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20TH ARMORED DIVISION *In World War II*

DANUBE-DACHAU-MUNICH-SALZBURG



THE TRAILS AND TRAVAIS



OF THE 20TH ARMORED DIVISION

Time Table

6 FEB		WE SAIL !
8 FEB		WE ARRIVE !
10 APR		WE CROSS THE RHINE
28 APR		WE CROSS THE DANUBE
30 APR		MUNICH: "THE 20 TH ARMORED DIVISION ROARS IN FROM THE WEST"
4 MAY		SALZBURG: END OF THE ROAD.



Drum in the ETO



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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the successful completion of the military missions assigned to and duly executed by the officers and enlisted men of the 20th Armored Division. We may recall with just pride our two-fold mission — first, our task of supplying trained armored replacements, and, secondly, our role in combat. We have contributed our share in securing total victory and unconditional surrender over the Axis nations that plunged all civilization into a World War II.



In Memoriam

May this book of recorded history serve as a lasting tribute to those brave men of the 20th Armored Division who made the supreme sacrifice so that freedom shall not perish from this earth. God grant that we shall not falter from the path of justice and freedom for all, so that our buddies shall not have died in vain.



**MAJOR GENERAL
STEPHEN G. HENRY
COMMANDING**

15 March 1943 - 28 October 1943



**MAJOR GENERAL
RODERICK R. ALLEN
COMMANDING**

2 November 1943 - 20 September 1944



**MAJOR GENERAL
ORLANDO WARD
COMMANDING**

31 October 1944 - 28 August 1945



**MAJOR GENERAL
JOHN W. LEONARD
COMMANDING**

29 August 1945 - 2 April 1946



COLONEL E. H. J. CARNs
CC "B"



COLONEL L. H. HAM
DIV. ARTY.



BRIG. GEN. C. M. DALY
CC "A"



COLONEL T. A. McCRARY
RES. CMD.



COLONEL W. H. HUNTER
DIV. TRAINS



MAJOR J. R. STORY
G-1



LT. COL. R. J. WILLIAMS
G-2



COLONEL W. E. LEONHARD
CHIEF OF STAFF



LT. COL. W. S. McELHENNY
G-4



LT. COL. R. N. ANDERSON
G-3

Training Phase

The 20th Armored Division was born on the Ides of March, 1943.

It was born to varied missions in the bitterest, bloodiest war of mankind; it was born to write a unique chapter in the history of World War II, and it was destined to be perhaps the luckiest division that ever left American shores for combat.

ALTHOUGH the 20th Armored Division cannot point to a long record of heroic slugging or dashing achievement on many of the battle fields of World War II, it made its weight felt by serving for two years as a replacement training division, properly climaxed by active participation as a unit in the final drive in the defeat of Germany. Although the 20th did not write a great deal of combat history, it joined valiantly in the knockout punch against a desperate Nazism, throwing its infamous legions back to and breaking them at its citadel, the National Redoubt in the Alps.

No, the 20th did not have a long history of battles and campaigns like so many other units; it wrote only a few paragraphs in the total book but it does know how history was written, and it was there to see the dramatic moments, causes and effects that will write the history of the future.

The division did many things; it experienced and saw all phases of war from the long, drawn, tedium of training and training again to the stomach-freezing tenseness of battle. And again it saw the bitter fruits of war on the battle-shattered nations of Europe, saw in hungry faces that cessation of fighting and victory do not mean the ideal has been achieved, learned first hand that bullets are only part of the answers when the fight is to right the wrongs of oppression and modern barbarity, when the fight is to keep alive the ideals of freedom and democracy.

*. . . training
for War.*





. . . a day's training is done—the sun is setting

Yes, it saw and experienced it all. Its men who were killed or wounded in action died and fell as bravely as all Americans did, earning our eternal homage for their courageous sacrifices for home, country and the ideal of freedom and dignity.

But out of all this, the men who lived in and fought with the 20th Armored Division think it is the nation's best—and luckiest.

Early in 1943, long columns of armor pushed over the Kentucky hills from Fort Knox to Camp Campbell, Ky.

These columns were the 8th Armored Division, but most of the men in these columns were destined to form the 20th Armored Division.

Scenes that greeted these men drew only long faces, gripes, wet feet and a persistent chill. Mud, deep, sticky mud, was the only camp surface in the northern area of Campbell assigned to the new arrival. Nature's morass was compounded by the churning wheels and trudging feet of the division. Everyone thought they had reached the end of their army trail, a dead end of mire and chill.



. . . studying weapons of war

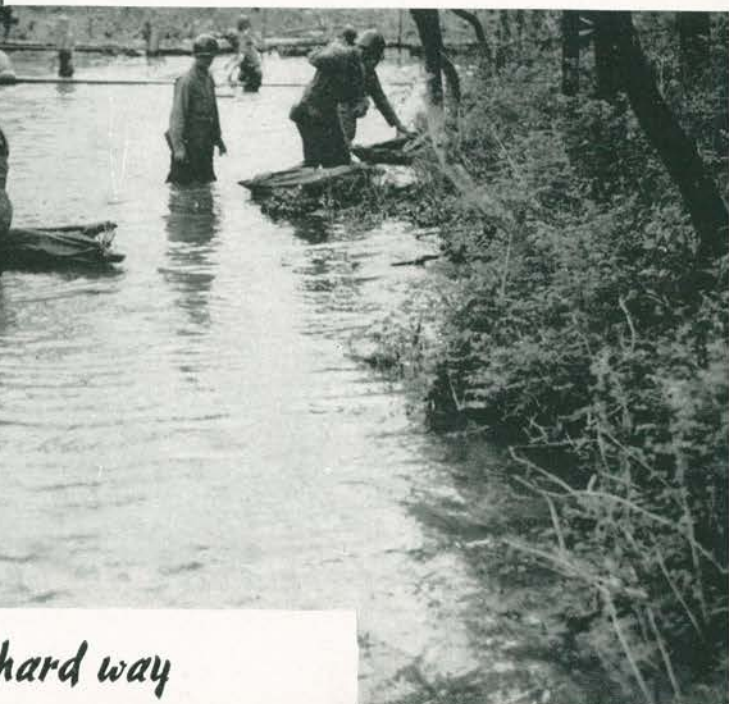
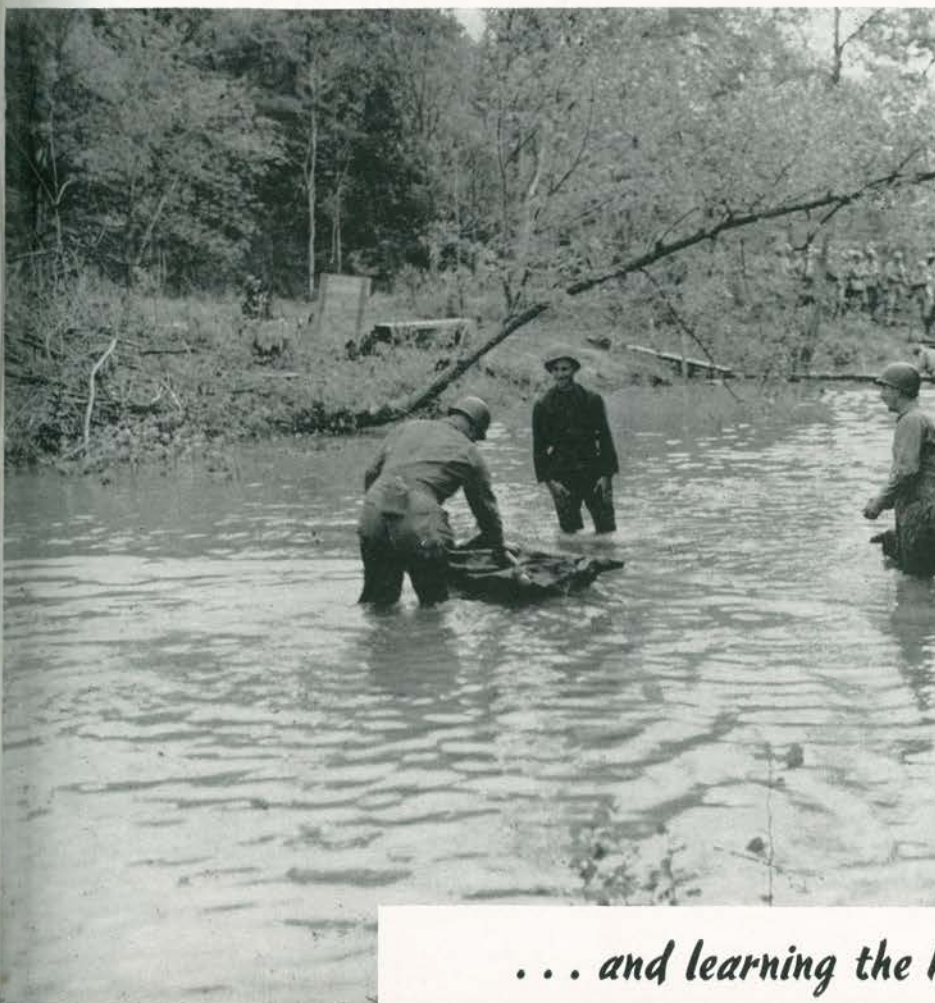
... the tanks start to roll



Then it became known that out of this division, the 20th Armored Division was to be formed. The 138th Ordnance Battalion was already organizing in Ohio.

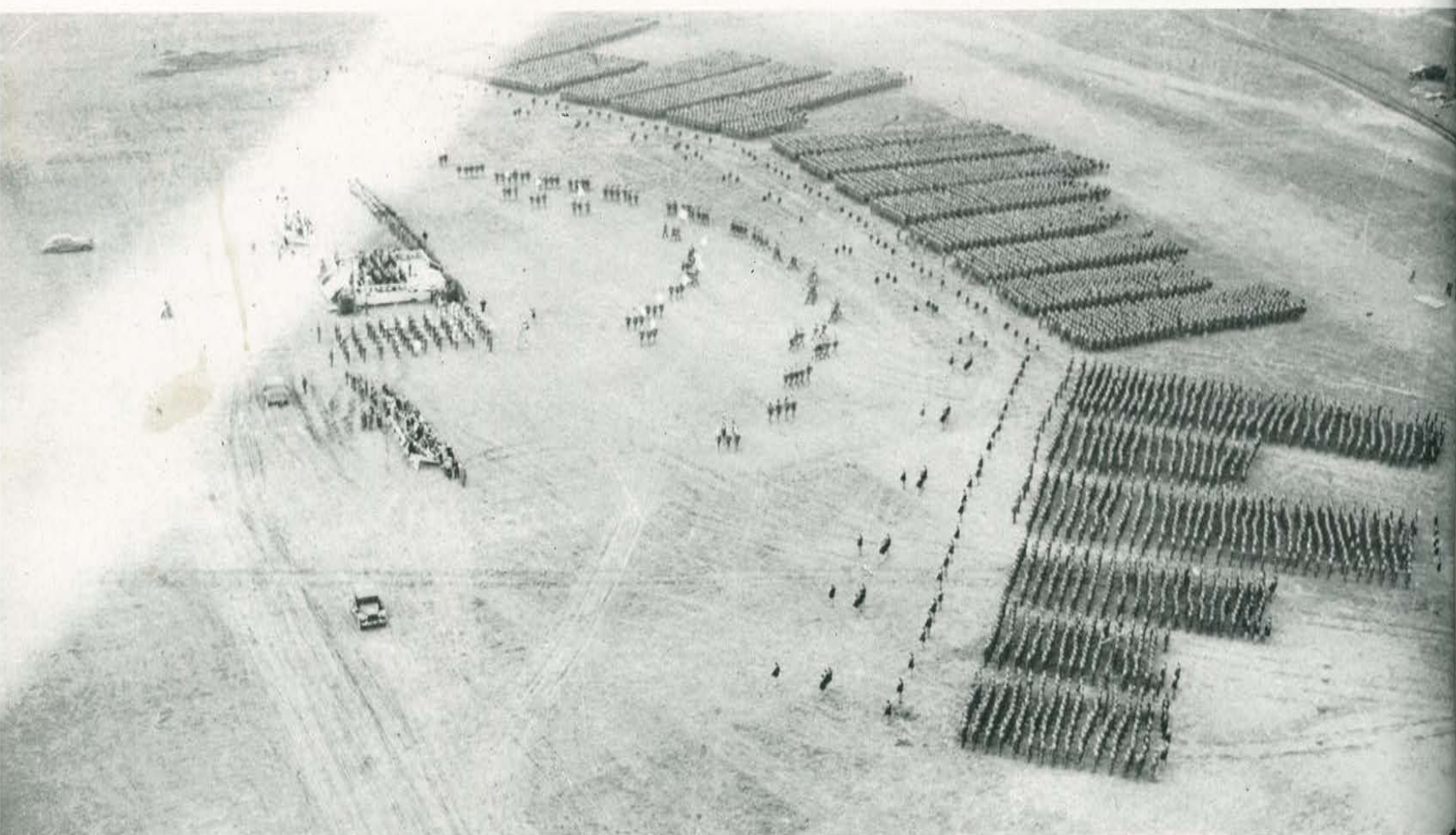
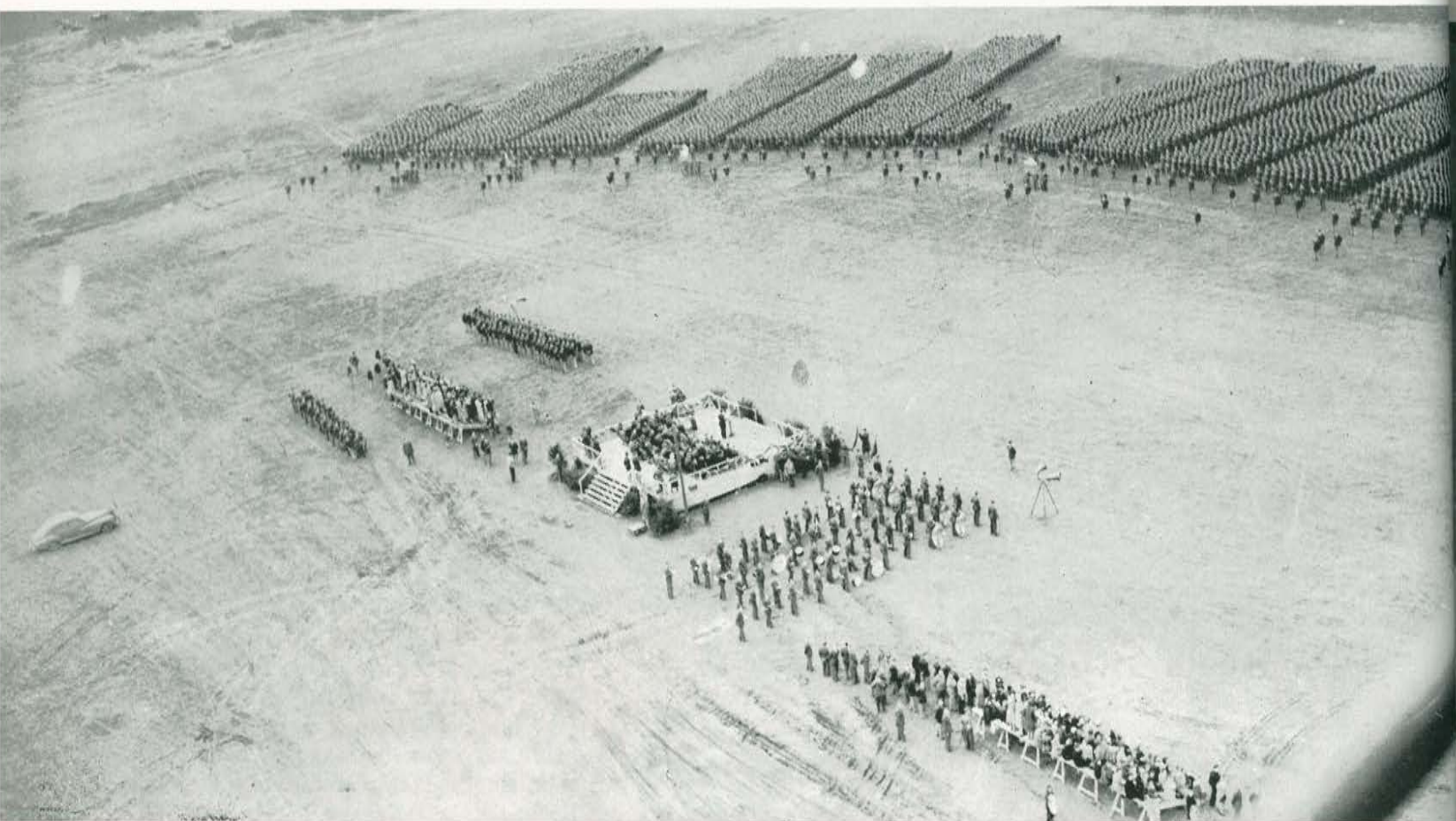
Finally a trickle of men left for Camp Polk, La. They were called the 8th Armored Division, while some three quarters of the men and officers stayed to start the 20th, supplemented by reinforcements from Fort Knox.

A division general staff was selected and sent to Fort Leavenworth for the command and general staff school. Brig. Gen. Stephen G. Henry, later to be promoted to major general, came to assume command, fresh from the gigantic job of planning, organizing and administering the Armored school, largest service school in the country. His was to be the organizational talent that was to form the seed of future development of the 20th Armored Division.



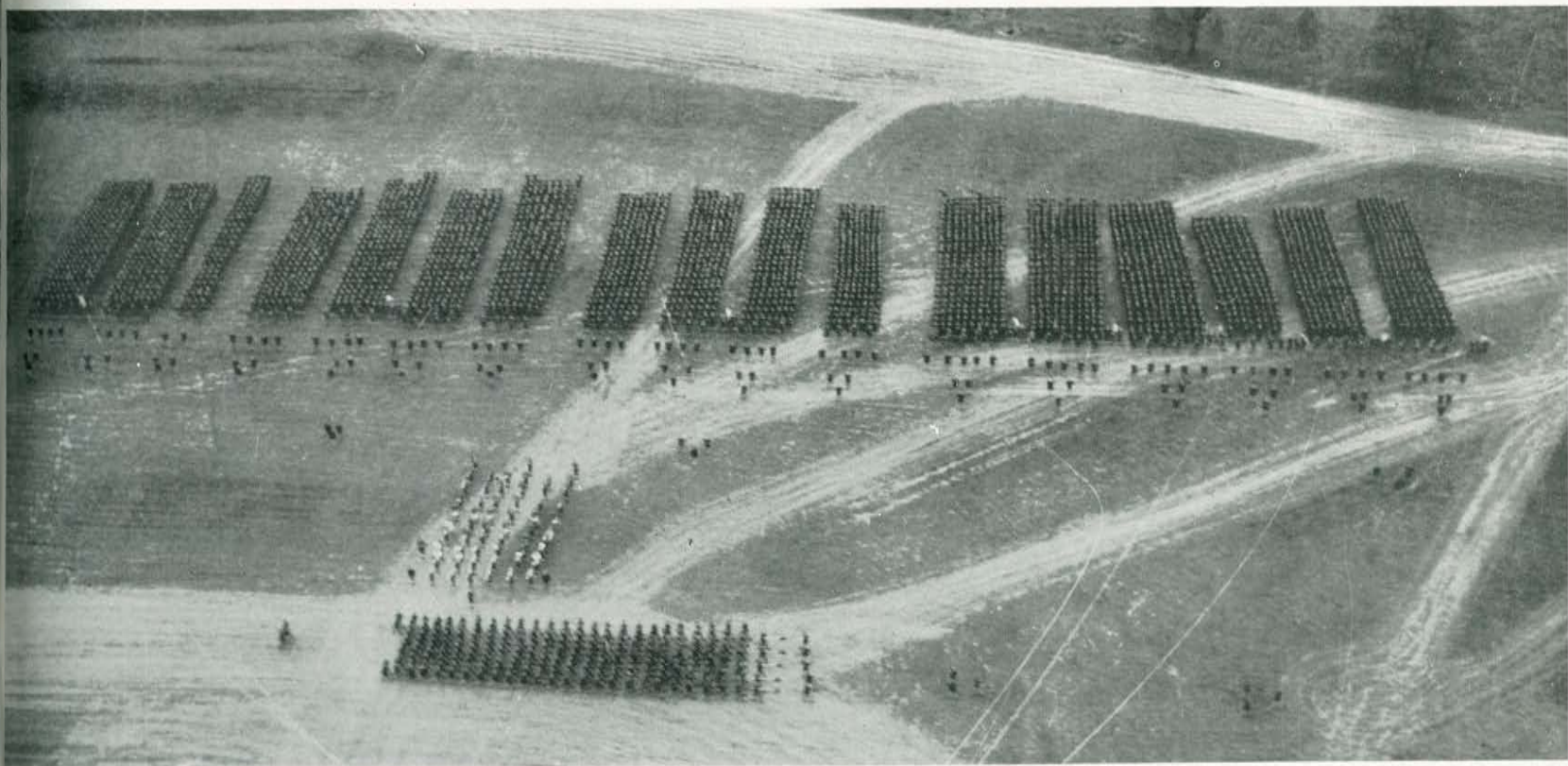
... and learning the hard way

Activation Day Ceremonies . . .



. . . formation in front of receiving stand

... through Aerial Camera Lens

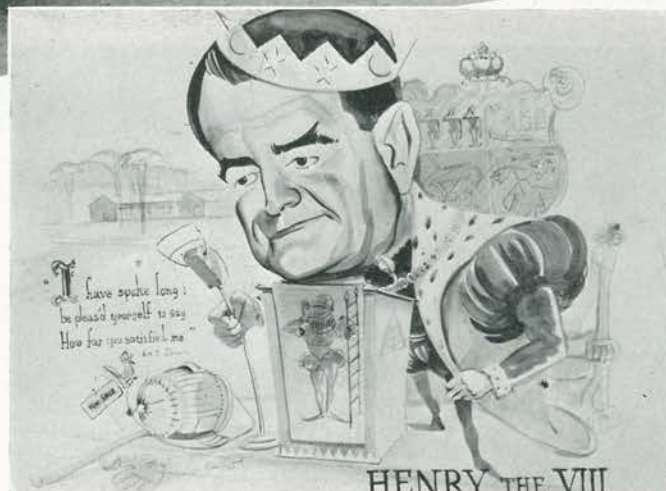


... passing in review --- troops



... and Armored Power

*... we proudly
parade our
armor for the
first time ... the
20th was a
reality*



Then on March 15, a cold rainy day, in 1943 the division was officially born. To the aggressor nations General Henry warned, "Beware of the Ides of March." A new threat, then some 15,000 strong, had been posed for the oppressor axis. It had been an impressive start. A solid phalanx of the division 15,000 men listened to General Henry's words and felt the historic significance of them. The division's armor rolled by, three abreast.

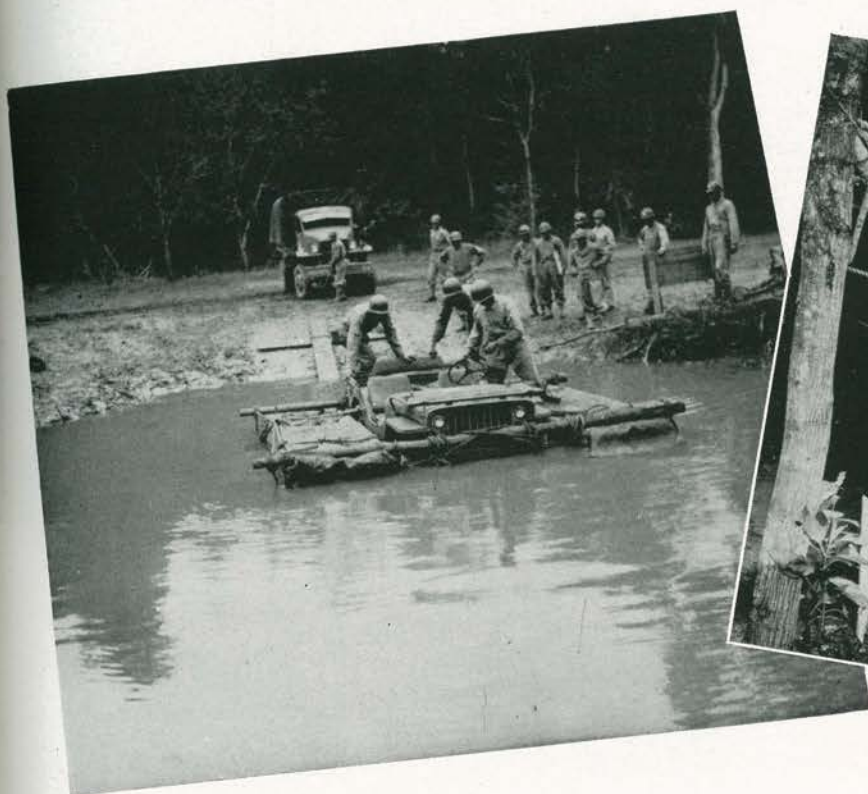
Then the division went to work.

Its first mission, and its mission for over a year, was to be an overseas replacement division. Almost immediately armored basics started pouring in from Fort Knox. Most of them were destined to reinforce armored divisions already overseas and fighting. The African campaign had just been cleaned up, and the Sicilian battles were in the mill.

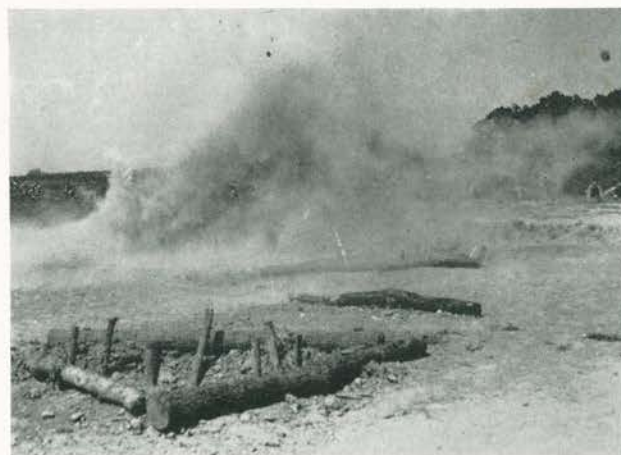
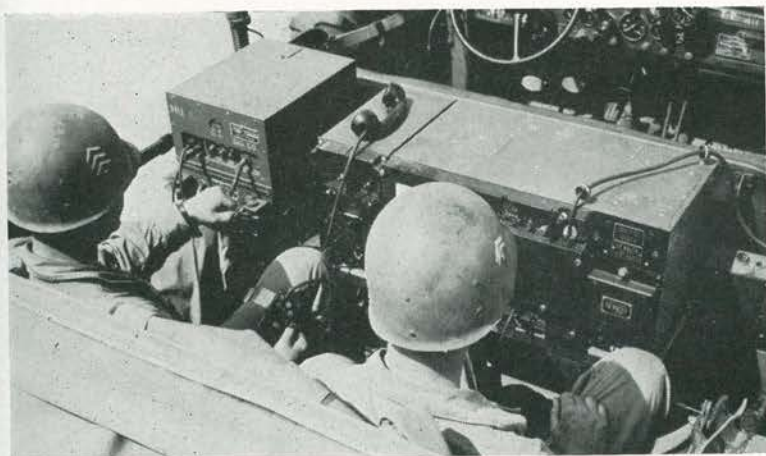
A select cadre was picked to conduct this training,

long, frequently repetitious hours of training that were not to stop until the division started to pack up for the ETO.

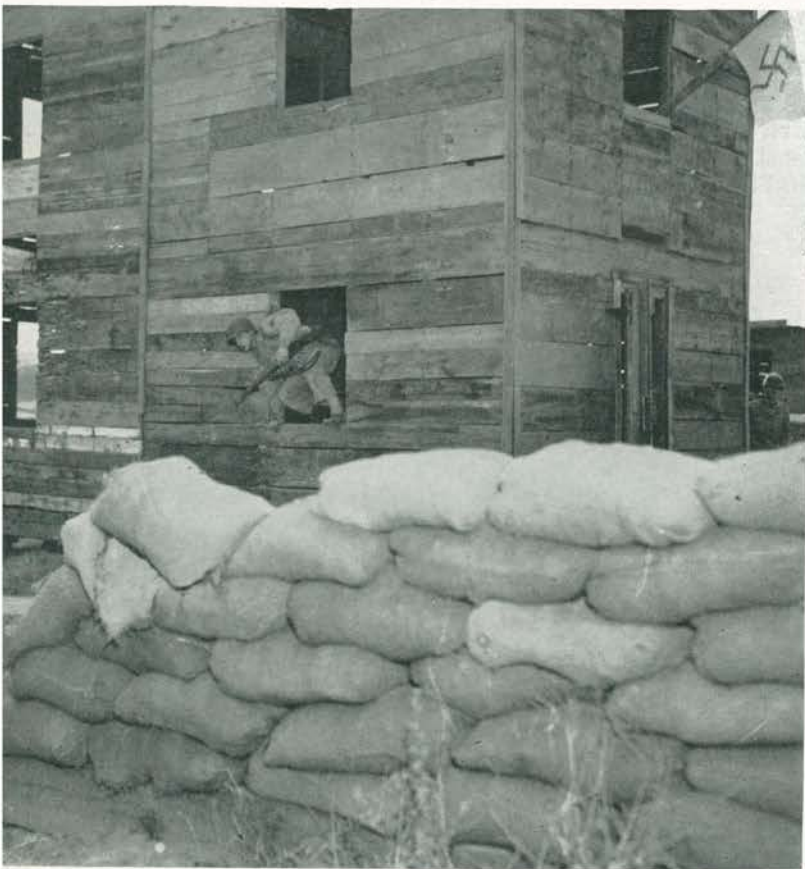
Using every technique he knew of mass production instruction, General Henry gave each battalion in the division specialized phases of training to enable every man passing through the division to receive the best, most thorough military education at division level that could be offered, and in the shortest amount of time.



... a thorough military education



. . . combat training in a mock Nazi village



. . . inoculation to overhead fire

The demands for replacements from overseas were great, but the division worked on the principle that every hour of training was a life saved, an enemy liquidated.

The Nazi village was erected, to become daily the attack target of men learning street fighting. It was in this village, the largest of its kind in the southeast, that men learned to know the crack of gunfire about them, the stunning concussion of planted land mines, and the ability to react to surprise targets. But the village was only one of the many courses of combat training set up by what was then the 480th Infantry Regiment.

Close-in defense and offense with judo and the bayonet were part of this training. Inoculation to overhead fire and an appreciation of mother earth's protection were indelibly ingrained on the infiltration course while combat firing from the hip was also taught.



*... county fair
system of teaching
battlefield first-aid*



Tankers had specialized ranges for all types of firing and driving. The 220th Medical battalion cadre set up a graphic county fair school for battle first aid. Field expedients, bridging, demolitions instruction kept the engineers working seven days a week, while signalmen of the 160th cracked the atmosphere all day long with radio refresher courses. The 138th Ordnance battalion, largely a volunteer battalion of automotive specialists and technicians checked and rechecked on the division's maintenance standards and training. Troopers of the 33rd Cavalry, then the 53rd Cavalry squadron, stressed the all-important techniques of scouting and reconnaissance, both mounted and dismounted.

... engineers worked seven days a week





. . . the going was tough

Everybody had a mission.

For those who stayed it was a tough mission, an unsung mission, yet one vitally important to every man going through the division that he might be properly prepared to meet, and best a tough antagonist on the field of battle.

It was a job that demanded alertness, patience, understanding and a devotion to duty that almost exceeded the requirements of combat. It was gruelling to do the same thing over again week after week, and then week after week see others go out from the rail sidings while the band played to put their new deadly knowledge to work.

The job got on many men's nerves. They were soldiers, they griped, not GI school teachers. They wanted war. It was a popular crack among the veterans of the division to say, "Any man who requests overseas assignment to get out of the 20th Armored Division is a coward."

Actually, though they complained, it was not well for an outsider to rap the division without taking a running start. By the very nature of their distinctive, if not the most desirable, assignment, they had developed a reverse English esprit de corps which rarely asserted itself until the division's merits were maligned by someone not wearing the "20" patch.



. . . the pace fast



. . . and you made your own comforts

But they kept at their jobs and did them well. After a few months, the specialized nature of the division's mission showed on the personnel rosters in G-1. The division attained an average IQ score of officer candidate level, a whole division of men with a mean average of over 110. It had become and stayed, the smartest division in the American army.

But training was not all. While the cold morning fogs, snow and clinging mud of winter gave way to the pulverized dust of summer, other things had been happening.

General Henry was a driver, pushing, demanding, pulling that the division do its job well. Discipline was his fetish and his frequent personal inspections of everything from bunks to battle maneuvers were the most exacting. Yet he realized that it takes many things to make a good soldier in addition to training, discipline and a proud, smart appearance.

He realized the need for attractive recreation and athletics. Under his direction, beer gardens were built throughout the division area. Nightly entertainment in each became a must for SSO officers, and when the day's training was done, dusk-caked, perspiration soaked soldiers were able to relax in their coveralls, drink ice cold beer, listen to music and talk, always talk.

Athletics, as part of the program of physical conditioning, was recognized as one of the most important phases of the training program. Team play was featured the year round from company to division level. Competitions were intense, healthy in baseball, soft ball, basketball and football. There was always something in the sporting fire.

And topping them all were the division teams, always good in whatever the endeavor was, teams that made the 20th Armored Division well known throughout the southeastern United States.

. . . relaxation, entertainment was reward after hard day's work



. . . 20th Athletic Teams



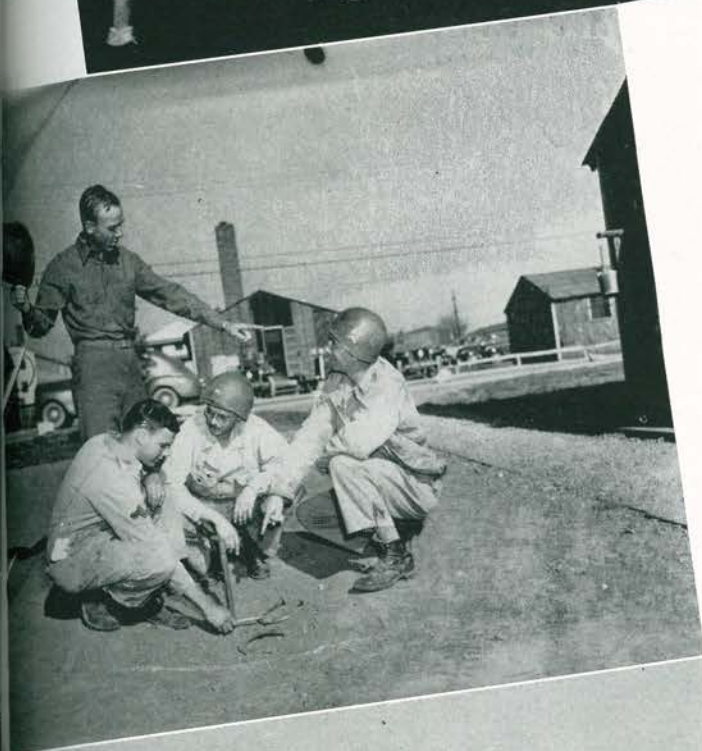
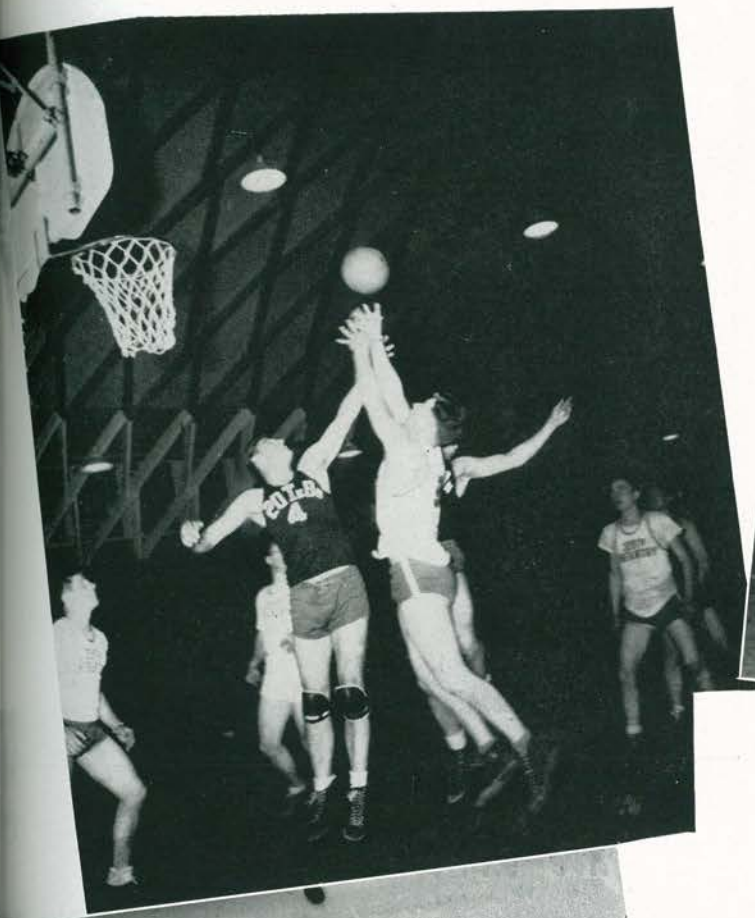
For two years under the direction of George Lacy and Howie Muderski, the 20th Armored Division baseball team virtually swept all opposition away like a tank going through brush. Once in a while the team ran into snags, but win-loss records showed the division nine had the ingredients of champions. For two years the team won the Southeastern Service baseball tournament to enter the Wichita Semi-Professional Tournament, top honor in its class. And then for two years the team battled its way through some of the best in the country to fourth place and a share of the purse.

And so the 20th Armored Division baseball team was recognized as tops in the area. In 1943, the delegation beat the pitching of Johnny Beasley, and again in 1944 the 20th sluggers, better known as murders' row, faced him and beat the All-Star Nashville City team. They rode high, and even the jibes of the 14th Armored Division couldn't take away from their prowess on the diamond.

Their last accolade was inclusion in a proposal for a Service World's Series between the Army, Navy and Marines, the 20th to represent the Army.



... made the Division Famous



In basketball it was nearly a repeat performance, and 20th men crowded the post gymnasium to watch their team tally up winning scores again over some of the best in the southeast. The 20th had become an accepted featured name in Nashville newspapers sports columns. The record of the quintet earned it an invitation to the World's Professional Basketball Tournament in Chicago in 1944. The team was eliminated from the tournament by the team that later won the championship.

A football team from the 220th athletically prominent Engineers, represented the 20th on the gridiron, and taking on all comers, this team gained high recognition on national ratings for three years.

In the squared circle also the 20th did not fail to place champions as Andy Anderson slugged to the Southeastern heavy weights Golden Glove title in 1943, while Nick Tally won the Golden Belt in the light heavyweight division the following year.



Even in such sports as tennis the 20th name ranked among the top with Pvt. Tom Brown copping both the Tennessee and Alabama state court crowns.

Among the battalions, the 220th Engineers, led the division in most of the sports. After four o'clock every field was filled with athletic teams, and after supper the crowds migrated to the beer gardens. There were plenty of hard hours of training, but other things were there, too.

Of course "beautification," the task of making an attractive military home out of the mud, became a new and frequently heard word in the vocabularies of 20th soldiers.

Except for close order drill in the morning, except for crawling on bellies through suffocating clouds of dust or slimy, cold seas of mud, except for the sweaty hours or shivering hours in tank turrets, it sometimes seemed more like college than the army.



. . . World Champion Joe Louis gave exhibition



. . . the 20th baseball team ranked fourth in National A. A. U.

. . . still the work went on



Still the work went on, the mission accomplished, until the division supplied more than twice its original strength to units overseas, many of whom were to later see the 20th patch in the ETO and hail it down just to state that they too were once in the 20th.

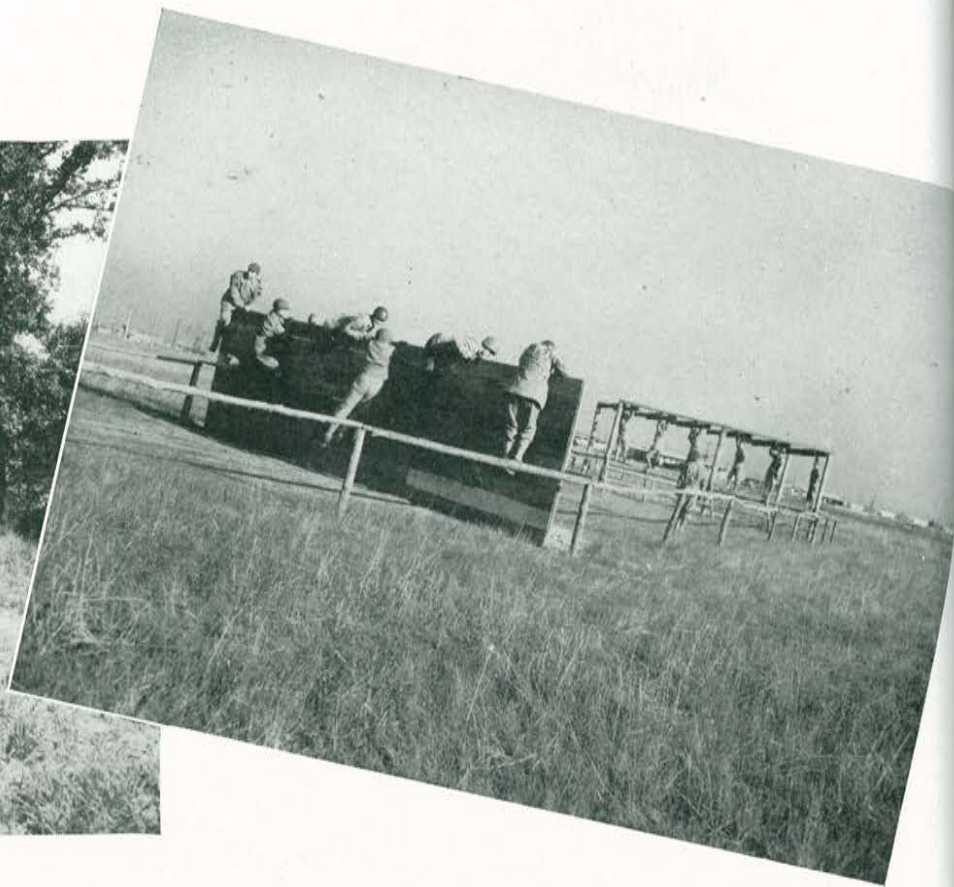
The ground hardened again, and fall came and with it important changes. General Henry left to assume an important post that later was to lead to G-1 of the War Department during the critical demobilization stage of post-war. General Roderick R. Allen, quiet-spoken, sandy-haired general from Texas and the 4th Armored Division, assumed command of the division.

The division was streamlined to a compact fighting unit of 10,000 men, and a new mission assigned—training for combat as a unit.

This was exciting news, but it meant starting out from fresh all over again, basic through all the training stages. Again, but this time the training concerned each man individually, tracks and trucks took loads to the ranges. Qualification charts became more important. Five, ten and 25 mile hikes with full field packs were the order of the day. Sick books were filled with blister cases and sore muscles after men dragged through the last three miles of the 25 milers.



The Grind Was Tough



. . . obstacle course hazards



. . . hand to hand combat





... a 20th "dough" hits Yank magazine cover demonstrating shoulder firing of 30. caliber machine gun.



*. . . Miss Lace
cartoon pin-up of
World War II*



*. . . breakfast in bed--
this ain't the Army*

For some these hikes merely meant another competition, another chance to hang up a record in the world of sports. Men like Bill Rasmussen and the Indian, Chief Blackcloud of the Engineers, set out to see how many miles they could compress in the least number of minutes. For many months Chief Blackcloud held the Army record for the 25 mile march with full pack.

On the lighter side, there was the unforgettable incident of an entire company in the 27th Tank Battalion receiving Sunday morning breakfast in bed, the GI's dream, as reward for some exceptional tank shooting.

With its new mission uppermost in mind, the division settled down during the bitterly cold Kentucky winter months to its own preparation for combat.



. . . keeping up with the World



. . . proud at a review



*. . . chow and a
shave on bivouac*



Weekly bivouacs in the field were scheduled for all the battalions, as the division reached battalion level training. Men learned how important their field expedient training had been as snows and thaws turned every training area into morasses that almost defied armored movement.

Bales of straw became one of the luxuries of living, and final arrival of overshoes made men think they were living like kings. Mud and cold were everywhere, in shoes, blankets, pup-tents, CPs, tracks and tanks. Comfort meant three layers of clothing, and the nearest log fire.

Tankers frequently had to leave their engines running all night to keep them from freezing, but through it all training never stopped. Long hours on the pitch black roads of the reservation in black-out driving training had taught the men to drive nearly as well after sunset as during daylight.

. . . APO in the field



*. . . an infra-red study
in black-out.*



Classes on everything from map reading to bakery techniques were intensified, and men living off the post in Hopkinsville and Clarksville were lucky to get home once a week. There were guys in Italy having it a lot tougher, but 20th men knew also their training for war was no picnic either.

Slowly, despite a couple of setbacks, the division began to shape up and combat command activities, first marches, then maneuvers spread the division across the Kentucky-Tennessee countryside.

The Reds and the Blues went at it, and there was the usual rat race of who liquidated who, who captured who and why, and what is this crazy war anyway. But staffs found out what they were going to be up against.

. . . home is where you find it.

... graveyard of errors



... heaving pineapples



*... no
barrier too high*

Meanwhile many specialized phases of training were introduced. A large area was devoted to the expert infantryman tests to rate armored doughboys on everything from endurance to infiltration. The Engineers set up and ran the "Little Siegfried Line" where troops saw how to deliver the knockout to prepared defenses. Village fighting and its accompanying courses were intensified. The tank ranges were put into full time operation.

In the tank crew tests, after a first failure, the division obtained the highest score ever achieved by any armored division, earning a 95 average. All three battalions ran neck and neck, but when the shooting was over the 20th Tank Battalion walked away with the high score. Interest in these tests ran high, and tank crews striving for a perfect record were ready to, and did, wager entire month's wages to back up their claims of marksmanship.





. . . bivouac snack



. . . necessity is the mother—

And so the division fought the battles of Weavers' Store and Parkertown, of Rose Hill and Mabry road. Dust and mud, sweat and cold, maintenance and shooting, inspections of all kinds and week-ends to Nashville. Motor parks were like a second home, and gravel of the parks had to be kept off the road and grease off the gravel. The little town of Lafayette, during battalion and combat command maneuver periods, used to look like an unofficial motor park after dark, and little general stores did big city business in snack, fruits and beer. And during bivouacs the MPs always had more food than anybody.



. . . getting ready for a week-end



. . . holiday cheer

There is an awkward tenderness, completely out of customary character, about the Army during the holidays of Christmas and Thanksgiving, and the 20th was not without its display of sentiment on those days. They are somewhat lonely days around an Army post, yet there is such an anxious striving by everybody to bring the festive spirit within the garrison that it achieves an effect that can be found nowhere else; it is very pleasant and full of nostalgia. Somehow it touched inside to see how big, rawboned artillery-men and doughs went out into woods and fields to bring back boughs and cornstocks and then decorate mess halls and dayrooms. They were soldiers, but also men who had always seen their women at home do these things, but there in the Army they did them themselves to bring back that touch of home. And the KPs and cooks and the mess sergeants always had to work double duty

with hundreds of pounds of turkeys and fixings for each company. Yet they never seemed to mind that chore. On those days they knew their efforts were going to be appreciated, and even Army cooks have the same professional pride of seeing their work enjoyed.

And during all this time, the streets and bars of Hopkinsville and Clarksville watched the ebb and flow of 20th patches through the two towns. The bars were small, usually dingy and not very good entertainment, but there wasn't much else to do outside of camp on week nights, so men went in and bought beers or a straight, drank and talked, always talk.

Lopsided buses, always full to the gun'als and in winter, smelling of old oil burners were the only links with the civilian world for most, and bus queues just became part of the pattern of Campbell living.



. . . miniature artillery range

Finally, however, everybody had done everything they were supposed to. All preliminary tests had been passed, and it was announced the division was going to go on its own special brand of maneuvers. Before it went General Allen was transferred to command the 12th Armored Division, and General Daly took over until the arrival of General Ward a few months later.

Typical of so much that happened to the 20th, it was not going to engage in maneuvers like all other divisions, but was to stage its own maneuver in the Tennessee area since maneuver headquarters had been closed.

A week in the field at Camp Campbell started the maneuver to acclimate the troops once again to an extended tour on wheels and under canvas.

It was fall, and the ground muddy again; but at the end of the week, the division pulled itself out of the mud and onto the road and the trek started, Lebanon, Tenn., bound.



. . . maneuver mustaches



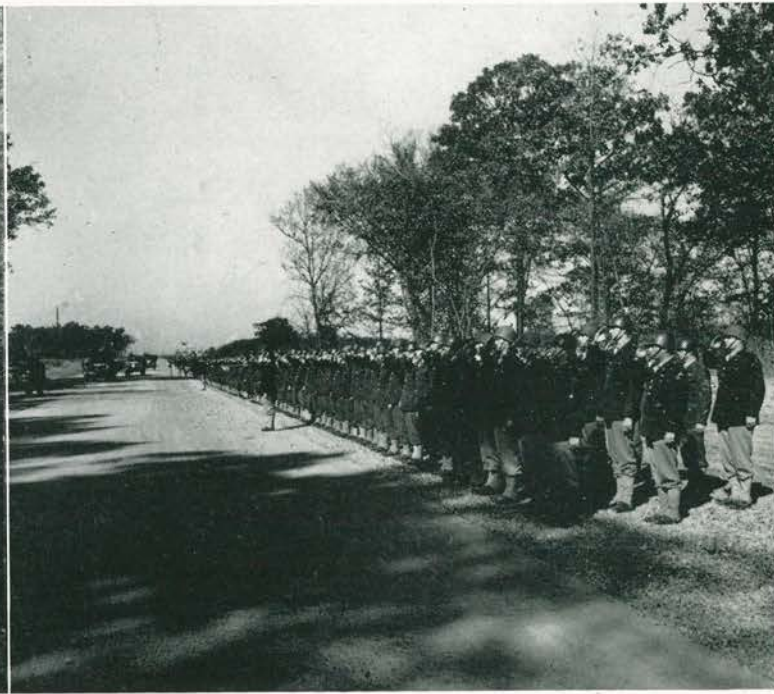
. . . pup tent pin-up

To all but staffs, the maneuvers were a confusing problem of movements at all crazy hours of day and night and early morning, or endless hours of apparently pointless waiting, of camouflaging and of maintenance. There was no one to fight except the 33rd Cavalry and there were not enough of them to give the illusion of enemy any reality.

Back and forth across the Cumberland, the division fought according to division headquarters G-3 maps and orders. Back and forth the men drove their tanks, vehicles, according to most of the men. The Engineers, as usual, were dished out a tough assignment, bridging of the Cumberland and the river was running high and fast. But they did it.

Property damage assessment officers were led a merry chase, and the men slipped into town as often as they could, if only to find a bath. Most of the time, however, was spent in leading a strictly and nomadic GI life. The division never seemed to rest, and drivers soon learned that a couple extra cans of beans or sardines in the vehicles were invaluable because the hour of chow was never certain.

After four weeks, the division was tired. The maneuver, which had been commanded by Brig. Gen. Daly, was completed satisfactorily, and again the 20th poked its long columns out onto the road for the slow ride north, back to Camp Campbell.



... Armor takes a bath

... A General departs



... SOS for the Navy

... and the enemy is spotted

P. O. M.

DURING the middle of the maneuver, orders were received giving the division its ultimate mission, combat,—a mission for which the division personnel had been pointing sometimes despairingly for a year and one-half.

Maneuvers continued midst rumors, but for some the feverish business of POM began then. Supply sections were split so that work on records could begin, not to stop for almost five months.

The first readiness date allowed only a minimum amount of time to pack and box, check and double check all kinds of records and some never heard of before. Starting at this time, it seemed the division never stopped hustling until V-E day.

The tedious, slow trip from Lebanon finished, men slipped off their gear, washed well, and the next day started attending packing and crating classes. In rapid fire order, three different agencies gave three different sets of advice on how to pack and crate an armored division.

The 20th Armored Division was scheduled to go over carrying more of its organic equipment than had ever been attempted. The main issue was speed. A division box factory was organized and turned out 800 boxes per day.

Packing non-coms and officers learned there is more to overseas movement than meets the eye. Gas cans had to be cleaned and sniffed for shipment, each one individually, to guard against fire on board ship. That done, the gas cans were discarded as part of the load. Boxes came in sizes, had to be marked in certain ways. Simple in itself, but most of the division was surprised to find how many ways that one marking method could become. Each soldier had his own interpretation, each headquarters their own instructions. Top-side on the division, supply agencies got red-eyed trying to write explicit, fool-proof orders. They were confounded by the questions that poured in from all sides, many of which no two in a staff section would answer the same way.

Authorities included Rail Transportation, Port, Theater Commander, Red List, the Service Command technical packing staff, helpers from Army, G-4, and five or six other orders, circulars and agencies.

But the packing took shape. Supply agencies mushroomed. Equipment was gathered, checked, washed, painted, turned-in, drawn.

Reports became a fetish, but necessary. Taking 10,000 men plus nearly all armored equipment and accessories was a big job. Each headquarters had its reports demanded of lower echelons. Four-twelves, and later four-thirteens were the headaches. Property books, impedimenta reports, packing lists, cosmoline, toilet paper for cushioning (proved in France to have been a brilliant packing item), inspectors, inspectors inspecting the inspectors. And so was spent those fall weeks and late winter months.



*... everything on wheels
was T. I'd.*

138th Ordnance shops were jammed with vehicles under repair and technical inspection, first inspection by the division, and then by War Department and Second Army teams.

But the line battalion men found their work in their shops and supply rooms. Details cleaned, inspected, stood inspection, prepared, packed and crated everything they had from carbines to field stoves, from tanks to tarpaulins.

All this was carried on against a shortage of personnel on POM leaves and furloughs. It was that last trip home before the "big adventure," and security lectures became another must on crowded schedules. Personnel sections prepared rosters after rosters, check and double check. It was hard to find a typewriter for the letter home day or night.

Married officers and men besieged the rail transportation office for tickets to send their wives home. Some wives went early, some stayed for the last train.

Once the alert order was postponed. Morale, until then, high despite fatigue from maneuvers compounded by the rush of preparation, dropped like a barometer before a storm in the tropics. Skeptics moaned, "The 20th's not going anywhere. We're rooted in this Kentucky mud." And many believed them. Slowly, however, the unabated packing activity reassured them, and the men were happy again.

These men were soldiers. They had trained to fight; they didn't want to go home having fought only the Battle of Rose Hill.

Finally the last inspection by War Department representatives. Men were examined for MOS qualification on a mass production scale; vehicles, guns and equipment were given their last going over for readiness; records of every description were combed for accuracy. Dog tags were hauled out



... show down

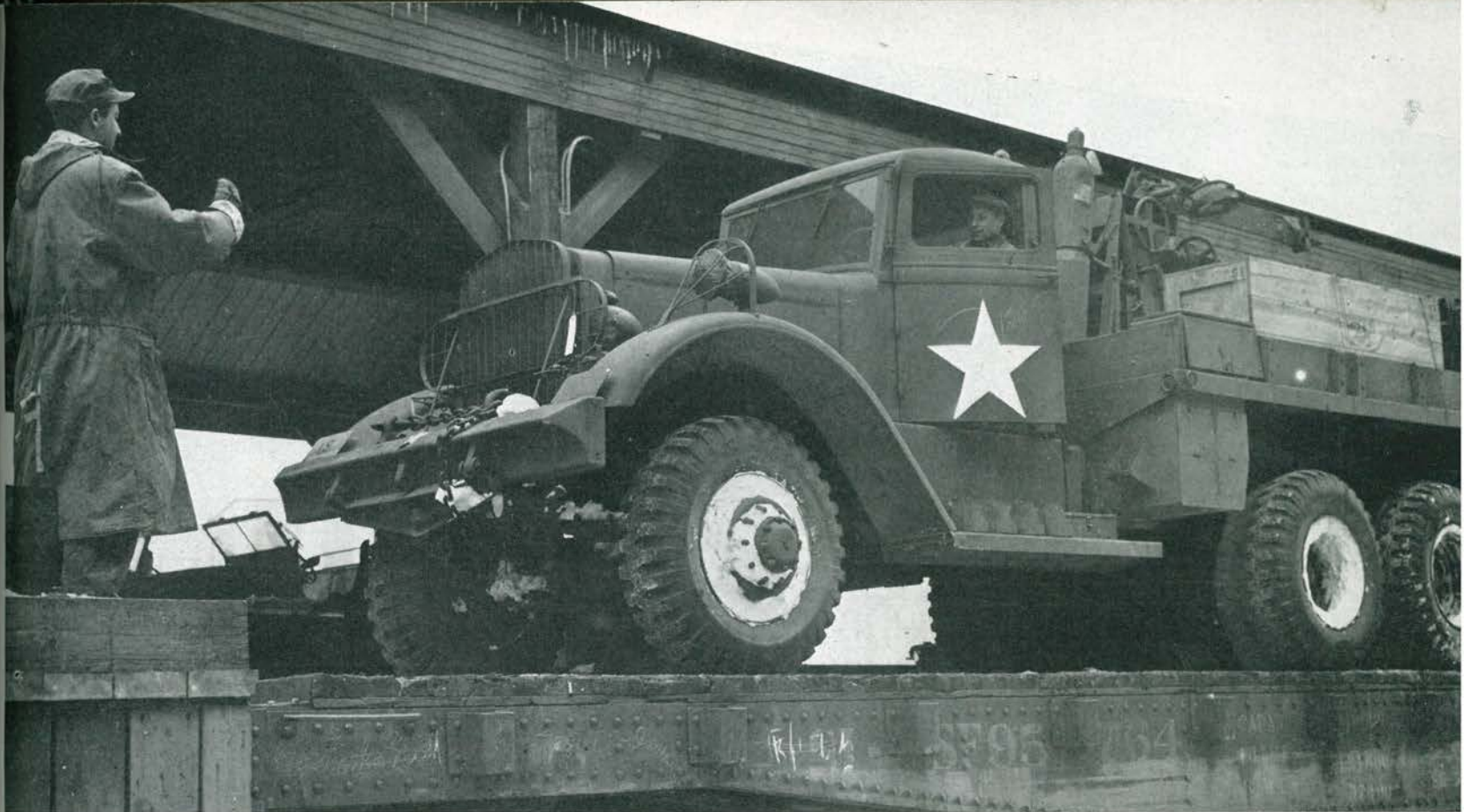
and put back; medical forms scanned and the "20th Armored Division" identification cut out of those of the careless.

The inspectors were tough. Tempers shortened and nerves strained. This was the "move out" test. Finally the reports were submitted and adjudged. Late at night the decision was rendered to the Chief of Staff. General Ward was not told. The next day dawned bright and clear, a rare Kentucky day, and the 20th band formed outside the Division Headquarters mess before breakfast. When General Ward arrived, the Band struck up with "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning." He knew the division had been okeyed for overseas. Everybody felt a weight relieved from their backs. Smiles were easy to get that day.

... records were checked

... and medical inspections





. . . vehicles were loaded

Then T/E equipment had to go out. Long freight trucks crawled steadily from division to the trains for three days, loading, bracing, barring doors. Check lists, large boxes on the bottom, pack 'em tight, inspectors, sweat, hurt, fingers, cold, wet afternoons were part of this picture. It was January, a Kentucky, a Camp Campbell January. Some men complained. Others observed they were glad they weren't still engaged in training schedules during that weather. On other sidings near the airport other men in numbing weather rolled vehicles up onto the flat cars, while the 220th Engineers, as tough as their motto, "In Spite of Hell," blocked the vehicles, wired and braced them to the flat cars.

The men who worked on these details watched these trains go out, and knew the division was on its way. They knew where then. But there had been a time when no one knew. Experts had it New York, New Orleans, San Francisco. It had only been during the last weeks that the port was revealed to be Boston, Mass. But the division was on the way. Motor parks looked bare, lifeless without men or vehicles, no grease spots on the gravel

to worry about, no gravel on the streets to sweep clear.

Slowly but steadily the movement closed in to the men's very military homes. Barracks inspection and area police followed. Attics were scoured, and amazing things found in them, enough from the division to start a large second hand shop. Holes in partitions suddenly loomed important. Signs, rock-walk borders, old punching bag stands were removed. The area began to resemble a ghost town.

Vehicles were turned in and then, to those who never tried to understand the Army, were foolishly, it seemed, drawn back out, the number necessary just for administrative purposes. Orders were issued and read telling which units were to go when and on which of the 25 trains. A special TAT train was formed.

With this limited transportation, pools were set up to get the TAT to the train, each unit with its own car. Again the back-breaking, finger-mauling shuffle of solving the three dimensional jig-saw puzzle of loading the box cars. It strained trucking facilities to continue to get coal, food, ice, dispose of waste, haul the refuse from police.



... no more training charts



*... last drink
at NCO Club*

Finally the 18th of January arrived. The first troops moved out of their barracks to the Field House to await shipment to Camp Miles Standish, Brockton, Mass., for final staging.

There was chatter and excitement in the air. Duffle bags, musette bags, files and men formed. The Field House was jammed with beds. Red Cross girls served coffee. The guys joked and laughed. Officers lost some of their reserve, the men some of their restraint. Except for a few who were somber, those men acted more like they were heading for a lodge picnic. This was "IT." IT was what they wanted and they were on the way.

Early the next morning, the hike started. At 0400 the first trainload pulled away, and trains kept pulling away, four a day until the 25th of January, when the last trainload left. Each load marched through the post area, waved goodbye to the civilian girl workers and WACS, joked about the German POWs working near the roadside.

Camp Campbell was a shell, the ghost of the three armored divisions 12th, 14th and 20th, and the infantry division, the 26th Yankee, that had trained there. But of them all, the name of the 20th Armored Division had become almost synonymous with the camp itself.

But the men, though they talked about Gate No. 6 beer, about Clarksville and Hopkinsville, and week-ends in Nashville, Madisonville, Louisville and Evansville, even Lebanon, were looking forward.

For everybody the train ride, usually three to four days, was a welcome rest. Police the car twice a day, the rest of the time, eat, sleep and read or just watch the country go by. For many this was the most absorbing. For many they saw the land go by and for the first time stopped to take stock and say "This giant sprawling land is America. It is what I'm going now to fight for." Usually these moods did not last long against the insistence of effervescent chatter and poker games.

*... familiar chapel
bade farewell*



Standish Staging



... we arrive--Camp Miles Standish, bleak,—cold

Some trains went north, some went south through Washington, D. C., and later passed the skyline of New York, but all finally arrived at the siding at Miles Standish, snow covered, remote.

No trucks here, except for duffle bags. The Transportation Corps put armor on its feet. Snow crunched under them, and Southerners wanted to know what kind of nitwits would live in a frigid white land such as they saw then.

Again checks and double checks on everything, but particularly personnel. Passes were granted. Boston and Providence and Brockton were overwhelmed.

The Statler Hotel was entertaining the New England Hair Dressers' Association. The Division used the Statler as a CP. The 20th had a very good time in Boston.

... from out of the cold





. . . a beautiful rumor



Suddenly it all stopped. No more passes. Tomorrow we move out. Some battalions had already gone to prepare the ships. Again marching traffic schedules, again the trains, but this time there was more snow. It was ankle deep and slippery. Bags were lined up, picked up and went to the train sides. Everything was done with clocklike precision. Mistakes meant tangles. The first troops lined up, cold, shivering a little perhaps from excitement, in the bleak darkness of a New England winter morning. Marching to the train was a muffled swishing in the snow. Hurry up and wait, again. At the train side, another formation while another headcount was taken. Then the loud speaker, orders, music.

The 20th Armored Division sailed away to the tune of "Rum and Coca Cola." Some thought it appropriate, even if they hadn't succeeded in drinking Nashville dry. It certainly was novel, gave the farewell a party twist. But the men waited for "Over There." That was more traditional. Finally they heard it. Most thrilled more than a little. Didn't admit it, of course.

. . . the troops lined up

P. O. Σ.

Embarkation



... Farewell, Kentucky



... greetings from snow-logged standish



... getting the low-down on the Σ70



... time out for a dance



... a shot in the arm



... thinking of home



... snow frolic

*... that
last call Home*

*... Boston treated us
swell - - but we
were off to War and
the stay too short.*



Embarkation



That was all. There were no more glimpses of Boston. Trains took the men right into the loading yard. The usual scramble followed as the train disgorged men, luggage and bag lunches. They formed next to each train and started the march down painfully long wharves. No trucks were here. Each man carried everything he had on his back. Fingers ached from gripping, stomachs griped from straining. One more stop preceded boarding the vessels. Another head count while the Red Cross girls passed back and forth with their usual wares, donuts, coffee and a smile. They also had Monday morning papers. News had become highly significant, especially in the European Theater of War. The gangplank loomed ahead. Each man, except the strongest, silently wondered if he could pull himself and all duffle up the plank, but each did, up the plank, into, around and down the ships, where everyone learned something of compassion for sardines.

... trains took men to loading yard

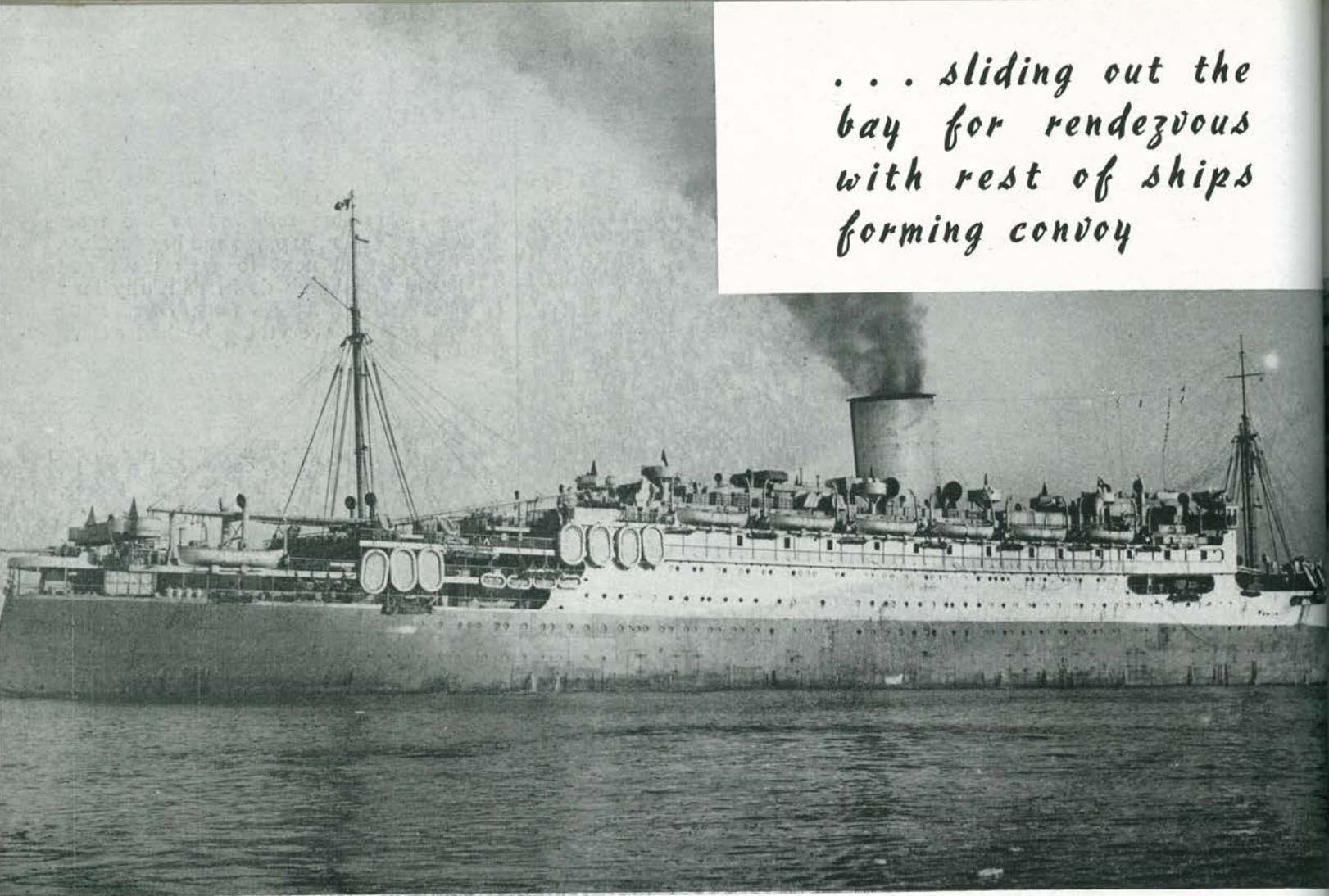


... checking on board



... this is it

... sliding out the bay for rendezvous with rest of ships forming convoy



Three ships carried the division personnel across. They were the Brazil, the Barry and the Excelsior, and they sailed in that order. But none who had sailed on them in pre-war days would have recog-

nized the ships. Drop bunks, canvas sewn on iron frames were cramped into all available space, compressing each man's world into a space about six feet long, two and a half feet wide and one-foot deep.



... mapping our convoy course

Across the Pond . . .



. . . abandon ship drill



. . . sardine can accommodations



. . . alert—even at chow



. . . our ships at sea

To Destiny's Calling



*... with the
naval gunners
keeping a
constant
vigil, life
aboard the
ship . . .*

*... goes on
the same with
the usual
army
chores, K. P.,
guard duty,
poker, rumors*



Community Life



... ship's store



... hospitalization



... a daily newspaper



... the mail goes through



... even a bakery



... and open-deck church

... on the High Seas



... Hi, neighbor



... night clubbing



... rail birds



... jam session

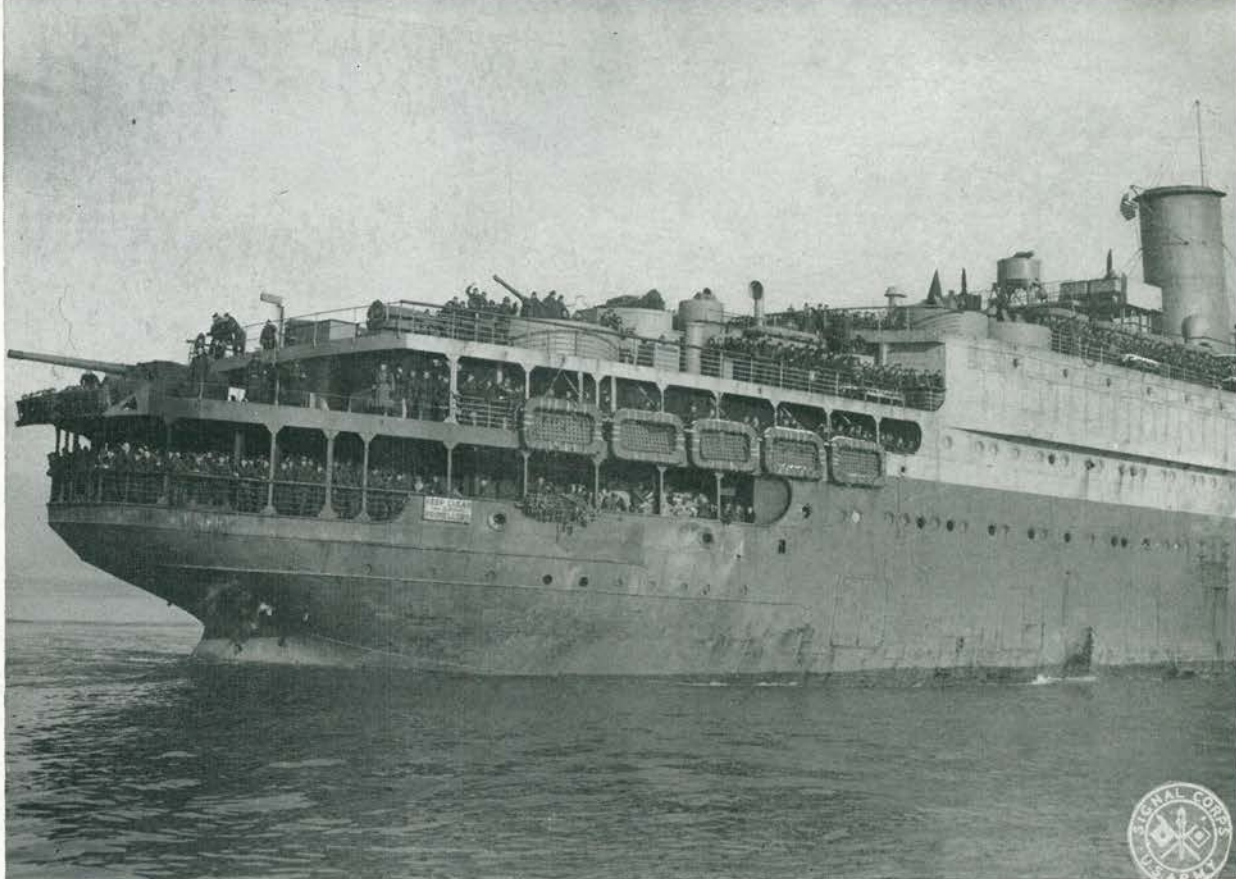


... a barber shop



... and radio station

*... a last
look
at
the
U. S. A.*



The Brazil, most luxurious and stable of the three ships, was formerly a luxury liner on the South American run, while the Barry was the reconverted sister ship of the ill-fated Moro Castle, and some of the men wondered. The submarine menace was almost licked, but there was always that chance. Trailing the 20th ships was the Excelsior, one-time banana boat of the U. S. Export Lines. Men on the Barry looked back often at the bobbing craft and sympathized. Those on the Excelsior resembled in color the green bananas the boat once carried.

One day on shipboard before sailing acquainted

the men with the innards of each vessel. They experienced sweating out long lines through the ship's corridors twice a day for the ships' two meals, taken standing up elbow to elbow. They showered for the last time in two weeks with fresh hot water. On 6 February the boats steamed out of the harbor. No bells, no beauties, no bands. The decks were cleared. Deck and dock hands swung off hawsers, tugs pulled, puffed and pushed, troops were allowed on deck, and the rear decks were jammed to watch the Boston and then the New England shore line fade from sight.

... sweating out long lines

... chow twice daily





. . . the 20th felt fond of the Navy

. . . shooting the sun

There were plenty of throat lumps as land faded into the cloud line. This was the complete break from "homeland." Although everyone had previously known where they were going and what they were going to do, the backing and filling of previous months had not permitted the idea to sink in completely. Now it was "Next Stop, ETO." Le Havre was the favorite on odds.

Gradually, even the seagulls dropped away from the small convoy, freighters with the division's equipment and vehicles having joined the three passenger ships. The next morning other ships started picking up, coming out of New York. The division had reached the "rendezvous area," and by late afternoon eighty or more ships were lined up in even ranks. To the south were ships as far as the horizon. To the north the division was protected by one line of freighters, heavily loaded, rising and falling in the ground swell. The Navy was out front. A baby flattop in the middle. 20th soldiers felt very fond of the Navy then. To the men it was good also to see tanks on the deck-load of the freighters. They knew then they had their armament, like a year 1865 cowboy—who felt comfortable only when he knew where his six-shooter was. The 16th Armored also was in the convoy.



. . . the decks were crowded



... musicians were popular aboard



... lounging under waterline



... daily exercise on deck



... boat drill—no joke



... PX rations for all



... Sunday deck services

Then started the long days of being an island in the ocean. Boredom was alleviated only by the prevalent atmosphere of anticipation, excitement and a degree of apprehension. Some men had never seen as much water. Some were sick. Many said they weren't, but stayed close to their bunks with queasy stomachs and slight headaches. A few were miserable as only seasick persons, soldiers notwithstanding, can be.

The routine was limited. Chow lines, chow, sleep, a few books from the library, letters, because home suddenly loomed very important, censoring for officers, cards, craps and more cards.

Kitchen police and guard varied the routine, but not much. On deck inadequate attempts to entertain were heavily supported. A one-time circuit rider named Monaghan started to make a name for himself. Decks were crowded, frequently wet, and holds were stuffy. Blackout was strict, and collisions of nightwalking soldiers on deck were frequent. Each ship had its own "Shadow" voice which ominously announced each night at dusk, "Black Out all ship, close all ports and baffle doors," and who also summoned a daily detail at the aft of the ships, "The garbage detail will now—etc." The mimic on each ship soon learned to imitate him. It was always good for a laugh.

The convoy saw stormy weather and calm, but generally it was a good winter crossing. Men watched vivid sunsets at sea, saw how clear stars can be in a black night, watched the phosphoresced stars in the water form and swirl away, saw the sea reflect a deeper blue than the sky.

Then the first sound of war, as the convoy neared the French coast, coming up from the Azores toward the channel. Depth bombs were dropped on underwater sounds. Deck drills took new meaning. Sometimes these bombs, dropped by screening destroyers, would shudder the ships as if they were popcorn on a grate. Men quartered below the waterline, shrugged their shoulders and resignedly said, "If it is, it is. Your deal Joe." They were learning quickly the fatalism of soldiers.

Once a boat dropped out of convoy with engine trouble. Soldiers watched her falter back, and felt bad. This ship was easy sub prey, alone, unprotected. Her engineers knew this too, and feverish work put her under way again, and she rejoined. The men felt better. The ships had become like friends.

Then evening on the 13th day, and eyes strained for the south coast of Normandy. Germans were still holed up at St. Nazaire. The coast didn't quite materialize, but later that evening, sharp eyes spied lights of shore. It was Le Havre. The ships hove to for the night in the outer harbor to berth the next day, February 19.

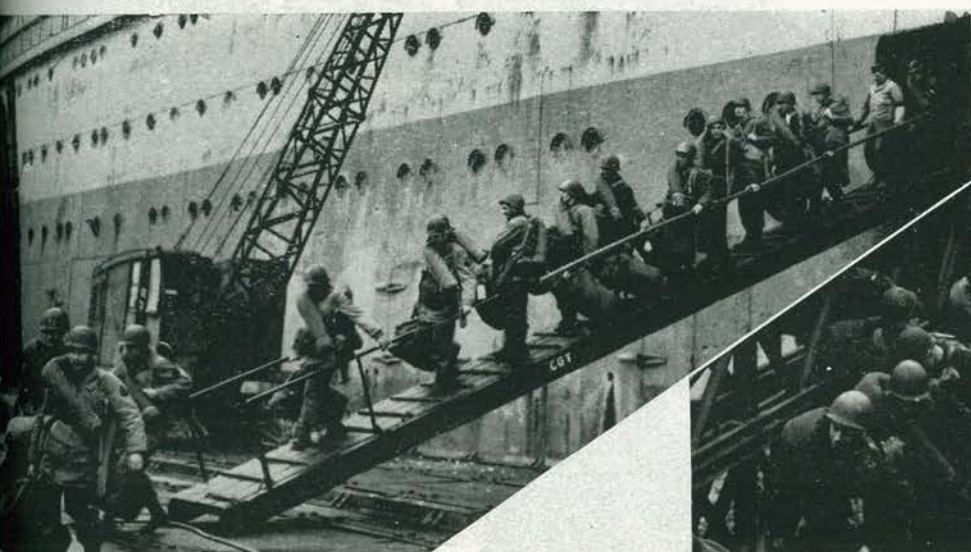
... rations for landing day



Le Havre Debarkation . . .



. . . it was cold and bleak . . . devastation met our eyes



. . . down the plank



. . . walking from the dock



. . . and piling into waiting trucks

. . . then a look at France



*. . . while equipment
was unloaded*

. . . we arrive

*and are billeted
in quaint French
villages→*



. . . unload our T. A. T.

. . . and meet French Mademoiselle



France and the E. T. O.

Decks swarmed with soldiers the next morning, a typical French winter day, overcast with heavy low clouds, damp and chill. Stocky, shabby, but colorful French fishing boats bobbed at anchor near the division's ships, sometimes fishing out refuse thrown overboard from the liners. The men knew the French must be hungry then. Eyes turned to the coast. A long peninsula stretched back toward the sea on the south. High cliffs reared imposingly on the north shore. It was easy to see why no initial D-Day assaults were aimed at Le Havre. The boats upped anchor and drew in. Binoculars were in agitated demand. On the high cliffs, remnants of pillboxes, German coastal defenses could be made out, also an encampment. The city looked far away and like any other city. Slowly the boats, one by one, moved into the Seine River harbor. Navy and Army boats buzzed around, tugs came out and started their nudging.

Then 20th soldiers saw and were aghast at the terrible devastation, the total destruction of modern war, World War II style. They saw from their boat decks solid stone and masonry that now was only dust and rubble, damp and heavy in ruin, ugly lumps that had been homes, buildings, businesses. They saw steel girders upturn and twisted, grotesque, as if picked up, wrenched and thrown down by some monstrous, malicious hand.

It was awe-inspiring. From buddy to buddy this reaction was whispered, "Gosh, Joe, no pictures ever prepared me for this." It was a city flattened, or nearly so, as the 20th Armored division men saw it. There were houses standing, but most had slashes, scars on them. Some were just shells with no floors, no roofs, no windows. Broken windows were black holes in these war dirty buildings. One stretch near the water front was leveled. Only foundations were left.

A harbor bus station was still up. Here and there a shabby hotel could be seen, remnants of more peaceful days. The men read French advertisements on other buildings, and tried to remember their high school French, usually unsuccessfully. As the boats drew closer, clusters of French civilians could be seen numbly going about the task of clearing rubble from the harbor areas. The harbor had first priority so supplies and troops could come in. Here was rear area misery, but there was still a war ahead.

Three ragged Frenchmen were noted rowing up and down the broken wharves. They didn't look up at the milling troops, or smile. They were hunting driftwood to warm cold hearths. Their sullenness seemed to spell despair. Soldiers realized France had been hit hard by invasion, occupation, and counter-invasion.



*... destruction, pill boxes,
homeless persons awaited
us at Le Havre—our
first taste of war waste*

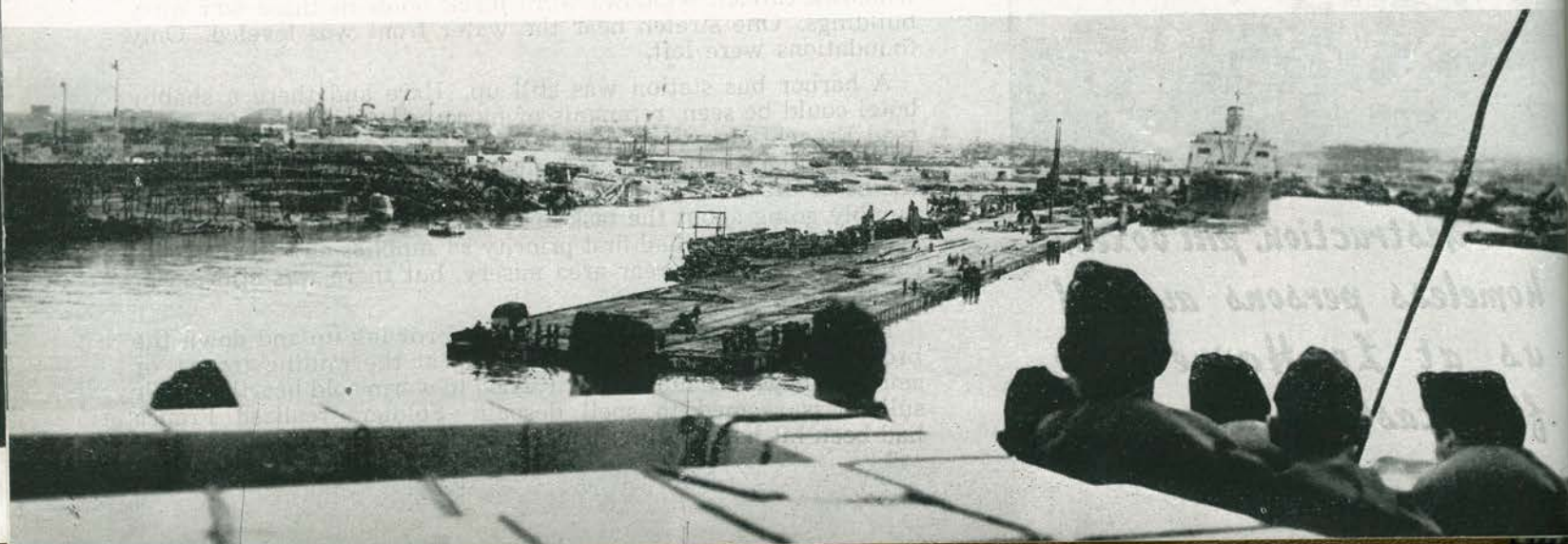
The ships docked, one at an engineer-made wharf, merely metal floats slung between piling. They looked over at another ship nearby and saw nurses on deck, and they cursed the passengers on that boat as "lucky dogs."

Transportation Corps representatives swarmed on each ship, and key division officers left. The heavy mails, accumulation of two weeks writing, were taken to an APO. Advance party representatives, looking worn, came up and were hailed. Questions, thousands of them, were asked and answered. Men learned right then about wire cutters on the fronts of peeps, talked to some who had been through or just escaped from the bulge, Germany's final attempt

to wrest at least a stalemate from defeat. Disappointment showed on many faces after they learned the question about French girls. They did not know, but were to learn, provincial France has always been extremely moral and very Catholic.

The excitement died down for all but supply personnel as everybody settled down to waiting to unload. The Brazil started to unload first. In the penetrating drizzle, men of CC "A" loaded duffie on their backs again, staggered down the gangplank and in loosely formed lines started the trek to huge 10-ton semi-trailers for their long ride to the Combat Staging Area, first phase in ETO.

*... Armoraiders
view knocked out
German harbor
defenses ... there
had been a fight and
sunken ships marred
our troopships
entry into the Port*



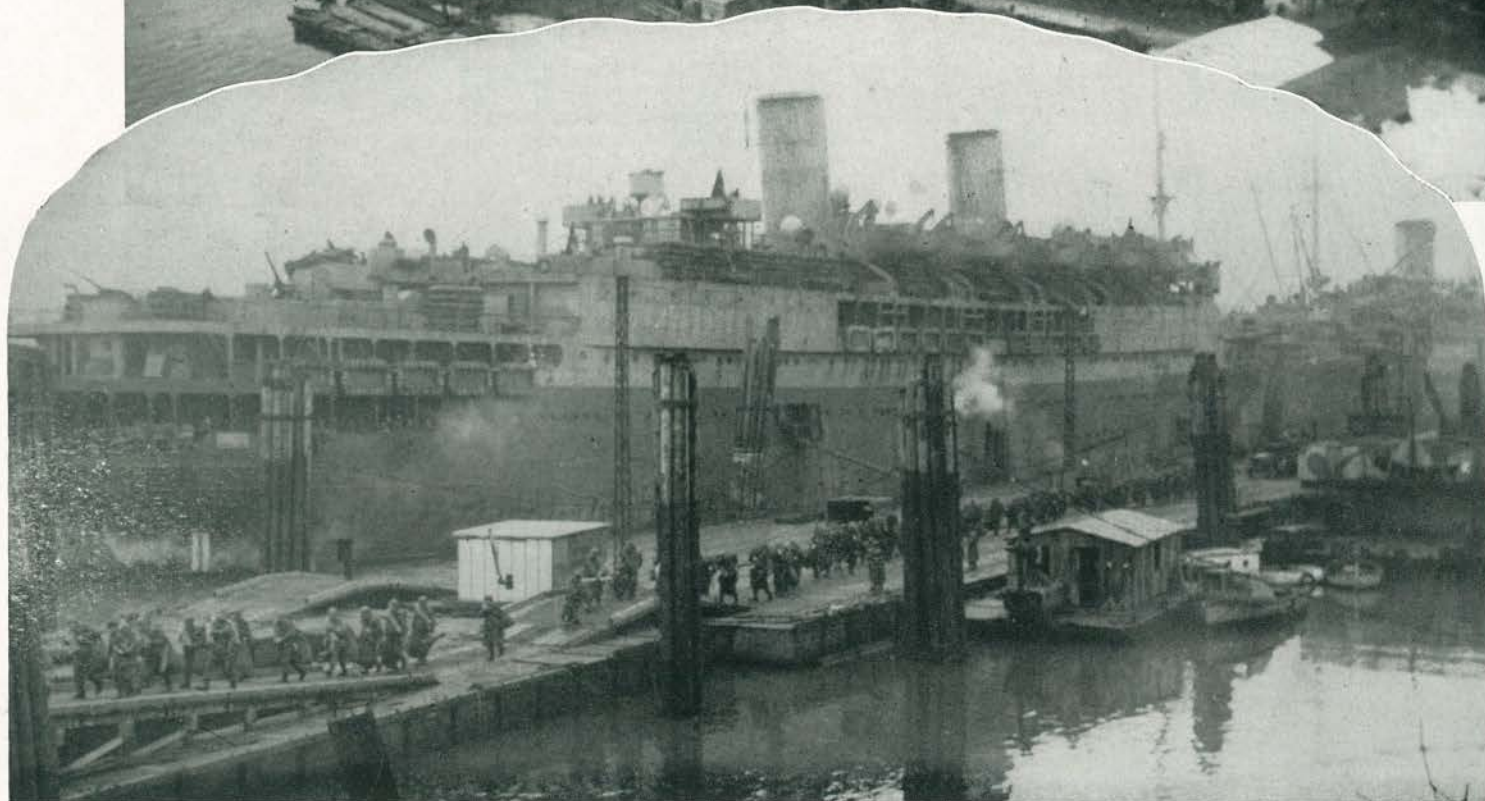


*... down the plank
baggage and bedrolls*



... then whisked off to assembly areas

. . . Pulse of Supply



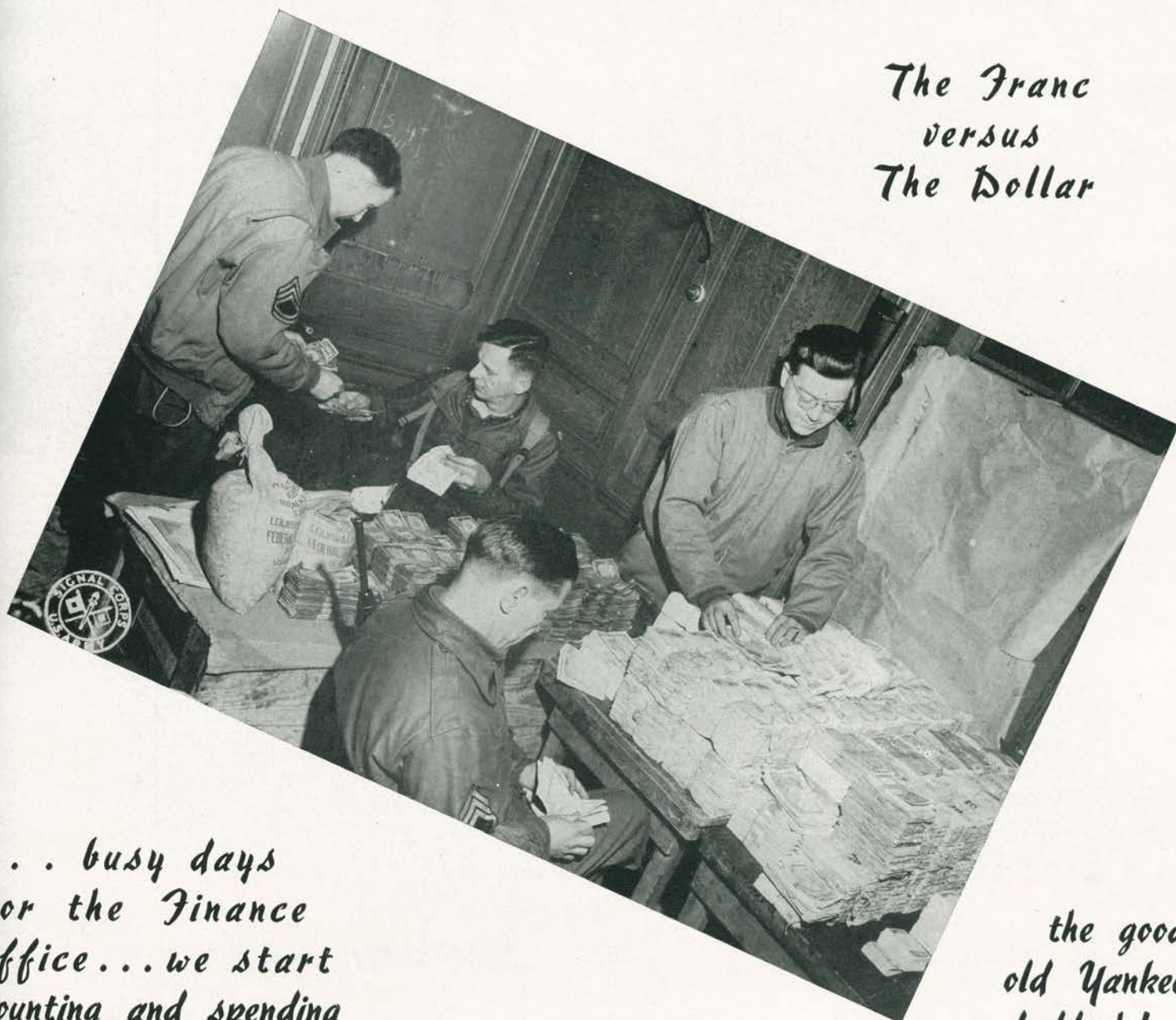
Other troops waited on the ships and watched. It was then they noted the intricate pattern of fortifications with which the Germans had planned to protect this vital French port, but which finally was taken from the landside. Massive still formidable grey pillboxes—many still intact, pushed out of the rubble. Across the harbor, beach fortifications and landing boat obstacles could be seen, still there. Close examination of one building near the waterfront disclosed it to be a cleverly camouflaged pillbox that from the sea side looked like an innocuous shop building and cafe. The men marveled at the job D-Day soldiers must have done, if they had faced half the prepared fortifications that were visible in Le Havre harbor.

Attention later was diverted to the unloading of TAT boxes, an operation which several times made

men's hair stand on end in futile anger. Port troops, until strongly told, did not seem to think of the care, arduous labor and hours that had been devoted to packing each box or the importance of its contents. Down in the hold the net went; loaded up it came, over the side the crane arm swung, and then down came the boxes with a crash on the steel wharf floor. This situation improved, but not until some of the officers groaned audibly as they saw their footlockers bounced on the dock and they thought of the "hair tonic, VO" carefully packed on the inside for later cold nights.

For 24 more hours the huge trucks continued to convoy 20th Armored Division troops to the staging area near Buchy, France, some 20 miles north of Rouen. They rolled all through the night and well into the next day.

The Franc versus The Dollar



*... busy days
for the Finance
office... we start
counting and spending
francs. Everyone missed...*

*the good
old Yankee
dollah!*

Each man, as he was pushed by the weight of his luggage down the gangplank, was thinking some version of the same thought: "Overseas, at last. A strange people, a strange tongue, a strange land. Even if — well, I will be seeing something I probably would never have experienced outside the Army."

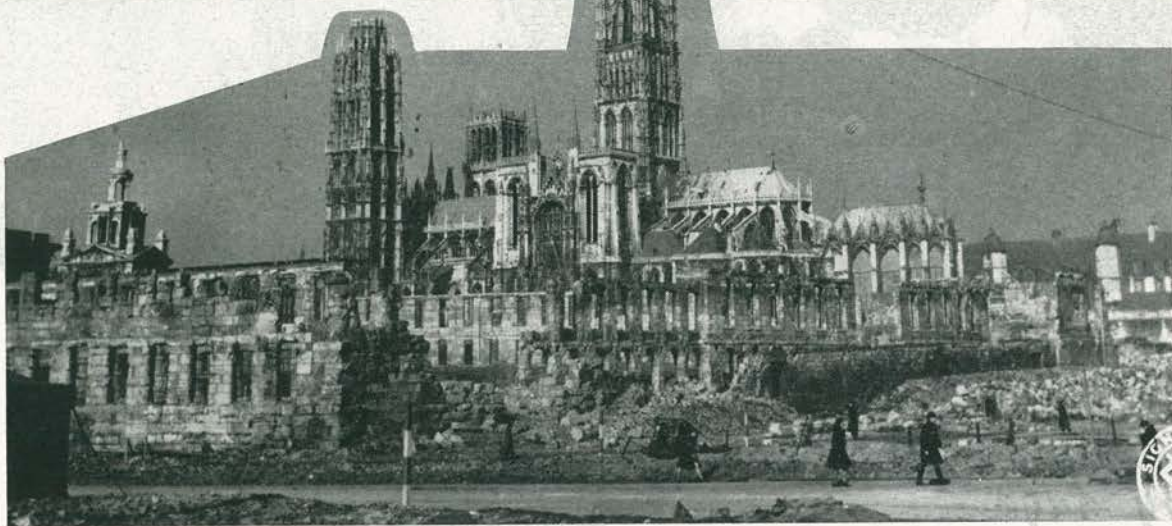
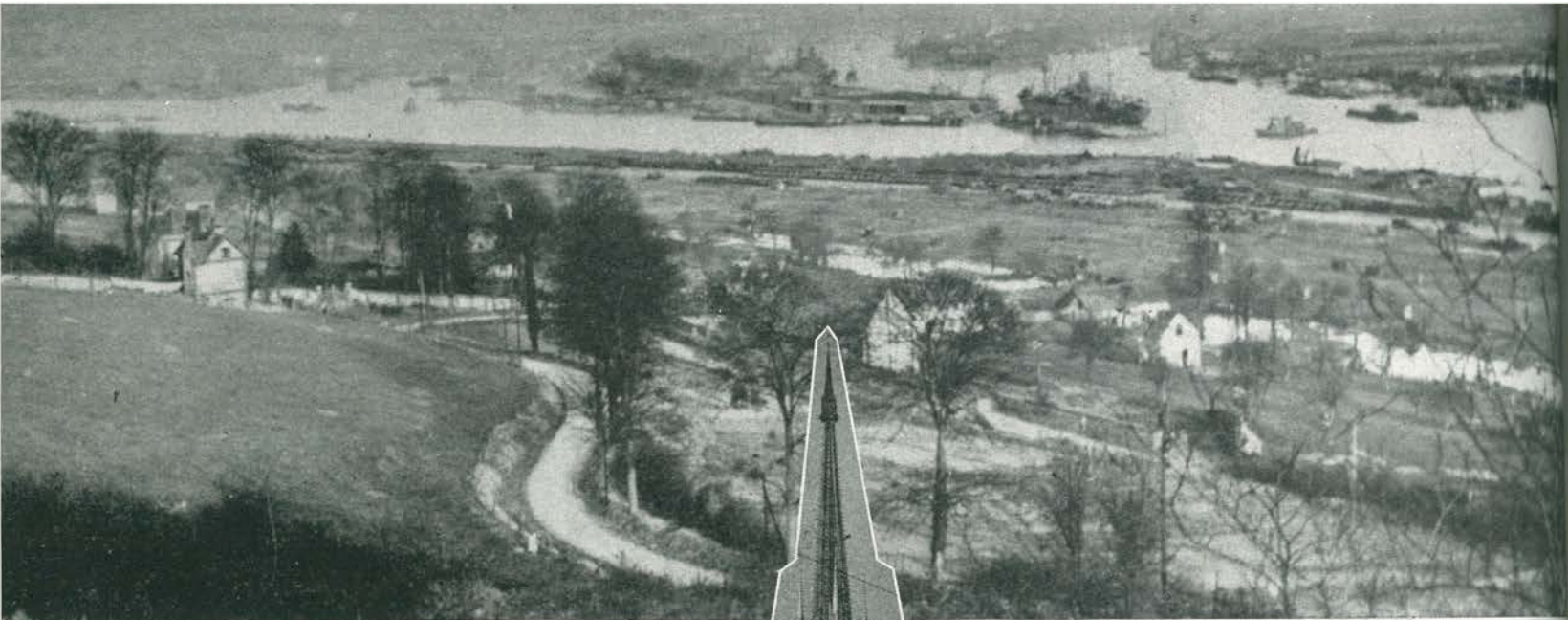
The soldiers were all eyes. The large two-wheel carts, like those pictured in history books, taking prisoners to the guillotine during the French revolution, excited comment as they trundled up and down the rubble-cleared wharves. Then orders to mount. Fifty men and luggage squeezed into each truck; the trucks rolled out.

Some travelled at night, shivered in the fog-heavy cold air, and peered into the night to see this new country. Most travelled by day. The long trip up the peninsula was like a tourist's ride. They saw the high, steep-roofed French farm houses with their heavy black wooden beams, the manure piles, the

tightly knit hedge rows that had been German fortresses, won not too long past at great cost.

They passed little towns with their shops flush to narrow sidewalks that bordered equally narrow, cobblestoned roads.

The men learned "Boulangerie" meant bakery, and the small, inadequate "Language Guides to France" started to get vigorous thumping. With newly-acquired expressions and the traditional wolf whistle, they greeted girls on the streets, leaning out windows or in the farm yards. Brooklyn, Georgian, Colorado accents tried "Comment allez-vous" and "Voulez-vous..." while the trucks lumbered. The French seemed to take this ribbing good naturedly and it was always good for a laugh. Between towns the trucks went out into the farmlands, where, even in the bleakness of winter, the rolling hills, bare tree clusters and neatly patterned fields vaguely resembled Ohio, Pennsylvania or Connecticut terrain. The draft horses looked heavy and strong.



Rouen . . . our supply base ... this Cathedral withstood war's ruin

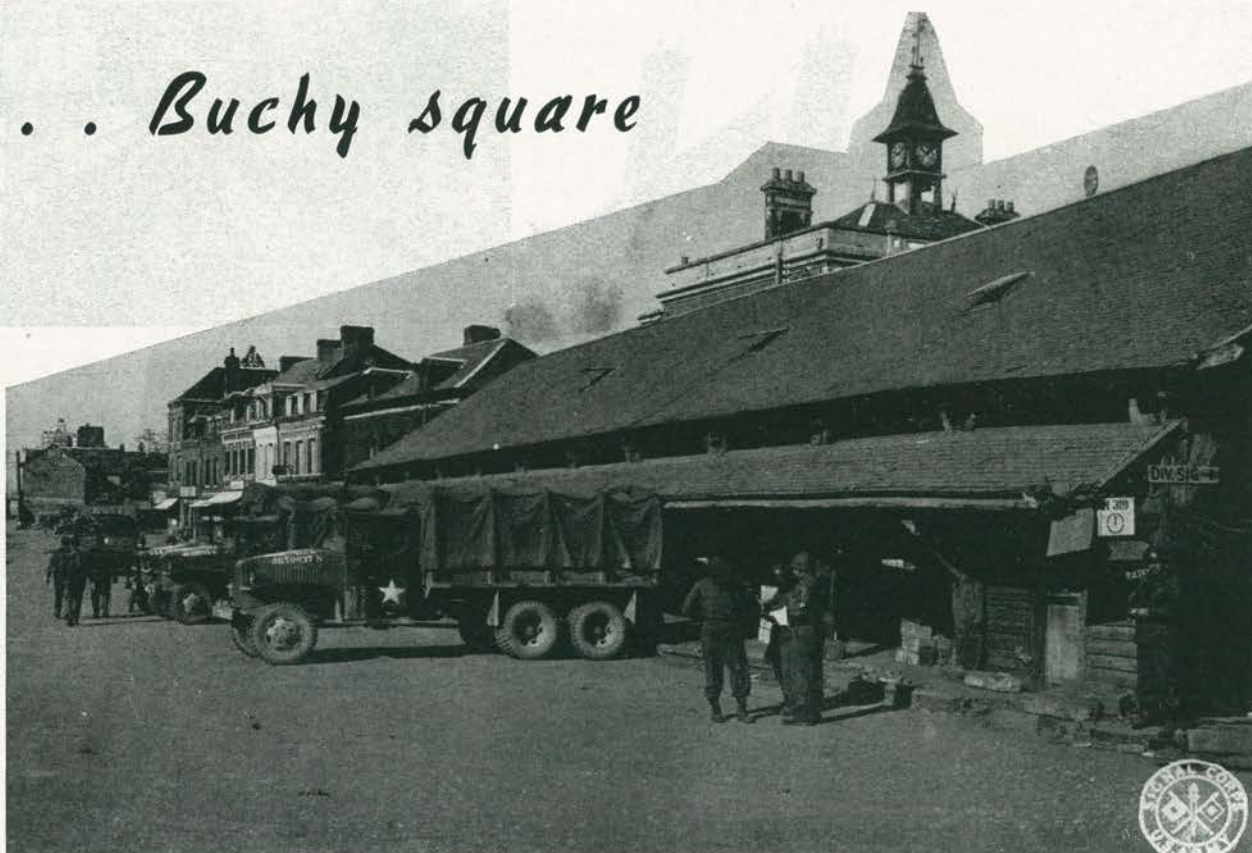
The route took the men up through Rouen, scene of Joan d'Arc's tragic execution at the stake. In Rouen there was not the severe bomb damage of Le Havre, and the antiquity of European cities with the musty three story brick buildings and ornate facades was more readily apparent. White helmeted gendarmes standing side by side with American Army MPs directed the trucks through the city, up the long, winding hill out of the river valley up to the Neuf Chatel highway, the last lap to staging. It was the same country the dad's of many of the 20th men had travelled 25 years ago.

About 10 miles out, in the middle of nowhere, these trucks stopped, troops dismounted, ate "K" rations and waited for the next shuttle to their respective area. The 20th Armored Division was spreading out over this section of Seine Inferieur province like

water from a spilled glass. Focal points of the division were Buchy, Rear Echelon Headquarters, and La Vielle Rue, Division Headquarters.

CC "A" landed in billets in villages neighboring Martainville, where General Daly established his headquarters in the historic castle. Although a little smaller than history book photos indicated, this great, dank castle was everything a castle in France should have had with two round, spire-tipped towers; remnants of an ancient moat; a deep, dark cellar for wine and dungeons; a small supporting farm nearby; and, most significantly, a history. The castle had been built in 1427 by the Count of Martainville as his country home, and it was there that Charles VII stayed when he came down from Paris to see Joan d'Arc burned at the stake because he feared her power and popularity.

. . . Bucky square



Meanwhile, the freighters that had been in convoy had proceeded up the Seine River to Rouen, and unloading of 6422 equipment was already under way.

While some trucks brought soldiers, others were plying the road with TE boxes, gas and water cans. Bucky square was already starting to mill with scores of vehicles, hundreds of men, and boxes of equipment while the French population continued unconcernedly to carry on their normal life.

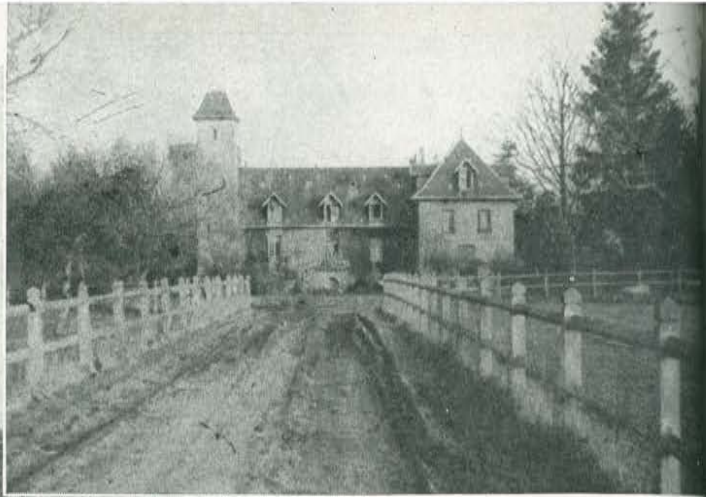
Everywhere soldiers were moving into billets, looking around, talking. It was as if a bit of America had been moved into the area. American slang mixed with the incredibly fast, soft French voices of the natives. They watched the quick one-two hand-claps of the French, noted the ragged wooden shoes of the farmers, the insufficient clothing on the children, and the chill-reddened legs and faces of the people.

Soldiers tugged impatiently to get into the nearby cafes, while the officers insisted on the ever-present clean-up. Billets were usually stable houses, attics, or former dormitories, and they needed strong applications of brooms and scrub brushes. The men kicked, the soldier's prerogative, and reminded each other bitterly, "We policed Camp Campbell, and now we're going to clean up France." They kicked, but they stayed healthy. The Army had learned much about sanitation between the two world wars.

Thinkers discovered that the Army had reason for being the Army. The old routine of guard duty, KP, details, training, reports and formations went into effect on the second day, and the 20th Armored settled down rapidly to its job, preparation for combat.

Although the front was a long way off, helmets were worn, and arms carried. This brought complaints, but the men learned not to lose their weapons while it was still safe. Those February days and nights were bitterly, penetratingly cold, but guards and details were not permitted open fires at night. After lessons of the Bulge, the Army was not chancing revelation of even reserve troops in rear areas.





*... French
chateaux
served
as billets*



Readying—Arms and Equipment . . .



*. . . working
with steam
cranes*



*. . . strong
backs and
bare hands*



*. . . and
even
wrecker
crews*

For March into Battle . . .



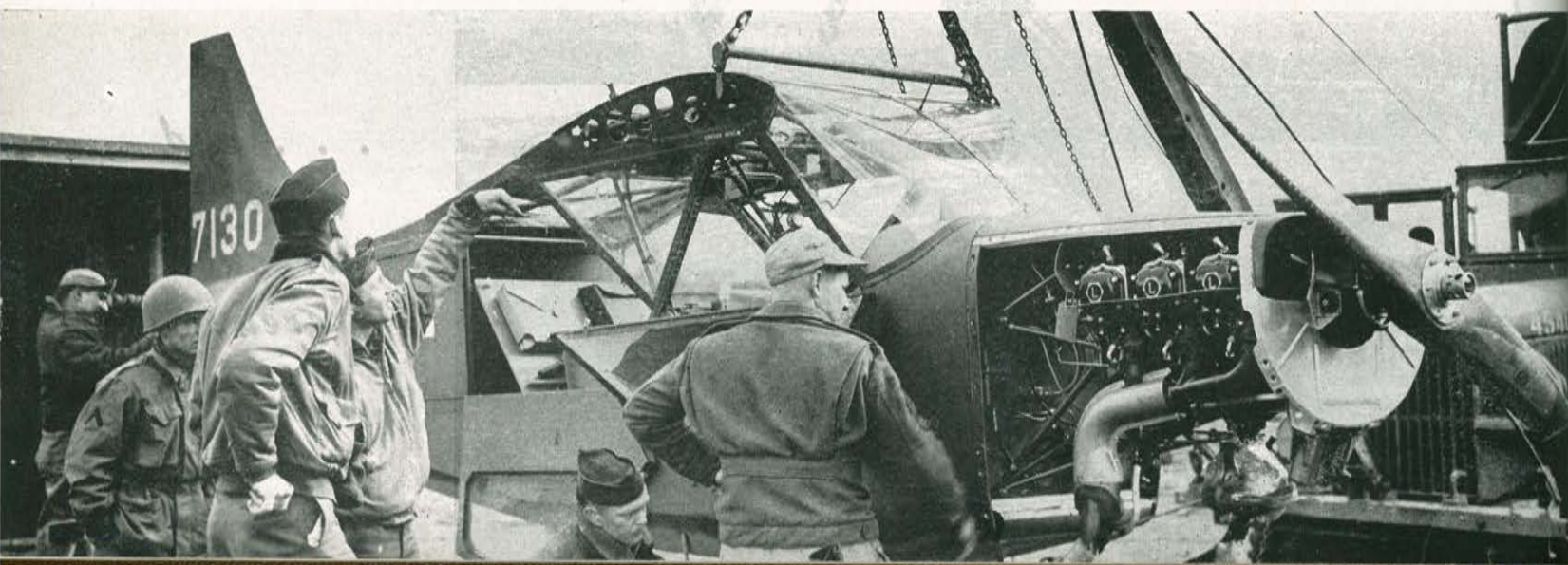
. . . every part is checked



. . . no rubber shortage

. . . levers for a prime mover

. . . wheels for a grasshopper



For three more weeks the division's equipment poured into Buchy square, day and night, four ship loads. Heavy engine boxes and slim bundles of tent poles and every conceivable size in between. They came in large semi-trailers and were unloaded by Ordnance wreckers and unit details. The details sweated through the day and froze by night, sleeping between truck loads like embryo caterpillars in their newly-issued sleeping bags on market benches

And in the middle of this the Band dropped its ration boxes and crates of vegetables, picked up their instruments to give the 20th's first formal concert in honor of the French. Hundreds of both soldiers and French civilians attended and there were salutes for the Marseilles and the Star Spangled Banner.



Units used every kind of vehicle they had to get their equipment back to the areas so work could start. Peeps would haul at least one box, trucks worked overtime carrying rations, water, gas, wood and equipment. Halftracks became carriers.

Only three people, natives said, had attended a similar German concert during their occupation, but for the Americans, Buchy turned out in droves.

Later this concert made the rounds of all the units, sometime for the soldiers only, more frequently a combined concert while Red Cross girls brought friendly American voices, donuts and coffee to the men.

Mondays were market days in France, and the town squares were filled with concessions selling everything from watered perfumes to second-hand clothes at auction. The French bought their hard-to-get necessities and a few luxuries. Soldiers purchased souvenirs, and the cafes were always full of soldiers struggling to speak French, to flirt with the waitresses, and the French farmers were struggling to understand mispronounced, halting French.

Other phases of entertainment were Saturday night amateur Variety Shows, staged by French talent. GIs always crowded the hall, bought Free France buttons and listened somewhat amused to French jokes they couldn't understand and the strange, rapid-beat dissonance of local French bands.

Special Service made the rounds with movies. The film inevitably broke at every climax, but it was better than nothing.

During the day the Division continued to put it-

self together. Convoys went to Le Havre, Rouen and Cherbourg to drive back the Division's full quota of vehicles and tanks. It felt good to see 6422-H, J and B tanks roar through the streets and to watch the expressions of the French.

Boxes were unpacked, guns cleaned, equipment stowed and vehicles reconditioned as received. Tankers got lame backs breaking tracks, removing connectors to put on duckbills and the argument still rages as to whether they were worth the trouble. The Infantry started squad training with the tanks. It was for the real thing.

A couple hundred men got up near combat on an emergency supply convoy for front line units, and experienced "Buzz-bomb Alley" in Leige, Belgium. A few lucky ones got to Paris and returned with exciting, exotic stories that made France seem more like the stories of World War I vets. The rest of the Division sweat out cigarettes and PX supplies.

... boxes were unpacked



... and guns cleaned

Slowly, irresistibly order came out of confusion and units started to practice load their vehicles. Loading plans were devised, but they were never exactly followed. The American Army always seem

to travel somewhat after the fashion of gypsies or the pioneers of covered wagon days.

Men had more time to look around, drink weak cider and bad wine, experiment with the explosive results of Calvados, forbidden but found, and feel the warming glow of Cognac brandy. The more fortunate linguists who had made friends with individual families were feted with meals and choice wines, hidden for years from the Germans.



*... practice
loading for real
thing that soon
followed*



... trying out weapons



Twentieth soldiers soon learned that candy bars are best not eaten but bartered for long loaves of bread and eggs for late night snacks after poker games and they joked about the way young farm girls would herd cattle with their daily bread ration, how geese, hens or ducks would be brought squawking to market either tied and held upside-down by the feet or in canvas bags strapped to the rear of a bicycle. They never were able to comprehend why farmers pulled their two wheel carts with two horses in line? One doing all the work apparently while the first just walked. They were surprised as winter gave way to spring and plowing to see a cow and horse teamed together in front of a plow.

Spring came well to Seine Inferieur after four weeks of February and early March with their constant overcast and wet penetrating wind. The last days of March brought early flowers out, the grass greened, a warm sun in blue skies thawed out the men who hadn't really been comfortable since landing. Soldiers started shedding two or three of their five layers of clothes.

Despite their constant chant of "cigarette pour papa, bonbon or chocalat pour mama, chewngum pour me," the youngsters made fast friends with the soldiers, and many a French boy now knows what a "one-two" or a "left hook" means as well as a rudimentary knowledge of the intricacies of America's national sport.

Topsiders and a few key noncoms made a trip to the French coast near Dieppe to see German channel defenses and came back sobered after watching automatically controlled flame throwers operated and saw the myriad of mines that are still taking their toll today of courageous French farmers. Spit and polish was revived for visiting brass when two French generals visited headquarters at La Vielle Rue, reviewed a small segment of troops and viewed one each of the vehicles in an American Armored Division.

. . . order out of confusion



Supply—an Armored Division's . . .



*. . . Drums of oil
and miles of
Jerry cans*



Life's Blood . . .

*. . . an Army moves on
its stomach*



*. . . food is
ammunition*

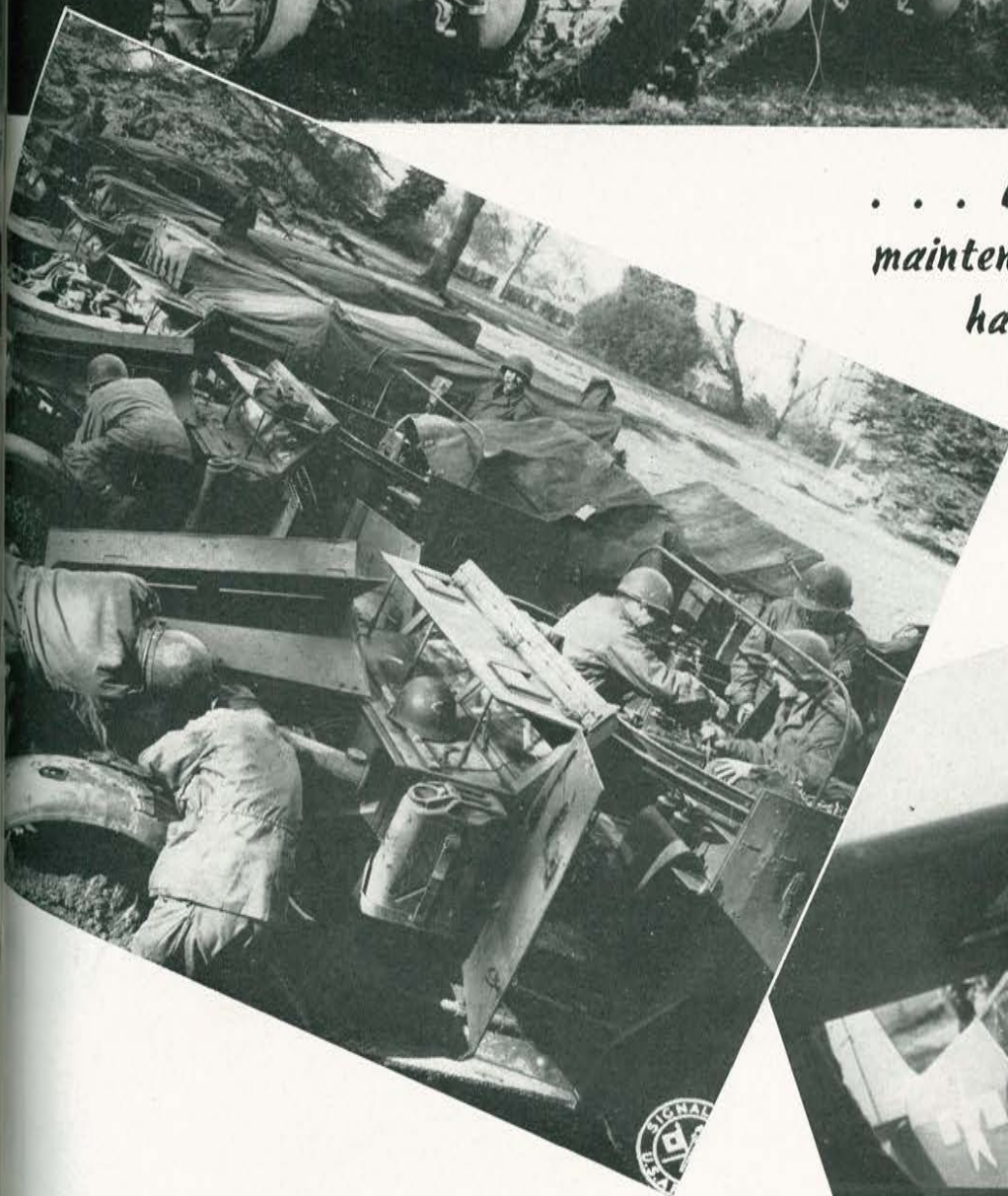


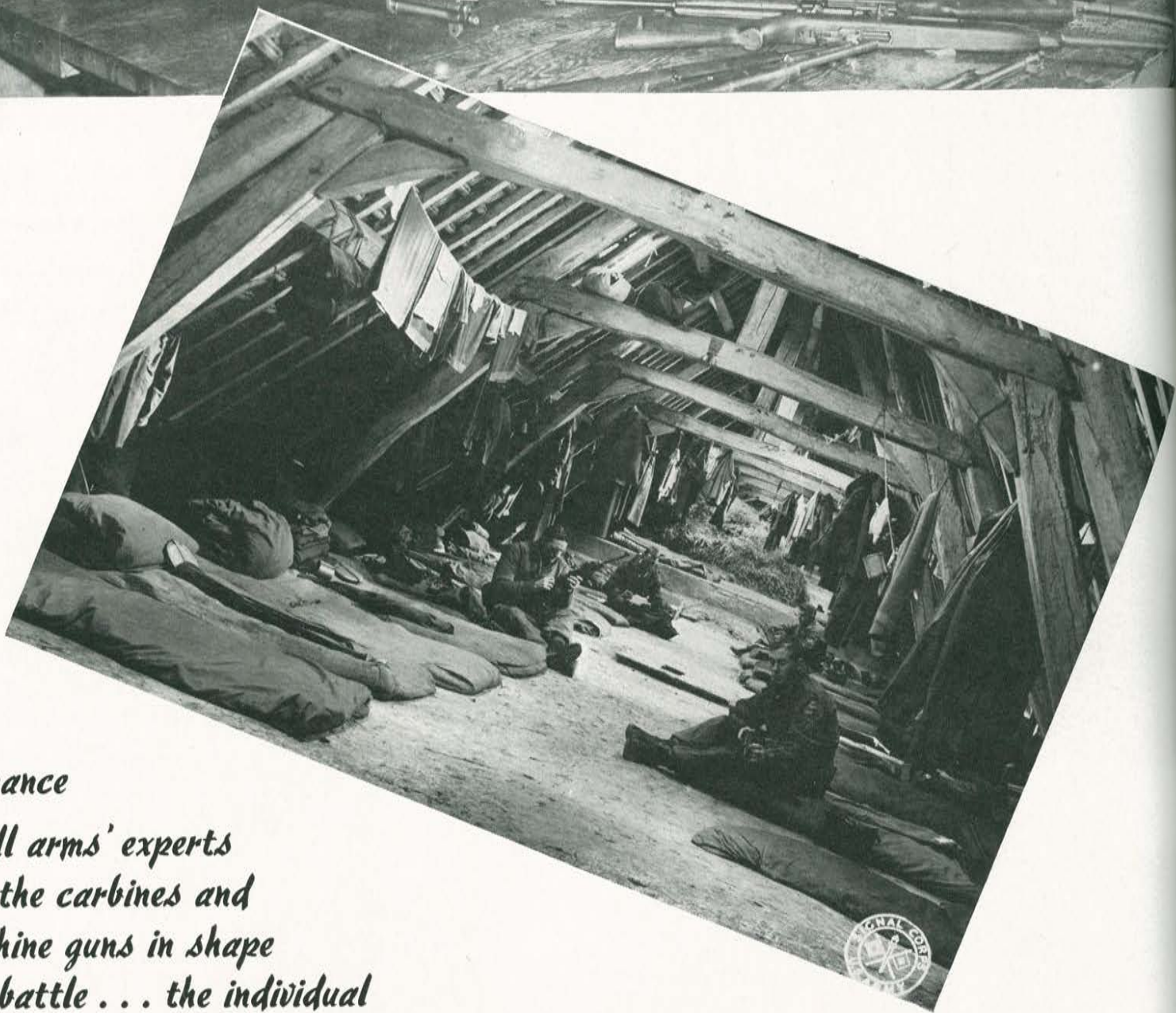
. . . ration dump

Maintenance Kept 'em Rolling . . .



*. . . Repair service, echelon
maintenance—be it tanks, guns,
half-tracks, recon. planes—
kept the Armored team
rolling—*





ordnance

*small arms' experts
put the carbines and
machine guns in shape
for battle . . . the individual
soldier kept his gun ready for use*



. . . the Medic's short visit



. . . The Blue Flag



. . . au revoir, Mademoiselle



The Long Haul Starts

Training, the stabilization of a routine, increased familiarity with the locale and its people were just starting to make the men believe that the Seine Inferieur was to be the 20th Armored Division's ETO Camp Campbell. It had been revealed the division was part of the 15th Army and rumor had it that all 15th Army units were to be used solely for occupation. The men grumbled again. If they were going to miss the fight they would rather have done it while spending the week-ends in Nashville.

But then things started to happen.

Ammunition was drawn at Forges les Eaux. The 8th Infantry and the 33rd Cavalry captured a couple of optimistic sets of escaped German POWs. Staff sections started some frantic planning while others, battalion and combat commanders and key non-coms, joined units already in the fight as observers and came back with exciting stories of what the war was about.

Finally Field Order 3 started through the mill, march tables, interval, number of vehicles per unit. S-3s were called to Division Headquarters for verbal orders.

The division was to move up to Germany, 266 miles in three days.

The news electrified everybody.

Tanks and vehicles got a last minute going over, and packing started. The local Don Juans who had been able to make actions speak louder than words kissed their girls goodbye, the MP traffic control squad moved out and a gas detail left to make arrangements for gas points.

. . . the Punch'es Piled



. . . Oh, Lord, give us strength!

The division was to move out in two convoys, the full tracks on March 31, the half-tracks and wheeled vehicles April 1, Easter Sunday, 1945. Once on the move the Division was destined not to settle down for more than a few days at a time until early in May.

When the sun set March 30, the Tankers and Ar-

tillerymen were lined up and ready to go. Each vehicle was loaded down inside and out in defiance of every known loading plan. Duffle bags, musket bags and bed rolls were ingeniously tied on the outside, rations filled the inside of turrets, plus little comforts and souvenirs picked up during the stay in France, that later were to be discarded when the going got tougher.

. . . tires for 1200 miles

. . . cleaner than we found it





. . . massed for movement



. . . load and lock



. . . routes are checked

Well before dawn, tanks from the 27th Tank Battalion roared through Buchy for the IP at the junction of routes N 28 and N 29 southwest of Neuf Chatel, where the liaison planes used to put in to see the nurses. One tank didn't make the corner when it threw its tracks and took down a brick wall.



A grey light streaked the east when the 20th Tank moved out and a pretty blond bakery counter girl was the lone villager to wave them goodbye. 9th Tankers lined highway N 28 under a cold overcast sky and waited their turn.



. . . first echelon pulled



. . . luck all around



. . . loading their mobile home

As morning neared noon, the Artilleries hit the road. The 414th churned up Buchy again, the 413th left their bomb-scarred area with its V-1 rocket launcher platform and the 412th waved goodbye to their age-worn, overgrown, drafty Chateau, musty memento to mellow moments.

The next day, while French villagers pulled out their only sets of best clothes to attend Easter Sunday Mass and smiled their "au revoirs" and "bon chance," the remaining units also "moved out."



. . . batten the hatches



. . . the old and the new



*. . . bumper to bumper
first night out*



. . . M. P.s watch



. . . liquid comfort



. . . solid comfort

Although the ride was long and tedious, it was a magnificent sight seeing tour through north-western France. Spring, early in Europe, was starting to give full-blooded blossom to its finery. The convoys passed the longer valleys and neater farms of upper France. There were glowing fruit tree orchards which looked nostalgically inviting to weary soldiers. People stood in doorways, leaned out windows and stopped in the street to wave another American division on its way. No identification showed.

The full trucks gassed at Amiens where they could see the spires of that city's famous cathedral. The rest went on to Cambrai, gassed on a turn around on a boulevard, moved out of the city to a long open field, parked bumper to bumper and bivouacked under canvas. Many soldiers found time to slip off to town and have another glass of wine, a mug of weak biere or maybe a cognac. They had traveled nearly 100 miles at 12 to 20 miles per hour, a long grind.

. . . the engineers roll along





. . . Belgium bivouac

The route went on through Bouchain, Valenciennes and Mons, crossed the Belgium frontier and stopped to gas outside Cambria. German PWs poured the gas this time, while frequently Belgium civilians brought beer and wine to the weary, disheveled soldiers who never seemed to stop laughing and joking. The soldiers liked the Belgians although they didn't see much of them—just a toast, a drink, a pat on the head for the children and “mount up” again.

. . . gas-up time



. . . 10-in-1 banquet



Flemish toast to "La Victoire"

Next bivouac, again in the field, double parked on a dirt road near the highway, was at Tirlemont. It rained that night, and many got wet. Some of the officers and well-striped non-coms slept in the vehicles to avoid putting up a pup-tent. As usual, the water purification squad had inconspicuously moved up, set up and were pumping water the next morning. The distance was 201 miles from the first IP.



. . . Rub-a-dub-dub, one man in a tub



. . . Rommel sleeps here

Again the road, next stop Holland, then Germany and non-fraternization, enemy territory.

During the second and third days, the constant running with only the inevitable "breaks" on the hour told on the synthetic rubber of the bogie wheels on tanks and M-7s. Blown bogies became part of the litter on the road shoulders, and crews cursed as they broke tracks, replaced bogies, spliced the tracks and carried on.

On past the tightly packed, steep-roofed villages of Belgium, seemingly cleaner than in France, the 20th Armored Division filed into Holland, the third European country, near Maastricht, and gassed again. Here the people looked more hungry than elsewhere although the houses resembled suburban areas in America.

Only a few more miles remained. The Meuse river, scene of bitter bridgehead fighting only a few weeks before, was crossed. The wreckage of war became more pronounced.



. . . chow call

Deutschland Occupation



... the road in

... the fangs are pulled

... 65 dollar question

Then Germany — near Sittard.

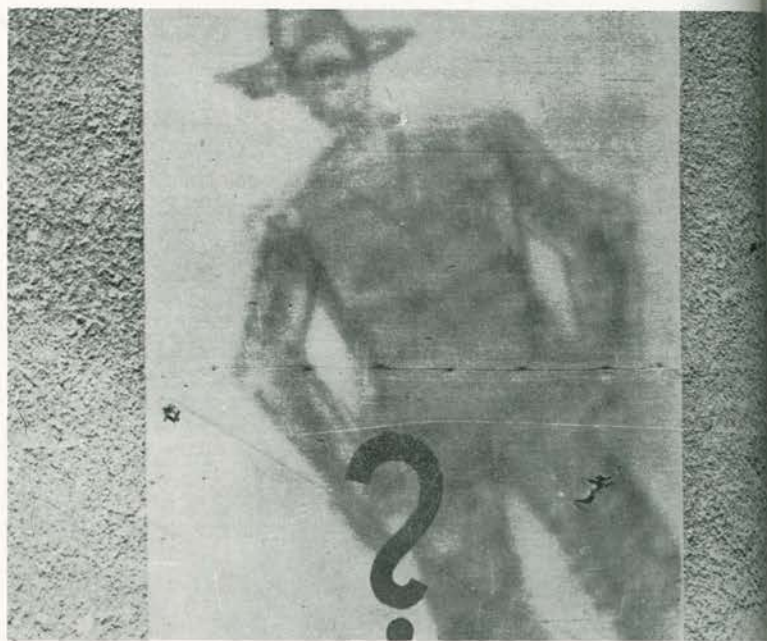
Signs were up already. "You are now entering Germany. Fraternization Prohibited." At the first break inside the border, men dismounted and answered nature's call. They felt it was particularly appropriate on this enemy soil. They didn't dare move over to the road shoulders as usual, however. Mines were everywhere. Clearing them is an SS job, now.

It started to rain again. The clouds hung close and malignly low. The dreariness of the day magnified the desolation and destruction of the scenes to come. The route was pitted with hasty and permanent defenses. Sandbagged bunkers and trenches, anti-aircraft positions, barbed wire, field after field with skull and cross bone warnings of mines, concrete pillboxes and dragon teeth tank obstacles revealed Hitler's intention to hold at the frontier of "Das Reich's sacred soil."

... a fallen Siegfried fort



... psst!





. . . cities of rubble and dust

This was the Germany the 20th Armored Division saw when it first entered that country. It was eerie. The men were glad they had ammunition in their guns.

When the men did see German civilians, they looked sullen, morose, drab and beaten. They walked with the slow steps of men drugged. In the cant of their shoulders they showed a people with a bitter past, a miserable present and a hopeless future. The house that Hitler had built for them and with them had fallen in about their heads. Figuratively, they stood bewildered and benumbed in the sodden rubble of their own manufacture. This was the world's answer, violent and decisive, to the audacity, the outrage of a super-race, slave-world philosophy.

The broken houses, mangled by air, artillery and tank explosives and scarred and pockmarked by small arms fire were mute testimony to how bitter the fight had been. Soldiers looked for German civilians; they wanted to have their first glimpse of the enemy on his own homeland. At first they were hard to find. In the half-rubble, half-house clusters, shattered seemingly beyond recovery, nothing moved. But then a scrawny cat slunk furtively across the scene of desolation, covered with the wet, depressing mantle of heavy grey clouds. In pastures dead horses and cows, legs rigid, bellies swollen, mine casualties, became common sights. Those with weaker stomachs swallowed twice when they first saw them.

This was a rear area, a conquered area, but the fanatical seed of Naziism still persisted actively in some distorted minds. An ordnance three-quarter ton, catching up with its convoy after servicing a tank, had its canvas top ripped off by a wire stretched across the road. The wire was intended for some hapless soldier's neck, not the steel posts of the windshield. Even rear areas at that stage were not entirely healthy.

Troops fanned out to their assigned areas to take over billets. No field bivouacs here, but houses,



at least what was left of the best houses and factory buildings. "Raus mit" got its first gruff workout here.

Combat Command "A" spread its troops over the landkreises of Aachen, Duren and Julich, once the pivotal corner of American attack and Nazi defense. The cities of the same names looked like the hammers of hell had worked them over. Here destruction was unparalleled to the eyes of 20th troops. It seemed as if no houses had been spared. There was nothing pleasant about this area.





. . . no houses had been spared



. . . running behind schedule



. . . the first spoils

Combat Command "B" garrisoned Geilenkirchen and Erkelenz. Combat Command "R" was placed in immediate reserve of the 94th Infantry Division and the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions which were containing the Germans east of the Rhine. Division headquarters CP was located in two massive oak-panelled houses in Herzogenrath, while Rear landed in the battered, leaky offices of a Palenberg coal mine. The mine wasn't producing much; bomb damage and the liberation of "slave labor" had reduced its output to almost nothing.

Hardly before the mission in this area was known, maintenance on road-wracked vehicles started. Security guards were posted. The guards walked post a little apprehensively. It was the first time deliberate death from another man's hand was a constant potential. The men soon overcame this and regained their confidence, but the first few nights after dark found everyone looking back frequently, peering intently down alleys. For the first time guns felt comfortable.

Here also the men had their first lesson in acquisition, lessons they learned well from the start. If a billet did not have enough beds, the next house had some and they always conveniently found their way into the desired place. Souvenir hunters also combed the rubble and cellars and 20th men started their collections of Nazi flags, Wehrmacht and SS helmets, arms and trinkets that later were to give the APO lame backs and short tempers. Demolition men in the 220th Engineers had a heyday in the German minefields. Luckily they had learned their jobs well and no one got blown into the next world.



. . . civilization's waste land

The assignment held promise; responsibility for security and Military Government of the assigned areas, readiness to counterattack in any portion of the corps zone, reconnaissance of the area, protection of captured enemy stores, arms and equipment and responsibility for Displaced Persons Camps.

Some moaned and thought this was occupation. Others waited. Action came soon for five units.

The 33rd Cavalry, per tradition, received a mission early, being moved up on April 3 to relieve elements of the 97th Infantry Division near Horren on the west bank of the Rhine. They became the first 20th Armored Division unit to experience front line action, to know the tenseness of moving up. Although under fire from German artillery across the historic river, they received no casualties and definitely saw one enemy machine gun nest go up from a dead center shot from a mortar platoon. They were themselves relieved late the same day to return to Badenburg.



. . . the Cavalry moves up

*. . . so much rubble it was
monotonous*





. . . our Artillery masses

On April 4, the Division Artillery, supplemented by the Infantry assault gun platoons, also went up for their battle inoculation, while elements of the 220th Engineer Battalion had its men on the river for bridge and crossing reconnaissance.

Taking positions between the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions north of Cologne, the 414th, 413th and 412th immediately went into action re-enforcing artillery fire already working. Although all three

gave and received lethal exchanges of HE, the 412th and 414th drew the two hot spots.

The men quickly learned there the soggy comfort of the foxhole more than compensated for the labor expended in digging when fragmentation made any place above ground a poor insurance risk.



. . . moves up toward the Rhine

. . . with Infantry assault guns



The 414th was kept ducking from counter battery of an elusive railway gun and one night received 44 rounds in the battalion area. Meanwhile the 412th was dueling with less heavy stuff. The battalion lost one-half track from a direct hit, then evened the score by intruding with some well placed high explosive on a "Joy Through Strength" calisthenics class of one German company and by catching another marching column on a road. These missions were reported to headquarters with typical military understatement: "Fire achieved good results and considerable enemy disorganization."

Watch on the Rhine





Such shooting was made possible by aggressive forward observer methods which sent a number of "eyes of the artillery" across the Rhine into enemy territory to direct fire.

Capt. Edwin C. Johnson, Charlie Battery commander, while doing this, became the Division's first captive to enemy troops. He stayed to direct fire on enemy forces counter-attacking a small reconnaissance force that was being driven by superior numbers back to the west side of the Rhine. He was driven from three floors of an OP position and several houses, by tank fire, but directed artillery until captured.

Dog Troop of the 33rd saw another type of action soon after returning from the front. Displaced personnel at a camp near Aachen went on a rampage of looting and revenge on an already badly-battered populace. Dog troopers were assigned to restore

. . . Occupation

*introduced displaced
persons and Moselle*

*. . . a study in
contrasts*



equilibrium, and in 24 hours had rounded up 500 former victims of Hitler's slave labor corps. Even Europe's liberated had to learn to let civilized law and order take its course. But from these uprooted, homeless people, 20th soldiers learned a healthy anger toward German ruthlessness.

But not all moments here were depressing. With that ability so well developed in America, beer, wines, even cognac, were ferreted out of cellars and warehouses. Occasionally a lucky squad would salvage a piano, and from the shattered, blacked-out billets parties would sing out and fade into large heads the next morning. It was an all-man society then and desires were unadorned; a drink, a leering joke or two, a long bull session covering firearms to figures, sleep and maybe a letter the next day. Some learned that Halein, Holland, was only up the hill from Herzogenrath, and fraternization was permitted there.

This lasted for a week. Then Field Order 5 informed the Division it was going to move across the Rhine—another leg up. The Division was transferred to First Army control. The threat of occupation was ended.

Nobody was sorry to leave that wasteland of civilization. Again the bedrolls were kneed into tight bundles, files repacked, vehicles stowed and lined up in a welter of dust for march orders. It was April 10, a brilliantly clear day for a change.

The destination was vicinity of Westerburg. This was directly south of the middle of the Ruhr Pocket. The Division on arrival was to be prepared to attack north or east to counter any attempted breakout of the First and Ninth Army vise on the industrial and military prize—the Ruhr.

The columns snaked out, drivers settled down into accustomed positions and automatically picked their interval. Tank and car commanders leaned easily on turrets or ring mounts and the crews settled down amidst the duffle to sweat out another 12 hours on the road.



. . . on our way

*. . . signs
of the times*



*. . . always
maintenance*



*. . . food is
where you
find it*





. . . out of the rubble

Out of the drabness of the industrial region with its high black slag piles and dull red, unimaginative workers' homes, those standing, the route went through Weiden, Eschweiler, Duren, where the streets were cleared of rubble with bull-dozers to Euskirchen. Here the artilleries joined their respective Combat Command convoys, and the scene started to change.

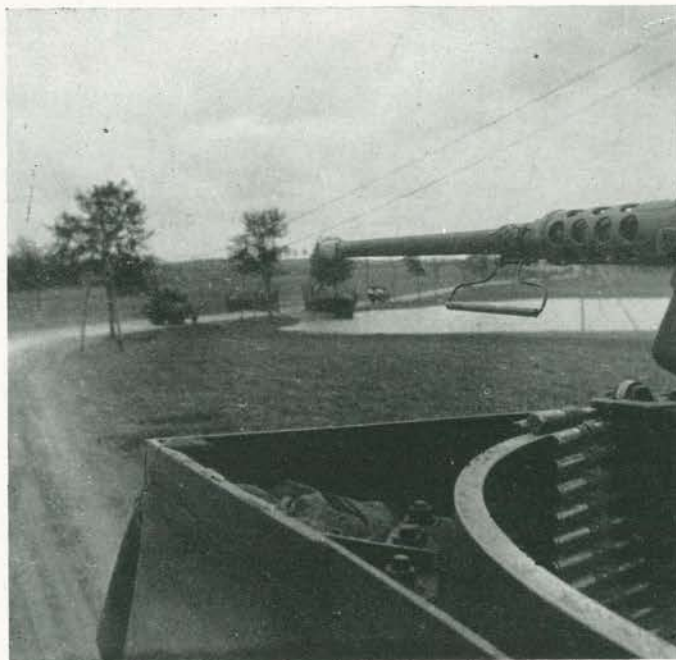
There were the long flat fields and pastures, broken by wood patches. The villages took on more

character, wood and white stucco and heavy cross beams. White flags were still flying from many of the houses in village clusters along the way. The people looked up and stared and the men stared back. Occasionally a reasonably attractive girl might evoke a low whistle. The roads were jammed with all kinds of transport. The route was one of the main First Army supply lines, and it staggered the imagination to see how much America had poured of itself in men and material into Europe to fight World War II.

. . . thru villages



. . . and fields



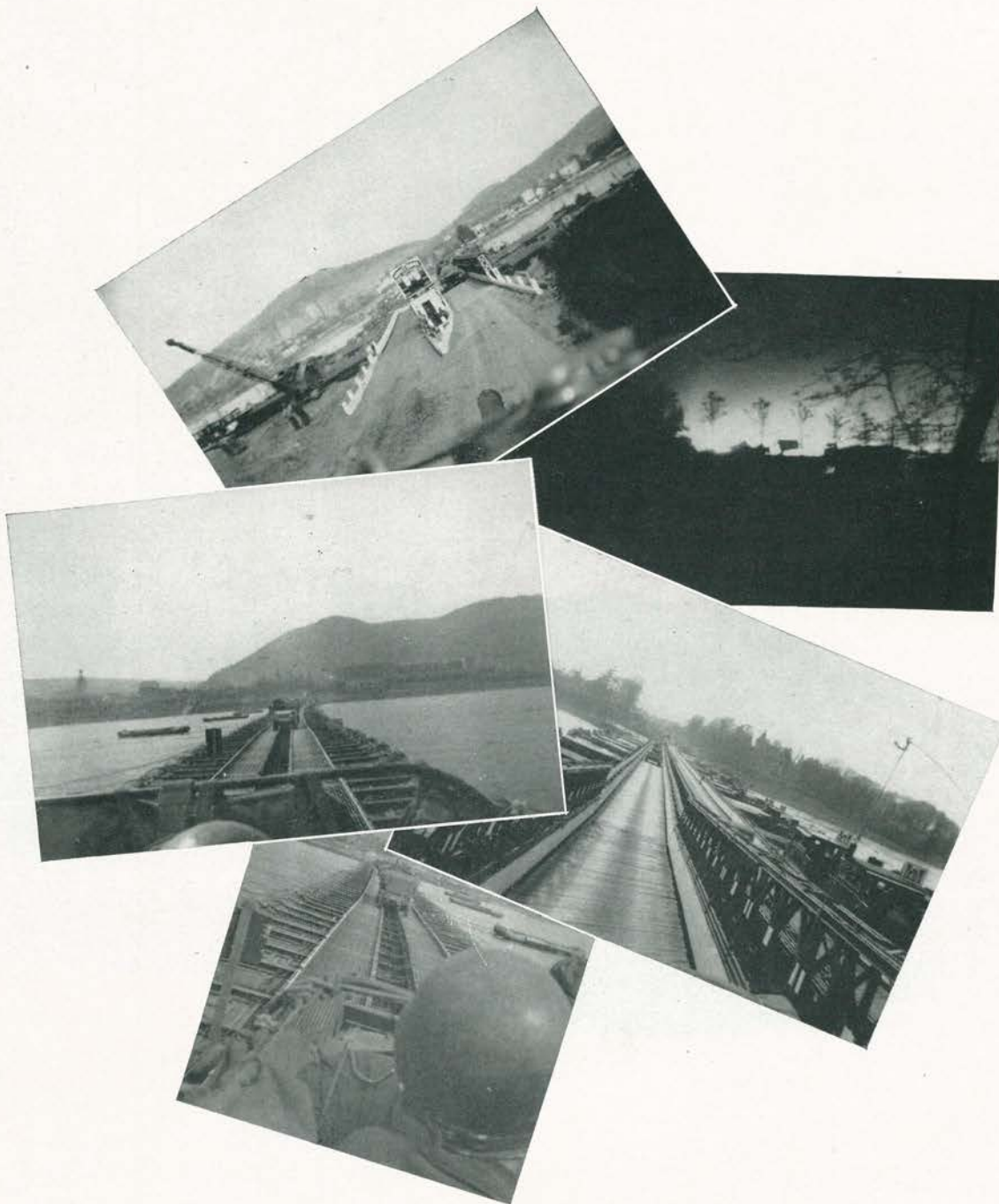
The columns rolled past pathetic little groups of DPs on the long trek home. They were French, Polish, Dutch, Greek, tragic pawns of one country's national egotism. In little groups, they pushed their worldly goods toward home in rough carts or just carried them on their backs. Some carried small flags of their native lands. That pride never died. The soldiers waved to them and received waves and grateful smiles in return. It felt good even to be remotely concerned with returning these humble, courageous people to the dignity of men and women. Many were traveling to homes which they didn't know were there or not and to families they were not sure if alive or dead. But they trudged on, looked up, smiled and kept going. More fortunate or less cowed DPs rode bicycles or rode farm wagons, borrowed, let it be said, from some German farmer.

The hills rolled more near the Rhine and the valleys glowed with apple and cherry blossoms as the route passed through the orchard country. The hot blasts of tank-made carbon monoxide mingled incongruously with the fragrance of the blossoms.



*. . . the long, weary
haul home for
Hitler's slave millions—*





*... We
cross the
Rhine
south of
Bonn—
... a Star
performance!*

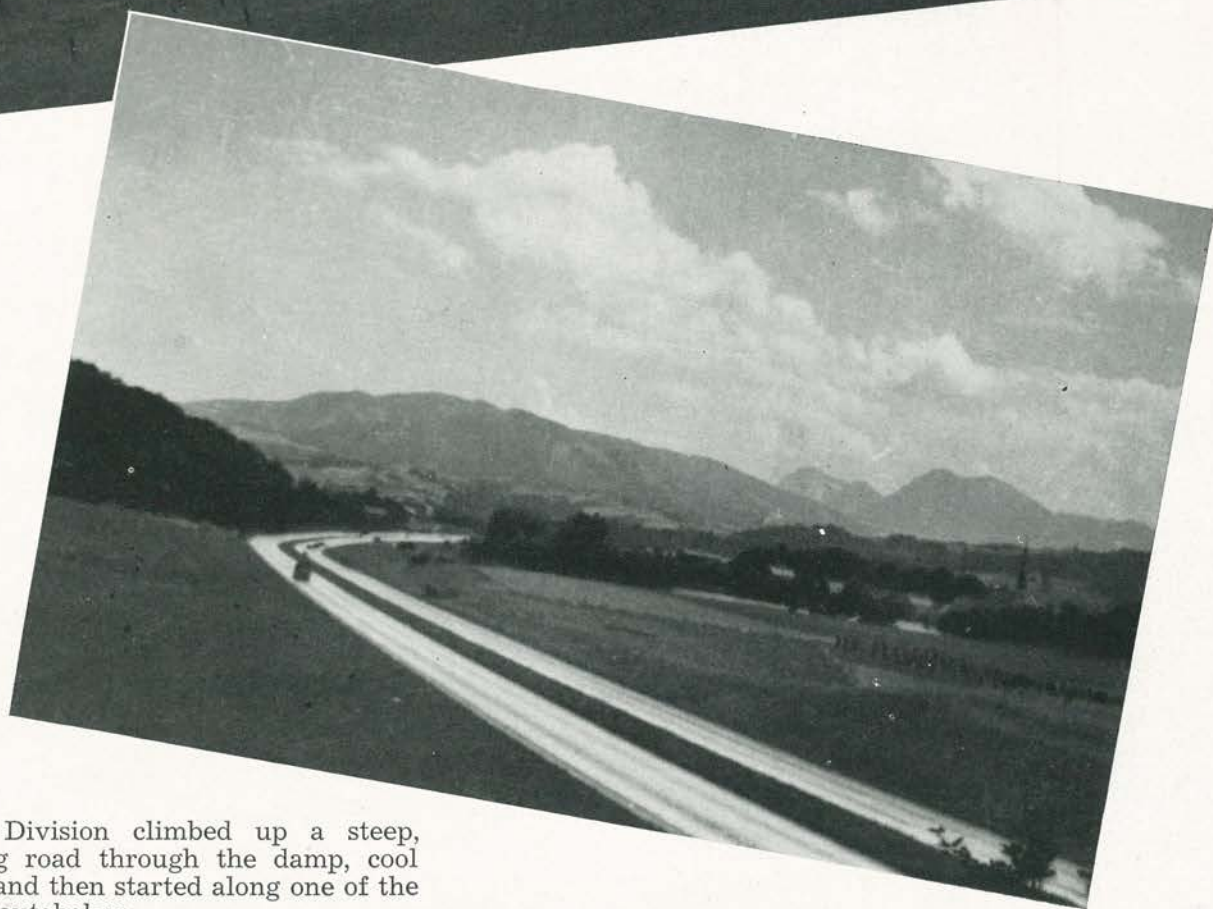
In late afternoon, the Division reached Bonn, famed Rhine University city. The city had been largely converted to a Rest Camp. Some resting armored soldiers recognized the 20th and taunted, "Well, the 20th finally got over here. The war must be about won now." They were right but there was still a lot of mean fighting to be done to prove that point.

South from Bonn, the Division crossed the Rhine at Bad Godesburg over the Gen. Hodges Bridge, a two way pontoon bridge, which the Germans were still trying to blast out with floating demolitions. The southwest corner of the Pocket was only about six miles away.

As the troops crossed, they looked up to the high, steep Rhine hills, pine-covered and black. On their slopes were many-spired castles, once feature attractions for tourists in Germany.

The scenery, the importance of the Rhine as a military barrier, made each man feel that there was real significance in crossing the Rhine.

On the east side of that river was the enemy.



The Division climbed up a steep, winding road through the damp, cool woods and then started along one of the famed autobahns.



. . . thru the Gothic gates

The middle of the autobahn was lined with pile after pile of ammunition. The 20th knew that when its turn came for action there was plenty of stuff for the final Sunday punch.

Darkness came quickly. A brief flurry of excitement passed up and down the columns as the men saw flares go up to the north. Occasionally a dark shadow of a plane would drone overhead. The vehicles were driven by the light of cat's eye lights. None wanted to be strafed. Twice in utter blackness of the unlighted night, tortuous narrow detours were negotiated where bridges had been blown out. Sometimes vehicles coming the other way had their lights on and the men cursed. As traffic increased, lights became more plentiful, forcing Division vehicles to use their driving lights also. But then it didn't matter. The other drivers had been in that area longer than the 20th and they weren't inviting disaster with their lights, so everybody relaxed and concentrated on driving.

. . . and around blown bridges

Finally the road swung off the autobahn, and the Division assembled in a goose egg between Westenburg and Hadamar. Most units bivouaced in the fields that night.

The next morning was clear and crisp. Here was a different section of the country, rich, undulating farmlands, well-patterned, neat. Crop rotation was being practiced. At the top of a hill it was possible to read the map and see the towns laid out in front in folds of the long valleys.

. . . street scenes



The Division was destined to remain in this locale for eight days until April 19. During this time, it stretched out to take security patrol of an immense area reaching back to the Rhine and north and east first to Marburg and then to Kassel.

Two-week-old newspapers came from home and Associated Press situation maps showed this area

Facts were just released about the mass murders at Hadamar Insane Hospital, where Nazi doctors experimented with injection deaths. Large numbers of the Division personnel visited there to see the inconspicuous hospital above the ancient city. They saw the neat grave markers, supposedly for only one body each, but under which 15 to 20 victims had



*. . . Hindenberg
watches conquerors*

. . . a knockout scored

still in enemy hands. It was a bit amusing to think that the Division was sitting peacefully in it.

There were long, cold rides for liaison officers then because of the distance the Division covered. Security road blocks picked up German deserters from the Ruhr Pocket as they tried to sneak out of the war to home. Displaced persons kept drifting in and had to be evacuated back to distribution points. Nazis were apprehended and screened. One abortive group of youngsters who weakly posed as werewolves was uncovered. This attempted Nazi guerrilla movement seemed to be failing in the face of a national guilty conscience.

Otherwise, it was a peaceful, pleasant area although there was fighting in the Pocket 40 miles to the north.

been buried, Russians, Poles and Germans.

As usual the townspeople didn't know about it, they claimed. It was a nice little town, too. The tightly packed brickfront houses were reminiscent of sections of Beacon Hill, Boston. Twentieth soldiers decided the cover didn't prove the contents of the book.

Burned out and wrecked German vehicles spotted the area and the curious investigated. Again luckily, no one was boobytrapped. In Frickhofen, division CP, there was an abandoned German vehicular multiple-barrel rocket gun. Once others had fought through this area. Now it was the epitome of pastoral life, farmers starting to break the ground for sowing as they had always done, peace, war, Nazis, American conquerors.

. . . a short ration of cigarettes and candy eased an increasingly acute cigarette situation, but they were to be the last received by most troops until V-E day. Division personnel were dispatched to take inventory on a gigantic wine store that was to be divided between all units on the east side of the Rhine for a Rhine Crossing Party. The inventory was a good party too, and the Division still received enough wine after V-E day to have its own party.

Troopers of the 33rd met or saw their first German royalty. She was the great granddaughter of Bismarck, the man who united Germany behind the Siegfried legend. And she was another of those strange, albeit beautiful paradoxes, intellectual schizophrenics that Nazism produced, of whom 20th soldiers were going to see more.

~~~~~

Yes, she hated Hitler, etc., etc. No, her great grandfather would never have let an upstart like Hitler tie his shoes, she claimed. She was lovely, and spoke English, like many did, with an attractive halting accent.

~~~~~

It was the Gestapo, she said, and it was hard to disbelieve her. She had given her palatial home almost over to 24 bombed-out families — but, she had survived, still with considerable money, her newly acquired husband, a prince of some description, who had been discharged from the Wehrmacht after being wounded on the Russian front, and her uncle ran a factory on slave labor that so hated him they nearly stoned him to death until 33rd soldiers stepped in.

~~~~~

She couldn't understand why they wanted to kill him. Unfortunately a whole nation can't be treated by a psychiatrist.





Gen. Ward directed that road nets be checked to the north and east to be ready for the eventuality of an attempted German breakout from the pocket to join growing forces in Hitler's National Redoubt, the Alps. But the Germans never made the try, and on 19 April the Division moved out on Field Order 6 for one of the toughest, most gruelling marches it was to make, nearly 24 hours of unbroken travel.



*. . . high octane manna*

The move, however, was made possible only after a freak stroke of luck solved an acute gas shortage. A number of transports, loaded with gas for the front, were forced down by bad weather in an emergency air strip in the division area. It was high octane manna from heaven since the division managed to acquire this gas, enough to start them on the first leg, while QM went out ahead to scour for more in the vicinity of Hanau.

The first troops to leave slept fitfully or played cards all night for they were to mount up around 0400. They crossed the IP at Rennerod and the Division trailed out behind, starting at Hadamar and Staufenberg. The move was to place the Division under Third Army control. This meant Patton; everyone tensed for impending action.

The route, passing through Esch, Niederems, Bad Nauheim, Friedberg to Hanau, became more picturesque. The Division was moving into Southern Germany.

*. . . dipping into picturesque Bavaria*



*. . . the pause that refreshes*







*. . . reluctant  
vanquished  
Madchen*



All day long the procession continued through villages flying the white flag.

Although the area had been taken less than a week before, children, German children, frequently lined the roads near villages and chorused, "Chocolat, chewin gum." They also smiled and waved the "Victory" salute. This behavior was a distinct surprise, but maybe that bit of compromise was their method of paying for the too-rich chocolate from "K" rations that were sometimes tossed to them. Children don't understand ideology too well, but the craving of a stomach for sweets, untasted for many years, was something the child mind grasped quickly. Mothers also sat on the road banks and smiled.

*. . . cigarette pour papa!*







. . . "Bed check  
Charlie"

K or C rations were eaten cold, hastily, during the breaks. A burned out 2½-ton, still smoking, lay over on the side of the road. Bullet holes told that it was the victim of "Bed Check Charlie." Finally dusk, then Hanau, and a large field. As units moved in, they circled into the field and stopped. It was a four-hour halt for gassing, and exhausted drivers heated a can of "C" rations, then slumped behind the wheel for sleep, the only freedom from cramped muscles and aching eyes.

Negro truck drivers from the 660th and 399th QM Truck Companies worked their share of overtime, driving their trucks without rest from the fuel dump to the fueling area for the entire 30 hours it took the division to clear. They even unloaded and loaded the Jerrycans from their trucks, although most drove alone, because one of them said, "These hyre boys are too tired."

"Bed Check Charlie" was introduced to the Division there, when he strafed a number of the Division's march serials, but he was off his aim and caused no casualties. The men were glad to have 468th Anti-Aircraft Battalion half-tracks in the column. "Charlie" buzzed the Division area each evening at dusk for the next three days in solitary, abortive flights. He was a pathetic reminder of the vicious power that once was the Luftwaffe, but the men thought he had guts. The four hours ended, it was "Wake up, come alive, crank 'er up, mount up, move out."



. . . getting the bead  
on Charlie





*. . . the people were  
frightened . . . sullen*

Most units left there in darkness with only cat eyes showing. Eyes grew heavy, sometimes almost succumbing to the monotony of driving, of looking. The tiny red tail-lights wavered, disappeared. The road was full of black, blind curves. It was hard to tell if the vehicle was losing speed, dropping be-

hind, or a curve had shut off the vision. Heavier on the accelerator, and then the black shadow of the vehicle ahead only 10 yards in front. The red light had short circuited. Brakes to avoid a collision.

Cold fog, settling in the valley route, chilled tank commanders and peep riders to the bone. Faces were rough with whiskers, lined with fatigue. Still the convoys wound along the snake-like route.

Morning, warm sun and the terraced vineyards near Wurzburg along the Main River. That city was another shattered by war since the Main was the last important natural barrier until the Danube. It was not far then to vicinity Ochsenfurt, the division's destination.

Markbreit, Kitzingen, Mainbernheim became more of the familiar names of the 20th's geography lesson. Headquarters was located in the ancient walled city of Mainbernheim.

The people were sullen. Bypassed pockets of German Wehrmacht were nearby in the forest-covered hillcrests. A couple of instances of sniper fire at lone guards after dark were reported. But the area abounded with Schnapps and wine and old fashioned Gasthauses. Ornate silver, pewter and crockery steins were added to souvenir collections. Cases of Schnapps found their way into most vehicles, surreptitiously of course.

There was just enough time here to recover a little sleep, pull first echelon on vehicles, and the division moved out, this time under Seventh Army and XV Corps after a southward shift in mission again on April 24. This was Field Order 7. For the first time the field order contained immediately pertinent data on enemy forces. Guns were given a thorough checking on the basis of the information.

*. . . walled cities couldn't keep us out*







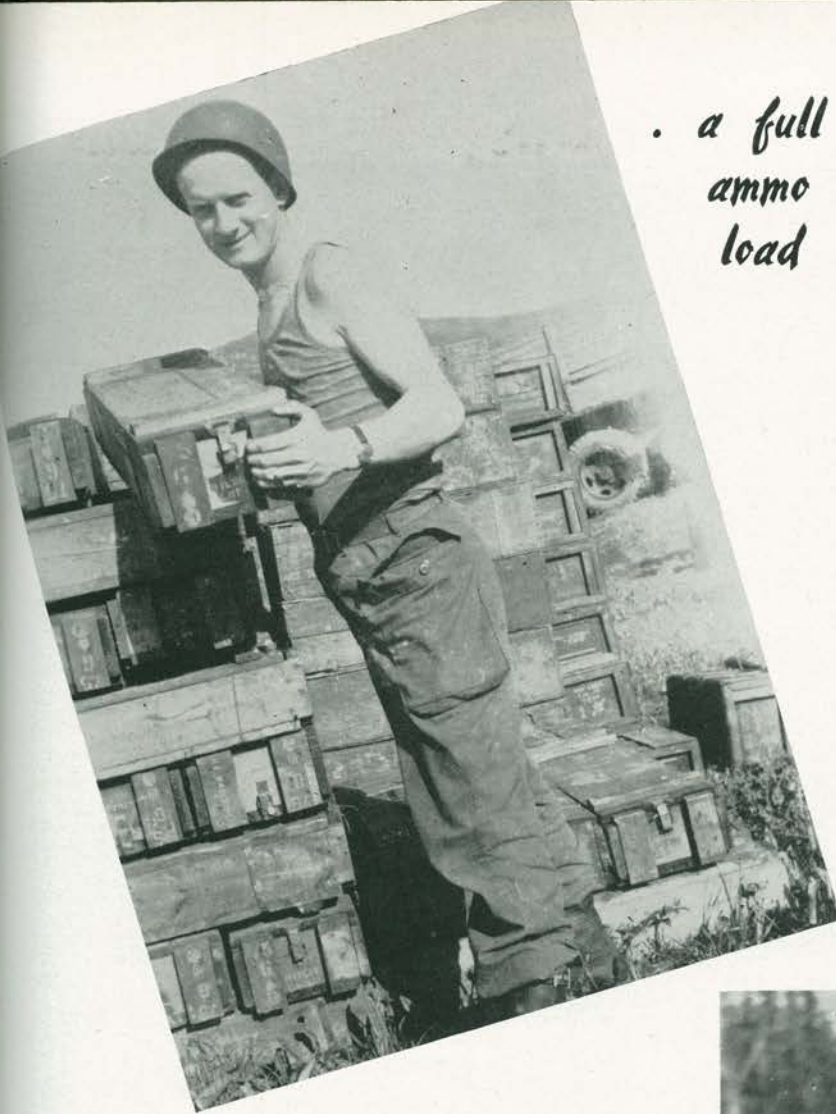
THE Division was moving into enemy territory for the first time. For the 20th Armored Division, it was going to be "attack" instead of merely "move out."

The new direction was toward Munich, the Reich's third largest city and the birthplace of Hitler's Nazi National Socialist State. Everyone hoped that city eventually would be the target. It was.

But action came slow at first. Although intelligence information gave promise of action indicating the remnants of both the German Second Mountain Division and the 79th Infantry Division plus a detachment of 200 SS troopers and two tanks were in the path of advance, no action was encountered.







*. a full  
ammo  
load*

That night troops made hasty bivouacs in the field; CC "B," vicinity of Herrieden; CC "A," Division troops and CC "R" around Feuchtwangen. Perimeter defenses were established, guards outposted.

The march into enemy territory continued, but still with little trouble. A small, indiscreet enemy detachment in Dorf tried to suck in lead elements of the 8th Armored Infantry Task Force when surrender of that town was asked for, but when bullets followed display of the white flags, the town was reduced.

In most places the enemy had fled or was in hiding, hoping to escape capture. One peep, two-mancapture, of towns became the rule that day. Even the Division Headquarters "point" captured the Division CP of Pfafflingen and was busy collecting guns and prisoners when General Ward arrived with his command groups.

It was obvious the Germans were folding, although they still had some rough fight left in them as the 20th Armored discovered a few days later.

But as the Division moved in to gather northeast of Nordlingen, it experienced a strange war. Vehicles arrived in a town. Distraught burgo-meisters were summoned, some still wearing the

*. . . the super-race gives up*

*. . . the new German flag*



tight knee britches and flat-crowned hats of their ancestors and word went out by bell ringing town criers that all weapons and German soldiers would be turned in; and in they came, a total of 459 PWs that day. Weapons of every make, age and description piled in each town square. Teary mothers surrendered dejected soldier sons.

Those houses that hadn't hung out the white flag were ordered to do so. There was little firing, only the threat of it.

All over Germany the red and black Swastika, symbol of a self-hypnotized super-race, was being replaced by the white flag of the conquered. Nazi Germany was getting its laundry done with very efficient GI soap, guaranteed to take the color out of anything Nazi. And laundry it was that hausfraus were hanging out, sheets, towels, pillow cases . . . clean linen, as it were.





## *. . . there were some changes made*

Most gratifying to 20th troops was the excited welcome extended by liberated slave laborers. One crowd of men, who knew they were free only when they saw CC "A" vehicles, waded across a stream to hug and kiss embarrassed soldiers.

Among the imported labor the 20th freed here were undersized, anemic 9 to 12 year old children. They were Hungarian, supposedly then allied to the Axis. But when labor pinched in Germany the Nazis forgot their allegiances. These youngsters, according to their testimony, had been grabbed out of their home fields and herded away without a goodbye to their parents.

The town of Nordlingen was a madhouse. Most of the liberated flocked there, and it was possible to see uniforms of almost any nation. French, Russian, Polish, and even Italian soldiers happily saluted any American they saw; they were free and they didn't care if the man was corporal or a colonel, he was American and rated a salute.

Only one living thing was not either animated or distressed at the arrival of the 20th. That was the tall stork standing in its nest atop the church spire in Pfaffingen.

Meanwhile the 27th Tank and 414th Field Artillery Battalions were attached to the 42nd (Rainbow) Infantry Division.



This mission gave the 27th Tank Battalion and the 414th Artillery the distinction of being the first 20th Division units to engage in hotly contested, aggressive action.

Target was to be Donauworth, key point in that sector of the Danube, clearance of which made way for the Division's spearhead drive to Munich.

The 27th Tank Battalion was to split its companies among the lead battalions of the 42nd Division. Each company was to be a spearhead.

They were green tankers, relatively, when they moved from Ansbach to Westheim. The doughboys were frankly skeptical of untried armored support. When the Tankers returned to the Division, they brought back highest praise that echoed from the commanding general, Maj. Gen. Collins, through regimental and battalion commanders, to the guys who carried the rifle and walked behind the tanks, whose lives depended on the ability of the Tankers.



### *. . . tank-infantry team slugs forward*

The attack started, a converging movement on Donauworth and soon the tanks were hot in it. The Germans knew this was their last defense before Munich. Machine gun bullets spattered off the hulls, commanders buttoned up, and the tanks answered with 30s, 75s and 76s, and kept on moving. The doughboys cleaned up behind.

Panzerfaust sizzled past "B" Company tanks, road blocks had to be by-passed through hastily cleared mine-fields, dreaded by tankers as every revolution of the track brings the chance of explosion that could tear the belly out of the tank's steel hull. Gen. Grimes, chief of the Cavalry School, lost his son, Lt. William Grimes, in one of these minefields. But "B" company kept boring in and after 11 hours had battled its way into Donauworth and two hours later the town was cleared. Only 200 prisoners were captured. The rest of the defenders found peace in Valhalla.

Other companies hit to the sides of the city. The pattern was the same. Company "D" riding the swift, new light tanks rumbled through counter artillery fire, engaged and knocked out a harassing German tank, cleared Kasheim and came up with 200 PWs also. "C" Company fought until 2000, clearing heavy machine gun and small arms fire for the Infantry.

### *. . . War passes a crucifix*







*. . . we got hurt too!*



*. . . glad to be out of it*



When particularly tough opposition slowed the advances, guns of the 414th thinned the ranks of defenders with time fire, and after the town was won kept the enemy harrassed by fire across the river, preventing the counterattack the Germans usually made. That night the battalion outposted the river from Altisheim to Erlingshafen; tired eyes and nerve strained minds and muscles protected the newly-won position.

The pathway was clear for the division.

Late on the afternoon of April 27 the Division moved up to assembly areas close to the Danube. The Division was to cross on three bridges secured by the 42nd Infantry and the 45th Infantry Division, pass through those Divisions and lead the attack on Munich. CC "B" was to the north, CC "A" the south, Reserve Command and Division troops in the center. Each combat command was directed to move out on a broad front, two task forces abreast in each command.



*. . . good  
Kraut tanks  
. . . dead ones*





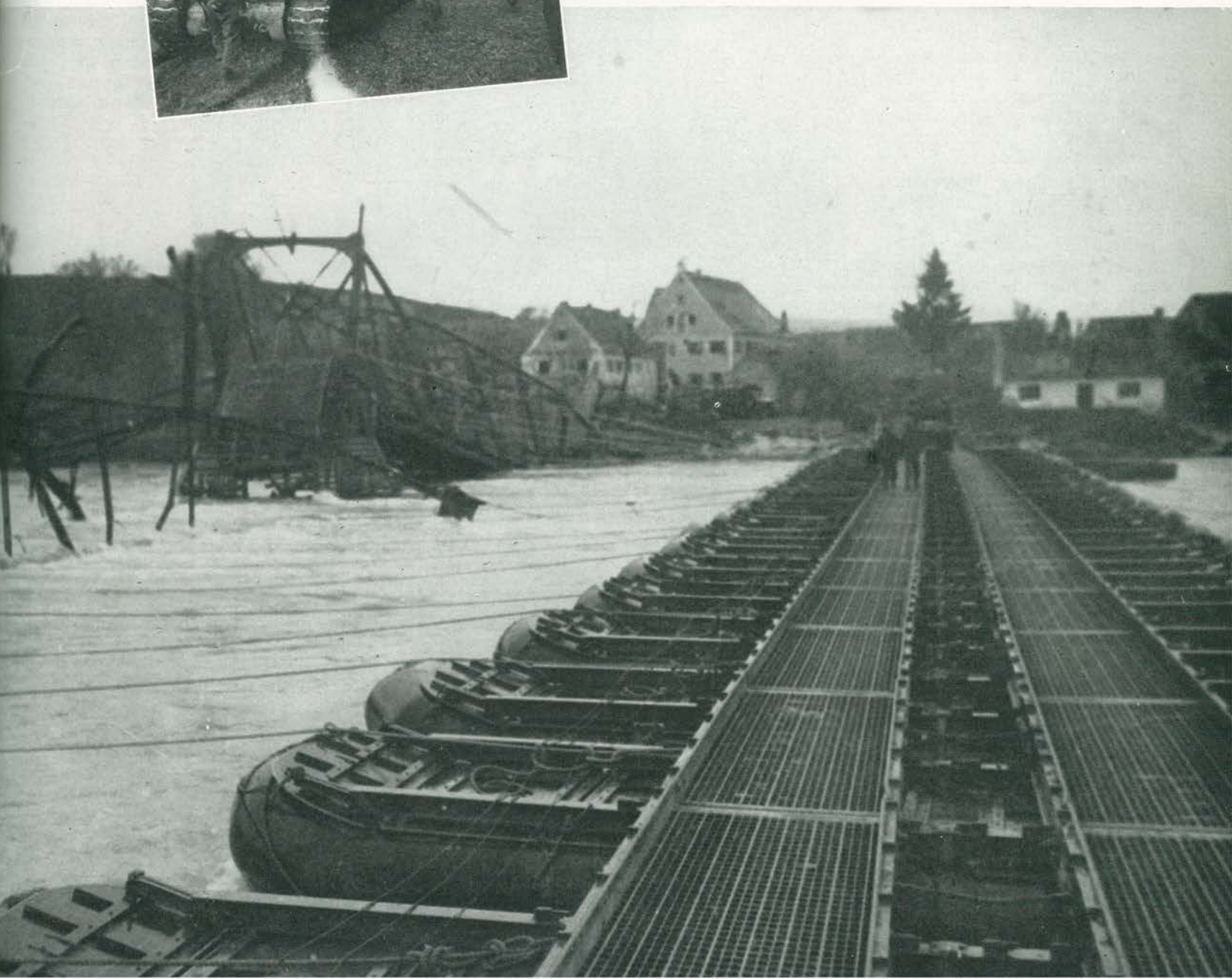
# The Blue Danube to Munich

THE move to river crossing assembly areas was difficult. Secondary dirt roads had been reduced to muddy streams, radio silence slowed communication and the roads, such as they were, were jammed with traffic.

To the man trying to get up to fight it sometimes seemed like everybody in the ETO must have the same mission. American preponderance of equipment in the immediate rear areas was overwhelming, although later the tanker, who sometimes wondered if he could ever shake loose from traffic jams, felt very much isolated and alone if he was leading a task force column toward a wooded hillside that

might be sheltering a battery of steel shattering 88s. Engineer, Ordnance, supply and administrative vehicles weren't in his way then. A song says "Saturday night is the loneliest day in the week." Any day on the point is a lonely day. From the empty feeling in the abdomen, it seems that even the stomach was deserted.

But by midnight every one was in position. Time was left to refuel, check armament, ammunition and vehicles, a short forty winks and the combat commands moved out in the bloodless grey of an 0600 dawn.







## *. . . 20th river crossings on the Danube*

It was April 28, only six days before all shooting was to stop in the ETO. But a lot of SS did not know that. It was Saturday, and America was already partying for the impending victory.

The 20th Tank Battalion with B Company of the 65th and the 65th Infantry Battalion with B Company of the 20th, both supported by the 413th Field Artillery, left the vicinity of Burgheim and crossed the Danube.



A few romanticists hummed strains of Strauss's "Blue Danube," but it didn't look very blue or romantic. Later troops crossing in daylight saw only another murky and rather swift river.

There was some confusion as units converged on the bridge because of radio silence, but, as usually happens in Army action, chaos was reduced to confusion and the two task forces fanned out, 20th to the left flank, 65th to the right.

*. . . and it  
wasn't  
blue*





Nobody sat on ring mounts or turret tops on this ride. Every machine gun was full loaded. Gunners grasped the handles more expectantly. Mouths were just a little dry. But nothing happened.

Crews were just beginning to relax when "D" Company 20th Tank reached the outskirts of Schrobenhausen to secure bridges across the Parr. Storm troopers suddenly opened up from cellars, but were eliminated by armored doughboys with small arms and grenades. Two German military hospitals were taken, plus 100 prisoners.



*. . . a fired town*



*. . . is taken*

Task force 65 found the bridges blown at Horzhausen so they sideslipped to follow Task Force 20 across a secondary bridge they had discovered. Task 20 learned an armored car of the 33rd Cavalry had been knocked out and two men killed near Aresing by a German 75 self propelled gun. Orders cracked over D company's radios, the first platoon deployed and took the town under fire, then continued to move against scattered small arms fire toward Gerolsbach to secure bridges across the Gerols River, capturing 25. The remainder of the column captured 381 more as it came through.

The Ilm river crossing was secured and at Petershausen the Glonn river bridge taken. Not tough so far. Some 75 liberated Polish and French prisoners stopped cheering and smiling long enough to tell the Task Force a German supply train was retreating only a short distance ahead.



*. . . by Armored doughboys*



Capt. Heiler whooped, and "D" company scooted after him in pursuit of the train. They caught the train, some 50 horse drawn wagons and a few motor vehicles, in the open moving slowly up a long hill and around a gradual curve.

Machine guns chattered against the heavier, slower barks of the 75s. Dead horses and broken carts littered the roadway. Some 150 surrendered. They had no idea the Americans were near until the first shot.

The column moved through, caught a couple stray vehicles in the sights, and secured four bridges across the Amper River at Grasse Nobach on Highway 13 before demolitions could be fired.

Task 20s advance was so swift that only scattered small arms fire greeted them at this



*. . . attack plans*

*. . . carried  
the 20th  
thru villages*



important barrier. Large quantities of explosives were removed from the stone bridge, the only one capable of handling tanks. If it had been blown, the result would have been a severe setback since the river was 150 feet wide and not fordable.

The high ground beyond the town was seized and held for the night. Distance travelled and fought was 52 miles. Speed was important since the ultimate mission was to punch into the Alpine Redoubt before retreating Germans could organize there. The 20th Armored was showing the speed.

The artillery did not sleep that night, but instead kept up a harassing fire on nearby towns, forcing hundreds to risk sentry fire to surrender. Total prisoners for the 24 hours was 800.

Task Force 65 had not been idle either. Its columns moved on the town of Hilgertshausen where a large enemy force was reported. Artillery and tanks fired the town and 400 prisoners came out. Lugers were being collected by the bagful. The attack continued to Weichs where a crossing over the Glonn was taken and the 65th also stopped for the night. Even Combat Command "B" headquarters had to fight its way with a brief fire fight into its CP town of Ansbach.

*. . . and fields, fighting as they went*





*. . . fighting was from—*

*vehicles and on foot*

Sunday morning was cold and joints were stiff as the men climbed into their vehicles. There was little time for church services. The mission was the Schleissheim airport, north of Munich.

A roadblock before Bioerbeck (the town isn't anymore) was easily overcome and Task 65 started to enter the town, which now displayed white flags, to seize a bridge across the Amper.

Concealed SS opened up with intense fire from both sides of the street forcing the column to withdraw. This treachery cost them the town. White phosphorous and HE burned the village to the ground. The bridge, however, was destroyed during the

delay and the 65th had to side slip again.

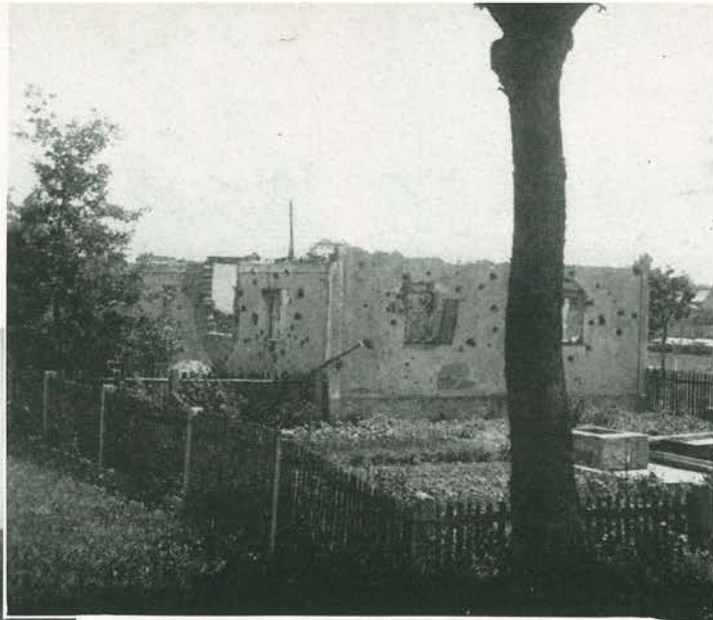
Expecting heavier opposition than on the previous day, Task 20 moved out along Highway 13 with "C" Company's medium tanks leading. Two roadblocks were encountered, requiring the combined efforts of a tank dozer and "B" Company engineers to remove them while under fire. "C" Company moved on through Lohof past the edge of a woods near Neuherberg into the face of three straight-shooting 88 anti-tank guns. Four tanks were knocked out. Here the dozer tank continued its trojan work, covering the reorganization of the Company and knocking out two of the 88s.

*. . . and always P. W.'s*





*. . . silenced*



*. . . Nazi guns*



*Lohhof was battle-  
broken and  
scarred*

While "C" Company was finding out that people on both sides get killed in war, headquarters and Headquarters Company, followed by "A" Company were bitterly engaged with ambushing SS troops in and around Lohhof. Many armored infantrymen on the tank decks were felled before they could deploy.

Cross fire was intense. The first four half-tracks moved on through town firing all guns as they went. The air was heavy with the smell of powder. Lungs seemed constricted and breathing was fast. The rear of the column stopped and attacked the town moving slowly forward. Headquarters men deployed dismounted as infantry, and the tanks fired the buildings. The SS had to be shot in their holes, and most of them were.

*. . . tit for*



*. . . tat*





*. . . the attack is mounted  
against a back-drop of  
smoke and flame*



During the attack, Col. Newton Jones, CC "B" commander, was killed by sniper fire. His tank turned viciously on the building from which the shot came, burned it to the ground and killed every military occupant. The attack had drawn off defenders from the airport, and it was captured with no fight. The week-end was almost over.

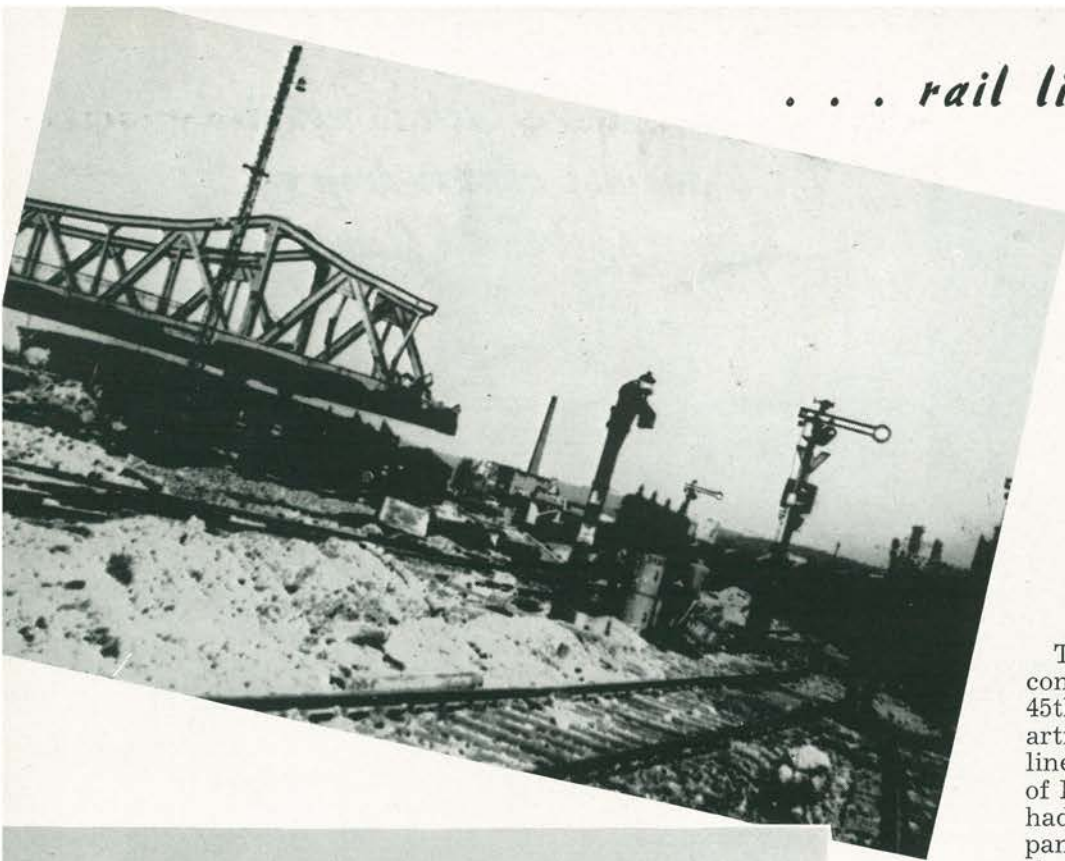
Munich was still ahead but between Task Force 20 attackers and Munich was the largest SS Barracks in Germany and a Wehrmacht anti-tank school. That was the target, and they were defending with a school solution. The Monday morning hangovers in America were pleasant compared to the headaches that mission was to bring.

Flak guns shooting horizontally through the night deprived tankers of much rest. They were tired men when they took off that morning, but they joked anyway. Smiles were ironic, fatalistic. And the gas trucks were making a 300 mile turn around to bring in fuel and ammo. War was no longer a tour through Europe.





*. . . rail line North*



*Munich—a  
twisted  
objective*

The attack was scheduled for 0700 in conjunction with the 180th Regiment of 45th Infantry Division after a 45 minute artillery preparation by the 413th. The line of departure was the woods north of Neuherberg where "C" Company had had trouble the day before. "C" Company was to attack on the left, "A" on the right with "D" astride highway 13 in the middle.

The prospect was formidable. The enemy, estimated strength 1500 or more, was solidly entrenched in width and depth in underground emplacements with overhead cover. In addition to the elaborate bunkers and emplacements, the ground was broken by series of trenches, World War 1 style. Some of the emplacements were two levels underground, having concealed exits as much as 50 yards from the emplacements. Others were linked with connected trenches and most had communication with the forward side of the SS barracks.

*. . . in passing—*



*bomb-holes  
gaped*



*. . . breaks come—even in combat*





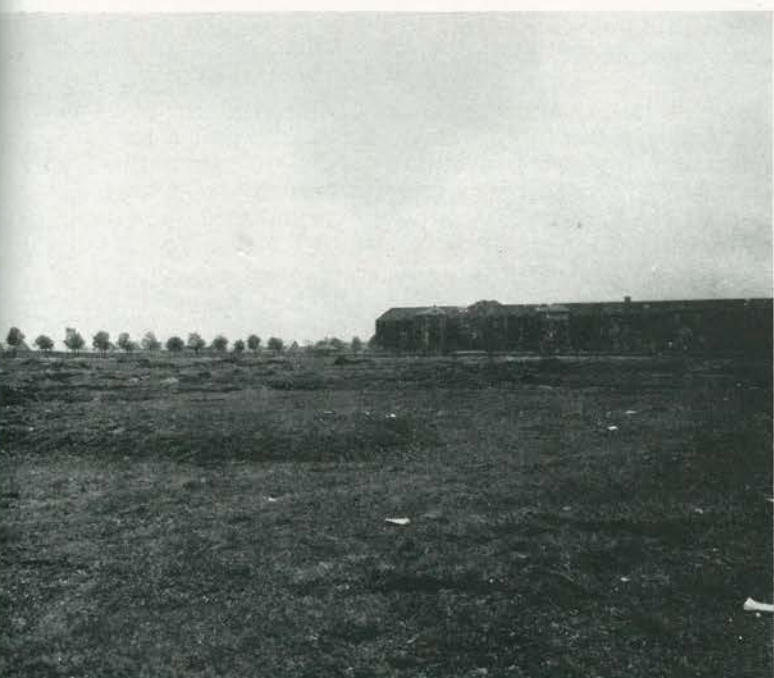
. . . *This was the Bastion*



The barracks, a massive building six stories high, afforded excellent observation across the flat ground to the line of departure a mile away. The building was built of reinforced concrete. It was 300 yards long, and surrounded by a 10-foot concrete wall, one and one-half feet thick.

SS in the bunkers were armed with automatic weapons, rifles and the vicious Panzerfaust. The entire area was also defended by 10 anti-tank guns, a number of 20 millimeter anti-aircraft guns depressed for horizontal fire, while numerous and realistic tank dummies were placed in strategic locations.

All the troops were young, and had lived almost an entire lifetime under Hitler indoctrination. They were pledged to die in defense of the city. The 700 in the outside emplacements did.







*. . . first barbed wire*

*. . . bull dozer burial*



Although the attack was scheduled for 0700, delay in coordination with the infantry held up action until 0830 when "C" moved out, but without the planned infantry support from the 45th. Then hell opened up from all sides, 360 degrees.

Small arms fire raked the tanks; panzerfaust hissed, hungry for steel; hidden 88s cracked. But the tanks moved on, waded in, firing as they went. But targets were scarce. Everything was below ground. Still they kept going to the vicinity of the anti-tank school. Air bursts of artillery showered the tanks. Electrically detonated mines threw up geysers of dirt,

The fast light tanks of "D" Company advancing on the left of the road dodged, turned, backed up, stopped and went to throw off the accuracy of 88 gunners, and still they fired. These tactics took them in among the Anti-Tank barracks, and the tank of Capt. Heiler, one of the most popular company commanders in the divi-

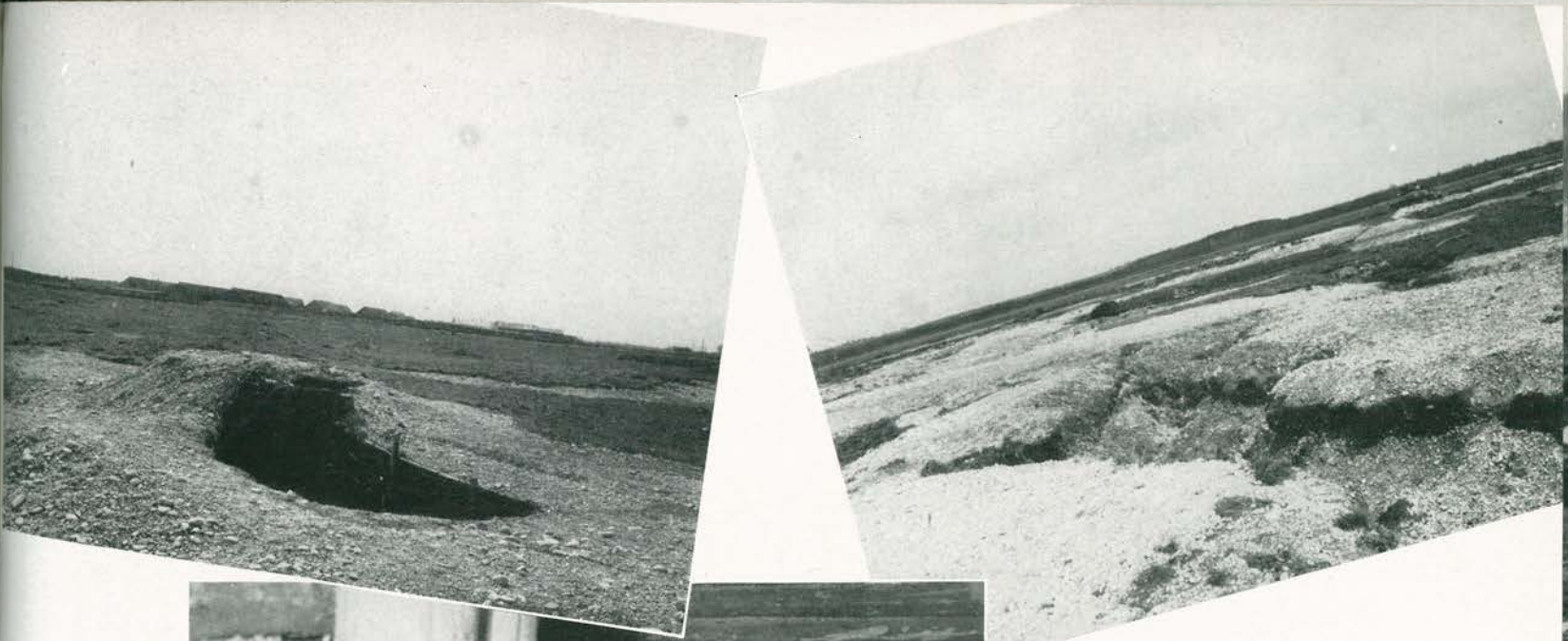
sion with both men and officers, was hit. He was killed by small arms fire while trying to rescue a crew member. Another tank was lost to an 88, while "C" lost three more to 88s. This force withdrew to the comparative safety of narrow woods 500 yards to the rear to reorganize and rearm.

Meanwhile "A" and the rest of "D" moved out at 0930. They ran into the same intense defense. Small arms and automatic fire came from the 500-odd windows in the SS Barracks. It was hard to know where to go, where to shoot, where to start. Firing was everywhere. This force also lost three tanks.

*. . . mission accomplished  
on the objective*







An air strike was requested. It seemed this was almost too tough for groundtroops alone. But the air boys couldn't fly because of the weather. Then came the artillery. Big 240 mm. sitting back by the CC "B" CP took the building under fire, bounced with the recoil and tore gaping holes in the barracks. The 105s of the 413th blanketed the grounds in front. But the b-----ds came back up out of their covered holes, came back from the cellars of the barracks and were waiting for the combined attack when it ground out of the woods again.

*. . . the ground was pitted with fortifications*







*. . . there was a price for victory*

Armored doughboys moved out behind the tanks with their tracks. Assault gun and mortar platoon acted sometimes as infantry, sometimes fired point blank down the mouths of the deadly bunkers. Infantry followed with grenades. Many didn't follow far. But even then, the SS defenders retreated to the lower levels of the bunkers and re-emerged after the grenade explosions to fire on the rear of the attacking troops. Tank dozers were hauled in to cover the entrances of the bunkers. That was one way to silence 'em. The tanks were still leading, still dodging panzerfaust. One tank stopped to accept a white flag surrender from a bunker, and a panzerfaust in the midriff was the answer. Strangely the lieutenant tank commander, wounded seriously by the hit, was evacuated by German soldiers to the SS hospital and

received excellent surgery, a rare bit of humanity shown that day. The tank was later found punctured by 88s. The Germans had attempted to use it and they died under their own guns.

Slowly the defending fire died down, as bunker after bunker was permanently silenced. Men died with a look of incredible surprise, but others kept fighting. Slowly the following infantry found them all. In early evening the fight was done. The capture of Munich was assured.

Even the sporadic flak fire, coming from farther into the city, failed to keep the men awake that night. Exhausted, they slept until morning or until awakened for outpost duty. The tanks stopped there and 45th Division went into the city. There was not much opposition.





*The S. S. had thrown its bolt*







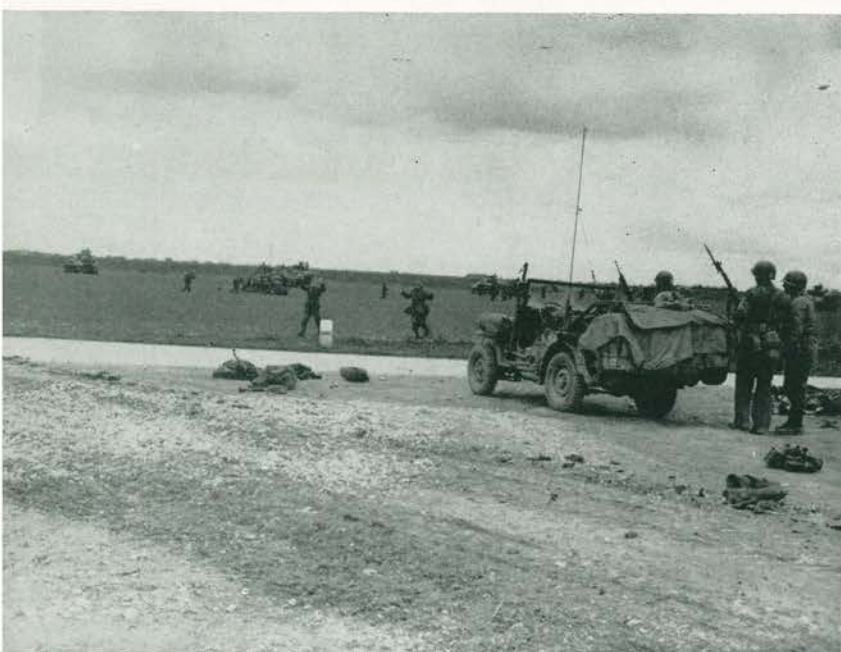
*. . . then on again*

The division's other task forces were active also, although not as heavily engaged. Task Forces 65, 9, and 8 pushed through continued but sporadic resistance from the Danube to Munich. It was the same pattern on other roads, small arms fire, panzerfaust and sometimes AT, but never enough to hold back the weight of firepower of any one of the Task Force units.

The 9th Tank Battalion was stopped momentarily at Affling, Germany, by a heavy concentration of troops on 28 April, but an air strike of dive bombing and strafing added to tank and 412th artillery fire dissipated the enemy will to fight, and the march continued. Thus CC "A" was able to lead the 42nd Rainbow Division right to the gates of Munich before giving away to let the Infantry into the city.

Although the 27th Tank Battalion had its show, 29 April caught them under a 30-minute artillery barrage on the outskirts of Dachau. Not far from them was the 70th Infantry which had come down the middle route to Munich, mopping up as they went. On the following day the 27th joined the 42nd Infantry in its entry, lightly opposed, into Munich, liberating hundreds of American POWs. One tanker even received a copper plate etching from one of the grateful GIs. The former prisoner had worked on the plate for two years during his imprisonment with the silent promise to give it to his liberator.

Of all this, the blood, the strain, the aching muscles, the stomach gripping fear, the long hours at guns, tank levers or track wheels, the tedious, eyeburning hours of staff action, the shivering nights, the ears ringing with sounds of battle even after it's over, the cumulative grime on faces and bodies, the remembered faces of buddies who fell—of all this the papers at home merely said, "And the 20th Armored Division roared in from the west."



*. . . more skirmishes*



*. . . and prisoners*





*Munich's infamous Hofbrauhaus—*

*—and Braunhaus*

*. . . Hitler plotted here*

But credit for the highly-debated first in the bomb-battered shell that is Munich went to "D" troop of the 33rd Cavalry which had been attached to a 6th Army Group strategic task force.

Their mission was to capture before demolition could be accomplished the Munich radio transmitter station at Ismaning, the Munich Radio studios on the Rundfunk Platz and the Volkischer Beobachter, foremost Munich newspaper, located at 22 Thier Strasse in the heart of the city.

Equipped only with armored cars and peeps, the three platoons were supposed to stay with 42nd Division troops, permit them to lead the way into the city and then grab the targets. It was not in-

tended to be a fighting mission.

But the 3rd platoon joined elements of the 106th Cavalry group and raced around the city to the transmitter, capturing it intact with much of its personnel after a short fire fight.

The platoon leaders of the 2nd and 1st platoons became impatient at the front line road jams near Dachau as the 42nd was passing through 20th Armored Division CC "A" troops, so, in typical cavalry fashion, they started side-slipping. A bridge here, a small bypass there, a hidden road a little farther on, and they found themselves alone, two lightly armed platoons, inside the city limits.

A hurried conference with platoon sergeants produced a decision. "Hell, let's go in." In they went.

*. . . but reaped*

*. . . this destruction*

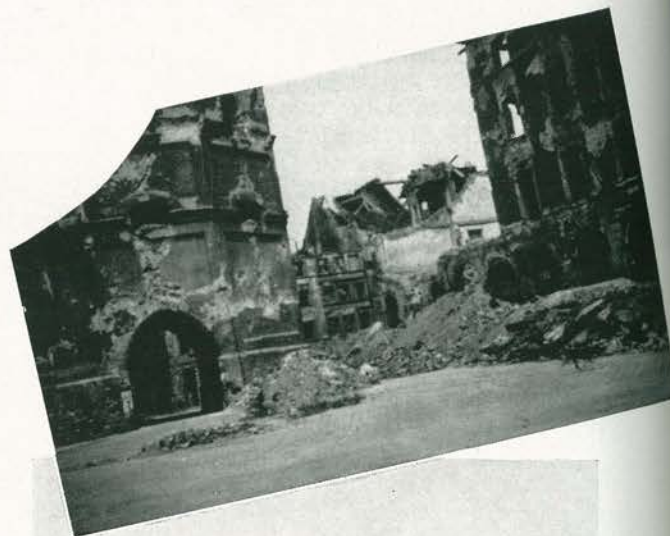






*. . . the house  
that Hitler  
built!*

First obstacle proved to be a "slave labor" concentration camp. Guards had already fled and when the inmates of the camp saw Americans they swarmed out, cheering, yelling, waving their arms. The platoons were surrounded, almost captured by the exuberant prisoners. Despite the warm thrill of watching a liberation, they had to go on. A former British soldier cleared the way, then he stayed. He had been captured early in the war, and wanted a return crack at the Nazis. He immediately became guide and machine gunner.







*. . . it was more like a liberation*

From then on it was a kaleidoscope of fast, strange action. As they moved into the city, the gaping soldiers were cheered by and showered with flowers, wine and cookies from German civilians. Screwy war. A doctor, member of the Munich underground, stopped the advance. He said a few tanks and anti-tank guns still were hidden in the city. He was riding a bicycle. He said he would go out ahead as advance scout and help them bypass these strong points. He was such a surprise on top of everything else, they believed him. And he was good to his word. The capture of Munich was led by a German medic on a bicycle.

Occasionally the column was stopped by machine gun or automatic rifle fire until it was silenced by

counter fire. Paradox of paradoxes, while some cheered other fought.

Germany was split wide open.

It was crazy. It was more like a liberation than a conquest.

They also liberated 150 American soldiers, prisoners, working in the city. But they too were no longer prisoners; they were just waiting for American soldiers to enter and then joined in the general hilarity of the occasion.

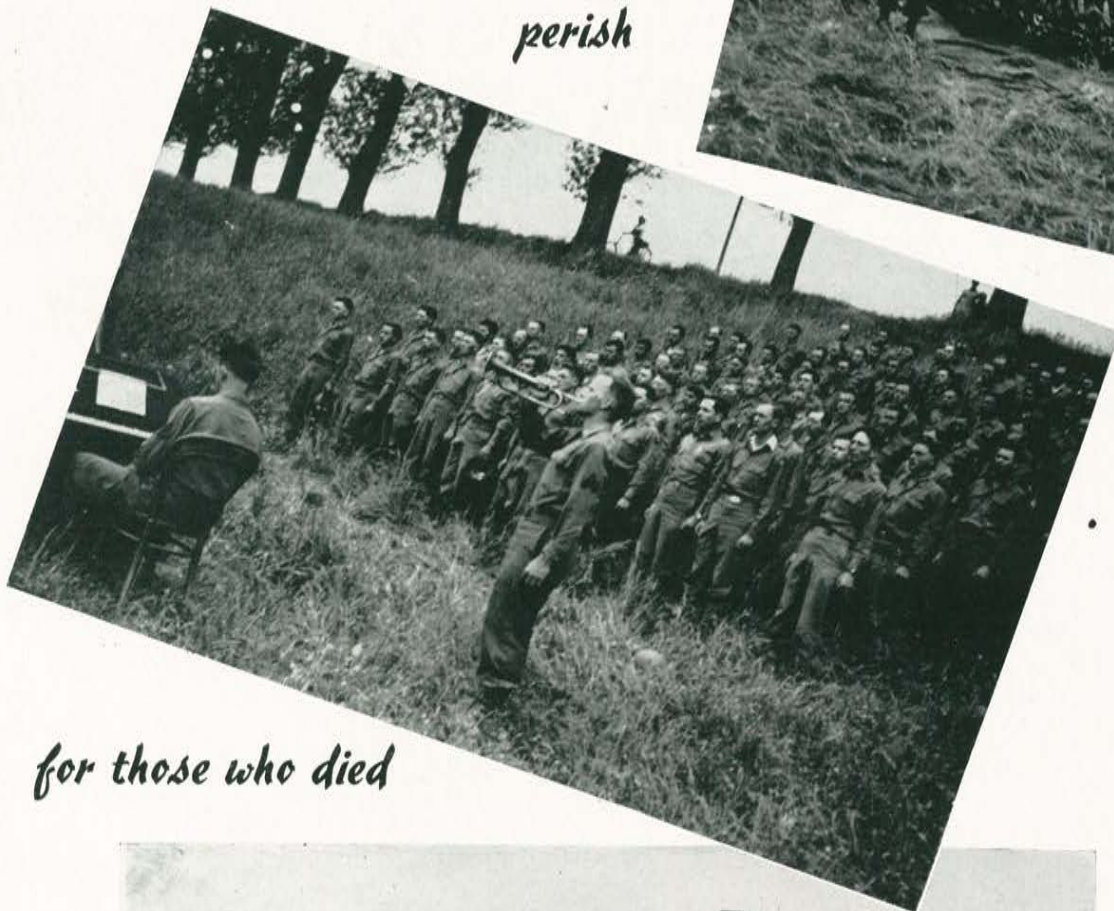
Both targets were taken. Soon afterwards the radio station was broadcasting as "AFN Munich" for and by American troops.

That was Munich.



# *Lest we Forget*

*. . . that Freedom shall not  
perish*



*. . . taps  
and our  
voices*

*. . . for those who died*





# *The Luftwaffe grounded, beaten . . .*



*. . . fangs*



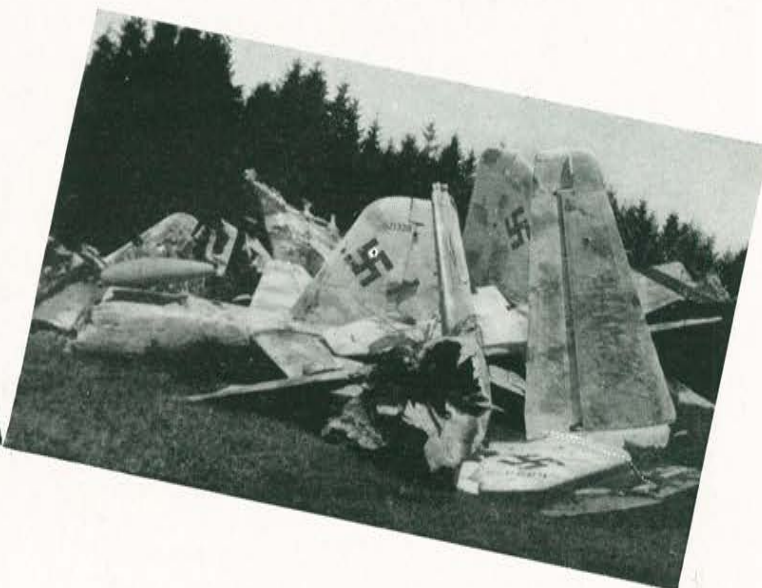
*. . . pulled*



## *Deutsch Air Power & Swastika*



*. . . become*



*. . . salvage*



# ⚡ ⚡ DACHAU ⚡ ⚡



Dachau!!!

20th Armored Division led the way to its capture by Infantry troops.

20th Armored Division troops were there and saw its nauseating horror.

Here was the proof of cruelty, sadism, ruthlessness, of every vicious characteristic of which man can be guilty.

Hardened veterans of war looked and retched. It was that bad. The pictures on these pages will

bring it back to those who saw. Only that penetrating, clinging, faint, undefinable, horrible odor of death will be missing. They will be memories that perhaps men would rather forget, but they are necessary if only as a permanent warning against what can happen with people gone mad on warped ideologies. When superrace, racial prejudice, political persecution doctrines deprive men of their humanity.

Here was the black core of Nazism. Here was the awful indictment of a people who followed an idea, "Might is right."





*. . . this is the grisly proof*



Americans caught Dachau in the middle of its macabre, ghastly work.

On a siding entering the campus-like exterior of the death camp and still in view to the neat, quaint little village of Dachau was one of the many death trains that had come to that notorious concentration lager.

Some 40 box cars were still full of their grisly cargo, starved men, humans that no longer looked like humans, just skin-covered



*. . . Murder in the mass degree*



skeletons, clad in striped pajama suits. They were dead, lying grotesquely, one on the other, in the residue of animal living. A few, still alive when the train reached Dachau, lay on the tracks beside the cars where they had stumbled out, only to die.

They had been alive when the train started from somewhere. It was intended they be dead on arrival, to be disposed of in the five crematoriums of the camp.





*. . . most  
were corpses*



*. . . few corpses  
lived—but most  
will die*



The rest of the camp was a continuation of horror. . . . dead, bone-thin bodies stacked like cordwood outside the gas chambers where they had met death. . . . yards long pile of clothes, mute evidence of other hundreds of nameless men who had died to feed the Nazi machine. . . . exuberant prisoners, the living dead, stunned at freedom . . . doomed to die despite liberation . . . prisoners drunk with looted wine, . . . prisoners squatting native fashion over small fires cooking looted stores. . . . dead SS guards, heads bashed in. . . . kennels with a bullet riddled dog in front, a dog that once had been used to kill when other methods became dull. . . . ox-tail whips, steel black jacks, instruments of persuasion. . . .

and the stories from prisoners only too glad to talk to American soldiers. . . . stories of hanging for hours from the wrists which had been tied behind the back, of death in winter by men being stripped and held under a hydrant hose, frozen stiff in the morning, of barbarity beyond description, beyond imagination in a 20th century western civilization.

And only a half a mile away was a church, and another half a mile was a roadside crucifix.

That was Dachau, synonymous with death, despair.





... the town quaint



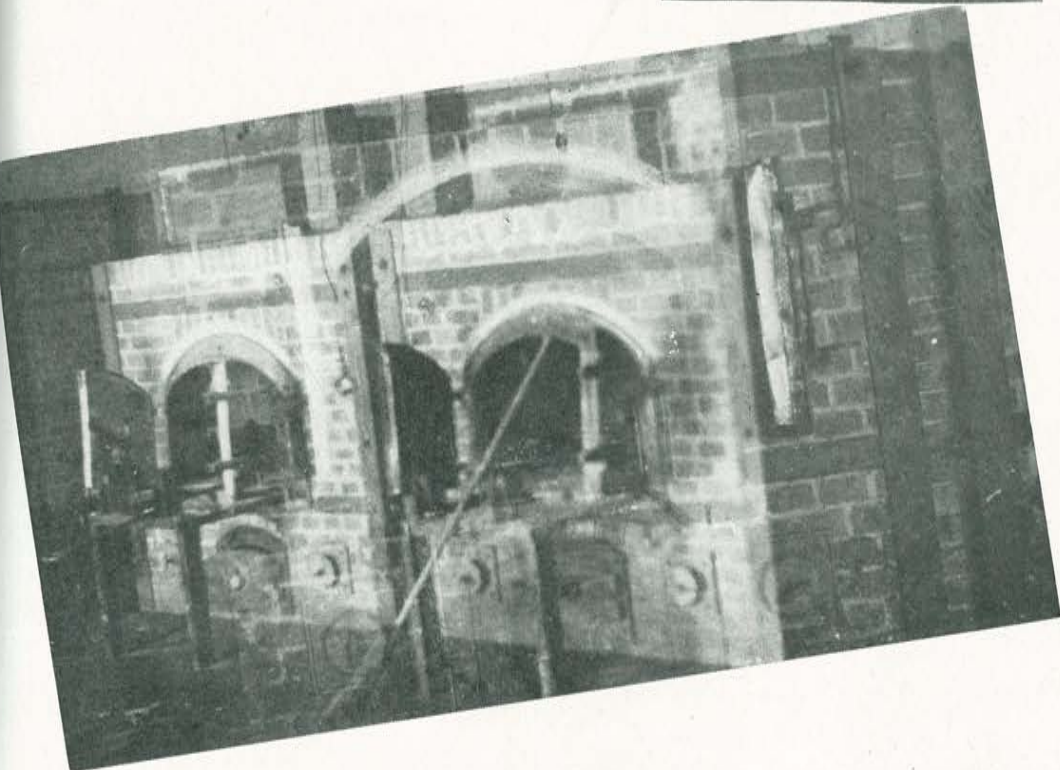
... the Crematory—Hell's Kitchen



... that to the guilty



... soldier reaction—  
—it's too good for 'em!



... the Oven's  
the Seventh Circle



*. . . meanwhile  
in rear areas*



*. . . the Q. M.  
brought rations*



*. . . Red Cross girls*



*. . . donuts and smiles*





# *Allus Kaput*



*feet were cold*



*. . . the  
route through  
forest  
and field*



*. . . it was a May-Day snow*





### *. . . scattered resistance*

The National Redoubt in the Tyrol was still an unknown quantity, except that hundreds of enemy troops, including large numbers of SS, were retreating toward that area, once designed to be a mountain fortress for Nazidom.

The division then was given a long left hook mission of swinging east of Munich to Rosenheim and from there to Innsbruck, Austria, to block any junction of enemy troops from Italy with those from Germany.

It was May Day in the states, but snow whipped 20th Armored Division faces as they started out again, 70th leading to secure the bridgehead over the Isar River at Graneck. A 140-foot Bailey bridge was built in record time by "C" company of the 220th Engineers and CC "A," Task Force 9 leading, passed through the 70th to start the sweep.

Resistance was negligible, and that day saw the beginning of the collapse of the German Army

Group "G," the army opposing the American Seventh Army.

The mission was changed, target Salzburg via clearance of the Ebersberger Forrest.

Now the war had a different pattern. It was a chase and a roundup. Everywhere ragged, beaten, submissive Germans, including SS, started to surrender. A few shells into the woods, a few blasts of machine gun fire and the threat of tanks and half-tracks fanning out toward the woods brought in prisoners by the hundreds.

More American soldiers were liberated from small farm work POW camps. Haggard, pitiful men, just released from various concentration camps, roamed the highways, shivering in their thin pajama-like clothes. They were suffering physically, but they were free of the camps. They had violated Army orders in leaving since it made rehabilitation more difficult, and they were depressing sights around GI mess lines.

### *. . . and combat breaks*







## *. . . beginning of the End*

And still the PW figures soared. A complete Hungarian division of 8,000 men surrendered and was passed through the division cages, then marched to Munich, a mile long column of dejected, shuffling men.

Gen. Daly returned from the hospital to reassume command of CC "A" in time to direct the next day's move to Salzburg, long a fashionable skiers' and tourists' center, and neighboring city to Berchtesgaden, Hitler's mountain retreat.

The march started again with CC "A" in front. Out of the woods into rolling

foothills of "UberBayern," the division marched to Wasserburg and the Inn River. The bridge was blown, but a dam served its purpose after the 412th Field Artillery had blasted the light defenses across the river out of the way.

From then on, the highway carried two way traffic. German soldiers were on the roadways waiting for the first elements to surrender. Others came out with the sound of a gun. Officers waved for cars to stop to surrender their pistols.

They were all merely disarmed and started in small bands, in column or as individuals on the road back. Tanks, infantry, ordnance, engineer, signal equipment clogged the roads going southeast. Germans shuffled along the shoulders of the road to the northwest and internment camps.



*. . . conquest  
brings smiles of  
opportunities*







Three days ago, 20th Armored Division troops had been fighting, killing and being killed by the enemy. Now they passed each other on the road like two taxis on Broadway. It was incredible, that mass surrender. Some of them even smiled and waved. They could be seen sponging meals from German farmers, or when tired sitting under a shade tree by the side of the road watching the division roll by. Some walked up the road, rucksacks on their backs, laughing and joking with each other. They were glad to be out of it.

*. . . it is  
good*

*. . . to be  
the Victors*







Finally the snow-covered peaks of the Alps rose up like gigantic diamonds sparkling in the sunlight. Salzburg and the end was only a few miles away. "A" troop of the Cavalry raced across country to Laufen, and with help from civilians saved a bridge across the Salzach from being blown. The 9th Tank reached the Austrian border, but there the bridge had been dynamited. More Engineer expedients. A railroad bridge served and while the wheel and track vehicles bumped up over the rails and along the ties past an overturned locomotive, the tanks forded the river and Salzburg was taken without a shot.

*. . . the Alps  
like gigantic  
diamonds*







Here again the scene was more of liberation than conquest. The tanks were immediately crowded by apparently jubilant civilians, and there was wine aplenty for the conquerors. But this was Austria, and they were undergoing a resurgence of nationalism, and, like all the rest of Hitler's lands, a repudiation of the Third Reich.



*. . . destruction marked the road*





*. . . and still more destruction*







*... the last  
river is crossed  
—Salzburg*







was in the air and everyone was happy. Word was received Von Kesselring was on his way to surrender. This was confirmed when Maj. Coelle of his staff reported in full dress to Gen. Daly and stiffly apologized for being late for the surrender conferences. He was turned over to the 3rd Infantry Division commanding general at the Osterreichischer Hof, and more beers were consumed, more toasts said, and all but the outpost sentries relaxed and had their first good night's sleep in a month.

### *. . . again greeted like Liberators*



Here instead of white flags greeting the 20th Armored troops as they had in every village on the long march from Holland, the red and white striped flags of Austria were displayed from almost every house. Those flags had been verboten since the 1938 anchluss annexation of Austria into the Reich, but on 4 May they came out of hiding and flew again.

CC "A" set up headquarters in the atmospheric Gerblerbrau Hotel. A very correct desk clerk helped with the assignment of rooms while civilians were summarily moved out. Still the "Raus mit." Plump, bar maids cheerfully served beer and wine to the newcomers in khaki. ETO peace







*... peace—and tents—by the numbers*



*... but to those who fell*

*... heart felt homage*

Nobody had wanted to try to crack the Alps open. It could have been rough. The strain of impending combat was gone. It was like the first spring day with a warm wind from the south.

The division meanwhile had coiled near Salzburg. One platoon from "C" Company of the 65th had captured 700 Germans at Chieming, but those kind of lop-sided episodes had become almost commonplace. The problem then was merely handling the great numbers of prisoners and segregating the SS from the Wehrmacht.

The next day, 5 May, appropriately dawned warm and clear, and at 1730 that night the message was received, "Cease firing." That was official enough for the 20th Armored.

V-E Day might have been better celebrated in New York, Paducah and Fresno, but with no more heartfelt relief than 20th soldiers did in their puptent bivouacs near Salzburg.

The killing business was over. In little groups in the dew-wet grass, the men pulled on a bottle of Schnapps, thought of home and went to sleep.



*... the deep sleep*

*... and a drink to Victory*





# Salzburg



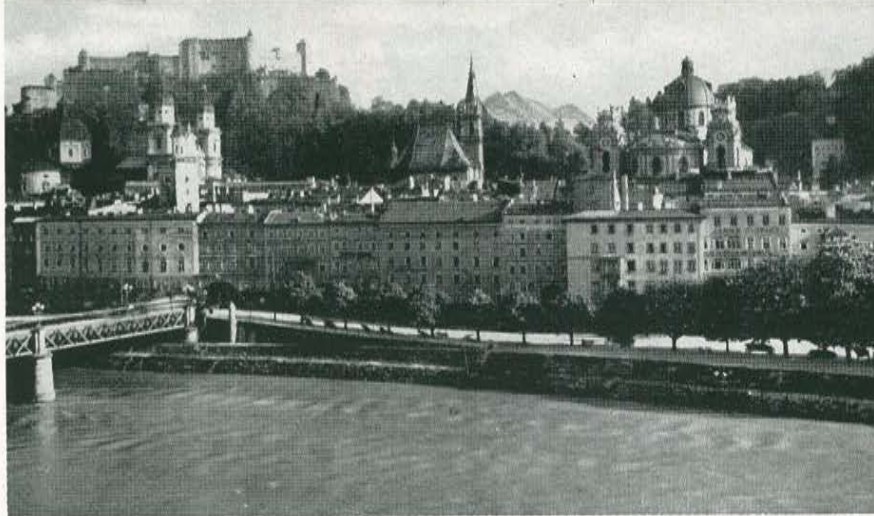
*. . . and the end of the road*

*. . . alleys*



*. . . antiquity*





*. . . the Salzach—lazy and muddy—split the City*



*. . . the American influence*



*. . . Mozart's statue  
—tribute to better days*

*. . . the Festung  
guarded the City*







*. . . three  
idyllic months*

The 20th had completed some 1400 miles of travel, consumed 1,000,000 gallons of gas, had crossed four countries and entered the fifth, landing up against the rearing sides of the Austrian Alps.

There followed three almost idyllic months. Counter-intelligence work and military government was the mission then. SS troops and Nazi bigwigs were ferreted out. CIC apprehended Paul Schmidt, official spokesman at the Wilhelmstrasse and press chief for the Nazi foreign office. Road blocks were maintained, curfews established, courts set up and the machinery organized to occupy, control and de-Nazify Bavaria.

But none of this was as demanding as anything else had been in ETO. Spring had come. Everyone had sufficient leisure. CPs seemed always to be on mountain rimmed lakes. There was swimming, sailing, and mountain climbing. Tankers turned away from their mechanized mounts and acquired German cavalry horses.

In scores of little towns Freilassing, Traunstein, Teisendorf, Wallersee, Mondsee, men and officers relaxed. Everywhere the scenery was breathtaking, the air clear and sharp, fields brilliant with flowers.







*. . . unsurpassed scenic beauty*







*. . . and still  
more beauty*







*. . . the land of  
lakes, mountains and*



*forests unchanged  
by war*





*. . . costumes were*



*. . . civilians  
wait for food*

*. . . as picturesque*



Civilians, the men in their ornate leather shorts and suspenders, the women in their tightly-bodiced, flare-skirt Bavarian dresses, tried to be friendly. Soldiers looked appraisingly at the pretty, statuesque girls, the Salzburg orchestra played a concert for the 70th Infantry Battalion, which also was then running its own railway from Laufen to Salzburg. Wines and champagne were plentiful and the best.

*. . . as the scenery  
beautiful*







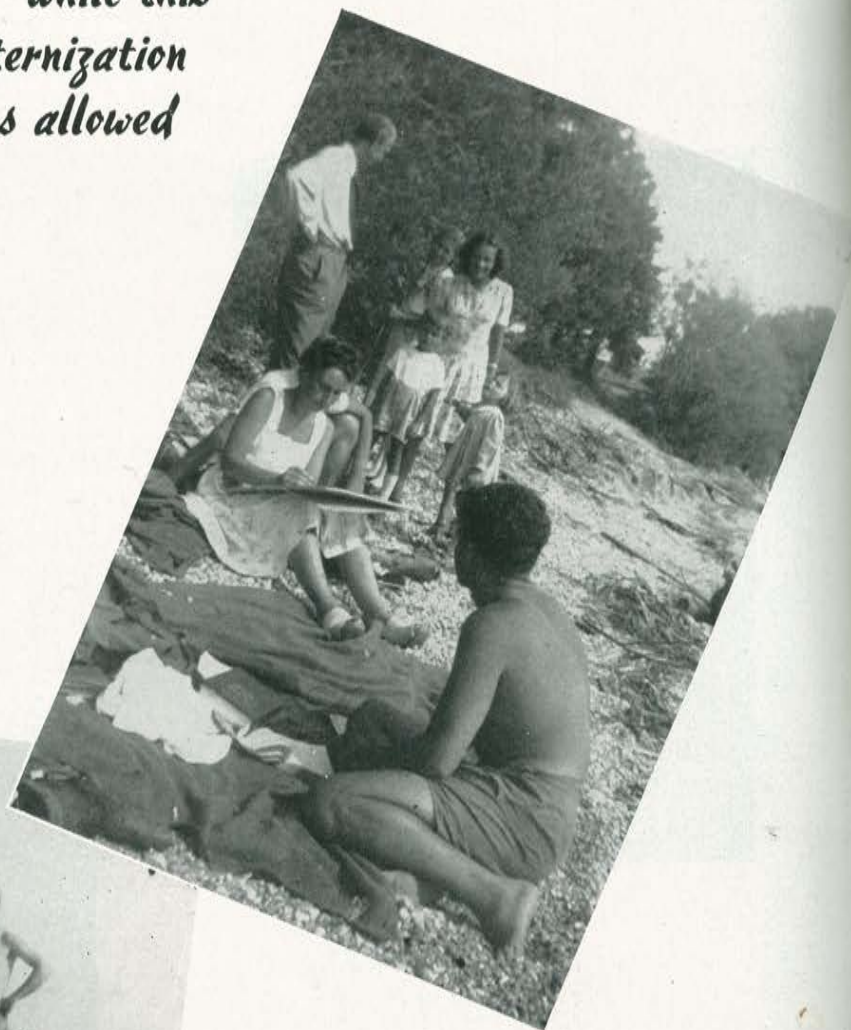
*. . . displaced gals*



*. . . were dated*



*. . . while this  
fraternization  
was allowed*



*. . . at the Germans  
—men only  
looked*





... architecture  
also was fabulous, unique



# Berchtesgaden



## *. . . the Conqueror's Citadel collapsed*

Baseballs cracked on bats, and the youngsters copied actions of these strange, friendly American soldiers who had so much chocolate. Tours went to Salzburg for the Mirabelle Garden, the Festung, (fortresse), the many cathedrals, for the atmosphere of this ancient walled city, the home of Mozart. Other tours went to the bombed out citadel of Hitler, Berchtesgaden and the Eagle's Roost, or to Oberammergau, scene of the famous Passion Play.







*. . . the home that Hitler built*



*. . . the Eagles' Roost*



*from this window he visioned a master-race*



*. . . Hitler doesn't  
live here anymore*



*. . . the Council Room*



*. . . Der Fuehrer's private R.R. car*

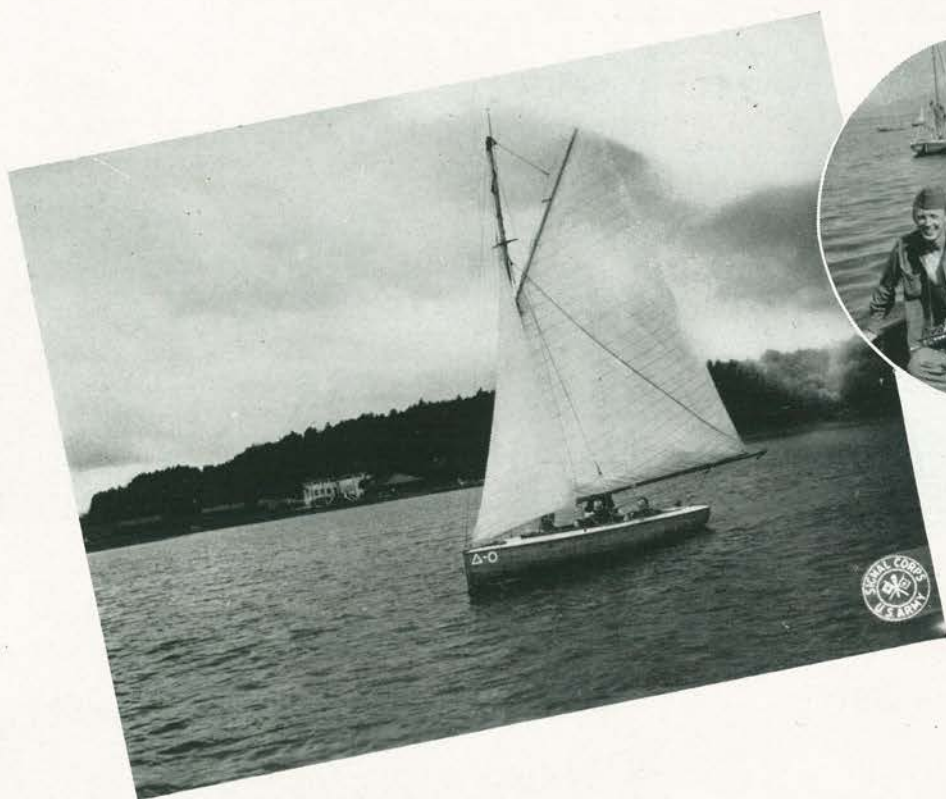




*. . . the 20th lived*



*. . . like kings*



*. . . and just relaxed*

*. . . sailing*



Convoys left Prien on Chiemsee for rest centers at Paris, Nancy, Cannes and the Riviera, France, and for London, England, even Scotland and Ireland. The division set up a rest center on Chiemsee. Hundreds more saw the fabulously ornate and glittering palace of King Ludwig II, mad monarch of Bavaria.

*. . . boating*





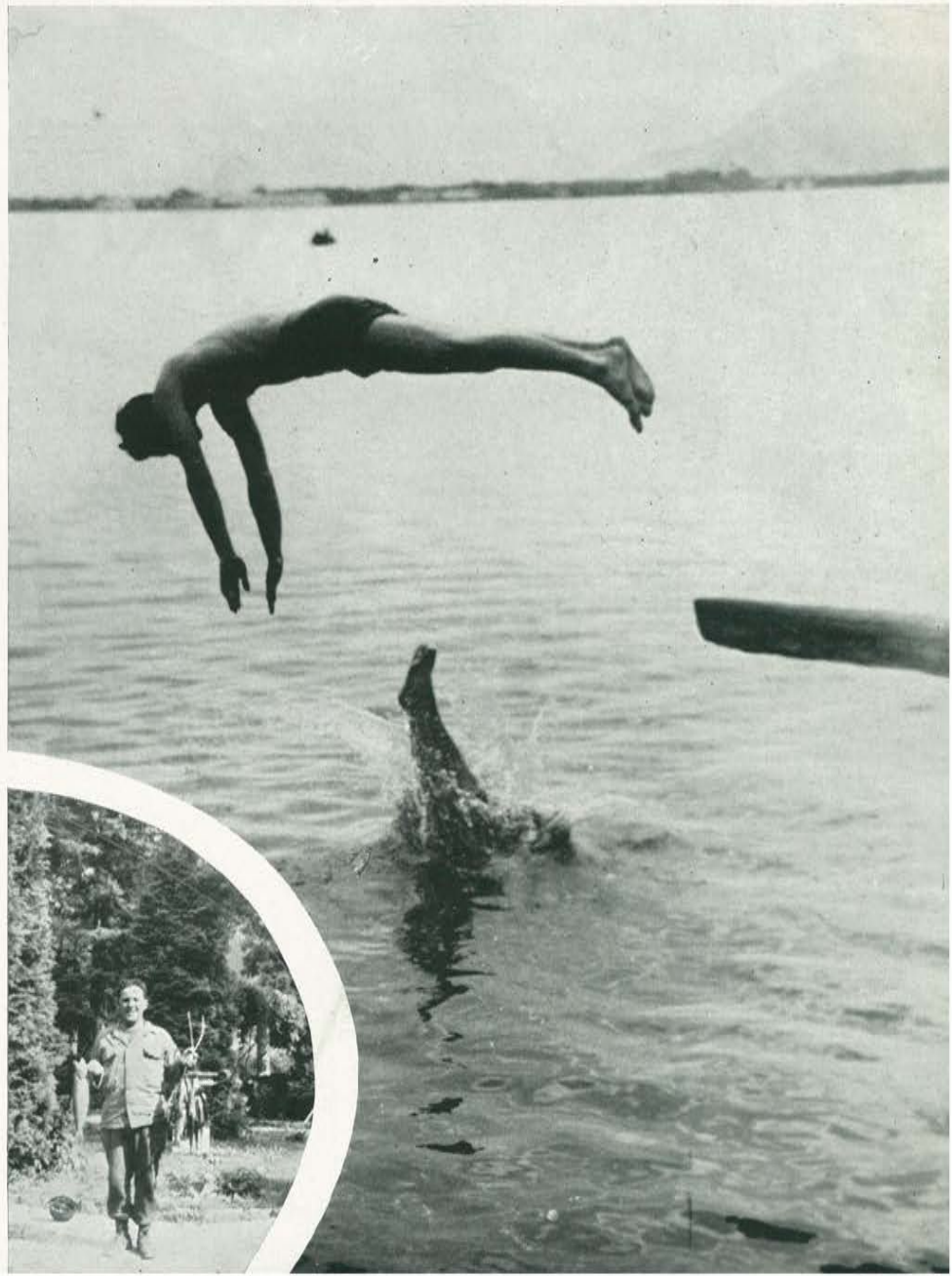
*. . . everything imaginable*



*. . . for recreation*



*. . . was available*

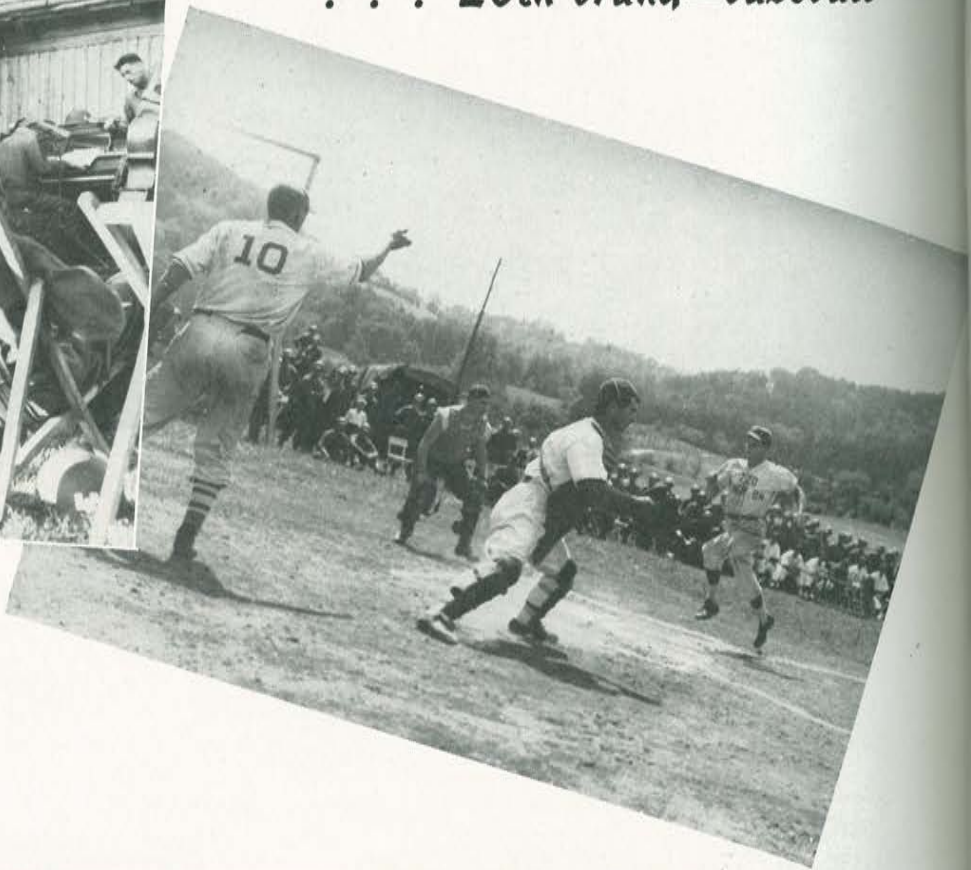




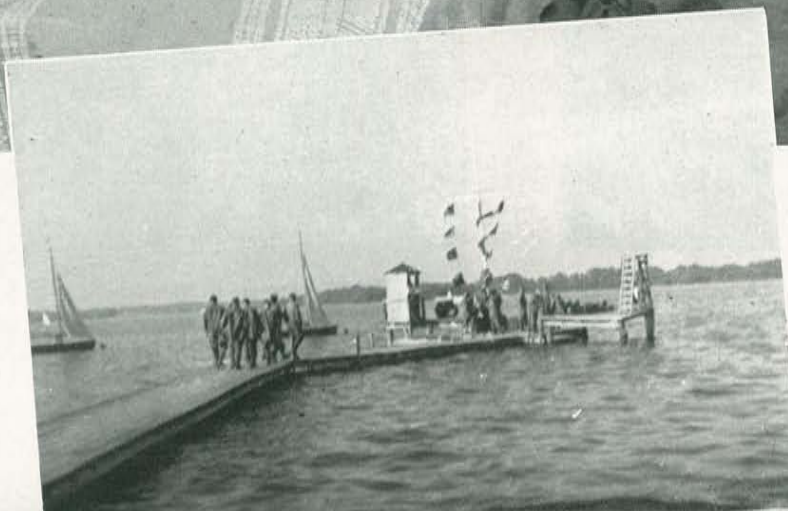


*. . . there was music*

*. . . 20th brand—baseball*

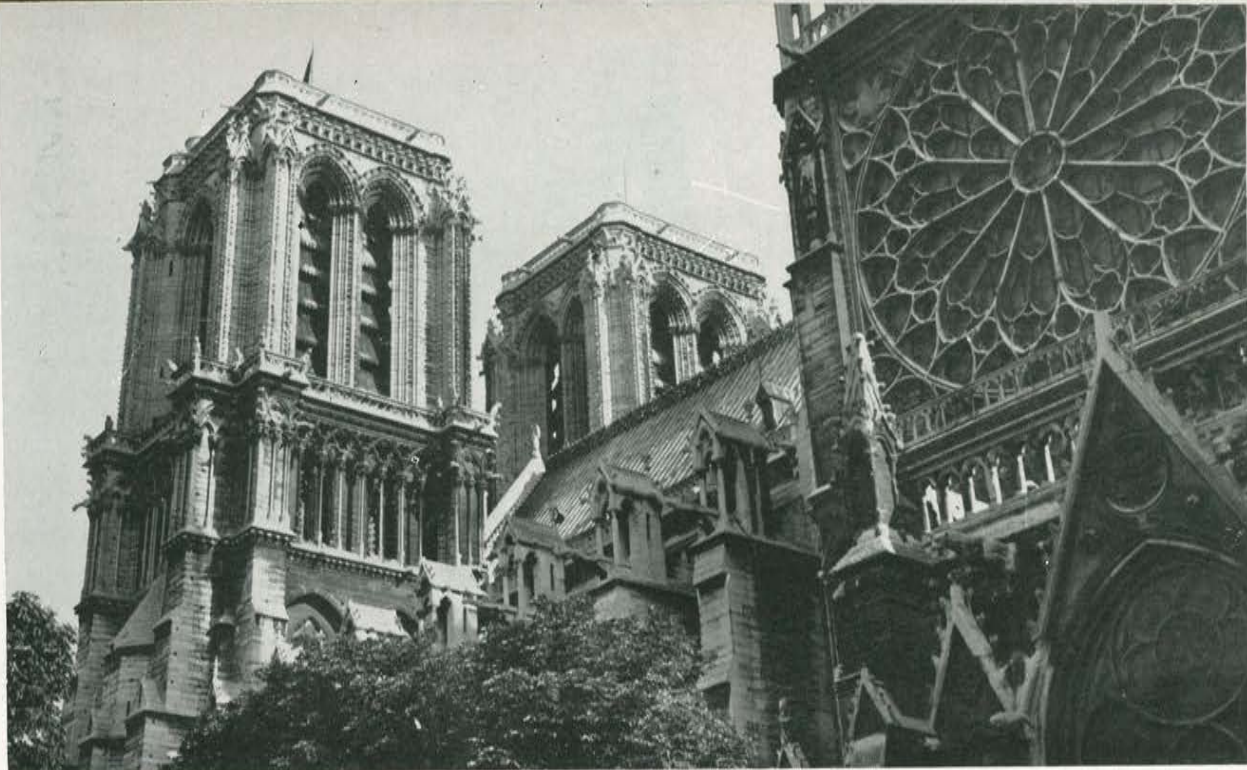


*. . . and the  
Division Rest  
Center*



*. . . and  
Chiemsee*





*. . . Paris passes—the Notre Dame*



*. . . the Arch de Triumph*



*. . . and gay night life*



*. . . while in camp—"B" rations*



*. . . and field services*



The 20th Armored had ended its combat in the beauty spot of central Europe, and proceeded to enjoy it. Without cruelty, without oppression, they lived like kings.

Only occasionally was the vacation interrupted. "C" Company of the 70th worked long and hard caring for 10,000 DPs, many critically ill. CC "B" was ordered deep into Austria when trouble brewed in Yugoslavia. There the three battalions and the 33rd sat in the saddle-like valley for two weeks, surrounded by surrendered German units which had succeeded in fleeing into the mountains, but had not been removed.

Here was an incongruous situation of intact enemy units, waiting transportation to internment camps, but meanwhile living the same as the American units, even to the extent of having their own armed guards. More sensible than it seemed to 20th men at first glance, the guards were armed to maintain order among their own ranks.



*. . . moving deeper into the Alps to watch a powder-keg*



*. . . and to the brave—Honors*





*. . . Nazi vehicles*



*. . . Goering special of CC "A"*

## *Captured*



*. . . new inventions*



*. . . and even uniforms*





*. . . and always  
P.W. and D.P.'s, the  
security of road-guard*





*... Visitors*



*Security of war . . . Mr. Patterson sees a Flying Wing*



*... and  
Lindberg visits*



*... Ingrid  
Bergman—  
Beauty and  
the Fawn*



*... our  
Russian Allies*



... Signs  
of the  
times



... and the Autobahn







*. . . inspections*



*. . awards*



*. . . camp Jones and training*



*. . . ceremony*



*. . . and more inspections*



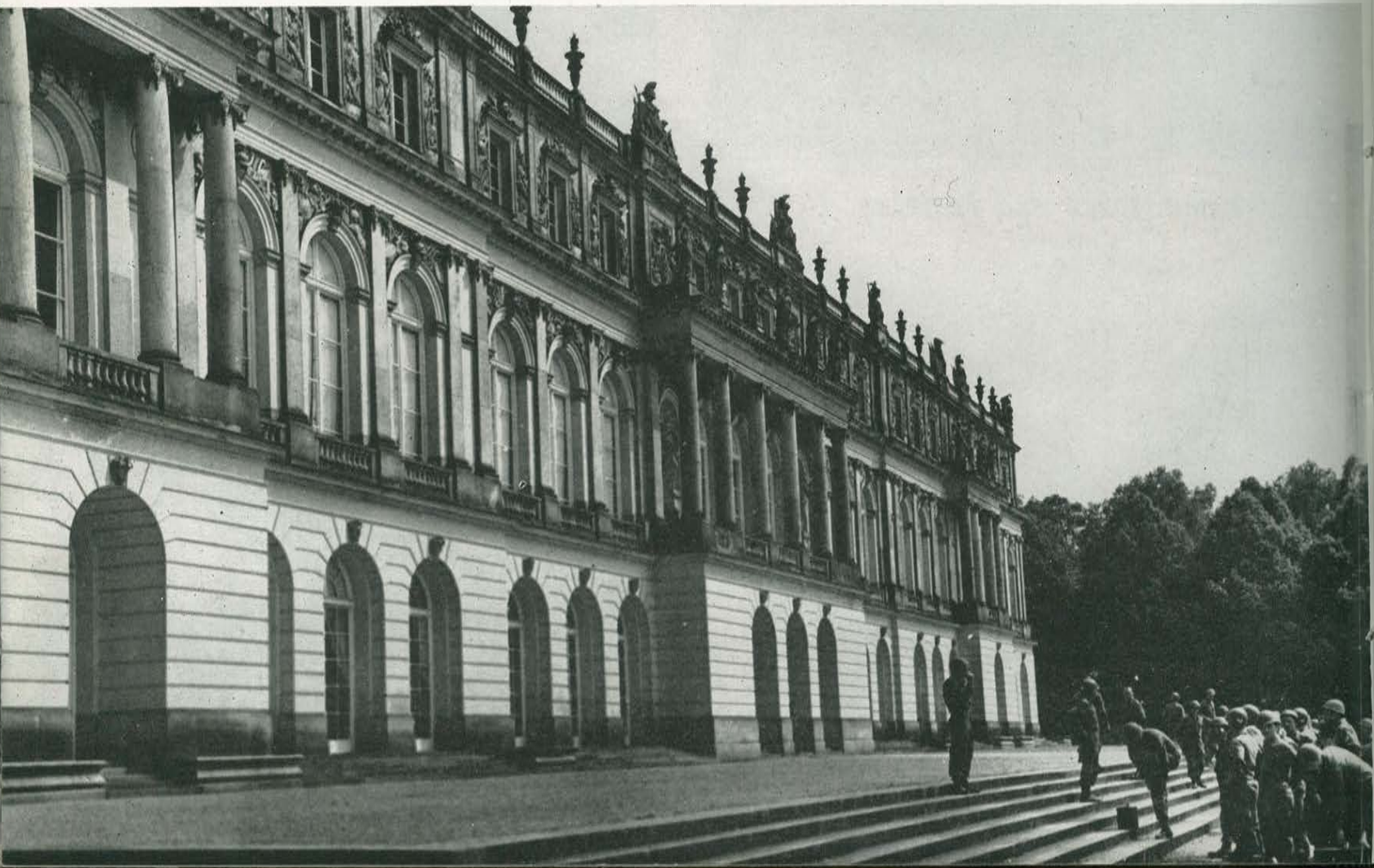
*. . . we were getting ready again*





*. . . Mad Ludwig's  
fabulous  
Palace—and  
the Hall of  
Mirrors*

*Showplace  
of  
Bavaria*







*Everything was gold . . . and brocade*





# Homeward Bound



*. . . it pays to advertise*

Finally CC "B" moved back, and another war loomed ahead. Training was initiated at Camp Jones, the artillery fired, tankers got acquainted with the 90 mm. tank gun, and infantrymen saw demonstrations of shoulder operated 57 mm. cannons.

Then another whoop went around the division. It was going home.

As beautiful as the country was, as leisurely the life, home was a magic word. Non-fraternization was straining each man's discipline and nerves. The land of paradox, where the gruesome inhumanity of Dachau contrasted with the sheer grandeur of the Tyrol, was confusing.

Packing again, vehicle turn-in, stock taking and rosters. Then on 10 June the division started moving by rail to Le Havre, France. In everything from boxcars to pullmans, all the rolling stock that could be requisitioned, unit after unit left until on 13 July the division had cleared and was on the road. A truck convoy followed.



*. . . job is finished*

*. . . the rocky road Home*





*. . . for six days  
box-cars were  
home*



*. . . tragedy in the 65th*



*. . . breaks*



*. . . and  
chow was  
catch-as-  
catch can*

Six days of starting and stopping, rattling and jerking over the countryside, of hasty meals, were spent in the trains. Near Stuttgart, the trains went into France, and as the last train crossed the border, non-fraternization was modified. Somebody observed that once Gen. Eisenhower had stated, "Non-fraternization cannot be lifted until the last dangerous elements are removed from Germany." The 20th had just left. The 20th was on trains in France when the French celebrated its Bastille Day for the first time since 1940.



*. . . occasionally an organized mess—and perhaps a shower*





*. . . the black-market thrived*

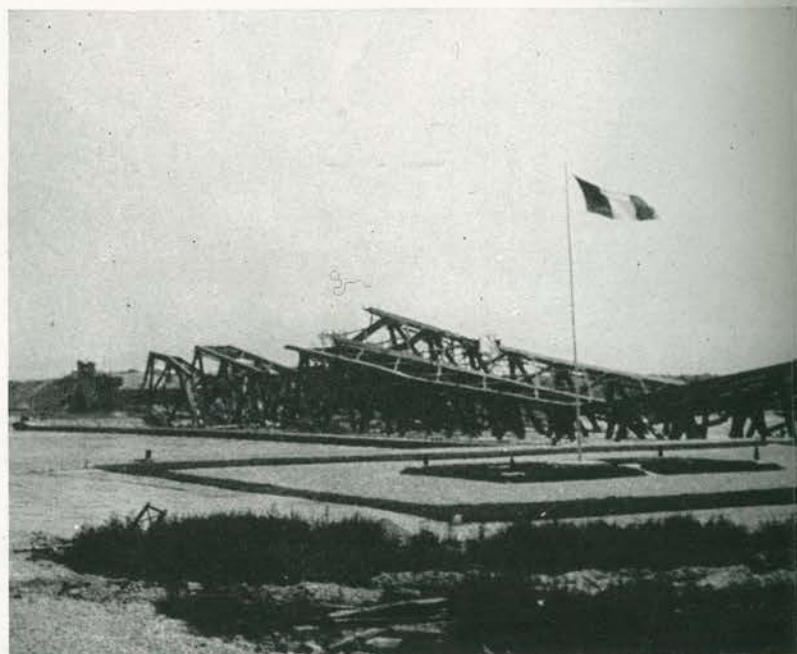


*. . . Europe crawled  
with the homeless*



French black marketeers plagued the trains at the stops, and were willing to pay up to \$15 for a carton of cigarettes. Dirty-faced, ill-clad children looked imploringly up to the soldiers for some part of their rations. Men remembered that France was still a long way from recovering from the wounds of war, that people were still hungry and would be hungrier and cold that winter. They felt pity, gave what they had but were glad to be on the way home—to America, the world's most fortunate nation.

*. . . finally France again*







Finally Camp Lucky strike, a city of tents and dust. Shipping rosters were done three times, booty declared, and swimming trips taken to Veule des Roses and Dieppe where there was flirting with the girls and mines and that had not been entirely cleared.

Men took passes to St. Valerie en Coeur to fraternize legally, and struggled to recall what they had learned of French and then forgotten in the welter of "ich" "haben," "schlafen" "sehr gut" etc. Others made the long haul on six by sixes for a last fling in Paris, dodged cabbies, drank wine under the bright awnings of the street cafes, paid fortunes for watered perfumes, haggled with black marketeers, looked at the Arc De Triumph, ascended the Eiffel tower, strolled on the Champs Elysses, and sported on the Pigale and the Montparnasse where an unabashed profession thrived.

Then it was goodbye to the ETO. On 25 July the Hermitage steamed out of Le Havre, followed three days later by the Ericsson, former Kungsholm luxury liner. It was more crowded on the return trip, but none cared. They were going home. Thirty days recuperative leave, and then Camp Cooke, Calif., and Japan. The men didn't know then they were scheduled for the Coronet attack on the home island of Nipponese, but they didn't care either.

On 6 August, six months to the day, after the division had sailed, the second boat pushed into New York harbor, past their favorite pin-up, The Statue of Liberty, watched and cheered the welcome boat with its complement of waving, cheering gals, American gals, hung out identification placards "Munich to Tokyo," and unloaded in a downpour of rain while a small welcome band played.

Again the Red Cross with coffee, milk and doughnuts, a short ride across the river in ferries and a chance to rest on heavy, loot-laden luggage, an hour's train ride to Camp Shanks, a steak dinner and processing.

The split up followed as the men were divided into regional groups and sent to other camps for leave and furlough orders. For 30 days, every man

had his mad whirl, usually spent too much money and generally luxuriated in being home. And everybody celebrated the Atomic bomb and V-J Day. The men wondered what would happen now, and wives, mothers and sweethearts had lighter hearts when the 30 days were over and the men started back. War on all continents was finished—at least for this generation.

Long rides across the country, over the Rockies to the Pacific coast reassembled the division during the middle of September.

Then men came back to a new Army, an Army in the flux of separations and readjustment. Men sweat out their number, trained a little, loafed a lot, and gradually got back to Army ways with newly-painted helmet liners.

It was week-ends and furlough to L.A., Santa Barbara, Lompoc and Santa Maria, anything to get away from the windswept barrenness of Camp Cooke. Every day men left, and slowly the division faded away.

That is, the 20th Armored Division was still there, but the men who had fought with it, trained with it, had been the division for World War II slowly disappeared in the anonymity of civilian life as the scores went down.

But the 20th Armored Division will always be there in the memories of the many thousand men who wore its triangle patch during the fateful years of 1943, '44 and '45.

They will be strong memories, memories revered as age greys the hair of its members; they will be strong memories of a crack division that served its country well in all its capacities, that proved it could fight when the chips were down.

They will be silent memories honoring buddies who fell, who died well and fighting that decency might have a chance in the world, that "freedom shall not perish from the earth."

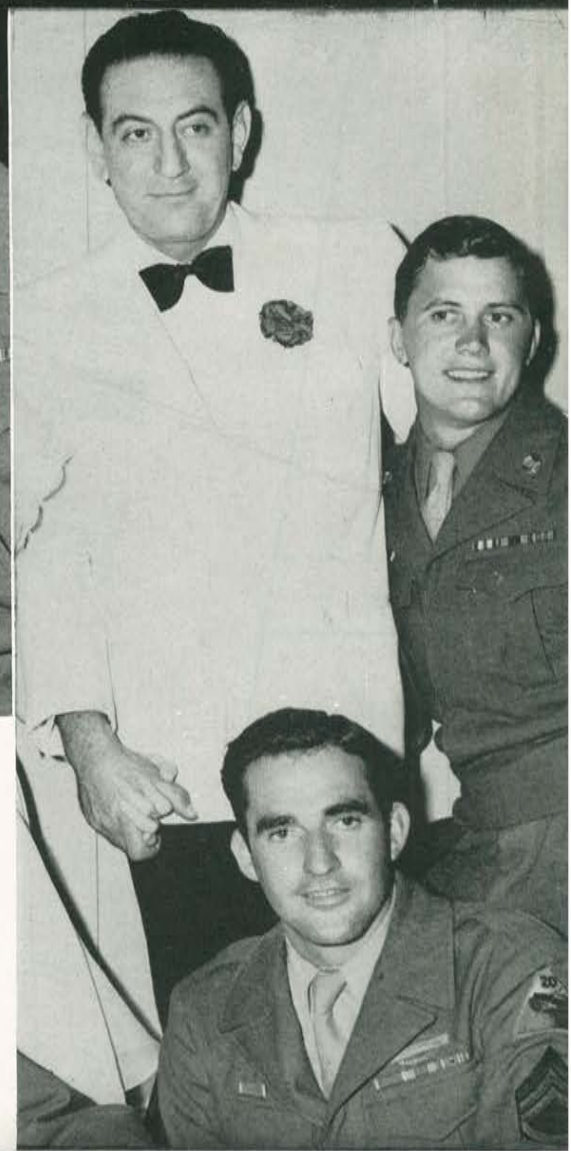
That is the history of the 20th Armored Division in World War II, the luckiest and best division in the whole damn Army.







*20th goes Hollywood*



*. . . thanks  
to the Atomic Bomb*



HEADQUARTERS  
ARMY GROUND FORCES  
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.



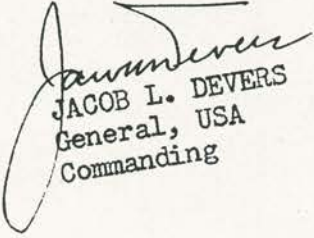
21 February 1946

SUBJECT: Letter of Appreciation  
TO : Commanding General, 20th Armored Division

The self-sacrifice and determination with which the officers and men of the 20th Armored Division executed every mission assigned it, both in this country and overseas, have earned the respect and gratitude of the nation. Although the division was not called upon to enter combat until the closing phase of the European war, it brought into battle with it the driving energy which has become a characteristic of all our armored units.

From its activation on 13 March 1943, and throughout subsequent training at Camp Campbell, Kentucky, the 20th Armored never failed to complete every assignment with the efficiency and enthusiasm which the world has come to expect from American soldiers. Arriving in Europe in the spring of 1945, the division participated gallantly and effectively in the campaigns around Munich and Salzburg, capturing many prisoners and occupying large areas of Germany and Austria.

Now that complete victory permits the inactivation of many of our fighting units, I am proud of this opportunity to commend you, your officers and your men for the division's achievement in our fight against oppression.

  
JACOB L. DEVERS  
General, USA  
Commanding



# THE TRAILS AND TRAVAILS



6 FE  
18 FE  
10 AD  
28 AP  
30 AP  
4 MA



# OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> ARMORED DIVISION.

## Time Table

- 6 FEB  WE SAIL !
- 18 FEB  WE ARRIVE !
- 10 APR  WE CROSS THE RHINE
- 28 APR  WE CROSS THE DANUBE
- 30 APR  MUNICH: "THE 20<sup>TH</sup> ARMORED DIVISION ROARS IN FROM THE WEST"
- 4 MAY  SALZBURG: END OF THE ROAD.



GERMANY

CZECHOSLOVAKIA





