IN OMNIA PARATUS

179TH INFANTRY REGIMENT

THE STORY OF A REGIMENT

THE STORY OF A REGIMENT

A History of the 179th Regimental Combat Team

by

Warren H. Munsell Jr.

BANGOR
PUBLIC
LIBRARY
BANGOR ME

Copyright 1946
Warren P. Munsell, Jr.
195 West 10th Street
New York City 14
New York

BANGOR
PUBLIC
LIBRARY
BANGOR ME

Passed By U. S. Army Censor 112421, *SHAEF*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Illustrations I
Dedication III
Frontispiece V
Preface by Col. Preston J. C. Murphy VII
Introduction IX
List of Abbreviations XIII

PART ONE. TOWARDS ARMAGEDDON (1925-July 9, 1943)
Chap. 1. A Matter of History 1
2. Ready, Get Set 4
3. The Yanks Are Coming .. 7

PART TWO. SICILIAN CAMPAIGN ★ ▲ (July 10-Sept. 10, 1943)
Chap. 4. Invasion! 10
5. Pinched Out 13
6. Race to the North Coast .. 17
7. Denouement, with a Punch 19

PART THREE. ITALIAN CAMPAIGN ★ (Sept .11, '43-Jan. 24, '44)
Chap. 8. Into the Jaws of Hell 23
9. From the Frying Pan 28
10. To the German Winter Line 31
11. The Battle of Venafro 35
12. Mountains of Blood 38
13. The Taking of Lagone 42
14. En Passant 45

PART FOUR. THE ANZIO BEACHHEAD ★ (Jan. 25-Aug. 14, 1944)
Chap. 15. Backs to the Sea Wall 50
16. The Battle of the Factory 53
17. Pause to Reflect, and Dig 57
18. Breakthrough! 64
19. Buona Serra, Bon Matin! .. 68

PART FIVE. FRENCH CAMPAIGN ★ ★ (Aug. 15-Nov. 21, 1944)
Chap. 20. Task Force 179 71
21. The Battle of Meximieux .. 77
22. Whittling Down the Krauts 81
23. Little Stalingrad 87
24. Brouvelieures Breakthrough 92

PART SIX. BATTLE FOR GERMANY (Nov. 22, '44-May 9, 1945)
Chap. 25. Man Spricht Deutsch 96
26. Counter-attack! 101
27. In the Shadow of the Russian Bear 107
28. Through the Line and Over the Rhine 112
29. The Womb of Nazism 118
30. The Heart of Nazism 124

EPILOGUE. MISSION COMPLETED 131

APPENDIX

A. Organization by unit of the 179th RCT
B. Awards and Citations
C. Combat Time, 179th Inf. Regt.
D. Casualties, 179th Inf. Regt.
E. List of Achievements
F. Commanding Officers, 179th Inf. Regt.
G. In Memoriam, 179th RCT

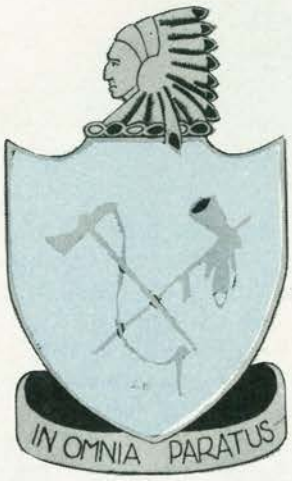
List of Illustrations

	Map	Opposite Page
Figure A	United States	1
Figure B	Chain of Command	2
Map 1	Sicily	10
Map 2	Central Italy	22
Map 3	Persano	24
Map 4	Eboli to Ponte	32
Map 5	Ponte to Piedimonte	33
Map 6	Venafro	36
Map 7	The Mountains	38
Map 8	Pontine Marshes (Anzio Beachhead)	50
Map 9	Battle of K-9	66
Map 10	March on Rome	67
Figure C	Europe to June 6, 1944	68
Map 11	France	70
Map 12	Southern France, the Beaches	71
Map 13	Vidauban to Rians	72
Map 14	Grenoble	74
Map 15	Town Plan, Meximieux	78
Map 16	Escape Route	82
Map 17	Doubs River	83
Map 18	Grandvillers	88
Map 19	Battle Line, October 19, 1944	92
Map 20	The Big Picture, October 19, 1944	93
Map 21	Alsace-Lorraine	96
Map 22	Molsheim	97
Map 23	Over the Border	98
Map 24	Wingen	104
Figure D	Saverne Gap, Situation Overlay	105
Figure E	Europe to January 31, 1945	108
Map 25	Germany	112
Map 26	Through the Siegfried Line	113
Map 27	Saar Basin, March 18, 1945	114
Map 28	Saar Basin and Palatinate	115
Map 29	Rhine Crossing	116
Map 30	Across the Main	117
Map 31	Central Germany (A)	118
Map 32	Central Germany (B)	119
Map 33	Bamberg to Nurnberg	122
Map 34	Nurnberg Area	123
Map 35	Over the Altmuhl	124
Map 36	Danube Crossing	126
Map 37	Munich Approaches	127
Map 38	Munich Area	128
Figure F	Germany to April 30, 1945	129

Dedicated to the Man who fought the war the hard way–

By permission of Bill Mauldin

The Infantryman–



179TH INFANTRY REGIMENT

The Regimental insignia, in silver and blue, bears the Latin inscription, "In All Things Prepared." The motto is interpolated into the design through an Indian motif: the pipe of peace and the tomahawk of war.

45TH INFANTRY DIVISION

Also utilizing the Indian motif, the Division insignia is a yellow "Thunderbird" on a red background. The Indian bird of rain, harbinger of good crops and fine harvest, it is considered a good luck sign.

HEADQUARTERS 179TH INFANTRY
APO 45, U. S. ARMY

8 June 1945

I am honored and proud to command the 179th Infantry. The Regiment has established a superb record in World War II and, like any other combat organization, it has lived on even while its casualties mounted and its personnel changed, and changed again. Every commander who preceded me, every officer and every enlisted man who served with the 179th Infantry, contributed a part of himself to the Regiment and thus helped to make the unit what it was and is. I take this opportunity to express my deepest admiration and appreciation for those members of this organization, past and present.

This is the story of the 179th Infantry. But it is the story as well of all infantrymen in the American Army, their trials and their battles.

We were fortunate to have a unit historian who remained with us throughout the long, hard war. Written in the field concurrently with the events it describes, this account has a continuity that few such histories can have. It has the additional value of being written by someone who was there.

The actual facts are correct. They are based on the unit's official war journal which the author, in addition to his normal duties, also wrote during the entire war.

The facts, however, are garnished by "sidelights" - both the good and the bad - which reflect the general opinion of men in the Regiment at the time of writing. These asides are not to be construed as "official", but they enhance the picture of war as it is seen through the eyes of the man who is closest to all its horror, the infantryman.

So, while we cannot assume responsibility as an organization for this book as an official document, we are happy to acknowledge it as a true story of the life of a fighting unit as it was lived in this Regiment - the 179th Infantry, a part of the 45th Infantry Division.

Preston J C Murphy

PRESTON J C MURPHY
Colonel, 179th Infantry
Commanding

Introduction

This is the military history of the 179th Regimental Combat Team. As a component of the "fighting 45th" Infantry Division, its story is a revealing one. Through its history can be seen a major portion of the Sicilian and Italian Campaigns, much of the French and German Campaigns—in other words, the war in Europe. Through its history weave the gallantries of the men who made the Regiment; yet by changing names and dates and places, this becomes the story of any combat infantry regiment. Thus, through its history must inevitably flow the life blood of the American soldier.

The 45th's brilliant war record has received due prominence in newspaper accounts and in the archives of the War Department; a record which, since World War II was the 45th's first and only war, had no previous foundation to color it in the making. And the 179th did more than its share to bring to the "Thunderbirds" the acclaim of the American people.

Unfortunately a roster of the Combat Team's personnel cannot be incorporated here. The Regiment alone, with replacements, transfers and casualties, in peace and in war, had better than 25,000 men and officers pass through it! Nor, regrettably, can more of the 179th's personalities and more individual achievements which paced this great adventure be embodied in this account.

But each of us had his own experiences, hence his own memories. I recall the day at "Pickett", for instance, when Col. Hutchins, praising the Regiment's execution of a recent maneuver at a critique, got sidetracked recollecting a dirty radio truck he had ridden in during the exercise. The more he talked of it the madder he got until he was off on a searing "dressing down" about everything the 179th had ever done. That's not criticism, but simply an incident that humanizes a man, and becomes a memory.

I remember the "family feuds" through Italy in the S-1 Section of the Regimental Command Post — Raymond Allen, Everett Hoffman, Herman

Craig, Albert Shapiro — with which as Red Cross field director I always operated, over how to prepare a meal from those rarely-issued 5-in-1 rations; and how cooking with a borrowed, recalcitrant Coleman stove in the torrential rains was our major concern during the historic battles of Venafro and the Winter Line.

When Gen. Eagles took command of the 45th, I recall his introduction to the 179th: how, reaching the front just after a bloody slaughter in which the 2nd Battalion had tried desperately to wrest a mountain top from a superior enemy force, he berated Capt. Mallory and Lt. Ness for a) not wearing leggins and b) not having shaved. My memory fails me as to which officer had committed which sin of omission.

I recall the time I was scared to death at Anzio; and the fruits that splattered me as I rode with Ralph Allegrezza into Manosque through clapping hysterical French crowds that gathered to watch us roll victoriously on . . . and I cannot forget the terrible night we shot down plane after plane during an enemy raid in a paroxsym of joy, only to discover we had knocked down among them our own paratrooper-filled transports. But so it goes.

In the following pages I could not set down the infinite humorous and tragic events that filled each day. This book has other purposes. Because it is about a unit that did its job, a thoroughly unpleasant job, day in and day out, for the men of the 179th it becomes a documentary diary on which to hang a retrospective bull session, on which to base a "Tall Tale", which with repetition will grow taller. Or for the man who doesn't want to talk about the war, a book to hand his friends and say, "That's where I was!" For the outsider, over-factual though it seems, it is the story of a fighting regiment.

This account is neither "prettied up" nor glamorized. I would not insult the memory of those who died in lonely misery, or those who struggled through the ordeal, by such falsification. Relatively few soldiers actually experienced the unglamorous, unenviable, unique life of a combat infantrymen: I can't credit the saying that it took 9 men in rear areas to keep 1 man fighting. I'll swear it took 900. So I believe that what these few did endure should be brought home, however belatedly, to everyone.

I don't believe this was done concurrently with the war. I found good descriptive coverage of the Pacific War in every magazine and newspaper: fought island by island, the Pacific battles were photogenic, homogenious and on a scale which permitted the depiction of life in lower echelons. In the vast, sprawling war with Germany the blanket of censorship was drawn tighter; there was neither time nor space to slice the "big picture" into small ones. The western front went home over the cable as a vast, impersonal description of large scale operations.

Correspondents did relate what generals said and did. But how about what the GIs who actually did the fighting thought and did? It may not seem as important to history, yet what the riflemen thought was their morale, and when their morale was low the objective was not taken. For although the victorious offensive receives the publicity, it is the gruelling, torturous days of inching on through devouring enemy fire that the men remember in their

nightmares, that reveal the reality of war, that win battles, and wars. I have tried to recapture these moments as well as the moments of victory.

In attempting a picture of infantry life, "gripes" must be aired. Perhaps we didn't get the raw deals we thought we were getting, from private to colonel. Perhaps our "bitches" sound petty. But a guy confined to a foxhole has nothing to do but fight, and let off verbal steam, the only emotional release he has. These gripes, very real when the shells are whistling, are in actuality but offshoots of the soldier's basic resentment: that a world system exists which breeds wars and denies him the right to live his own life.

Thus the complaints herein registered must be taken for what they are worth, as general complaints with which I did not always concur, even though I record them. We are all human; we are most concerned with what affects *us*. Every soldier has had to adjust himself from civilian independence to military regulations; the infantryman must adjust himself still further: to the terrors of battle, to living in a hole in the ground, to eating 3 meals a day out of a cold tin can. Doubly imposed upon, the infantryman is particularly sensitive to injustice, unreasonable hardships and discrimination, most particularly because in his case alone the answers affect his very life.

But the infantryman, though often he finds it hard to remember that no personal penalty is intended, is aware of a purpose behind the most unreasonable demands. He appreciates the inconceivably huge scale of global war, the fantastic task involved in equipping and directing 8 million troops overseas, the incalculable achievements Gens. Marshall and Somervell must have performed to make possible each operation in which he partook. That awareness is there always, even when he is consciously remembering only that as an American he has the right to complain publicly. And if anything as vast as the U. S. (or any other) Army is perfect, then the millenium has arrived.

There are many omissions in this history: some records cover only the Regiment, for I had less access to attached units' files. It was impossible to reproduce all the operations details without a map a mile square. The sketches included are makeshift except, of course, cartoons by Bill Mauldin, who generously allowed us to use some of his masterpieces in this history.

But prefaces are intended for more than apologies. And this story could never have been written but for the impetus, guidance and assistance given me by Lt. Col. Wayne L. Johnson, Major Gardner A .Williams and CWO Floyd L. Bryant. They and the other staff and company officers and enlisted men freely advised and oriented me. However, they are not to be held responsible for exceptions anyone wishes to take with the history related in this book.

And objections will be raised. For not only is there rivalry between divisions, and conflicting claims; there is rivalry between regiments within divisions, between battalions and companies of the same organizations. I can only state that I have used the most reliable sources.

Though none was in any more combat, no doubt other regiments served their country with no less distinction than did the 179th. I admit its faults, and those of the Division, for this is a "White Paper", not a white-washing. If I imply that we had it tougher than others did, that is because at times circumstances made it actually the case, and because the account is undoubtedly

flavored by having been written in the field under fire as the events took place. And because I lived with the 179th and 45th for three years, through all of its fights.

A certain natural pride is unavoidable, inherent in my writing as it is inherent in the hearts of the men who made up the Regiment. And I know damn well that those men have a right to be proud, and a right to take pride in their pride.

Hitler's Apartment,
Munich, Germany
May, 1945

Warren P. Munsell, Jr.

List Of Abbreviations

Newspapers have familiarized the public with most military abbreviations. Even so it is well to remind the reader the meaning of those employed herein. I have resorted to that reader's horror, the footnote, but explanation of certain specific references seemed essential. The abbreviations below, however, appear repeatedly throughout the narrative.

I have used abbreviations solely because they mean as much, often more, per se than do the words for which they stand. That may sound paradoxical, but any combat soldier knows that his headquarters was called the "C. P." Many *don't* know what those initials stand for: a C. P. is a C. P., a command post a high class name for only God and the War Department knows what. Because abbreviations, like nicknames, have always been second-nature to Americans, in my years with the 179th I never heard an observation post called anything but an O.P., nor a TD anything but a TD. But I'm doing it myself. *That* is justification enough for their use.

RCT — Regimental Combat Team.

AA(A) — Anti-Aircraft (Artillery).

(A)FA — (Armored) Field Artillery.

Inf Regt — So used only in referring to unit designation: thus, 131st Inf Regt (Infantry Regiment).

CP — Command Post. Field Hqs. of a unit's operations staff. Well forward to facilitate communications and control of the fighting elements, the CP operates in the field from CP tents, set up in defilated positions and camouflaged, or in convenient houses if the situation permits. Actually, the CP is where the unit commander is, by military definition.

CO — Commanding Officer, herein always of the 179th unless defined otherwise specifically.

GI — Government Issue, anything issued by the military, and by usage applied to the soldier himself.

CG, ACG — Commanding General, herein always of the 45th Inf Div, unless otherwise stated. ACG, actually Assistant Commanding General, refers to Assistant Division Commander.

VOCG, VOCO — By Verbal Order of the CO or CG.

PW — Prisoner of War.

Div — In unit designation only, as 3rd Inf Div.

MP — Military Police.

TD — Tank Destroyer, ½-track or tank-like armored vehicle mounting 3-inch anti-tank gun.

AMG, CIC — Allied Military Government, Counter Intelligence Corps.

Bn — Battalion, only used here when designating a unit.

KIA MIA, WIA — Battle casualty abbreviations used when listing casualties: Killed in Action, Missing in Action, Wounded in Action.

EM, O — Used here for listing battle casualties, etc. Enlisted Men, and Officers.

BHL, MLR — Beachhead Line, Main Line of Resistance.

(C)WO — (Chief) Warrant Officer. Other military rank abbreviations are thoroughly familiar.

LD — Line of Departure — meaning the jump off point of an attack.

IP — Initial Point — same as an LD except that it is employed not for an attack but for a movement.

HE and AP — High Explosive and Armor Piercing (also Anti-Personnel, in re bombs) artillery and mortar shells.

A-T — Anti-tank.

SPs — Self-propelled guns, mounted and thus mobile, as opposed to towed guns.

Ex-O — Executive Officer—of the 179th Infantry, unless otherwise indicated.

TOT — Time on Target. So many shells are fired for so many minutes on a given area.

MSR — Main Supply Route.

OP — Observation Post.

"88s", "75s" — Refer to millimeter calibre of shell. 88s are TOO exclusively German.

Hqs Co — Headquarters Company, used in such unit designations as 1st Bn Hqs Co. Other company abbreviations used are Sv Co (Service), Cn Co (Cannon), Med Det (Medical Detachment) and AT Co (Anti-Tank Company).

Power — Code designation (in telephone use only) of 45th Division. All 45th Division units began with P: thus the 180th was Passport, the 157th Poison, the 179th Pagan. For clarity and secrecy in case of enemy listeners, these code names were always used.

Red—1st (Battalion). Thus in calling the 179th 1st Bn, one called Pagan Red.

White—2nd (Battalion).

Blue—3rd (Battalion).

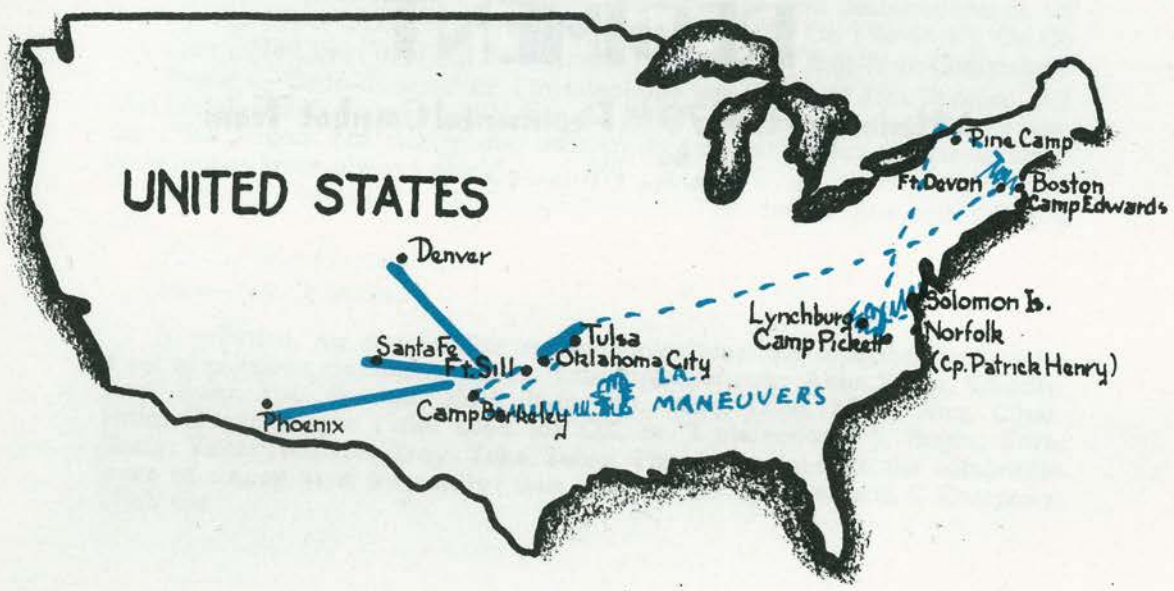
In addition, for clarification in communications, the alphabet was given a set of phonetic, definitive names. This alphabet ran: Able, Baker, Charlie, Dog, Easy, Fox, George, How, Item, Jig, King, Love, Mike, Nan, Oboe, Peter, Queen, Roger (also used for OK, or "I understand"), Sugar, Tare, Uncle, Victor ,William, Xray, Yoke, Zebra. Those pertaining to the companies were of course used frequently: thus, Pagan Red Charlie, was C Company, 179th Inf.

THE STORY OF A REGIMENT

A History of the 179th Regimental Combat Team

by

Darrell P. Mansell Jr.



U. S. A.

45th Div. Moves - - - - -

45th Div. Maneuvers ———

General assembly areas to mobilize

MAP A

PART ONE: TOWARDS ARMAGEDDON

Chapter One. A Matter Of History

Wars, born when man was created, exist while he exists. Even in the few moments of universal peace men plan and fashion new implements for future wars.

Such were the days anteceding the globe's most recent halocaust, days when the Army was infinitesimal, when men in uniform were still thought of as guys who couldn't get a job anywhere else, when the infantry wore leggins and campaign hats—and the National Guard was a lark for men who liked to play at soldiering a couple of nights a week.

In 1925 the Oklahoma State Guard received Federal recognition and was incorporated into the U. S. Army as that state's representative in the family of National Guard divisions. It became the 45th Infantry Division. As such it embarked on its military career. As such it became famous.

Originally organized as a "square" division, the 45th's basic components, the infantry regiments, were four in number. The 179th and 180th hailed from Oklahoma and comprised the 90th Brigade. The 157th from Colorado and the 158th out of Arizona made up the 89th Brigade.

Other Division elements included the 70th Artillery Brigade, encompassing the 158th, 160th and 189th Field Artillery Regiments; the 120th Medical, Engineer and Quartermaster Regiments; and Division Headquarters' special troops.

Because these units came principally from Oklahoma, where more Indian tribes reside than anywhere else in the Union, a third of the 45th's original enlisted personnel was of Indian descent.

Years of leisurely peacetime training for the soldier-civilians of the Guard sauntered by. But across the ocean war clouds gathered. Hitler, manacling Germany, hungrily sucked in Austria, Czechoslovakia. Bloated by uncontested success, the Nazi monster grew bolder and began to gobble up Poland. Only then, in September 1939, did Europe's democracies, with true democratic reluctance, go to war.

The Allied Entente met with disaster. By June 1940 England alone defied the lengthening Nazi shadow. Hopes sank deeper into quicksand when Hitler turned on Russia and his mighty armies began to roll across the Steppes through the wobbly Red legions.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt cajoled and harangued his fellow citizens, disdained the cry of "war monger" and prepared for national self-preservation at first in the only way acceptable to the country, through its pocketbook, as the Arsenal of Democracy. Despite brittle undercurrents of the times, despite the Fifth Column stretching out its tentacles to clear the Nazi path into the Americas, the U. S. was averse to being awakened by any but a Prince Charming.

But overnight the country was compelled to wake up. In September 1940 the desperate President proclaimed a state of National Emergency. And on September 16 the first four National Guard divisions, the 45th among them, were called to

active duty. No longer social organizations, their training now assumed a grim realism. The Guardsmen became civilian-soldiers.

A week's grace in reporting for duty enabled the separate 45th units to recruit at their home stations, to augment their peacetime strength to the authorized mobilization strength. In subsequent months, through the acquisition of volunteers and selectees, the outfit gradually attained its full T/O[1] strength.

And the boys still thought they'd be back home in a year. They were only a couple of light years off.

The Division assembled for the first time as an integrated part of the U. S. Army at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, on September 24, under the command of Maj. Gen. William S. Key. The troops engaged in general military exercises here until February 28, 1941, until the 45th had been issued its complete quota of individual and organizational equipment. Whereupon the entire Division packed up and departed for its first field training ground, Camp Barkeley, Texas.

Through fall mud and rains the emphasis rested on practical field problems, the program including participation in the 1941 Louisiana Maneuvers, from August 4 to October 4. The outstanding performance of the 45th Division during these exercises caused the General Staff to single it out for special commendation and to mark it as an efficient combat force to remember in the future. The 179th Infantry Regiment alone fought off an entire "enemy" division for three days during the maneuvers.

With Pearl Harbor, and the entry of the U. S. into World War II on December 7, 1941, the Army began to streamline its training program and at the same time modernize its divisions. Thus, on February 1, 1942, the 45th Infantry Division was triangularized. The 158th Infantry was detached, leaving the 45th with three infantry regiments. The Engineer and Medical Regiments became battalions; the Quartermaster Regiment was reduced to a battalion, later a company; and the Artillery regiments were reorganized as battalions. To retain the Division's heavy fire power, however, the 171st and 45th Division Artillery Battalions were activated.

Furthermore, the unwieldly brigade was discarded as a military anachronism. Its place was taken by the more mobile Combat Team: with the infantry regiments as the nucleii, around each was built an organization which could function as a completely self-sufficient fighting force. And hereafter all training was conducted by Combat Team, so that each RCT would learn by practice internal coordination and mutual support.

Thus the 179th Infantry, with the 160th F.A. Bn, Company B of the 120th Engineer Bn and Company B of the 120th Medical Bn, became the 179th Regimental Combat Team[2].

Early in 1942 the 179th had a rapid succession of Regimental commanders after Col. Murray F. Gibbons' transfer. Then, at Fort Devens, Mass., whither the Division moved on April 20, two noteworthy staff changes occurred: Maj. Gen. Troy H. Middleton took command of the 45th, and Col. Robert B. Hutchins was assigned on July 6 as C.O. of the 179th Infantry.

Field problems, continuing to receive the major stress at this station, included a two weeks' exercise at Camp Edwards, Mass., where the RCT practiced amphibious landing operations, the technique of "shore to shore"[3] assault in small landing craft.

Other events annotated the Devens interlude: each Division unit received large numbers of replacements, the majority of whom were selectees from New York and Massachusetts. And the 179th was signally honored. A provisional battalion was formed from its companies and sent to New York City, where the representative unit marched down Fifth Avenue in the 1942 Army Day Parade.

It was also at Fort Devens that rumor, the soldier's staff of life, began to rear its insidious head, nourished by several false "alerts" to prepare for overseas service. In quick succession the 45th was "on its way" to India, Iceland, the

---

1—Tables of Organization, the War Department "bible" governing the strength by grade of all military units. In 1944 the T/O was revised as the TO/E, Table of Organization and Equipment. This volume combined the old T/O and T/BA (Table of Basic Allowances) which stipulated the authorized equipment allotted to each military unit.

2—However, administratively the attached units remained under control of their respective organizations, as well as being responsible to their unit C.O.s through the chain of command.

3—Operations in which troops embark on one shore and proceed across a body of water to assault another, "hostile," shore from small landing craft. This in contrast to "ship to shore" operations, in which troops debark from large transports into landing boats to assault "enemy" beaches.

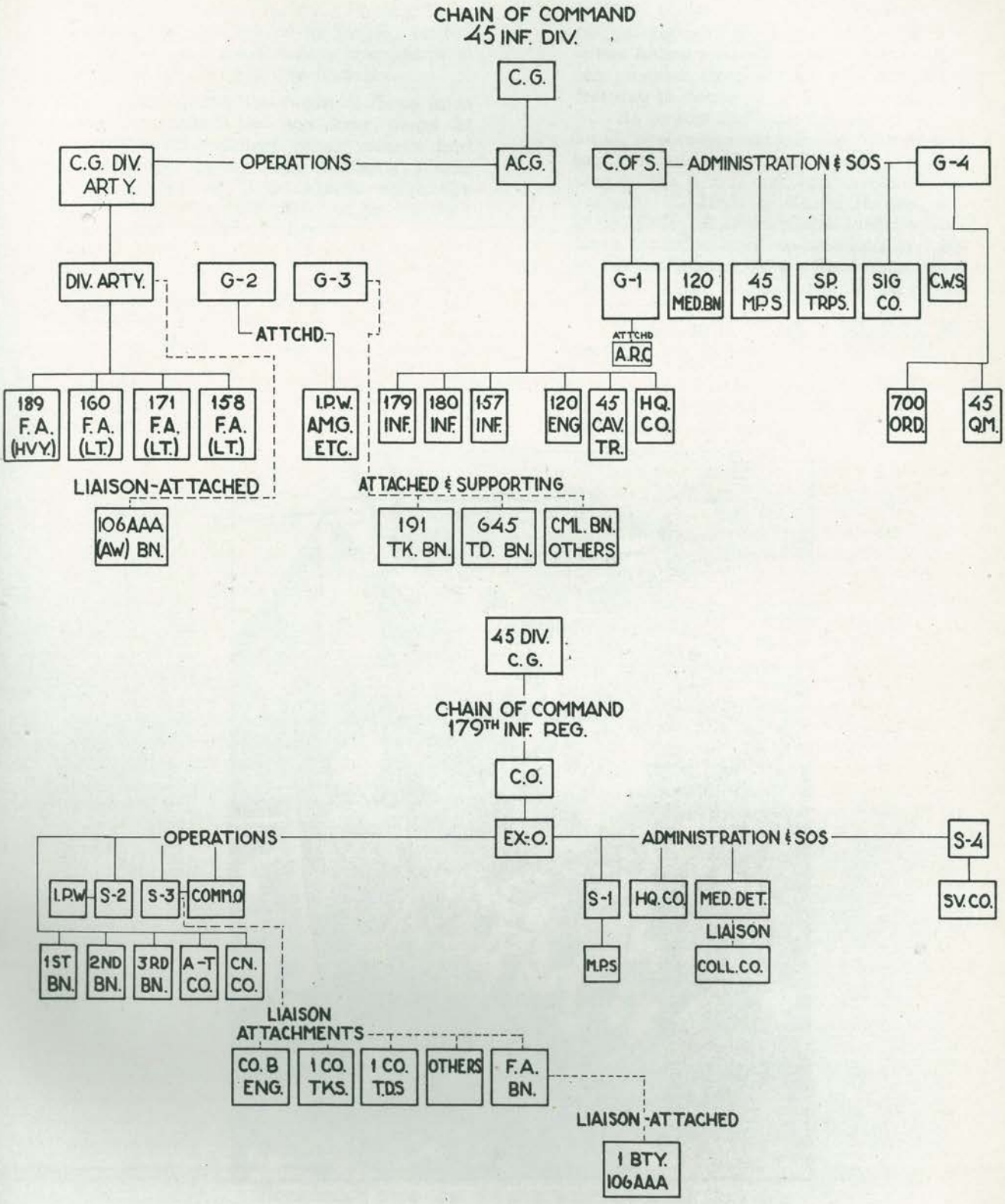


FIGURE B

Note: The C.O. of a Regiment controls his battalions tactically through S-3 (operations) and administratively through the Adjutant (S-1), who is directly responsible to the Ex-O.

South Pacific (God forbid!), France. Then, as the Allied invasion in Tunisia on November 8 promised further operations in that theater, Italy or the Balkans.

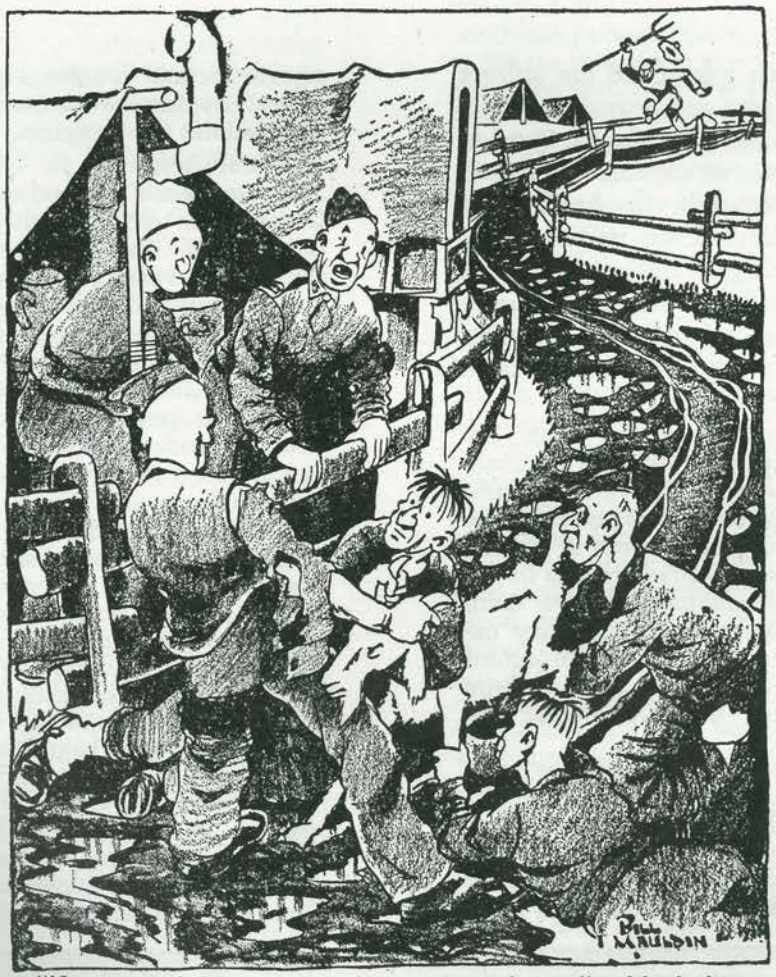
But, equally the result of these false alerts, abetted by two long years of monotonous training, other rumors had the Division never going overseas: it was hinted that the Thunderbirds would be used for battle all right—against the then rambunctious John L. Lewis.

Slogans appeared on latrine doors: "Mother, take down your service flag, your son's in the 45th;" "Join the 45th and Beat the Draft."

On November 9 the Division moved to Pine Camp, New York, where, with temperatures dropping as low as 46 degrees *below* zero, the only possible training program involved how to keep from freezing to death.

As events in North Africa came to a head, however, suddenly the 45th's training schedule was speeded up. The Division began a four day rail movement on January 11, 1943, to Camp Pickett, Virginia. Here, while small unit tactical problems, marches and "toughening up" exercises continued, a gradually mounting tension began to permeate the camp atmosphere.

Then, one day in late February, the fuse that had been laid was finally lit.



"Never mind, boys—the old man wants his coffee black this morning."

By permission of Bill Mauldin

TOWARDS ARMAGEDDON

Chapter 2. Ready, Get Set!

Col. Hutchins assembled the officers of his Combat Team and gravely announced to them that the 45th Infantry Division was in the process of starting its final 95 Day Training Program in Amphibious Operations, a shakedown period immediately preparatory to overseas service. This time the 45th's imminent departure was no "latrine rumor"[1]. Its destination was not divulged, but the Division was definitely going *somewhere!*

With the knowledge of what lay ahead as impetus, the intensive schedule now launched was more feverishly tackled than any ever before executed by the Division. Its dual purpose was to harden the troops for the rigorous ordeals in the offing and simultaneously to give them every conceivable phase of military experience that might be utilized in actual combat. Each brief allotted moment was nursed by "Plans and Operations" toward these ends.

Running obstacle, bayonet and infiltration courses,[2] 5 mile timed marches and 25 mile endurance hikes, and practice climbs on the "mockups"[3] all became part of each day's routine. And to supplement the squad, platoon and larger unit tactical problems scheduled night as well as day, two important maneuvers rounded out the program.

First came a 10 day amphibious "ship to shore" operation, held in the Chesapeake Bay on the "Solomon Islands", off the Maryland coast. This simulated invasion, painstakingly mimicking the real thing to the smallest detail, was conducted in conjunction with the Navy, which provided actual troopships. The Air Corps also gave a hand; in addition to ground forces deployed to resist the invaders, "enemy" aircraft strafed and bombed (with flour sacks) the landing parties.

This taste of the real thing was unpleasantly emphasized by continual foul weather. Sleeping in open foxholes with only a blanket and shelter-half to ward off rain, sleet and finally snow coupled with night temperatures below zero, made the troops aware of what was in store for them. But *here*, at the end of the exercise, they were able to return to a warm ship and a well stocked larder!

The second maneuver was a 15 day problem in the Blue Ridge Mountains north of Lynchburg, Virginia, calling for extensive tactical deployment to demonstrate the complications of warfare and

---

1—So called as it has about zero veracity, is generally gossip emanating from a latrine.

2—Troops crawl on their bellies across a given area through barbed wire entanglements, while machine guns spit bullets just over their heads. The course's purpose is to accustom troops to the sensation of being under fire, incidentally providing a memorable warning to keep their heads, and their tails, down.

3—Scaffolding over which are hung nets such as hang from the sides of transports for debarkation into small landing boats. These swaying rope ladders are hazardous obstacles when the climber is trying to ascend or descend and at the same time clutch 80 pounds of equipment.

supply in mountainous terrain. These difficulties were brought home all too realistically by an accidental forest fire which the entire 179th fought for two days.

The race against time, with bloodhound concentration on getting results quickly, went on. The weeks passed, and suddenly, like a blow from behind, the 95 day training period had ended. The time for action was at hand.

The Division was at its peak of efficiency. Each soldier was tough, readied for combat by the exacting physical conditioning exercises. Each RCT was a smoothly geared entity, with its own supply trains, combat engineers, "medics", and heavy fire support. Each of these RCT elements, necessary to the whole, knew how to operate in its appointed assignment. And within each Regiment each company was partly independent, being composed not only of riflemen and supporting machine gunners and mortarmen, but also supply and kitchen details, aid men and company headquarters personnel.

Such coordination all the way down the chain of command was essential for the successful employment of the 45th in combat. For armies fight with divisions and regiments, regiments with companies, battalions with platoons and companies with squads. A break anywhere along the line can dislocate an entire operation. But the 45th Division C. G. knew that he could use his Combat Teams either in rotation, side by side, or as separate task forces, certain that each could fight without assistance from other troops needed elsewhere.

That the RCTs could do this was determined in training. That they did so is history. Because of this thorough preparatory background, Lt. Gen. George S. Patton, Jr. was able to exclaim, on witnessing the 45th fight its first engagement alongside units previously battle-tested in the North African Campaign:

"They fight like veterans!"

On May 1, 1943, Col. Hutchins again stood facing his assembled officers. The long awaited orders had been received. Two and a half years of military training were about to be put to the test. The fuse, having been lit, had run its course. The 45th Division, made ready to embark for —Shangri-La.

The fever of last minute preparations began. Special paraphernalia for invasion troops was issued, units drew new organizational and individual property, new vehicles replaced the old. Non-essential equipment was discarded, historical records and files were stored for safekeeping, the 45th's vehicles were "waterproofed,"[1] and companies dropped from their rolls those who had failed to exhibit the qualities of good combat soldiers. The Combat Team was being streamlined for action.

Families, of course, could not be told. The men themselves knew none of the details, only of the impending fact. But everyone frantically scrambled for those weekend passes: there was that feeling in the air that made every weekend home seem the last. And few men can successfully fool their wives or mothers.

The final step commenced with the processing of the Division. Medical examinations rechecked the physical and mental fitness of every enlisted man and officer. Safe arrival cards[2] were filled out. And passenger lists compiled.

This was no ordinary crossing. The 45th was sailing as a separate Task Force, leaving the U. S. prepared to land fighting on enemy soil. So it had to be "combat loaded."

TQMs,[3] selected for each ship, plunged into the complications of allocating every cubic inch of space aboard the transports. Each man, each barracks bag, each gun, each vehicle, each pound of food and each ammunition case had its place aboard, no more room than it required and no less. To be mathematically positive that what fit on paper would fit aboard ship and to supervise the actual loading were yeoman tasks. They were handled flawlessly by the men and officers under Capt. Buford S. Kirtley.

The soldiers of the 179th got orders to pack up, and on May 24, in strictest secrecy, the 45th Infantry Division was transported to its "jump off" station, the staging area of Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia. Letters home, under the sharp eye of the censor, continued to refer blithely to

---

1—Sealing of machine parts either destructible or susceptible to corrosion on contact with salt water.

2—Cards addressed to each man's next to kin, made up and held in the U. S. When a convoy safely reached its destination, a cable advised the Port of Embarkation Post Office and the cards were thereupon mailed to the addressees.

3—Transport Quartermasters, in charge of loading and disposition of all cargo and personnel aboard Navy or Merchant Marine vessels.

the weather at Camp Pickett. But that was no inane hoax. Lives were at stake, for Camp Patrick Henry was the gateway to the sea—and enemy submarines.

While administrative sections sweated over the minutely detailed embarkation plans, the troops had nothing to do. The camp, a dismal farewell to the U.S.A., was new and inadequate, and it was sealed tight. So the men just stood around, nervous and bored.

Their boredom, however, ceased with a bang on June 4. On that momentous morning the 45th took its last train ride, to the port of embarkation, Hampton Roads, Virginia. Giving the troops no time to be nervous, on arrival they were hustled up the gangways of the waiting transports. Already aboard were its vehicles and organizational equipment, and consequently by 1100[1] the next morning the 179th was completely loaded. Pulling away from their piers, the RCT troopships glided out to the Transport Assembly Area in the harbor and rode at anchor until the entire Division fleet was ready to sail.

Five transports bore the 179th RCT. The USS LEONARD WOOD, transport flagship under the command of Commodore W. B. Phillips, USN, carried the Combat Team commander, his staff, and troops of the 1st Battalion. The USS HARRY LEE, alternately maligned as the "Listing Lee" or "Horrible Harry," bore the Regimental Echelon[2] and the Unlettered Companies[3]. The 2nd Battalion troops were aboard the USS DOROTHEA L. DIX and the 3rd Battalion forces on the USS FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE, while the USS ALCYONE served as the Regimental cargo vessel, carrying a supplementary 5 day supply of gas, ammunition and rations in addition to such equipment as was not essential for the initial landing.

Through the 6th and 7th of June the transport fleet and naval escort congregated in the harbor. The 20 ships that made up the Division complement, being troop-carriers, were heavily protected. The naval force included the plane-carrying cruisers USS BROOKLYN, USS BOISE and USS PHILADELPHIA, the latter the convoy flagship under command of Rear Admiral Kirk, and more than a score of destroyers. With the bristling ack-ack batteries and 3- or 5-inch guns of the transports to supplement the naval fire power, the massed Task Force presented a formidable fighting force area.

By nightfall on June 7 the 45th Division convoy had assembled and lay straining at its anchor chains off Hampton Roads, restlessly awaiting sailing orders.

1—Time herein is recorded in conformity with military practice, in which the hours are counted from 1 to 24 and the minutes written immediately thereafter. Thus 3 p.m. becomes 1500; 2:55 a.m. becomes 0255.

2—Includes Special Staff (as differentiated from Operations Staff), Hqs Co, Message Center, Communications Section. As in this case, the Executive Officer and each departmental assistant generally moved in a separate echelon, so that in case of accident to one staff, a full replacement staff would be available at once.

3—Often referred to as Unlettered or "Q" Battalion. See Appendix A for composition.

Chapter 3. The Yanks Are Coming

At 0820 June 8, 1943, the convoy was under steam and began to ease slowly out of the harbor. Once through the screen of submarine nets and mine fields guarding the mouth, and out in the open sea, the Task Force steered a southeasterly course until it crossed the Equator some 600 miles off the South American coast. Then, swerving east, it cut a bold swath through the less traveled waters of the South Atlantic. The long, gently plunging columns of transports, vigilantly watched over by far flung lines of destroyers and mothered fore and aft by cruisers, zigzagged their way toward Africa. As the fleet approached the Canary Islands the needle swung northwards.

During the days at sea the RCT Command pursued its training of personnel through the mediums of films and lectures. Otherwise, save for frequent "Abandon Ship" and debarkation drills, the men were free to write letters or read, to engage in bull sessions or poker for stakes that only doomed men play for, or simply to stare at more water than most of the soldiers from the land-locked Mid- and Southwest had ever dreamed of. And though quarters were cramped the men were happy in the present, for the Navy's chow was good.

There was, of course, radio silence. Intership communications were maintained by semaphore or blinker lights. After dusk blackout regulations were rigidly enforced on deck, while even below decks on some vessels the only lights permissible were the red lamps marking the hatchways, which cast no more than a faint, eery gleam five feet away.

As the ships plowed through a calm sea into the war zone, the days and nights slipped by, uneventful for the troops aboard. But several submarine contacts were picked up by radar,[1] necessitating emergency turns[2] by the whole fleet in unison, and sending escorting destroyers and cruisers racing off to attack the enemy undersea raiders. The bubbling white water spouts hurled skyward by exploding depth charges were visible to the soldiers lining the rails. The 179th Journal logged these U-boat contacts on June 13, 15, 18 and 21.

As the Task Force, steaming along the West African coastline, drew within range of enemy air and raider bases, the Navy maintained "General Quarters", its crews at battle stations, at sunrise and sunset on board all ships. But, to the delight of the soldiers, nothing interfered with the regular, frequent, sing-song chant over the ships' loud speakers: "Sweepers, man your brooms, clean sweepdown fore and aft."

On June 21 at 1430 the 179th's flag-

1—Secret devices which record any object contacted by their radiating beams.
2—All ships make prearranged sharp starboard or port turns at irregular intervals to prevent enemy U-boats from calculating the fleet's course and thus setting the course of their torpedoes.

ship passed the Rock of Gibraltar, looming formidably firm out of a shimmering sea. It came within eyesight of a Europe still totally Nazi-dominated save for a particle of European Russia, struggling desperately for its existence. The ships pulsed on past torrid, squat Tangiers into a Mediterranean Sea still more than half under Axis control.

Despite enemy broadcasts claiming the sinking of the WOOD and the LEE, no contact whatever was made with enemy subs or planes in "Mare Nostrum."

The following afternoon the convoy steamed into the bay at Mers El Kibir, 7 miles from Oran, Algeria, and dropped anchor. Sharing anchorage in the mole with the 45th Division fleet were several British battle-wagons, the French battleship RICHELIEU, and countless light Allied naval vessels, all hot from combat, and now constantly on patrol to clear the waterways of the enemy after the first Allied victory of the war, the conquest of North Africa.

All hands and "passengers" remained aboard as the transports lay at anchor until, late in the afternoon of June 24, the Task Force again raised steam and headed east along the North African coast, to partake in the final amphibious dress rehearsal, known by the code designation, the "Camberwell" Exercise.

The transports reached their Assembly Area shortly after midnight June 25, and troop debarkation, following the plan that would be put into effect on D-Day,[1] commenced at 0200. Boat team after boat team[2] slipped over the sides, down the net ladders into the waiting LCPs and LCVs[3] bobbing impatiently below. As each wave of landing craft was loaded with its complement of assault troops, the storm boats headed for shore.

The pitching invasion craft rode the surf, then stopped with a jolt on sand bars just off shore. The troops leaped out —into waist high water!

On gaining the beaches and struggling through the sand on the run, the troops executed a brief tactical problem. Then, dry except for soggy shoes, marched on feet that deteriorated into blistered stumps 16 gruelling miles in the broiling sun to the bivouac area in the vicinity of La Sidia, Algeria.

The practice landing was a disappointment: not only had the Navy landed troops on the wrong beaches, missing the marked landing points by as much as 3 miles, but on reaching shore the troops had clogged the roads and taken totally inadequate precautions and security measures as demanded by the mock invasion. Gen. Patton rode up and down the roads in his gold helmet cursing everyone within earshot. But, after the axiom of the theatrical profession, many believed that a bad dress rehearsal meant a good "first night."

From June 27-30 Maj. Wayne L. Johnson, Regimental S-3[4], put into force a strenuous program to recondition the men after their long sea voyage, one demanding taxing foot marches, running of obstacle courses and squad tactical maneuvers. The latter included house-to-house and street fighting, and patrolling. Incidentally the troops had a good whiff of the Arabs and their beasts of burden, a taste of native wine, and a wrestling match with French money. It was a toss-up as to which was worse.

Meanwhile the transports had repaired to their berths at Mers El Kibir, where the RCT staff perfected plans for the coming operation. And on July 1 the 179th's sweating troops returned to the ships, gaining a brief respite aboard while the Allied command awaited the propitious moment to begin the fireworks.

With the realization that "Camberwell" wrote finis to practice performances, that the next time it would be "for keeps", excited anticipation welled up in the hearts of the men in the holds. While everyone openly mulled over the 45th's possible objective, each man inwardly was haunted by that inevitable question mark which every untested soldier the world over asks himself: Will I be afraid? No matter a man's background, no mat-

---

1—Invasion Day, as H-hour was equivalent to the zero hour of the last war.

2—Each was composed of an officer or non-com and up to 35 men per boat team. Drills were continual, because in the complete blackout during invasion, each man must know by rote his route, boat team station and the order in which he debarks.

3—Landing Craft Personnel and Landing Craft Vehicular, small motor driven barges, flat-bottomed, armed with 2 light machine guns and equipped with landing platforms forward which drop into the water to become runways. The former accommodates 36 men, the latter a vehicle and 2-6 men or no vehicle and 36 men. Transports carry these boats on deck, and on nearing the objective shore, lower the craft into the water for the final assault on the beaches.

4—G-1, Administration; G-2, Intelligence; G-3, Plans and Operations; G-4, Supply. In echelons lower than divisions, S is used instead of G, but represents the same category.

ter what he was or is, the answer is never predictable.

On July 5 Task Force 45 weighed anchor and sailed out of Mers El Kibir harbor, moving east again along the African coast. Hugging the shore line, all day the ships held a steady course. Gradually, as the coastline receded to the south, the fleet pulled away into the open sea. Eyes clung to the vanishing mountain silhouettes, lingered on the last glimpse of friendly soil.

That night, in each transport's troop headquarters, the secret orders were brought out. The ranking officer present broke the seals. Silence held as his eyes scanned the closely typed sheets of operations instructions, the maps, the overlays, the "big picture."

"Well, men, this is it. We're heading for the island of Sicily."

Maps were distributed at once, to be studied minutely by every officer and non-com of the command. Every soldier was instructed in the nature of the terrain he would attack; the beach obstacles; the location of enemy pillboxes, machine gun nests, barbed wire entanglements; the anticipated opposition; the Division and Regimental objectives. Each man received a copy of the pamphlet, "A Soldier's Guide to Sicily", a compendium of the island's history, its people, its customs—and its diseases.

And each soldier learned that he would land fighting as a part of the 7th Army, commanded by that colorful showman and brilliant soldier, Lt. Gen. George S. Patton, Jr., to take the first step in the bloody, but vital job assigned a very few divisions: to keep the enemy fully occupied in the Mediterranean, while the Allies used every moment gained to build up a vast fighting force—for another front.

Digesting this information and contemplating the future, and the past as well —for each man knew many would not come back—the doughboys saw the next day and the next pass swiftly. And still the fleet plowed eastward! The purpose was to confuse enemy observers in the air or under the surface of the sea as to the Task Force's ultimate objective: for if the course remained unaltered, the invasion fleet would wind up off the coast of Crete!

At last, in the twilight hours of July 8, the ships reversed their direction and steamed west northwest. During the night the skies blackened and shrouded the moon, heavy seas arose, and the troopships began to pitch and roll. Into the grey morning light the convoy moved on its course but was slowed by the strong winds and turbulent waves. Somewhere along the way mine sweepers, corvettes and motor torpedo boats, miniature fighters of the deep, attached themselves to the escort and, huddled close to the big transports, crashed through the seas half smothered by each splashing mountain.

With darkness the ships slackened speed until they were treading water. Then with the coming of another dawn the fleet began to cruise around in circles. Would the bad weather, disasterous to landing craft and successful amphibious operations, delay the execution of the invasion plans?

But slashing rains came to smooth the surface waters, and the stormy seas gradually settled into long ground swells. Toward evening the transports again swung into column, set a westerly course, and resumed full speed ahead toward the objective.

At two minutes to midnight, July 9, the invasion fleet slipped quietly into the Transport Area 18,000 yards off the southwest coast of Sicily, surrounded by its protecting screen of heavy and light units of the Allied Navies. Anchors splashed, chains rattled, clanked and stopped. The minutes ticked by, and July 10 came silently into being.

PART TWO: SICILIAN CAMPAIGN

Chapter 4. Invasion!

It was a moonless night. With stilled engines the ships rode out the blackness, waiting. The slap of water against their sides was loud on deck. Instinctively whispering, the Navy gunners at their stations, the troops too nervous to remain below, looked out across the bridge of water to a deeper blackness, the outline of the low lying dunes of Sicily.

Beyond the 179th's ships, beyond the Division ships, as far as the eye could see and beyond that under the horizon, poised the trembling hulls of other transports that had sailed from North Africa carrying other Allied fighting men. But not a crack of light gleamed anywhere. Like Trojan horses the ghostships belied the masses of men and tense activity in their holds.

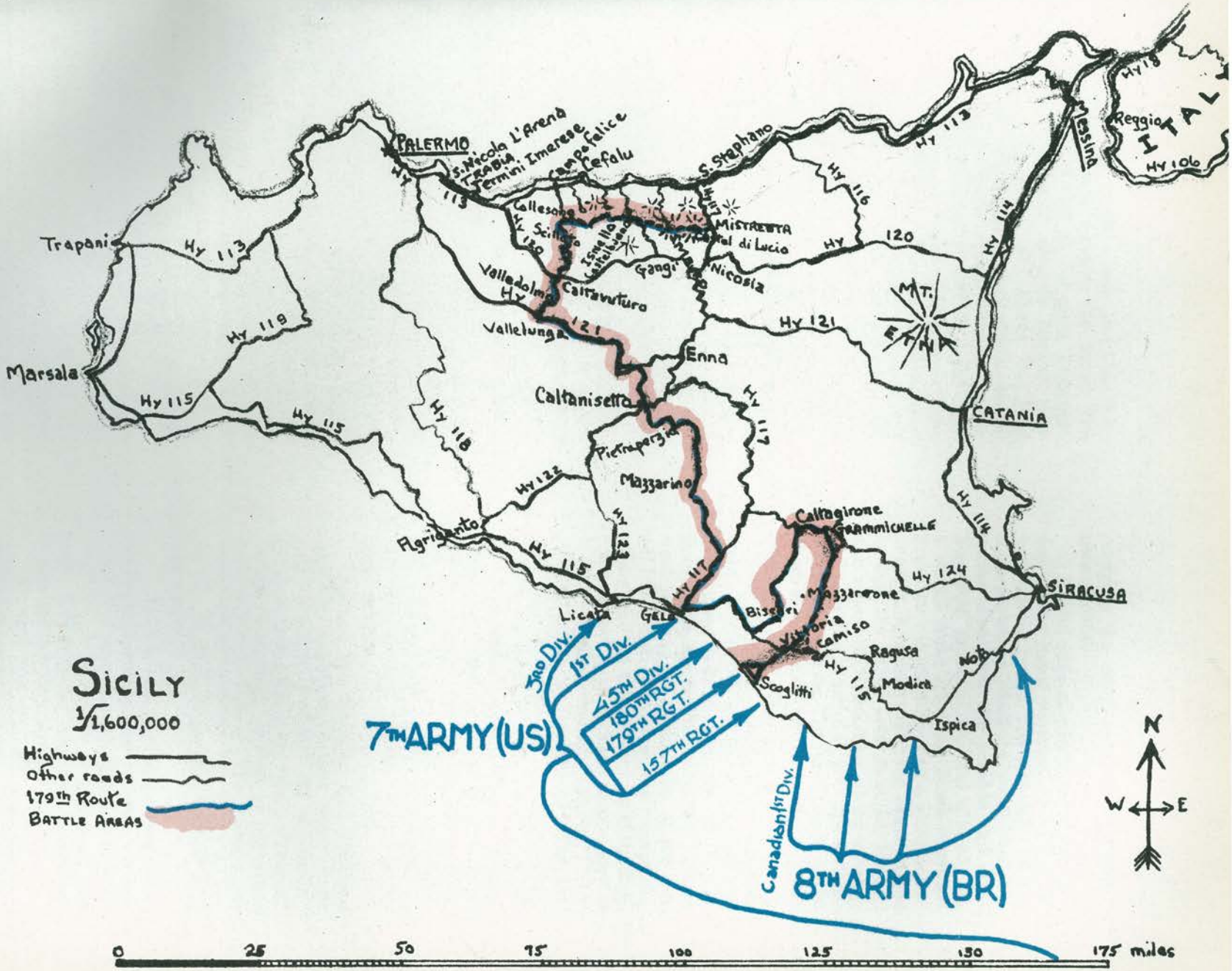
For below decks, no one even pretended to rest. Men checked and rechecked their equipment, hoisted on their packs and slipped them off again, fingered their well oiled rifles, laughed and joked nervously. The red glow of the hatchway lights made Satanic figures of the moving shapes. A corporal looked at his watch; looked again, still without seeing it. He wiped his forehead with his sleeve. It came away damp.

Whitecaps still tipped the waves. Word passed that because of the weather H-hour had been retarded from 0245 to 0345. Another hour to wait! Now that the moment had come everyone wanted to get it over with.

Suddenly a beacon ashore started blinking back and forth. Its beam cut the blackness, nervously searching, but faded far short of the transports. Then activity from another quarter: things were starting! Explosion flashes flared ashore where planes were bombing the enemy's pillboxes and coastal gun emplacements. It was like watching a silent picture: the planes were invisible, no drone of motors, no sound of crashing bomb bursts could be heard on shipboard. But the "runs" could be followed by the flashes up, then down, the beaches.

Under cover of this diversion, the transports moved in. Engines at quarter speed so as to leave no telltale phosphorescent wake, they glided closer and closer to the shore line. At 11,000 yards they stopped. Again silence reigned out on the water. The air raid went on. No novelty to the enemy, "they" had come on other nights. But did he realize that this was not any other night, but THE night?

The men lined the rails to watch the "show". As the last flashes died away and the planes went off, other actors took over the stage. Miles away below the horizon HMS NELSON, HMS KING GEORGE VI and other battleships opened up with their 16-inch rifles. A bright flash lit up the sky over the horizon, seconds passed, and a muffled Boom! was heard. Then, as gracefully as three ballet dancers, the salvo of shells floated by, high overhead in the sky. The white heat of the shells illuminated their path as, seem-


SICILY
1/1,600,000
Highways
Other roads
179th Route
BATTLE AREAS
PALERMO
S. Nicola L'Arena
TRAPANI
Termini Imerese
Campofelice
Cefalu
S. Stephano
Messina
Reggio
ITALY
Hy 18
Hy 106
Hy 113
Hy 116
Hy 114
Hy 120
Trapani
Marsala
Hy 119
Hy 115
Hy 118
Hy 122
Hy 123
Hy 121
Hy 117
Hy 124
Hy 115
Hy 130
Hy 121
Hy 115
Hy 114
Hy 115
Hy 115
Hy 115

ingly in slow motion, they described their parabolic flight through the night. The white heat faded at the apex. Darkness closed in. Again seconds passed. Suddenly, the whole sky above the land flashed blindingly: crack-crack, crack! Three thunderous reports rolled out across the water as the shells struck home.

Destroyers, barely 3,000 yards from shore, opened fire. Their shells described a smaller arc, burned red, not white. On the same plane as the troopships, each sleek destroyer was briefly visible in the light of its own firing flash, etched sharply as it lay low along the water. Then everywhere naval batteries were firing salvo after salvo into carefully selected targets ashore. Ashore, a fire started and spread in the direction of Scoglitti. Another fire glowed, and burned itself out, dead ahead. The reflected light from a third fire well inland flicked the sky. Surely the enemy was preparing for what he must now know was coming!

During the bombardment landing craft were lowered into the sea from the ships' decks; around each transport these invasion barges now hovered, circling. With the slap of the last LCP hitting the water came the order from the bridge: "Lay into the boats!"

Quietly, orderly, calmly now that waiting had given way to action, the men struggled over the rails, clung down the nets and dropped into the pitching boats. As each craft filled with its complement of troops, it drew away from the ship and began to circle in the "rendezvous area".

Riding the rough seas the men's stomachs churned. As one was seasick—or perhaps it was "scared sick?"—the power of suggestion persuaded others. What lousy weather in which to stage an invasion!

Another vocal signal from the bridge megaphoned into the darkness: "Good luck, fellows . . ."The circling ceased. The LCPs formed in a V pattern and nosed for shore. Out of the murkiness swept destroyers to pick up their groups of boats, heel over almost horizontally, and aim for the beaches. The small boats powered to full speed and followed the wakes of their guides. The first assault wave of the 179th "headed in" at 0345.

Along the coast for miles in each direction, at 0345 the first waves of other assault forces were heading for shore, carrying the front line to the enemy's own ground.

A faint tinge of grey brushed the horizon as the boats throbbed to within 100 yards of the beach. The crouching men in their protected positions under the gunwales discarded life jackets and fixed bayonets. Steel glinted and clinked. Not a sound came from the black coastline. Trees were discernible, and a white house, another. A moment later the boats rushed in with the heavy surf, thudded, lurched and struck sand. Landing platforms slapped into the wash and out spewed the men, on the run. The first troops to hit "Fortress Europe" tore across the broad beaches. It was 0403.

As they ran, the men of the 179th were surprised. No withering fire mowed them down from machine gun nests they knew were there. Then suddenly Italians were popping out of dugouts, hands raised! Many had been completely surprised, others had no intention of fighting. Then came a shot, and another. Capt. Garvice L. Robison, commanding Company C, fell with a bullet in his stomach. The first casualty. The troops of "C" ran on, blood in their eyes and revenge in their hearts.

Elsewhere some Italians fought, others hesitated, while another wave of shock troops hit the beach. And another. In an hour all four 179th assault waves were ashore, and for those uncerain enemy soldiers, any decision was no longer up to them.

Aboard the flagship, Col. Hutchins leaped to his feet as the first laconic radio report came from shore: "No resistance." Other reports filtered in: "No resistance." "Slight resistance." Pockets of opposition formed here and there. The infantry ran in and wiped them out. The troops moved off the beaches, streaking toward their objectives.

At dawn German aircraft swept over the ships disgorging more men, more material. The planes were driven off by the staccato chattering of a thousand AA guns; their strafing and their screeching bombs missed their marks.

At 0930 the Colonel and his staff reached the shore, where LCPs, broached and pounded against the sand by thunderous breakers, had become dangerous hazards to the landing of troops and supplies. Establishing the 179th's first C. P.

on Sicilian soil 1 mile inland, from here the C.O. directed the troops' advance—by runner, radio, telephone.

The 1st Battalion's objective was to secure the beaches to Scoglitti, 7 miles to the south, and occupy that seaport village. The 3rd Battalion's mission was to push 8 miles inland and capture Vittoria, a major city of 36,000 people. The 2nd Battalion, in Division reserve, was ready to assist wherever the situation warranted.

The 1st Battalion doughboys half ran down the coast, sweeping aside road blocks, smashing pillboxes, wiping out machine gun nests, and dropping off squads to clean up isolated resistance pockets. By 1400 they had captured Scoglitti, mopped up snipers within its walls, inflicted 187 casualties on the enemy and taken 800 prisoners! The 1000-man battalion had suffered exactly 15 casualties.

The 3rd Battalion seized the high ground 1000 yards from the beach, sped up Highway 115 through olive groves and past frightened groups of ragged Sicilians, and at 1440 held Vittoria! But there were still enemy troops in town, and as the 3rd Bn Hqs Co began to pass through, Germans concealed in a group of buildings opened fire. Lt. James H. Cruickshank led his platoon to the street down which the enemy was firing a machine gun and two 28 mm. AA dual purpose guns.

The doughboys couldn't flush the Germans by sniping. So Cruickshank left his men to engage the enemy in the street while he made his precarious way across the rooftops until he overlooked the enemy position. The lanky lieutenant opened fire, killed 3 men with his first burst and so surprised the remainder that they hastily abandoned their guns. The platoon thereupon charged the buildings, wiped out the stragglers and captured the weapons. During the night the 3rd Battalion cleaned out the remaining snipers in the city.

The results of the 179th's first day's combat were phenomenal. The Combat Team had taken its initial objectives with minimum losses and with a speed and surety that proved it the equal of any veteran unit. Furthermore, in capturing Vittoria, the RCT had the distinction of seizing the first major city on the island to capitulate.

Occupying the exact center of the invaders' lines, the 179th was flanked by the 45th's 180th RCT on the left and 157th RCT on the right. To the Division's right was the British 8th Army, to its left other units of the American 7th. And everywhere Allied success was unqualified. The brilliantly planned invasion had been executed flawlessly. The enemy, expecting the Allies to strike on the north coast near Palermo, had been completely surprised.

By the day's end the beachhead was secure, at many points 8 miles in depth and expanding rapidly. The Italians were surrendering en masse after only feeble efforts to resist.

However the Germans, born and bred to fight, and supported by panzer forces, were beginning to develop savage counter-attacks.

In several sectors, especially facing the 1st (U. S.) Division on the plains of Gela, Mark IV and VI tanks[1] were already engaging American armor and infantry.

The Luftwaffe, too, was full of fight. Again and again swift black Messerschmidts skimmed the tops of the bulbous captive balloons floating above the ships off shore. They swept the vessels' decks with rattling fire and hammered the beaches with bombs.

And extensive mine fields, secreted in the beach sands by a wily enemy, caused heavy damage and injuries. In fact, the whole story might have been different had the Italians, with the men, guns and defenses to stave off an army, fought as did the numerically few Germans.

But the facts remained: glowing success it was. And in the midst of so much achievement the 45th, the only green division employed on the entire 7th Army front, in its first fight had covered itself with a soldier's glory. Said General Patton in his August address to the 45th's troops:

"Born at sea, baptized in blood, your fame shall never die!"

1—Tank model numbers. The Mark VI was Germany's biggest and best, generally superior to the heaviest American model.

Chapter 5. Pinched Out

In the morning, swinging back from Scoglitti to the northeast, the 1st Battalion occupied the heights facing Biscari on the RCT's left flank, as the entire Division struck inland on a solid front. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions advanced on Comiso Airport in two columns, from the south and west. For the first time the 179th ran into organized Germans, crack troops employed to defend this vital airfield.

The 160th F.A.'s batteries began softening up the Comiso defenses with 105 mm. shells. Naval guns directed by shore observers swung into action to support the infantry assault. And behind this crescendo of fire the two battalions, with a 157th Inf Bn backing them up, attacked. After a short but fierce engagement, in which both sides laid down a withering fire, the airport fell at 1610.

With the taking of Comiso the Allies gained a twofold objective: the enemy was driven back to more distant bases from which to attack beachhead shipping (in his hurried evacuation, incidentally, leaving to the 179th its first spoils of war, 120 planes, and all over the field stacks of 250 and 500 pound bombs that now would never be used against the Allies). And the invaders secured a base on Sicily itself from which to demolish German positions from the air in support of the ground forces.

With daylight on July 12 Air Force personnel began repairing the field and installing equipment. To cover these operations the 2nd Battalion was dispatched 1½ miles north. But no sooner had the 2nd set up a hasty defense line than the enemy counter-attacked. He hurled the cream of his infantry, moving up behind intense mortar fire, at the Battalion. Col. Hutchins intercepted his Red Battalion and sent it to reinforce the 2nd, savagely holding off the Germans. Lt. Col. Edward F. Stephenson's men, speeding to the scene, jumped into the fray and bolstered the 2nd Battalion as it beat off the attackers.

Meanwhile to the north the 3rd Battalion was fighting off enemy tanks stabbing at the 179th's line. Losing a tank and tank wrecker by bazooka and AT fire, the remainder of the enemy armored force withdrew.

This was in accord with the Germans' tactics. They had abandoned trying to confine or smash the Allied beachhead after the first day. Unable to rely on the Italians and incapable of mustering sufficient force at any one point to meet the invaders in strength, they had to resort to delaying and harrassing sorties by small tank and infantry detachments jabbing first here, then there, then withdrawing.

Prisoners identified the units opposing the 179th RCT as elements of the Stammkampf Panzer Grenadier and renowned Hermann Goering Panzer Divisions. The latter, G-2 reported, had been sent to Sicily from the Russian front to rest. However, the Germans hadn't bargained for such a complete "rest": their dead littered the sphere of action, a sprinkling of German and fantastic num-

bers of Italian prisoners poured back to the rear, and the Regimental medics worked day and night nursing hundreds of enemy wounded, who lay on stretchers side by side with American boys. Yet in the 3 day old battle of Sicily, the 179th had lost only 8 killed and 35 wounded, many of these by cunningly hidden mines and booby traps.

However horrible their use, booby traps are a legitimate defensive weapon of war. And, it must be also recorded, none of the Nazi outrages against civilians in occupied countries were perpetrated against the 179th's soldiers on the battlefield. But, because incidents to its discredit must be told to give credence to its credits, the shameful truth is that in the first excited flush of combat the 45th Division itself was guilty of an "atrocity."

An M.P. in the 45th, loading a group of captured Germans on trucks to haul them from the front to PW enclosures in the rear, found that he could crowd only 200 of the 235 captives in the trucks provided. So he lined up the "extra" 35 and mowed them down with his tommy gun. That M.P. was summarily punished with life imprisonment at Fort Leavenworth. And happily thereafter no further such unmotivated brutality marred the 45th's record.

It was certainly not desirable to treat the enemy too well, and by "too well" most combat men meant the parties, proxy weddings and other delightful ceremonies photographed and described in PW camps by U.S. newspapers for the edification of the American fighting man. But the Treaty of Geneva dictates covered the situation adequately.

July 13 the RCT spent in consolidating its positions and keeping contact with the enemy by reconnaissance patrols. Intermittent artillery barrages and counter-battery fire enlivened existence in the rear areas and "kept 'em burrowing." Air activity was intense.

At 0650 the next morning the Heinies launched another local attack on the 3rd Battalion, sweeping in from the northeast with 30 tanks, and 2 supporting rifle companies to protect the armor from infiltrating Americans. Unable to deflect all the onrushing tanks, some penetrated the Battalion right flank. But they inflicted little damage behind the RCT's line.

S/Sgt. Joe R. Harbeson* of Company L, already wounded in this action in both arms so that he could not even carry a rifle, still led his platoon forward. His numbed arms dangling at his sides, suffering intense pain, Harbeson, heedless of whining bullets and whistling shells, was everywhere calmly and quietly inspiring and directing his men.

A few American tanks, just landed, aided in battling the enemy armor, although they could not be persuaded to stand up and slug it out with a Mark VI, with its thick steel plates and terrific fire power. That is, not if the tankmen saw a Mark VI first. So it fell to the infantrymen to bear the brunt of the German "blitz".

That infantry was able to stand up to much less beat off tanks was due to the rifle grenade launcher and that simple but effective close range weapon, the bazooka. However, both were only powerful AT weapons if in the hands of utterly fearless men like Pvt. Archie McBride. This doughfoot[1] of Company K calmly challenged an onrushing enemy tank throwing "88" shells and spitting a stream of lead from its machine guns, armed only with a rifle grenade launcher—and plenty of guts. He blasted away at the side of the tank, aiming for a weak spot. The tank kept coming on. It was within 100 yards when McBride got a direct hit on its ammunition supply. The tank burst into sudden wild flame. Then, despite other Germans pouring fire on him, he and his comrades picked off the entire tank crew as each German tumbled out of the blazing turret.

Reeling from such savage resistance, the enemy was smashed back 2 miles, losing 50 infantrymen, 7 tanks destroyed and 2 others seriously damaged.

Blue Battalion thereupon dug in, and the 179th's lines became stabilized. The 2nd Battalion consolidated the left flank by advancing to 4 miles south of Grammachelle. With the 1st in the center and the 3rd Battalion on the right, the RCT line ran south of and parallel to the Grammachelle-Caltagirone highway.

And as dusk fell on July 15 the Canadian 2nd Brigade swept in from the right and captured Grammachelle. While

*Killed in action north of Anzio

1—Dogface and paddlefoot are other terms applied by GIs to themselves. As for the enemy, he was referred to by Americans, especially by Army newspapers, as "Kraut" or "Jerry", sometimes "Heinie"; never as "Hun" or "Boche", far more hate-inspiring terms.

179th doughboys looked on from the heights commanding Highway 124 and Caltagirone the next morning, the Canadians passed across the Regiment's front to secure that town.

Extension of the 8th Army's sector northeast automatically stopped the RCT's forward motion against the enemy. So the Combat Team abandoned the sector. Leaving the 2nd Battalion to assist the 180th Inf in a hot fight on the left flank, the remainder of the RCT motored 88 miles via Biscari, Gela and Highway 117, to occupy new positions southwest of Mazzarino. On arrival at 0145 the morning of July 16 the 179th took up the mission of supporting the 157th's drive on Caltanisetta.

Shortly after midnight July 18, headquarters moved to the vicinity of Pietrapiaza and, when Sicily's largest inland city, Caltanisetta, fell that morning, C.P. personnel plodded on 16 more exhausting miles. The gagging limestone of the Sicilian roads stuck in their throats. Tanks and peeps racing past the foot columns kicked up swirling showers of thicker dust, turning the men into white spectres. Up the winding roads and down detours that bypassed dynamited bridges the men tramped, slapped dizzy by the fierce sun. Reaching an area one mile south of Caltanisetta, they flopped dry-mouthed and panting to the ground.

Gen. Middleton was now rotating his three Combat Teams. So after a day's breather during which the 2nd Battalion rejoined the 179th command, Col. Hutchins' forces passed through the ruins and stench of death that was once the thriving city of Caltanisetta and northwest up Highway 121, to establish the front lines 10 miles west of Vallelunga. Here, under cover of darkness, the RCT relieved the 180th and prepared to attack.

Here, too, began a new phase of the Sicilian Campaign. Abandoning all attempts at holding, but abetted by the more mountainous terrain of northern Sicily, the Germans heavily mined the roads and confined their active opposition to "shooting and running", ever falling back to the northeast.

Consequently the central and western sector battles became brief and indecisive. After each skirmish the Americans sped by motor to chase the fleeing enemy. To all intents, the 45th became a motorized division.

With no time to bring up kitchens, with only fleeting bivouac halts, the mere business of pursuing the Germans day after day became an exhausting ordeal. Rations never varied from C or K units,[1]

Sunday Oklahoman, Oklahoma City

BAPTISM OF THE 45TH DESCRIBED

How well the 45th withstood its baptism of fire, and how the men from Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado, Texas, Massachusetts and New York went into action is told by Daniel DeLuce, Associated Press Correspondent: "The only battles the 45th Division had ever seen were in the movies, but when it hit the beaches of Sicily it charged into action like a veteran." This Division, now regarded as one of the fightingest outfits that ever carried an American flag into battle, seized the first Sicilian airdrome to fall to the allies—and it did that not against demoralized Italians but against German troops and armor . . . So well did this segment of America's civilian army perform, that within a week it had won battle honors at Scoglitti, San Groce Camerina, Comiso*, Ragusa and Vittoria*.*

*(*179th Infantry conquests)*

1—Containing a concentrated meat, cheese or ham-and-egg can, unappetizing hard biscuits, and a dehydrated liquid, 3 units made up a day's ration. C rations consisted of a meat stew, more edible biscuits and a similiar liquid. D rations were small chocolate bars jacked up with vitamins to make their caloric value equivalent to a meal. All were subject to the same objection: fine as emergency rations, as a steady diet they were monotonous, unsatisfying. In rear areas better rations were obtainable, but front line units were rarely able to prepare hot meals. Thus Army Hqs. complained of only 4 steaks a week, Corps of only 2, Division of but 1, Regiment of the infrequent fresh meat, Battalion of the damned canned meat, and the guy on the line of Ks. Tough on Army Hqs., wasn't it?

the men unpacked, dug in and rolled up in mosquito netting, only to repack at once and move on. No chance or facilities for bathing, changing clothes, no opportunity for an uninterrupted night's sleep, no time for anything but moving, and moving again. The troops were dog tired, but they kept going.

Everyone was thankful that the casualties were light; another consolation was that in baked, blistering Sicily, the good weather held.

Chapter 6. Race to the North Coast

On July 22 Sicily's capital and principal city, Palermo, fell to the Americans, and with its capitulation all resistance in the western half of the island ceased. The Germans put up no defense whatever, doubtless influenced by the relentless air and naval bombardment in previous weeks which had systematically reduced the city's waterfront to rubble, and by the 45th's cutting Sicily in half and thus blocking all escape to the east.

For, speeding north on the heels of the now not-so-famous Hermann Goering Division, the 179th raced through Caltavuturo and Scillati to reach the outskirts of Collesano by July 23, where G-2 reported enemy troops were entrenched. But with artillery fire shattering the dugouts ahead of them, Pagan White's companies attacked, overran the holding force and pursued the krauts into Isnello, 8 miles from the north coast.

Then, while B Company patrols probed to the sea, the Regiment's axis of advance spun east. As the 157th and 180th RCTs reached the coast, they too swerved eastward, north of and parallel to the 179th.

West of Isnello, the Thunderbirds proceeded more cautiously. Serving to cover his retreat and hinder pursuit, the enemy had blown up bridges, laid mines and set booby traps everywhere. One extensively used German mine was the "Bouncing Betty", or S Mine. An anti-personnel mine with a 3-pronged igniter, when stepped on it flew into the air and exploded shoulder high. An alert, courageous captain who felt his boot strike such a mine, quickly shouted to his men to fall flat while keeping his heel on the mine, forcing it to burst underground. His leg was shattered, but the officer prevented the sizzling fragments from spraying a wide area and wounding his men.

A second type of mine widely planted was the film-case-shaped Teller Mine, containing more steel and greater explosive force than the S Mine. Intended to destroy vehicles, it was set deeper in the earth and regulated to withstand 200 pounds pressure before detonating. It could partially wreck a 2½ ton truck, totally demolish a peep.

To these mines enemy demolitions squads frequently attached booby traps, trip wires setting off the traps while the mines were being "cleared". The Germans placed these attachments cunningly: one RCT mine clearing crew, while "sweeping" a mine, jumped into a handy foxhole, a precaution against accidental discharge. As they pulled gently on the rope tied to the mine to ease it out of the ground, a hidden wire exploded the booby trap—in the foxhole! The enemy had anticipated every move.

Past masters in the art of demolitions, the Germans employed the booby trap at every turn, for while the device was designed to kill or maim, almost as important was its effect on morale. The constant unknown danger put added strain on already jumpy nerves. So the American soldier had to learn, too often the hard way, that vacant houses or welcome Ar-

tisian wells might be more than invitations to refreshment.

Despite such attempts to slow the rolling tide, the invaders smashed on. The 1st Battalion, now spearheading the Regiment's advance, entered Castelbuono at daybreak July 24. Patrols, climbing cautiously on as far as San Mauro, encountered no enemy troops. But the doughboys were having plenty of trouble now battling the terrain.

For in northern Sicily, in contrast to the lowlands of the south, the country is rugged. Precipitous mountains, barren of vegetation to give cover to attacking troops, rise abruptly from sea level to a height of 3500 feet. Towns dot the range, nestle precariously on the tips of peaks. These settlements are a throwback to ancient times, when inaccessibility was essential for safety and defense against brigands. The paths winding up to these villages are dead-end roads. Thus a direct approach, such as the 179th had to make, was possible only by an arduous cross country trek from peak into valley to the next peak. The alternate route lay back down each path to the coast highway, then up another mountain lane to the next village in the clouds. Mountain tops 2 miles distant were 75 miles away by road!

On July 29, after a roller-coaster march from peak to peak which brought it to the village of San Mauro, the 3rd Battalion shoved on and occupied the Regimental objective, Castel di Lucio. Here on the towering heights the 179th's troops overlooked and commanded Highway 117, the north-south road linking the German strongholds at Nicosia and San Stephano. Although the objective was taken with ease, tactically the 179th's advance was instrumental in the fall of Nicosia: when the Germans found the Americans in control of the ridges overlooking them, they hastily withdrew from the town—with a helping push from the 1st (U.S.) Division's infantrymen.

The victorious march went on. The entire western half of Sicily subjugated, in the east the enemy now withdrew into prepared defense positions. Forming an arc 75 miles in depth and anchored at the key port of Messina, this string of fortified strongpoints centered on the north at San Stephano, which the 45th was preparing to assault. Nicosia, focal point in the center of the line, was being overrun by the 1st Division. And on the east coast these defenses terminated at Catania, from the beginning of the battle for Sicily fanatically defended by the Germans as a major bastion protecting the approaches to Messina. Indeed, the Germans, well entrenched on the heights dominating the broad Catania Plains, were even yet holding out tenaciously despite the British 8th Army's incessant battering. But other British units had bypassed the city and were moving up the coast in the shadow of Mt. Etna.

The Germans were compelled to stand along this line to protect the retreat route and the evacuation of troops from Messina to the Italian mainland across the narrow straits. Beaten, the enemy was preparing to concede Sicily to the United Nations.

While the 157th Inf was attacking and finally capturing the Bunker-Hill-like heights of "Bloody Ridge" west of San Stephano in the fiercest fighting of the campaign, and while the other 179th battalions remained in defensive positions, the 2nd Battalion under Lt. Col. Charles D. Wiegand motored 89 miles around the mountains to take over the 18th Inf (1st Div) sector near Mistretta. Jumping off from here the troops pushed slowly ahead through road blocks and mine fields until, at 1430 July 31, the Combat Team was relieved by the 3rd (U.S.) Division. Shortly thereafter the entire 45th, at the very outskirts of San Stephano, was withdrawn from the fight.

Despite the initial heavy fighting, the subsequent sporadic resistance, and the enemy's widespread use of mines, the 179th Infantry had suffered only 48 killed in action, 159 wounded, and 3 missing in the entire campaign.

For, as far as the 179th RCT was concerned, this was the end of the Sicilian Campaign.

Chapter 7. Denouncement, With A Punch

The fighting on Sicily had not, of course, ceased. But with the fall of Nicosia, resistance on the central front quickly folded, and paved the way for the enemy's complete collapse. The windup became merely a matter of time.

The 3rd Division took San Stephano on the north coast with little trouble, while to the southeast the British, finally effecting the capture of Catania, sped up that coast in full strength. Crowded hotly by armies squeezing them from both flanks, the Germans put up a desperate fight for their only port of escape to Italy, then suddenly on August 17 surrendered Messina to advance elements of the 7th Army.

So the last resistance on the island ended. The Battle of Sicily was won, and more than that, the first of the battles for Europe.

The debacle cost the Axis 113,350 PWs and other thousands killed or wounded, 1,162 cannon, 265 tanks, 2,324 trucks and over 200 planes. And, although the enemy salvaged a fragment of his divisions, the final flight from Messina was made at a terrible, incalculable cost. RAF and USAAF planes, dominating the skies over the straits, sank hundreds of small craft attempting the perilous journey to the peninsula.

The fighting was over. And yet, here as everywhere else that was to feel the impact of war, there remained the pathetic aftermaths. Innocent farmers plowing their fields, and curious children playing in their yards, were and for years would continue to be killed or injured by mines, left hidden in the ground by warriors who had passed on to other battlefields.

Meanwhile, the 179th RCT had proceeded to its bivouac area 5 miles west of Cefalu. Although manning guard posts at vital transportation centers in this area and pursuing a limited training schedule, in the main the troops were free to enjoy a well earned rest.

The GIs swam—their first bath since July 10!—engaged in athletics, and regained their physical fitness. In fact, they were all ready to start another private war when it was discovered that while they had been fighting the Germans, their extra barracks bags had been thoroughly looted on the southern beaches by the 40th Engineer Regt. Fortunately for the Engineers' skins, that unit was still on the southern beaches.

The troops were mollified, however, by the arrival of company kitchens, heralding the end of a 3 week "fast". There was Bob Hope's superb outdoor show—unfortunately the only name show the troops saw overseas and the first and last of any kind the 45th's fighting men saw for almost a year. And there was "fraternization," with nothing brotherly about it. One 19-year old GI said: "Good God, my mother should know what I've done!"

On August 20 the 179th was ordered to a new bivouac area 2 miles west of San Nicolo L'Arena. The Cefalu camp was abandoned with regret, for the new site was a hillside so steep even the resi-

dent Sicilians had had to terrace it to keep the slopes from sliding down on them. And the bathing here was inferior. But life went on fairly comfortably.

plaints poured in from inhabitants that things were little different than they had been under Mussolini.

In one village the AMG officer,

Watertown Times, Watertown, N. Y.

NEWS FROM OLD FRIENDS

So the 45th is in Sicily . . . The 45th Division, as all will recall, was at Pine Camp for about two months. They came in early November last fall and remained until the middle of January. They were a rugged, rollicking group. They made the 4th Armored, which had preceded them appear as docile as Dagwood Bumstead.

It took us a few weeks to get used to them and frankly speaking, the town was considerably quieter after they were shifted elsewhere.

Raw November and December weather never really cooled off their spirits. They cut high, wide and handsome capers on our streets. They broke up a tavern or two. They gave the local police and the M.P.s a real workout.

Yet we look back with affection upon the 45th. They were fighting men. Woe to anyone who fell in their path. Now, if it is true they are in Sicily, they will find conditions exactly to their liking. If General Eisenhower wants Catania taken, let him shove the 45th into battle. They will deliver any town, mussed up perhaps, but thoroughly conquered.

(N.B. This delightfully satiric column indirectly reminds its readers that in the first week the 45th "occupied" Watertown, in addition to wild brawls there were cases of grand larceny, rape, murder and one incident of a soldier biting off another soldier's ear.)

Near the conclusion of the rest period each GI was even granted one 5 hour pass to Palermo. There was much sarcastic comment over this "reward" for services rendered. Rear echelon soldiers had, naturally, enjoyed unlimited pass privileges there for weeks while, O tempora O mores, even the smallest village was patrolled by M.P.s and plastered with "Off Limits" signs for the 45th's benefit, often had been since the moment it had been captured.

But although out of bounds to combat troops, most towns boasted a resident AMG representative. The establishment of a military government is no simple process. But it was made harder because at the outset of occupation these officials were too often sincere but inadequately prepared for the job. In numerous instances Fascist officials remained in control of town governments. Justifiable com-

an intelligent soldier, unfortunately spoke no Italian. He therefore employed an Italian woman as interpreter—long notorious locally as a petty political intriguer. In seventh heaven, this woman translated AMG decrees as best suited her own interests: she told the populace the Americans required a part of each farmer's crop (as Mussolini had done), which exactment she took to line her own silo. To the needy whom the U.S. was giving 100 lire she offered 70 and retained the "interest" for herself. But with no staff of his own and no knowledge of the language, until the 179th initiated an investigation the AMG captain did nothing about it because he hadn't known it was happening!

One almost ignored event interrupted the peaceful days that followed the Regiment's move to San Nicolo, however one which boded of things to come. The 45th

Division was detached from the 7th Army and assigned to the 5th Army, under command of Lt. Gen. Mark W. Clark.

And suddenly, as August ended, the RCT was alerted for a second amphibious operation. The news spread on wings through the camp, but the excitement did not begin to parallel that which had heralded the previous landing. The Combat Team was a veteran outfit now. The invasion just ended hadn't been the suicidal affair everyone had anticipated at all. The men were cocksure.

But it *was* a surprise to learn that the whole 45th had not been alerted. Save for the 179th RCT, only 2 battalions of the 157th and the Division's other artillery battalions were scheduled to participate in the coming assault. The rest of the 45th would remain in the Trabia, Sicily, area and follow the 179th later.

Preparations began. If the Regiment had been stripped for action in June, now it was denuded. The Personnel Section and much of Service Company stayed behind under Capt. Gail C. McLain. Barracks bags, administrative equipment and many vehicles were left. The man, the pack on his back, ammunition to shoot and rations to eat were all that did go.

By September 6 the troops were en route to Termini Imeresse, where British LSTs and LCIs were drawn up along the beach. The Regiment embarked at once, and with little heavy impedimenta to slow the loading, at midnight of the 7th the invasion ships hauled up their landing platforms and backed slowly off shore. Forming in 3 columns, LSTs in the center lane flanked by files of LCIs, the convoy got under way, ringed by a naval escort of light American war vessels—destroyers, corvettes, mine sweepers and motor torpedo boats.

The C.P. was established aboard LST 404, which also carried the 45th's C.G., stocky Maj. Gen. Middleton. Shipboard conditions were crowded, uncomfortable. Designed to transport armor for short hauls, the LSTs had little below deck space for troops. The heat in the holds where vehicles were stowed and the men were supposed to sleep was unbearable. The food was C Ration, for the galleys were not equipped to handle chow for several hundred men. Conditions on the open LCIs were even worse.

Through September 8 the convoy plodded through a placid blue sea. The men lolled on deck. Over the lip of the horizon occasionally peeped the stacks of a vigilant destroyer. The smaller escort craft hugged the troopships, plunging like galloping steeds.

There was the usual conjecture as to the RCT's destination, but not for long. Soon after gaining way, orders and maps were broken out: the Combat Team was sailing for Italy! As for its mission, that was dependent upon the situation. 5 plans were set forth, each of which the 179th must be instantly ready to execute on order. The 5th Army's floating reserve, RCT 179 would be hurled into the hottest spot! The command and troops began speculating and betting—as well as planning—on which mission it would pull.

At 1930 the ships' radios, tuned to news broadcasts, emitted some preliminary squawks, then voiced the startling announcement that Italy had unconditionally surrendered to the Allies! As the spontaneous cheers died away over the water, a babbling of theories as to the effect this would have on the battle for Italy broke out. At best Italians had proved reluctant belligerents, but G-2 believed that alone, the Germans could muster scarcely 30,000 troops in the vicinity of the intended landings. And there was the 8th Army, already creeping up the toe of the mainland and gaining momentum daily.

Enemy aircraft cut short conjecture. However, flying at great altitude, the bombers missed their targets. Their bombs whistled down and burst harmlessly in the water.

With dawn on the 9th there loomed distant grey shapes, another fleet, large cargo and troopships and naval ships of the line. All day that convoy steamed along in the wake of the RCT fleet. But even as the two task forces neared Italy, the first Allied troops had struck at the beaches of Salerno. Landing at 0330 against swiftly developing resistance were the 36th (U.S.) Division, the 46th and 56th (British) Divisions, and special Commando and Ranger units.

Night fell, and at 0150 September 10, exactly 2 months after the Sicilian invasion, the RCT fleet reached the Transport Area. It moved through the darkness into the midst of other ships, hundreds of them, of all sizes and descriptions.

As anchor chains clanked, a large enemy air squadron attacked, dropping flare after flare in ones and in clusters till the blacked out ships were clearly lit

up in the water. Then out of the surrounding blackness the planes dived on the spotlighted targets. Their hurtling bodies screamed through the wind, down on the sitting ducks.

Ships everywhere opened up, and the black sky became a crisscross of crimson tracers. The zipping red stitches streamed from rattling machine guns, the 90 mms. thumped and pumped their shells into the night where they burst in a puff of smoke, and the insistent pom-pom of multi-barrelled British Bofors' chattered like furious magpies at the stars.

In the midst of pandemonium, the 179th ships' guns were silent. The Luftwaffe was after information as well as after the ships themselves, and the 179th fleet apparently preferred to remain anonymous.

The planes faded into the night. A light mist gathered. Waiting, this time the "veterans" rested or slept on the steel decks, squeezed in among the vehicles lined hub to hub. But at 0420 everyone was awakened with a rude shock: again the enemy flew in low over the ships. Wham! The sides of the LSTs crackled with the splatter of shell fragments as the bombs burst feet away! Wham! The ships shuddered and creaked, and rocked. The planes went away. Hearts were gulped back where they belonged.

Night waned and a pale light filtered over the horizon like a brimming cup. The men grew nervous over their failure to debark. Soldiers want to be far away from ships in daylight, when planes can see their targets. Paradoxically, with their feet on the ground men take twice the risk with half the fear.

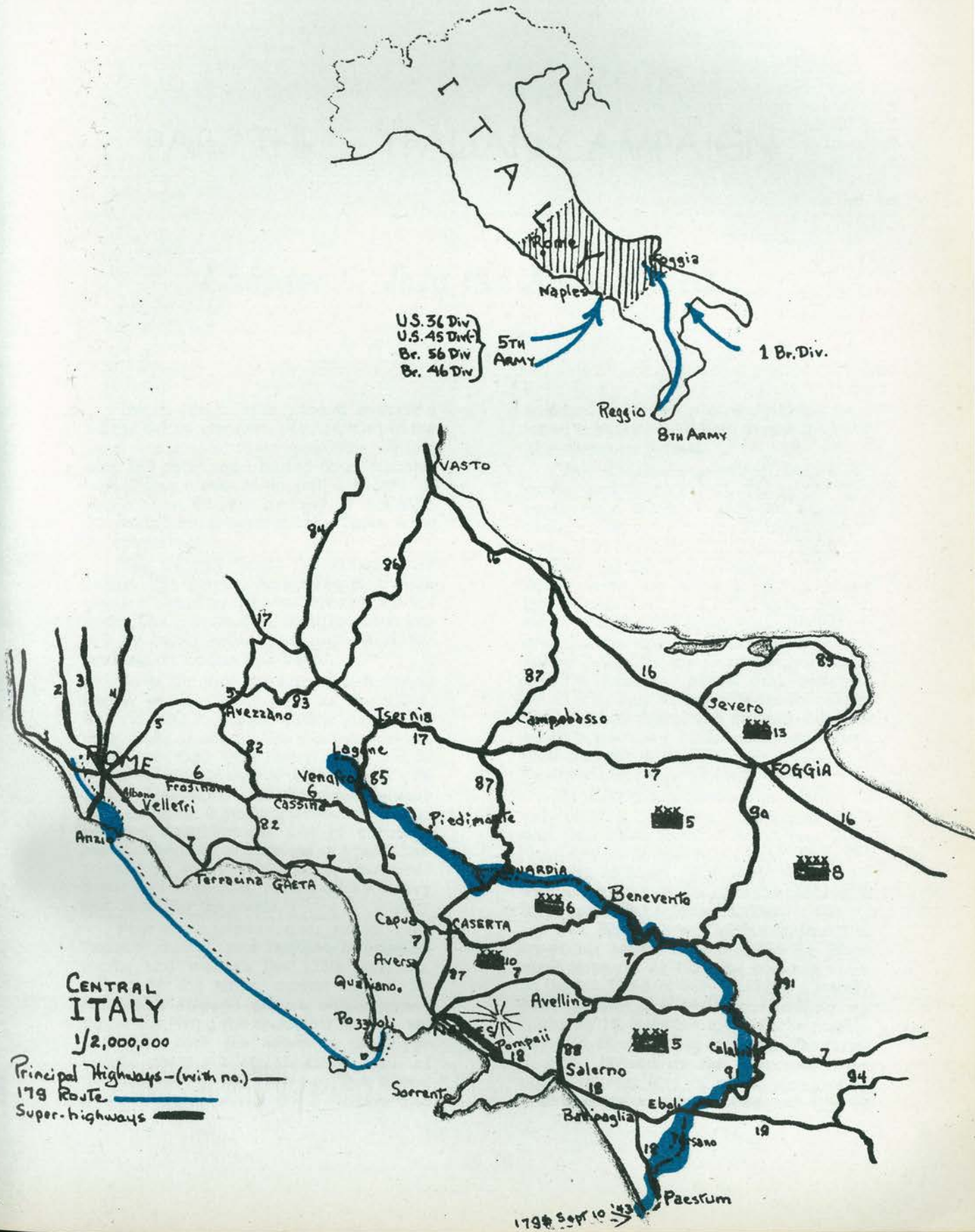
Debarkation had been scheduled for 0300. But the mist was so thick that the danger of collision was unavoidable, for the ships rode shoulder to shoulder. So debarkation had been postponed until 1140 in the morning.

Daylight found the Combat Team's troop carriers inching in. Big transports were already unloading their cargoes into landing craft, the sea swarming with the little boats bustling back and forth to shore. The Combat Team's LSTs and LCIs, however, pulled right up on the beach, or to engineer-built pontoon bridges that extended 50 yards into the water.

As the ships moved up to Beach Blue, 3 miles south of Paestum, Italy, on the Salerno Plains, it was very quiet in the morning sunlight. Too quiet. Beyond the broad flats the mountains that encircled the basin and formed the spine of Italy reached up into the cloudless blue, silent and cool.

The men sat around smoking, jittery, watching the sky, the silent landscape, awaiting the signal to debark. At 1140 landing platforms were lowered and the great steel doors swung wide. Drivers started up their peeps[1] and trucks. M.P.s at each exit waved the lead vehicles out, and the drivers shifted into low gear. On deck troops "slung" their equipment and crowded about the hatchways. "It's a cinch," said a sergeant, "there ain't no enemy at all" . . .

1—Peeps are 1/4 tons; jeeps or command cars are, like weapon carriers, 3/4 tons; the regulation trucks are 2 1/2 tons. Tonnage pertains to the vehicle's carrying capacity.


ITALY
Rome
Foggia
Naples
U.S. 36 Div
U.S. 45 Div(-)
Br. 56 Div
Br. 46 Div
5TH ARMY
1 Br. Div.
Reggio
8TH ARMY
VASTO
Avezzano
Isernia
Campobasso
Lagine
Venafro
Piedimonte
Severo
FOGGIA
ROME
Albano
Frosinone
Velletri
Cassino
Anzio
Terracina
GAETA
GUARDIA
Benevento
Capua
CASERTA
Aversa
Avellino
Quadriano
Pozzuoli
Pompeii
Salerno
Sorrento
Battipaglia
Eboli
Paestum
CENTRAL
ITALY
1/2,000,000
Principal Highways – (with no.)
179 Route
Super-highways
179th Sept 10 '43

PART THREE: ITALIAN CAMPAIGN

Chapter 8. Into the Jaws of Hell

Swish—in a split second everyone hit the deck—crrrump, WHAM! Out of the noon sun flashed Messerschmidts, 50 feet over the ships, and hurled their missiles before gun crews could pull a trigger. A bomb burst directly in front of one LST, 20 yards from a second ship. There were 12 casualties.

The second "run" the crews were ready. The bombs, screaming in a high pitched whine as they wobbled down, fell wide. The planes fled, their fuselage pitted by bullet holes. The process of debarking on Italian soil began.

Save for that flare-up, the invasion began peacefully enough for the 179th. But the 36th had been fighting furiously ever since landing. The battlefields just off the beaches were littered with burned vehicles and the debris which always remains after action: an abandoned enemy anti-tank gun; a pack discarded by a hot, nervous doughboy; a pile of cartridge shells where for a moment a squad had paused to spray the enemy; splintered trees; and branches, blown off by heavy fire, blocking the roads.

Past mountainous gas, ration and, "ammo" dumps, and bustling bulldozers, trucks and tractors, the 179th vehicles, rolling off the ships, moved inland. Infantrymen stepped ashore and marched single file along the shoulders of wire net pathways over the sands to the Regimental assembly area 3 miles north of the beaches, near Paestum. The troops flopped to the ground, ate K rations, and watched an air strip already being fashioned from a plowed field across the road. The afternoon passed.

The situation was critical. Italy's surrender had made no difference; the Germans were massing powerful forces to assault the tremulously shallow beachhead. Still but 3 miles in depth, it sat precariously close to the water's edge. The Allies were too weak to do anything but fight to hold until reinforcements arrived; and the 8th Army was still too far south to constitute a flank threat to the enemy. Already the Germans had dealt the 36th punishing blows. And, entrenched in the ring of foothills from whence they stabbed down with massed armor at weak points they could easily spot from their commanding OPs, they could only be dislodged by a full scale assault.

At 1500 Corps decided to commit its only reserve. The 179th RCT was to move east and block against developing German threats to the beachhead from the direction of Eboli. From there the enemy was expected to drive onto the plain with large tank and infantry forces.

Col. Hutchins waited for darkness to cover his move, then ordered the Regiment forward. At 1925 the columns were on the go. The foot troops held to a steady pace behind the staff cars rolling up Highway 18, stopping to await the marching men, then moving on again. The miles dropped behind as the Regiment crept north, a long line of silent warriors in khaki. There was no sound but that of

tramping feet. A cold white moon arose.

At the first road junction the columns struck off to the right and trudged on, to the Calore River. Here they halted. Ahead the sky glowed as a fire licked the overhead blackness, a fire marking the still blazing Calore bridge. The work of the enemy.

RCT engineers under their intrepid commander, Capt. Richard M. Strong, sped to the columns' head to locate a ford and rush some kind of causeway over the river. It was vital that the 179th be in position before daylight. The infantrymen settled down to wait, wondering, tense. Ex-schoolteacher Capt. Bryan J. Watkins moaned, "I wish I could light up a cigarette."

Invisible planes droned above as the engineers worked feverishly. In the fields flanking the road squatted the shadowy hulks of tanks and TDs, moved up to support the Combat Team on its mission.

In an hour the engineers had completed a pontoon bridge. Stretching better than half across the river, it spanned the deep water on the southern side to disappear into the shallows near the opposite bank. Over there lay no man's land, or enemy territory. No one knew which, for no reconnaissance had explored that far. The C.O. would have to feel his way blindly through the unknown, certain only that his orders specified points on the map his Combat Team must reach, prepare to defend and hold, if need be, at *any* cost.

Ignoring military school tactics, sticking out the collective neck of a whole RCT, was necessary because of the Allies' vulnerable position. When the enemy swept down from the hills he had to be stopped before he reached the beaches, and stopped cold.

Vehicles and troops started forward again. No spare men to drop off to protect the rear supply line. Across the bridge, through knee deep water the Regiment went, back to the road and then on. Through Persano, nestled in the shadows of tall, quiet trees, where no sign of any life was visible. The columns halted beyond the town.

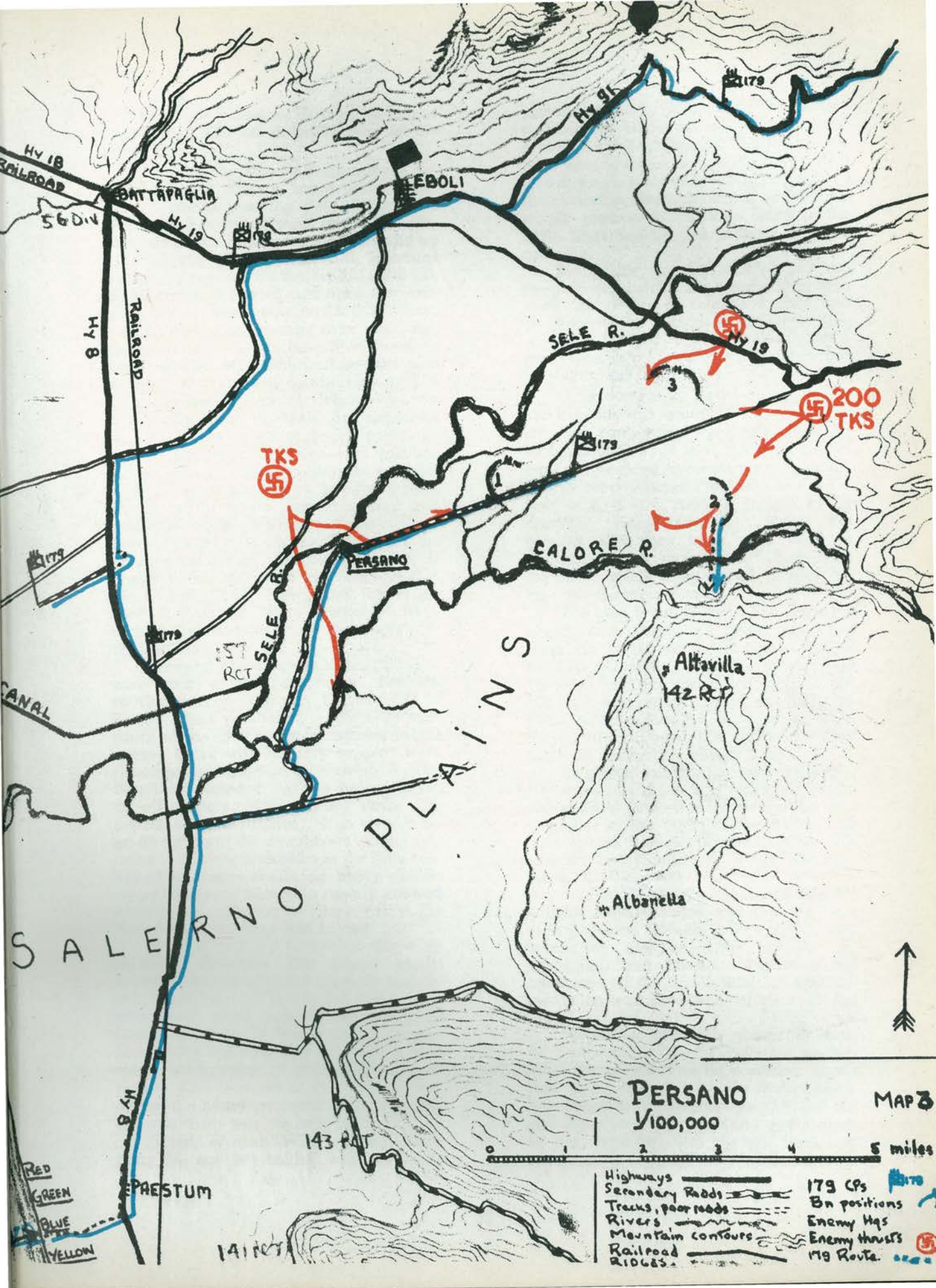
A patrol peep crept up the road ahead, to see if the road itself was clear of mines—and Germans. No time to investigate to either side. The stillness was ghostly. A cricket chirped. The peep returned; the road appeared safe. The men shifted their packs and rolls and rifles, and went on. Ten miles. Fifteen miles. Twenty-two miles from the beach, deep in no man's land, in outrageous defiance of the enemy.

Lt. Col. Taylor suddenly reported that he had made contact with enemy infantry and was deploying his companies for a fight. Col. Hutchins halted, set up a temporary C.P. in a gulch beside an unfinished bridge halfway up the road from Persano to Highway 19. At 0530 the sky was turning grey as the 3rd Battalion began to fight from its line facing north—and the enemy base headquarters at Eboli; as the 1st fell back to the southwest to protect the left flank and rear; as the 2nd Battalion ,moving independently up the Calore's right bank to the bridge north of Altavilla, dug in on the RCT right flank and completed the all-round defense. As dawn broke on September 11, the artillery batteries took up their positions in support of the rifle companies.

And as dawn broke the Germans struck. They struck with everything they had, trying to wipe out the 179th, to sweep on and wipe out the 5th Army beachhead. At first a few enemy tanks and infantrymen, feeling their way, hit the 3rd Battalion from the northwest. To combat the enemy armor, Col. Hutchins called for his supporting tanks and TDs. He sent the order, *only his tanks and TDs weren't there!*

Advance German units, infiltrating south as the enemy developed his drive on the beachhead in this very sector, had spotted the 179th passing Persano. Quickly seizing on this surprising information, the alert enemy command rushed up strong forces to trap the Regiment. By the time the 179th had crossed the river and supporting armor prepared to follow, the Germans had brought up tanks, SPs, machine guns. Opening up with a blistering fire, they held down the U.S. armor to the south bank, for the tank commander had ducked and decided not to even attempt a crossing. By which decision he had left an unsupported regimental combat team to the mercy of the combined armor and infantry of two Panzer divisions!

Col. Hutchins reacted differently, rushing Company C south to attack the enemy in behind the RCT. The lead scouts ran into scattered fire, which increased every moment. Charlie Company com-


HY 18
RAILROAD
BATTAPAGLIA
56 DIV
HY 19
EBOLI
HY 91
179
HY 8
RAILROAD
SELE R.
HY 19
3
200
TKS
TKS
179
1
2
179
PERSANO
CALORE R.
SELE R.
179
157
RCT
CANAL
Altavilla
142 RCT
SALERNO PLAINS
Albanella
143 RCT
HY 18
RED
GREEN
BLUE
YELLOW
PAESTUM
141 RCT
PERSANO
1/100,000
MAP 3
0 1 2 3 4 5 miles
Highways
Secondary Roads
Tracks, poor roads
Rivers
Mountain contours
Railroad
RIDGES
179 CPs
Bn positions
Enemy Hqs
Enemy thrusts
179 Route

mitted all its platoons. Heavy fire began coming in. The 1st Battalion was in the thick of it.

By 1000 the enemy feelers were developing into a large scale attack. German tanks across the Sele River near Persano, completing their mission of pinning down the American armor, swung up against the 179th's rear. Col. Hutchins radioed a request for the 1st Bn, 157th Inf, to attack on the south and ease the pressure of these tanks against the RCT's rear.

By 1100 Heinie tanks were also closing in on the 179th positions from the north and west in force. Physical contact was made and a furious battle began. The 160th's batteries, with Lt. Col. Jess Larson personally directing their fire missions, sent shell after shell screeching into the enemy tank concentrations with wonderful accuracy. The artillerymen's shirts were damp with sweat as they rammed in shells, let fly with a deafening roar and reloaded, again and again. Cannon Company opened up with its "75s." And the enemy countered by lobbing mortar shells at the RCT lines and into the C.P. area itself; "88s" interdicted the crossroads behind the C.P. to prevent the Regimental Commander from regrouping or shifting his troops.

Forward observers reported 200 German tanks of the 16th Panzer Division roaring east on Highway 19 just north of Pagan Blue's positions . . . TD observers south of the Calore River radioed that 7 enemy tanks with infantry support were rumbling up from east of Persano . . . The Battalions reported savage fights raging in all sectors, with enemy tanks approaching in terrifyingly plain view to let go direct fire at the doughboys in their foxholes . . . German mortars in the hills continued to dump shells on every visible target, on every man who openly showed himself . . . Enemy artillery raked the American lines from end to end . . .

The 1st and 3rd Battalions threw up all-round defenses. The troops fought bravely, tenaciously. But grenade launchers, bazookas and a few AT guns, even with great good luck in the hands of heroes ,were insufficient to stop 200 tanks. Slowly the 3rd Battalion fell back a mile south of Highway 19, pulling in its companies. And because of that withdrawal, one of the many personal dramas of that Persano Trap was written.

S/Sgt. Warren W. Pingleton, Company M, was left behind with his entire platoon, cornered in a gully. The platoon commander since no officer remained, handsome, soft-spoken Sgt. Pingleton picked 3 men to assist him, and immediately laid down an intense covering fire against the encircling Germans which enabled his whole platoon to infiltrate back to the 179th lines one by one, without a single casualty!

But by the time this ticklish job had been accomplished, the 4 remaining men were the object of intense mortar and small arms fire. With no one to cover *their* withdrawal, they were hopelessly trapped. Was it the end? To Pingleton this was only the beginning.

With shrapnel flying and bullets kicking the dirt around them, the men crawled cautiously, evasively, inch by inch out of the hot spot, dodging the enemy and seeking cover where they could. Slowly they wormed their way out of the field of fire, in a running crouch, or by dragging themselves flat along the ground, until they were safe. Only in ducking the enemy, "Ping" had been forced to circle deeper and deeper behind the *German* lines!

The men found a cave. The Germans found them there, but could not blast them out owing to the accurate fire of the four. At dark, not daring to stay, the sergeant and his comrades slipped off. Hiding by day and moving stealthily by night, without food or water save what they could forage in the fields, the men crept on behind the enemy lines.

Pingleton knew what he was doing. He was working his way obliquely to the Allied lines. And, ever aware that he was a soldier in the midst of the enemy, he was taking careful, detailed notes. He charted the location of every German dump, artillery pit and troop area he came upon. Finally, on the fourth day the 4 doughboys crawled through the German positions into No Man's Land, and across into the American lines. For his leadership and heroism, Pingleton became one of the first battlefield appointments as commissioned officers in the 179th.

Meantime, although absorbing terrific punishment, the 1st Battalion on the south hung grimly to its positions, again and again driving off tanks that penetrated almost to the Regimental C.P. But the 2nd Battalion, after crossing the Calore in the morning, was pushed back, its two leading companies withdrawing over

the one remaining bridge spanning the Calore east of the RCT headquarters. By at once hurling powerful tank and infantry forces into the breach the Germans completely separated the 2nd Battalion from the remainder of the Combat Team. The 3rd Battalion was being hit hard by enemy planes strafing and bombing its positions. The tanks and TDs to the south were still unable to force a river crossing anywhere.

At 1845 Maj. Johnson radioed Power requesting the immediate construction of a pontoon bridge across the Calore due south of the 179th's positions, where a mile gap still remained in the enemy's steel ring around the Regiment. He requested completion by dark to evacuate the wounded. For the growing numbers of casualties were under constant shellfire in the tiny gulch now housing the Regimental Aid Station as well as the C.P. And men were slowly dying for lack of hospital care.

The RCT Command was determined to hold, but it had one more reason for requesting that bridge. If the RCT *was* smashed, what remnants of its companies might survive might also be able to reach an escape route—if there were one.

At 1920 Col. Hutchins asked for air support. None could be spared. However, trying to divert part of the German forces and also open the 179th supply route, Gen. Middleton sent the 157th Inf and the 191st Tank Bn to attack Persano. The nearest other friendly unit was the 142nd Inf, 36th Div, attacking Altavilla from the southwest. The British 10th Corps was on the left, but 10 kilometers away. And with the Germans attacking fiercely along the entire front, these units had their own battles. The stake was the whole beachhead, but the 179th had to be left to its fate.

As the afternoon wore on, the RCT staff held its breath. Artillery on both sides was merciless. Machine guns chattered—the steady rat-a-tat of the American, the jabbering rapid fire of the German. Rifles spat. Mortar shells whistled and thumped home. The boys stayed down and prayed. Enemy tanks rolled up to the lines, fired point blank, tried to break through. The RCT line held.

It was not because the Combat Team was surrounded that the situation was desperate. Any outfit with guts and determination can batter its way out of encirclement, even if in so doing it suffers heavy losses, for no ring can be as strong everywhere as the force an encircled unit can bring to bear on a single point. But any fighting unit is licked by lack of ammunition and lack of rations. And its combat load of both expended, the 179th could not get any more!

By 1700 the 160th had shot all its ammunition, except for 5 rounds per battery to be fired point blank in the final emergency. To conserve bullets, rifle companies resorted to cold steel; down the line went the order, "Fix bayonets". Many units had already exhausted their water supply.

Across the river White was in contact with supply dumps, but it still could not reach the rest of the Regiment.

Hour after hour Col. Hutchins sat on a bench before some boards nailed up between two trees that served as his operations desk—a reminder that this had once been a German C.P. and maneuver area. Though this fact was also evident by the remains of man's natural function scattered everywhere with disgusting abandon, an inevitable German trait apparently as basically "Aryan" as the filthy pictures almost every German soldier carried on his person.

Gone was the blustering, coldly military man of garrison days. The C.O. smoked cigarette after cigarette, studying maps, planning and issuing commands, calm and reassuring to his men in this, his first real combat crisis. He was trying not to think of two of his key 3rd Battalion commanders and a field artillery observer, lying dead somewhere beyond the lines. And so many of his "boys" with them.

Night fell slowly, and with it the roar of battle dropped to a whisper, then died away. The enemy was apparently willing to cool his guns. The 160th wasn't, but it had nothing to shoot. Everyone was hungry and thirsty—and scared.

The 1st and 3rd Battalions tightened their lines as well as their belts. The Command Echelon dug in around the C.P., manning hasty defenses with cooks, wiremen, anyone. Men said goodbye to their comrades lightly—with their hearts in their mouths. And, surrounded and seemingly abandoned, the 179th began to sweat out the hours of darkness.

It was quiet, but not the kind that induces sleep. The minutes dragged into hours. Still no attack came. The fate of

the 179th hung in the night air, and with it the fate of a beachhead. But like a cat with a trapped mouse, the enemy seemed in no hurry now. He'd await the dawn.

And at long last dawn came. The sun started across the sky. Still no attack materialized. Incredibly, impossibly, the Germans didn't realize the Regiment's desperate plight, its shortage of everything a soldier needs to fight. They didn't realize how close they were to final, complete victory!

While the enemy dallied, the situation improved. The 157th's dawn assault on Persano was forcing the Germans to give ground, and as they yielded they withdrew their tanks strung along the north bank of the Calore. At 0945, although the road was still raked by enemy fire, Brig. Gen. Raymond S. McLain, 45th Div Arty Commander, courageously ran the gauntlet to the C.P.—and brought with him a truckload of artillery ammunition!

The route reopened as the enemy withdrew, the wounded were evacuated at once. At 1150 up rolled the TDs. And when Lt. Col. Russell B. Moses, Ex-O, returned from a "recon", he reported that the enemy tanks north of Blue's lines were pulling back. Unable to smash the 179th, the Germans were giving up the attack!

Close-in fighting slacked off. Companies A and B attacked south to improve their positions. The front stabilized while the artillery, its bite back, hammered everything in sight. The Germans backed off to the protection of the hills. As darkness came again, this heavy fire became a strong rear guard action, for with the threat thwarted in this sector, the 179th was relieved of its mission. Leaving the 36th Division to take over, the C.O. closed station at 2000 September 12 and led his men back down the road they had come just 39 hours ago.

Behind them the men of the 179th left 38 comrades dead and 121 officers and men missing. 363 officers and men had been wounded and evacuated. For the first time the doughboys had come face to face with fields covered by their own dying. They would long retain that image.

That stand cost the Regiment 15% of its command. But by their sacrifices, the men of the 179th had materially contributed to the saving of other thousands of lives, the Allied foothold at Salerno, and the plans reaching far into the future. They had brilliantly executed a superb strategy which had sent them out to meet and smash the enemy attack before it reached the beachhead line itself. For that beachhead was still so shallow that it could not have absorbed a direct blow, and survived.

Chapter 9. From the Frying Pan--

The march out of the "Persano Trap" was a tense one, but quiet reigned, no enemy fire raked the columns of tramping men. Back down the road they went, to the beachhead line, still barely four miles deep, and recrossed the Calore. At Highway 18, however, they swung column right. Past Gen. Clark, concernedly reviewing the weary troops, they marched until they reached the crossroad north of the canal that underpassed the highway. Here, at 0330, September 13, the C.P. was established.

The battalions went into position. The 2nd dug in a mile north of the C.P., the 3rd occupied the rising ground across the road to the northwest. The 1st Battalion dug in on the 2nd's left rear, doubling as front line fire support and Regimental reserve.

The 179th's new positions, constituting part of the general regrouping to meet new enemy threats, placed the 157th and the 36th Division on the right, and the 10th Corps on the left in direct contact with the Combat Team. The 179th hadn't been relieved, after all, but simply shifted to fill another breach, this time the gap between the 10th and 6th Corps.

While the RCT prepared its network of defenses, Allied aircraft appeared over the front, began shuttling across the lines in an endless stream to pound enemy troop assembly areas. Too, more heavy artillery was landed, and in the 179th sector the 160th was reinforced by the 45th's 158th and 189th F.A. Bns in laying down thunderous barrages, especially bent on harassing German tanks which were rushing up to the lines in twos and threes to locate weak spots.

For the enemy could see, from his OPs in the hills, that if he could smash through the shallow defenses and reach the beach in force, he could still raise unholy hell with the Allied foothold, prevent it from expanding. Perhaps eradicate it. At any rate it was evident that he intended to try. And when he did, once again he would be met by the 179th RCT.

At 1600 the Germans sent infantry-supported tank columns against the Regimental sector from two directions. One column rumbled down Highway 18, the other followed the road leading southwest from Eboli. But this time the RCT had had time to get set. Supported by intense artillery, mortar and anti-tank fire, it repulsed the jab. On the right the tanks made a local breakthrough, but the 157th RCT quickly reformed and counter-attacked, forcing the German armor to withdraw. At a safe distance, the enemy halted and began to reorganize.

That, then, had merely been a tester, conducted by strong combat patrols. Through the night the situation remained static. At 1030 the next morning Gen. Clark arrived at the Colonel's headquarters. His forces already on the defensive everywhere, for the enemy had smashed back the Americans along the center and right flank of the beachhead perimeter until nowhere was the beachhead further than 4 miles inland from the sea, the harassed 5th Army Commander empha-

sized the continued importance of the 179th's role in the Salerno battle. Once again he ordered Col. Hutchins to hold on his present line "at all costs!"

Probing again at the Regiment's positions, the enemy's machine guns and mortar fire suddenly spattered the C.P. area minutes after Gen. Clark's departure. Slugs sang and smacked into trees all around the "old man." Shell fragments shook the branches.

Simultaneously, behind a screen of sledge-hammer artillery fire the Germans launched their second and real offensive. Using the same approaches as before, on this occasion the enemy threw in 200 tanks and a battalion of infantry!

Col. Hutchins called on all the fire power at his command to plaster the oncoming foe, while the men in the lines fought back wildly against the steel monsters. The "Battle of Shrapnel Corner" waxed fiercely all day. The roar of "105s" and the crack of Long Toms[1] split the air, answered by whistling enemy "88s". The rattle of machine guns and whining small arms fire rounded out the death symphony. Allied planes, dominating the skyways, bombed and strafed the Germans time and again.

Out in front of Pagan White nearly half a company of Germans appeared, waving a white flag. The Americans let them come on, but 150 yards from the U.S. lines, the Germans dropped the flag and began shooting. The 2nd Battalion troops were ready for tricks—in moments their blistering fire accounted for 40 dead Jerries.

The fight swayed back and forth as each local gain was followed by the opposing infantry's furious counter-attack. The enemy's tanks couldn't be pinned down, looming here then there out of the smoke of battle, their long snouts belching smoke and screeching shells. A haze covered the front: the figures of men in grey and in olive drab darted in and out of it, seeking cover and firing, attacking and withdrawing. RCT artillery and mortar shells bored into the earth right in front of the lines seeking out enemy tanks, while forward observers yelled into their field phones corrections in range. 179th riflemen had a field day picking off German infantry riding the backs of huge tanks; and artillery in one field of action alone knocked out an entire force of 8 German tanks charging the lines.

Such was the local nature of the battle that individuals played a vital role in stopping the enemy from driving the Regiment back to the sea wall. The Germans threatened to break through the 1st Battalion positions. Shellfire had demolished the building which housed the artillery OP, and small arms peppered the position. The observation party, what was left of it, abandoned the spot. That is, all but diminutive Sgt. "Libby" Salamone*. Hiding on the hill alone, Salamone directed artillery and naval gunfire via his still intact communication line, with such telling effect that the enemy was unable to exploit or capitalize on his momentary advantage.

And as dusk came, the Germans fell back reeling. They had failed to dent the 179th line, their casualties were tremendous, and they left behind 22 tanks destroyed in the RCT sector alone. In helping to repel the Germans in the whole 45th Division sector, the three light artillery battalions had fired 6,687 rounds!

Mentally and physically battered, hot, exhausted doughboys fell into their holes and slept, instantly, dreamlessly. The 179th caught its breath. But under a bombers' moon Allied planes continued to hurl their bombs screaming into the enemy's positions. Eboli was a principal target. As hundreds of bombs registered hits on that town the fires were visible from the Regimental sector. Indeed, the day and night air activity marked the greatest concentration of Allied air power yet employed tactically against the Germans in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations.

These telling ground and air blows of September 14 left their permanent mark. For the main German strength had been exhausted. The small beachhead army had held firmly during the day, and by badly mauling the enemy's forces at every point it had reduced him to a level where he was now incapable of further exploiting his salients.

There was a general stand-to at 0500 September 15 in anticipation of another German attack, but the best the

* *Missing in action in France.*

1—155 mm. rifles, so called because of their long barrels.

enemy could do was to make a limited and again disastrous thrust at the British sector.

The succeeding two days saw a lull in ground activity, though Allied planes and artillery never let up on the enemy. The invaders landed more cannon and organized for attack. The beachhead was finally secure. "Finally", because despite efforts to minimize the true predicament by such "feed-the-public-pap" communiques as Gen. Clark's cheery "The situation was never in peril," actually there had been a week of grave doubt about the issue. Perhaps enough to warrant the "transfer" of Maj. Gen. Ernest J. Dawley, 6th Corps Commander, elsewhere.

That more troops weren't available to augment those already committed was possibly due to the unexpected vigor with which considerably more than 30,000 Germans resisted. As it was, the 10th Corps with the 46th and 56th Divisions and the 6th Corps with the 3rd, 45th and 36th Divisions and special Army troops[1] constituted the 5th Army forces that invaded and fought the Battle of Salerno—and then, with the 7th (Br.) Armored and the American 34th Infantry and 82nd Airborne Divisions, fought the whole subsequent battle of Southern Italy!

Meanwhile, the British 8th Army was sweeping up the east coast of Italy, and on September 15 at Vallo, just south of Paestum, contact patrols of the 8th and 5th Armies met. Two days later the two armies effected a junction, by which union the beachhead ceased to be.

The Battle of Salerno had been won!

1—These were the 23rd (Br.) Armored Brigade and, under Col. William O. Darby's command, the 2nd and 41st Commando Bns (Br.) and the 1st, 3rd and 4th Ranger Bns (U.S.).

Chapter 10. To the German Winter Line

With the end of the beachhead what had been the battle for an anklehold became the Battle for Italy. On the coast the 10th Corps, seizing the heights commanding the Naples Plains, was laying siege to the city itself. On the central front the 6th Corps, spearheaded by the 45th, began pushing inland up the Sele River Valley to the mountains. On the right the 8th Army's forces stretched to the eastern coast. The Allies had a solid front across the peninsula. The "foot of the boot" lay conquered behind them.

But despite diminishing infantry resistance on the Salerno Plains, it was still more than a man's life was worth to step into the open. The Germans had perfect observation. They were alert to any movement not expertly camouflaged. If a peep, dashing out on an errand, kicked up a cloud of dust, an "88" shell screamed after it. They even fired artillery at a single soldier!

Under cover of this spot shelling, the Germans crawled back into the hills. Giving up their attempts to smash the beachhead, they prepared for the second phase of the fight, one in which they held all the high cards except air superiority. As defenders, they could make the Allies fight on their terms, in terrain selected by them. And from brilliantly selected positions they could hold up the advance with a minimum of troops for the maximum time. For the German strategy was based on what they felt the fight was worth in *time* as, fighting all the way, they gradually fell back through the heart of Italy to their strongly fortified "Winter Stellung."

On September 19 the 179th moved up Highway 18, then branched off to the left up the Eboli road. Delayed by mine fields and dive bombers strafing the cautiously spaced columns, the troops crept along roads bracketed by gaping shell-holes to the hills equidistant from Eboli and Battapaglia off Highway 19, where the RCT halted. The 1st and 2nd Battalions organized positions on the ridge north of the roadbed, but contact with the Germans was lost. The 179th paused to allow other units to draw up on its flanks.

Here, deep in dank, filthy caves and hovels among the hills were found the first of thousands of pathetic, frightened Italian refugees, protected from falling shells and bombs—but starving. They snatched greedily and fought each other for rations proferred by sympathetic soldiers. They huddled together in befouled linen, dirty as only south Italians can be dirty. Among them were several wounded women and an old man, victims of earlier shellings, whimpering and afraid of the American doctors who came to cleanse their festering unwashed wounds. For their whining selfish greed and filthiness, these people soon lost their compassionate appeal to the American combat soldier.

By September 24 the Combat Team was moving again, through Eboli to Oliveto. The RCT's advance scouts picked up the German rear guard north of town. Artillery of both sides became ac-

tive. The enemy concentrated particularly on the highway up which the 179th was attacking. Then, after the 2nd Battalion had plunged on to take Calabritto at dawn September 25, the 180th RCT went through the 179th and assumed the role of Division spearhead. However, in case "Passport" ran into trouble, the Regiment tagged along close behind.

On Oct 1, as Naples was capitulating to 10th Corps troops, the C.P. advanced to a half mile north of Materdomini, the 179th's rifle battalions fanning out ahead and pushing steadily up the valley through the mountains. Stalked constantly by the Thunderbirds, the enemy dubbed the 45th the "Falcon Division."

Two days later the RCT jumped 33 miles, to within 2 kilometers of Grottominarda, where patrols again ran into enemy fire. Here the 3rd Battalion was temporarily attached to the 157th Inf. The remainder of the 179th snapped at the heels of the Germans.

Following the line companies up Highways 90 and 7, the Regimental Echelon passed through Benevento on October 6 shortly after midnight. Once a busy metropolis, Benevento was a ghost city that dismal, rainy night. Gutted, crumbling, fire-blackened buildings, solitary walls waveringly standing sentinel over rubble that had once formed handsome edifices, and pockmarked streets and by-ways all attested to the effectiveness of Allied bombings.

Sweeping north, the RCT paused only briefly outside of Benevento to drive back German field pieces and tanks trying in vain to slow the surging drive. But approaching San Lorenzo, the doughboys stopped to organize for attack. They had reached a known enemy stronghold, a triangle of fortified towns formed by Faicchio on the west, Guardia on the east and Cerreto Sanita to the north. Germans also manned entrenchments along the towering heights of Mt. Acero, the 179th's ultimate objective.

The 3rd Battalion was released to Regimental control so that the command was unified for the assault. The 160th F.A. Bn, with one of its accurate, devastating barrages which prisoners unanimously agreed caused them the greatest terror and havoc of any of the American weapons of war, paved the way. And at dawn, the 179th jumped off from positions southeast of Guardia.

The 1st Battalion sped west, crossing the familiar Calore River south of Castelvenere. The 2nd swung north along the Benevento-Guardia highway and, despite furious enemy defensive fire, cut Highway 87 and gained the ridges west of Guardia. And, having driven a wedge in the enemy lines, the 2nd Battalion pushed on through the night. The darkness was speckled with gun flashes, tracers and tank, artillery and mortar shell bursts.

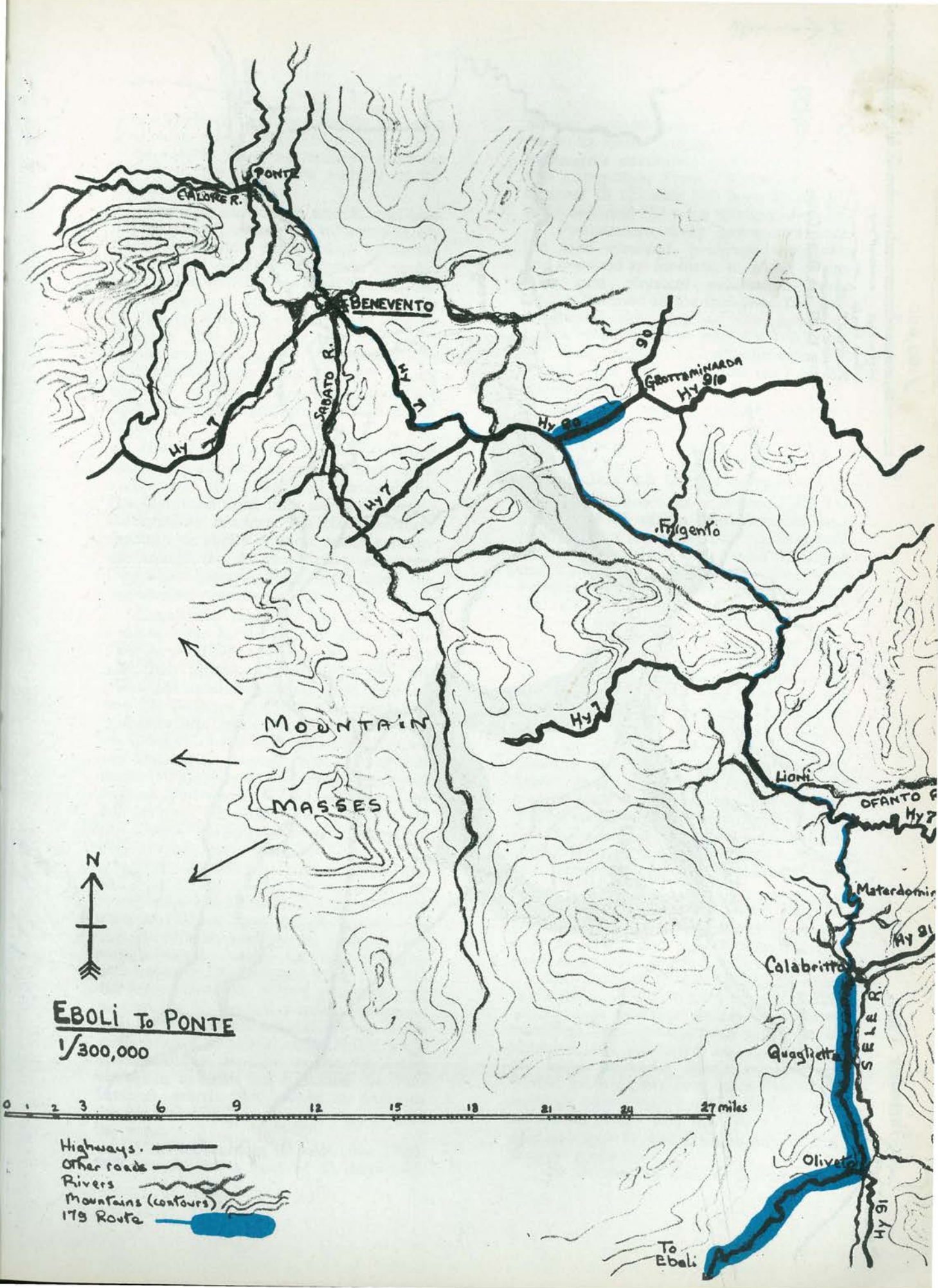
Maintaining the attack the next dawn the 3rd Battalion kicked off through the 2nd toward the precipitous cliffs that overlooked Guardia from the east. Artillery fire pinned the Germans in their foxholes while the troops charged up the steep slopes, scrambled and clawed their way to the crest, and then stormed the enemy dugouts savagely with bayonets, grenades and sweeping rifle fire. The attack overwhelmed the enemy. By nightfall the 3rd Battalion troops had butted the Germans off the heights and were masters of the invincible looking palisades.

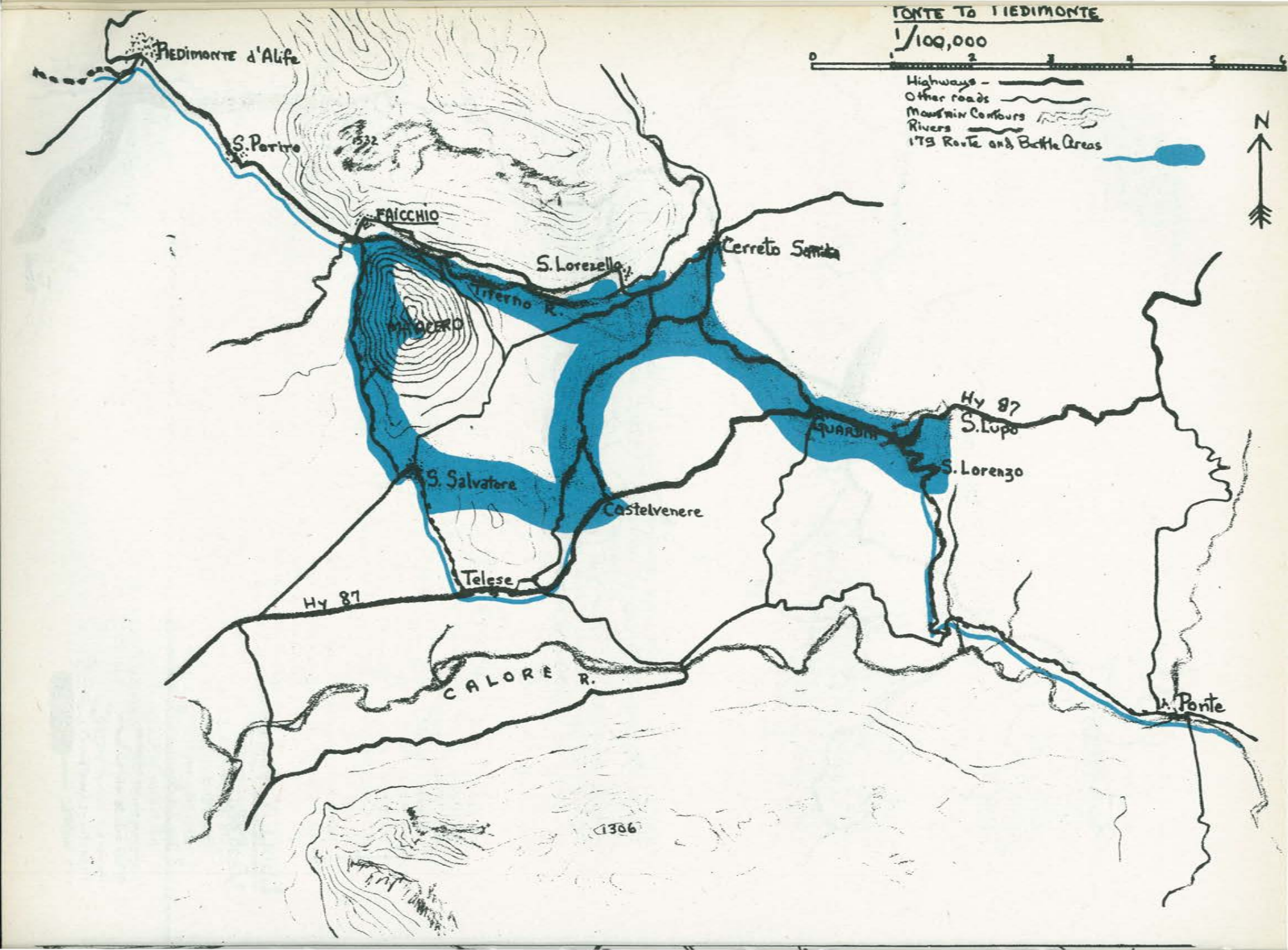
With the loss of the controlling high ground, the Germans withdrew from Guardia that night, leaving the 2nd Battalion free to walk in unopposed at 0715 October 11.

The enemy had withdrawn only to more distant heights northwards, from where he kept up a steady harassing fire. Yet the 2nd kept attacking until by dusk it had established a firm defense line 1000 yards west of San Lorenzello.

By noon October 12 Cerreto Sanita was in the Regiment's hands. And as the Germans then retreated to the mountainous region across the Titerno River and hugged their foxholes, the northeastern portion of the RCT sector was cleared of the enemy. The 2nd Battalion was pulled out, leaving the 1st and 3rd Battalions to press home the attack to the west.

The going got tougher in this direction. The Germans used increasing numbers of mines and their batteries in the hills deprived the attackers of the free use of the Titerno River Valley road. To add to the difficulties, the Luftwaffe was making its weight felt. Until October 10 the German Command had caused its ground troops to doubt the very existence of Germany's air force. But about then the air aid which had been repeatedly promised the Wehrmacht actually materialized.


PONTE
CALORE R.
BENEVENTO
SABATO R.
Hy 7
Hy 90
GROTTAMINARDA
Hy 91
Hy 88
Frigento
MOUNTAIN
MASSES
Hy 7
Lioni
OFANTO R.
Hy 7
Materdomini
Hy 91
Calabritto
SELE R.
Quaglietta
Olivet
Hy 91
To Eboli
N
EBOLI TO PONTE
1/300,000
0 1 2 3 6 9 12 15 18 21 24 27 miles
Highways.
Other roads
Rivers
Mountains (contours)
179 Route


TONTE TO TIEDIMONTE
1/100,000
0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Highways
Other roads
Mountain Contours
Rivers
179 Route and Battle Areas
N
PIEDIMONTE d'Alife
S. Potito
532
FAICCHIO
S. Lorezello
Cerreto Sannita
Titerno R.
MONTE CERO
Hy 87
S. Lupo
GUARDIA
S. Lorenzo
S. Salvatore
Castelvenere
Telese
Hy 87
CALORE R.
1306
Ponte

Swastika-marked planes began to bomb and strafe the 179th positions daily. Their chief targets were the artillery batteries set up in the immediate vicinity of the Regimental C.P.

Deciding on a night attack, and basing his plans partially on information obtained by daring patrols that infiltrated through the German lines near Faicchio each night, the C.O. ordered the 1st and 3rd Battalions to jump off at 0045 October 14. The 1st drove down the river road on Faicchio. The 3rd, under Lt. Col. Earl A. Taylor, smashed its way astride the San Salvatore-Faicchio road through heavy machine gun fire to gain a tentative foothold along the southern slopes of Mt. Acero.

Here the battle for the heights raged ferociously all day and night. Both sides hurtled tons of artillery and mortar shells. The Germans used their nerve-shattering six-barrelled mortars, the Nebelwerfers: shooting six shells at once, which screamed through the air like dying banshees, they soon became aptly nicknamed the "screaming meemies."

Casualties mounted as the bloody hand to hand battle kept on through the 15th. As the 179th's officers fell, sergeants took their places. As sergeants fell, privates assumed command until, one by one the German machine gun nests and pillboxes had been demolished. At sunset October 15 the 3rd's doughboys threw the last of the enemy from the heights south of Faicchio. A begrimed, exhausted platoon leader said: "Well, we booted the bastards off, all right." His eyes scanned the littered hilltop, the dead lying silent and twisted. Then he fainted.

With Americans to the south and Germans to the north, Faicchio itself became a No Man's Land. But the RCT had completed its mission so, after safeguarding the 157th's passage up the San Salvatore-Faicchio road, the 3rd Battalion was relieved. A battalion at a time the 157th took over the 179th's positions, and on October 18 the last battalion to be relieved, the 1st, came out of the lines. A few days later the 45th's other RCTs were pinched out of the fight by the 8th Army sweeping in from the east and the 34th Division, which had moved in between the 3rd and 45th Divisions, closing in from the west.

With the coming of rest, the 179th RCT terminated a total of 43 days continuous commitment to battle, during which its losses had already doubled the Regiment's casualties in the entire Sicilian Campaign. From September 10 to October 18 133 men had been killed, 619 wounded, and 157 were missing in action.

Furthermore, daily downpours coupled with constant, prolonged exposure had resulted in fantastic numbers of malaria and physical exhaustion cases among the men in the foxholes. The total evacuated sick reached the appalling figure of 978 officers and EMs! All told the 179th, exclusive of attachments, had already lost over half the men in the Regiment!

Scarcely enough trained non-coms and riflemen remained to form a nucleus in any one platoon, while of the officers only one of the original rifle company commanders still led his company.

To counteract these losses, 1,340 enlisted and 25 officer replacements had been sent to the outfit. But the Regiment was losing veterans with 2 years' training and 2 campaigns' experience; they were being replaced by soldiers most of whom had had only the basic 13 weeks training! Despite the millions of well trained troops in the U.S., the Army was sending overseas as replacements many men who had not even fired the weapon with which they were armed! Granted Italy was but a subsidiary battle front and that it was imperative that trained men be massed to build up the huge forces needed for a "Second Front," this worked a terrible, brutal hardship on the fighting regiments and on their individual men. For on first joining a combat unit these replacements inevitably had a disproportionately high casualty rate, until those who survived had learned, albeit the hard way, a soldier's trade.

So the rest period afforded the new men a much needed opportunity to zero in their weapons, and the veterans a much needed breather.

On October 21 Col. Hutchins went to the hospital. For months he had suffered his own physical torture in silence, taking an hour to dress each morning. He returned in a few days, but only to bid his troops farewell. Much against his wishes he had been pronounced too ill to continue commanding in the field. It was with deep regret that the 179th Infantry said goodbye to their C.O., a superb and fearless soldier.

On October 26, Col. M. R. Kammerer

was assigned as Commanding Officer of the 179th.

Two days later the Combat Team was dispatched 25 miles by truck from its bivouac area south of San Lorenzello to an assembly area 4 kilometers west of Piedimonte d'Alife. The next morning the new C.O. moved his headquarters to Ailano, from whence he and his staff made constant reconnaissance of the front, preparatory to relieving 34th Division elements in the line, the initial step in the assumption of the entire 34th sector by the 45th Division.

The resumption of hostilities by the Thunderbirds marked the beginning of the most strenuous and exhausting phase of the Italian Campaign. Just ahead lay the mighty defenses behind which the Germans intended to hold throughout the coming winter: the interlocking, brilliantly conceived network of pillbox emplacements, the German Winter Line.

Chapter 11. The Battle of Venafro

With the British 10th Corps and 8th Army on the flanks attacking up Italy's two coastlines, the binding link between them was the U.S. 6th Corps, composed of the 3rd, 45th and 34th Infantry Divisions and the 82nd Airborne Division. The strategy aimed at smashing the heart of the Winter Line with these American units.

The 179th was slated for a major role in this offensive: its initial mission was to secure the high ground overlooking the Volturno River on the east, cover the 180th RCT's crossing of the river and assist that unit in taking Venafro.

The city of Venafro was a key link in the German chain of fortified localities. What the enemy described as his Winter Line was, like the Siegfried Line, a series of strongpoints extending across the natural mountain barrier in great depth. It began at Venafro, San Pietro, Mt. Rotunda and Mignano. Each strongpoint was tied to the next by a system of interlocking pillboxes dominating every peak and ravine. Each position, defendable by a small force, was so placed that even when it fell, the Germans could withdraw to other prepared defenses which, on even higher knolls, commanded the heights just abandoned!

This type of warfare tested to the zenith the physical endurance and "guts" of every American fighting man. Here, in his mountain fastnesses the enemy ceased his hasty withdrawals. The terrain was rough; so was the German soldier. Indeed, despite reports that enemy morale was steadily declining, because of the Wehrmacht's defeats and because of rampant suffering of families in the Fatherland due to Allied bombings, there was no evidence of it in the enemy's fierce resistance.

The 179th planned its attack carefully. At dawn November 1 the 2nd Battalion occupied the ridge along the eastern bank of the Volturno. The 3rd Battalion moved up the heights behind the 2nd, the 1st drew up behind the 3rd, and the solid line facing west and overlooking the river crossing was complete. No opposition was encountered. The Germans had relinquished the right bank of the river unpersuaded.

The C.O. advanced his Command Post to an area 1 mile southwest of Pratella: en route the convoy was attacked by Messerschmidts swooping down the valley and levelling off 100 feet from the ground! For a fleeting moment the pilots' faces were plainly visible: one enemy airman had a moustache. One enemy plane was shot down. The convoy moved on. Two days later it advanced again, to within 2 miles of the river ford.

During the early hours of November 3, strong combat patrols forded the Volturno at its low point near the blown out bridge and infiltrated to the heights north of Venafro, feeling out enemy strength and locating outposts. Just as day broke

the silent patrols slipped back across the river.

The 3rd Battalion was selected to lead the attack. Blue quietly assembled at its "jump off" near the ford and organized for the crossing. Just after midnight, November 4, Major Merlin O. Tryon, now battalion C.O., gave the order to advance. Lead elements moved out and began to wade across the river, triggers cocked and ears and eyes alert for the slightest sign of the enemy on the opposite bank.

But the night was serene. At 0315 the entire battalion had reached the western bank. The companies reformed to attack. At 0545, Company K leading, the 3rd Battalion jumped off.

Advancing on Venafro, once away from the river bank it ran into excited machine gun and rifle fire from the alarmed enemy lines. Overwhelming the initial outpost resistance, the 3rd pushed on. By 0915 the lead squads were a kilometer from town. "K" sped ahead, but the rest of the battalion was suddenly forced to seek hasty cover as a withering crossfire broke out from a string of German dugouts. Unable to advance, the battalion troops began to reduce the pillboxes one by one, except for King Company.

"K", far out in front, was isolated. But its daring commander, Lt. Timothy J. Shaughnessy, decided that since he was cut off he may as well keep attacking. So King proceeded to assault the objective singlehandedly—and at 1245 captured Venafro! Punching on without pause, the company waded into the real enemy resistance anchored in entrenchments on the heights north of town. All afternoon the inspired troops fought the Germans up the slopes, with grenades, sizzling small arms fire, and bayonets.

That night, when the rest of the battalion broke through the last defenses south of town and rejoined "K", that company was still battling the enemy along the road skirting Mt. Croce. The whole battalion halted and dug in, within earshot of the Germans.

Meanwhile the 1st Battalion had crossed the river and moved up behind Blue. The 2nd Battalion continued to cover the crossing and protect the 179th's engineers, toiling to construct a pontoon bridge over the Volturno. By early afternoon a structure that would bear light vehicles had been erected. By dark a steel bridge was completed capable of sustaining any vehicle. The RCT's organic transportation began to pour across it.

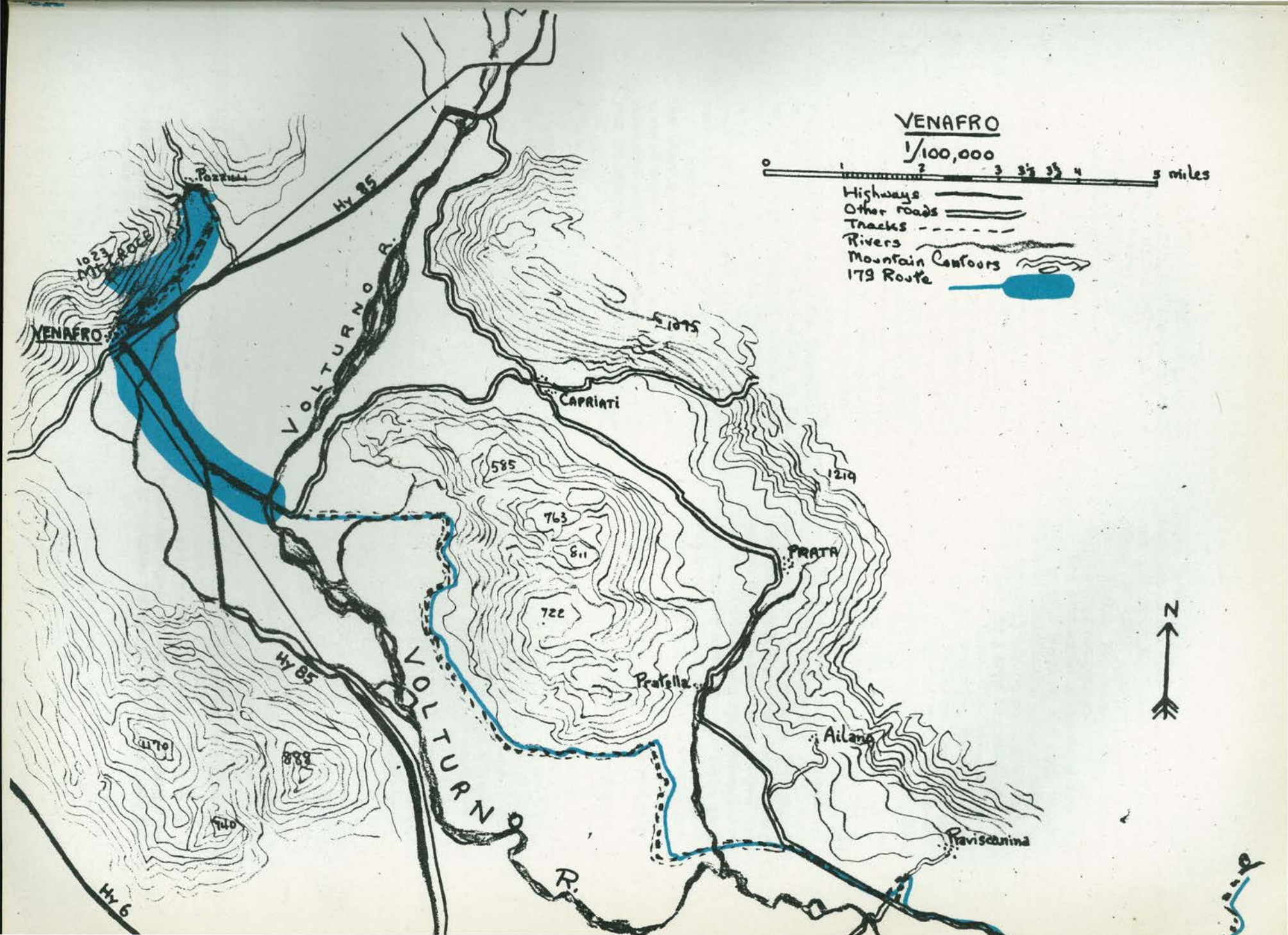
On November 5 the 1st Battalion passed through the 3rd and, bypassing 5 enemy tanks and 80 German infantrymen pocketed on Mt. Croce on their left, plodded single file over that peak. When the troops, reaching the hilltop, took one look out across the valley to other mountains swarming with Heinies and realized their vulnerability along the skyline, they scampered down the hill. It is not in the books to advance into enemy territory without benefit of reconnaissance or prior preparation, but that was Red's mission. By 0915 the 1st and 3rd Battalions manned a line from the base of Mt. Croce to the heights southwest of Pozzilli.

That night the Colonel set up his C.P. a half mile northeast of Venafro. The slopes of Mt. Croce, directly overhead, were controlled by the enemy, but the site was afforded partial protection by the overhang of the mountain.

At daylight the C.O. sent a platoon up the mountain to ferret out the krauts. The troops, scrambling up the slope, ran smack into Gen. McLain. Theoretically observing the front, actually he was engaged in a personal fire fight with an enemy sniper! The platoon "relieved" the General and, deploying at once, maneuvered about all day picking off Germans. C.P. personnel below spent the time in their foxholes. Not only did spent bullets drop whining all around them, but the area was interdicted first by artillery, then by mortar fire; for dessert it was bombed and strafed 3 times that afternoon by low-flying enemy planes.

Meanwhile Red Battalion, infiltrating into Pozzilli, found the town unoccupied. So it tramped on until locating good defensive terrain along the ridge west of town. The 2nd Battalion, moving up behind the 1st, attacked slowly up the rising ground south of Filignano. And ran into a mare's nest of Heinies.

Called on for support, the 160th's batteries began to pound German positions. Mortars zeroed in on enemy pillboxes. Machine guns sputtered. And the infantry charged up hill. The Germans fought savagely from their dugouts, thick as flies covering every approach up the mountain. The troops had to smash each one before the advance anywhere could


VENAFRO
1/100,000
0 1 2 3 3½ 3½ 4 5 miles
Highways
Other roads
Tracks
Rivers
Mountain Contours
179 Route
Hy 85
VOLTURNO R.
1023
Mt. Croce
VENAFRO
1075
CAPRIATI
585
763
811
722
1219
PRATA
Pratella
Ailano
Hy 85
1170
888
740
Hy 6
Raviscanina
N

proceed, a job that took blind courage. In "G's" sector, while the company maintained a fierce fire frontally, Cpl. Earvin Craddock took 3 men to act as cover for himself and slipped up on the flank of a stubborn machine gun nest. When he had crept to within 25 yards of the chattering enemy gun, he suddenly leaped up and hurled himself at the emplacement, tossing grenades and pouring out a stream of tommy gun bursts. He blew apart the gun—and the crew with it. Then, using the same technique, he rushed a second enemy dugout, and wiped it out.

The Germans withdrew to higher ground and the 2nd Battalion consolidated its gains and prepared to renew the torturous uphill battle with the next dawn.

209 air miles from Salerno, but much farther as the infantry travels, the 179th had reached the core of the German resistance. Indicative of the nature of the terrain was the forming of a mule pack train to supply the front line troops with rations and ammunition. Not even peeps could scale these mountains. So the army mule came into his own again.

It was up such mountains, too, that the Graves Registration Service details crawled each night, seeking the bodies of American and German dead for burial. It was no mockery of the dead that these men were called "the Ghouls". Theirs was one of the most harrowing, dangerous and agonizing jobs in the Regiment. Many a GRS man went to pieces after having to collect the remains of a life long companion.

The evacuation of the dead was not easy in such weather and such terrain. Nor was identification always easy, for direct artillery hits do not leave much in their wake. But it must be consoling to the relatives of those who were killed in action to know that under the direction of Capt. Robert L. Richmond* the GRS was thorough and careful, and that decent Christian burials were given every soldier who fell on the battlefield.

And those who lived to fight on? To lie in waterfilled foxholes all day cowering from the ceaseless enemy fire pouring down from above; to get up unrested as night fell to charge into the face of machine guns; or to make a daylight attack, men and weapons alike soaked through by the endless rains; to live and fight on nothing but emergency rations; to still retain the will to go on despite such conditions made a hero of every infantryman in the line. And it was under just these conditions that the 179th RCT began its battle for the mountains, slope by slope, ridge by ridge.

** Wounded at Anzio. Every regiment has its "character", and "Red" was the 179th's. Conscientious and serious about his job, the rest of the time he was, in addition to his other duties, the unit "jester."*

Chapter 12. Mountains of Blood

What the doughboys faced as they stormed the rising peaks north of Pozzilli can be visualized from an analysis of the enemy defenses under attack, written by Capt. Richard "Monty" Strong*, C.E., after he had become S-3 of the 179th Infantry:

"This was the key to the German Winter Stellung. From a river valley 600 feet high at Pozzilli, the mountains rise to an elevation of 2310 feet 3,000 yards to the north, and to 2115 feet 2,000 yards to the west. They rise in increasing heights, between which are deep ravines. Roman trails between rock walls traverse each cultivated section, so that to attack such terrain the aggressor is forced to move across the open noses of the hills.

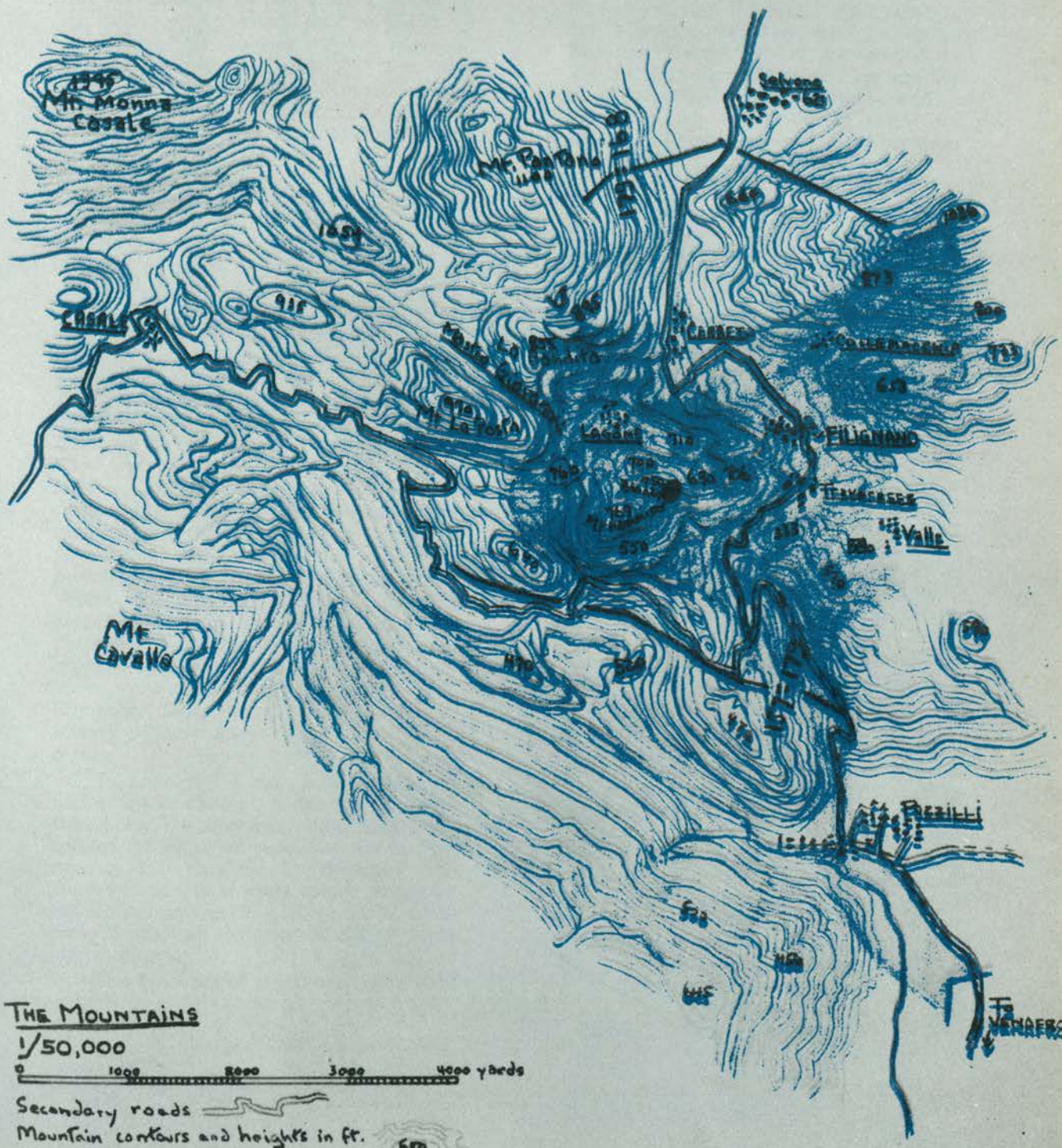
The enemy acted on this knowledge. The German defenses were so situated that a majority of the automatic weapons were forward. Riflemen behind were ready to counter-attack. Weapons were grouped: each section was protected by bunkers and shelters consisting of dugouts reinforced with rock or timber and extending to the front and sides to blend naturally with the terrain and produce excellent camouflage protection. Nearly all were strong enough to withstand direct artillery hits.

Gun positions placed near these bunkers were protected by riflemen who also acted as observers and sentries. The weapons were set up to cover each nose with interlocking bands of fire, each valley with bands of crossfire, and each trail with direct fire. In addition, each position was so located that it covered an adjacent position and supported its fire, while enemy artillery fired intermittent harassing fire throughout the operations on all zones not completely covered by small arms fire. The rock walls enabled the Germans to shift or mass troops unobserved, these reserves counter-attacking our troops but never in such strength as to be more than a local attack to regain limited objectives.

The best success in conquering these positions was found to be by a heavy concentration of artillery preparation, thus keeping the enemy confined to his bunkers, followed by an immediate infantry attack to drive the enemy out with hand grenades and bayonets."

On November 7, despite knee-deep mud and teeming rain, the 2nd Battalion

* *Killed in action north of Anzio.*



THE MOUNTAINS

1/50,000

0 1000 2000 3000 4000 yards

Secondary roads

Mountain contours and heights in ft. 650

179 Route and Battle areas

179 Sector boundaries

179=168

River

MAP 7

started up the slippery slope of Hill 769[1] amid a hail of mortar and small arms fire. Defended by an enemy battalion and joined by Hills 750 and 700 to Lagone, Hill 769 formed the southeastern link of another section of strong positions winding through the mountains. Progress, made at almost prohibitive cost, was slow. Hill 769 became to the 179th RCT what the taking of Richmond was to Grant.

As the 2nd stormed Hill 769 through the foggy downpour, the 3rd Battalion troops struck across the Pozzilli-Traverecce road at the ridge of Hills 530-533-570, driving up foot by foot under the watchful eyes of Lt. Gen. Courtney Hodges, subsequently 1st (U.S.) Army Commander, who was observing combat operations in the 179th sector.

By morning visibility had dropped to 40 feet, but White and Blue Battalions still attacked. Despite heavy enemy artillery fire the 3rd seized Hill 570, taking 40 PWs. No sooner had the Battalion organized its defenses than enemy infantry, supported by direct tank fire,[2] counter-attacked. A pitched battle ensued, lasting into the darkness, until sheer weight of numbers forced the 3rd Battalion doughboys from the crest. Maj. Tryon held his battered forces together, and anchored a defense line along the muddy slope. Red's companies slogged up behind the 3rd to provide defense in depth and right flank protection along the Traverecce road. White, still furiously fighting along the slopes of Hill 769, or "Mt. Kammerer" as it came to be called, was unable to gain ground against the fierce German resistance. In a pause a couple of GIs in E Company began arguing about whether it was possible ever again to be clean or dry.

To prevent the men from collapsing under the strain and under the inhuman conditions, the attacking battalions were rotated as often as possible. So on November 9 it was the 1st Battalion that surged ahead in a night attack to retake the Valle ridge of Hills 570 and 580. Company B reached the crest at 0500. It was unoccupied.

This retaking of a hill and then withdrawing in the dark was a repeated trick of the Germans. It kept the attackers guessing whether the enemy held the heights or not, and if not where a surprise counter-attack might come from once they got there.

Extending the lines long the Valle ridge, Red patrols also infiltrated into Valle itself and Filignano. And while the 1st struck across the road to occupy Hill 706 directly behind Traverecce and the 3rd Battalion advanced on the German defenses in the mountains north of Filignano, the 2nd Battalion threw day and night attacks up Mt. Kammerer. In two days the 2nd, with E leading, had wrested 25 bitterly contested yards from the enemy.

It had become a war of attrition. In 10 days the Regiment had suffered 228 battle casualties. In an effort to put on the pressure, the 157th RCT was thrown into the fray south of the 179th, to assault Hill 470. The 180th was relieved by fresh Ranger and Paratrooper units near Venafro. But what was needed was a division attacking on the same frontage now given a regiment.

Rain hampered offensive operations, but the 160th's guns, since the recall of Lt. Col. Larson to the U.S. under the command of his able Ex-O, Maj. John Embry, continued to blast away at the Germans. RCT artillery consistently outgunned enemy batteries, which fired principally at prearranged areas rather than at observed targets.

Despite continued bad weather on November 14 the 3rd Battalion resumed its attacks and the battle of men, mud, mountains and mules went on. Companies I and L moved up the masses north of Collemacchia, up and up, 800, 900 metres, to the crest of 1036, the northernmost point of the 179th sector and the highest ground yet seized by the Regiment. It was bitter cold up here. Feet, burning inside wet socks, were alternately frozen and sweating.

The 2nd Battalion inched its way tortuously up Mt. Kammerer, inspired by the gallantry of such leaders as S/Sgt. T. P. Hattensty*, who repeatedly led his

* *Killed in action at Anzio.*

1—Hills were numbered according to their height in metres, as indicated on operations map.

2—Somehow the Germans managed to get their tanks into position in any terrain. Whereas (perhaps inspired in part by the keen rivalry between various branches of the service) the actions of U. S. tanks fostered a saying in the infantry that if you saw an American tank you knew you were a safe distance behind the front.

platoon into the thick of the fight and by his personal courage alone calmly held the thinning ranks together. It took such leaders. Wet, cold, hungry, unable to sleep but too exhausted to keep awake, and under endless fire from enemy guns 75 yards away, the men weren't enthusiastic about attacking, not even about fighting for their lives. It needed but the slightest jar to send them over the brink of nervous hysteria. Man after man got that jar.

With listening posts and patrols cautiously ranging the front, the entire Division was attacking from defensive positions to take only limited objectives. The battle began to approximate trench warface. A new major strategy was needed to break the stalemate.

The Germans, of course, were satisfied with the status quo. The Allies however (possibly to convince themselves the Russians weren't winning the war alone?) kept battering themselves into insensibility with insufficient forces smashing at a stone wall, using up and killing off their crack troops.

To make matters worse, the Volturno River became so swollen by the rains that all bridges as far south as Alife were washed away, disrupting supply channels for days.

The C.P. moved out of the downpour into a building in Pozzilli, its first indoor headquarters in 6 months and its next to last in another 6. But intimately familiar with terrain features, roadways and obvious troop areas by having previously occupied all this territory, no sooner had the 179th C.P. been set up than the enemy began shelling the town. The first night they scored a direct hit on the C.P. building. On 8 of the next 11 days enemy guns hammered the town and highway, usually throwing clusters of 3-4 shells at once. In range of enemy batteries for weeks to come because of the bogged down advance, Pozzilli became the "Purple Heart" town.

One quiet afternoon Allied artillery units fired 5 rounds of propaganda shells. For weeks thereafter PWs came in proferring these pamphlets, which exhorted the Germans to surrender, emphasizing the good treatment PWs received at Allied hands. The enemy high command tried unsuccessfully to counteract their influence by decreeing the death penalty for anyone caught with a leaflet in his possession.

In contradistinction German propaganda was having no effect. Their leaflets, frequently extracts from President Roosevelt's speeches, were obvious misquotations. Often they aimed at causing dissension between Russians, British and Americans with half-truths. And on Radio Rome, with the German's typical inability to realize when he is ridiculous, George and Sally (the "Berlin Bitch") boosted the troops' morale with what they must have thought was pretty telling propaganda. One of Sally's classic remarks: "Who's sleeping with your wife tonight while you are over here fighting?" These two also gave lists of American PWs, sprinkled with warnings (dramatized with "Inner Sanctum" background music) to the American listeners to go home or Jerry would most regretably kill them all.

No incentive but this unconscious if grim humor was needed to make Americans listen to such programs, but incidentally the Germans also played far more popular American musical selections than were heard on either the BBC or the Algiers Expeditionary Force stations.

Even better for morale, in November the first Division group left for the Naples "Rest Camp". This center, established to revive combat soldiers after the gruelling hardships of the front ,was occupied each week by new groups from all the 45th's units. An interesting sidelight on the Italian war emanated from the combat troops' contact with rear echelon units stationed in Naples.[1] To these latter soldiers the war was indeed remote, for life in Napoli pursued the normal ways of any American seaport city. Combat troops were eagerly interrogated as to the kind of life they led: they were asked if they too only saw old movies, if their billets in hotels (!) were also overcrowded, if they too got passes only every *other* weekend! Many of 45th Division artist Bill Mauldin's cartoons brilliantly satirized this utter inability of rear echelon troops not three

1—Dirty and avaricious, it was in reality a City of Scavengers, where if you even dropped your voice an Italian beggar would pick it up.

hours travel from the front to grasp true conditions in combat, the real, terrible, meaningless horror of war.

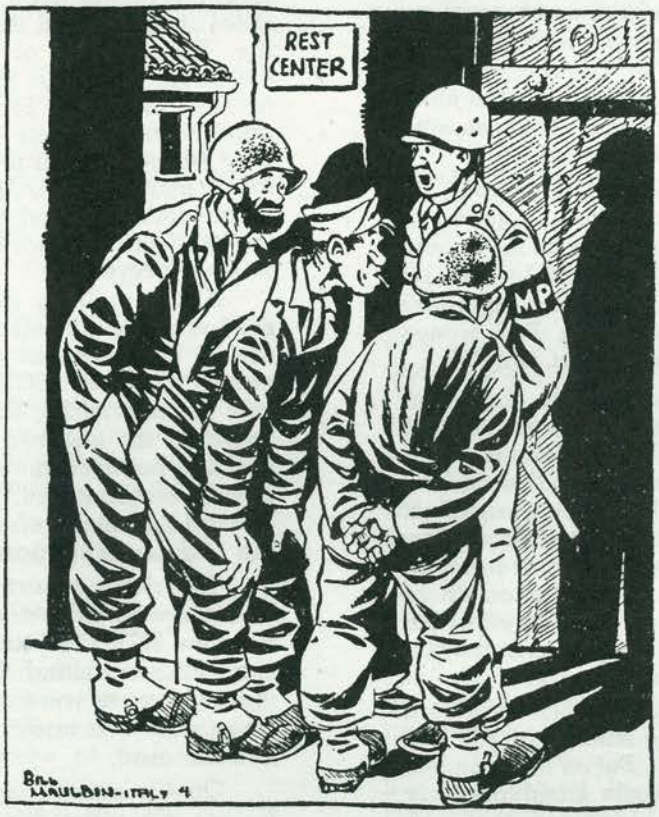
Yet, ironically ,it is only the infantryman himself who can appreciate what he goes through. The briefest sentence in a communique has cost him blood, sweat, tears—and a part of himself. A simple phrase like "extending the line to the right" under fire means a volume to the soldier, to a whole battalion: it means reconnoitering new supply routes and building new roads, rerouting communications, new strategy, redeployment of troops and the committing of more men. To the individual it means moving out of his old hole, tramping somewhere else, and digging a new one, ducking bullets all the way. A combat commander doesn't pass off such a move with a wave of his hand; a private can't.

On November 22 the 179th RCT heard with sincere regret that Gen. Middleton, who had led the Division in all its brilliant successes, had been transferred. His departure was followed shortly by that of Gen. McLain*. The new C.G., Maj. Gen. William W. Eagles, had been the 3rd Division's Assistant Division Commander.

Toward the end of November plans were formulated for a new all-out offensive against the German line, still focused in the Lagone area. This line, swinging in a semicircle from La Bandita on the north through La Posta to Mt. Cavalla on the south facing the Regiment, was similar to and indeed a continuation of the Filignano fortified positions. The Germans also still held salients at Hill 769 and northwest to Lagone.

Against ever rising masses of peaks, the 179th was to spearhead the 45th's attack once more and, along with the rest of the 6th Corps forces, it too began to swing to the west facing the sea, and Rome.

* *A National Guard officer, personally the most admired general officer ever to serve in the 45th, soon after the end of the European War Gen. McLain was promoted to the rank of Lt. General!*



"Th' yellow one is fer national defense, th' red one wit' white stripes is fer very good conduct, and th' real purty one wit' all th' colors is fer bein' in this theater of operations."

Chapter 13. The Taking of Lagone

The general offensive began at 0600 November 29. Striking on a narrow front, the 179th's 1st Battalion led off, its attack paralleled on the right by the 168th Inf.

Coming under fierce small arms fire 50 yards out, Red (less one company assaulting La Bandita on the north) smashed up Hill 690 east of Lagone and that morning wrested the ridge from the stubborn Germans, then beat off successive enemy counter-attacks.

The Regiment paused to regroup its companies, while the 160th hammered at the enemy's fixed positions in the mountains. The RCT line, manned by the 1st and 2nd Battalions, ran along Hills 690 and 710, with other Pagan Red troops holding the eastern slopes of Hill 750.

In order to seize Lagone, however, the surrounding heights had to be first in American hands. So although many rifle companies were reduced to as few as 50 effectives, the Regiment jumped off again toward the objective hills ringing Lagone. At dawn December 4 from its LD on La Bandita, the 1st Battalion drove up Hill 895. Despite superhuman effort the men could not reach the nose, and withdrew under hot machine gun fire.

At the same time the 2nd Battalion was pushing over the summit of Hill 750 toward Mt. Kammerer. But as it advanced, it was hit on both flanks simultaneously by enemy infantry hidden in the rock crevices. The companies, decimated, fell back to Hill 700 and went on the defensive.

The exhausted men dropped to the ground and slept where they fell, oblivious to bullets and mud and rain and hunger. But at 0700 the next morning they were again on their feet and forging up the slopes, a thin grim line crawling, sprinting across open patches, through a sheet of bullets and thudding heavy shellfire. The impetus of their drive carried the troops to within 75 yards of the crest of Hill 750. The thinner line attacked again, was stopped. Not knowing why they struggled so frantically to stay alive in a living death, yet the doughboys fought furiously and held all day, repelling two German attacks with heavy losses to the enemy.

After repulsing more enemy attacks, the 2nd again clawed onwards, and on the 6th at last cleared that knoll of Germans. With the RCT advanced to just east of Lagone, Mt. Kammerer was isolated from the enemy's chain of defenses. The 2nd Battalion moved up to reduce the enemy remnants still holding out there. The 3rd Battalion, refreshed and saved for the Lagone fight, closed in on the town.

That day's operations netted the 179th 42 PWs, who were eagerly questioned at the new RCT C.P. at Filignano by Russian officers visiting the Italian front. For these Germans were members of the 44th Division, which had formerly seen action at Stalingrad.

On the second anniversary of Pearl Harbor, Company E and White's AT platoon, with Company C in support, were busy eliminating the resistance on the 179th's bete noire, Mt. Kammerer. The

remainder of the 2nd Battalion cleared the isolated but still dangerous enemy-occupied pillboxes around Hill 750.

The 3rd Battalion, fanning out behind these enemy pockets, seized Hill 710 and the neighboring ridges overlooking Lagone from the northeast.

Three times the Germans counter-attacked Company I on this strategic ground, and three times were thrown back. By dusk the Battalion line was within 200 yards of Lagone.

The 3rd Battalion picked off small enemy groups around town but delayed directly assaulting Lagone until the Mt. Kammerer heights were completely cleared. For while the Germans held any part of Hill 769 they could shoot direct fire into the backs of anyone assaulting Lagone. And while the 3rd waited, the 160th's batteries began softening up the town with great rolling barrages. Mortar squads fed their hungry guns, as fast as shells could be lobbed over into the enemy lines. Machine guns spat at the Germans. The enemy stayed under cover.

During the tense wait one of those idiotic incidents occurred that typifies the American soldier and his keen sense of humor which enables him to endure untold hardships fortitudinously. Capt. Henry W. Strong, Blue S-3, lay on his back in a dugout 200 yards from the enemy lines, behind a slight rise affording him some cover from enemy fire. Capt. Richard M. Strong lay on his stomach on top of the same rise, observing and spotting targets for the artillery. Strong in the hole called Strong on the hill on one of three field phones he had spread around him: "Listen, I'll call you little Strong and you call me big Strong, to avoid confusion in phoning. O.K.?"

"No," roared Strong on the OP, "I'm bigger than you."

"Yes," Strong in the foxhole shouted back, "but I'm stronger than you."

The Battalion Commander, who happened to be listening in on the party line, settled the argument. He said they would be called by the name of their home towns.

"Roger," said Strong in the hole, "call me Far Rockaway from the town of the same name on Long Island."

"Oke," said Strong on the hill, then paused to duck a shell that whistled and burst close by. "Uh—I'm Albuquerque, and *everyone* knows where that is!"

The conversation ended. Pretty soon Strong on the OP observed enemy movement. He rang Strong in the foxhole who, after answering the other two phones, finally got the right line. "Far Rockaway? Fire mission. Will you coordinate, Far Rock?"

"Delighted, Albuquerque," came the reply. Strong in the hollow consulted other parties on two of his three phones at once. Suddenly the scream of shells whined over Strong on the hill. He bawled into the phone: "Hey, Rock! What the hell is that?"

"Me, Albu, registering in."

"Oh. Hey, that's good. The range is O.K., Ro."

"Roger," said Strong in the hole, "Here I come, Al."

The next moment all hell broke loose on the enemy.

Anticipating the American attack on Lagone, on December 10 the Germans threw a 450-shell barrage at the RCT's positions, concentrated into 20 minutes. It was the greatest artillery barrage yet employed against the 179th, only, since the range was off, the whole concentration fell behind the lines instead of on them. A few minor injuries resulted.

Coordinated with flanking units including the 2nd Moroccan Inf Div which had relieved the 34th Division on the right, the 179th's attack on Lagone began at 0630 December 15 after a 10-minute artillery preparation fire. Red moved out and by 0800 was laying fire on Hill 760. The 3rd Battalion streaked for town. At 0940 Company L was in the outlying streets of Lagone, and hung there all day and night battling the Germans in fierce house to house engagements.

With the 1st Battalion's capture of Hill 760,[1] the 179th gained command of all the heights around Lagone, and the battle became one for the town itself. Blue, reinforced by Company G, began slaughtering the enemy in town. "K" passed through Company I and, under intense

1—In this action Maj. Harry W. Hughes, 1st Bn C.O., received his fifth wound since landing in Italy, to become the 179th's most decorated officer, and its most resilient, for in a few weeks he was again back in the fight.

mortar fire, took over the frontal position, while the latter unit swung north to sweep into Lagone from that direction and catch the enemy between two fires.

"K" ran into a hot fire fight with enemy riflemen lodged in the town's foothills. Lt. Ernest W. Dean* picked off a Heinie right in front of him. The enemy soldier, mortally wounded, nevertheless began crawling laboriously toward the officer. Lt. Dean kept up a furious fire as other targets presented themselves, but also kept a wary eye on the German. The soldier dragged himself to the edge of Dean's slit trench. Dean was ready, but the German simply dropped in beside him. Dean looked at the man, then between bursts of fire, gave him first aid and a drink of water the German craved, though his was a stomach wound.

Suddenly the soldier fumbled in his pocket. Dean tensed. The German drew out his pen, then a watch, and handed them to the American. When Dean accepted them, the dying man's eyes softened for a moment. His gift had not been rejected by the man who had shot him. At peace, the German slowly let out his last breath, and lay still.

Any combat soldier will understand that German. The "big picture" is beyond the concern of the line soldier. His concern is for the next hot meal, the next relief, the next bath. His hate is more articulate, and therefore stronger, against the rear area GI who is lucky enough not to be where he is, than it is for the German he is fighting. Because both are front line troops with the same problems, fears and reactions, combat infantrymen of opposing armies respect one another. They kill each other because they would rather kill than be killed. In a sense such killing is more horrible than killing in revenge and passion. But because Americans are aware that the individuals facing them don't want to be there any more than themselves do, it is the way they kill.

At 1230 Company I entered Lagone from the north, to discover that the shattered enemy forces had retreated from the town. The 3rd Battalion at once occupied Lagone. Sending patrols hot after the Germans into Mastro-Giovanni, the Americans found that the enemy had abandoned that locality as well.

This last advance brought the 179th RCT to its final objective.

* *Killed in action north of Anzio.*

Chapter 14. En Passant

On December 18 the 180th passed through the 179th which, reverting to Corps reserve, was thereupon able to withdraw elements of its weary battalions to the Filignano area.

Here on December 21 Gen. Eagles, in a simple, dramatic ceremony held in the miniature town square, decorated ten men of the Regiment for their gallantry in action during the campaign's early stages. The following day 6 Brazilian officers, representing that republic's first expeditionary force, arrived at the C.P. on an inspection tour of the combat zone. Christmas Day was marked by the visit of Gen. Clark. A time of potent longings and remembrances, the day was generally observed by a decent meal and writing letters home.

On January 1, 1944, the Combat Team was released from its mountain defenses, and the next morning leading elements began the 41 mile motor move to a bivouac area a mile southeast of San Potito[1]. Here, billeted in pyramidal tents, the troops settled down for an "indefinite" rest.

When the last 179th unit, Company C, was relieved on January 5, it signalled the Regiment's first complete withdrawal from the theatre of action since D-Day. Following the one brief relief terminating on November 2, the subsequent 66 days commitment was recognized as the longest uninterrupted stretch of action any U.S. unit had seen in the war to that date. And in establishing this record the 179th had been instrumental in giving the 45th Division another kind of marathon record: 119 days combat out of the compaign's possible 119!

The accepted U.S. practice of retaining troops in the line for such interminable periods without a break, even under the *best* conditions, was later sharply condemned in the Surgeon General's brilliant and realistic report, in what for the Army was rare, outspoken language. Not that anyone apparently heeded his recommendations, not by any immediate, direct action! It was claimed by the Army to be better than World War I's rotation-of-divisions policy. It conceivably was more practical, it certainly employed fewer divisions. But it was inhumanly hard on the individuals it affected.

Not that it was purposeful, wanton murder so much as the demand of necessity. For, up to the recent commitment of French forces, 6th Corps was still using the same divisions that had fought at Salerno, the Volturno and the Winter Line: the 34th, 36th, 3rd and 45th Infantry units were in terrible reality "expendable."

Instead of sufficient forces to frequently rotate the RCTs and thus preserve the men to fight longer, the infantry boys were being worked until, if not casualties, they dropped from exhaustion. Often obtaining replacements was a mat-

1—See map 5.

Precis of Surgeon General's Report, Office of the Surgeon General
Distributed October 4, 1944

Prevention Of Loss Of Manpower From Psychiatric Disorder

The fact that troops, under the terrible strain of the danger of death as well as physical hardships, wear out, is insufficiently recognized by command. Soldiers do NOT get used to combat. And after a certain time, almost all non-battle casualties become psychiatric casualties, for like trucks after so many miles, doughboys too wear out after too much combat time. After their "critical" period, if soldiers are left in combat they become useless.

In Italy, infantry battalions lost 50% of their original strength killed, missing or wounded in 120 combat days, and this figure would have been higher still had not many soldiers been removed as exhaustion cases before they could become casualties. While the British count a man's combat usefulness as 400 days, twice the U.S. estimate, they relieve their troops every 12 days or less for a 4 day rest. In Italy the American soldier was kept in the line as long as 80 days without relief!

Reasons for so many psychiatric disorders: no soldier is removed from combat until he is worthless. Knowing this, the infantry has no incentive to go on. Too, there is no appreciation of the guts it takes to endure just one hour of hard combat. The base area soldier gets the same pay, ratings and all the "gravy"—entertainment, regular passes, comfortable living. Nor has the meaning of the war been sufficiently emphasized to the fighting man. The Russian fights for revenge, the British for survival, the French to regain France. The American fights only because he has to. And, after proving he has the guts to "take it" for a few months, he feels he has done his share. He begins to feel gypped. He looks on a wound as a blessing, an honorable and effective way of getting out of further combat. Nothing he does now—go AWOL, shirk duty, etc.—can disprove the fact that he was capable of fighting when he wanted to.

Such men are psychicly sick, inclined to self-inflicted wounds, misbehavior before the enemy.

To reduce these psychiatric disorders several things should be done:

1. *Combat troops should get a promise of a definite end to combat duty after a specified time. The probable command objection—loss of unit efficiency and veteran troops—is easily answered: after 200 combat days soldiers are worthless for combat anyway. The rate of attrition in Italy in rifle battalions was such that only 7% attained 210 combat days—most men so doing having lost many days in hospital through wounds or illness. Thus a 210-day limit would cost almost nothing in manpower loss: but to the men it would mean a concrete goal.*
2. *There should be rewards for achievement other than simply medals: special privileges, supply priority, unrestricted leaves (many rear echelon centers were off limits to combat troops!). Now the least rewarded U.S. soldier, the infantryman should be made to feel that he comes first.*
3. *Tactical orientation should clarify to troops why objectives must be taken.*
4. *Strategic orientation is desperately needed, too, to remind them why they are fighting, that the threat to the U.S. created by the rise of Nazism was real, immediate.*
5. *Finally, instead of individual replacements, combat GROUPS should be sent to fighting units, so that soldiers go into combat not alone, but in company with their friends.*

ter of begging. Yet in the rear thousands of troops aimlessly wandered about the streets of Italian cities, attended or participated in Army-sponsored boxing, baseball and football contests, widely publicized presumably to sustain morale in the U.S.A.

Remembering that the 179th's T/O strength was under 3500, the Regiment's casualties for the Italian Campaign to date (in some 3½ months) were staggering: 302 KIA; 1213 WIA; 236 MIA or Captured; and, primarily fever or exhaustion cases, 2282 evacuated sick, non-battle. A turnover of more than 100%! It is clear how few original riflemen *could* still be fighting!

Eventually 40% of the sick and 25% of the wounded returned to duty, it is true. But these men were rarely able to again adjust themselves to the rigors of combat, either mentally or physically. Indeed, many returned to duty sicker than when they left, several returned with still open wounds! Even those who were healed, like baseball players who become ball-shy after a "beaning", after being wounded found they were now battle-shy, were eventually reclassified.

But for the moment, far behind the front, entertained by Special Service shows and kidded along by Red Cross "doughnut girls",[1] the troops that were still around began to recuperate in body and spirit.

With the assignment of 411 replacements, rifle companies' strength soared welcomely. These new soldiers, glad to have found a home,[2] eagerly joined in the training program stressing marksmanship and close order drill. Seemingly ludicrous for troops hot from combat, actually drill is the finest disciplinary training there is. And it takes inbred discipline to keep exhausted men fighting, to lead and keep them following.

The days passed. And with the dawn of a new year, the panoramic picture of the global war was a shimmering splash of fresh hope. Russia had launched a massive offensive which was making the Wehrmacht's legendary invincibility a thing of the past. In the Pacific the Allies were starting to retake islands as the Japs, their peak of territorial expansion reached, sucked in their breaths and pursued a policy of retrenchment. And in Italy the United Nations had made the first breach in the walls of Fortress Europe.

Two restful weeks vanished into the void, climaxed by a notorious officer's party which was undermined by wood alcohol diluted by an eye-dropper full of orange juice. Next morning, holding floating heads and nursing black eyes, remorseful officers were given another jolt when Col. Kammerer returned from 5th Army Hqs to inform them that once again the 179th had been alerted.

It was no surprise. It had been expected for days. Reluctantly, barracks bags were again placed in storage, equipment was checked and movement orders were published. Only, this was a surprise, the Regiment wasn't going back into the mountain line at all. Instead, for the third time, the 179th RCT was heading for an amphibious landing!

The GIs weren't exactly receptive to the idea. The 179th's most successful landing was the Sicilian operation: new to combat yet keyed for battle, the men had been eager neophytes, ignorant of what was coming but ready for anything. Now the doughboys had sweated out two seaborne invasions: they knew plenty!

The more a soldier sees of the sea in wartime the less he likes it. Navy crews can shoot hell out of attacking aircraft, or at least try. But a soldier is only a passenger asea: locked deep in the hold, he is a helpless trapped animal, with no gun to shoot, no job to do and no place to go. With no outlet for his fears, he can't even dig! He simply sits, while bombs rock the ship and blister its steel plates. He sits, and wonders what is in store for him this time, remembering past invasions.

1—Overseas, ARC assigned to each division a clubmobile unit of 4 girls to serve "donuts" and coffee to line troops, also 4 field men to handle welfare and recreation problems. These and other field ARC personnel lived along with and like the soldiers they served. But unfortunately, much of ARC's donated funds was squandered by dollar-a-year amateurs, glad handlers in rear areas so preoccupied in bickering over internal ARC politics that they forgot the school children's pennies had been donated for the primary, Charter purpose of handling emergencies. In France it was to cost the American people over $10,000 a month to keep 75 such dignitaries in apartments in Paris alone! ARC overseas, expanding as rapidly and more top-heavily than the army, desperately needed practical executives; it suffered by employing people unfamiliar with field problems—socialite figureheads and British subjects. America should demand a detailed public accounting of ARC expenditures abroad.

2—Several officers were even flown in frantic haste from the U.S. only to acquire callouses on arrival, awaiting assignment for months, homeless and unwanted, subjected to the tortures of a Repple Depple (Replacement Depot).

If, between seasickness and impotence, he can think at all.

And the RCT was slated to land on D plus 2, just about the time the Germans had drawn in all their air power to smash at the landing forces.

But personal preferences don't enter into war. On January 20 the 179th made the 60 mile move to Staging Area No. 3, 3 miles from Bagnoli and 5 miles west of Naples, near the old Racecourse.[1] Subsequently it developed that the RCT had been misdirected and should have proceeded elsewhere to be "staged". Any "elsewhere" would have been preferable. An ancient volcanic crater, the area was an oval pit a mile square, sunk 700 feet below ground level. White mist, so impenetrable men were lost ten feet from their puptents, settled in the pit and did not rise until sunset. The cold was biting, intense. And, a staging area, the place was sealed. No one could get out.

Here vehicles were waterproofed and equipment packed preparatory to loading on troop carriers. And here the plans for the coming operation were unfolded: the 179th was plain unlucky. Once again the Regiment would lead the way in the Division. Detached from the 45th, the 179th RCT was attached to the 1st Armored Division, to function with Combat Command A's tanks.

While the RCT made ready, on January 22 the 3rd (U.S.) Division, the 1st (Br.) Division, and Special Service, Ranger and Paratrooper units made an amphibious landing 61 kilometers south of Rome, on Italy's west coast in the vicinity of Anzio and Nettuno. Landing unopposed, the Allies caught the enemy completely off guard: the objective beachhead line, a penetration of some 8 miles radiating in an arc from Nettuno, was attained in two days against sporadic and disorganized resistance.

The amphibious infantry, its part accomplished with the securing of the beachhead, dug in awaiting reinforcements to exploit the surprise flank threat. These were to come in the form of tanks, primarily. In terrain more ideally suited for it than any other in Italy, armor was to have its most golden opportunity since the European invasion had begun.

Meanwhile Gen. Clark watched for the anticipated effect his "end run" would have on the Cassino front. To combat this thrust the Germans were expected to draw on and thus weaken their mountain line 75 miles east (because of Italy's curious shape Cassino is actually a mile north of Nettuno). Too, the Allies silently prayed that their squeeze play would force the enemy to beat a hasty retreat with his whole line lest he be trapped between the two forces. Meanwhile, from the beachhead, armor and infantry would be sweeping up to Lake Albano, then along Highway 7, vital German supply route from the north to the Cassino front, and on to Rome. As it filtered down to Regiment, that was the *plan*.

Crack infantry troops and armor were to pour onto the beachead. So at 1245 January 23 the head of the 179th's foot column marched out of the staging area and down to the ships, a two hour hike away. Each battalion, with its attachments, was allotted 2 LSTs and 3 LCIs. Except for 3 LSTs carrying the Regimental Echelon and the 3rd Battalion berthed at Nisidia, the vessels were docked at Pozzuoli.

By 2000 that night all the 179th troopships were ready to sail save for the LST bearing the 179th Command Group. At the last minute that ship's TQM was given, instead of the originally planned LST, a new British LST, HMS THRUSTER, with a different cargo space allocation than its American counterpart. The carefully calculated loading blueprints were discarded, and the night was spent in fitting in the vehicles as compactly as unrehearsed ingenuity could devise. Many amphibious vehicles[2] had to be transferred to other ships as it became apparent that they could not all be stowed aboard.

But the schedule had to be adhered to. And so at 0300, the C.O. stood on the deck of the THRUSTER, still loading at the wharf, and watched the shadows carry his Combat Team slowly out of view.

By the next noon the THRUSTER had completed loading and steamed to Naples Harbor. From here, alone save for a mine

---

1—See Map 2.

2—1/4 ton "amphibians" designed to operate on sea as well as on land. They proved a fiasco, had continual motor trouble ashore and maneuvered asea only in the mildest weather. In the Oklahoma vernacular, they were as useless as tits on a boar hog. However their big brothers, the 2 1/2 ton "ducks." were used in the Italian and Sicilian landings with great success, unloading in any weather direct from transports, operating smoothly even where LCPs were smashed to bits by heavy surf.

sweeper as escort, she set out for Anzio, 100 miles up the coast.

Just after dark, as HMS THRUSTER raced through the water at full speed, she was suddenly attacked by enemy torpedo bombers. Two "tin fish", churning through the mounting seas, missed their mark by feet as the ship veered sharply. The ship resumed its course and lurched on, cleaving the dancing whitecaps . . .

PART FOUR. THE ANZIO BEACHHEAD

Chapter 15. Backs to the Sea Wall

The speedy THRUSTER reached the Anzio area at 2300. She docked on January 25, a day behind the rest of the RCT fleet. Col. Kammerer debarked and sped to the 179th assembly area, 2 miles northeast of Nettuno.

Anzio looked like it was going to be a cinch. Awaiting orders, the Regiment just parked on the prairie-flat repossessed marshlands. Only stubby growths broke the unchanging vista until the flats swelled into modulated hills to the north, into lofty mountains on the south.

The 160th's field guns were temporarily detached to support Ranger units on the front lines. The infantry remained in Corps reserve. And because the 1st Armored had not yet arrived, the CCA (Combat Command A) Plan was abandoned. The Allies were letting their initial advantage slip out of their grasp.

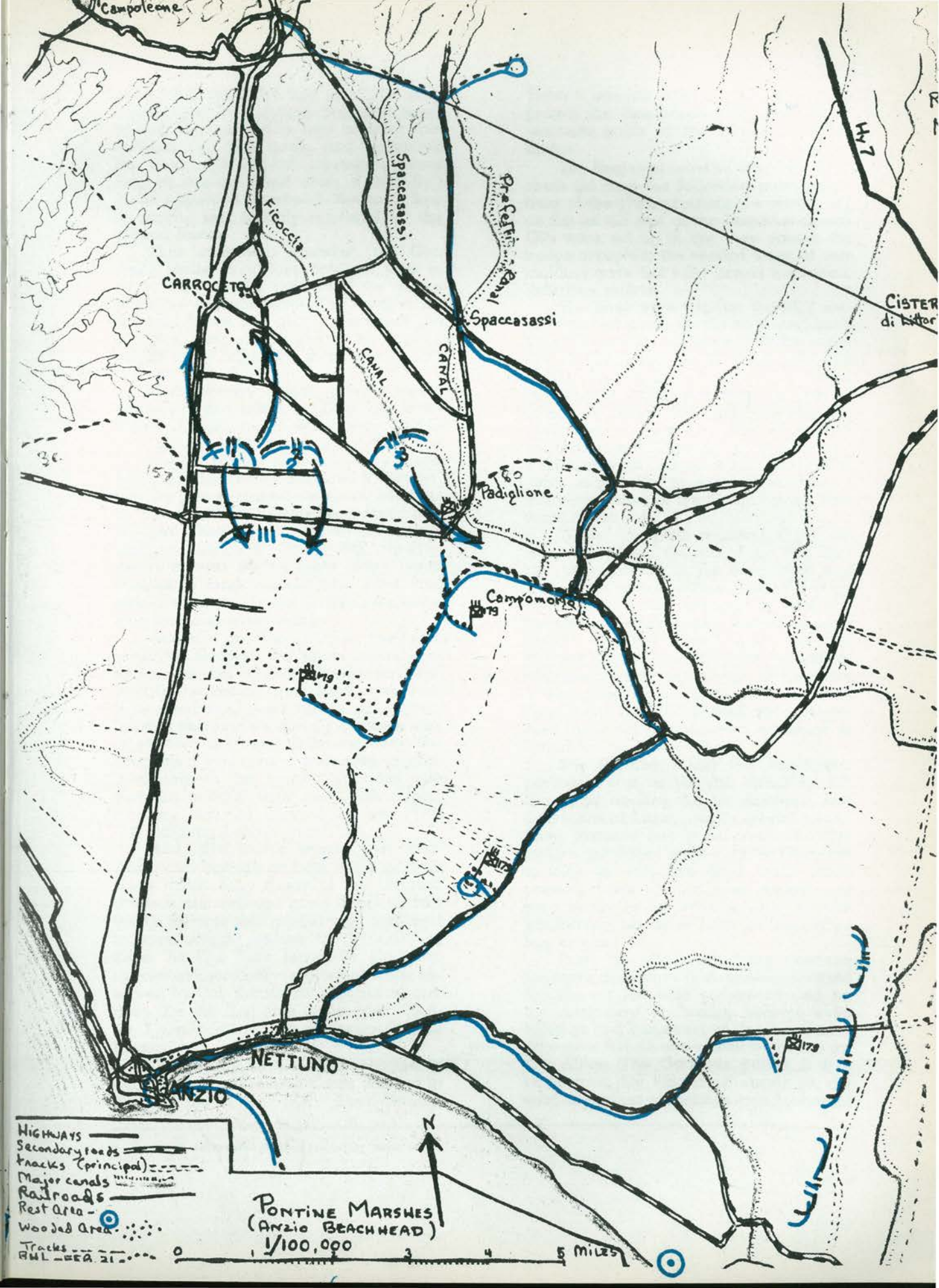
Meanwhile, despite constant coverage by Marauders, Mustangs and Spitfires patrolling the beachhead skies to shield the only port of entry, enemy planes slipped through the screen four times on January 25. One dive bomber hurtled aflame into the sea, a second limped off with smoke pouring from its tail, hit by the death-dealing Fourth of July fireworks.

Again four times the next afternoon the Luftwaffe attacked harbor shipping, swooping low over the Regimental area as they came in. Just above the captive balloons, through a rattling sheet of AA fire they zipped, and the RCT troops dug in as deeply as the former marshes allowed, and flattened out in the ooze that seeped to the surface.

And, determined to disrupt the flow of men and supplies onto the beachhead, at sunset a fifth enemy echelon appeared. This time AA gunners were in rare form. The light was right. In two minutes 4 of the 12 enemy bombers burst into flame and spun down to crash to earth or beyond the ships into the sea. Then in the deepening dusk 2 more planes were hit by the flicking red tracers flowing skyward that spelled but every fifth bullet fired. And as each enemy plane made its erratic flaming fall to death, hitting the ground with a final brilliant explosion, the doughboys in the foxholes stood up and cheered like frenzied undergraduates at a football game.

With night the enemy came again, however, dropping flares, eery shimmering lanterns that hung suspended in the sky, illuminating the earth and sea below in uncanny clarity and etching the targets of the enemy's bombs. These German flyers were veteran Luftwaffe pilots, evidenced by their daring and skill. 12 planes were shot down over Anzio on January 26, despite "tinsel" the Heinies dropped to impair radar-directed AA guns' accuracy. But several vessels were hit. A hospital ship that lay off the port was sunk.

The next day the enemy kept coming over, at 0530, 0850, 1100, 1339, 1430. And even then, although the infantry wasn't


Campoleone
Spaccasassi
Prefetti Canal
Ficoccia
CARROCETO
Spaccasassi
CANAL
CANAL
Padiglione
Campomorto
NETTUNO
ANZIO
HIGHWAYS
Secondary roads
tracks (principal)
Major canals
Railroads
Rest Area
Wooded Area
Tracks
N
PONTINE MARSHES
(ANZIO BEACHHEAD)
1/100,000
0
1
3
4
5 MILES

the target, the 179th lost men. Not from bombs, but from falling flak and unexploded 90 mm. shells, tons of steel that swished up, then down, and splattered the area with red-hot fragments every time an enemy (and often a friendly) plane appeared overhead. Newton's law of gravity was forcibly reviewed for the ground forces!

That afternoon, however, the Germans made their last daylight raid in force. For months thereafter the Allies ruled the daytime skies. The enemy, his daylight losses too great to warrant the sacrifice, took over nightly.[1] But nightly meant *every* night for three and a half months!

Unfortunately night attacks were worse than daytime ones! Deprived of the sense of sight, which has always made man principally a day creature, the drone of invisible planes sounded everywhere. Each man felt, with Capt. Fred P. Snyder, that the planes circled above *his* head until they found *his* foxhole, then dived and dropped their sticks of bomb—crump, CRUmp, CRUMP! Some fell nearby, others nearer! In the night every bomb seemed to land in one's own yard, and from the fragmentation holes in tents the next morning, many *had!*

Actually, the town of Anzio itself was being hit hardest. On three consecutive nights gas and "ammo" dumps, so crammed in the limited area that hits were almost inevitable, were blown up, exploding and shooting off streaks of flame and steel erratically through the darkness. The town itself was soon a shambles. A crippled ship in the harbor exploded one morning at 0300 with such violent concussions that the blast shook the 179th C.P. building 5 miles away.

And, grist to the enemy mill, both Anzio and Nettuno and the ships as well were within easy range of the German artillery and railroad guns. It got so bad the GI miracle took place: men stationed in town sought passes to get OUT of town. As Cpl. Jack Jones, Sv Co, crap shooter extraordinary, remarked when observed by Col. Kammerer digging in, and deep, for the first time in his life: "Hell, sir, I just can't fade them bastards any longer."

On January 28 the 160th returned to RCT control, whereupon Corps decided to commit the 179th RCT. The Combat Team's mission was a holding one: to protect the beachhead right flank, from positions south of the Mussolini Canal bridge.

The Regiment relieved the 504th Parachute Inf Regt the following morning. In front of the 179th positions the terrain lay as flat as the rest of the beachhead, and OPs were set up in the very houses the troops occupied; the second story of any building gave full view across the naked, unbroken prairie.

The lines were thin, for the RCT sector stretched along the Canal's west bank from the seacoast all the way to the canal fork 10 kilometers to the north. But the enemy had deployed only light forces opposite the 179th, so activity was limited to patrols across the canal and shellfire exchanges. Enemy fire inflicted several casualties on RCT troops, for by February 1 the Germans had zeroed in on the C.P. itself, established in some farmhouses 2 kilometers west of the Canal off the Nettuno-Littoria road.

While the 179th manned these defensive positions, the rest of the 45th Division was arriving on the beachhead and was given as its mission that of "roving center": it would prepare to hold the beachhead against any enemy counterattack. To give the Division its full strength for this task, the 179th reverted to 45th control and on the night of February 1 was relieved in position by the 36th Engr Regt. The RCT immediately assembled in its old bivouac area northeast of Nettuno.

The fighting along the beachhead perimeter was as yet still desultory. 6th Corps, by landing the 1st Armored, had 4 divisions at Anzio, plus its special forces. Then, jammed into a cul-de-sac 8 miles square, the Allies waited for the Germans to take the initiative. With each day's passing favoring him, the enemy was soon ready to do just this—and without weakening his other front as the Allies had banked on.

From the whole 5th Army front the Germans drew but 1½ divisions: there the fighting for the high ground capped by the monastery at Cassino became even bloodier and more savage, for the natural defensive terrain was obstacle enough for the Allies. The Germans pulled 2 divisions from the 8th Army sector on the east, but giant mountains and inches of

1—Ack Ack is totally ineffective after dark.

snow had already bogged down that front. They brought down 1 division from France and 1 from Yugoslavia. But the bulk of their reinforcements, 3 divisions strong, they simply drew from northern Italy. The brilliant German field commander, Field Marshal Albert von Kesselring, was ready to commit every unit he could lay hands on to stop once and for all time the Allied tide at Anzio *and* Cassino. He very nearly succeeded.

By the 27th the Germans had massed the thrice reorganized Hermann Goering Panzer Division and the 3rd and 29th Panzer Grenadier Divisions along the beachhead front, and with more troops pouring into that sector, by the week's end the enemy had available elements of 9 divisions, including strong panzer forces. 11 days after the landing the score stood: Allies 92,000 men; Germans 98,000 men.

It is easy to second guess, but it is blatantly obvious that the brilliant strategy of the Anzio end run was nullified in part by weak tactics once the beachhead had been established. When the enemy didn't just collapse, the Allies seemed stumped for their next move. They just sat on their predetermined BHL.

Alert opportunists might have exploited their advantage over the surprised enemy by daring to extend their lines northeast and seize the controlling high ground behind Carroceto, ground commanding the highways down which the enemy had to move his masses of troops. Or, instead of trying to threaten Rome and the north, they might have cut inland to the southeast, effectively severing the German Cassino line from its supply trains by anchoring their right flank on the natural defenses, the mountain range itself. They might have done numerous things.

They did nothing. And having waited this long, the Allies had no choice but to await the enemy onslaught. They strengthened their defense line and regrouped their forces.

The day approached when the opposing armies would determine the victor of the Battle of the Pontine Marshes. If the Allies won and broke the back of the German armies they would march on Rome. If the enemy won—the Anzio Beachhead would be a second Dunkirk.

ANZIO BEACHHEAD

Chapter 16. The Battle of the Factory

While enemy aircraft and artillery, making particular use of air bursts, pounded the beachhead, the number of Allied reinforcements being brought ashore diminished, then stopped. The well had run dry. At the same time the saturation point was reached. Like Times Square on New Year's eve, the place was crammed—with troops, artillery, planes and landing strips, gas, ammo and supply dumps.

The enemy, massing more troops against the beachhead than he had facing the whole 5th Army front, had concentrated most of his army in the Carroceto area.

The Germans were preparing this locality as a battleground. Its terrain features made it an ideal base of operations: behind Carroceto, soon to become famous as "The Factory", the ground rose on the north and west, giving the enemy elevated positions from which to observe Allied positions and direct artillery fire. From immediately behind the buildings of Carroceto roads led out to the south and southeast, perfectly suited for tanks to sally out on the flanks of any force assaulting Carroceto frontally. And before the Factory lay the Allies lines, in flat barren terrain save for a wooded area a few miles to the south. The microscopic gradations afforded slim cover to the beachhead defenders.

The 179th's C.O. meanwhile made daily reconnaissance of the beachhead lines, making plans to occupy any position in the central portion of the front immediately on order. The battalions prepared advance defense lines, individual foxholes and C.P.s.

In a belated effort to seize the Factory, the new Mediterranean High Command[1] committed the 168th (Br.) Brigade. Attacking greatly superior forces backed by panzer units, the Brigade battered futilely time and again at the enemy strongpoint until, decimated almost to extinction, it had to be withdrawn.

Then, on February 10, under cover of darkness, the 1st and 3rd Battalions, 179th Inf, went in to take over the 169th Brigade's positions, just south of and facing the Factory.

Here the 1st Battalion, on the left, prepared to attack. The odds were 1,000 to 1 against it before it jumped off. For the Allies, unwilling to commit their reserves, were poking at the German stronghold with one unit at a time! The soldiers might well ask: what about those statements by War Dept spokesmen that the Allies would always attack with air,

1—5th Army Command was unchanged, but the formation of a Second Front Command in England drew Gens. Eisenhower, Montgomery, Bradley, Patton and others from the Theater. Gen Sir Maitland Wilson became Supreme Commander in the Mediterranean theater, and Gen. Alexander the Italian Operation Commander.

sea and ground force superiority? Weren't those principles proven valid in Sicily?

Paving the way for the infantry, field pieces laid down a murderous barrage, hundreds of bombers sweeping over from Corsica plastered enemy positions from the air. And at 0630 February 11, in conjunction with the 191st Tk Bn, the 1st Battalion launched its attack on Carroceto.

Companies A and B, advancing in two columns up the roads flanking their objective, ran into a withering fire guarding the approaches to the Factory. The units paused, reformed, and at 1300 charged on, Company A on the left, B on the right. In ninety minutes both were battling in furious man-to-man fighting at the very walls of the buildings.

But the enemy behind the walls, those coming up in support, and those dug in around the Factory, spewed forth an overpowering small arms, machine gun and tank fire. Then, from behind Carroceto tanks thundered out, straight at the U.S. riflemen. Behind the armor came counter-attacking enemy infantry. And the 191st's tanks were nowhere to be found—they were two fatal hours late! Unsupported and isolated, the attackers, what was left of them, fell back for fear of annihilation.

Behind their own lines again, the companies checked their rosters. A few stragglers showed up. Even so, Company A had lost all its officers wounded or missing; half its enlisted strength had been killed, wounded, or were unaccounted for.

That night the 1st Battalion stoically reorganized, while enemy artillery pummelled its positions. Then at 0353, this time with Companies C and B, Red again attacked. Again the troops swarmed in from the south and southeast and by 0430 they were again battling at the very Factory walls, supported on the right flank by Company I.

But again it was the same heart-rending story. The infantrymen fought heroically and took a terrible toll of the enemy. But once more German tanks and infantry counter-attacked until, its forces disintegrating and its men being slaughtered, the Battalion fell back to the road paralleling the front, their LD. Here, covered by artillery fire to prevent the enemy from following up against the exhausted troops, the 1st Battalion reformed in defensive positions.

The line was stabilized, manned by the 179th in the center, the 180th RCT on the right flank and the British "Loyals" and 157th RCT on the left.

The sector stayed lividly alive with endless artillery barrages and air attacks, but ground activity subsided into local skirmishing. On February 14 the 2nd Battalion relieved the 1st. The 3rd Battalion remained in position on the 179th right flank.

The next day the Germans made an abortive attempt to infiltrate through the 2nd Battalion's defenses. At the same time the tempo of artillery duels quickened to a furious jamboree. Germany's heavy railway gun, the "Anzio Express", boomed and whistled and shook the whole beachhead with its monstrous shells. Tank-mounted "88s" and more and still more artillery pounded the Allied lines. In answer, British naval units off shore fired salvo upon salvo into enemy positions, in support of beachhead artillery. But with the enemy steadily increasing his pressure on the Allied lines, the British and Americans at Anzio knew that "It was coming!"

And, behind a barrage of mortar and tank fire as well as heavy field batteries, with dawn on Febraury 16 the Germans launched their great 6-Divisional offensive to force a decision at the Anzio Beachhead.

Diversionary forces struck left and right at the 157th and 180th defenses. Then, from behind the Factory, masses of tanks and infantry raced out, 2 divisions strong, to smash through the 179th RCT!

At first the Germans came on slowly, confidently giving their preparation fire time to "soften up" the Combat Team. Then they really began rolling, wave upon wave, a grey blur, a flesh-and-steel tide. At 0815 Company G, manning the 2nd Battalion front with Company F, took the full brunt of the first contact. Hit simultaneously by tanks and infantry moving down the Anzio-Albano road and by similar forces striking frontally across the fields, Companies G and F fought like demons—and held!

At the same moment the 3rd Battalion was attacked by more tanks and infantry from the northeast. The 179th's troops stayed and slugged it out, but with tanks milling around the battlefield stabbing everywhere, the fighting became disorganized. Established lines disintegrated. Company K reported a whole platoon cut off; Company L attacked to assist "K", but

men could not stand up to armor. The 3rd Battalion began to withdraw, fighting every inch of the way. Company I got surrounded but determinedly fought its way out of the encirclement. Time ceased to exist—only "Sturm and Drang" remained.

For a time Pagan White continued to hold its sector and mow down the charging Germans with furious machine gun and mortar fire. But when 157th elements astraddle the Anzio-Albano road were overrun, German tanks raced down that highway unopposed and cut in behind Company G's positions on the left. With no tanks of its own to drive off the enemy, with German armor roaring up frontally before TDs could get in a shot and with whole panzer companies sweeping in from behind, "G's" resistance collapsed. The company lost contact with neighboring units. On the right, Company F, its flank now bared to enemy crossfire, was also forced to abandon its positions.

From his OP Lt. James M. Sherrick, 160th F.A. Bn Forward Observer, saw all this as he directed artillery fire. An infantry officer crawled up to Sherrick to tell him the outposts were being drawn in. A while later the same officer returned: the entire line was withdrawing, there would be no more cover fire for the OP in the building. Sherrick saw for himself that enemy tanks and infantry were closing in on his position from three sides, so he sent back the enlisted men in his party with the liaison officer. But he himself remained, still spotting targets and directing fire with devastating effect. Counter-fire directed at his OP became intense. The net drew tighter and tighter. He could make out the insignia of rank on the approaching grey uniforms.

Gradually Lt. Sherrick dropped the range as the enemy closed in. Then, over the phone to the fire control center, he snapped: "Drop the range 400 yards." The officer in charge studied the map, and hesitated. Slowly he gave the order to drop the range 400 yards. Those were the last words heard from Lt. Sherrick. Completely surrounded, the enemy at his very doors, he had brought down his own artillery on the building he was in, down on himself. He had done all a man could do to stop the oncoming avalanche.

The enemy tanks, having pushed back the 2nd Bn., streaked across the front and poured a vicious fire into the 3rd Battalion's flank. The 3rd thereupon again withdrew. And this time, to complete the rout and effect a major breakthrough, the Germans kept throwing their full weight at the retreating Americans. For the first time in its history, the 179th's companies and battalions were disorganized, scattered. Communications cut, the C.O. got only vague reports as to the location and situation of his forces. The M.P.s had to establish straggler lines along all roads to direct those who had escaped the enemy's clutches and were wandering around behind the lines dazed, shaken, lost.

The casualties were appalling. Men did trickle back in twos and threes, but they couldn't be employed to buttress the sagging line: they came back crying, hysterical. Even veteran section leaders, ashen-grey and quaking, broke under the strain: sleepless for days and pinned in their holes by artillery, they had come out only to find Brobdingnagian steel monsters charging them from all sides, pouring out a deadly fire as they came. These men had looked down the muzzles of cannons 25 yards away! Those who still lived were only half alive. One haggard, ragged squad leader who came back without a squad, squatted on his haunches outside the S-1 tent. For two hours he sat unmoving, eyes glazed and wide open, staring into space. Not a sound escaped his lips, but for two hours tears rolled down his cheeks unchecked.

American artillery and TDs pasted the enemy as he kept coming, smashed 10 German tanks, were instrumental in delaying the German drive while the 2nd and 3rd Battalions drew together the remnants of their companies and platoons and whipped them into a semblance of fighting order.

And the Germans paused, regrouping for fresh assaults. The 179th gained a vital, quickly drawn breath. Company A moved up to reinforce the 2nd Battalion. The Regiment took up a new stand 2½ kilometers south of the Factory.

Then, with awe-inspiring courage, the 179th organized to counter-attack, to seize the stream bed due north of its positions on the BHL. The 3rd Battalion was reduced to 274 fighting men, so the strongest companies of the other two battalions were given the assignment. Companies E and F, supported by "A", jumped off at 2300,

simultaneously with attacks by the 157th and 180th RCTs on the Regimental flanks.

Through the night of February 17 the 2nd Battalion advanced, under fierce fire. But the enemy countered by sending strong tank forces to Company E's left; infiltrating behind the attacking line and once more outflanking the doughboys. The companies had no choice but to hastily withdraw, under the covering fire of Able's outpost line.

For Company A held firm, allowing the 2nd Battalion to drop back in an orderly fashion. At least until the enemy, despite his own high losses, turned his defense into another assault, and pouncing on Company A, tore its defenses to ribbons with massive tanks and waves of infantry. Most of the company was captured. Just 14 doughboys got back to the American lines in a group!

Col. Kammerer requested air and tank aid to gain a breather for his badly mauled men. He was informed that the 1st Armored was already preparing to attack to ease the pressure on the 179th. Then, abruptly, at 1415 February 18, the popular, too humane C.O. was relieved. Col. William O. Darby, former Ranger Commander, at once took over command.

The new C.O. hastily reorganized the remnants of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, under furious enemy artillery concentrations and the barking small arms fire of the German infantry. Blue was reinforced with 250 men from the Regiment's service echelon. The 1st was strengthened with the attachment of Company I.

In reply to his recommendation that the 179th be permitted to withdraw to the shelter of the woods to the south or be reinforced, Division informed Col. Darby that the BHL *would be held*. However, the 157th's 1st Battalion was sent to hold down the RCT right flank, thus enabling the 179th to shorten its lines. The 179th's 1st Battalion moved up on the 2nd's left. For despite "A's" staggering losses, the 1st was the only organized battalion left in the RCT.

Minutes after taking up its positions, the 1st was hit by waves of German panzer forces, eager to complete the Combat Team's destruction and the threatened breakthrough.

The weary men of Companies C and B responded heroically to inspired leadership, and held. The Germans withdrew, leaving the fields before the 1st Battalion's line littered with dead. But, willing to absorb terrible punishment to gain the objective, and with still more fresh troops available, the enemy struck again with another regiment. A second time the 179th line held unflinchingly, on through a wild night. Gun flashes lit up the sky, shrapnel peppered the battle front, machine guns chattered, men fell and did not get up.

And with daylight February 19, the enemy came on again, through the half-light of early morning. Lt. Col. Wayne L. Johnson, 1st Bn C.O., was at a forward OP with his S-3, Capt. Gail C. McLain, directing his battalion's defense. Through the savage bloodfest of the 18th he had stayed there, inspiring and leading his men. But even as he directed the defense to meet this new onslaught, an enemy barrage fell on the OP. One shell made a direct hit. Capt. McLain was killed outright beside his commander.

Lt. Col. Johnson was knocked down by the concussion and could not get up. He had compound fractures of both legs. But he staunched the flow of blood himself, and refused to be evacuated. He directed the course of battle until he was able to personally advise the Regimental C.O. of the situation and the best disposition for continued defense. Only then did he consent to be evacuated. By his actions and brilliant leadership through the attacks of February 16-19, Col. Darby stated, Johnson had been the major factor in preventing the complete collapse of the 179th Inf.

The 1st Battalion took revenge for the loss of their commander. Companies C and B, under Capt. Hurd L. Reeves and Lt. James H. Cruickshank, Jr., beat off with murderous fury a final attack at 1700, after which the enemy, decimated, permanently crippled, and exhausted, withdrew for good. For the first time in four days the line became stabilized.

The enemy had forced a deep salient in the Allied lines. But he had never penetrated the original BHL, despite the power he had hurled at the lines and the irrevocable losses he had sustained in maintaining his ferocious drive. The flies had attacked the fly paper.

The 179th RCT had time to take stock of itself, certain only of but one all-important fact: behind the still-smouldering fires, behind the debris that marked the graves of men and machines, behind the ragged line of exhausted, battered doughboys, the beachhead was still there!

Chapter 17. Pause to Reflect, and Dig

In an effort to eliminate the jutting salient, on February 19 the 1st Armored's Force H, composed of tanks and infantry, jumped off up the diagonal road southeast of the Factory. But the armor no sooner pushed out past the front than it ran into enemy fire, hence withdrew behind the lines. The enemy's wedge remained. And, spent and weak, neither belligerent attempted any more big scale attacks for days, weeks, months.

In stopping the German offensive, the 45th Division had borne the brunt of the 4-day, 6-divisional attack. Within the 45th, the 179th and elements of the 157th had once again taken the heaviest blows. But the bloody stand had no appreciable affect on the Cassino front, and since the beachhead in and for itself alone was worthless, the men could only hope their sacrifices held an importance in some larger jigsaw puzzle. Certainly there was no sense of achievement in the Pyrrhic victory just won. There was not even the compensation of personal glory to be derived from this kind of combat.

For the dramatic emphasis in this war was on the Air Corps and the Navy. Both arms of the service have always had two common advantages over the infantry: there is a definite END and BEGINNING to their every battle, so that conclusions can be drawn and victory or defeat gauged accordingly. And, each engagement is fought by a relatively few individuals. Those factors make battles easy to photograph, dramatize, evaluate and understand, all essential for good newspaper copy and public appeal.

Contrarywise, infantry warfare is rarely conclusive so far as it concerns any unit. Its significance is obscure unless analyzed as an integral part of the overall strategy. Its battles go on for weeks without a decision, dying down, flourishing, and once more expending themselves. It is confusing warfare to the observer. Ends are gained only by the employment of masses of unidentified soldiers. Even in death the infantryman is one of a mass, one of hundreds of still, mangled forms.

Yet under the camouflage, the individual is still there: the sailor eats hearty and stretches out in a hammock after a sea fight; the pilot flies a 30-minute mission, then returns to every luxury the Army can devise. But the infantryman is in there *all* the time, day and night, every day and every night, griping and grumbling through rain, mud, hunger and bullets, but slogging ahead anyway and doing the job he hates and didn't ask for. One of millions, he has no name. He is a hero made, not born. But he is the real hero of any war, and he is very much an individual!

Daily Oklahoman, Oklahoma City, March 12, 1944 (Page 1)

45TH PINCH HITS AGAIN AT ANZIO, GIVEN CITATION

By Tom Rucker

When the chips are down the army bets on the Fighting 45th ... It happened that way in Sicily ... in bloody Salerno. And now it happened that way again—this time at the Anzio Beachhead before Rome.

The Army disclosed Saturday that the division had been cited for bravery ... (for) the 45th infantrymen bore the lion's share of the Nazi's second and most vicious offensive to take the precious beachhead.*

That offensive came on February 16, when 2 battalions of the Division lay astride the Albano road leading straight to Anzio, that became the focal point of the Nazi drive.

Repeatedly the Germans hurled full force against the straight line to Anzio. They drove a wedge into the division's lines ... but before the tide turned, dead carpeted the ground before Anzio. By February 19 the battle reached its crucial point and the tide turned. Germans were surrendering gladly and by the hundreds (!). Other hundreds of Nazis were killed by their own gunners when they attempted to flee the might of the Allies (!) ... The 45th, which had already fought its way across Sicily and up the Italian boot across the Volturno and almost to Cassino, landed its first regimental combat team on the Anzio beachhead January 24.

(Other papers also carried the 45th's "citation", later its second citation. The Division was NEVER cited. Separate units in the 45th did receive awards, but Press Releases misquoted individual unit citations to read "division".)*

In the 7 days, February 12-19, the 179th Infantry alone lost 55% of its men and officers: 142 killed, 367 wounded, 728 missing or captured, and 670 evacuated as exhaustion or psychiatric cases. These dread figures would have been even higher but for the tireless efforts of stretcher bearers, aid men, field surgeons, Capt. Victor Mulaire's Medical Collecting Company ambulance men, and the beachhead's field hospital staffs. Under shellfire from the actual front lines to the surgical tents, the selfless efficiency of the Medical Corps saved hundreds from death, hundreds more from being permanently crippled.

On February 23 Gen. John P. Lucas was replaced by Maj. Gen. Lucian K. Truscott, former 3rd Division Commander, as C.G., 6th Corps. Lucas would long be remembered by the 179th as the author of a cheerful billet-doux to the effect that the Anzio battle had been won and that the Allies were ready to push on—a message which reached the combat troops on February 16, the morning of *somebody's* push indeed!

There were serious implications in the relief of Gen. Lucas, especially when considered with the similar transfer of Gen. Dawley at Salerno. Wasn't incompetence somewhere high in the 5th Army indicated, when it was apparently necessary to remove Corps commanders, and incidentally other scapegoats like Col. Kammerer, after every major engagement in which the Army participated?

Perhaps a Patton or Bradley was needed. Both generals possessed that quality in leaders which inspires. And, although admittedly an easier campaign, in Sicily there had never been a symptom of uncertainty. Perhaps instead of drawing off so many leaders from the Italian theater to plan the Second Front invasion in England, certain general officers might

have been left to fight the one battle the Allies were already waging in Europe.

And there is no doubt that vociferous old "Blood and Guts" and his counterpart, quiet Omar Bradley, knew how to fight with armor. But, in Italy, although the enemy used his tanks tellingly under any conditions, the American tanks seemed unable to fight if the terrain was too rough, too flat, too high or too low; if the weather was too dry or too wet—or if enemy tanks were too much in evidence. Was it the fault of the men who fought in the tanks, the officers who commanded them, or the generals who didn't make full use of them, or all three? In any event, so far they had not proved to the infantry they were the potent fighting arm they should have been.

The night of February 21-22 a reinforced 3rd Battalion relieved the 1st, Companies K and L moving into the line and I and F providing defensive support in depth. Except for constant patrolling, local skirmishes and of course the interminable artillery and mortar barrages the beachhead was, FOR IT, quiet. The 179th RCT settled down to "foxhole warfare", static but still nerve-shocking and eminently dangerous.

The lines defending the salient were still manned by the 157th and British "Loyals" on the left, the 180th and 509th Parachute Inf Regt on the right, and the 179th in the center. On the beachhead right flank was the 3rd Division, on the left the 1st (Br.) Division.

The 179th command had now set up a schedule whereby each battalion was in the line 8 days and out 4. Rotation of units was as frequent as feasible to rest the men, to keep them occupied instead of pining away in their holes all day, and to give each unit an opportunity to be rejuvenated through personnel replacement. For 1,291 new enlisted men were materially helping to revive the Regiment and heal its wounds.

Yet still the reinforcements came inadequately trained. Many had received their basic training, shipped overseas, got their combat initiation, and died in line of duty all within 17 weeks of their induction into the Army!

And because of the psychopathic unbalance induced by heavy losses and the resultant images conjured up by impressionable, unseasoned youngsters, among the novitiates were many cases of AWOL, desertion and SIW (Self-Inflicted Wound). More court-martial offenses occurred in February in the Regiment than had occurred in the previous 8 months combined[1], yet court-martial had no effect. When the fear psychology seizes a man he goes over the hill regardless of threats or consequences. Nor can he be frightened or shamed. He is beyond any feeling but the impelling need to get away, to get out of it!

36 officers also joined the 179th during this recuperative period. They were needed, for officers, as well as men, in line companies who survive 6 weeks are living on borrowed time. No wonder combat troops called anyone further back than platoon headquarters "PBS"[2]. Any man was rear echelon to them who could hope to live 6 months—to wait out a promotion.

One costly shell had deprived the 179th of the services of three able leaders: Majs. Sturdivant and Tryon, and Capt. Armstrong. And as, in quick succession, Lt. Col. Johnson, Maj. Hughes, Lt. Col. Wiegand and Maj. Hood had been evacuated, by March not a field grade officer remained who had come overseas with the outfit. No rifle and no unlettered company commander was still present for duty. Two Bn Hqs Co C.O.s were the only unit commanders left. Too few original "Okies" remained even to sustain the overworked joke about the OPA[3].

Inevitably, these losses sapped the hell-for-leather spirit which had hurled the 179th onto the Sicilian beaches. Even the Regiment's mood was affected[4]. Shortly before the Factory disaster S-2

1—One reason for AWOLs was the courts' leniency. Many offenders were never court-martialled at all! Even when 20-80 year sentences were meted out, everyone figured (usually rightly) that these would be commuted in a few months. So, until severe sentences were pronounced and executed, deserters got just what they wanted: OUT OF COMBAT. The man who stuck it out proved to be the one who was really penalized. He got killed.

2—Peninsular Base Section, headquarters for the Italian theater, in Naples.

3—Not a federal agency, but the Oklahoma Protective Association, so-called by minority groups who felt the old-timers favored their fellow Oklahomans. The regular Army clique was good humoredly (?) referred to as the WPPA, West Point Protective Association—generally by OPA members!

4—Regiments have moods, periods of fighting fever, depressions, discontent, matching the moods of individuals who compose them. When any idea pervaded the minds of enough men, it affected and thus became the whole organization's attitude.

Lt. Felix S. Smolenski was phoned a report that the 2 WACs Division had sent to the front to count the number of enemy shells landing in the area had submitted their tally-sheets. "Smo" bit as usual, at once called Division G-2. He repeated twice for emphasis that the 2 WACs reported 451 shells had fallen in the designated area. There was a long silence at the other end of the line. But this wasn't the first hoax Smo had unwittingly furthered, so G-2 took a deep breath, said "OK," and hung up.

That was "then". Now nothing was funny to the 179th. Col. Darby,* famous as an inspirer of fighting men, and Lt. Col. Preston J. C. Murphy, Ex-O, tried to infuse fresh vitality into the Regiment. In part they succeeded. But both the 179th and 157th had suffered irreparably. They fought on, and well, but under a distinct handicap: the RCTs were teams of football players who had never played together before. Few close associations remained, new ones had not had time to develop so that men in squads would fight for each other. Only a pathetic scattering of dark, fearless Indian faces remained to carry on the great traditions of the Regiment's original Redskin warriors, once 1000 strong. And however capable the replacements as individuals were, two years of training in team work could not be duplicated in two weeks. So the 179th had to be rebuilt slowly before it would again be a Combat TEAM. The original RCT had been burnt out, indeed the old 45th had been used up. Gone was the esprit de corps.

The new men soon acquired the same proficiency as the old, though they could never have the same devotion to the Regiment: they had not been raised with it, lived and fought with it from the beginning.

And yet, despite changes and losses, the 179th lived on. No living man is indispensible to a living thing, and come what may, no Regiment ever dies. It lives on and on and on.

But just now the 179th was barely living. Nor did the military situation improve the general state of mind. All through March and April the lines remained unchanged at Anzio. The enemy in the Alban Hills could look down and see what the boys were having for chow (Spam); so their artillery was never completely silent. Casualties kept mounting at the rate of 1% KIA and 10% WIA every month.

Every acre of the beachhead got its share of this shellfire. Day and night the crump, crump, crump of HE and the thud of AP fire sounded near or far. 2000-shell barrages hammered the front. Rear areas were pounded by long range railroad guns, the deadly 240 mm. rifles. Still it was a certainty the Germans weren't happy either: 800 Allied field guns firing most of every day weren't to be ignored.

The Luftwaffe at night, Allied mass formations in daylight, occasionally both air forces at once, kept the beachhead skies echoing with the drone of motors, the scream of bombs and the zip of bullets.

The troops kept their helmets on all day, often slept in them. Bald spots appeared on heads that had rarely been free of these 2-pound hats for a year,—because it was orders, and because it was transparent but reassuring psychology. The helmets were almost useless if one was hit, yet under them a soldier felt safe. Often men only wished they could curl up in a ball and fit their whole bodies inside their helmets, like turtles in their shells.

The nightly air raids in particular kept the troops on edge. Lone photo reconnaissance planes were nerve-wracking but harmless. Not so "Popcorn Pete" with his damned anti-personnel bombs! Evening would fall quietly, and as the last crimson sword of light faded along the horizon, in blackout tents sealbeam lights or candles were lit. At the Regimental C.P. staff sections worked, other troops played cards—for any stake, for money had no meaning here. Yet all the while, with months of practice to sharpen their acuteness, subconsciously straining faces told of listening ears, ears attuned to noises beyond the games or typewriters. Then, regular as clockwork, came the distant drone, jerky and distinct from the sound of U.S. planes, of enemy aircraft.

Men reached for helmets, edged casually nearer their holes in the ground, and went on working or playing. The planes droned around and around in the darkness. Each doughboy mentally de-

*—*The colorful "Lone Ranger" was killed in action a week before the end of the European war.*

bated with himself: one plane or two? Over Anzio, or over the 179th area? The planes droned on. And at the exact split second that they suddenly dropped, struts whining as they screamed down to bomb and strafe, everyone reacted: someone doused the light, helmets leaped to heads as if on wings, cards went sailing from blanket or table, and men disappeared, like scuttling rats, into their holes. The bombs whistled, shrieked, smacked into the sod, and burst. Machine guns chattered. The planes rose, swept down again, and again, then went away. Soldiers crawled from their holes, gabbling like spinsters over a back fence. Lights came on again. Helmets were removed, but set down within reach. The card games were resumed; the clack of typewriters began again. *If* no one was hit.

So, for the ground troops, despite a static front, there was "sweating it out", and nightly patrolling into enemy territory to reconnoiter, observe and harass the enemy. Such a patrol was Lt. William C. Landgren's, consisting of another officer and 16 men.

All one March day Lt. Landgren observed enemy activity near an abandoned ambulance to the right front. With dark his patrol moved out on that approximate azimuth. Friendly artillery boomed close at hand, echoed by the ballistic crack of enemy guns. A 100 yards out, Lt. Willard F. Peters and 5 men were dropped off to establish a listening post and maintain communications with the company C.P. Deploying his remaining men on the flanks and rear, Langren himself moved out with his runner and squad sergeant. The Germans, wary of small noises in the dark, discharged flares. The patrol crept on from hole to hole.

The lead group was well out when a sudden thump was heard. The three men froze. An enemy patrol approached, and when the group was discernible, Landgren opened fire but, finding himself outnumbered, called up the rest of his patrol.

A sharp fire fight ensued, the enemy throwing several concussion grenades, then withdrawing. The patrol pushed on, and found the German patrol leader in a shell hole. He promptly surrendered, and conducted his captors back through a German minefield they had unknowingly passed through. On the return trip the enemy attempted to cut off the Americans by a flank attack, but the patrol's alert defense frustrated that strategy and the group reached its lines safely. Such continual stabs kept both sides tense and alert.

Then, all but essential Italian civilians were evacuated from the beachhead to Naples. The whole area became a tiny, purely military fortress.

The Germans threatened to attack on March 5 in the 179th zone, but on information received from a PW, the impending assault was smashed before it started by heavy artillery concentrations laid on the enemy's assembly areas and avenues of approach.

On March 6-7 the 6th Armd Regt relieved the 179th in sector, executing the relief by echelons to prevent any enemy breakthrough during the switch. But by March 12 the 3rd Battalion was back in the lines, followed the next night by the 2nd.

On March 23 the 179th was involved in a general shift to the right. The 157th moved over to relieve the 30th Inf (3rd Div) and the 179th thereupon extended its lines to cover and include the 180th RCT's positions, that unit being pulled back for a rest. The Regiment thus held a front 4 kilometers wide; its sector included the critical diagonal-and-lateral road junction on the right.

The C.P. also shifted to the right, taking over the former 180th C.P. area, a site reached solely by crossing sucking marshes over a miserable one-way trail constructed out of logs and facetiously called the Burma Road, or Via Dolorosa.

So the days went on, and the fighting went on, local engagements, uninspired, undramatic—but deadly. It was the irony of infantry warfare that surviving on Anzio, battling up the mountains or holding at Salerno, were far harder on the troops than the publicized, dramatically exciting battles of Venafro, of Vittoria, of Messina. For victories mean moving fast, overruning the opposition instead of slugging with it and leaving no time to think and worry. It is the day after day after day sock-fests that are toughest.

On into April the 179th, with 2 battalions abreast, held the center of the salient, separated by 75 yards from the 309th and 3rd Panzer Grenadier Regiments. The opposing forces watched each other alertly for any change in personnel, strength, positions.

On April 3 Col. Darby was recalled

to the U.S. for a new assignment, and Lt. Col. Murphy assumed command. His first move was to switch by a day the regularity of the battalions' rotation, to cross up any possible enemy intervention.

On April 14 the 7th Inf relieved the 179th, part of the 3rd Division's general relief of the 45th after 76 days in the line. At 0500 April 15 command of the sector passed to the C.O., 7th Inf, and the 179th proceeded to the "pinewoods" area on the coast south of Nettuno.

Here for the ensuing 12 days the 179th, with the whole Division, rested. The troops were still in artillery range, for one evening during a retreat formation, as the band was playing "The Star Spangled Banner," a stray enemy shell caused 21 casualties. However, it was the best area there was on the beachhead, and compared to the lines, peaceful. Sand hindered athletics, and mines in the water prohibited swimming. But there were showers available (to maintain the one-bath-a-month average), movies and other limited recreation.

And, for the first time, replacements brought the 179th to T/O strength.

Then, on April 28, the 179th RCT returned to its old sector, "subbing" for the 7th Inf a battalion at a time. But as the Regiment also fanned out to include the 157th sector on the right, all three battalions had to be committed to defend the extended front.

The spotlight swung to Cassino, where the house-to-house bloodfest continued, where patrols were sent from "the living room to the kitchen", where German and Allied infantrymen slept side by side, separated only by a thin wall partition. Where death rained, and reigned.

At Anzio all spring was a period of marking time. There was time for reflection. There is no let up during combat, but when time hangs heavy, there is nothing to do but think. There were sharp, conscious pangs of homesickness, accentuated by the loss of old friends, by the seeming endlessness of the war, by time itself. And by rotation.

This was a system whereby men were returned to the U. S. for a 30 day furlough and subsequent reassignment.[1] The quota in the 179th, as elsewhere, was but ½ of 1% per month, but what a lucky ½ of 1%! In March four months quota, those who had long since been selected but never received travel orders, departed in a group.

Once upon a time the men who stayed "over" felt only wrath for the 45th soldiers who returned to the U. S., for most of them told tall tales of their exploits.

But nowadays all talk in the Regiment centered around who was to go home next. The only thing that mattered was getting home. The next best thing, getting out of combat. Thus, when Capt. Harlos V. Hatter returned from hospital and said he'd answered "No" when asked if he wanted a "B Classification"[2], CWO George Jacobsen incredulously asked the captain if he hadn't misunderstood the examining board to say B *Company*?

Aside from such wishful dreaming and the endless bull sessions born principally to talk "home" or "rumors", the major occupation those days was digging, deeper and deeper under the ground.

First the mere slit trenches the length and width of a man were covered over with boards or cane and heaped high with dirt. Then, egged on by daily shell fire, everyone began branching out into the contracting business. It looked like a long stay, and an unhealthy one, so there was moving day: men shifted to sites on slight rises, where they could dig deeper before striking water. Holes were enlarged so a man could sit up in them, then stand up. Timber and doors, procured from the ruins of the beachhead's only towns, Anzio and Nettuno, and sandbags, were the ingredients for more palatial residences. But ever underground. Always with a view to better stopping flying fragments and near misses. Nothing stops a direct hit.

Ingenuity made the most of limited materials. The sealbeam headlights of peeps, when hooked up to a vehicle's battery, gave dugouts electricity. Bunks were built in and, the final touch, pin-up girls tacked on the boarded walls. So the dirt holes became home. Of course, rain or seepage frequently washed them out.

1—Later there was also Temporary Duty: men went home for 30 days on "T.D.", but remained assigned to and thus returnable to the unit of origin on expiration of the furlough.

2—Owing to physical inability to take combat duty any longer, an officer was placed on limited service and assigned to some rear echelon position.

They occasionally caved in. Then the men set to work and built new, and better ones.

Other conditions were less refined. The food was a mixture of K, C and 5-in-1 Rations. Washing or shaving water was heated over a recalcitrant burner and poured into the only available bucket (but not when shells were falling): the steel helmet. Toilets were any open space (not too near a neighbor's foxhole and not to be confused with same), plus a shovel to dig a hole and cover neatly after using, catlike. And, in keeping with the military efficiency that produced camouflaged khaki underwear, there came into being a new tissue, khaki toilet paper.

It wasn't hardship, but it was primitive. And a year of such living made every man keenly aware that Americans have always taken a hell of a lot for granted. Men dreamed of steaks (*not* dehydrated), milk, toilet seats, running water and the exquisite problem of what color clothes to wear. Except for, of course, their wives, mothers or sweethearts, soldiers asked for only little things. Across 3000 miles of ocean they loomed tremendous.

The monotony went on. The men were cooped up with no place to go except eight miles up or back, from front line to sea. The work went on behind the lines: rations details, mail sections, first echelon maintenance. It was easier for the sections to work immobile, but even they felt like—and were— prisoners.

There wasn't even the kind of action that made the troops feel they were doing something to speed the war's end. For that matter, nowhere did the fighting inspire prospects of ever getting the damned mess over with. From Italy in particular the end appeared not an iota nearer than it had in January, not a lot nearer than it had the night of July 9 when the 179th poised to strike the first blow at Fortress Europe.

But even the worst doldrums come to an end sometime. And on the horizon the first faint rays glimmered, betokening hope—for victory, for some day getting home again.

Chapter 18. Breakthrough!

On May 2, coincidental with the arrival of flamboyant Colonel H. A. Meyer to take command of the 179th Infantry, activity on the beachhead quickened. Like a man too long outside a dentist's office, the enemy was nervous. He began sending up flares nightly to illuminate the front, he peered out into the American lines. He fired at noises. He shelled Padiglione regularly. He sent out small patrols to foray and observe.

Both sides feinted and shadow-boxed warily. Neither opponent was ready to come out swinging, yet. Although S/Sgt. Harry H. Dunbar, Company C, a one-man Task Force in himself, gave the Germans the impression that the Americans were!

North of Padiglione the front revolved around a building identified as House No. 4, some 50 yards from the enemy lines and held by the 1st Battalion. On May 2 Dunbar patrolled from here through savage enemy artillery fire, seeking information. He got it, in the form of 2 PWs. The next day he sallied out again and, with grenades, wiped out a machine gun nest that had been harassing his platoon for some time.

That night an enemy company sharply attacked Dunbar's platoon defenses. Dunbar began to get mad at the Heinies, and once he started fighting he couldn't stop.

Dunbar threw 5 boxes of grenades at the attacking Germans, catching his breath between tosses by merely emptying his tommy gun into their midst. A shell burst a yard from his foxhole, so close that the concussion literally hurled him from his hole. Dunbar shook himself, cleared his head, and went on fighting. He took a slug in the shoulder. Still the sergeant refused to be evacuated. Singlehandedly he staved off the attack.

The enemy continued to probe, hunting a weak spot to strike. Dunbar directed fire on patrolling enemy tanks, and was credited with one tank destroyed and one damaged. All night Dunbar stuck to his guns, directing his men and artillery fire, between times picking off any target that appeared in his sights—all the while gritting his teeth against the throbbing pain in his shoulder.

By dawn May 4, pressure had eased off. But the enemy was still too close to suit Dunbar. So he crawled out of his hole again, crept to within 20 yards of the Germans, and began hurling hand grenades. The enemy hastily pulled back further. Dunbar, out of ammunition, returned to his platoon. He made certain each of his men had been supplied with food, water and ammo for the day—and collapsed. Only then was Sgt. Dunbar removed from the battlefield—*his* battlefield.[1]

On May 5 the enemy tried to forestall what he feared was an impending

1—Deserving a Medal of Honor as much as any soldier who ever lived, Dunbar received a DSC for these actions.

Allied push by "jumping off" first. German infantry assaulted Company B's positions, withdrawing only after a stiff small arms fight in which both sides suffered heavy casualties. As bustling enemy activity continued behind the lines, the next day in the 179th sector alone Forward Observers directed 9,000 rounds of artillery fire at the Germans!

Meanwhile morale everywhere got a great boost when word came that at 2300 May 7 a full scale offensive had begun on the south Italian front. By May 18 Cassino, impediment to the whole Allied offensive for months, had been flanked and had fallen, after so many fruitless frontal attacks, to French troops of the 5th Army.[1] Smashing on through the Gustav Line, the 5th and 8th Armies were again moving up the peninsula from coast to coast.

Thereupon the beachhead forces stepped up their pressure. While the 179th rotated each battalion to give it Infantry-Tank tactical training in the rear, the 800 artillery guns roared ceaseless warnings to the already nervous Heinies. The 3rd, 45th, 36th and the recently landed 34th Division, along with the 1st Armored, started moving everything up as close behind the actual front as possible. So did the British on the left.

6th Corps was preparing for a push of its own. In it the 179th's initial mission was to hold in position, primarily to stop the inevitable enemy counter-attack that would come once the Allied offensive began to roll.

On May 23 at 0630 the beachhead army jumped off, to break out of its confinement, to contact the 5th Army advancing from the south, and to push north, to Rome.

The Germans fought back fiercely. But softened up by the air force and field guns, and hit until they were groggy by waves of attacking infantry, they fell back slowly. By the second day Cisterna on the right was on the verge of capitulation, and the main southern railroad bed had been cut in several places.

On the second night the enemy launched his desperate counter thrust to upset the Allied attack plan. Moving down the Spaccassasi Canal, the Germans charged—and piled up on the 179th, set and waiting. The RCT's withering small arms, mortar and artillery fire stopped the enemy cold. And when the waiting riflemen leaped from their holes and attacked his wavering lines, the enemy broke, and "parti-ed."

On May 26 the Anzio Beachhead was no more. Ending four tortuous months of isolation, at Borgo Grappa 5th Army advance patrols made contact with the beachhead troops. For the first time since January 22 the Allies surged onward in a solid, united mass.

And, its mission completed, on May 26 the 179th was released from its positions, to join in the general advance. The Regiment's new assignment was to smash the enemy's fanatically savage holding attack along Highway 7, by following 1st Armored tanks and mopping up enemy strongpoints which the armored column bypassed. The 2nd Battalion, selected to lead the column of battalions, was to strike north astride the Anzio-Albano road and seize the ridges in the vicinity of Corioli.

Jumping off from south of Campoleone at dusk, May 28, the 2nd began to push ahead against crack German units armed with "burp guns" (machine pistols), rifles, machine guns, mortars and SPs. The companies' leading elements suffered 20% casualties in the push to the Battalion *LD*. The terrain was barren, the troops at the mercy of enemy gunners.

At 0530 May 29, supported by tanks, Company E and Company F jumped off abreast, with G echeloned to the right rear and H throwing in close support with its mortars and heavy machine guns. The doughboys smashed pocket after pocket, only to run into others, each enemy strongpoint set up to cover the noses of the ridges and sweep the draws up which the Americans had to advance.

Through the night, through the next day and night, through murderous cross-

---

1—Curiously, American tactics in Italy persistently followed the obvious frontal approach. Small units were trained always to flank, but "Army" battered head-on for weeks: at the Factory, Cassino, the Winter Line. When each objective was eventually outflanked and thereby fell, each time it was as if a new strategy had been revealed to the Command. Russians and Germans always used enveloping tactics, unless the terrain absolutely forbad it! Indeed U.S. Italian fighting somehow seemed to typify the very opposing natures of Americans and Continentals. Europe, resigned to war, looked to next year's attacks. Germany played subtlely for each inch for time, Russia took time to prepare thoroughly for each offensive, Britain fought a long war. And Americans, seeking quick results, went to war intending to get it over with—fast—remember? They went off "half-cocked". As in all its history, this technique often produced brilliant results. It also brought about Cassino, Anzio, unnecessary losses in men, material, and in the long run—time.

fire and tank fire the 2nd plunged on, powerfully supported by TDs, and tanks which for the first time fought *with* the infantry instead of behind it, and gave superlative help to the charging riflemen. The enemy fought stubbornly, but nevertheless fell back, and the toll of his losses piled high.

Moving north and west, Easy Company seized the high points, destroying or capturing all the snipers and entrenched machine gun positions in its sector. Prisoners were identified as members of the 309th Lehr, 11th Parachute and 29th Panzer Regiments.

Company F swung west and seized the tiny village of Colle Cavaliere against bitter resistance, while E pushed on towards the "Red House", a position on extremely high ground which dominated the road network, "the 5 points". Attacking so swiftly that relatively few casualties were suffered despite the heavy enemy artillery barrages that were laid on the troops, "E's" infantrymen raced across open terrain to seize the Red House, the Regimental objective.

From dawn to noon on May 29 against fierce enemy infantry and artillery opposition, the 2nd Battalion had advanced two miles.

An hour later White's ragged men were smashing on again. F attacked to take the high ground at Casalpozzo. It took four hours of savage battling to cross the 2200 yards through a devastating fire, but Fox got there, and held.

The next morning the 1st Battalion attempted to attack through the 2nd, but the 135th Inf (34th Div) picked that moment to cross the 179th's 2 kilometer front, creating confusion in the sector. The enemy pounded the concentration of troops with everything he had.

That night, in a last attempt to stem the drive, Kesselring brought up fresh crack infantry troops. For he was defending this, his last established defense line before Rome, with grim determination, at all costs. A breakthrough here would leave the major highways he was using exposed to flank assaults by the beachhead forces.

At dawn May 31 the Germans struck back. Col. Meyer threw in all three battalions, smashing the assault with a furious fire. And the 179th plunged on, yard by yard. On the right Company A gained several yards, then was stopped dead by chattering machine guns. Cpl. Frank Best, hit while deploying his squad before an enemy entrenchment, didn't stop for medical aid: he rushed an enemy gun position, hurling grenades. The gun kept firing, so he moved to within 20 yards, then hurled his "pineapple". The enemy gunner was killed, two other Germans wounded. From a litter Cpl. Best watched his company charge the next pillbox.

Meanwhile Lt. Col. Grace's 2nd Battalion, which deserves the greatest glory for smashing the enemy force guarding the approach to Rome, had jumped off at 0600, still spearheading the RCT attack. Up the hills went G, with F on its left. Enemy small arms and artillery fire was intense, and the Germans clung doggedly to their positions, dug in 6 feet and often steel or concrete reinforced.

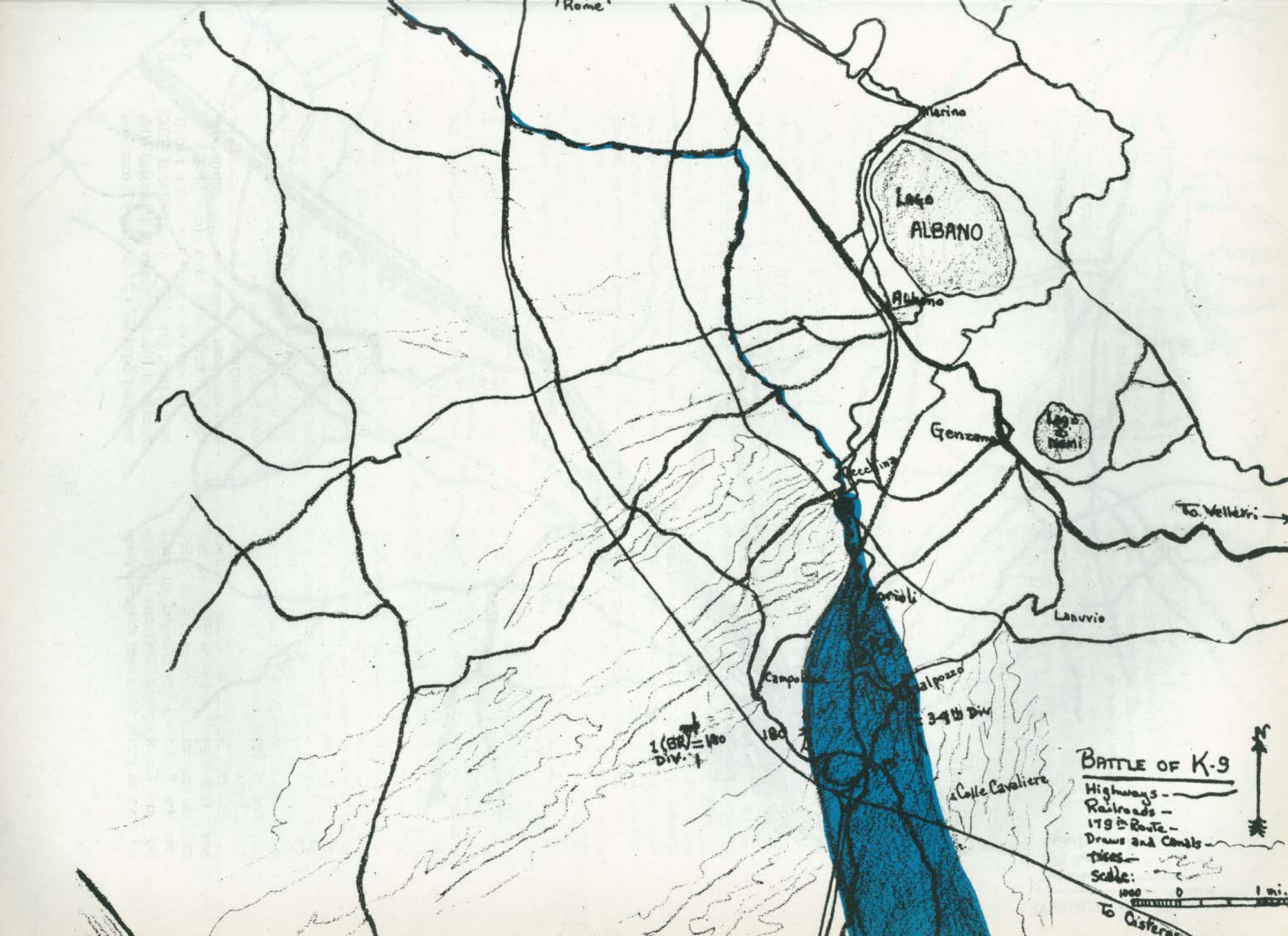
Mortar fire thudded ahead of the riflemen, machine guns blazed away supporting them, and slowly the Americans drove back the defenders, inches at a time. The companies reached the high ground 1500 yards from their LD and consolidated.

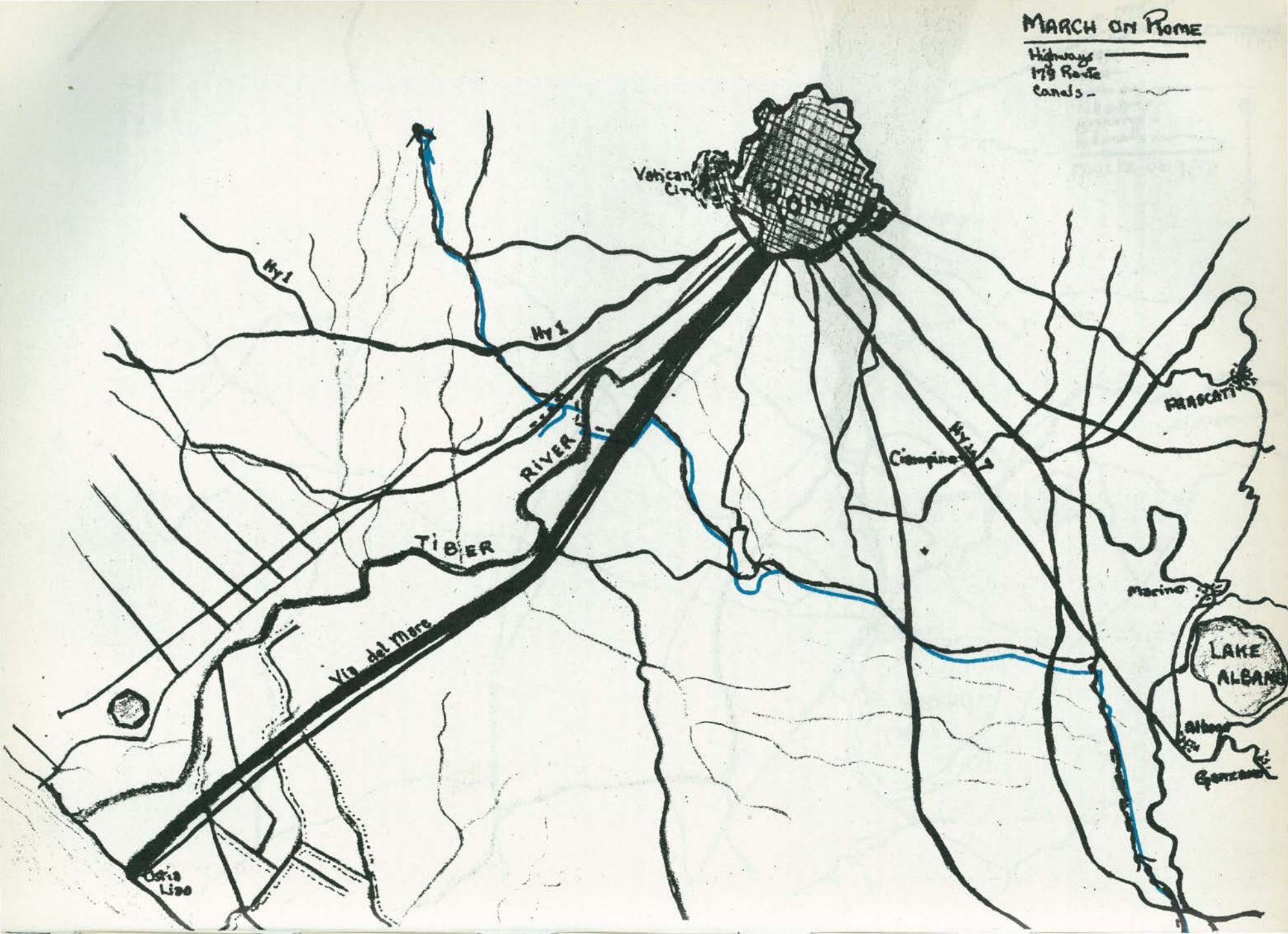
Through June 1 the attack staggered on. The C.O. fidgeted, eager to hop in his peep and streak for Rome. Blue Battalion, although two successive commanders, Lt. Col. Edward E. Webber and Maj. Strong, had been killed, kept attacking on the flank. Red punched ahead on the opposite wing. White still was the point of the flying wedge, its assault power increased by the attachment of Company B.

George and Easy held in position despite furious shelling. Company F, swinging around G's left, moved out to seize the German strongpoint, Hill K-9 (its map coordinates).

No sooner did the troops push off than they met the heaviest volume of concentrated small arms, heavy caliber artillery and flat trajectory tank fire encountered in the whole drive on Rome. The men of Fox Company fell flat. The moans of the wounded, the thin, desperate cry of "Medic!" brought aid men racing up through the fire. Many soldiers did not rise to go on. But despite the threatened derangement of control due to high officer and non-com casualties, the doughboys reached and clung to a slope of K-9.

Through the night the battle raged. In support, the 160th thumped out 6700 rounds of 105 mm. shells in 24 hours. With morning light June 2 Company E attacked


Rome
Nettuno
Lago
ALBANO
Albano
Genzano
Lago di Nemi
To Velletri
Lanuvio
Campoleone
Carroceto
34th Div
1 (BR) = 180 Div.
Colle Cavaliere
BATTLE OF K-9
Highways
Railroads
179th Route
Draws and Canals
Trees
Scale:
1000
0
1 mi.
To Cisterna


MARCH ON ROME
Highways
Mfg Route
Canals
Vatican City
Hy 1
Hy 1
RIVER
TIBER
Via del Mare
Ostia Lido
Cisterna
Hy 7
FRASCATI
Marino
LAKE ALBANO
Albano
Genzano

to take the remainder of the objective. Through the smoke and dust kicked up by friendly artillery fire it went, into direct fire from the Germans. The infantrymen paused, struggled on, then stopped. Six U.S. tanks raced up. With the tanks Company E jumped off again, reached the nose and at 0912 Hill K-9 was taken.

The enemy no sooner lost the high ground than he counter-attacked with infantry, SPs, and huge Mark VIs. The doughboys clung heroically to the ground, while a reinforced company with its own supporting tanks raced around the krauts' flank. Slashing into the Germans with a deadly crossfire, the 2nd accounted for 60 Germans, 3 SPs. The enemy renewed his "strategic withdrawals."

The back of the resistance was cracking. In the night 1st AD tanks shot around K-9 to jump off for the final thrust to Rome. And on June 3 the boys bounded in like police dogs into a chicken coop. Company G kicked off once more, and swept into Corioli. Fox attacked through G, and slaughtering a last desperate German defense force, led the column of companies to the hill position of Cecchina, overlooking the railroad. Then suddenly the enemy's organized resistance crumbled, completely and spontaneously.

The remnants of the German Army turned tail and headed for their next defense line, far north. The savage fighting deteriorated into a track meet without field events.

In the 5-day battle the 2nd Battalion had lost 209 men (20% strength). But alone it had accounted for 300 enemy dead, inestimable numbers wounded, 200 PWs, and huge quantities of guns, tanks, small arms and equipment captured.

The 179th took to trucks. The night of June 3 the Command Echelon pushed on from Campamorto (now indeed a "Camp of Death"). The road wound past the Factory, now a ghostly swiss cheese of shell holes, over slightly rolling plains and through gullies where shattered tanks still smouldered. One gulch held 18 charred armored mausoleums, mostly American. Each house dotting the road, a shimmering ribbon in the moonglow, was a ruins: roofs smashed in, walls crumbled, hearths cold. Then, approaching Rome, suddenly the houses were trim, unscarred, inhabited. A cleavage as sharp as if an invisible barrier had been erected marked the extreme range of the old beachhead's guns. And the point where, after the breakthrough, the disintegrating Wehrmacht had turned—and run.

Chapter 19. Buona Serra, Bon Matin!

As the front rolled on the 179th dropped out, its mission completed. In Division reserve it assembled south of the historic Tiber River below Rome on June 5, still alert to race ahead should the enemy attempt a stand along the way. One of the Regiment's bloodiest fights, the 9 day "Battle of K-9" had cost the lives of 147 soldiers; 436 were wounded, 163 missing. On June 1 alone the RCT's Medical Collecting Company had evacuated 288 casualties, the most they handled in one day during the entire war.

As the Regiment crossed the Tiber and at 0100 June 6 was assembling along the river road, elsewhere a momentous event was occurring. Timed perfectly with the fall of Rome and the rout of a German army, across Europe masses of Allied troops that same morning were launching the long-awaited Second Front Invasion. From Caen to Cherbourg thousands of fighting men swarmed onto the Normandy beaches. By noon, despite appalling casualties, the Allies had overwhelmed German coastal defenses and were smashing inland from the sea.

Russia, too, synchronized a new drive with these events, sweeping across Poland and pounding at Rumania's gates. The Allies were really on the march!

The 179th, meanwhile, moved north up canal beds parallel to Rome and in field glass range of the Vatican City. On June 7 the Regiment halted northwest of the holy ground and set up its C.P. in a handsome manor overlooking surrounding verdant hills and vales.

Here, in reserve, a training schedule came into effect. But it took a back seat to the spontaneous emotional outburst of men who for four months had been confined to foxholes, as cloistered and celibate as Trappist monks in Tibet. the 179th's mood brightened. Let others pursue the Heinies to their Gothic Line guarding the fertile Po Valley. The RCT was authorized passes to Rome!

The Italian capital was an improvement over the cities of southern Italy: it had cleaner streets, finer shops, smartly dressed and better looking natives, endless historically interesting monuments and varied enough entertainment to appeal to any soldier's appetite.

There were the usual friendly Italians who were indigenous to or had relatives in Brooklyn, U.S.A. But from the attitude of the majority of the populace, Rome was clearly still the hub of Italian Fascism; had the Germans suddenly returned, obviously they would have been made welcome. In truth, Rome seemed to mirror the whole Italian political makeup: ready to jump either way, solely interested in personal aggrandizement, ever the international mugwump.

On June 8 the 179th RCT celebrated (?) a year of overseas duty, a year in which it had established a remarkable record of combat service: of the 330 elapsed days since invading Sicily, the

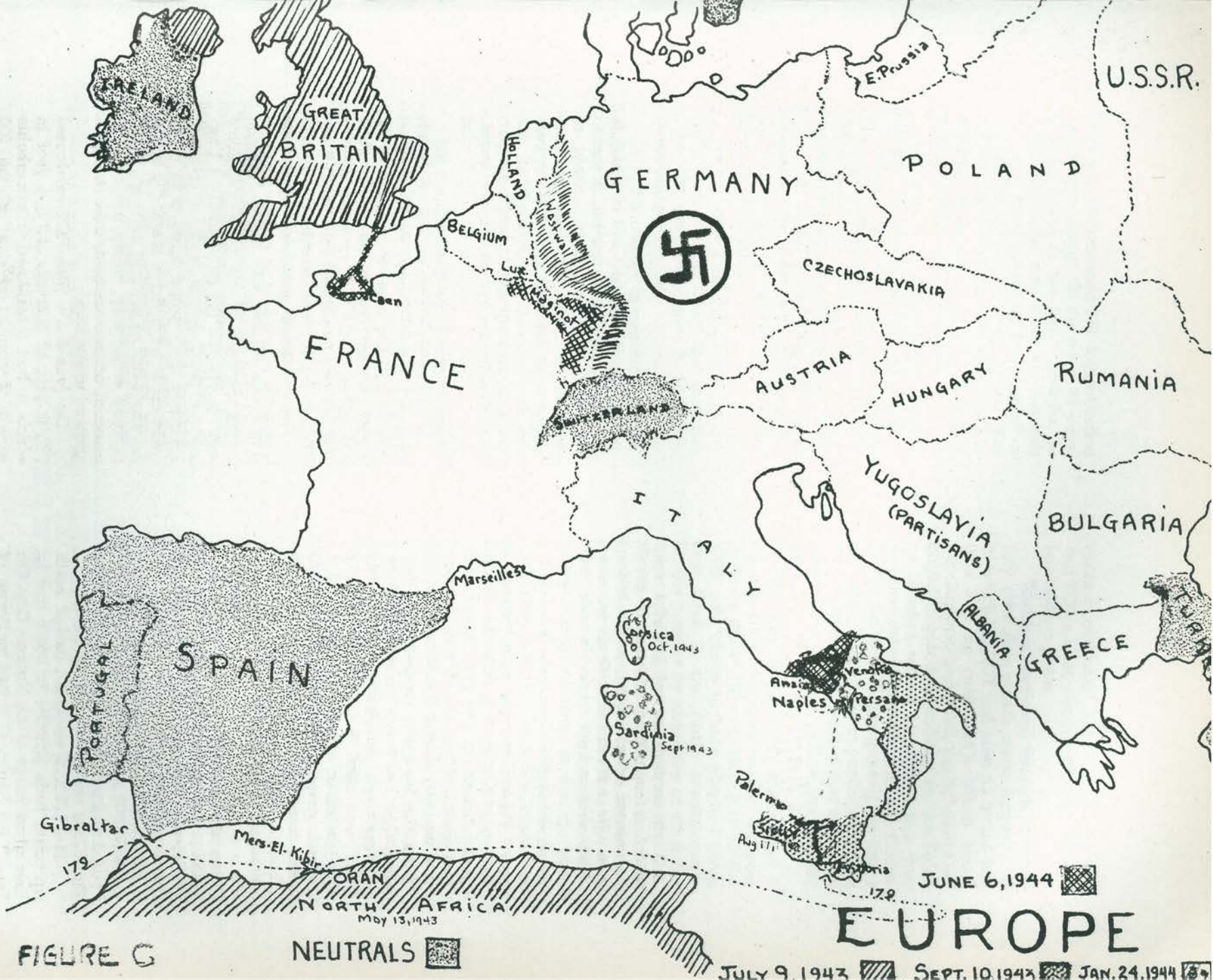

IRELAND
GREAT BRITAIN
HOLLAND
BELGIUM
Lux.
Caen
GERMANY
E. Prussia
U.S.S.R.
POLAND
CZECHOSLAVAKIA
FRANCE
AUSTRIA
HUNGARY
RUMANIA
SWITZERLAND
YUGOSLAVIA (PARTISANS)
BULGARIA
ITALY
ALBANIA
GREECE
Marseilles
Corsica Oct. 1943
Naples
Sardinia Sept 1943
Palermo
SPAIN
PORTUGAL
Gibraltar
Mers-El-Kibir
ORAN
NORTH AFRICA
May 13, 1943
JUNE 6, 1944
EUROPE
NEUTRALS
JULY 9, 1943
SEPT. 10, 1943
JAN. 24, 1944

FIGURE 6

Regiment had amassed 236 days of action against the enemy. Of the other 94 days, 45 had passed in the first 3 months, in Sicily, and of the remaining 49, over half had been spent preparing for amphibious assaults, loading and being at sea! The Combat Team had been busy. So, while awaiting its return to combat, it had a lot of recreation to catch up on.

On June 16 the 45th Division reorganized under a new TO/E. Although making but minor alterations in the 179th Infantry's organization, it did cut down on wire section personnel which, since telephone was used almost to the exclusion of radio in Europe, should if anything have been increased. Like most such changes, the new TO/E probably had been devised by armchair militarists.

At the same time, 6th Corps was detached from the 5th Army and attached to the 7th Army, Maj. Gen. A. M. Patch commanding.[1]

With this change in command for the 3rd, 36th and 45th Divisions, things began to happen. Instead of moving north, on June 18 the 179th RCT was transported by motor and ship, via Anzio, to Infantry Training Command Area No. 35, 2 miles north of Battapaglia.[2] By the time all units had closed in this area on June 21, training in *beach tactics* had already begun!

But the bad taste was partially counteracted by the camp's recreational atmosphere. There were Special Service shows, athletic contests and countless "unofficial" passes to keep the men happy. Such clubs as T-5 Albert Shapiro's "5 to 4 Club" (for fourth and fifth grade non-coms) blossomed forth. Even "bars" were set up in company areas.

Rumor hinted that the training was just counter-espionage, that the only place the 179th was going was—home. Fictitious hopes! Yet probably inspired by Gen. Eagles' remark that this training might never be put to a practical use, and fostered by the seemingly casual pursuance of the program all the way up the chain of command. Yet the cold fact was that TQMs were already at work on combat loading plans.

Training continued through June and July (the first month since August 1943 in which the RCT had seen no action and thus had no casualties). When beach training was completed, the battalions engaged in practice landings on the Salerno beaches, where 11 months ago they had first debarked on Italian soil. Culminating the amphibious training, on July 7 the entire Combat Team participated in a final exercise, then packed and moved to allow other troops to utilize the training area.

On July 8 the 179th bivouacked 2 miles south of Paestum on the Agripoli-Paestum road.[3] Here at 1850 July 10 the 179th paid tribute to those who had given their lives in the Anzio breakthrough. Simple prayers by chaplains of all faiths were followed by an address by Col. Meyer. Then, while the National and Regimental colors snapped in the breeze and honor guards stood at attention, taps with echo rolled out across the broad, reverently silent Salerno Plains.

General instruction and recreational schedules were resumed, supplemented by orientation lectures on historical and military subjects and by daily guided tours to Mt. Vesuvius, Herculaneum, Pompeii and Paestum. The Regiment departed from this delightful area on July 19, for what constituted a staging area. 3 miles northwest of Qualiano,[4] the driest, dustiest, most disagreeable area on earth, except in its proximity to Naples.

Passenger lists were compiled, vehicles and impedimenta loaded aboard transports, training for enlisted men continued, and officers pursued the Nurses' Corps throughout the length and breadth of Napoli.

Cases of anticipatory nerves and "salt water fever" cropped up again. The atmosphere did not clear with the "hot G-2" that in this next invasion, the beaches were going to be strongly defended. G-2 added that after the initial

---

1—Former 7th Army G. G. George Patton was now busy accomplishing miracles in Normandy with his 3rd U. S. Army, vindicating himself in reply to irrelevant charges made against him by a misguided press and a petty Congress. Indeed, to GIs overseas Congress seemed to waste endless hours over picayune trifles and to spend too little time with major issues, such as winning the war.

2—See Map 2.

3—See Map 2.

4—See Map 2.

landings the going should be comparatively easy. But G-2 was so often wrong!

The 179th was "going in" as Division reserve, on D-Day! That no doubt meant getting shoved into the hottest spot that developed.

But there were silver linings. The Germans were plenty busy elsewhere: in Normandy the Allies had isolated the Brittany peninsula, and were charging inland towards Paris as well; Russia was rolling over Rumania in the east; and in Italy the Allies had reached the Gothic Line. Best of all, it seemed likely that this was the last amphibious landing the 179th would have to make. Surely they could find SOME other divisions, besides the 3rd, 36th, 34th and 45th, to fight the Pacific War!

On August 5 the 179th moved to the "Nevada Area", on the outskirts of Naples. The next day the troops marched to the port of Pozzuoli, and from here were transported by LCI to Salerno where they were joined by 179th LSTs participating in the 45th's "Thunderbird Exercise." On the 7th, all Division rifle battalions "assaulted" the beaches until the "end of exercise" order was received at 1215. The troops reembarked and by nightfall they had again reached the Nevada Area.

On August 10 the 179th began to load for the "pay run". On completion of embarkation the LCIs once more sailed to Salerno, where the LSTs were taking aboard the Regimental Command Echelon.

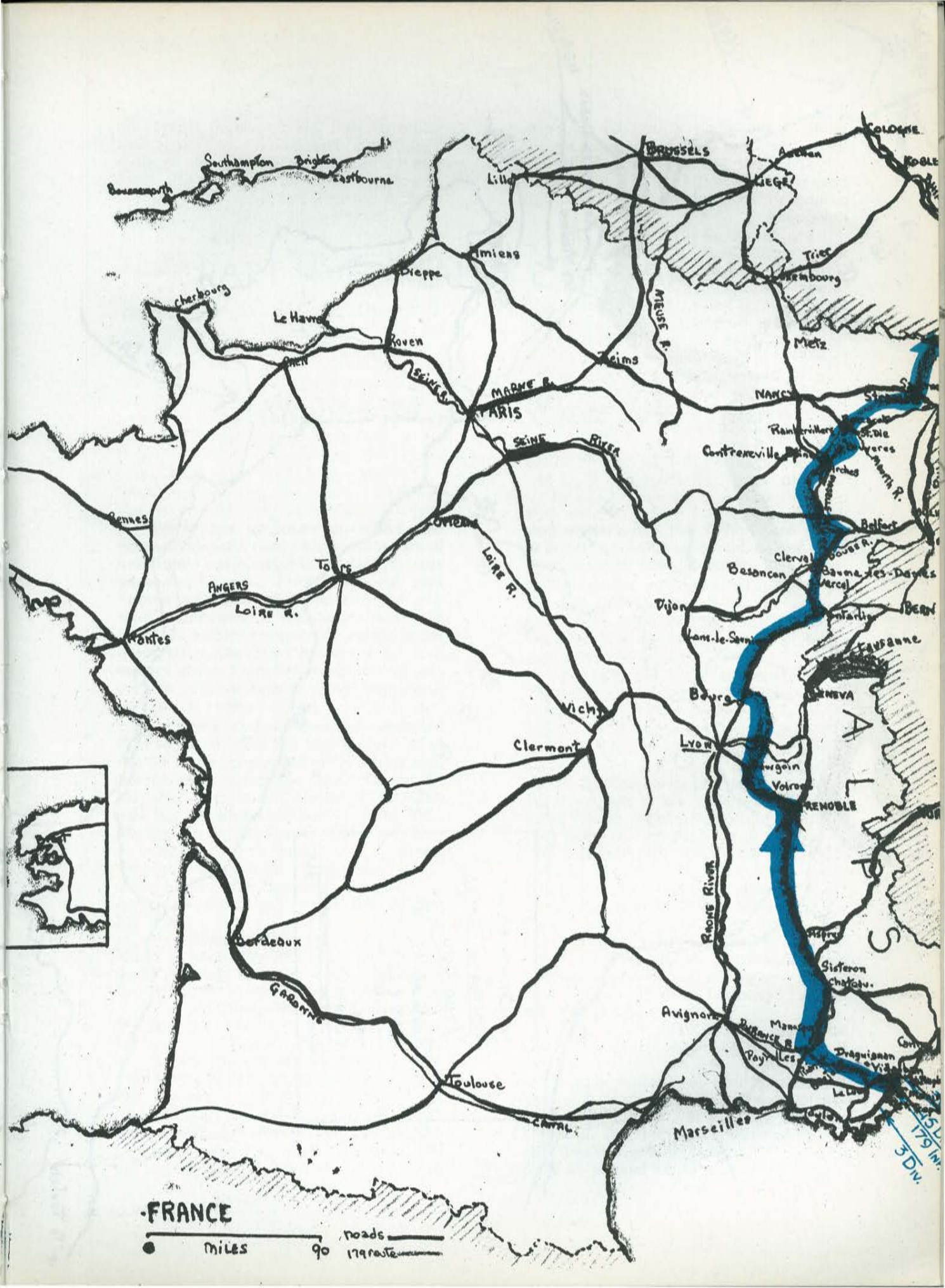
A private, struggling along with full field equipment and sweating profusedly, looked up at the LST as he boarded her and grunted: "This is where I came in." An Oklahoman behind him laughed. "We might as well join the damn Navy", he contributed. The general sentiment was that a man can do this thing just so often before his dogtag instead of him goes back to the wife and kids.

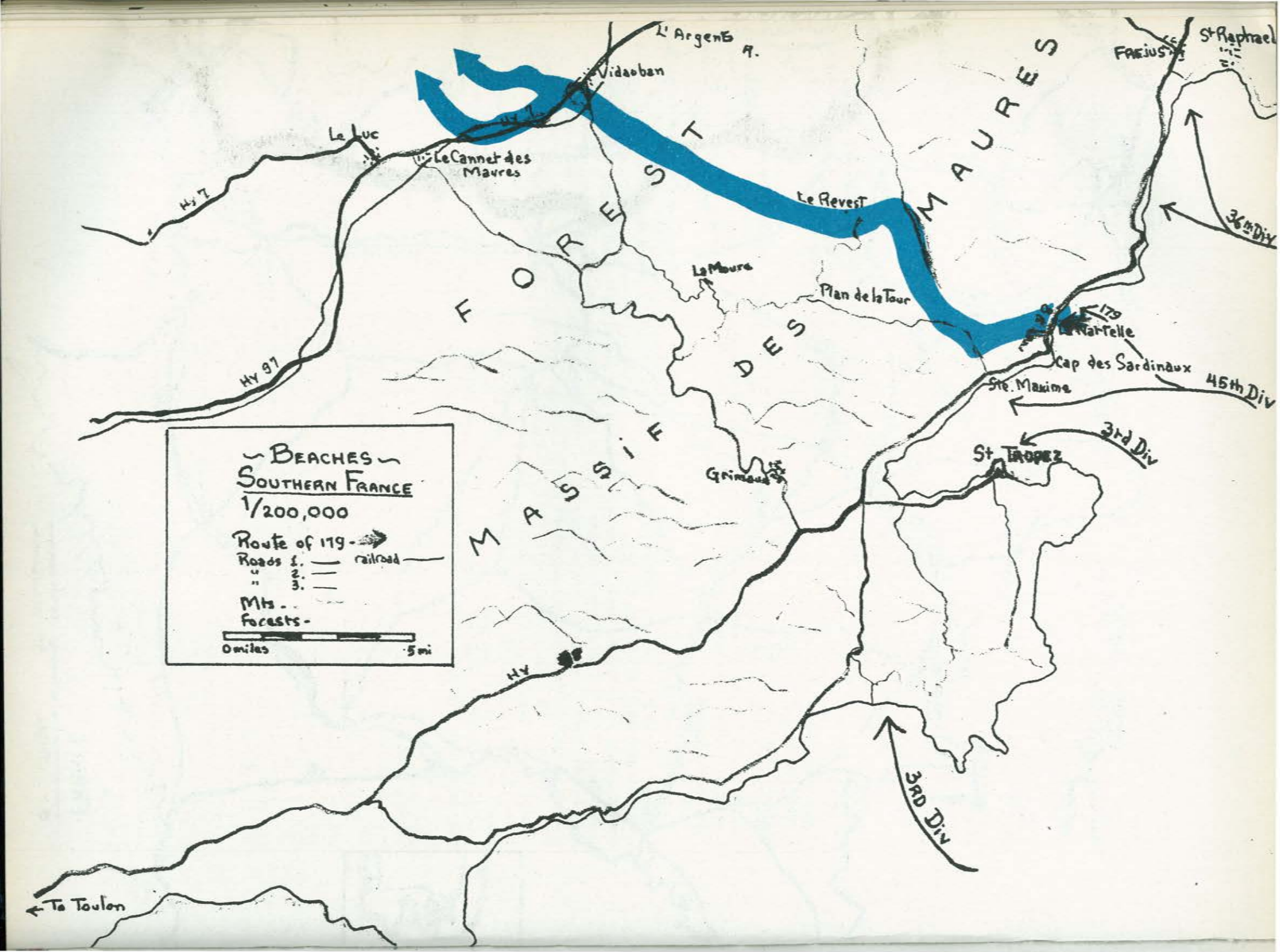
At 0800 August 12 the troopships got up steam, formed in columns with the rest of the 45th's troop carriers, and glided out of the harbor. It was "Farewell, Italy"—thank God!

Under light naval escort the convoy gained the straits knifing between Sardinia and Corsica, and paused off the latter's southern coast to await the opportune moment to clear for its objective. The fleet lay comfortably at anchor until the evening of August 14, when it raised steam and plowed northwest along Corsica's western coast.

Another soldier's "Guide Book" was distributed, invasion maps were unrolled, and the now familiar process of assault orientation—this time for another part of Europe—proceeded. 6th Corps' veteran soldiers had missed out on the Normandy invasion, but they weren't about to be done out of action on any European front. They were making their own landing on the beaches of *southern* France.

The Thunderbird's battle-scarred veterans of three seaborne invasions were brought to the Transport Area off the enemy-held coast on the night of August 14. Methodically they checked their weapons and equipment, studied the maps and attack plans with a practiced eye and discussed tactics. Confident in their knowledge and experience, the doughboys were ready for their fourth amphibious landing. They lay down and went to sleep.


Southampton
Brighton
Eastbourne
Bournemouth
Lille
Brussels
Liege
Cologne
Amiens
Dieppe
Cherbourg
Le Havre
Rouen
Caen
Seine R.
Paris
Marne R.
Reims
Meuse R.
Metz
Nancy
Trier
Luxembourg
Rambervillers
St. Die
Epinal
Contrexeville
Belfort
Besancon
Dijon
Beaune
Chalon-le-Saone
Bern
Lausanne
Geneva
Bourg
Lyon
Vichy
Clermont
Grenoble
Rhone River
Loire R.
Angers
Nantes
Tours
Orleans
Bordeaux
Garonne
Toulouse
Avignon
Marseilles
Sisteron
Draguignan
Nice
Italy
FRANCE
Miles 90
roads 179 route
3 Div.
179 Inf.


~ Beaches ~
Southern France
1/200,000
Route of 179 →
Roads 1. —— railroad ——
" 2. ——
" 3. ——
Mts. . .
Forests -
0 miles 5 mi
L'Argens R.
Vidauban
Le Luc
Le Cannet des Maures
Hy 7
Hy 97
Hy
Le Revest
La Moure
Plan de la Tour
FORÊT DES MAURES
MASSIF
Fréjus
St Raphael
36th Div
179
La Nartelle
Cap des Sardinaux
45th Div
Ste. Maxime
3rd Div
St Tropez
Grimaud
3RD DIV
← To Toulon

PART FIVE: FRENCH CAMPAIGN

Chapter 20. Task Force 179

While the dogfaces stretched and yawned and got ready for another day of hell, in the early hours of August 15, from Toulon to Cannes, British, American and French warships and hundreds of aircraft commenced a murderous softening up of the enemy's coastal defenses. In the greyness of pre-dawn rocket ships raced toward shore, launched their flaming projectiles, and scampered out of small calibre range again.

At 0800 the invasion of southern France began. The 3rd Division struck at the St. Tropez peninsula at Cavalaire and Pompellonne Bays, the 36th hit near St. Raphael from Pt. St. Aygulf to Antheor, and the 45th landed in the center, near St. Maxime in the St. Tropez Gulf.

Landing craft streaked for shore, through a haze of gunpowder smoke that clung to the water, poured out the assault troops on the beaches and raced back for more.

And there was almost no opposition! What strength the Germans had in the south (many defense units had been drawn north to meet the growing Normandy offensive) was concentrated in the Toulon-Marseille area. PWs stated an invasion *had* been expected there, but not at all until September! So the landings found the enemy unprepared, off balance, disorganized.

At 0830 the 179th Communications Section still aboard ship intercepted radio messages reporting the landing of the 157th and 180th Combat Teams virtually uncontested. Just the 179th's luck to be in reserve when the establishment of a beachhead was a pushover!

6th Corps was quick to seize its advantage, and shelving its pre-invasion attack plans, shot the 3rd Division southwest, the 36th northeast and the 45th Division inland to the north.

At 1230 the C.O., followed by the 179th Command Group, debarked on the north shore of Cap Sardinaux, near the hamlet of La Nartelle. That landing was unique: when the Regiment's LCIs and LSTs shoved their blunt noses onto the beach, the shore was practically deserted. All there was to see were a few disinterested GIs, a parked truck, and a hole in the enemy's anti-tank wall made by naval shellfire. It was as if the Americans were coming to the Riviera to utilize its famous pre-war resort facilities. MPs already occupied the town cafes and had tacked up their "Off Limits" signs.

It was easy. But still the boys "sweat it out", because all hell might break loose any moment, because as long as a man is in a war and lives, he is *always* "sweating out" something!

The 179th bivouacked near the beaches until, at daybreak August 16, it was ordered into the line —if units striking independently in all directions can be termed a "line". Its mission was to proceed to Le Revest. But en route the lead battalion, the 2nd, was redirected to the high ground north of Chaume. While Company G pushed on to occupy the objec-

tive, the rest of the Regiment assembled just south of Vidauban.

The next morning the 1st Battalion sped to the heights near Cannet-les-Maures on the 157th's right, while the 2nd continued toward Le Thoronet, via the river road from Vidauban. The 3rd Battalion advanced on Le Thoronet up parallel roads on the 2nd's left, moving so swiftly the troops carried the front line with them by motor! But Blue ran into small arms and anti-tank fire just south of Le Thoronet, and paused to organize an attack on that locality the following day.

Jumping off at daybreak the 18th, by 0845 the 3rd had knifed through the meager resistance at Le Thornet and was pushing northwest along the axis Garces-Cotignac. Pagan White continued to attack abreast of the 3rd, moving on Cotignac via Entrecasteaux. The 1st Battalion, following the 3rd, was in motor patrol contact with the 3rd Division on the left flank.

Enemy resistance was still scattered, ineffectual. Driven into a frenzy by the constant harassing of partisans — the French Forces of the Interior—their communications cut and their messengers waylaid and murdered, many German garrisons were completely in the dark as to the situation, where other German forces were, what they were supposed to do. Thus some groups fought, doggedly but without real purpose. Some took to the hills to become guerillas. Others were bypassed and pocketed before they realized the Americans had swept by them.

So, knocking out or ignoring the scattered fire from the hills, the American infantry pushed on into Cotignac. Then, hitching rides on the backs of tanks which had been attached to the 179th, the troops jounced on without pause toward Barjols.

Hasty reconnaissance preceding the infantry reported the road clear to within a mile of Barjols. But in town FFI scouts reported an estimated 300 Germans. Hence the 1st Battalion detrucked at the outskirts of town, where Lt. Col. Michael S. Davison organized his forces for attacking the village, coordinating his plans with local Maquis units and with U.S. tanks assembling in the vicinity.

That night Company A attacked an enemy road block guarding the approaches to Barjols. Meeting heavy machine gun fire, Sgt. Addison Miguel's squad was ordered to locate and wipe out one of these guns. After surveying the situation, Miguel tried to eliminate the gun crew with fire from his automatic weapons team, but the enemy's cover was too good for the BAR[1] men to get in a direct shot. So, placing his men to afford him maximum covering fire, Miguel went on alone toward the German machine gun nest. The sergeant crept up through a stream of fire until, almost on the enemy's position, he cut loose with a hail of lead from his submachine gun. Two Germans fell dead, three others were fatally hit. Miguel leaped into the emplacement, spun the machine gun around, and turned it on other German dugouts, keeping the gun chattering like a riveter's drill and inflicting several casualties until the ammunition was spent. Whereupon he smashed the gun, called his squad forward, and joined other Able Company elements in wiping out the remaining defenses around the enemy-held road block.

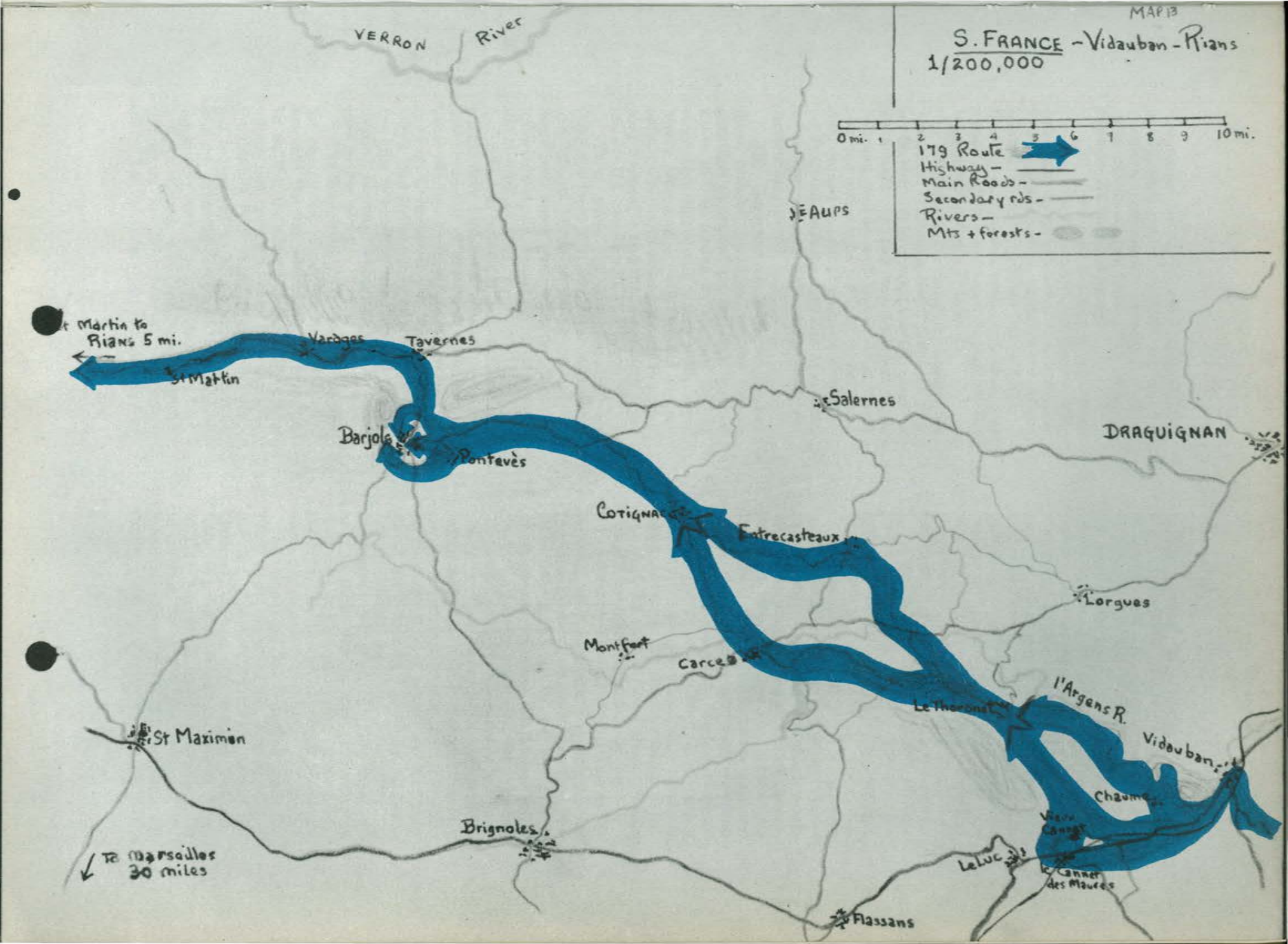
And at dawn August 19, the whole 1st Battalion jumped off for Barjols. C, attacking frontally, engaged the Germans in close-in street fighting. A seized the nose of the hill southeast of town. B slipped around the flank and poured into town from the north.

Massacred by the rifle and machine gun fire sweeping them from three sides at once ,and blasted out of their buildings by direct tank fire, the Germans scattered. By 1055 the 1st Battalion even commanded the ridges on the far side of town.

As the advance sped on, pockets of Germans were left behind. One such group, with mortars, popped up near Cotignac and interdicted the 179th supply route with fire. A platoon of RCT engineers and Company G were dispatched to cope with the Germans. But the combat force could find no trace of the enemy, and returned. At once messages poured in reporting that the Germans were back again. This time Capt. Robert C. Dean, S-2, organized a Task Force of Maquis and 3rd Battalion riflemen, and went back to put an end to the marauders.

Forward, with the Barjols resistance eliminated, Col. Meyer now relied on combat patrols of tanks, TDs and infantry to gather information concerning the routes leading west. There was little correlated "G-2" to guide the Combat Team, although there was no lack of excited, shouted reports from the French. In French, Belgian and parachute-dropped uniforms, in bastard combinations of all three, or in assorted civilian dress

1—Browning Automatic rifle.


MAP 13
S. FRANCE - Vidauban - Rians
1/200,000
0 mi. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 mi.
179 Route
Highway -
Main Roads -
Secondary rds -
Rivers -
Mts + forests -
VERRON River
DEAUPS
St Martin to Rians 5 mi.
St Martin
Vardages
Tavernes
Barjols
Pontevès
Salernes
DRAGUIGNAN
COTIGNAC
Entrecasteaux
Lorgues
Montfort
Carces
Le Thoronet
l'Argens R.
Vidauban
Chaumes
Vieux Cannet
Le Luc
Le Cannet des Maures
St Maximin
Brignoles
Flassans
To Marseilles 30 miles

militarized by Cross of Lorraine armbands and their inevitable berets, the partisans swarmed around the C.P., gave it the appearance of a musical comedy Allied headquarters.

But there was nothing comic about the way the FFI fought, or the incalculable aid they rendered the invaders. Prior to the landings, on direct order from London, carefully briefed bands had carried out widespread demolition work and raids on enemy garrisons throughout the breadth of southern France.

After the invasion, often before the American reached a town, partisans took up their cudgels against the Germans in the streets—fighting with last war rifles, hoarded pistols and knives, with fierce courage and a wild patriotic ardor. Often they gained control of villages, even seized Toulouse with the invasion forces still miles away, and held them until the Americans arrived.

The Germans could have retaken these isolated localities, for the French guerillas depended on the lightning-like shock of their forays for success, neither possessed nor could carry with them heavy weapons or artillery. But the enemy could ill afford to expend the necessary troops. He had trouble enough fighting the U.S. regulars.

Then, when the doughboys did arrive, the local FFI served as informants and guides. After 4 years of spying, these men knew everything there was to know about the enemy. And they knew the terrain.

But their principal job, the one for which they had been trained, remained the harassing of the enemy behind his lines. Maquis squads blocked roads and fired on German vehicles using the highways. Like Indians they swept down from the hills to blow up gasoline and supply depots, capture weapons, murder sentries in the night.

The French people in the mass fought the enemy, too. Excepting the few Vichyites and Darand's detested collaborationist militia, the Germans got neither gratuitous nor commandeered help from the inhabitants. Four years of ingrown loathing blossomed forth in a single moment, and the naturally emotional French hated the enemy with a deadly, vicious hatred.

Americans, who had never felt the impact of the Nazi heel of occupation, could hardly understand the intensity of feeling against the "Boche." It burned deep in the eyes of the kindest looking old ladies. But then, Americans had never been jerked from bed in the middle of the night to be shipped as slave labor to Germany, or to be shot as hostages, or perhaps shot for the hell of it. They hadn't found, as the Grenable FFI found, two box-cars on a siding crammed with the bodies of French children, mummified attestations to the Nazi Kultur: the Germans had simply poured quicklime over the huddled children and, when the lime had flowed over the tallest tousled head, they had turned off the tap and gone away.

Each person in each town through which the 179th passed nurtured his hatred for some such definite, personal, real reason.

But besides hatred, the French gave vent to another irrepressible emotion—joy in being free! They extended a fabulous welcome to the victorious Americans. In every village the inhabitants lined the streets to cheer, weep, clap and overwhelm the tramping troops with fruit and flowers, wine and kisses. At every window snapped the Tricolor, on every balcony the people crowded to shout encouragement to the columns of khaki below. And the echo of these cheers floated out of town after the marching men.

Accustomed to the indifference of the Italians, the Americans were themselves inspired by this contagious enthusiasm. Cheerfully they even braved the dangers of conquering a town, the danger of injury from thrown tomatoes, grapes—and in a peep doing 30 MPH—very hard apples and canteloupes! In self-defense, the troops began to halt, to accept manually the proferred wine bottles and fruit rather than risk broken noses. Not that they didn't have to stop constantly anyway. For all along the road little knots of Frenchmen gathered, blocking the highway to shake hands and give voice to their thanks. Liberating place after place, the 179th felt the full impact of a nation's suddenly released hysteria.

So down the flag-bedecked roads the 179th swept on to Rians, leaving behind the 3rd Battalion to tackle some 100 Heinies "sacked up" around Varages. Reaching the northern outskirts of Rians at 1745 August 20, the Regiment started to bivouac. But at 2100 the Division Commander ordered the 179th to jump off again, cross the Durance River via High-

way 96 at once, and occupy the ridges south of Manosque.

But not even orders, sped by radio and messenger to bridge the increasing distances, could keep pace with the advance. Before this last command could be executed the 179th was ordered by VOCG to press on to the junction of Highways 85 and 96, and prepare to keep going. The Americans were getting way out to the end of the limb, but French regulars were by now coming ashore to consolidate the beachhead behind them.[1]

The Combat Team raced up the road. The 3rd Battalion, released from its mission, followed the rest of the 179th to the assembly area just south of the road junction. Here the troops bedded down, however manning precautionary road blocks.[2]

There were plenty of Germans around, but they were, to say the least, confused. While several enemy forces were observed seeking to escape to Italy across the eastern French frontier, other German units were just as determinedly trying to flee by cutting across southeastern France in the opposite direction. Other groups didn't bother about escape routes. They headed for Switzerland. Or sat waiting for the Americans to capture them, having no better ideas.

At 2030 August 22 the 179th RCT was shooed on to Aspres. No longer having tanks or TDs attached, alone the Regiment began to scamper helter-skelter up the highway, getting to the next stop as best it could. There wasn't time to take precautionary defense measures against possible resistance. Fortunately, the only Germans encountered eagerly surrendered. They scared the daylights out of many doughboys by suddenly swarming out from hiding places along the roads, where they had waited in fear of their lives. For the Germans didn't trust the vengeful FFI, all around them in the hills, to take them prisoner and keep them above ground.

At Aspres the 2nd Battalion was dropped off to establish road blocks and guard the vital road net in that town. The rest of the 179th was told to keep going. It was doing fine.

The 36th Division had swung west to push the remnants of the still organized 19th German Army on its way out of southern France. TF Butler,[3] the reconnaissance command which led the Allied drive north, had also turned west at Aspres. Thus, completely on its own, the 179th (less one battalion) took off to the north, into unknown terrain against unknown enemy forces, a spearhead without a shaft.

The RCT Command Group was the advance patrol, for it alone had its own transportation. Along an incomparably

New York Daily News, Monday Sept. 11, 1944. Box, Page 3

179TH INFANTRY DID IT AGAIN!

Rome, Sept. 10 (AP).—It was the 179th Regimental Combat Team of the 45th Division—an Oklahoma National Guard unit—that made the spectacular eight-day thrust of more than 125 miles north to Grenoble after the landings in southern France, the Allied command disclosed today.

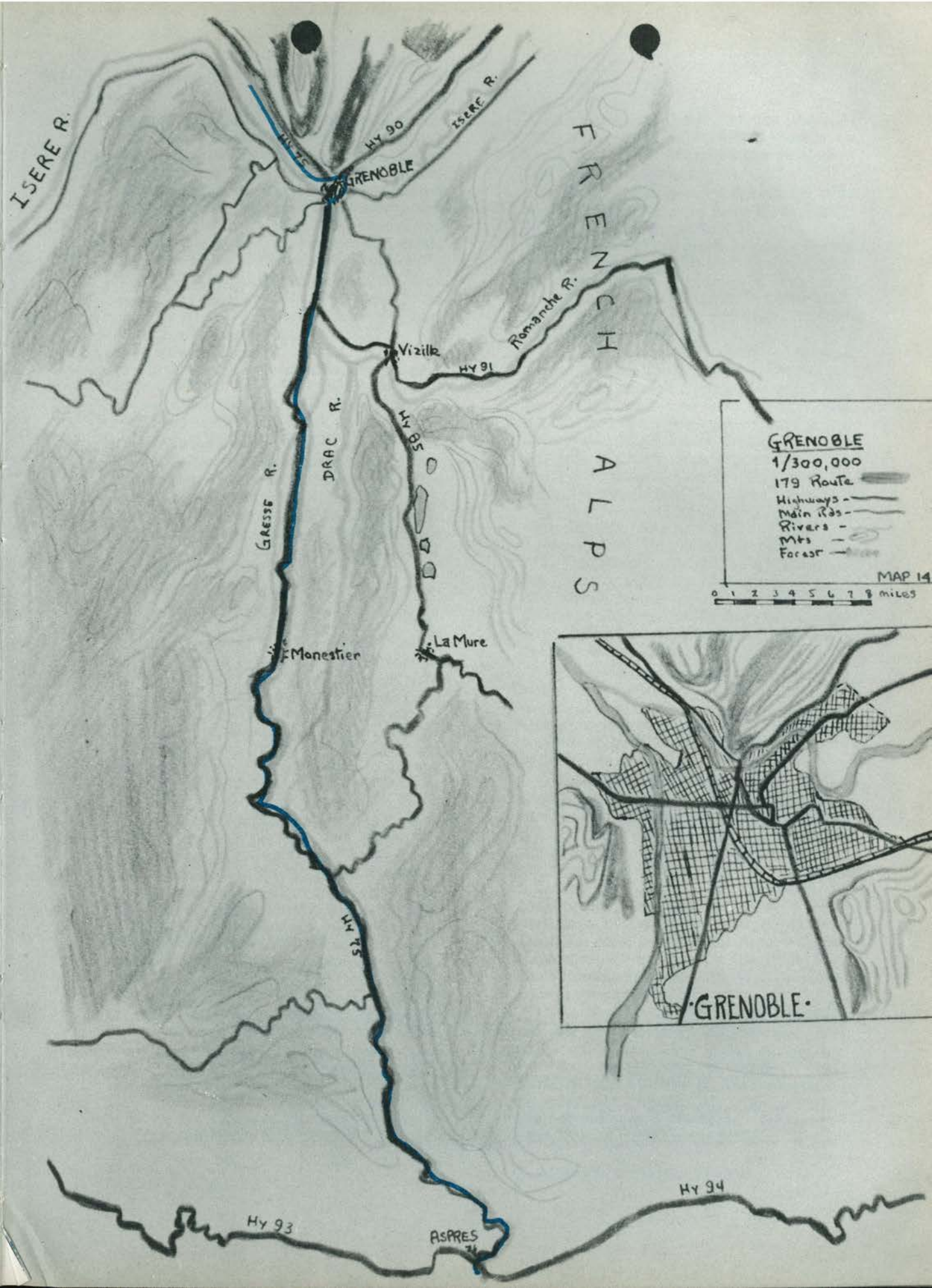
The regiment first went into action in the Sicilian landings, capturing Vittoria. It landed on the beaches at Salerno in Italy a year ago. Later it captured Venafro after forcing a crossing of the Volturno, and spent 66 consecutive days in combat on the Italian Winter Line.

After a rest, it was sent to the Anzio beachhead and participated in the big shove into Rome.

1—By using these French divisions along the beachhead base toward Nice on the right and Toulon and Marseille on the left, instead of their relieving the Americans, a persistent report that U.S. units would be pulled out once the beachhead was secure was thereby scotched. Even if that plan had been contemplated, 7th Army couldn't pass up the opportunity so gratuitously thrown in its lap by the lack of resistance.

2—Road blocks were set up to prevent the enemy using the roads as attack approaches. Dependent on the situation they took various forms: generally they were either physical blocks across the road or, to save the trouble of removing them when pushing on, simply a defensive fighting force. An AT gun, TD or tank was placed to command a stretch of straight road with direct fire. Supporting infantry, usually in platoon strength, was deployed on the flanks to protect the guns from infiltrating enemy infantry.

3—Task Force under Gen. Butler. TF denotes any combat group on an independent mission. In this case, Gen. Butler's force was about regimental strength, consisted of motorized reconnaissance troops and strong armored units.


ISERE R.
HY 90
ISERE R.
GRENOBLE
FRENCH ALPS
Romanche R.
Vizille
HY 91
HY 85
DRAC R.
GRESSE R.
Monestier
La Mure
HY 93
HY 94
ASPRES
GRENOBLE
1/300,000
179 Route
Highways
Main Rds
Rivers
Mts
Forest
MAP 14
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 miles
·GRENOBLE·

beautiful scenic route that skirted Switzerland and fringed the French Alps, winding past doll-like towns and trim Swiss-style chalets, sweeping through breath-taking picture postcards of green rolling valleys and snowcapped mountain peaks, the 179th sped on through the evening and through the night, a distance of 125 miles, to the suburbs of the city of Grenoble.

At 0300 August 23 the C.P. was opened at the edge of town. During the day the 1st and 3rd Battalion troops poured into this rendezvous area. When all units had reported in, the C.O. moved into the southwestern section of the city, setting up his headquarters in the Hotel Suisse et de Bordeaux. 36 hours ago it had been a German billet.

With the occupation of violently anti-fascist Grenoble, the largest city yet taken in southern France fell to the Allies. The fantastically swift drive inland had carried the 179th, far in the fore, 225 miles in 8 days, 28 miles a day—further than the combined Allied armies had progressed in 9 months in Italy!

Despite the distance to dumps rearwards which threatened to break down the flow of war materials to the RCT, somehow supplies kept up. Capt. Harlos V. Hatter, 179th S-4, worked miracles licking the supply problems with his few trucks. His drivers made the tremendous runs to the beaches and back with rations, gas and ammo, then hauled troops back and forth countless times without rest, over miles of unprotected highway. They in particular thanked God for the FFI.

And in Grenoble, curious doughboys watched the FFI roaming the streets on their sinister missions. In a building beside the 179th C.P. the FFI found 10 collaborators, and dragged the traitors from their hideout. Some they killed with cold dispassion by blowing out their brains on the sidewalk, while the Americans looked on. The rest they hauled off for trial. Several exchanges of fire took place down the street. But the French were left to settle their own domestic problems. The Americans merely jostled each other for a ringside seat at this private war. "Ain't this the God-damnedest thing?" said one GI onlooker, swigging a stein of beer while one Frenchman executed another on the pavement in front of him.

The Regiment's battalions set up road blocks east and south of the city. At 2230 August 23 1st Battalion guards on road block No. 2 observed gun flashes in the vicinity of Domene.

The FFI were fighting the enemy, who was reported along the Isere River Valley in considerable force. At 2315 German fire was received at the block itself. Company I was alerted to go to Red's assistance if necessary. German infantry attempted to force the Company B block. But after a hot fire fight the attackers withdrew. By 0300 quiet was again restored.

With daylight investigation showed that a sizeable force had been employed in the night assault. Several Germans had been killed, an enemy scout car had been K.O.'d, and much equipment was found abandoned. Lt. Clarence E. Coggins, Company A, 179th Inf, was reported missing.

Partisans informed the C.O. that the Germans had pulled back because they had been thoroughly surprised at encountering Americans. They had believed the city was held merely by a few FFI. The enemy's confusion on discovering his error led to his next move: in twos and threes, mostly in civilian guise, the Germans began infiltrating across the river into the suburbs that afternoon, seeking enlightenment.

Those enemy spies never returned to report their findings. The FFI, under command of the Prefect of the Province of Grenoble, isolated some 50 Germans in a section of city blocks and methodically wiped them out.

That night Lt. Coggins* reappeared at the 3rd Battalion C.P., bringing with him a German lieutenant who stated that he had some troops who wanted to surrender. Negotiations were commenced at once, and the next day the PW enclosure admitted his "group"—946 Germans! As the French were also delivering a commendable proportion of their captives to the 179th MPs, by nightfall August 25 the number of PWs taken by the 179th RCT since landing in France 10 days previously had swelled to 1726!

For two more days the Regiment paused at Grenoble, holding the point while other American forces moved up. But as consolidation of such a vast territory was impossible, the uncertainty of what lay behind *as well as* what lay ahead gave the men the empty sensation of being suspended in a vac-

*—*Killed in action in France.*

uum. Indeed, the 179th had moved so rapidly that, long since off the detailed operations maps usually used, S-2 was barely able to supply the command with 1/200,000 scale road maps, which showed only the principal highways and nothing whatever of the terrain features!

Thus constant reconnaissance was essential. Combat patrols shot northeast to Albertville, south to Romans, north beyond Chambery. The roads, at the moment, were clear. Patrols also scouted their way toward Lyon—in which direction lay the coming fight. For Lyon, held by strong enemy forces, was the link between southern France and the escape route through Bourg to Belfort and Germany. The enemy was determined to salvage something of his southern army from the eager Allies' clutches.

And while the enemy bolted in southern France, while Toulon, then Marseille, were liberated, elsewhere too the blows fell left and right. Coming to meet the 179th's bold thrust north and to narrow appreciably the Germans' escape gap came Patton's 3rd (U.S.) Army, its armored columns rumbling past liberated Paris toward Reims. And furthermore, whole nations were "getting out from under": Turkey finally dared thumb her nose at the Nazis, Finland and Bulgaria sought peace terms, Rumania quit the Axis and turned her armies against Hitler. And Russia's titanic armies rolled toward East Prussia in the north, and through Bulgaria in the south to link up with Marshal Tito's Yugoslav Army of Liberation.

So much success, piled on top of their own long awaited freedom, was too much for the people of Grenoble. They lavished presents and food they could ill afford from their scanty rations on the "conquering heroes". In the same breath they hounded captured specimens of their former torturers through the streets. They hunted down Vichyites. And here, as elsewhere, they seized women who had willingly consorted with the enemy, shaved off their hair, and paraded them through the city to be recognized, remembered, and forever after shunned.

Then, swift as chameleons, they turned back to celebrating their liberation. And while the hated Germans were driven back and back, all around the 179th, all through France, was heard the deafening roar of the "Marseillaise" and 40 million Frenchmen laughing and crying for joy . . .

Chapter 21. The Battle of Meximieux

On August 26 Col. Meyer was advised that the 1st Bn, 180th Inf, would assume responsibility for the 179th road blocks in Grenoble, thus releasing the Combat Team to continue northwest. So, preceded by a reinforced combat patrol from Companies A and L, on August 27 the 1st Battalion moved to Voiron and the 3rd Battalion to Bourgoin.

The 2nd Battalion, making the first tactical rail move ever made by the RCT, moved north to rejoin the Regiment. Railroad operation in France was being hurried behind the front to ease the burden on motor transports, still having to travel all the way to the landing beaches to obtain supplies!

August 28 was a quiet day for the 179th. The Germans, however, strengthened the defensive walls along their escape route. They pushed out with 70 tanks towards the 45th troops hounding their flank. The FFI retaliated by raiding a German airdrome southeast of Lyon, destroying all the planes on the field and seizing the enemy's dwindling gasoline supply.

That night the remainder of the RCT joined the 3rd Battalion at Bourgoin, from whence Company E, with FFI support, pushed on to Pont de Cheruy and threw out defenses around the bridge there. With the span secured, at dawn on the 30th the 2nd Battalion was able to cross the Rhone River unopposed. Blue prepared to follow, but when PWs reported that the Germans were probing to the east, the 3rd was left behind to keep an eye on the enemy's movements. Thereupon the 1st Battalion leapfrogged the 3rd and crossed the Rhone, holding up at Loyettes 3 miles south of the Regimental C.P.

The 179th, paralleling the German escape channel northwards, moved as the enemy moved, for eventually he would have to cut east. It was spread out but alert to repel any enemy feelers jabbing east, and served both as Corps left flank and 7th Army spearhead. Meanwhile, artillery and aircraft were blasting the long enemy convoys of motor and horse-drawn vehicles cramming the German-held highways, and the 3rd and 36th Divisions were nipping the Germans in the rear.

At 1830 Gen. Church, who had replaced Gen. Pasquale as ACG, 45th Div, advised Col. Meyer that the 179th would proceed to Meximieux. Near here large armored and infantry forces protected the German right flank, forces which already held Dagneux, Montluel and Faranas.

Company F established a road block midway between Dagneux and Meximieux. At 1315 August 31 it was under sharp attack by enemy armor rolling up from the west. The company committed every man. 100 FFI went to aid "F". But the enemy tanks were too powerful to hold off. The Company was overrun, scattered. Only 33 men returned from that mission, although subsequently 30 more F Company doughboys returned from

captivity (bringing with them as PWs their former guards.)

While the Germans pushed on toward Meximieux that night, the C.O. issued his orders: the 1st was to move into Meximieux on relief in its present positions at the Ain River bridge by the 3rd Battalion. The 2nd Battalion, relieved in Meximieux by the 1st, would proceed to Chalamont. But as Company F was already engaged and couldn't be relieved, it was attached to Pagan Red. "B" was attached to the 2nd to proceed with that battalion to Chalamont.

During the night these battalion reliefs were executed under strong covering forces, especially at the Rhone and Ain River bridgeheads. Meanwhile the enemy threw in more and more troops and armor. By daylight Sept. 1, with the Company F road block already wiped out, enemy tanks, motorized infantry and SPs rolled on towards the 179th positions unopposed.

At 0925 Lt. Col. Murphy set up the 179th C.P. in Meximieux and prepared to defend that vital center of road intersections, while Col. Meyer proceeded with the 2nd Battalion to Chalmont (and a Corps memorandum reached the RCT declaring all French towns off limits!).

The Germans developed a large scale offensive along their entire flank to divert the Americans and give their main force time to retreat further out of reach. They attacked partisans holding Perouges. And they hit Company C, defending the Ain River bridge south of Meximieux, with tanks and infantry. The 3rd Battalion took over the fight from "C" at 1215, and all day battled savagely to stave off the enemy tanks, which had brought up 2 rifle companies for support. The battalion, fanned out on both sides of the Ain west of the bridgehead, held firm, but it had to commit all its troops to do so. Then when, late in the day, Company L did try to push on to the north, it found the enemy astride the road.

Thus at Meximieux, the defense of the town fell to Company A (the only rifle company), Company D, 1st Bn Hqs Co, Regtl Hqs Co and C.P. personnel, with supporting fire from the 160th F.A. Bn, and a 155 mm. howitzer battery. And some Tank Destroyers. In all, a force of less than a battalion. It faced 1000 German infantrymen, 30 medium and large tanks, SPs and other armored vehicles, all of them frontline units of the 11th Panzer Division. Their mission: to wipe out resistance at Meximieux and continue east to cover the German flank.

With OPs reporting the enemy converging on the town from the northeast and southwest, Lt. Col. Murphy radioed the 2nd Battalion to return to Meximieux. So White, already mopping up resistance in Chalamont, turned about face and began to march back.

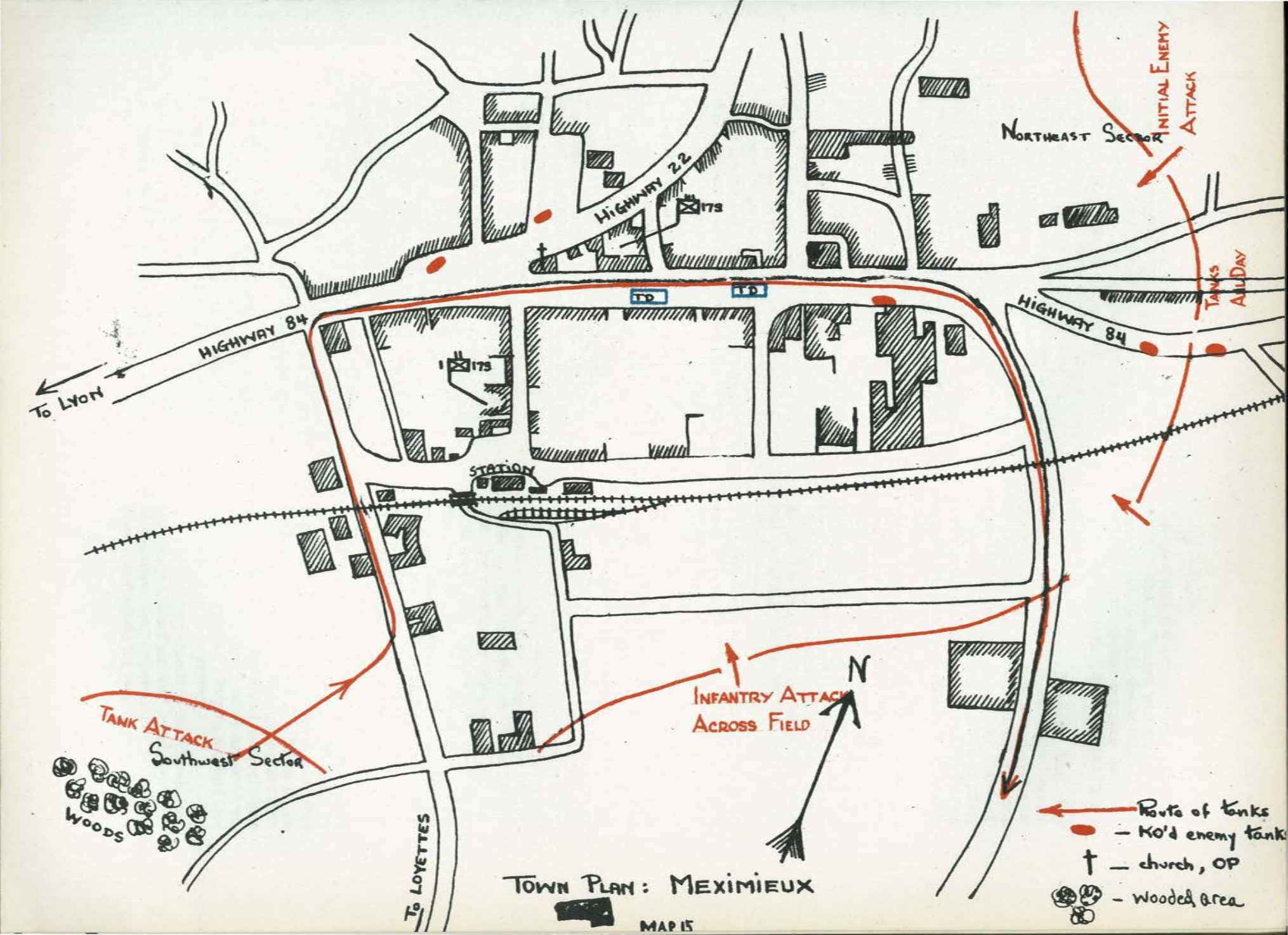
At the same time the Ex-O requested TD and AT support from the 157th RCT on the northeast, to assist in combatting German armor already massing outside town. Speedy compliance with this request was impossible, however, for the enemy had long since demolished the one bridge leading east from town.

And as the enemy was even then moving to cut the Loyettes-Meximieux highway to the south, the defenders were isolated and surrounded.

At 0900 the enemy struck. An Able Company platoon with Dog Company mortar and machine gun support fought off an infantry force charging in from the northeast. Simultaneously the Germans assaulted a similar defensive force on the south. On the west cooks and drivers made up the town's defense troops.

By 1100 the small arms fire subsided. The Germans had scattered. Then came tanks, moving up to within 1000 yards of the 179th's all-round defenses. "D's" mortars hounded the tanks, sheltered in the woods, and actually disabled one by direct hits on the turret and treads, a unique achievement for mortars. But other tanks continued to move in, slowly. Suddenly a fresh German infantry attack swept in to seize the town's railway station. Across the open field of fire they came, out of the patch of woods, and as they ran, 1st Bn Hqs personnel holding the station mowed them down with a blistering small arms fire. Enemy tanks ventured still closer and began pounding the station in an effort to turn the tide. A direct hit on the waiting room luckily caused no casualties. The 179th doughboys kept up their effective fire, and the remaining Germans withdrew.

At noon six tanks broke from the cover of the woods southwest of Meximieux and raced up the road in column, crossed the tracks and roared down into Meximieux's main street, firing machine



Town Plan: Meximieux

MAP 15

guns and cannon as they came. Enemy riflemen riding the tanks fired into the houses as they swept by. But as the Mark VIs hit the center of town, 2 U. S. TDs, neatly placed and waiting, opened up. With deadly accuracy the 3-inch guns smashed the first three tanks as they appeared; one caught fire and sacheted into a building which thereupon also began to burn, the second careened off the road and crashed into a wall, and the third stopped dead. The 179th's snipers cut loose from every house on the street, and German riflemen fell off the backs of the tanks like flies.

Two of the remaining enemy tanks, swishing by before the crews could reload, missed colliding with the TDs by inches. One then halted 50 yards from "A's" 3rd platoon. A bazooka hit put the tank's gun out of action. The other tank began firing through town at random, carefully avoiding the TDs waiting for it to show itself. Unable to stop the tank any other way, Lt. Col. Murphy ordered his artillery to fire HE at it, despite the proximity of his own troops. Five direct hits were scored—true marksmanship!—and the enemy infantry riding the battered tank were all killed or wounded. The sixth tank, seeing the fate of its comrades, promptly took off from town.

House to house fighting raged on, and at 1430 eight more enemy tanks approached down the Lyon highway. FOs directed a furious artillery barrage on them, and damaged or destroyed three of the German monsters.

But the rest came on nevertheless, with infantry close behind, and another fierce fire fight broke out. It raged up and down the streets, in and out of houses. A bazooka hit stopped one tank 150 yards from the 179th C.P. The tank ceased firing and Capt. Norman E. Putnam hit the window sill, the ledge and a pane of glass before finally picking off a Jerry in the tank. Other C.P. personnel picked off more of the tank crew. The C.P. itself sensibly withdrew downstairs into the cellar, but eventually the tank took off, lack of AT weapons prohibiting the defenders from finishing it off.

At 1615 B and G Companies moved south to join the 1st Battalion forces. However by then, despite two tanks still firing in the outskirts, the intense fighting in town had abated. The 2nd Bn reached the heights northeast of Meximieux, thus protecting that flank. But at 1835 enemy riflemen again infiltrated into town, this time to within 100 yards of the 1st Bn C.P. By 2030 another melee was being fought all over the village in the gathering dusk. Normally non-combat soldiers were actually earning their Combat Infantryman Badges!

By dark the Germans had had enough. Leaving behind their burning tanks and smashed vehicles, they began to withdraw from all sectors. On the north sporadic rifle fire punctuated the darkness and all night long mortars, artillery and tank fire thudded intermittently. But the enemy was now dueling from a safe distance.

The Regiment rushed to establish communications between its various units. During the day wires had been "in" only sporadically. Now telephone contact was made with the RCT's artillery southwest of town, and forward observers began spotting furious barrages at enemy tanks still weaving about on the outskirts of Meximieux.

With the coming of morning, the enemy withdrew to the west, tanks, infantry, artillery and all. At 0935 Lt. Col. Murphy advised Division that Meximieux was secured.

The savage battle had lasted just 24 hours.

The most remarkable feature of the action was that, despite the enormous expenditure of ammunition and the enemy's ceaseless small arms and heavy shell fire, the 1st Battalion had suffered just 11 casualties! This was partly attributable to the superb job done by the TDs. By effectively bottling up the German tanks and thus denying them direct fire on likely targets, they forced the enemy gunners to shoot indirect fire; miraculously, few shells had hit rooms or sheds housing doughboys. Indeed, because of the 179th's small force, the men had of necessity been spread out widely.

In contrast, the Germans suffered 85 known dead and a total of 350 killed or wounded. 41 WPs had been taken. And although the 179th had no tanks of its own to battle the enemy's armor, the Germans lost 6 tanks destroyed, several more damaged, 3 SPs and 7 other armored vehicles smashed, and 4 81 mm. mortars and 4 machine guns captured.

This debris littering the street, and the charred, shell-marked buildings, gave Meximieux the appearance of having been a battlefield for two mighty armored

forces locked in a death struggle. Certainly it seemed impossible that it was all a panzer division's losses inflicted by a handful of riflemen and machine gunners, a couple of TDs, some artillery, and clerks, cooks, drivers and orderlies.

Chapter 22. Whittling Down the Krauts

Rejoining his command, Col. Meyer reorganized his companies and returned detached units to their respective commands. And at 1900 the 179th RCT, less the 1st Battalion and its light artillery battalion remaining to guard the Meximieux road net, pushed north again.

The morning of September 2 Blue's riflemen advanced through Bohas to Meillonnes and Lionniere, where contact was made with the 180th Inf attacking Bourg along Highways 79 and 246. The 800 Germans defending Bourg were reportedly already disconcerted by FFI within the city and by desertions of Russians and Poles impressed into the Wehrmacht.

The 179th, also ordered to assist the 117th Rcn Trp having a stiff fight at Montrevel, sent the 2nd Battalion on this mission. After helping to clean out that enemy pocket the 2nd's troops remained with the reconnaissance unit for a week, operating in motorized armored patrol groups to provide flank security for 6th Corps.

Widely scattered, the Regiment now had but one battalion at its disposal until the 1st Battalion, finally relieved at Meximieux, rejoined the 179th at Montmerle. The whole Division, however, was fanned out in a like manner. Stabbing at the German flank, it nibbled at the retreating army and repelled every eastward penetration which the enemy, growing desperate as his forces dwindled each day, attempted.

While the 180th entered Bourg from the north and the 157th charged in from the south, thus smashing another link in the enemy's escape channel northwards, the 179th was speeding to cut Highways 83 and 396 and contain the Germans if they tried to flee north from Bourg. But even while the RCT was moving Division superseded this command with others: in the end the 1st and 3rd Battalions set up road blocks on Highway 83 and stayed packed and loaded, ready to roll northeast again at a moment's notice.

Resistance in Bourg collapsed quickly, so the 179th hit the road. Mile upon mile it dashed up the highway, to within 2 kilometers of Lons-le-Saunier. Finding no opposition in that environs, the Regiment kept on, via the main highways, through plush green rolling hillsides and attractive little French villages.

Nights grew colder as the mountain air dropped in from the towering Alps; the dew was heavy. So C.P. halts each sunset meant hauling out small wall tents, operations tents and pup-tents (headquarters life was considerably more refined than the riflemen's). When the kitchen truck was along, emergency rations could be washed down with hot coffee. MPs and guards were posted, C.P. signs tacked up, sometimes wire was laid to nearby RCT units. Gas arrived at the motor pool and vehicles refueled while occasional guns banged away up ahead. Water points were established; lights were rigged in operations tents. In an hour or less, in some tree studded area somewhere in France, the camouflage-disciplined C.P. was bedded down for the

night. In twenty minutes it could pack up and be rolling again, and let the countryside revert to peace.

En route to Vercel Col. Meyer was warned that enemy forces occupied the 179th's intended assembly area in the Champ de Tir du Valdahon. So after rolling through Pontarlier, almost at the Swiss border, the C.O. held his forces at St. Gorgon. Patrols crept up to Vercel. But no sign of the Germans was discovered. The troops went on into Vercel as planned.

This latest sweep led the Combat Team off the enemy retreat route. But like a forest track that peters out into wilderness, the krauts had been so thoroughly mauled by infantry on the flanks, FFI in their midst and artillery and aircraft from long range that only ragged remnants of the 19th German Army were left, and they had no place to go. In three weeks the 45th had taken 4781 PWs, the siftings of 8 divisions, 12 Luftwaffe units and 20 miscellaneous battalions!

So the Division swung to the east, to attack toward the vital Belfort Gap, the first of the enemy's fortified defense belts guarding the approaches to Germany itself.

On VOCG September 6, the 3rd Battalion jumped off to seize Baume-les-Dames. The troops raced through Orsans, but south of Baume they ran into the 3rd (Fr.) Division, which had begun fighting for Baume but was now withdrawing for lack of armor to combat six enemy tanks in the town.

The Regiment paused, awaiting clarification of its boundaries. Division reported that the 180th was taking over from the French in the morning, hence the 179th should continue as planned. So the 1st Battalion, followed by the 3rd, pushed along the south bank of the Doubs River, reconnoitered fords, and prepared to cross and attack to the northeast.

Despite enemy small arms fire spitting at the troops from across the river, the 179th consolidated its positions on the south bank. Reconnaissance during the night verified French intelligence that both the Clerval and Baume-les-Dames bridges had been dynamited. On September 7, unable to locate fords or practical crossings, it began bridging the Doubs by infiltration.

The scarcity of small boats and the Germans' fire hindered the crossing. In the 1st Battalion sector 1st Lt. Hubbard G. Clapper was the first man over, swimming the river to seize a rowboat and then paddle it back to carry across the initial assault party. By 1400 the 1st had several small combat groups over, as did the 3rd Battalion on the right at Clerval, and both were already driving inland.

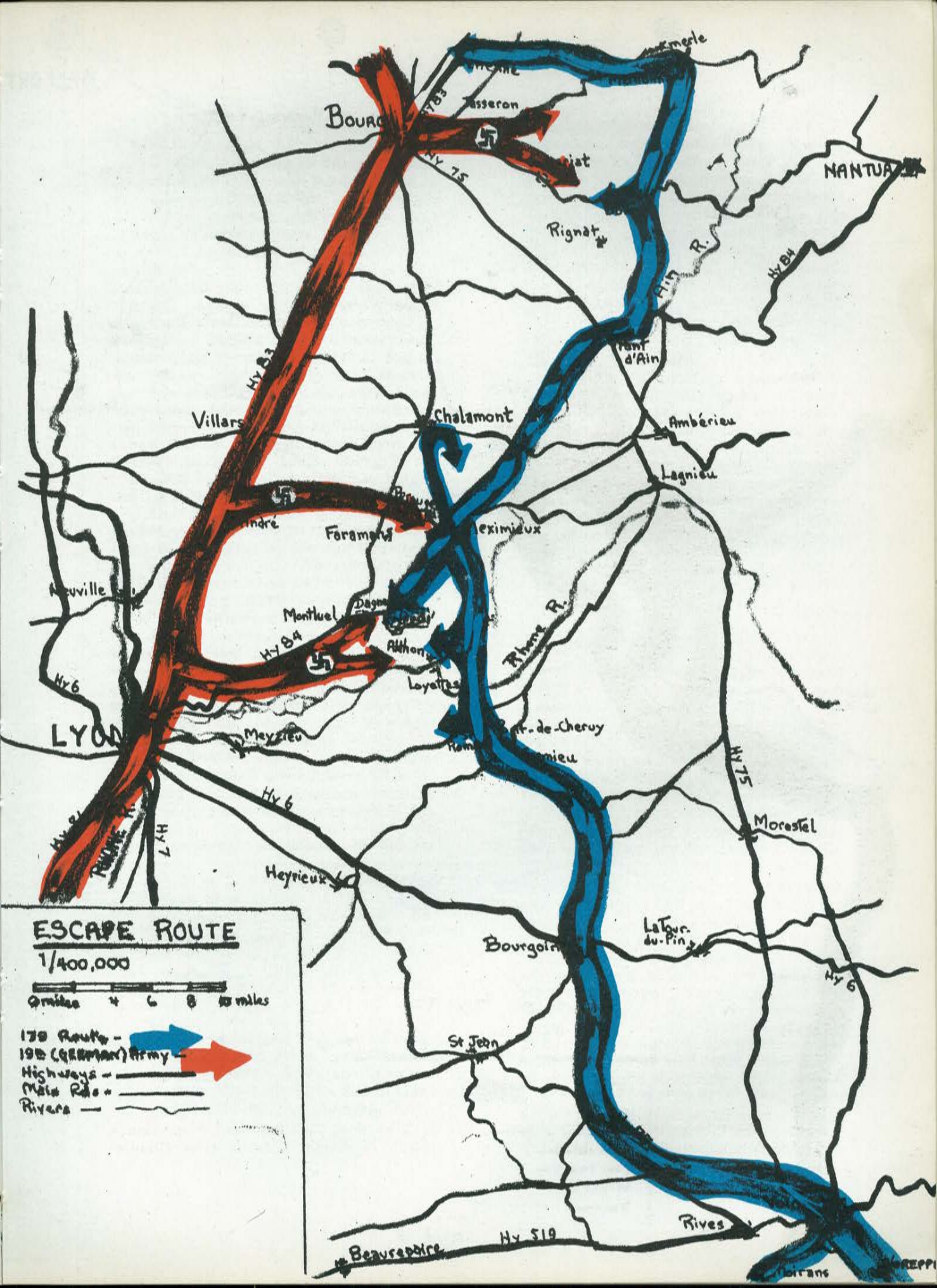
Suddenly, in the 3rd's sector artillery and mortar shells began bursting at the rate of one every 45 seconds. Six casualties in Company M resulted from the first rounds. But Cpl. Andrew T. Olson, a heavy machine gun platoon aid man, went from wounded comrade to wounded comrade, dressing wounds and ignoring the murderous barrage. He was hit in the right arm, but stuck to his job, not even stopping to dress his own wound. He saw to the evacuation of 4 casualties, gave aid to a machine gunner almost dead of suffocation from a chest wound, applied a tourniquet to the thigh wound of a rifleman who would otherwise have bled to death within minutes. Nor was it necessary to change any of his expert dressings at the Battalion aid station.

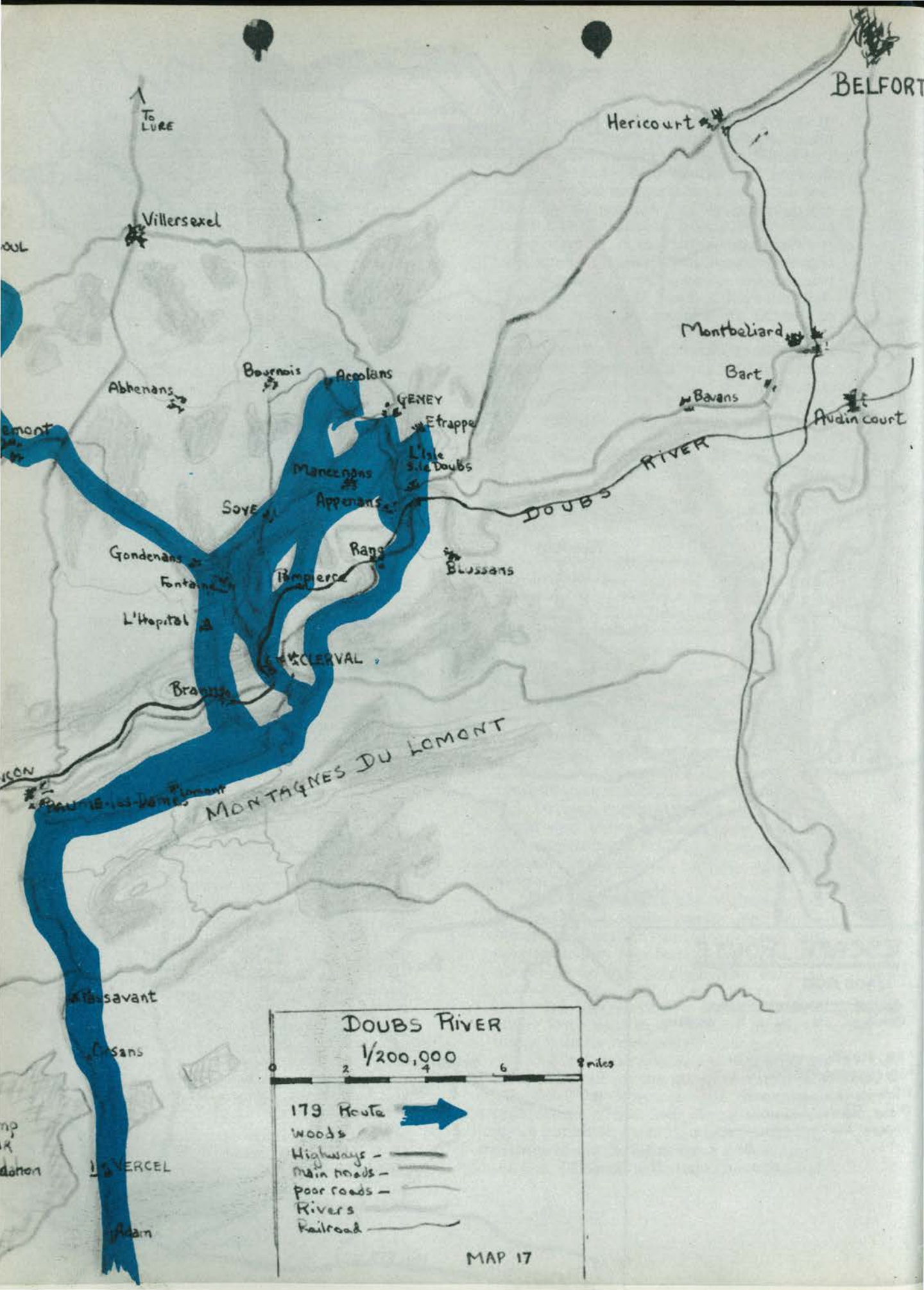
And when shellfire kept felling other doughboys, Cpl. Olson again went out into the area under fire—and was killed by a direct artillery hit.

On order of Gen. Butler (famous as TF Butler and now ACG, 45th Div), supporting flak wagons and field artillery fired an intense concentration across the Doubs in support of the RCT's amphibious operations. With dusk the 1st Battalion was crossing in strength, developing and consolidating the bridgehead. By 2355 Lt. Col. Davison radioed that his entire command was across and was only awaiting the completion of bridges to transport his organic transportation before attacking deeper inland.

But the engineers had no bridge materials, hence were constructing rafts, barges and ferries, and improvised ladders to enable foot troops and (with the aid of block and tackle) even vehicles to cross on the partly intact spans of the damaged Clerval bridge. By 0200 on the 8th a ferry was in operation. By dawn the battalions were able to push on.

The 3rd Battalion seized the heights above Clerval on the east bank; the 1st occupied the town and protected the bridgehead. The 2nd Battalion, once again returning to 179th control, was left to drive along the south bank of the Doubs toward L'Isle-sur-le-Doubs. The Combat


ESCAPE ROUTE
1/400,000
0 miles 4 6 8 10 miles
17th Route
19th (German) Army
Highways
Main Roads
Rivers
Bourg
Villars
Chalamont
Ambérieu
Lagnieu
Rignat
NANTUA
Hy 83
Hy 84
Hy 75
Hy 6
Hy 7
Hy 519
Ain R.
Rhone R.
Foramans
Monthuel
Althon
Loyettes
LYON
Meyzieu
Heyrieux
Bourgoin
La Tour du Pin
Morestel
St John
Rives
Beaurepaire


BELFORT
To LURE
Hericourt
Villersexel
Montbeliard
Bart
Bavans
Audincourt
Bournois
Accolans
Abbenans
GENEY
Etrappe
L'Isle s.le Doubs
Mancenans
Appenans
Soye
DOUBS RIVER
Rang
Blussans
Gondenans
Fontaine
Pompierre
L'Hopital
CLERVAL
MONTAGNES DU LOMONT
Lomont
Clerval
Adam
DOUBS RIVER
1/200,000
0
2
4
6
8 miles
179 Route
Woods
Highways
Main roads
Poor roads
Rivers
Railroad
MAP 17

Team thus retained control of both river banks.

Company A, 191st Tk Bn, was attached to the 179th. For with the drive closing in on Belfort through the lower Vosges Mountains, resistance became more than the rear guard action of a retreating army. The RCT was hitting an MLR of the Wehrmacht.

Still all three battalions advanced: the 3rd, flushing and dispersing enemy tanks north of Clerval with artillery fire, fanned out behind advance patrols and plunged on toward Mancenans; the 1st reached the approaches to Soye; the 2nd attacked into Clerval on the south bank, recaptured four U.S. peeps abandoned there by the Germans, and drove on to Rang. As the 157th RCT took over the Clerval-Gondenans sector behind the 179th, the 3rd Battalion shifted to behind the 1st Battalion facing Soye.

And on September 9 the Germans savagely counter-attacked at Soye. Enemy infantry, supported by SPs and five tanks, drove back Company A's outposts. But RCT artillery rocked back the enemy forces, and the 1st Battalion attacked into Soye. All afternoon the opposing riflemen battled in a vicious, see-saw house to house slaughter. American artillery converged on the enemy armor, which pulled out. And the 1st's infantry smashed through town. At 1510 the village was secured with one company, another held the high ground overlooking Soye.

The Battalion, with but nominal losses itself, had wrecked 9 vehicles and 1 tank, killed 20 Germans and wounded countless more. The enemy withdrew towards Appenans.

At daybreak September 10 the 1st Battalion captured Mancenans, but at the approaches to Appenans its advance bogged down in the face of fierce machine gun fire. The 3rd Battalion too, made little progress against determined resistance, despite its commitment of all three rifle companies. And besides dogged opposition, the enemy was hindering the 179th advance with obstacles: extensive mine fields; road blocks of huge trees felled across the roads for as much as 600 yard stretches, the branches booby trapped; and with the use of flame throwers and rockets against the Americans.

Nevertheless, Red pressed on in its drive to Appenans. Charging into town, the troops couldn't get the stubborn Heinies to come out of the buildings, or give up. The RCT command had to send up tanks to fire point blank at the houses. Even then those Germans who weren't blown to bits had to be wiped out by the infantrymen, rushing into cellars hurling grenades and pouring out a spraying fire with tommy guns and rifles.

Securing the village, the 1st pushed on, but stopped to reform on running into heavy fire from enemy entrenchments outside Geney. Combat patrols ventured out to estimate the German strength. They took a PW, who warned of an imminent enemy counter-attack on Soye. But it was a false alarm. The Germans were busy effecting local withdrawals and maintaining a defense as they did so.

To the southwest the 2nd Battalion had patrols in L'Isle, but waited for other 179th units to close in on the north bank of the river before occupying the town. Its patrols also kept contact with the 1st Battalion by fording the Doubs at Rang,

---

ESTIMATING U. S. CAPABILITIES

(As Others See Us)

The Japs: "The Americans do not exploit their battle successes promptly. After winning a battle they are likely to remain static for a considerable time . . . . The U. S. infantry is not aggressive and does not attack with anything like enthusiasm unless it is capable of maintaining terrific fire power . . . ."

—War Dept. Intelligence Bulletin, Nov. 1944, Vol. 3, No. 3

The Germans: "Americans do not follow their successes up. The Russians over-ran and sealed us in our pillboxes, then returned and wiped them out later. Americans must be afraid of losing men; they always stop when they come to an obstacle and do not press on until it has been destroyed. But their artillery—is terrifying."

—Interrogated Prisoner of War, 179th Inf PW Cage.

---

and with the Algerian Regt, 3rd (Fr.) Div, on the right flank.

The slackening pace was only partly attributable to mud, rain, treacherous dank woods full of Heinies, and stiffening resistance, now being provided in the Regimental sector by the 159th Reserve Division and the 63rd, 71st and 91st Regts of an Air Corps Division.[1] The Regiment was only committed to take limited objectives, for it was the pivot on which the whole Allied line was swinging, to face east. North of the 179th was the 157th at Bournois; the 180th was pushing northeast to occupy a sector above the 157th. As the axis turned, the 3rd and 36th Divisions also moved north, thus establishing a solid line, with depth and flank security, for the first time since 7th Army had landed in France.

Not that the Combat Team relaxed its pressure. Minor advances were registered by the 3rd Battalion on September 12 and 13. At 1630 September 15 Blue captured Accoulans, bagging 72 PWs in town.

On the 16th Red attacked Geney. Held up by a dripping fog and because supporting tanks weren't in position on time, the jump off was delayed until 0900. Then in half an hour Company B was fighting on the edge of town. "A" moved abreast of "B" and joined in the fray. The enemy brought up tanks. The 1st Battalion called up its TDs. As dusk fell, Lt. Col. Davison halted his attack, consolidated his lines on the outskirts of Geney and reorganized for the next day's battle. The 3rd Battalion moved up to tie with the 1st.

Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion had at last crossed the Doubs and joined the Combat Team on the north bank, leaving its sector to the French regulars. Now, on the right, its forces probed around L'Isle and Etrappe.

On September 17, just as the 1st Battalion was about to jump off, enemy tanks rushed the 179th outpost line and swept in against the main Battalion defenses. Throwing up a fierce small arms, mortar and artillery fire, the 1st beat off the assault. The Germans withdrew. But the 1st Battalion's attack never came off.

For at 1315 1st FFI Division officers arrived at the 179th C.P. in Soye to arrange for the relief of the RCT by their division. The C.O. turned over his plans and maps to the French. The relief, beginning at daylight September 18, was completed at 2130. Whereupon the Regiment moved to Rougement, where plans were made to occupy a new sector the following day.

In the momentary lull the troops were paid, at the dubious exchange rate of 2 cents to 1 franc. And the dreary Italian Campaign was brought to mind by the appearance of the booklet, "The March on Rome", shortly followed by a more elaborate edition, then by an enormous, map-studded series of volumes, published by and about 5th Army. This first edition, with a preface by Gen. Clark and with a text that reported little but Gen. Clark's decisions, was such blatant self-praise that the volume's circulation around the 179th's chateau C.P. could be audibly followed by laughter. A saying was born in the Regiment, probably elsewhere: "The Commander's fourth (fifth, tenth) decision . . ." applicable to any bald, pretensious remark.

The 7th and French armies were now lumped under the 6th Army Group command; and the 45th's and 179th's shift was part of the general regrouping of Allied forces along the whole western front. For with the enemy in central France liquidated, the Allies were now concerned solely with what lay ahead. And in this coming battle the Germans, no longer fighting far afield on someone else's soil, would be drawing on their fanatical Hitler Youth, their Home Guard, their crack divisions, and civilians. For they were starting to fight for their lives.

Already in the Epinal sector there was growing evidence of, if not animosity, Teuton-inspired sullenness in the civilian attitude toward the conquerors. For the Nazis held the long view, organizing even now in defeat as they once had organized for victory. So in this disputed territory which had changed hands between Germany and France so often that some signs said Bellefort, others Belfort, some maps called it Mulhouse, others Mulhausen, the population had its collaborationist sympathizers as well as its patriots. "Occupation" bulletins were already circulating warnings to soldiers against fraternization: there could be no common bond between Allied soldier and German civilian.

Meantime, everywhere the United

1—German aviators received infantry training to round out their practical military experience, incidentally learning to appreciate the tactical use of air power in conjunction with ground forces.

Nations tightened their steel ring around the "Holy German Empire". Only in Italy, where Gen. Clark just marked time and measured his gains in yards, did the Germans hold firm against the Allied Armies.

But in the east the Reds had overrun the Slavic republics and, although leaving the Polish patriots in Warsaw to be exterminated unaided after a heroic 63 day insurrection, southwards the great bear lumbered on through Rumania, into Bulgaria and Hungary, on to Slovakia and Yugoslavia. Hitler was being shorn of his satellites. He was being left to fight the final battle alone.

And facing the Westfall, the Allies had surged on to tie in all their armies, from the Channel to the Swiss border. From this latter natural boundary to the Doubs were the French; from the Doubs to Nancy was the 7th (U.S.) Army; from Nancy to Metz, where wild battles still raged around the forts, Patton's heavily armored 3rd (U.S.) Army; north of Metz and already into Germany itself at 2 points stretched Lt. Gen. Courtney D. Hodge's 1st (U.S.) Army, fighting to exploit the Siegfried Line breach at Aachen (Aix-la-Chappelle).[1] And at the northern tip of the line were the British 2nd and Canadian 1st Armies of Gens. Dempsey and Crarar, pushing into Holland.

Winter was coming, but giving the enemy no pause to get set, the democracies prepared to fight, all-out, throughout the cold and snow. The fury of the offensive did abate as in the ensuing weeks reserves of men and supplies were built up. But only momentarily, to let the Allies prepare a starting lineup for the coming battle of Germany.

"Yank", June 1945

THE SWEEP FROM THE SOUTH

. . . Seldom had an invasion been so smooth and simple and perfectly executed as this one. It was something generals dreamed about during Louisiana maneuvers. It was so smooth for several reasons: (one, because) the three American D-Day divisions, the 3rd, 36th and 45th, were all veteran outfits.

. . . The 45th came in so fast that some of the boys walked into a camouflaged dugout near the beach to find hot coffee boiling on the stove . . . Once in, troops moved faster . . . after a bitter fight for the Hotel du Nord, the 45th cleaned out Ste. Maxime, one regiment moving up to the high ground outside Vidauban and another regiment going up to the Durance River. Patrols were also sent into Lorgues where they found the paratroopers and FFI already in control. FFI also took over the town of Barjols while 45th troops were fighting for the high ground . . . of the 66,000 soldiers of VI Corps who landed on D-Day, less than 500 were casualties . . . (and) while VI Corps troops were streaming up the Rhone Valley, the French Army was busy cutting around Toulon and Marseille.

The Rhone Valley was flooded with American troops. The Nazi plan of retreat (was) resistance during the daytime with strong rearguard action, long forced marches at night. (But German pockets) anxiously hunting for Americans to surrender to, wanted Americans, specifically, because they knew the hate that filled the FFI. One batch of 946 Germans asked 2nd Lt. Clarence Coggins of E Company of the 179th Regiment of the 45th to please find some American unit which would take them in as prisoners. That happened in the Isere Valley near Grenoble.

Grenoble was an FFI hotspot. For women collaborators there was a baldy haircut with a swastika brand; for men collaborators, FFI squads worked overtime. For Americans there was everything, all the wine, all the women, all the song, that any GI ever dreamed about.

By midnight Aug. 24, the Seventh Army had liberated approximately 15,000 square miles of Southern France. The front had the shape of a huge

---

1—The Americans were also forming another army, the 9th, to move in on the 1st Army's left.

wedge with the 3rd and 36th securing the flanks while the 45th spearheaded in the center pushing for Pertuis, after crossing the Durance River.

. . . Using the Swiss border as a hinge to protect their flank against encirclement, the Germans were able to swing their columns northeast, heading for the Belfort Gap, aiming for the Rhine. The whole Seventh Army was chasing them, the 45th moving up to Bourg-en-Bresse right behind the 11th Panzer and the 3rd and 36th still on the flanks, close behind . . . (On Sept. 3) the 45th was racing for the Doubs River after coming up on the east bank of the Ain, paralleling the retreating Germans on the west bank to keep them from crossing.

The French attempt to close the Belfort Gap escape hatch didn't work out because the Germans counter-attacked with tanks in strength, thereby partially maintaining a defense line generally east-west along the Doubs. (But by Sept. 15) the 45th was in Villersexel, the 36th in Luxeuil, the 3rd attacking toward Remiremont . . . East was the Moselle.

But the champagne campaign was finis. Now it was a slow war. Plodding through hills and woods on ground too mushy for tank maneuvers against an enemy dug into excellent defensive positions. And the autumn rains had started.

"If I git there without bein' sunk, an' land without gittin' shot, an' meet me a gal wot ain't been dated, this might come in handy."

By permission of Bill Mauldin

Chapter 23. Little Stalingrad

Moving via Vesoul to Neurey, on September 19 the 179th led the 45th Division shift to the north toward the 15th Corps sector.[1] The Combat Team's mission was to secure a bridgehead across the Moselle River in the vicinity of Epinal. The 2nd Battalion would lead off in two Task Forces under Capt. Snyder and Lt. Robert I. Ciraldo*, followed by the 3rd Battalion as transportation, always a problem on long distance moves, permitted. To support the attack more tanks were attached to the Regimental command; the 59th AFA Bn was brought up to provide supporting fire reinforcement.

Soon after daylight September 20 the columns reached Bains-les-Bains, then pushed to three miles north of Xertigny. Col. Meyer directed his 2nd Battalion to seize the heights south of the river bend below Epinal and the 1st to take the commanding ridges near Vieux St. Laurent. By 2020 both battalions had troops on their objectives. Patrols scouting along the Moselle River bank reported all bridges from Arches to Epinal destroyed, spotted a signpost on the road: "St. Tropez 430 miles, Berlin 430 miles."

Through the 21st, while rifle fire cracked from across the river, scouts sought possible river crossings. Battalion sectors were designated: the 1st's boundary ran north to St. Laurent, the 2nd's covered the big bend in the Moselle in the center and the 3rd's hinged on Arches.

During the night engineers worked quickly, bringing up assault boats and bridge materials. And at 0400 September 22, initial 179th troops jumped off to ford the 80 feet wide Moselle. In the 3rd Battalion sector Company L started over, but withdrew after suffering 27 casualties in the advance patrol group. Enemy mortar fire was intense. Company I put a boat of scouts across further up the river without opposition, but because of the swift current it was 0615 before the entire company was on the opposite bank, near Archettes. "L" thereupon followed "I", the latter moving in to occupy the ridge north of town.

The 2nd Battalion got Company F across at 0700 despite savage small arms and heavy fire, and "E" an hour later. The Germans counter-attacked Easy while the company was forming on the eastern bank. "E" fought back furiously. When one squad's machine gunner was hit, Pfc. Merril F Raab took over the firing, moving the gun even further forward to gain a greater field of grazing fire. Seriously wounded by sniper fire that pinged all around him, Raab nevertheless stuck to his gun until the attack was repelled. "E" regained the offensive and pushed on,

*—*Wounded in action at Grandvillers.*

1—Of the Third Army, shortly thereafter attached to the 7th Army.

but without Pfc. Raab, who died of his wounds the next morning.

Rushing his headquarters to Arches, the Colonel ordered his entire command to cross without delay. Company A temporarily stayed behind to clean up enemy forces still at St. Laurent, but when the Arches bridge was completed, the entire 1st Battalion crossed. By nightfall it was moving up to secure the right flank as the 2nd and 3rd Battalions pushed on, abreast.

Its bridgehead secure, at dawn September 23 the 179th attacked northeast into the lower Vosges Mountains. The 3rd Battalion seized Mossoux while the 2nd was cutting the road northwest from town. The C.P. moved into Mossoux, although the town was still interdicted by enemy artillery fire.

Punching through mine fields, booby-trapped road blocks and stubborn resistance every inch of the way, Companies L and K captured La Baffe, moving east in concerted attacks with the 180th on the left and the 36th Division on the right.

The fighting grew ever more savage. The Germans, old men and fanatical Hitler Youths, fought like madmen. Snipers along the route of advance had to be attended to individually. And the terrain was rougher. The Indians of the original 179th would have been in their glory, for in the increasingly dense black forest, the fight moved from tree to tree. Tanks were ineffectual, artillery observation limited. There was no guessing where the enemy was, his strength, the depth of his defense, or in which shadowy growth he lurked.

The 179th axis of approach was Aydoillies - Fontenay - Memenil - Vimenil-Grandvillers. On the 25th Able and Baker Companies gained a few yards, then fought all day to hold them. Company L, with "K" and "I" assisting, captured Charmois-devant-Bruyeres. Two days later A and C Companies, attacking in two columns, inched on until at 0915 they were in Aydoillies and mopping up the Germans from house to house.

And while the artillery pounded the road junctions at Vimenil and Grandvillers, the 2nd Battalion grabbed Fontenay on the heels of the withdrawing Germans, then moved out into the thick woods. Under Lt. Walter M. Cabaniss Company F squads had almost cleared the local forest of enemy lurkers when Cabaniss was killed by a German sniper tied, Jap-fashion, in a tree.

The 2nd Battalion drove into Memenil, the 3rd struggled on through the woods to the southeast. At his C.P. in Aydoillies Col. Meyer conferred with Gen. Eagles and Gen. Patch. The doughboys were too busy to be impressed.

At dawn, September 29, all three rifle companies of the 2nd Battalion were again attacking through the woods. They swarmed up Hill 383, but met savage machine gun fire. Nevertheless they took and held the ground overlooking the Vimenil road; then as Company F pushed over the hills to the south, Companies E and G launched a direct attack on Vimenil. Although in control of the town at 1730, the GIs kept to cover as the enemy pounded them with harassing fire.

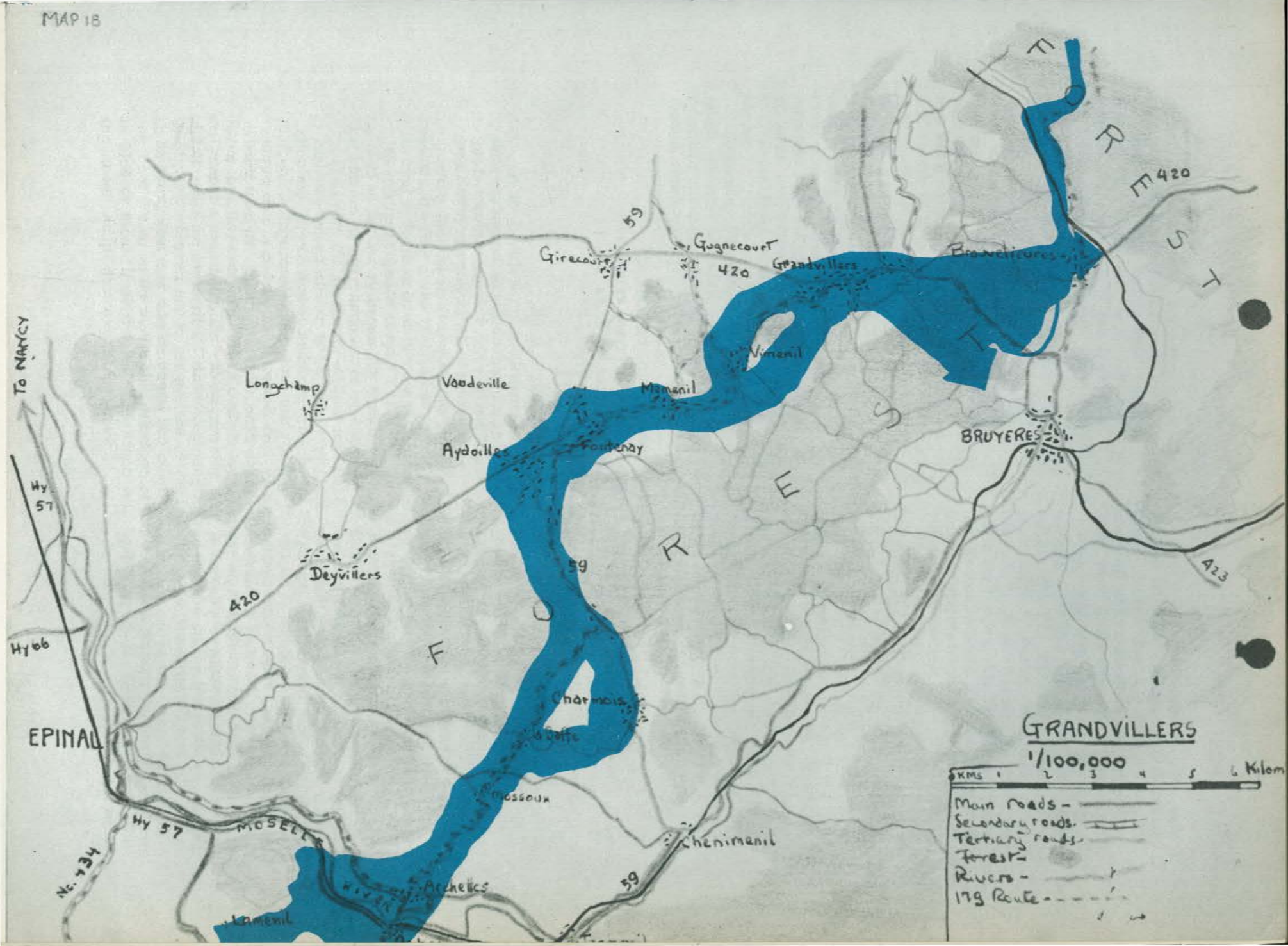
Blue Battalion, moving through the woods astride the highway, forced the fanatical Germans slowly back from the heights south of Vimenil. The 1st Battalion had Company B doughfeet at the edge of Grandvillers. So the 179th lines ran northeast from the high ground a kilometer south of Vimenil to just west of Grandvillers.

It was tortuous, savage, unromantic warfare. Losses mounted. The Regiment had 500 casualties (70 dead) in September. The future looked even gloomier: east of Grandvillers lay unending dense forests and the foothills of the lower Vosges, ideal defensive terrain, hard to bomb and hard to shell. Yet because of his impenetrable defenses and the fanaticism of his troops, the enemy commander could use cooks and bakers and other odds and ends of units to hold off the Americans. Meanwhile he rested and rebuilt his finest divisions, hoarding them for the time when they were most needed, for future major battles.

The war took on the aspect of another horrible winter stalemate such as 1943's, again eating up the crack troops of the U.S. Army.

The 179th was being hard hit, but at least it could claim to have run the gamut. It had made amphibious assault landings in Sicily, crept through booby-trapped mine fields in northern France, battled up mountains at Venafro, endured trench warfare at Anzio, fought tank-infantry engagements in the drive on Rome, fought guerillas in southern France. It had met the enemy as part of a solid front, as an independent Task Force, and in a column of battalions. It had fought to hold its own at Anzio, to inch up the mountains

MAP 18


FORET
420
59
Girecourt
Gugnecourt
420
Grandvillers
Bru-Neufcourt
To NANCY
Longchamp
Vaudeville
Vimenil
Mamenil
Aydoilles
Fontenay
BRUYERES
Hy 57
Deyvillers
420
59
423
Hy 66
EPINAL
Charmois
La Bolle
Missoux
Hy 57
MOSELLE
No. 434
RIVER
Archettes
Chenimenil
59
Hamenil
GRANDVILLERS
1/100,000
KMS 1 2 3 4 5 6 Kilom
Main roads -
Secondary roads -
Tertiary roads -
Forest -
Rivers -
179 Route - - - - -

of Italy, stride through Sicily and whip furiously through southern France.

And now this Indian-style woods fighting. Not many men remained who had done all these things, but those who did could certainly claim that "they had seen everything."

Here in northeastern France the fighting approximated the Pacific type warfare. Generally requiring the antithesis in tactics, the Pacific war, even when employing huge forces, was fought on a man to man basis in the cocoanut-tree forests of the Solomons or the dense underbrush of New Guinea. In the west men fought as platoons or squads. That is, until this jungle warfare. It was no rougher than other kinds of fighting. But it seemed so: for inevitably, as the war went on and the 45th stayed in campaign after campaign, battle after battle, the men who were left grew tireder and tireder, more battle-weary and more battle-shy. Every fight seemed progressively harder.

September 30 at dawn the 1st Battalion attacked Grandvillers. The town, dawdling along the highway for two kilometers, was fought for house by house. At 0745 the western end of town was cleared, 30 PWs taken and 30 Germans killed. Yet all day the doughboys continued to battle against furious opposition in the heart of the village.

The 179th C.P. was set up in the western end. The fight raged 800 yards ahead. The 2nd Battalion moved up to provide local security. Blue held down the right flank and assisted the 143rd Inf (36th Div) in its sector. The Combat Team attacked on, to seize the ground north of Bruyeres and the ridge northeast of Grandvillers, its objectives.

The 180th on the left battled for Fremifontaine, the 3rd Battalion pushed through the woods to the southeast, and the 1000 men of the 1st Battalion grappled with the enemy holding out in Grandvillers until at last on October 2, the Germans were booted out of town. With tanks shooting up the houses, Baker's riflemen prowling through the streets, and Companies A and C sweeping wide around the left flank to seize the ridge and road junction northeast of town, Grandvillers was secured. The final sweep through the eastern end of town netted 60 PWs.

The Star and Stripes, Overseas Edition, Oct. 5, 1944

"IT'S STILL A LONG WAY TO THE RHINE"

By Sgt. Stan Swinton, Staff Writer

....With the 7th Army in Grandvillers, Oct. 3 (Delayed)—Grandvillers, the little Stalingrad where doughboys and landzers separated by as little as 15 yards fought a four-day battle of annihilation with grenades and tommy guns, was finally occupied at 1 a. m. today.

Now that the snarl of guns has moved to the forested hills skirting Grandvillers, the cost of the Wehrmacht's stand . . . can be measured: 50 Germans twisted in death, at least 40 more still entombed beneath the rubbled buildings, 186 sulking in the PW Cage.

The battle . . . began the morning of Sept. 30 when Baker Company of a veteran infantry battalion commanded by Lt. Col. Michael S. Davison advanced with the support of a platoon of light tanks. Not until the doughboys had penetrated almost to the center of Grandvillers did serious opposition develop. Then a hail of small arm and mortar fire pinned them down.

. . . An anti-tank gun and mines forced the armor to withdraw. The infantry dug in beside the ancient church whose narrow, conical spire juts upward from its sloping red-tiled roof to dominate the village. There . . . under fire that did not slacken until 3 a.m., Baker Company stayed. Meanwhile Able Company pulled into the village outskirts only to have its commander and four other men wounded. Charlie Company moved forward on the left flank. Engineers braved fire to remove the clusters of box type mines which had blown up one tank and damaged two others.

At 2 p.m. on the damp, chill afternoon of Oct. 1, Baker Company jumped off once more. It gained 300 yards, then was halted again. Lt. William B.

Flowers and nine other men from his platoon reached a house behind a stone wall. Until 8:30 p.m. they traded shots with 70 Germans in another house 20 feet across the wall.

There was a stillness . . . suddenly the Germans began to shout: "Come out and surrender". The nine men answered with all the fire power they could muster: one BAR, one tommy gun, seven M-1s. The Germans reacted as though drunk or instilled with a Jap-like desire to die in battle. They advanced, stepping over their fallen comrades. The Americans poured out a furious fire to keep the Germans from hurling a "potato masher" into the room.

From the house to the rear, Lt. Harold D. Glass ordered a BAR to open fire on the right in an effort to hold the desperate assault back. "For God's sake keep the BAR going, it's saving our lives," Lt. Glass shouted into the field phone.

For five hours—until 2 a.m.—the Germans kept coming. Then, ammunition almost gone, the trapped nine resorted to hand grenades. The attack slackened, then halted.

Meanwhile, on the left flank, Charlie Company had pushed the Germans back through the heavily mined woods outside the village after a sharp fire fight. Able Company worked its way through the woods on a narrower axis. Medium tanks came up to Baker Company.

At 6 a.m. yesterday, the tanks began their house-by-house assault. Six-man squads followed them, moving straight to the cellar entrance after the 75 mms. shattered the buildings . . . they either killed or captured the Germans hiding in each. Able and Charlie Companies prevented the Germans from fleeing into the woods. As many as 37 Germans were found in a single house.

By nightfall the battle was almost over. A single pocket between Baker and Charlie Companies was cleaned out at 1 a.m. to end the fighting. Now the tired, bearded doughboys have pushed a few 100 yards further. Grandvillers is behind them. The Rhine is a long, long way ahead.

Meanwhile the Regiment's other battalions made infinitesimal gains through the woods against furious infantry resistance and direct tank fire. The attackers were hindered by an acute shortage of 105 mm. and 81 mm. ammo. The accumulated reserve stock had disintegrated. The number of rounds per gun per day was strictly rationed. As time went on it became more and more evident that when the Allied star-gazers had figured the war to end in Oct. 1944, they had banked too heavily on their foresight. They had stopped shipping many essential war products, had apparently reconverted too many U. S. plants to civilian production.

Also, as in Italy, insufficient replacements left the offensive with no depth and with no relief for the used up troops. For days the entire 179th right flank facing Bruyeres was held down by C Battery of the RCT's field artillery! The men lost their aggressiveness. Their attacks were often beaten off not for lack of will but for lack of physical and mental strength to keep on. The doughboys were too keenly aware that there was not much point in making gains, as there was no force to exploit those gains.

But the soldiers had to go on. For two weeks the 179th battered at the German lines in the woods east of St. Die and the Meurthe River. It was intimate, personal combat. In the deep dank forest, where only occasional patches of sunlight struck the ground, visibility was negligible. So fingers stayed glued to triggers. Any moment an enemy would come stalking through the woods. Men got mixed in their directions, wandered into the wrong lines. One German thought the American lines was the latrine and got caught with his pants down—literally.

The opposing forces were barely 50 yards apart. Several pitch black nights the troops provided their own artillery barrages against the Germans—with hand grenades! They could hear the enemy digging, moving about, cursing *his* rations and *his* commanders.

Incessant patrolling was necessary to retain physical contact with friendly flanking units, for in such fighting, the enemy would plunge into the smallest gap in the line.

On October 6 Company I, along the slopes of Hill 523, was subjected to a

strong enemy counter-attacked aimed at recapture of the hill. Pfc. Delmar B. Chamblee, machine gunner, opened up with a deadly rapid fire, accounting for 23 enemy killed, unknown numbers wounded. The Germans tried to silence his gun with grenades and rifle fire. Chamblee was hit by a grenade fragment that pierced his left eye. Almost blind, suffering excruciating pain, the fighting doughboy stayed at his gun, kept pouring out his withering fire. A moment later he was hit again. His right arm, numbed, would not respond, dangled useless at his side. Still he stuck at the gun until the enemy, leaving his dead and wounded piled high before Chamblee's position, fell back. Then Chamblee, weak from loss of blood, was carried away for treatment.

Such men made up for the lack of replacements, and each day the 179th gained 50 or 100 yards, taking ridges, road junctions, trails. Artillery, mortars, tanks, TDs and flak wagons helped the infantry beat off the savage counter-attacks that followed every limited gain. For each time the men pushed out a few yards beyond their LD, they dug in and prepared to hold. Maj. Fred P. Snyder accurately described the fighting: he said that when he was ordered to attack, he leaned forward in his foxhole—but not too far!

As the lines crept closer to Bruyeres, the C.O. tried to rotate his battalions to rest the men. But invariably companies had to be recommitted to bolster the line after but a few hours respite. A Division rest camp was opened in Bains-les-Bains, but no combat troops could be spared to go there.

The Regimental S-4 tried to ease the troops' misery by establishing a GI bakery of his own, providing the men with bread to supplement the endless "K" rations. He rigged up a portable shower and laundry unit, which contributed materially to the spirit, health and combat efficiency of the 179th Infantry.

But no one could do anything about the mounting casualties. And on October 6 Col. Meyer was wounded by small arms fire; in the same action Maj. George S. Williams, then 3rd Bn C.O., was captured. Once again Lt. Col. Murphy took command of the 179th. Lt. Col. William P. Grace Jr., brilliant 2nd Battalion field commander, moved up to become Regimental executive officer.

A platoon had to be formed from Hqs Co personnel to fill in on the line. Company A was down to 40 combat effectives, Company C to 50. And, because the going got "unreasonably" rough, the tanks and this time the TDs as well were refusing to stay up with the infantry.

So the infantry had to take care of the German tanks itself. On October 14, after an intense preparation fire, an enemy company with two Mark IVs in support assaulted Able's position. One tank got in behind the lines, disrupting the 1st Battalion's wire communications and inflicting several casualties. Lt. Wreno M. Hall, picking up a bazooka, wove through the area and, despite tank, mortar and small arms fire, exposed himself directly in the path of the approaching tank. When it was within 15 yards, Lt. Hall let fly. The tank was stopped, but kept firing, so Hall crawled closer and fired again, completely disabling the Mark IV. The tank crew tumbled from the turret. Hall picked up his carbine and killed them as they dismounted.

The 179th was now fighting on a line running from a mile east of Grandvillers to 1½ miles west of Bruyeres, facing east and south. In two weeks the RCT had gained two kilometers on a 2-kilometer front. But now also the Regiment was in contact with the 442nd RCT, new Jap-American unit expanded into an independent RCT from the old 100th Bn, remembered for its superb fighting in Italy.

With the 442nd's commitment on the right the 179th lines were shortened. The Americans finally were building up enough strength in the sector for an all-out offensive to break the costly deadlock in the woods.

It began to rain, steadily. The weather turned raw, the wind was sharp and biting. But no one was stopping, least of all the 45th. Winter, summer, rain or shine, the fight was being carried to the enemy. And with a big push in the offing the 179th, in action continuously since D-Day, August 15, was still in the lines. Apparently it was going to stay in, indefinitely!

FRENCH CAMPAIGN

Chapter 24. Brouvelieures Breakthrough

Coordinating its attack with the 180th and 442nd RCTs, on October 15 the 2nd Battalion jumped off at dawn as the offensive got under way from Rambervillers to Belfort. Stopped after small gains by heavy enemy machine gun, mortar and tank fire, in the afternoon White attacked again, and then again, inching southeast toward Bruyeres, German strongpoint defending the mountain passes to the Meurthe River.

Through the 18th American units along the front punched on, suffering heavy losses but inflicting heavier on the foe. Along the knolls and ridges the 179th battled the enemy, while artillery shelled with telling effect his lines of communication and supply behind the front. The 3rd Battalion, 157th Inf, was attached to the 179th and committed between the RCT and the 442nd RCT.

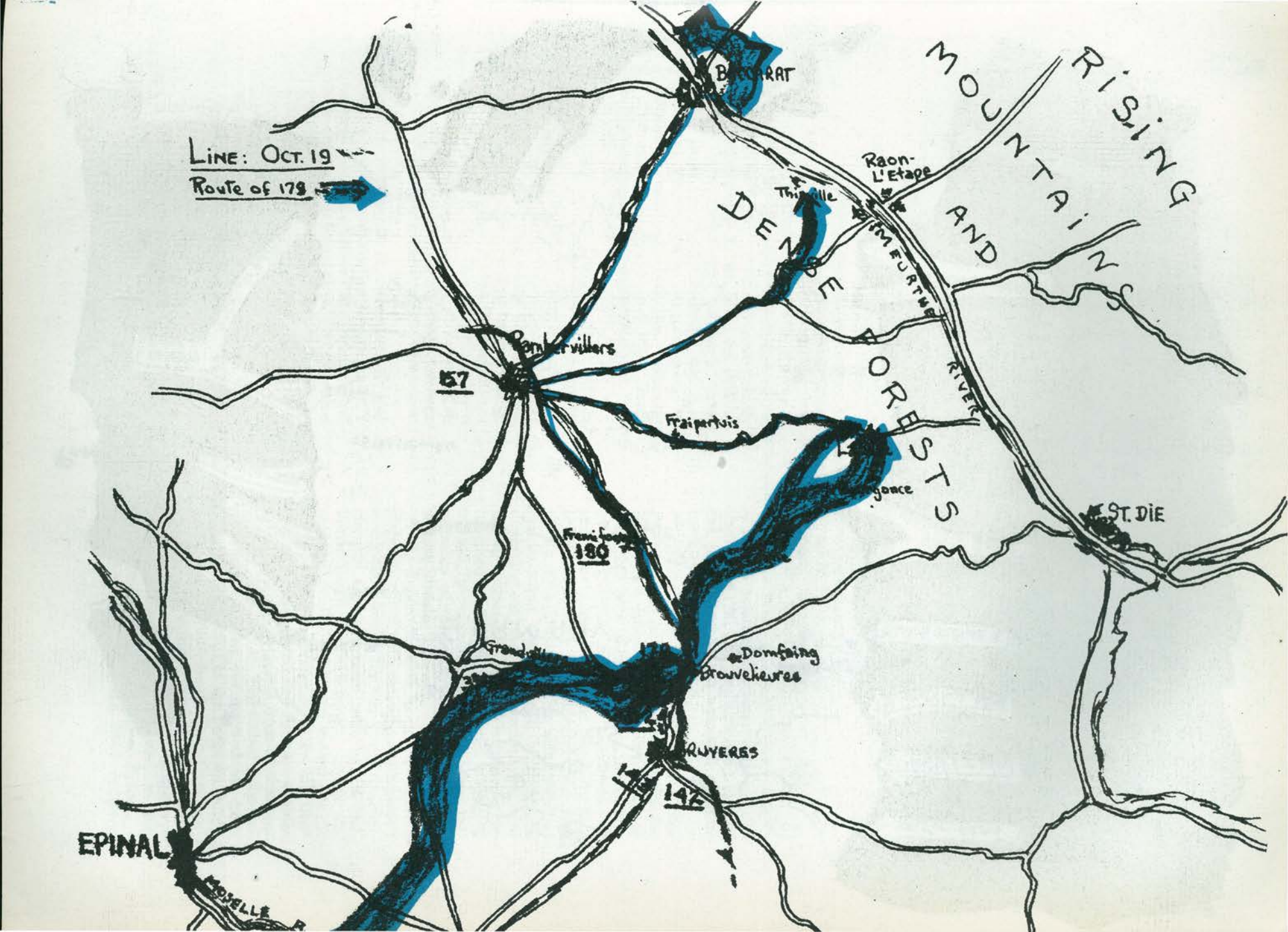
Finally, with the 179th crashing through the woods north of town, the 442nd entered Bruyeres and gained control of the northern third. As the 36th Division struck at Bruyeres from the south, the 179th swung northeast toward Brouvelieures. The Combat Team's troops stormed through the woods to the edge of the river valley lowlands. The 3rd (U.S.) Division was brought up in order to drive through the 179th lines.

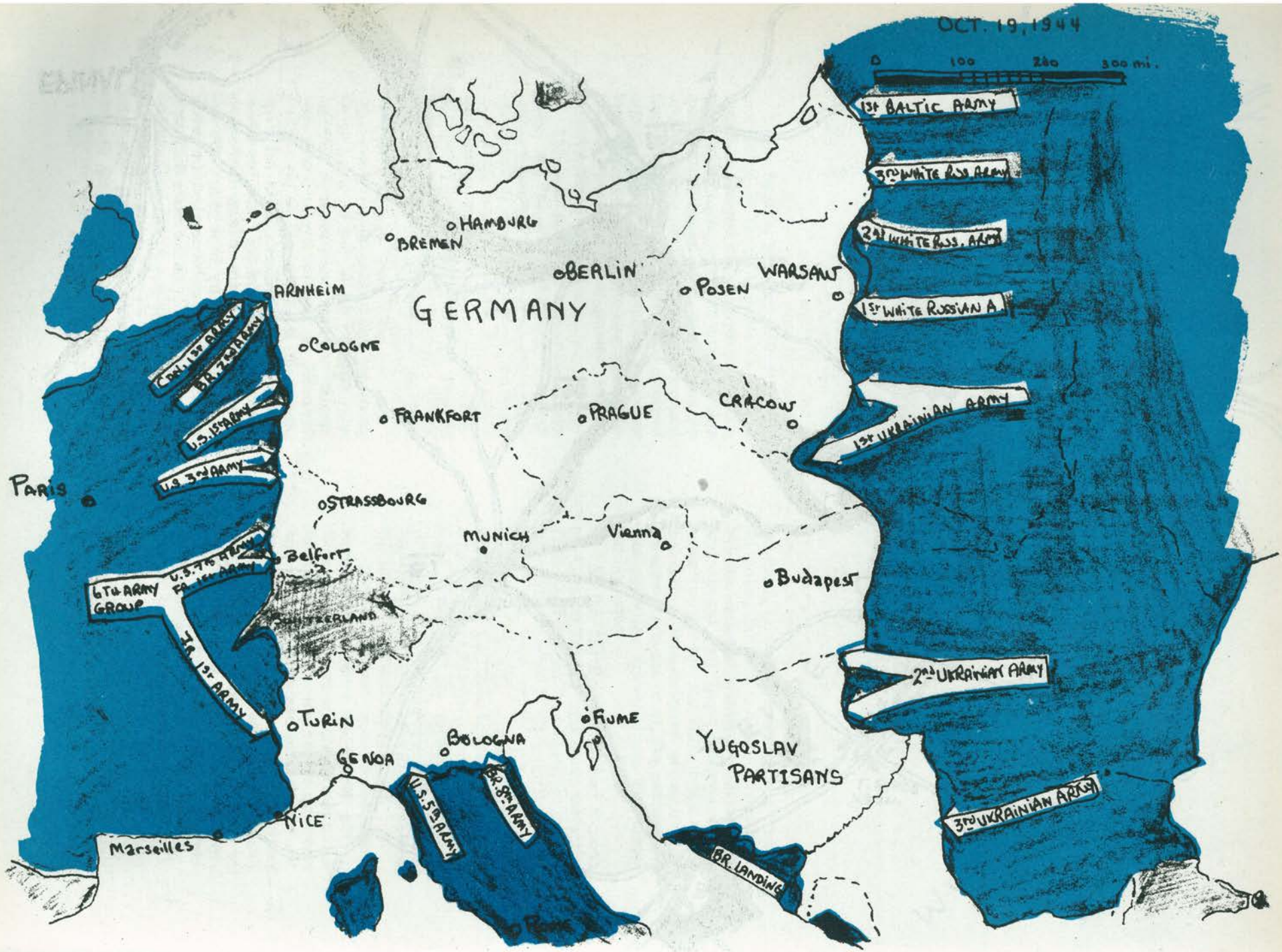
The offensive began to gain momentum. October 20 the 1st and 2nd Battalions and the 157th's 3rd "Bun" smashed through hot fire until, at 1115, Company G effected a local breakthrough on the left flank. Lt. Col. Murphy at once rushed up his 3rd Battalion to exploit this success, but the Germans countered with reserves and closed the gap. However, these gains had brought the 179th to the ridges just west of Brouvelieures, giving it direct observation on the town .The artillery began pounding Brouvelieures with creeping barrages.

As the 3rd Division pushed through the Combat Team's right flank, the entire 179th plus the attached battalion jumped off at 0800 October 21. Clearing the ridges around the town, White launched its assault down the hills on the village itself. With tanks and TDs in support Companies E and G swept into town from the left and right, even as, in the northeastern end of town, the retreating enemy was attempting a "scorched earth" policy by burning buildings indiscriminately.

The RCT infantrymen dashed from house to house after the enemy, killing, dispersing or capturing, blasting the buildings down on the stubborn Krauts. And while they mopped up the town and the surrounding hills, the 3rd Division sped east through Brouvelieures, gained a bridgehead across the river north of town that evening, and kept the push going by taking Domfaing and plunging into the dense forests beyond the river valley.

The 179th, its part in the breakthrough accomplished expeditiously, moved north of the 3rd Division sector along with the rest of the 45th, and attacked toward Mortagne.


LINE: OCT. 19
ROUTE OF 178
MOUNTAINS
RISING
AND
DENSE
FORESTS
Raon-
L'Etape
Thiaville
Fraipertuis
Grandvillers
157
Franciscopage
180
Domfaing
Brouvelieures
RUYERES
147
ST. DIE
EPINAL
MOSELLE R.


OCT. 19, 1944
0
100
200
300 mi.
1st BALTIC ARMY
3rd WHITE RUS. ARMY
2nd WHITE RUSS. ARMY
1st WHITE RUSSIAN A.
1st UKRAINIAN ARMY
2nd UKRAINIAN ARMY
3rd UKRAINIAN ARMY
HAMBURG
BREMEN
BERLIN
POSEN
WARSAW
ARNHEIM
GERMANY
COLOGNE
FRANKFORT
PRAGUE
CRACOW
PARIS
STRASSBOURG
MUNICH
Vienna
Budapest
Belfort
6TH ARMY GROUP
U.S. 7TH ARMY
FR. 1ST ARMY
SWITZERLAND
FR. 1ST ARMY
TURIN
GENOA
BOLOGNA
FIUME
YUGOSLAV PARTISANS
NICE
Marseilles
U.S. 5TH ARMY
BR. 8TH ARMY
BR. LANDING
ROME

(VI Corps) Beachhead News, Oct. 22, 1944, p. 1

179TH LIBERATES BROUVELIEURES

Supported by the deadly fire of tanks, TDs and a company of chemical mortars, the 2nd Bn of the 179th Inf Regt yesterday afternoon established a firm foothold in the western edge of Brouvelieures. By late afternoon roadblocks had been established on the four main north and northwest approaches and by early evening the last remaining elements were cleaned out of town . . . The Infantry launched their assault at 2 p.m. Within 2 hours these elements, aided by the full power of a field artillery battalion and strong support from the regiment's Cannon Company, which further assisted in pulverizing the krauts, had taken the objective.

(N.B. With the last amphibious landing, overseas censorship relaxed considerably. For the first time even companies were specifically designated. But, to everyone's confusion, every changing military situation inspired new regulations: one day it was permissable to tell "all" up to 14 days prior to date of writing; the next it was "verboten" to write anything whatever!)

The Regiment advanced more rapidly now. Company F, of late the 179th's hard luck company, although whittled down to half strength, smashed through the woods to seize a group of buildings south of Mortagne. Company E assaulted Mortagne and after fierce house-to-house fighting, secured it at 1010 October 24.

Charging on behind lead scouts through deep woods and up sharp inclines, the doughboys struck north, encountering tanks, infantry, and ceaseless counter-attacks. The whole line crept into the mountains until, losing its propulsion, the attack bogged. It was the terrain, not the opposition, for the Germans were actually withdrawing to a new MLR, leaving behind only strong contact groups to dull the sharpness of the American thrusts.

On November 1, after Baker had driven into the village of La Salle, the RCT pulled up to facilitate its impending relief. Almost to the next natural barrier, the Meurthe River, Gen. Patch was now prepared to rest the old-timers and try out new divisions under his command prior to launching the next major operation.

The 179th's 2nd Battalion entrucked at Fraipertuis on November 2 and moved north via "Dead Cow Crossing" at Heusseras—where 25 cows still lay with limbs akimbo as incidental war casualties,—to Baccarat. Here, where French armor had forced a bridgehead across the Meurthe, it set up defenses northeast of town and with the 117th Rcn Trp prepared to hold the bridgehead in the event of German infantry attacks.

At the same time the 399th Inf (100th Div) moved into the line alongside the Regiment's other rifle battalions. To initiate this new unit to combat, for a day both regiments held the positions and sent joint patrols to contact the 157th RCT on the left and the 15th Inf, 3rd Div, on the right. Then the 179th withdrew. The 3rd Battalion also motored to Baccarat, deploying on the 2nd's right flank and facing southeast. The 1st Battalion was attached to the 180th Inf, and attacking toward Thiaville, by November 5 had two platoons of Company A fighting in the village streets.

At Baccarat, with each unit tied in physically and with strongpoints grouped every 50-75 yards, the two battalion semicircular defenses were manned through November 5. But no enemy attack developed. So the 179th was pulled out.

The 100th Division's 397th Inf Regt relieved the 2nd and 3rd Battalions while Red was being released from attachment to the 180th. And by November 7 the entire Regiment was bivouacked far from the front: the C.P. (in the Hotel du Parc) and the 3rd Battalion set up in Contrexeville, the 1st occupied the Les Forges area and White's area centered at Uxegney. The sprawling sector allocated to the 179th ran for 30 miles, west of Epinal.

The Combat Team's field artillery

was less fortunate: through the ensuing rest period the 160th stayed in the lines, first supporting the 100th Division, then the 44th and 79th Divisions in their push toward the Rhine.

In its first rest since hitting France three months ago the 179th looked back to one of the swiftest campaigns in history, swifter than Hitler's vaunted "Blitz" four years earlier, and one in which the Regiment had played a stellar role. Furthermore, while official records varied, even the most unfavorable estimates credited the 45th with more campaigns—officially seven—than any other division in the European Theater. And the 179th, not alone by virtue of its 84 day stint just ended, led the rest of the 45th in days in action.

During the French campaign, the 179th had already destroyed better than an enemy regiment, twice its strength in vehicles, tanks and material. Another "regiment" of Heinies had passed through the PW cage: 3099 prisoners.

The Regiment had suffered heavily itself, especially in the drive from Arches to Mortagne. Battle casualties alone (killed, wounded, missing) totalled 65 officers and 1230 enlisted men. Over 1300 more men had been hospitalized sick. Far below normal combat strength, the 179th had only received 44 officers and 778 enlisted replacements in France.

So the rest beginning November 7 was needed, desperately. Billeted indoors out of the increasing cold and heavy downpours, the troops got daily baths, new clothes and equipment. The training schedule was light: drilling, physical conditioning, firing of weapons.

The doughboys were grateful for the chance to sit in warm rooms and relax. There were plenty of books to read. There were nightly movies, "B", or "Z" pictures —maybe the base sections saw the better films—but any picture was better than none at all. And for the GIs with Wanderlust there was Epinal—if you had a pass and the patience to sweat out a regiment of MPs on every corner—strictly a rear echelon town now, with hundreds of troops wandering aimlessly around the streets in their dress uniforms and overseas caps. The rifle companies could have given them something to do!

Also, the gayer blades organized unit parties. Their success was insured by one of those rare liquor issues—more than ever startling because for once even the Scotch filtered down as low as Regiment. This nectar from home, plus "requisitioned" champagne and local hog swill, formed a foundation for the parties. Add a GI Band, and some nurses, WACs and/or local feminine talent in whatever proportion was procurable, and the festivities were under way. By the numbers the men got obliviously, pleasantly, and sometimes unpleasantly, plastered.

Because of the rapid personnel turnover in the line companies, the rest afforded the troops a good opportunity to become acquainted with their comrades, not merely as serial numbers and fighters, but as human beings, civilians with interests, businesses, and ambitions.

Also due principally to battle losses, many staff and battalion changes were now necessary: quiet Maj. Marion W. Crouse now commanded the 1st Battalion; booming Maj. James O. Smith the 2nd, and boisterous Maj. Noble L. ("Revolving Rat Bastard")[1] Riggs the 3rd. Within the battalions the changes were numerous: in the 3rd it got so bad Capt. Christopher J. Pappianou, S-1, declared he needed a score card to tell the names and positions of the staff each day.

A second reason for so many staff changes was the loss of many officers through rotation. After a barren period while the 45th shifted from NATOUSA to ETOUSA,[2] this system was revived, only now in a different form. "Temporary Duty" took the place of actual rotation. And while "T.D." was better than nothing, it was a pernicious innovation. For it is a sad commentary on a nation of 135 million population, some 10 million of them under arms, that the poor devils who managed to survive a year and a half of actual combat were expected to come back after 30 days and have to sweat out bullets and shells for God knows how long all over again. There is such a thing as tempting fate too often, and too much!

But even with its evils, rotation gave

1—His pet phrase: as defined by the author, a revolving rat bastard is a guy who is a rat bastard any way you look at him.

2—Mediterranean and European Theater Commands, respectively.

the men a goal, a hope for each that it might be he who was given a temporary respite from combat, from playing hide and seek with death. Many lost the game, others managed to get "million dollar wounds"—wounds not too serious yet sufficiently so to end their combat days—a few even got rotated.

And since rumors stimulated men's hopes too, for a time the troops clung to another hope: for Division requested a list of the original men still with the 179th (the surprisingly high total of 970 at that time, however almost all of them in Hqs, Sv, Cn and AT Companies, for the rate of attrition in rifle companies was ten times that of the Regimental echelon). But of course nothing came of it. The rumor—that these old men would go home, or get *some* sort of break—gradually petered out. It was realized that the C.G. had probably just wanted to know the number left. The answer *was* usually that simple.

Twice, on the verge of returning to the line, the "break" was extended. Communication kept everyone cheerful. As long as the boys were out of the line they were happy even though, almost perceptibly, their relations with the French civilians grew less and less effulsive.

For the French, now that France was free, degenerated from heroic, long-suffering patriots to cloyingly greedy petty bourgeoisie. Their idealistic vision of liberation faded into the picture of a dollar. And naturally, if somewhat unreasonably, GIs most resented the French military and civilian attitude about lend lease goods. A stranded doughboy could rot in hell before a Frenchman would give him a gallon of American gas or a K ration. The French needed U.S. equipment mostly, it appeared, for parades down the Champs Elysee, to inspire its populace with "France's" might.

Meanwhile the 44th and 79th Divisions of the 15th Corps had put on a damn good push of their own, and were driving across the Meurthe River into Alsace and Lorraine.

As the impetus of their drive began to slacken, the 45th was alerted. Creeping up to the Rhine on the east and to the German border on the north, 7th Army was preparing to throw in the old timers again to keep the push rolling, beat the Germans back to their heels, and strike at the dreaded Siegfried Line.

The 179th began packing up. The men of the 45th hitched on their rifle belts, slung their packs over their shoulders, grabbed their rifles, and said: "Germany, here we come!"

PART SIX: BATTLE OF GERMANY

Chapter 25. Man Spricht Deutsch

Using as its LD almost the exact spot where two weeks earlier it had been relieved, the 1st and 3rd Battalions passed through Baccarat to the initial assembly area, Cirey, at the edge of Alsace. Here the Regiment convened through the night of November 22. The first of the 45th's RCTs to be recommitted, until the other Thunderbirds joined it, the 179th was attached to 15th Corps, for the first time in France leaving 6th Corps.

The next morning the Regiment moved by motor to the forward assembly area, Romanswiller. Here, directly behind the present front line, the 179th closed in with its supporting artillery, attached TDs and tanks.

The moment the wheels rolled over the Alsatian border marked changes took place in the scenery, atmosphere and civilian attitude. For here in reality was a province of Germany itself.

In Alsace the signs, meticulous black lettering on white fields, were in German script: the original French names had been painted over four years ago, although a faint outline of France was discernible through the new veneer: the "Gasthaus" of "FRANZ" had not quite obliterated "FRANCOIS".

In Alsace many homes were deserted, evacuated by Nazi owners as the Wehrmacht fell back. And the remaining population met the conquerors with mixed greetings: welcome from the true French, acceptance by the hybrids, antagonism from the converts and imported Nazis.

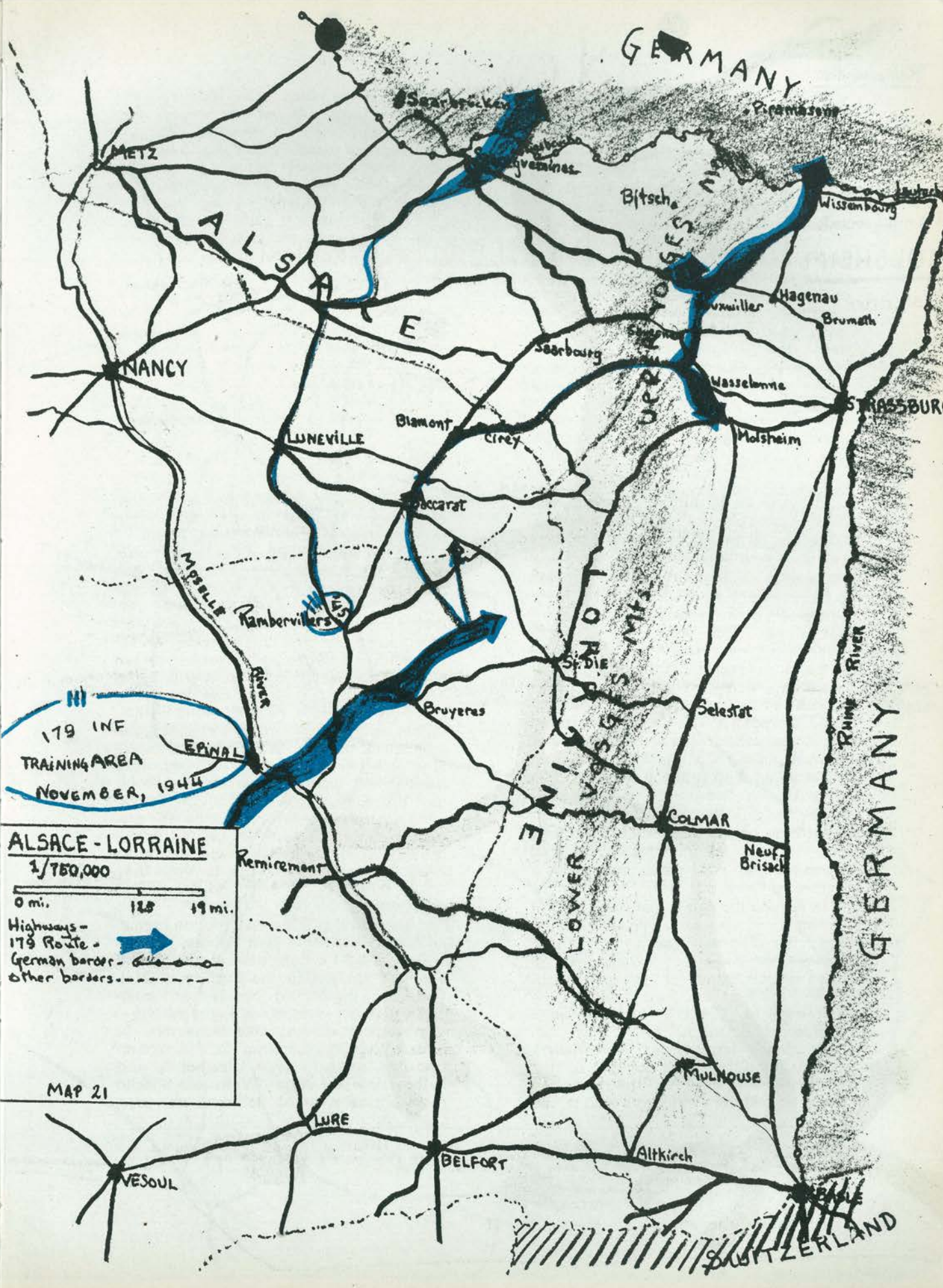
There were plenty of the latter group, for the Alsatians received the same treatment and rations as the German people themselves: they were well fed, contented looking. The Nazis had tried hard and efficiently to sell Germany to the Alsatians permanently. Alsace was not simply conquered territory; it was being incorporated into the Third German Reich.

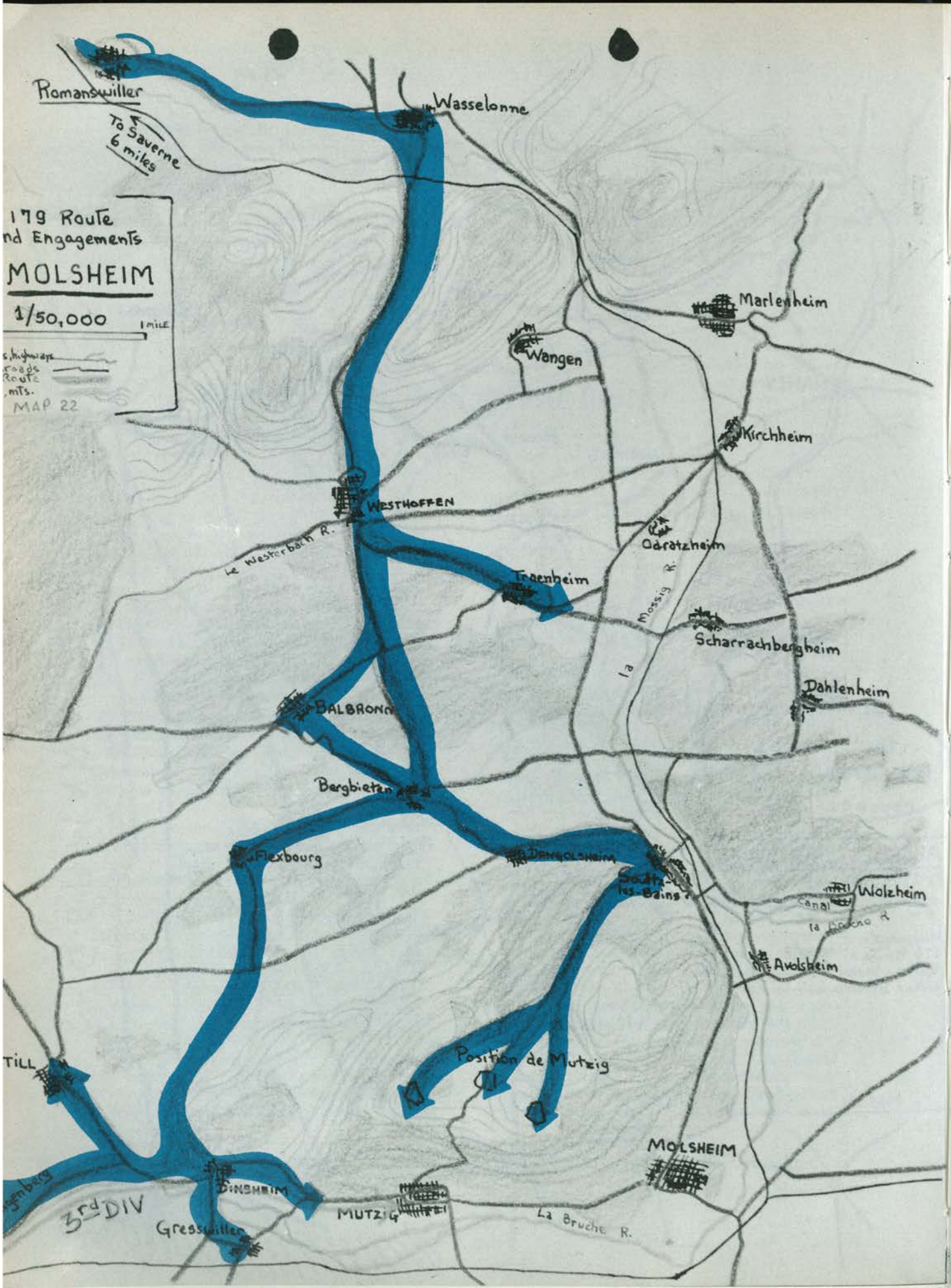
And in Alsace as real winter settled on the soil, the troops took to buildings to keep out of the cold and snow. Many civilians resented the intrusion of tired, dirty soldiers into their prim, scrubbed homes, and the easy-going, gullible Americans[1] often got out when their presence was protested, to live in tents, or on the frozen ground. The Germans would not have been so considerate. "This is war" they would have said, if they had deigned to explain at all.

The 179th RCT's mission upon recommitment: attacking in a column of battalions in 3-2-1 order, to seize Mutzig and the high ground in the vicinity of Molsheim, cut the Mutzig road net and interdict the roads leading southeast with fire.

Jumping off at 0800 November 24 from Wasselonne, the 3rd Battalion smashed south to seize Westhoffen and Balbronn, while Pagan White established road blocks west of Balbronn and east

1—American gullibility made possible the war's most fantastic case history: a German officer, complete with U.S. uniform, orderly and peep, penetrated an Army Hq. learned vital secrets, and would have escaped undetected except that he got drunk and gave himself away.


GERMANY
METZ
ALSACE
NANCY
LUNEVILLE
Blamont
Cirey
Baccarat
Saarbourg
Wasselonne
Molsheim
Hagenau
Brumath
Wissembourg
Bitsch
Pfalzburg
VOSGES MTS.
DONON
Rambervillers
MOSELLE RIVER
St. Die
Bruyeres
Selestat
RHINE RIVER
GERMANY
179 INF
TRAINING AREA
NOVEMBER, 1944
EPINAL
COLMAR
Neuf Brisach
Remiremont
LOWER VOSGES MTS.
MULHOUSE
LURE
BELFORT
Altkirch
VESOUL
SWITZERLAND
ALSACE - LORRAINE
1/750,000
0 mi.
9 mi.
Highways -
179 Route -
German border -
other borders -
MAP 21


Romanswiller
To Saverne 6 miles
Wasselonne
179 Route
nd Engagements
MOLSHEIM
1/50,000
1 MILE
MAP 22
Marlenheim
Wangen
Kirchheim
WESTHOFFEN
Le Westerbach R.
Odratzheim
Traenheim
la Mossig R.
Scharrachbergheim
Dahlenheim
BALBRONN
Bergbieten
Flexbourg
Wolxheim
Canal
la Bruche R.
Avolsheim
Position de Mutzig
MOLSHEIM
DINSHEIM
MUTZIG
La Bruche R.
3rd DIV
Gresswiller

of Traenheim, thus covering the RCT flanks behind the 3rd. On into the afternoon Blue advanced, against stiffening opposition, into Dangolsheim and Soultzles-Bains, on into the wooded hills to the south. Battling past outpost lines and small arms fire, at 1540 the 3rd had driven to Position de Mutzig, a cluster of heavily wired-in forts defending the northern approaches to Mutzig and Molsheim.

While the rest of the 2nd Battalion continued to block roads in the sector against possible counter-attacks, Company G was committed and sent down on the 3rd Battalion's right to cut the main road leading west from Mutzig. Despite heavy enemy fire the company was on its objective at 2120. The 179th was thus closing in on Mutzig from two sides at once.

The following day the attack went on with continued good results. The 2nd Battalion drove down on the right, "G" capturing Dinsheim, then reforming and again attacking, with Company F, to secure Still. "E" was meanwhile climbing to the summit of Hill 333 northwest of Heiligenberg. Seizing the crest at 1530, an hour later Easy Company had swept down the mountain to take Heiligenberg. Here, White contacted 3rd (U.S.) Div elements approaching from the west to attack Mutzig and Molsheim across the 179th RCT front.

Simultaneously the 3rd Battalion was making a savage assault on the Mutzig forts. Jumping off behind wicked artillery preparation fire, Company K flanked the forts and took the heights overlooking Gresswiller on the Battalion right flank. "I" headed for the eastern-most fort, cut its way through the barbed wire at noon, and attacked the pillbox with grenades and heavy fire. Company L followed through the wire and branched out against the western fort. The companies of determined doughboys sloughed through machine gun and automatic weapons fire to the very emplacements and by 1400 the "Position's" forts had been either taken or neutralized.

To the rear, at dusk just after the 1st Battalion had moved out of Westhoffen, a "Buzz Bomb" crashed into town. It was the Germans' only use of V-1 against the Regiment. Making a hole 150 feet in diameter, the murderous shell had demolished 15 buildings completely, as if a giant's hand had swept down from the sky and crumbled the houses in his fist. Concussion had blown off roofs, dislodged doors and shattered every window pane for acres around.

At 1215, with the rest of the 45th in the sector now, the 179th reverted to Division control and prepared to move to a new combat zone. For tactical reasons, however, the whole command remained in the 15th Corps.

Abandoning the sector to the 3rd Division, on November 26 the 179th began to move. The RCT C.P. was advanced to Bouxwiller. The 3rd Battalion, occupying the heights north of that city, sent probing patrols in the direction of Obermodern, where light enemy forces were contacted. The 1st Battalion organized the sector to the 3rd's left. The 2nd Battalion was held in Regimental reserve. This new shift placed the 179th on the left flank of the Division, with the 180th Inf on its right.

With one prong striking northeast of captured Strassbourg and the Rhine, and another prong slowly bottling the enemy in large numbers in the Colmar pocket, the remainder of 7th Army was now free to smash north in a solid mass toward the Maginot Line, the German border and the Westwall. Striking parallel to the Rhine and skirting the edge of the rugged forested mountains forming the Upper Vosges Range, the attackers were closing in on the heart of the German defenses guarding the Saar Basin and Palatinate, Germany's richest soil west of the Rhine.

Lacing into the Germans in unison with all other units on the front, at daylight November 27 the 179th's 1st Battalion jumped off to spearhead the Combat Team's drive. Company B smashed through Niedersoultzbach to seize the ridges north of town, while "A" paralleled its advance on the right and beat back several sharp German thrusts designed to cut into Baker Company's flank.

To speed the advance and prevent the Germans from gaining time to form new lines along the way, the 45th threw all three combat teams into the line abreast, the 157th Inf moving in on the 179th's left. Renewing the push with dawn on November 28, the 179th committed all three assault battalions.

Wading the Moder River, the 1st Battalion struck at Menchhoffen. German tank fire pounded the advancing khaki line, but the RCT's accurate artillery fire drove the enemy armor out of town and Company A raced in to clean up the vil-

lage. Other battalion troops swept on to seize the road junction and set up blocks east of town, while Red patrols swept the plains to the front. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions also jumped off with the 1st. Company L took Zutzendorf, then led the attack on Nieffern and the woods to the north. Company E pushed northeast to take Schillersdorf; Company F passed through it to tackle Muhlhausen. But "F" was held up by fierce mortar, tank and small arms fire the Germans were throwing from town.

Jumping off again that afternoon, the 179th companies continued to leapfrog each other, leaving reserve companies to mop up and occupy the towns immediately behind the attacking forces. White launched its all out assault on Muhlhausen with "G" charging northwest through Nieffern and F and E storming the village from the south supported by tanks and TDs. Savage enemy fire and house to house resistance met the attackers, but the charging infantrymen finally drove the Germans out of Muhlhausen at 2000.

Ponderously, but as rentlessly as a steamroller, the push continued. In the 179th sector Company G gained the ridges northeast of Engwiller at 0915 Nov. 29. The Germans immediately began infiltrating behind "G", but were beaten off as "F" raced up to close the gap on George's flank.

At the same time the Germans, following a vicious artillery barrage, counter-attacked at Muhlhausen. They reached the buildings at the edge of town, and the fight swayed back and forth until the enemy, his force depleted by the loss of 30 dead and many wounded and prisoners, gave up the assault.

The 3rd's K and L Companies, supported by artillery to match the heavily armored resistance, directly assaulted Uhrwiller. When the town was cleared the 1st Battalion came up and drove through Blue into the woods northwards.

As, with the clearing of Uhrwiller, the battle focused on Engwiller, the 179th lines swung almost due east. On November 30 at dawn Companies A and C smashed ahead 400 yards, wiped out several enemy pockets, and knifed into the woods northwest of Engwiller, where they ran smack into trouble—in the form of German tanks. Combat Team artillery and mortars threw up a screen of smoke shells, under cover of which American tanks raced up and joined the doughboys. Immediately attacking with their armored support, the 179th infantrymen battled opposing tanks and infantry all day through the wooded area.

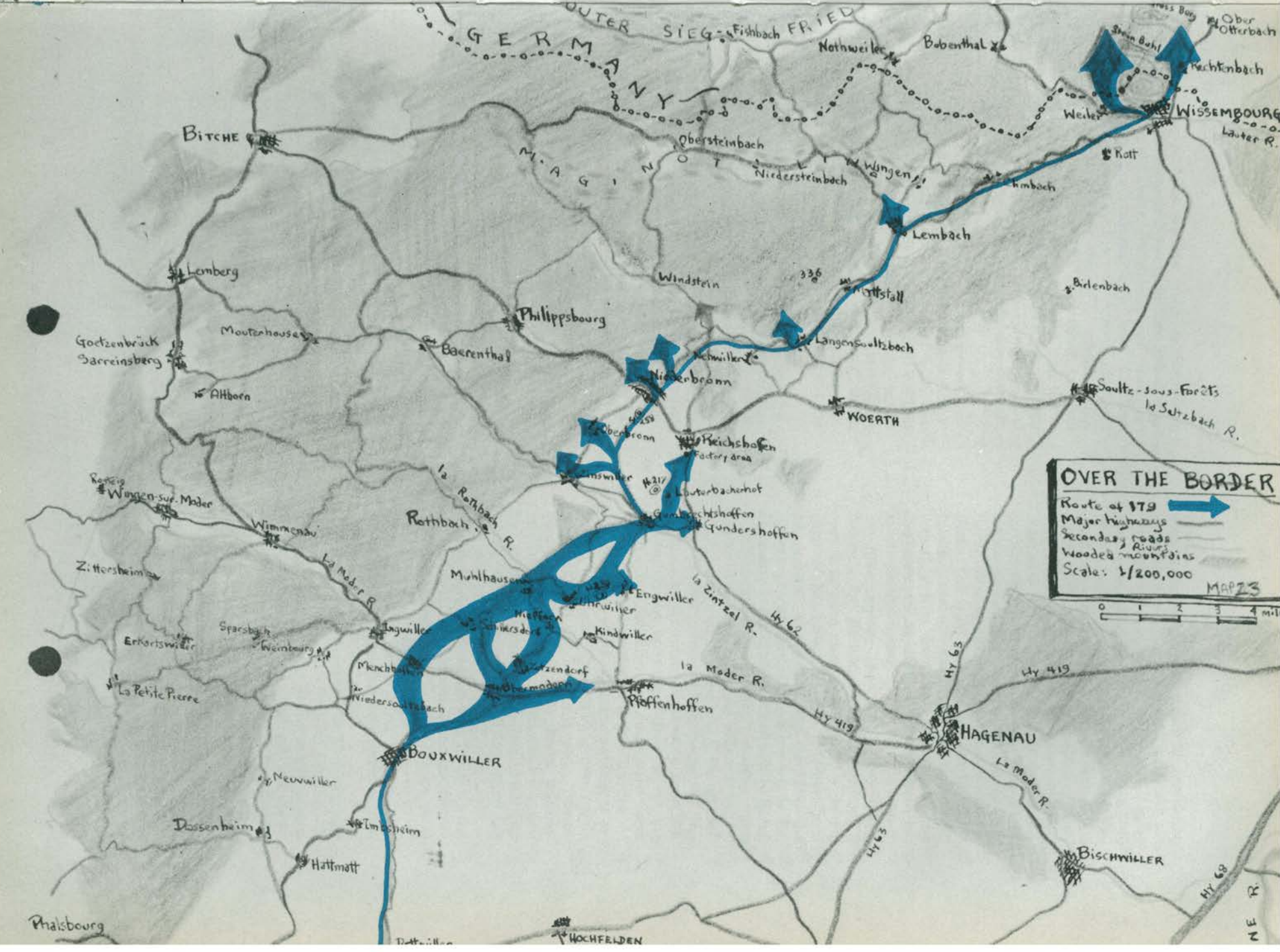
The Regiment was striking with two other prongs as well. The 2nd Battalion, moving northeast, seized the heights two kilometers southwest of Gumbrechtshoffen, then Company G beat off wave on wave of counter-attacking Germans. Company E, then "F", shoved off and cut the road skirting the woods with fire. And late that afternoon the 3rd Battalion had Company I, battling up the slopes and breaking through the enemy defenses, firmly ensconced on Hill 238.

On the last day of November Gen. Eagles was wounded when his peep hit a mine, and Gen. Butler assumed command of the 45th. Meantime the Regiment consolidated its positions between its sister regiments, the 180th in Kindwiller and the 157th at Zinswiller, and kept on tenaciously battling in the woods northwest of Engwiller against an enemy who, using tanks and artillery to their fullest in support of German infantry, would not quit.

Even with the 2nd Battalion controlling all the woods north of Engwiller and the 1st slashing at the town itself, it was only after the 180th pushed up on the right flank that the Germans yielded Engwiller and withdrew across the streams to the northeast.

As the 45th, flanked by the 100th and 103rd (U.S.) Divisions, stepped up its pressure until the push had assumed the proportions of a major offensive, on Dec. 3 command of the 45th was taken by able, suave Maj. Gen. Robert T. Frederick. Famous as one of the youngest generals officers in the Army, Gen. Frederick had already commanded the 1st Special Service Force and the 1st Airborne Task Force.

Switching to a night assault, shortly after midnight December 3, the 179th's Companies E and G jumped off east toward Gumbrechtshoffen, or "Gumdrop" as the troops dubbed it. Securing that part of town that lay south of the stream bed at 0255, White's C.O. shot patrols across the stream near the blown out bridge. The scouts met heavy fire, but held a small bridgehead through the night. And at 0400 3rd Battalion troops raced up and attacked across the stream into the northern half of Gumdrop. They drove the Germans out of town, then surged on up the heights to the north.


GERMANY
Fishbach
Nothweiler
Bobenthal
Ober Otterbach
Rechtenbach
WISSEMBOURG
Lauter R.
Weiler
Steinbuhl
Obersteinbach
Niedersteinbach
MAGINOT LINE
Wingen
Ratt
Lembach
Birlenbach
Bitche
Lemberg
Windstein
336
Philippsburg
Goetzenbruck
Sarreinsberg
Mouterhouse
Baerenthal
Schwilker
Langensoultzbach
Niederbronn
Soultz-sous-Forêts
la Soltzbach R.
WOERTH
Reichshoffen
Factory area
Gunderschoffen
Wingen-sur-Moder
Wimmenau
la Rothbach R.
Rothbach
Zittersheim
la Moder R.
Mühlhausen
Engwiller
la Zintzel R.
Hy 62
Hy 63
Hy 419
Ingwiller
Kindwiller
Sparsbach
Weinburg
Erkartswiller
Menchhoffen
Obermodern
Niedersoultzbach
Pfaffenhoffen
HAGENAU
La Petite Pierre
BOUXWILLER
Neuwiller
Dossenheim
Hattmatt
Phalsbourg
BISCHWILLER
Hy 68
HOCHFELDEN
OVER THE BORDER
Route of 179
Major highways
Secondary roads
Rivers
Wooded mountains
Scale: 1/200,000
MAP 23
0 1 2 3 4 mi

Here the enemy held stubbornly in his dugouts and trenches, and the doughboys withdrew. Reforming and attacking again, that afternoon L and K Companies seized the objective, suffering heavy casualties. With "L" guarding the bridgehead and "K" covering the left flank, Company I fanned out and drove northeast, into withering fire. The troops crept and sprinted on. They gained the ridge west of the factory area in Reichshoffen.

The sun cooled. The rains were frequent and biting. The mud was as sucking as it had been in the last war. The troops turned up their collars and pushed on. The 179th continued to make small gains, every yard bitterly contested. Its lines faced east, running north and south, the 3rd Battalion at the northern tip, the 2nd in the center and the 1st holding the southernmost end of the line.

"G" seized Lauterbacherhof and patrolled across the stream to Gundershoffen. The 3rd Battalion took Hill 258 against savage resistance, but could not eliminate enemy troops on the crest overlooking Niederbronn for 20 hours. The battalion was relieved by Red's troops, which were hit by counter-attacking enemy infantry and armor 10 minutes after completing the relief. Bearing the brunt of the assault, "A" nevertheless held firm, and with the aid of artillery batteries pounding the armor, repelled the assault.

Supporting artillery fire power was increased by the attachment of the 59th AFA Bn in direct support and the employment of 189th FA Bn elements for reinforcing fire. This murderous fire gradually whittled down the Germans as they defended furiously around Hill 258 and the factory area of Reichshoffen. And the 179th's right flank was strengthened on December 10 when the 180th Inf attacked north into Gundershoffen and then went on over the heights beyond that town to close in on Reichshoffen from the south.

As the 45th's three combat teams drove on abreast with the 103rd Div paralleling their advance on the right, wider and wider grew the yawning flank on the left, facing nothing but mountains, forests, and Heinies. The Division was tactically compelled to revert to 6th Corps control. For the gap had widened until there was a 30-kilometer hole between the 45th and the next 15th Corps unit on the left, the 100th Division. And in that gap there was no American force except one motorized patrol group riding up and down the mountain passes!

The 157th, moving along the edge of the wooded mountains, was forced to drive northeast and converge with the 180th, so the 179th was squeezed out. The 157th and 180th RCTs pressed on, and the 179th took over a new mission: the manning of road blocks protecting those numerous passes and draws leading down the Vosges Mountains onto the plains on the 45th Division's open flank. The hills themselves had been bypassed, and in them the Germans still lurked. It was the 179th's mission to stop the enemy if he drove southeast from his mountain fastnesses.

Blocking on the 157th's left flank, Pagan's 3rd Battalion sent Companies I and K to man road blocks in the woods west of Niederbronn. The riflemen beat off several enemy feelers probing the American defenses; but on the whole the Germans in the hills kept ominously quiet.

Company I pushed deeper into the valley. With attached armor it set up a road block at Philippsbourg. Small German patrols attempted to penetrate the position by infiltration but were repelled. Bolstering the slowing Allied drive, the 179th's Red Battalion was committed north of Langensoultzbach on Poison's right.

So, with some 10 infantry and 2 armored divisions, 7th Army drove north, from Metz to the Rhine, through Strassbourg, beyond Hagenau, almost parallel to Bitche. The attack rolled until stopped by fanatical resistance, then built up again and smashed on. All the while the 45th was in the fore.

Its line, manned by the 157th on the left of the 180th, stretched three kilometers east from Lembach. Up the draws went the Thunderbirds, through the ill-fated Maginot Line at Lembach, now scornfully disdained by the enemy as a defense line, toward the German border.

Effective December 7 Lt. Col. Murphy was promoted to the rank of Colonel. A rare achievement for a National Guard officer, his promotion justified the Regiment's faith in its leader and its opinion that in Lt. Cols. Johnson, Grace and Murphy the 179th had been blessed with superior soldiers for Ex-Os.

And on December 13 the 45th Infantry Division completed its 365th day of combat.

Never very publicity-conscious as a unit, comparatively undecorated, yet the

45th had quietly piled up a full year in action out of 18 months foreign service. It was in its eighth campaign (Sicily, Salerno, Volturno, Winter Line, Anzio, May Offensive, Southern France, and western Germany—Alsace). Because it was tough and tried, it was a trouble-shooting outfit, and more was expected of it than of most divisions. It was kept too busy to concentrate on publicity, on writing up awards, on lapping up the gravy.

As the Division neared the enemy's home frontier west of the Rhine, resistance grew more savage and fanatical. On December 15, while the 160th F.A. Bn was firing its first shell into Germany itself (and the 231, 671st round it had fired in combat!) at 1330 Companies K and L of the 180th Infantry inched over the invisible line.

No sooner were they over the border than the doughboys hit the fringes of the Siegfried Line, and from the endless pill-boxes the Germans fought back like madmen! Touching German soil was like touching an inflamed, agonizing sore-spot —to judge from the enemy's reflex.

Chapter 26. Counterattack!

In just 15 days the 45th had smashed up the plains from Saverne through the Maginot Line and over the German border to the Westwall's outer defenses! It was out on a limb: its line from Nothweiler to Bobenthal was in advance of the units flanking it: on the east, tied in physically to the Division line, the 103rd Division front ran from Climbach to Birlenbach, while the 14th AD was grouped east of Wissembourg in patrol contact with the 79th Division on the extreme right.

On the far left the 100th Division was south of Sturzelbronn, and *still* only Rcn troops bridged the expanse of mountain terrain separating the 2 divisions, a setup that courted disaster. But the Division Commander could not do anything about it except hope that disaster didn't come.

Short on manpower partly because two of its crack units, the 3rd and 36th Divisions, were helping the French to contain the belligerent German forces hanging on in the Colmar pocket, the 7th Army attack bogged down as it smacked into the intertwined pillbox defenses of the Siegfried Line.

And while the 45th began measuring its gains in yards, the 179th continued to block the Lembach passes. The battalions reconnoitered northeast toward Nothweiler as the Commanding General recommended the 179th make ready to attack on the left of the 180th Inf. But on December 18 these plans were cancelled: because of circumstances far removed from the 7th Army sector but nevertheless very much affecting it.

Far to the north von Rundstedt, brilliant German field commander of the western front, had launched the biggest enemy counter-offensive since the Allied landings in France. Driving with over 15 panzer and infantry divisions into Belgium and Luxembourg, the Hun was proving himself far from beaten. With lightning spearheads reminiscent of the 1939 "blitz", the Germans overran the Allied lines, overran whole divisions, supply dumps, ammo depots and rear echelon heavy ordnance battalions. Allied G-2 had been asleep, blind to huge enemy forces massed along the front for an attack! The attackers, avalanching better than 200,000 men on the Allies at once, made tremendous headway until, like waves on a shore, their sweep lost momentum and finally began to recede.

But only time could replace the quantities of equipment, armament, supplies and troops captured by the enemy. And though the Germans lost thousands of crack troops, they gained precious moments in which to strengthen their defenses within Germany.

For the German drive forestalled a planned Allied attack. Their entire grand strategy upset, now the Americans and British were forced to draw on all their reserves to stop the Germans from breaking through and isolating the 1st, 9th and two British armies in the north.

It was left to daring, invincible Patton to organize this counter-offensive. Pat-

ton was the man to do it, and soon had a mighty force driving into the southern flank of the tentacle-like prongs of the German push. To do it, however, he had to draw on troops from everywhere. So the 7th Army had to relinquish the 103rd Division to relieve a 3rd Army armored division which would be thus released from its sector to swing north against the enemy salient.

The 45th Division, therefore, took over the 103rd's sector, in addition to its own, and extended its line to the right. The Combat Team moved up to relieve the 409th Inf, 103rd Division. The 179th's 1st Battalion became the Division's only reserve.

The Regimental C.P. was set up in Wissembourg and the night of December 21 the initial phase of the relief took place with Company F relieving 3rd Bn, 410th Inf, elements. In the grey light of predawn the 2nd and 3rd Battalions moved into the line: by 0930 White occupied the high ground in the woods north of Weiler, Blue was in position on the right in the neighborhood of Rechtenbach. The C.P. shifted to Weiler, and at 1050 command of the sector passed to the C.O., 179th Inf.

By noon the 160th's batteries were ready to fire support for the ground troops deployed in a semi-circular line for five kilometers on the 180th's right flank. At once they were in great demand: by enemy SPs and pillboxes, begging to be shelled.

The German riflemen, however, kept to their holes, so the Yanks had time to consolidate, improve their defenses, sow their own mine fields and booby traps for a change, prepare demolitions and set up road blocks. Too thinly spread to attack themselves, the Americans worked hecticly to construct a solid, strong line. If the enemy attacked, they'd give him a dose of his own medicine.

But the Germans were also incapable of attacking in strength. So they, too, took out additional insurance with more mine fields and improved road blocks. The latter, built over a period of months, were formidable: one block just across the border was established on a road bisecting such deep forests and rugged hills that it was impossible to bypass it. Attacking it frontally, therefore, the troops first ran into a block with defending machine guns and a tank gun. Behind this lay 600 yards of flooded area, then 200 yards of felled trees, each full of hidden booby traps, then a booby-trapped mine field, and finally a second road block covered by concrete forts and antitank guns. No wonder the Germans in their pillboxes felt quite secure.

So while the main battle raged in the north and the German offensive crumbled until only a small salient remained of von Rundstedt's terrible onslaught, in the south the days faded one into the next. Activity was only spasmodic.

That doesn't mean there wasn't unhealthy excitement for the individual soldier. On December 23 Pfc. Elwood P. Brown, of Company K, which had been losing men daily from enemy machine gun fire coming from a Westwall pillbox opposite its hill positions, took off across 150 yards of open terrain with a 40-pound pack charge. The enemy let loose a wild fire, but he reached the pillbox, ignited his charge, then beat it to nearby cover. The explosion had no effect on the pillbox. So Brown recrossed the open ground, alone and vulnerable, but again reached the target in one piece. He set another charge. This time the blast blew off a corner of the concrete fort. Pfc. Brown, and the enemy, withdrew. But in opposite directions.

Gen. Butler left the 45th on December 24, and Col. Adams replaced him as ACG. The next day, crisp and cold, a steel blue Christmas sky was speckled by endless Allied bomber echelons. While folks at home opened packages and perhaps Christmas cards from their sons in the 45th, streaks of white high above the doughboys were marking the swaths cut by plane upon plane winging for Germany. Even the Luftwaffe indulged in a few sallies.

Ground patrols that went out that day were grateful for the quiet that reigned along the 179th front. The chief celebration was turkey for noon chow. But also, the Regiment got its initial quota for 3-day leaves in Paris and for the Division rest center just opened in Niederbronn. Soon passes were available to the 45th for Brussels, subsequently for England.

Through the last days of December contact with the enemy was close. The Americans sallied out regularly to attack and demolish pillboxes, organized local attacks and combat patrols to keep track of the enemy s strength and defenses. The 180th was still on the RCT's left. The 315th Inf, 79th Div, relieved the 14th AD and moved in on the 179th's right. The two di-

visions held firm on their MLR, but the 45th also kept a wary eye on its left flank, where the woods and mountains, now undefended at the passes, loomed ominously silent—and menacing.

December 26 saw the 3rd Battalion pull back from Gross Berg to Stein Buhl. The new positions, a kilometer south of the old, marked the preliminary step of 7th Army's proposed withdrawal to a new MLR which, if executed, would yield all the territory taken north of Hagenau to the elements—or the Germans. The present meandering line required so many troops to man that Army was denied defense in any depth. The proposed positions would run straight along the Maginot Line to Hagenau and Strassbourg, pivoted at the western tip on the 45th Division. It was not retreat, but a logical precaution to avoid an enemy trap, solidify the line and insure the flanks.

So that the plan could be effected immediately on order, Operations Instructions were published and details set. Delaying and covering forces were selected by the 179th commander. The impending necessity of withdrawing broke the hearts of the men who had fought so bitterly to take that ground. To give it all up without a fight! Too, it was hard on civilians in that area sympathetic to the Allies, for they would have to withdraw as well now that their sentiments had come from underground into the light.

While the 179th troops held on the present MLR, therefore, they prepared defenses to the rear, almost sheepishly awaiting the order which would find the 45th falling back for the first time in its history. The snow piled higher and higher as day upon day flakes fell steadily from a mottled sky.

By December 29 the Luftwaffe was stepping up its raids along the front. Enemy paratroopers were dropped near Niederbronn, others were discovered far behind the lines, at Phalsbourg and Saverne. Nerves tensed, and at night security guards snapped out the challenge and cocked triggers at the slightest sound. Germans in the Bitche sector infiltrated through the woods on the 45th's left, where recon troops and TF Huddleson[1] defended with light forces. Fighting between patrols occurred with increasing frequency and violence along the front's perimeter.

Beyond the 79th Division and Gen. Patch's two armored divisions, the 12th and 14th, on 7th Army's extreme eastern flank, came another enemy threat. The Americans fought furiously to contain German task forces which crossed the Rhine north of Strassbourg.

New Year's Eve was a sober occasion: celebrations were outlawed in fear of a German attack. Nor was the alert a false alarm. The attack came.

It began in the small hours of the morning on New Year's Day and developed through the forenoon. It came, not against the manned front, but into the Saverne Gap from Bitche: Germans poured down the passes between the thickly forested, snow covered mountains, aiming to link up with the Strassbourg bridgehead attacking southwest and the Colmar pocket forces striking northwest, aiming to cut off all the American forces northeast of Saverne. The enemy, despite his appalling losses in the northern fiasco, now struck south in the sequel, desperately determined to give the German people something to cheer about!

No sooner did the first wind of the enemy push reach the rear than pandemonium broke out. Rear echelons remembered the fate of 1st Army rear echelons. 7th Army Hqs, 12th TAC Hqs, huge trucking and ordnance outfits, all picked up and fled. Leaving food uneaten on the table, they "partied" and never stopped until they had reached Luneville! Traffic was paralyzed, the roads jammed with trucks, peeps, trailers and vans—all going back. The terrible waste that always follows an army was multiplied many fold as endless equipment was abandoned. Like H. G. Wells' "The End of the World", the rear pulled out as if the end had really come. But the infantry stuck.

By daylight January 1 the Germans were coming down the mountains in force,

---

1—Composed of 70th Division elements. Like the 42nd and 63rd Divisions, the 70th was good-humoredly dubbed the "American Volksturm Grenadiers" by members of the press, unofficially. They did seem to be led by amazingly naive officers. One of these units' C.O. commended the 179th's worst AWOL offender because he led part of that unit a few yards forward—not even under fire. Another of these regimental officers asked the RCT's staff where the 45th had picked up its equipment on landing in France. His outfit had been equipped in Marseilles, and the officer couldn't comprehend how the 45th had obtained impedimenta unless it had been waiting on the docks. Another gentleman by Act of Congress asked if the new MLR would be taped out so he could find it! And all these troops told the Thunderbirds they'd been warned in the USA not to heed anything anyone in the 3rd, 36th or 45th Divisions said, as these veterans were blood-thirsty and didn't give a damn for human life. Still, all old hands are inclined to forget that they were once beginners.

beating back TF Huddleson from its Lemberg-Baerenthal line. To counteract this offensive, 7th Army stripped its line elsewhere, grabbed a battalion here and another there, and hurled these separate battalions into the Gap. The first organized unit made available to go and stop this drive was the 179th Infantry.

The 2nd and 3rd Battalions, relieved by the 36th Eng Regt, moved to Lembach, then headed southwest, over icy mountain roads along sheer cliffs. It was bitter cold. But the old timers remembered winter at Venafro and grinned, with cracked lips. Trucks slithered and skidded, sank into deceptive snow banks, and stuck.

Slowly, past huge 8-inch howitzers and infantry platoons massing at Niederbronn to join the 157th in defending mountain passes there, past troops from the Niederbronn 45th Rest Center stoically abandoning their long-awaited rest for a fight, past fleeing refugees—old women and children frightened and cold and pulling carts and baby-carriages piled high with their miserable worldly possessions, past columns of 14th AD tanks moving in both directions at once, through confusion that on a small scale must have resembled the French debacle of '39, the 179th rolled into the silvery mountains beyond Ingwiller. The enemy infiltrated here, then there. Rumors put them everywhere.

At Wingen-sur-Moder the C.O. set up his headquarters at 0830 January 2. The 2nd Battalion raced up the road to Goetzenbruck and Sarreinsberg and threw up defenses in that sector. The 1st set up blocks in zone. The 3rd moved to south of Meisenthal and prepared to fight along the ridges flanking the valley toward Melch.

The advancing enemy ran into the 179th's doughboys. Meeting opposition he began to support his infantry with sledge-hammer shelling. He attacked furiously all day while behind the 179th the Americans desperately amassed a hodge podge of some 19 infantry battalions to stem the drive.

Widely scattered, from the 157th at Niederbronn to the 179th at Wingen, the 45th could have used its old friends, the 3rd and 36th Divisions. Instead, because his was the only organized command in the sector, 7th Army put all of these odd units under Gen. Frederick! By January 2, in addition to the entire 45th, attached to help defend the Saverne Gap he had the 36th Engr Regt; 275th and 276th Inf Regts (70th Div); 313th Inf Regt (less 3rd Bn), 1st Bn, 314th Inf Regt, and 1st Bn, 315th Inf Regt (both 79th Div); and five AFA Bns and two FA Bns! In addition, the 19th Armored Inf Bn was supporting the 179th's 2nd Battalion.

The enemy's greatest pressure was at the extreme left flank. Pushing down between the 179th's 2nd and 3rd Battalions, the Germans separated the two units and denied the RCT use of the north-south highway linking them. Also a gap yawned on the 1st's right.

Thirty minutes after midnight Jan. 3 Red's troops smashed back 300 enemy, then attacked through furious fire to the north. The 3rd Battalion beat off a two-company assault at 0400, then slashed back to tear at the powerful German forces still pouring down the ridges into the 2nd-3rd gap.

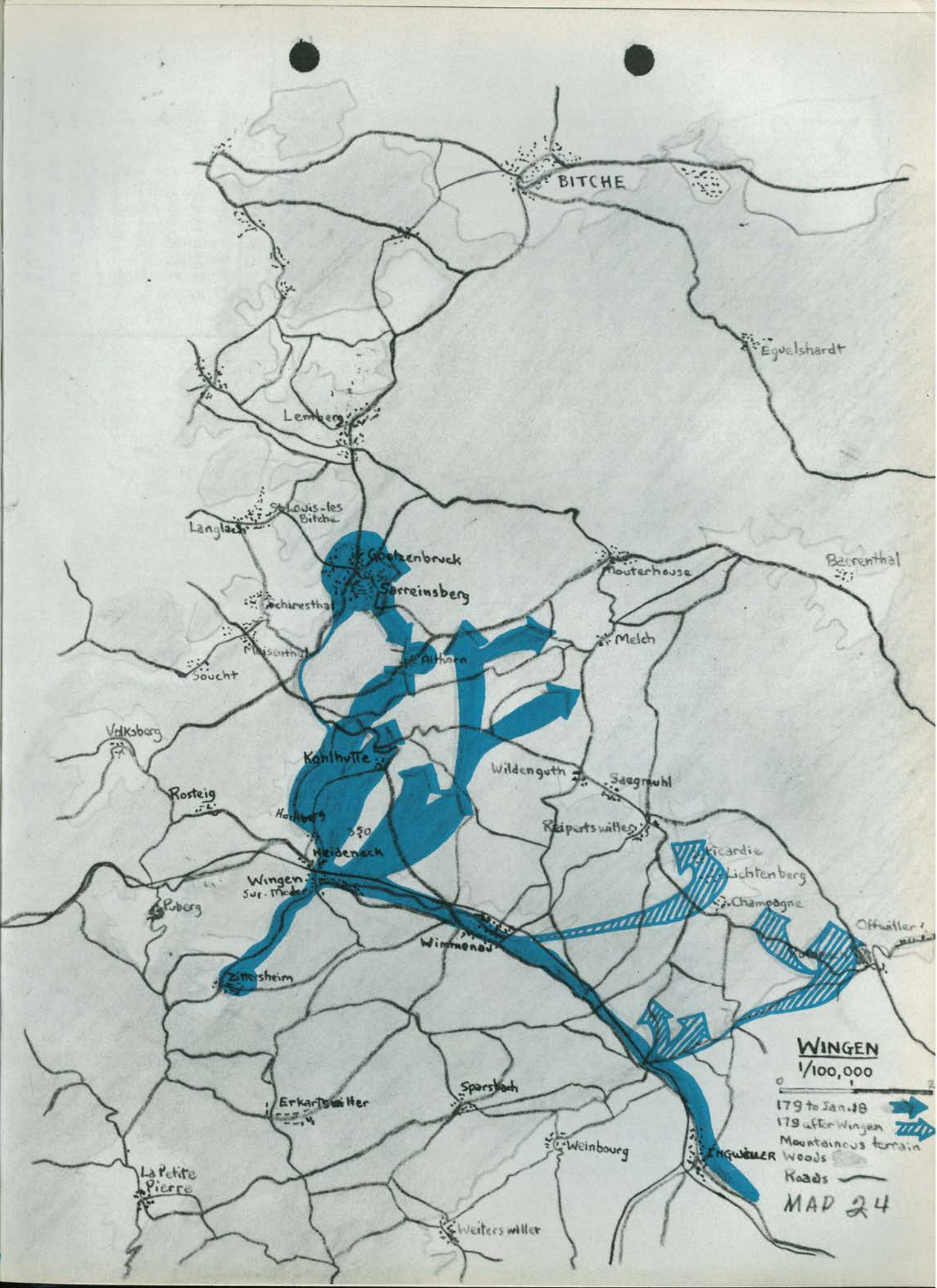
White's doughboys drove south from Sarreinsberg, into intense infantry and tank fire, and were only saved from isolation by retaining contact with the 100th Division on their left.

Wingen got too hot and the Regimental C.P. moved back to Zittersheim. The fight raged on, but neither side could make headway. Both were attacking. The 180th arrived on the scene.

But before Passport could attack to fill the gap on the 1st Battalion's right, the enemy leaped into the hole. At 0805 January 4 he began swarming down Mt. Hochberg to seize Wingen and the Wimmenau-Wingen highway. As the first Germans crept into Wingen, 1st Bn Hqs personnel opened fire. More enemy infantrymen poured into the town. The fire fight got hotter: bullets sang, ricocheted and smacked into the walls, artillery shells burst in the streets and exploded in the buildings. The troops of both sides hugged the dirt, then stuck their heads up and picked each other off.

The Germans were crack troops: the 1st and 3rd Bns, 12th Regt, 6th SS Mtn Division, Nord (Michael Gaissmair). Thy had been rushed three days before from Norway via Denmark, on bicycles! 256th and 257th Volksturm Grenadier Division elements were also being employed.

The 180th attacked and pulled abreast of the 179th's Red Battalion, unifying the line facing north. The


BITCHE
Egvelshardt
Lemberg
St Louis-les Bitche
Langlack
Spetzenbruck
Sarreinsberg
Schiresthal
Meisenthal
Soucht
Althorn
Volksberg
Kahlhutte
Rosteig
Hochberg
Meisenneck
Wingen sur-Moder
Puberg
Wildenguth
Seegmuhl
Reiparts willer
Mouterhouse
Melch
Barrenthal
Picardie
Lichtenberg
Champagne
Offwiller
Wimmenau
Zittersheim
Sparsbach
Erkartswiller
Weinbourg
Ingwiller
La Petite Pierre
Weiters willer
WINGEN
1/100,000
179 to Jan. 18
179 after Wingen
Mountainous terrain
Woods
Roads
MAP 24

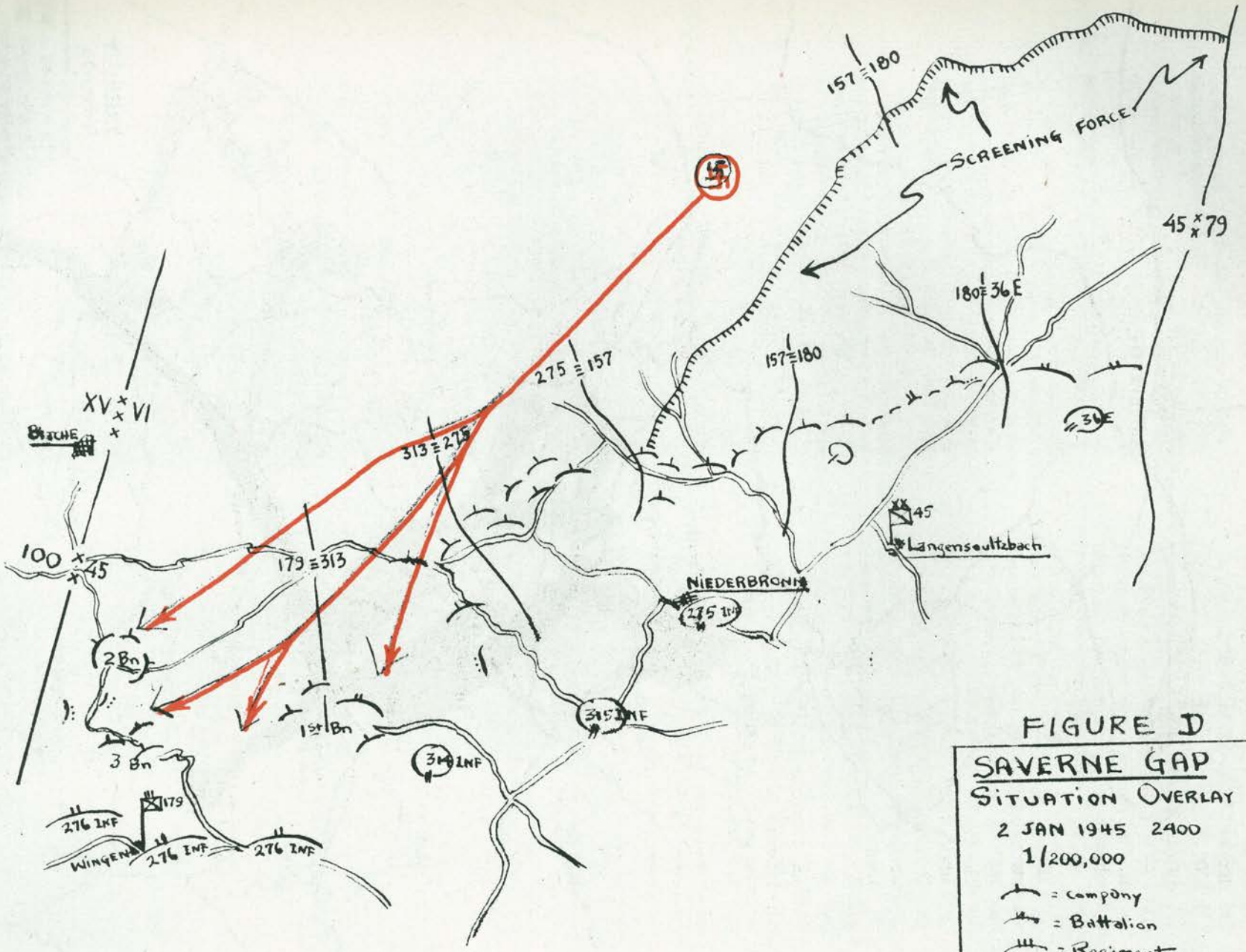


FIGURE D

SAVERNE GAP

MAP 25

SITUATION OVERLAY

2 JAN 1945 2400

1/200,000

= company

= Battalion

= Regiment

-XX- = Division

XXX = Corps Boundary

= Regimental Boundaries

Germans in Wingen were thus isolated, but two battalions strong, they now controlled the town, and the 179th's 1st Bn Hqs echelon was captured.

Red's infantry boys begged to be allowed to about face and attack Wingen to release their comrades. Orders forbad it, for despite the enemy behind the front, the line facing north had to be held. So instead, the 276th Inf Regt was alerted to go into action.

The situation along the fluid front changed hourly. "B" annihilated 30 Germans pushing down to contact the Wingen Germans. "G" with tanks inched south from Meisenthal. "F" smashed two local attacks. Artillery duels and infantry battles raged everywhere. And everywhere by its aggressive action the 45th was stopping the enemy from breaking through to the Saverne Plains.

Pfc. Breshears of Company B, 120th Med Bn, escaped from Wingen and reported 75 Germans wounded and 100 179th PWs in town. Everyone asked him about special buddies and friends. S/Sgt. Charles Chevalier, 179th Med Det, braved fierce fire from both sides to come through the lines with a German medic, obtain blood plasma for the wounded of both armies, and return to Wingen, a surrounded and battered village, a wreckage of charred buildings, burning vehicles, and still bodies in khaki and grey.

With dusk the enemy in Wingen, still unaware that the escape route behind him was closed, yet growing anxious because no reinforcements had arrived, began to infiltrate out of town toward the German lines. Few Germans got through.

While the attachments milled around and the 276th Inf still "prepared" to attack on the outskirts of Wingen, above town the 45th's own RCTs kept battling north. The 179th's 2nd Battalion fought savagely from perimeter defenses around its two towns; Red's companies advanced up the ridges below Althorn; and Companies I and K of the 3rd Battalion closed in on the heights east of Meisenthal, through blistering rifle, machine gun and mortar fire.

By January 7 the enemy forces knew the situation at Wingen, and tried to break out in full strength. They took with them their captive officers, but left behind unharmed the 179th's enlisted prisoners.

The officers sweated out their own mortar and machine gun fire. They crawled and crept as the Germans directed, prodded along by bayonets. Then, during a heavy barrage from their own Company C, the 179th officers split and made a break for it. They scattered and raced for shelter, hit a ditch and flattened out. Nobody followed. The Jerries took off and left them. For a miracle, no one shot them as they returned to the Regiment's own lines.

All day the Charlie Companies of both the 179th and 180th battled the Germans, facing both directions at once. The rest of the 1st Battalion, alongside of the 3rd, began to make progress northwards. By dark White's Easy Company, with "G" and the 19th AI Bn, had pierced south to take the ridges above Althorn.

And by dark the Wingen fight was over. 6 officers and 97 EMs of the 179th returned from their brief captivity and, with the Germans no longer behind the Regimental front and the line stabilized, held the local spotlight for a moment with stories of their personal exploits.

With all its battalions tied in together again, on January 8 the Regiment resumed the initiative and attacked to smash the enemy's striking power. Air assaults on Mouterhouse ahead of the infantry helped disrupt the German defenses. The C.P. moved back to Wingen, into the town's only undamaged building.

With Red's doughboys scaling the heights southeast and cutting the road north of town, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions assaulted Althorn itself. The troops sliced into the village from the surrounding hills, the 2nd on the northeast, the 3rd on the southwest. House by house the stubborn Heinies had to be wiped out. It took all night, and the next day. Finally at 1430 January 11 Althorn was clear of the enemy.

50 PWs were seized in town. 100 more gave up when they were caught trying to escape from Althorn. In 10 days, the Regiment had captured 282 Germans, bringing its total taken since landing in France to 3,690 PWs.

The fighting settled down to local but destructive slugging. 7th Army again started pushing inch by inch through the rising heights eastward, to regain the once-conquered territory all over again. But this time there was little fear of a large scale enemy counter-offensive. The enemy had shot his bolt.

The critical period was over. The German drive had been smashed and the

45th, savior of the Saverne Gap, was preparing to press on again, to Germany.

Steady but unspectacular as the 45th's advance through Alsace had been, yet it helped 7th Army accomplish a military feat never before attempted much less effected in all military history. For the first time an army had attacked, advanced through and conquered the Vosges Mountains, heretofore believed to be impregnable and impenetrable.

"Dammit, ya promised to bring rations this trip."

By permission of Bill Mauldin

Chapter 27. In the Shadow of the Russian Bear

While the 7th Army front quieted until, commensurate with the Italian theater, patrol engagements were news, and while the Germans were in full retreat from their northern "bulge", in the east the Russians suddenly launched a stupendous offensive which for sheer power had never been duplicated in any war!

Jumping off on January 13 all along the 1000 mile front, the Reds had swift, fabulous success. No wonder: in one sector alone 90 infantry divisions and 15 tanks corps were committed! In twelve world-shaking days the northern spearheads of the five pronged offensive had reached the Baltic near Danzig, isolating all of East Prussia, and had swept past Warsaw across Poland to Posen, 125 miles from Berlin; in the center Red armies had smashed to Breslau and captured Cracow; and in the south they had laid siege to Budapest and forced Hungary's surrender!

So the doughboys on the western front began figuring on home in '45 again, asking at breakfast, dinner and supper, "How're the Reds doing?" Spirits soared. Combat troops cracked to patrol groups: "Be careful if you see a bunch of guys swarming over the hills out front—it's probably the Russians." The foxhole boys hoped it *would* be the Russians who took most of Germany—they'd know how to deal with the krauts!

Each report recorded more incredible gains by the big bear, more stratospheric figures of territory taken, prisoners taken, towns taken. The Germans rushed troops from the western front, remnants of divisions decimated in the abortive Ardennes drive. The Allied air forces countered by hammering every rail and highway hub in the Reich, every city through which the Wehrmacht was moving. They made a holocaust of all Germany.

The Russian drive seemed insurance against any major German attack on the western front, and certainly 7th Army was no powerhouse itself. In the 45th, rifle company strength was down to 3 officers and 95 men. Yet the 45th fought on through bitter cold and white blizzards, to keep the krauts jumpy. Fire fights took place each day; and artillery fire cracked and thundered at the slightest evidence of enemy movement.

On January 15 the 179th took over strong positions along the ranges north of Wildenguth, extending its line eastward to relieve 180th Inf elements. For days the Regiment held here, spending the hours constantly improving its fortifications, registering in defensive fire, laying concertina wire and mine fields to the front, and setting trip flares.[1] The Americans tried a Jerry trick and organized an ambush, but after waiting for several uneventful hours, abandoned it.

Then, suddenly, pulling more troops out of his magician's hat, the enemy launched a local but savage attack

1—When the flares were set off by enemy patrols sneaking through the white-manteled woods, prearranged artillery barrages plastered the area at once.

against the 157th Inf on the RCT's right. The Germans, cutting off the 157th's 3rd Battalion in the woods northeast of Saegmuhl, also infiltrated behind that combat team's E and G Companies.

By January 17 the situation was so critical that the 179th, expanding the 1st and 3rd sectors, withdrew the 2nd Battalion and rushed it that night to Wimmenau, with the mission of attacking north from Lichtenberg to make contact with the 157th. For now the 157th's front not only faced Germans, but behind it was developing another enemy line—leaving the doughboys the spread in a bitter sandwich.

On January 18 the 2nd Battalion attacked this second German line, battling desperately through heavy fire to contact elements of the 157th's 1st Battalion. Through January 19 Pagan White struggled slowly on against savage small arms fire, then supported 411th Inf elements also attacking to extricate the surrounded companies. But by the time the situation was under control the 157th had already lost five companies complete, save for two men.

The 2nd Battalion returned to unit control, releasing provisional reserve platoons (from Sv, Hqs, AT and Cn Companies and the 179th Personnel Section), which had been serving as temporary front line reserve, to revert to their normal duties.

Meanwhile, plans were made for another withdrawal to a new MLR. This projected withdrawal would again leave the Thunderbirds holding the left flank and point while the line fell back on the right. The 179th would man the holding line with two battalions, protecting the 6th Corps left flank and maintaining contact with 15th Corps. Fortunately the Russians, now past Posen and over the eastern frontier of Germany, were advancing faster than the Americans could even *contemplate* withdrawing.

Unexpectedly the withdrawal plan was shelved. The 45th stuck to its snow-covered holes. Continual fighting went on through lashing blizzards in which the troops, fingers frozen to triggers, could only glimpse the enemy through ice-encrusted lids when he was right on top of them.

As the front quieted, Gen. Frederick began to rest his battered combat teams. The badly mauled 157th was pulled back, then the 180th came out. And on January 22, using the still attached separate battalions, the 45th C.G. sent in the 274th Inf for the 179th. As of 1500 the 2nd Battalion reverted to Division Reserve at Wingen. The 1st moved to Weinburg and the 3rd to Puberg, while once again the 179th headquarters set up in Zittersheim.

But the 179th's star wasn't on the rise. The line was thin, and the enemy again threatening, so the next afternoon found the 179th back in supporting positions. A and B Companies of the 1st dug in along the ridge line west of Rothbach; the 3rd Battalion placed K and L on the high ground above Ingwiller facing north and west. Baker's Capt. Hal Weisuhn grumbled, watching the ice melt off his clothes, "Don't they think we're human, too?"

There was no rest for the weary doughboys: action was very light, but there was steady snow, constant cold and dampness, hard rations, trench foot and so, more unalleviated misery.

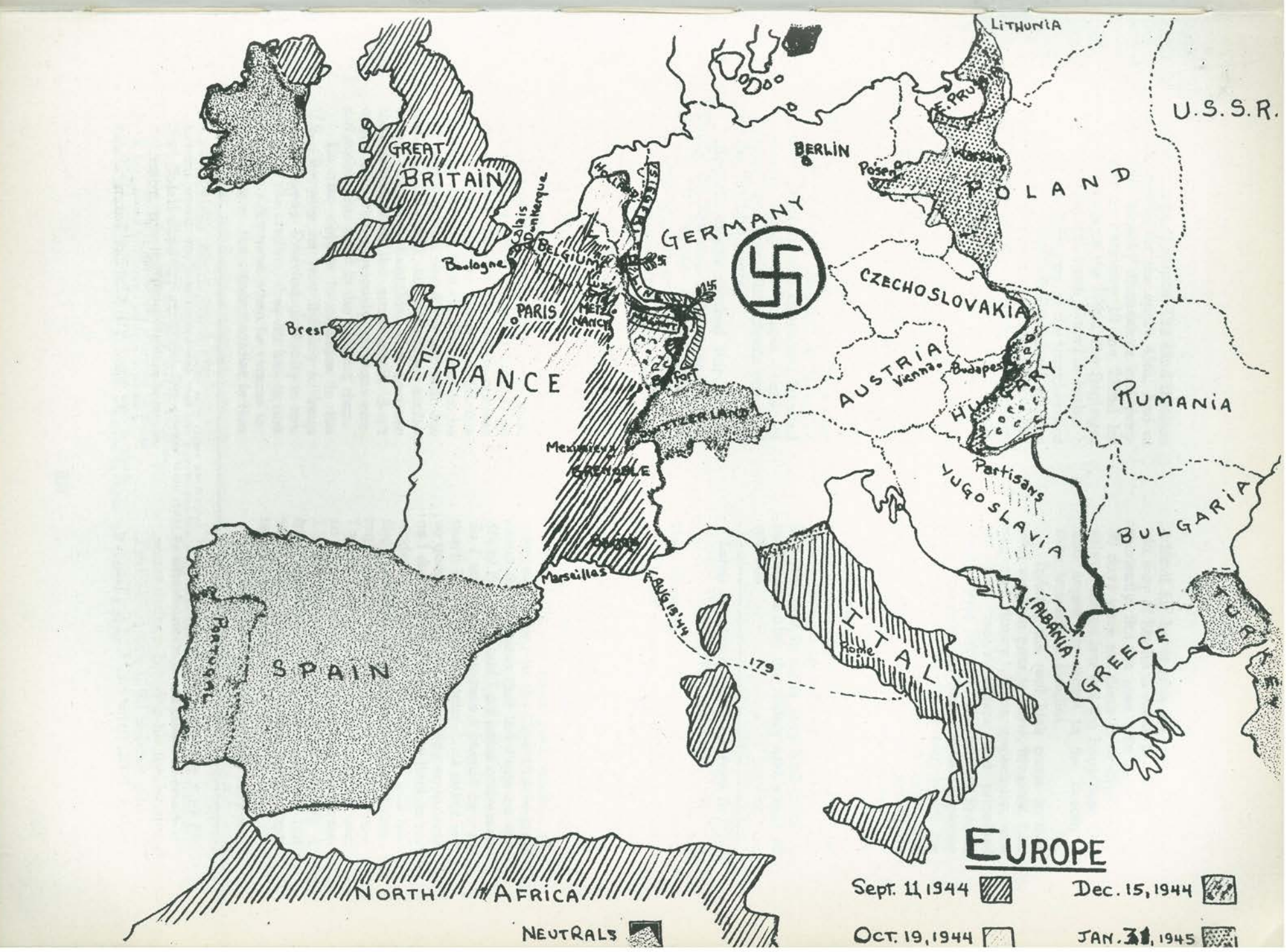
Juggling his hodge podge forces, on January 29 the General decided to return the 179th to its original positions north of Wingen, still unrested. So back went the RCT.

The 1st Battalion stayed behind to support the 36th Engineers south of Champagne. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions resumed their old mountain defenses, relieving 320th Inf elements and tying in on the right with the 180th, on the left with the 137th Inf (35th Division), then when that unit was relieved in the line, with the 398th Inf (100th Div). On February 5 the 179th's 1st Battalion returned to Regimental control and went into the line. Once more the Combat Team had all its units committed on the front.

A week later the 2nd Battalion launched a raid, one of a series along the 7th Army front designed to keep the enemy guessing, to make him expect an imminent push in the sector while a real offensive was being developed elsewhere. Throwing a fierce fire as they raced ahead, the men of Companies E and F charged up the hills, engaged in a sharp battle along the mountain slopes, then suddenly withdrew.

Again, the next day spirits soared as staff conferences took place preparatory to the Regiment's relief by the 180th. Again these hopes were dashed. Capt. Weisuhn beat on the ground and cursed everyone—his boys were exhausted, frozen, wrecks. But the 179th was ordered to hold fast.

At least the Combat Team wasn't


LITHUNIA
U.S.S.R.
BERLIN
Posen
POLAND
GREAT BRITAIN
Calais
Dunkerque
Boulogne
BELGIUM
GERMANY
CZECHOSLOVAKIA
PARIS
Metz
Nancy
Brest
FRANCE
AUSTRIA
Vienna
Budapest
HUNGARY
RUMANIA
SWITZERLAND
Mulhouse
Belfort
Grenoble
Partisans
YUGOSLAVIA
BULGARIA
Marseilles
Nice
AUG. 15 '44
179
ITALY
Rome
ALBANIA
GREECE
TURKEY
PORTUGAL
SPAIN
NORTH AFRICA
EUROPE
Sept. 11, 1944
Dec. 15, 1944
NEUTRALS
Oct. 19, 1944
JAN. 31, 1945

stuck for long, this time. The 42nd Division was going in for the entire 45th. And at last, after lengthy discussions and preparations, on February 16 the 222nd Inf began to replace the 179th. The Regiment had not, after all, been placed in limbo.

At 0430 February 17 the truckloads of troops passed through Petersbach and an hour later convoys were rolling into the 179th bivouac area north of Rambervillers. The dog-tired GIs dropped off the trucks. The 3rd Battalion had the zone around Menil-sur-Belvitte, the 2nd was in the vicinity of Xaffevillers, the 1st's area centered in Moyemont. Cannon Company set up in St. Maurice-sur-Mortagne, Anti-Tank in Bazien and the 179th HQ in Roville-aux-Chenes.

It turned out to be no rest area. There were parties, and liberal pass quotas, but after two days of cleanup, an intensive training program was instituted. Tactical problems, firing on ranges, care of weapons and specialist schools occupied all the daylight hours.

Several events marked this period. Firstly, the first men to have gone to the U.S. on TD returned—only to report that they were glad to get back! Many had spent a miserable time at home, many were sorry they had ever gone—men who had thought of nothing else but before they left! They had found the attitude at home no more comprehending than the attitude of PBS!

This tragic situation was no one's fault. The combat soldier returning home doesn't really know what he wants: he resents being ignored, he resents endless questions, he resents civilian indifference or being made a fuss of. The fact is, he only wants to talk about the war with his buddies: they talk his language, understand unspoken thoughts, and because they come from the same outfit, don't argue with him. Obviously, civilians cannot satisfy this need in the fighting man.

He also objects to changes in the U.S. (Because he was fighting to keep it unchanged). Evolving gradually in two years for the civilian, they hit *him* in one fell swoop. Of course when he returns for demobilization, the combat soldier is less critical for he attunes his attitude to the old way of life he is about to resume permanently. But the men who returned for 30 days were not there to readjust themselves, hence few felt the happiness they had hoped for except in the bosom of their immediate families.

Indeed, the real kick came to men who went on pass to Paris, Brussels, London and Nancy.[1] Paris, especially, was all these men's fathers had promised them it was. Women, charmingly French, were available in abundance to please any appetite. Despite a real pinch for food, money and clothes in Paris, theaters bloomed with bawdy, beautifully staged productions. The 'Metro" was free to men in uniform and went everywhere. The cacophonic city noises were a welcome change from strictly GI living. The atmosphere alone sufficed to make most GIs feel that in Paris they had found a real haven after the misery and horror of combat.

Letter Received—179th Inf, from R. L., Paris, Feb. 20, 1945

Dear Captain,—

Probably this letter will surprise you very much. Are you that tall nearly fair-haired about 30 years old captain that came to fetch me in the No. 240 Boulevard R—instead of the 214? If you are not, please excuse me to disturb you.

As I did not know your name and address I asked in the Cite Universities about the captains that left Paris on the 4th of February and I got some addresses. So I write you because I should like so much to find my captain . . . I never felt so good feelings for somebody so quickly as I did for you. When I came back to my student house I told my friends I had met two American officers so nice, so charming! I put on my most beautiful dress and I waited for you all the afternoon I was so disappointed that you did not come. I knew your mistake by chance by a friend who made the same mistake but who could join me because he had my telephone number.

He told me the woman was very sur-

1—Red Cross helped immeasurably to make such cities as Naples, Rome, London and Paris heavens on earth for American troops. The only trouble was that the guy-in-the-line's opportunities to avail himself of these delights were so pathetically infrequent. The average time spent by 179th doughboys in rest centers on pass was:
2 month in Sicily: one five hour pass to Palermo.
5 months in South Italy: three days in Naples.
5 1/2 months at Anzio: one afternoon in Rome.
5 1/2 months in France: no days anywhere.
4 months in Alsace and Germany: two days in Paris.
Thus in 22 months he had utilized these wonderful facilities for exactly 6 days!

prised in the 240 to hear him ask for Mslle L. because a few days before two American officers had asked for her and nobody knew her. I was very much sorry when I heard that and I went immediately to the 240. That woman told me that the two officers were very sorry and disappointed not to find me, so she suggested them it was a bad joke, they at first did not believe it but at last, after having waited for me, they left and were very mad, they told her they would never forget in their lives that a French girl had made such a bad joke to them.

Sure that woman WAS a good woman, but how could she have so stupid ideas in her head? that I could make such a bad mischief? of so bad taste to so nice and handsome officers. She told me she was happy to see at last that tall brunet girl they wanted absolutely to find. When I heard that story my heart was completely broken, What a bad luck!

So I decided to find you again, even without knowing your name. I went to the Cite Universitaire and asked an American officer about the captains that left on the 4th of February. I told him the story and he laughed at me very much: of course he thought it was a tempest in a tea-pot, but nothing can stop me. He gave me some addresses.

Please, if you are not my captain don't laugh too much at me, sure you are a nice man as all the Americans are: unfaithful but nice fellows. I apologize if I disturb you with that awful story. Don't let me anxious and answer me Please, excuse me. Goodbye, dear Captain.

Yours truly,

R———

I told my three best friends in the school that if I found my captain I should be so happy that I should give them exactly what they wanted. The first asked me a jewel representing a jeep, the second stuff for a dress and the third a big cheese. The last two things are very scarce and expensive, so if I find the captain I'll get ruined but so happy. I know that if you are the right captain you will answer immediately.

(N. B. This is a story without an end. Unfortunately, *our* captain was not *the* captain, so I do not know if this delightful young lady ever found *her* captain.)

While the actual was war held in abeyance for the 179th, the paper war, as always in rest areas, sped on. The affidavits, reply-by-indorsements, ad infinitum, that accompanied every reported trench foot case alone made it apparent why it was requiring some nine men in the rear to keep one soldier in actual combat, why the human meat grinder had to be stuffed in order to get the slightest trickle coming out the end—the front end!

Awards for past heroic exploits were written in this period, though the Regiment still lagged behind the more aggressive 157th and 180th administrative sections in this category as well as in publicity and special service programs. This was not the fault of the individuals involved so much as an inevitable result of filling "special staff" positions with officers and men for whom there was no other job. Yet the staff had a reason: for the responsibility of soldiers' lives in the line was more important than the responsibility of any secondary function; and whatever its shortcomings in administrative channels, there was no doubt that the 179th got the job done, and well, on the battlefield.

One personal note must be added: for at this time the 179th's Red Cross representative, now also 45th Inf Div field director, was the entire ARC's combat veteran: the only man who had been overseas and remained with a combat unit in the field this long in the entire ETO.

On March 5 the training program took on an entirely fresh aspect: the old schedule was discontinued, and now began an intensive training in river crossings! Practicing on the Moselle River, preparatory to the Regiment's eventual crossing of the majestic Rhine, the 179th command taught its troops all phases of river crossing technique and tactics. Specialized problems were studied exhaustively: laying communication cable across water, clearing obstacles and enemy troops from the opposite bank, and handling of assault boats (double assault, storm and rubber boats, and rafts as well).

After demonstrations, lectures, dry runs and individual training, each assault battalion executed two full scale practice exercises across the Moselle, one daylight and one night crossing, with the support of Company B, 120th Engr Bn. Then the entire command participated in a dress rehearsal crossing with bells, drums and whistles.

Meanwhile in Europe the war had been going wonderously well. USTAAF

had stepped up the air war on the Reich with 2000, 3000, 3500 plane raids. In early February the French and Americans had wiped out the stubborn enemy pocket at Colmar. And the Russians on the eastern front rolled on, smashing army after army of the cracking Wehrmacht.

With nothing to fight for except their own extermination, why did the Germans keep on? Perhaps, because no other responsible government from among a people ready but impotent to quit could be formed? Anyway the war went on. The big Three conferred again. Turkey and even Argentina declared a paper war on Germany in order to get in on the San Francisco Conference.

Then, in early March, the Russians slowed down. They kept rolling in the south, insuring their future "influence" over the Balkan and Central European states, but to the north they paused to consolidate their 1000-mile line along the Oder River and to mop up in East Prussia. When they stopped their deepest penetration had reached Kustrin, just 40 miles from Berlin!

The Russians had delivered a murderous, soul-shaking right to the Nazi jaw. Now the Americans and British picked up the cudgels, emerged from the shadow of the Russian bear's great onslaught. While the 179th and 45th completed training, the 1st, 9th and 3rd Armies and the British Armies launched the western front offensive. Driving to the Ruhr and across the Cologne Plains, by March 6 the Rhineland's great cathedral city itself had fallen and American armor and infantry were mopping up German forces the length of the Rhine south to the Moselle River. The Germans, jumping troops back and forth between east and west to combat the threats on each front, were punchdrunk, reeling. The Americans and British had delivered a vicious left to the solar plexus. Now the United Nations prepared for the knockout.

On March 14 the 179th packed up and moved from its Rambervillers bivouac area northeast through Baccarat and Blamont back into the battle zone, back into the scrap.

Chapter 28. Through the Line and Over the Rhine

As the 179th rolled up the road, the 3rd Division—another of 7th Army's "First Team"—was also getting ready for combat again, to crack the Siegfried Line still protecting the Palatinate and Saar Basin pocket, and to clean the Germans from the still unconquered area west of the Rhine.

The weather had joined the United Nations: spring was already in the air; the snow had melted away; fields and trees were tinged with green. And through the vales and villages rumbled 7th Army.

Excitement hung in the air as the unending lines of trucks and peeps, tanks and armored cars, captured vehicles and monstrous big guns crept up the road through the night. "Cat's eyes" blackout lights blinked in a blackness heavy with dust. The convoys got "hung" in the inevitable traffic tie-up, with everyone sitting around and no one giving any orders. Then the columns rolled again, mile upon mile upon mile.

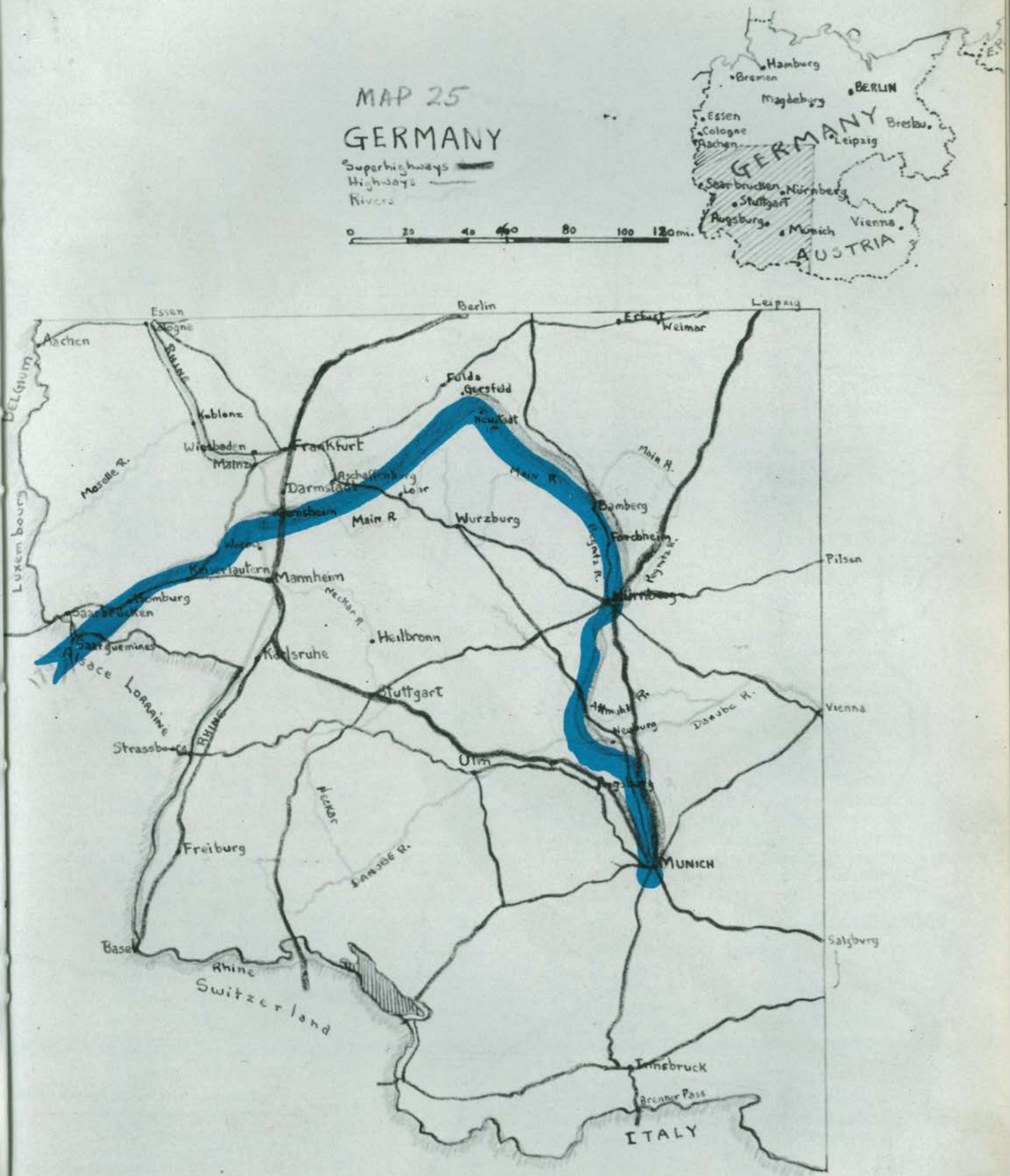
Nearing the front, different convoys dropped out to set up along the MSR: first the long range guns, then service echelons, then field artillery units, finally the infantry. On reaching designated C.P. areas, trucks were unloaded in the darkness, men stumbled and cursed and hunted places to sleep and work. Operations Installations were unloaded, generators hooked up, blackout curtains or blankets hung and lights attached. Kitchen crews threw a meal together. C.P.s were functioning minutes after arrival.

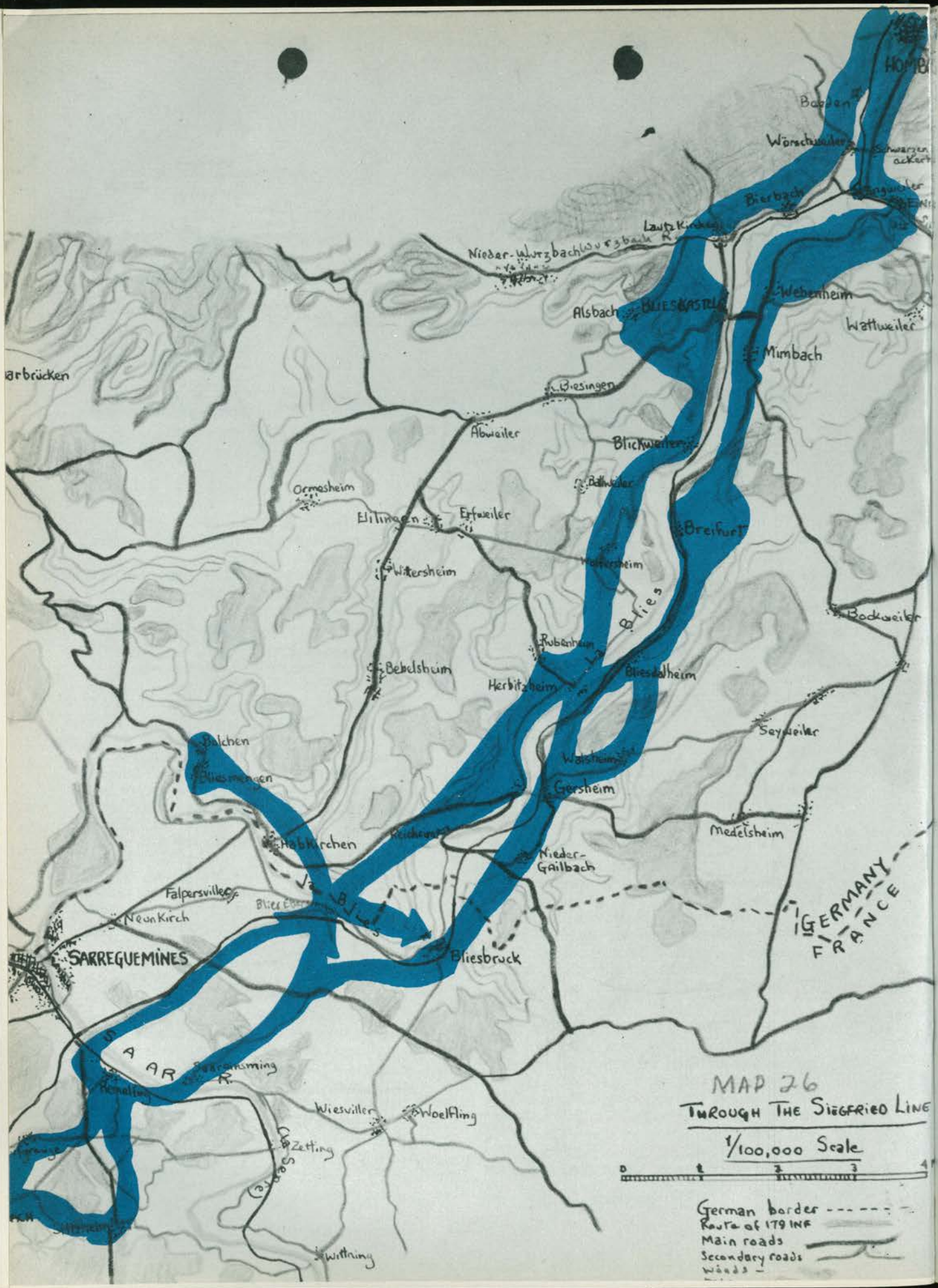
Overhead planes—probably "ours"—droned. Occasional shells came in not so far away. The crack and jarring blast of friendly artillery barrages began to shake the night air and rattle the few intact window panes. The men turned in, ready to repack and rumble on again, with daylight. And outside the grinding of gears, racing of motors, and heavy quaking became a part of the night sounds—as the endless chain of motorized equipment, guns, supplies and troops kept pouring up toward the front. The big push was brewing.

The enemy knew, and he became panicky. Von Rundstedt was ousted. Field Marshal Albert von Kesselring, master of defense tactics (when he had the troops), was given command of the German armies in the west.

March 14 saw the 179th C.P. set up in Siltzheim; by 2200 the entire command had closed in the assembly area south of Sarreinsming. Passing through the 44th Division the next morning, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions became Division reserve, while the 1st Battalion went into action.

Company C struck independently behind the 157th and 180th RCTs to clear the bypassed towns of Bliesmengen and Bolchen, effecting its mission and taking 28 PWs. The rest of the 1st, with tank and TD support, organized at Blies Ebersling at 1310 March 15, then jumped off across the Blies River. Smashing northeast, Companies A and B ran into fierce small arms fire and held up to consolidate just short


MAP 25
GERMANY
Superhighways
Highways
Rivers
0 20 40 60 80 100 120 mi.
Hamburg
Bremen
BERLIN
Magdeburg
Essen
Cologne
Aachen
Breslau
Leipzig
GERMANY
Saarbrucken
Nürnberg
Stuttgart
Augsburg
Munich
Vienna
AUSTRIA
Aachen
Essen
Cologne
Berlin
Erfurt
Weimar
Leipzig
BELGIUM
Fulda
Gersfeld
Koblenz
Neustadt
Wiesbaden
Frankfurt
Mainz
Moselle R.
Aschaffenburg
Darmstadt
Main R.
Bamberg
Worms
Wurzburg
Forchheim
Kaiserslautern
Mannheim
Pilsen
Saarbrucken
Homburg
Neckar R.
Heilbronn
Saargueimines
Karlsruhe
Alsace
Lorraine
Stuttgart
Vienna
Rhine
Strassbourg
Ulm
Danube R.
Neuburg
Freiburg
Lech R.
Isar R.
MUNICH
Salzburg
Basel
Rhine
Switzerland
Innsbruck
Brenner Pass
ITALY


Baden
Wörschweiler
Bierbach
Lautz Kirchen
Nieder-Wurzbach
Alsbach
BLIESKASTEL
Webenheim
Wattweiler
Mimbach
Wiesingen
Ormesheim
Ehlingen
Erfweiler
Breitfurt
Wittersheim
Bliesdalheim
Bebelsheim
Herbitzheim
Bliesdalheim
Bolchen
Bliesmengen
Habkirchen
Falpersville
Neunkirch
SARREGUEMINES
Bliesbruck
Niederkailbach
Medelsheim
Seyweiler
Gersheim
Wolfisheim
GERMANY
FRANCE
Wiesviller
Woelfling
Zetting
Wittring
MAP 26
THROUGH THE SIEGFRIED LINE
1/100,000 Scale
German border
Route of 179 INF
Main roads
Secondary roads
Woods

of their objective towns, Reinheim and Bliesbruck.

The Regiment's sector ran between the 180th on the left and the 157th on the right, one which bracketed the Blies River. So on the 16th the 2nd Battalion attacked up the east bank while the 1st drove up the west bank parallel to White. With the crossing of the Blies, the Regiment once more touched German soil, and headed north through fierce machine gun and small arms fire, intermittent tank and SP shelling, toward the Siegfried Line.

On the left A sped along the controlling ridges and C Company pushed up the valley to take Reinheim and Herbitzheim.

Baker Company moved up to clear Bliesbruck, defended by 100 SS Troopers. The only route of approach was across an open field. Half-way across, the doughboys were sprayed with heavy machine gun and sniper fire. The third platoon, in reserve, raced up to flank the nests—and was pinned down by another machine gun. Pvt. Phillip Buff, acting on his own initiative, squirmed 30 yards to the right of his comrades, suddenly stood up in plain sight and opened fire with his B.A.R. on the Germans. The enemy gunners spun their guns on him, yet Buff stood his ground, incidentally killing 4 Germans, until his platoon had raced in under cover of his diversion and smashed the enemy machine gun nest.

The rest of B Company also thundered into town. House by house the village was taken. Suffering but 18 casualties, the doughboys took 42 PWs, killed 20 krauts and captured considerable booty.

At the same time "G" seized that section of Bliesbruck on the Blies' right bank, while Fox Company took Gersheim and Walsheim and "E" grabbed the eastern part of Herbitzheim and the high ground north of Walsheim.

Smashing on the next dawn against increasingly vicious resistance as the Regiment closed in on the main Siegfried Line defenses, Red captured Wolfersheim and Blickweiler and at 2155 Company C's advance patrol had battered its way into the first five houses of Blieskastel. The 2nd Battalion, spearheaded by Easy, attacked through Breifurt and reached the commanding heights overlooking Mimbach.

And while the doughboys battled on, Col. Murphy moved his headquarters into Breifurt—and so did Division. But fortunately the troops advanced so rapidly that the two Command Posts had to move on quickly; the Breifurt buildings had no sooner been vacated than a delayed action bomb erupted in the heart of the town! The bomb belatedly explained why, inexplicably at the time, no civilans at all were living in Breifurt!

By March 18, Red Battalion had cleared Blieskastel and, pushing up the ridgeline east of Alschbach, had encountered a devastating fire from Germans ensconced in pillboxes along the slopes. The 2nd, too, had reached the Westwall entrenchments. The doughboys of "G" drove into Webenheim, where every house held snipers, regulars and Home Guard fanatics.

As one platoon entered town and, with two tanks rumbling along with it, began clearing houses on either side of the street, an enemy anti-tank gun suddenly opened fire from down the street, disabling the lead tank. S/Sgt. Herbert Klaucke ordered his squad to take cover, then took off across an open field, dodged two Germans' sniper fire, and reached the house behind the enemy gun. He crept to the wall, peered over, and saw 3 krauts furiously firing the gun, a rolling bazooka type. Klaucke whipped out two grenades, yanked out the pins with his teeth, let fly, and ducked behind the wall.

The rattling explosions hurled rubble down on the sergeant. The smoke cleared. Klaucke cautiously peered over the wall. Very little remained of the three Germans. The doughboy clambered over the wall, smashed the gun, and started back, then remembered the two snipers. Making a detour, he spotted the Germans dug in on a hill to the right of the village. Klaucke again moved up from the rear, crawled quietly to within 20 yards, then killed both snipers. "George" Company moved into town, cleared it, and then went on to join the rest of the battalion in day and night attacks against the enemy pillboxes covering the hill slopes north of town.

Through March 19 the 2nd, attacking alongside the 3rd Battalion, which had moved through the 1st Battalion's left flank, battered at the concrete, heavily gunned dugouts. Tanks, chemical mortars, Tank Destroyer 3-inchers, Anti-Tank and Cannon Company guns and supporting artillery pounded the Germans. Aircraft gave tactical support to the infantry, its bombers guided to the targets by artillery smoke shells. 8-in. howitzers, 107mm monsters, were towed up and their re-

verberating fire was brought to bear on the enemy strongholds. With dusk searchlights threw their illuminating beams on the enemy, and the fighting raged on. The riflemen in the line got and used flame throwers. The dugouts along the hills northeast of Webenheim and Alschbach were blown to bits.

Company L smashed 6 pillboxes, and the infantry jumped into the connecting trenches and charged other bunkers from the flanks, catching the Germans on their blind sides. On the right and left the 45th's other RCTs were also crashing pillbox after pillbox of the vaunted line. By morning March 20 the back of the resistance was broken. The Wehrmacht was in full retreat.

While Division planned the next step, the GIs looked around and discovered a lot of good "loot". It became very clear, from the brand new equipment in Gestapo and Nazi Party headquarters everywhere, including such non-essential civilian merchandise as radios, furniture and suits of clothes, that the Germans were still producing. However much German industry had been crippled by the air war, however much her people suffered from bombings, somehow they were able to manufacture comfort—even luxury—articles to the very end!

All three 179th battalions sped after the enemy, taking 451 PWs in the day. The 1st Battalion forded the Wurzbach River and cleared Lautzkirchen. The 3rd grabbed Bierbach and Worschweiler, then sped along the river road into Beeden. The 2nd seized the crest of Le Hungerberg (Hill 325), raced down its slopes, crossed the stream, captured Einod and Ingweiler, and established contact with the 3rd Battalion. And, two battalions abreast, the 179th's forces assaulted the city of Homburg, crashed through it street by street and house by house, and in the late hours of the night, cleared it of all enemy soldiers.

That night the Regimental Field Order disclosed the next attack phase: the Siegfried Line breached and the enemy retreating, the 45th's mission was to clear the entire sector to the Rhine. Patton's tanks had superficially rushed through the general area under attack by the Thunderbirds, but one tank or 20 passing through a sector didn't mean the finish. Such thrusts disorganized and confused the enemy, but a thousand Germans could be holed up outside a town, or in it, and not till the infantry had gone over the ground could the area really be considered "taken." Sometimes not even then.

Heading the 7th Army advance, the 45th was to establish contact with 3rd Army elements driving south on the left flank. Spearheading the 45th attack, the 179th with attached tanks and TDs would charge northeast in a column of battalions. Acting as a Task Force, the 3rd Bn was selected to lead, its objective the "goose egg", or general area, east and north of Otterbach. The 2nd, guarding the spearhead flanks, would move to the objective ground south of the 3rd and prepare to aid the 3rd Inf Div, if necessary, in the capture of Kaiserlautern. The 1st Battalion would serve as the RCT's rear guard.

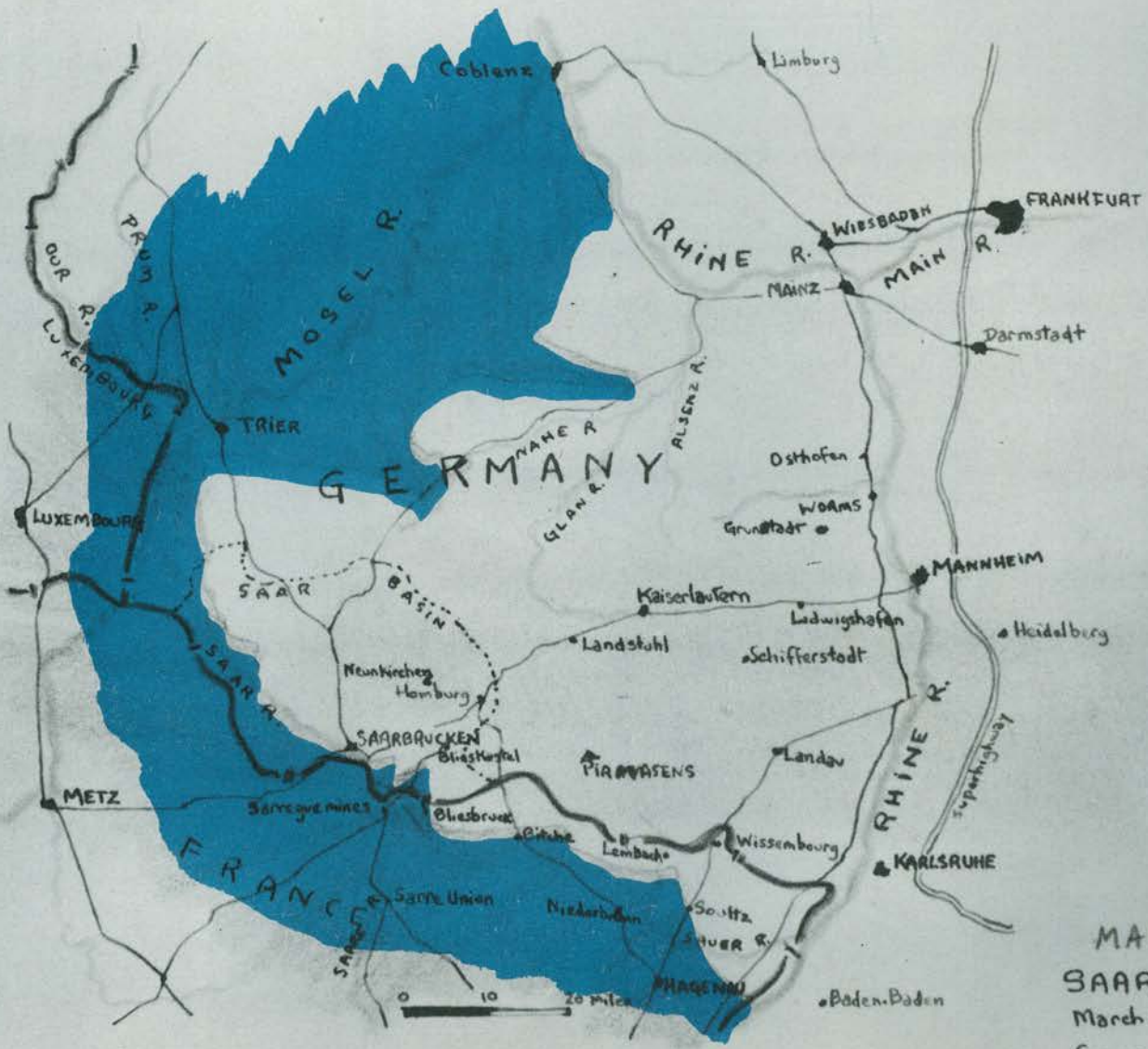
It took as long to write the order as to execute it. On March 21 at 1010 the 3rd Battalion was moving out of Homburg. Speeding up the highways through Vogelbach and Rodenbach, through towns bedecked with the white flags of utter surrender (beware the town that flew none!), by 1200 Blue had closed in Otterberg. The entire sector was combed for enemy, but the Germans had fled. The advance was made without firing a shot.

Pushing on, the C.P. was advanced to Neu Leiningen; the troops halted in the vicinity southwest of Grunstadt. Then, during the night of March 22-23 the Regiment swept on to Flomborn, where the former C.O. of the long-to-be-remembered 12th Regt, 6th SS Mtn Div, fell into the 179th's hands.

The initial American bridgeheads had been established across the Rhine and Gen. Patton's tanks were already probing in every direction to disrupt the enemy's defenses across the river in the heart of Germany. The veteran 45th and 3rd Divisions were to spearhead 7th Army's drive over the water. The 179th Infantry halted and formulated its plans for crossing the Rhine and joining the more northerly U.S. armies on the other side.

Behind the shelter of the Rhine's raised banks, bridge sections were assembled, assault boats unloaded, big amphibians lined up, "weasels"[1] issued, and priority transportation pulled up ready to cross on rafts. The 40th Engr Regt, to han-

1—Miniature quarter-ton track vehicles used in place of peeps.



MAP 27

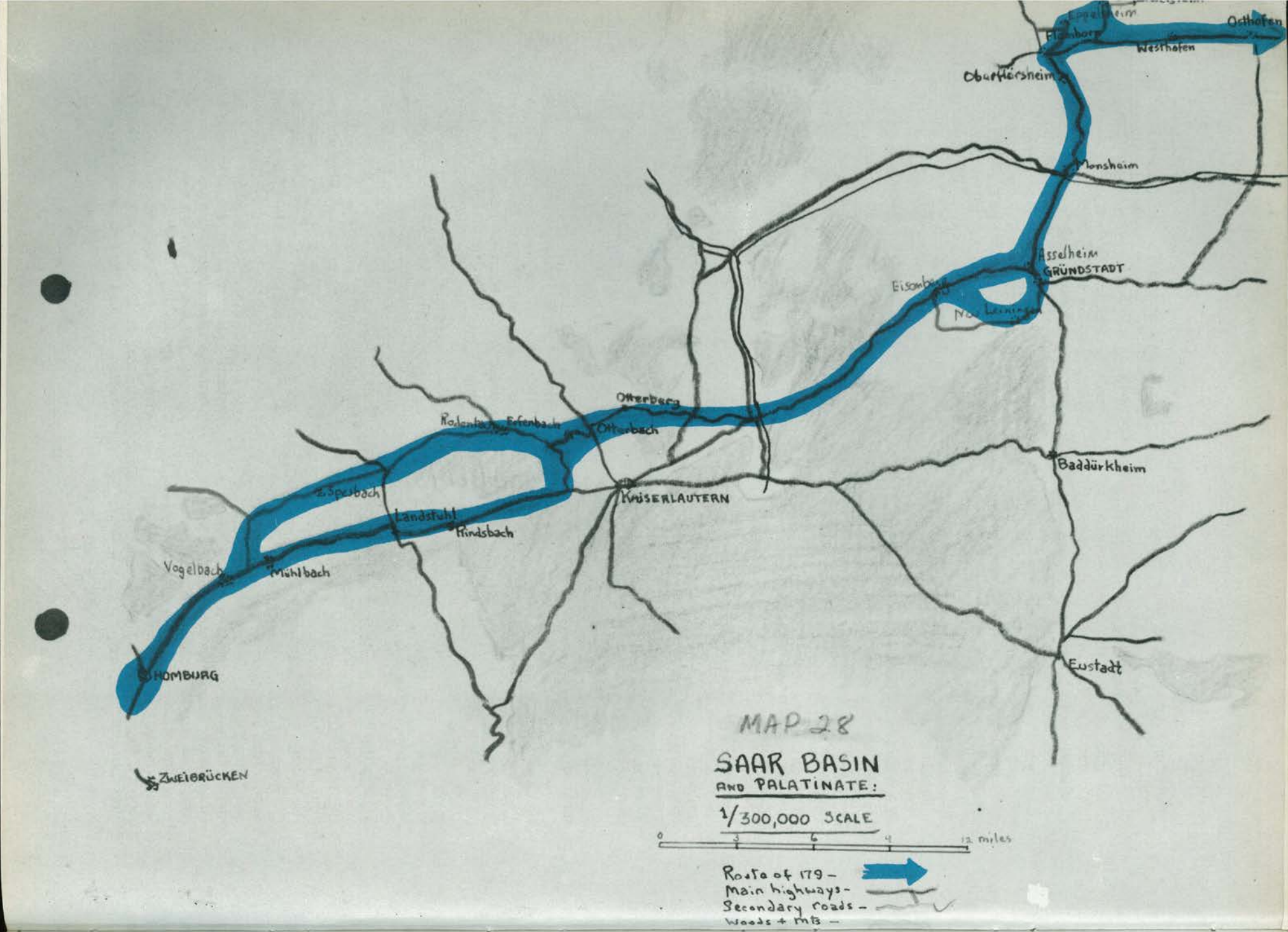
SAAR BASIN

March 18, 1945

German border

roads

Area taken by Americans


Ottstein
Ottstein
Ottstein

dle the boats and rafts transporting the infantry, coordinated its plans with the 179th's.

Constant patrols reconnoitered the west bank of the Rhine, drawing fire from the opposite shore as they crawled to the edge of the broad, swift, historic river. The enemy was there waiting, all right. After watching the grey clad figures moving about a few hundred yards away, the patrols withdrew to report. The Rhine raced on, unconcerned.

On March 25 Maj. Gardner A. Williams, 179th S-3, published the operations instructions. The 45th,flanked on the right by old reliable, the 3rd Division, and on the left by 12th Corps, was to cross the Rhine on D-Day at H-Hour. The assault regiments were the 179th and 180th (on the right); the 157th Inf would be reserve. To make the assault crossing and gain the Regiment's initial objective line, from the Gernsheim railroad station south to the edge of Biblis, Col. Murphy selected the 1st and 2nd Battalions. The 1st on the right would cross at Green Beach, take Gross Rohrheim and strike inland northeast. The 2nd, crossing at Red Beach, was to seize Gernsheim. Meanwhile, the engineers would be constructing a pontoon bridge to span the rapid waters at Hamm.

Hub to hub endless streams of artillery and tanks, TDs and maintenance battalions, medical units and mortar companies clogged the roads, waiting for the infantry to jump off so that they, too, could pour across the Rhine. The veteran doughboys moved up to and lined the banks, tense but quiet, wise through experience in four seaborne invasions. They hugged the river bank and listened while shells swished overhead. Artillery guns were laying a savage preparation fire.

At 0230 March 26 the engineers pushed the storm boats over the crest of the bank. Sergeants gathered their squads together, shadowy figures in the deep shadows of the trees. As the assault boats slapped into the racing tide, the troops piled in, and the 1st and 2nd Battalions' men began to cross.

The enemy cut loose with a furious small arms crackle from the eastern bank. T/Sgt. Llewellyn M. Chilson saw his platoon leader "take" a slug as the boats neared the enemy bank, and realized that he was now in command of a "G" platoon. Heavy German SPs let fly at the tiny boats swarming toward the eastern edge of the river. Then the Americans hit the bank, scrambled over the rise and poured down on the German machine gun nests. Rifles cracked, carbines spit back, German burp guns spoke in dribbling bursts.

Chilson's platoon met small arms, then machine gun fire. Several men fell. Sgt. Chilson signalled his men to halt, then crawled up the bank of the dike and wiped out two nests single handedly, with white phosphorus grenades and his carbine. His platoon followed, and picked up 23 krauts prisoner.

By 0330 both the 1st and 2nd Battalions had all their foot elements across and, overrunning the German defenses after a few desperate, costly moments, were driving inland.

The fighting men fanned out. Pagan Red struck at Gross Rohrheim, took the town at 0640; Pagan White headed northeast. Company F made radio contact with 3rd Army units 2000 yards to the north. Company G raced across the plain—and suddenly was mowed down by two flak wagons turned into anti-personnel weapons, set up at opposite ends of an open field to catch the khaki-clad figures in a deadly crossfire.

The air corps bombed and strafed the guns. Chilson, flat on his belly, along with his platoon, called for artillery fire on the flak wagons, then set up his two

---

Rocky Mountain News, Denver, Colo. April 2, 1945

The 179th Infantry boarded their assault boats under the pale light of a clouded moon and Col. Preston Murphy said "I hope the next river I cross will be the Poudre, and with a fly rod along." The colonel was lucky to be able to cross the (Rhine) river, a German shell having narrowly missed him a short time ago.

The 45th Division, which has piled up more combat days than any other division in the European Theatre, is commanded by the army's youngest division commander, 37-year old Maj. Gen. Robert T. Frederick.

---

light machine guns as a base of fire, and took off with two riflemen. The three men made it safely to a water-filled ditch on the enemy's right flank and, using grenades and rifles, killed five of the Germans. 29 more surrendered, with their machine guns! Company G went on, took 62 more prisoners, and smashed its way into Gernsheim.

By dark the bridgehead was deep enough to be firmly secure: White's companies held a solid front from east of Klein Rohrheim to two kilometers northeast of Gernsheim; the 1st Battalion had "A" manning road blocks on the Hahnlein highway, Baker's troops three kilometers in the woods beyond Gross Rohrheim and Charlie Company in the village of Langwaden. The 3rd Battalion, already across the river behind the 1st Battalion, was assembled in Gross Rohrheim and had established patrol contact with the 180th Inf at Biblis.

7th Army's Rhine crossing was a success. Hotly contested by the enemy, especially in the 3rd Division sector to the south, nevertheless the veteran divisions had done their job swiftly and surely. They had swept inland at many points so rapidly after crossing that whole companies of Germans had been caught flatfooted. The 179th alone took 636 PWs on D-Day. Japs might lose their necks to save face, but Germans were perfectly willing to lose face to save their necks.

On March 27 the 3rd Battalion struck east, the 179th's motorized spearhead: first recon peeps, TDs and tanks with riflemen aboard ready to leap off shooting at the first sign of resistance; then the main body, speeding along in anything that rolled—more tanks, TDs, trucks, peeps. Up the main roads the troops roared, taking Hahnlein, Jugenheim and Ober Beerbach. By nightfall K was in Ernsthofen, I at Ober Modau, L was occupying Wembach and Rohrbach.

Paralleling this advance on the left was the 157th. On the right the 180th, hitting stiffer resistance, was pressing its attack to move abreast of the 179th.

With its objective the Main River line and the securing of a bridgehead across that stream, Blue leaped off once again the morning of March 28, with Company K leading. Wiping out resistance, chiefly in the form of fanatical Volksturm boys and persistent snipers, the 3rd Battalion forces sped on, bypassed many Germans eager to surrender because it could not guard them all, and in a phenomenal advance by chow time had secured the west bank of the Main, crossed over the undamaged railroad bridge in the 157th sector, and was fanned out in the woods two kilometers east of Obernau! Its right flank was strengthened that evening when Company B also crossed the river, and raced south to capture the town of Sulzbach.

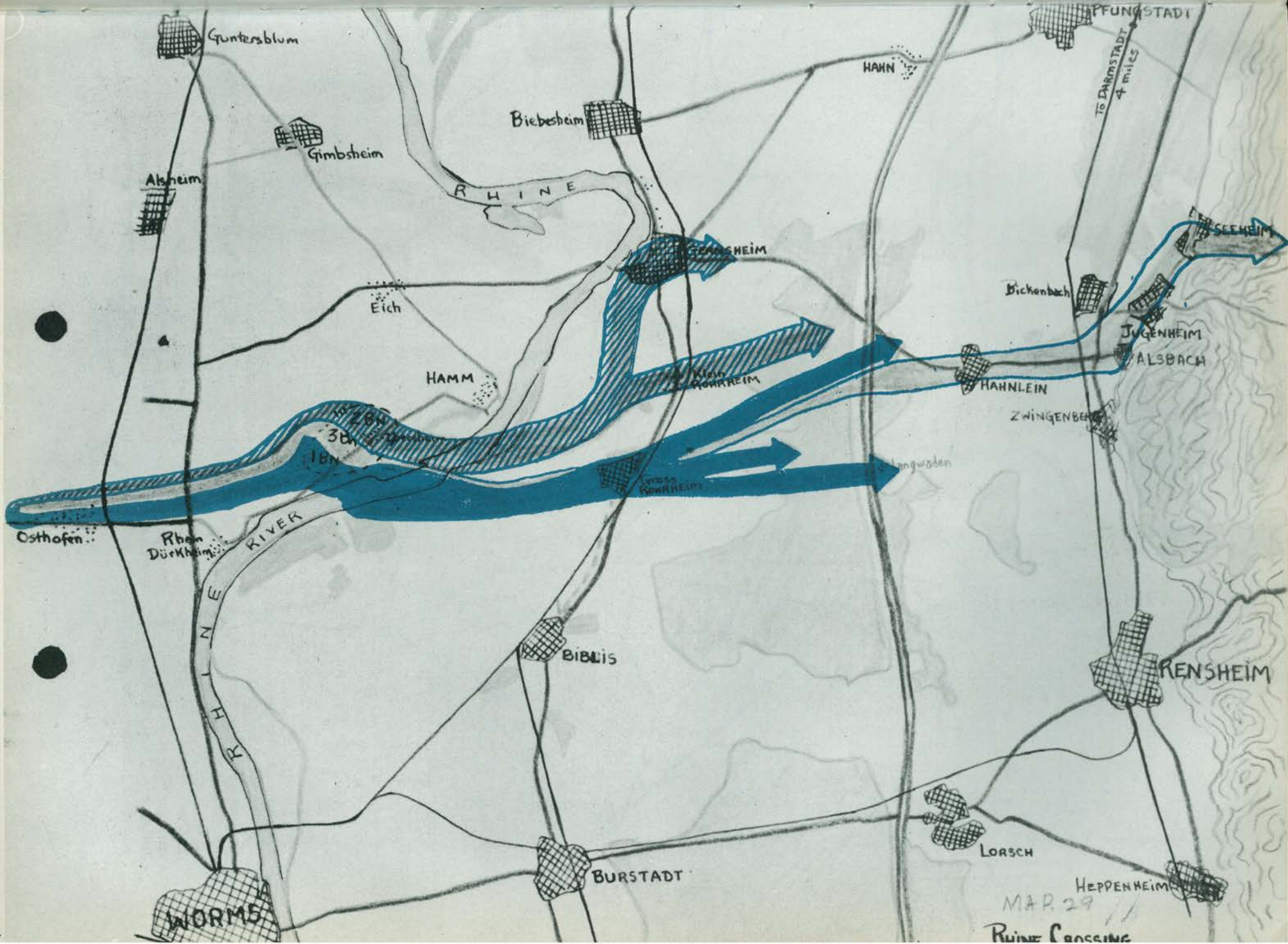
The 1st and 2nd Battalions moved up behind the front. Artillery guns were shoved into position just west of the Main's near bank. Col. Murphy moved his C.P. over the single span that fed both the 179th and the 180th, and established headquarters in Obernau. The engineers laid planks across the railroad ties and vehicles began to stream over the river, flowing swiftly between marshy banks 50 feet below.

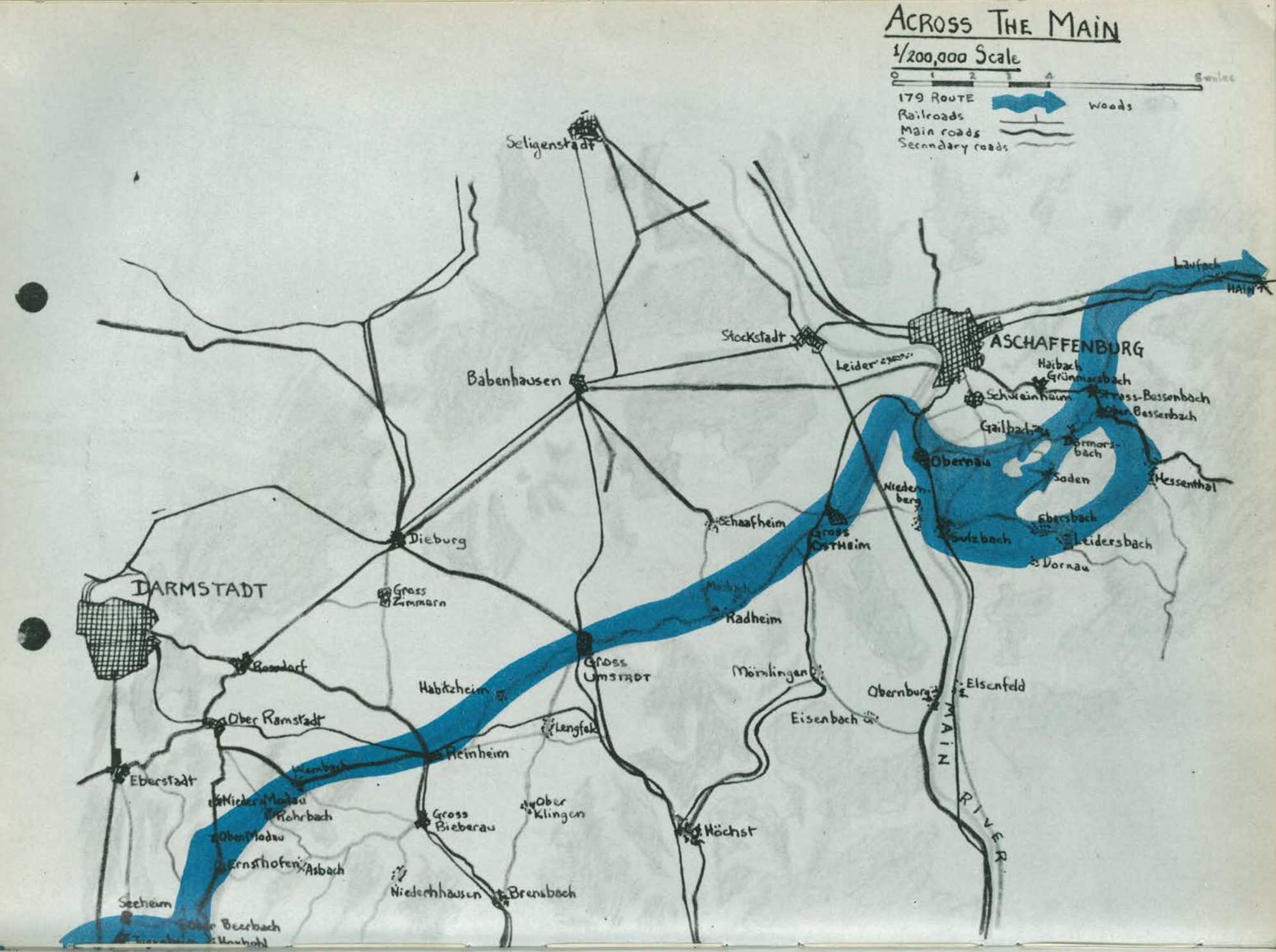
Aggressive infantry action had swept the front lines 40 miles ahead in 30 hours. But here, encountering the first of Kesselring's delaying forces, defending a line along the Main north to and anchored at Aschaffenburg, the doughboys were stopped.

The rest of the 1st Battalion was committed. A and C Companies crashed through the woods east of Sulzbach but held up in the face of murderous small arms and artillery fire. The 3rd, striking into the woods north of Red with "I" on the right of "L", also met fierce resistance. Through March 30 the RCT attacked toward Objective Fox, the Hessenthal-Oberbessenbach road. The 1st Battalion cleared the road junction east of Sulzbach, entered the woods near Dornau and reached the outskirts of Leidersbach. The 3rd pushed deeper into the woods. The 2nd Battalion joined the fight, passed through the 3rd's lines, and punched east over ridges toward Soden against sweeping enemy fire covering the approach trails.

Midnight found the 179th on a line northwest to southeast, from three kilometers east of Obernau to the edge of Ebersbach.

Renewing the attack at dawn, all three battalions registered slight gains: with Able driving on the Regimental left boundary and "B" in the center, Red's Charlie Company took Ebersbach and Leidersbach. White engaged in a hot battle with enemy infantry dug in along the heights east of Soden. The 3rd Battalion's doughboys reached the ridges south and


Guntersblum
Gimbsheim
Alsheim
Biebesheim
RHINE
HAHN
PFUNGSTADT
TO DARMSTADT
4 miles
SCHEIM
SCHEIM
Eich
Bickenbach
JUGENHEIM
ALSBACH
HAMM
Klein Rohrheim
HAHNLEIN
ZWINGENBERG
3BN
1BN
Langwaden
Osthofen
Rhein Dürkheim
RHINE RIVER
BIBLIS
RENSHEIM
LORSCH
BURSTADT
HEPPENHEIM
WORMS
MAP 29
RHINE CROSSING


ACROSS THE MAIN
1/200,000 Scale
0 1 2 3 4 Miles
179 ROUTE
Railroads
Main roads
Secondary roads
Woods
Seligenstadt
Stockstadt
Babenhausen
Leider
ASCHAFFENBURG
Laufach
MAIN
Haibach
Grünmorsbach
Schweinheim
Strass-Bessenbach
Ober-Bessenbach
Gailbach
Dörmorsbach
Obernau
Soden
Hessenthal
Niedernberg
Sulzbach
Ebersbach
Leidersbach
Dornau
Schaafheim
Gross Ostheim
Dieburg
DARMSTADT
Gross Zimmern
Modau
Radheim
Bessdorf
Gross Umstadt
Mömlingen
Obernburg
Elsenfeld
Eisenbach
Habitzheim
Ober Ramstadt
Lengfeld
Heinheim
Eberstadt
Nieder Modau
Rohrbach
Ober Modau
Gross Bieberau
Ober Klingen
Höchst
MAIN RIVER
Ernsthofen
Asbach
Niedernhausen
Brensbach
Seeheim
Ober Beerbach

west of Gailbach, before darkness closed in.

Frustrated by the determined, organized line of resistance, the Divisions facing east suddenly switched tactics. The key to the enemy's defense was Aschaffenburg. Despite the 157th's forces battling furiously on the outskirts of the city, despite poundings by Allied aircraft and artillery so destructive that the city was all but invisible behind a pall of smoke that billowed from its blazing blocks of buildings, Aschaffenburg was still in German hands.

So the axis of advance was changed from east to northeast. The 180th, 179th and the 3rd Division turned to outflank the enemy's stronghold and cut the Lohr-Aschaffenburg highway behind it. The 180th moved between the 157th and 179th, the 3rd Division doughboys moved up on the 179th's right. Jumping off on a front from south of Schweinheim to Hessenthal, the 179th sliced off the enemy's left tackle, crashed through the hole and gaining momentum, began to speed up the field, deep inside Germany, taking town after town, mile after mile, throwing back in his face Hitler's boast that his enemies would never set foot on German soil!

Chapter 29. The Womb of Nazism

Rolling up the enemy line like a rug from the flank, the 2nd Battalion, on the 45th right flank and moving alongside the 3rd Division, smashed into Hessenthal, Ober and Strass-Bessenbach. The 3rd, attacking abreast of the 2nd, seized Gailbach and Dorrmorsbach, then struck along the ridges of the hills.

And the stubborn enemy line of defense, penetrated and outflanked, collapsed. The 157th captured Aschaffenburg despite fanatical resistance which included 15-year-old girls sniping at the doughboys with bazookas! The 180th swung north on the 179th's left, and the latter took to trucks and renewed the rat race.

The 2nd Battalion knifed cross country to the main Lohr-Aschaffenburg highway, then behind Company G, swept north through four phase lines in a day, stopping only to refuel. Rolling past the 14th Armored on the right, "G" spearheaded the RCT attack into the dense forests and rolling mountain ranges northeast to Heinrichsthal.

Tactically, such swift, motorized advances were fraught with danger—danger of ambush and of flank attacks by any sizeable enemy forces. For the troops stuck to the highways. "Roads swept to ditches" applied now to more than mines: any number of unknown Germans might lurk in the woods and hills bounding the roads. At any moment a furious fire might sweep the moving column of vehicles.

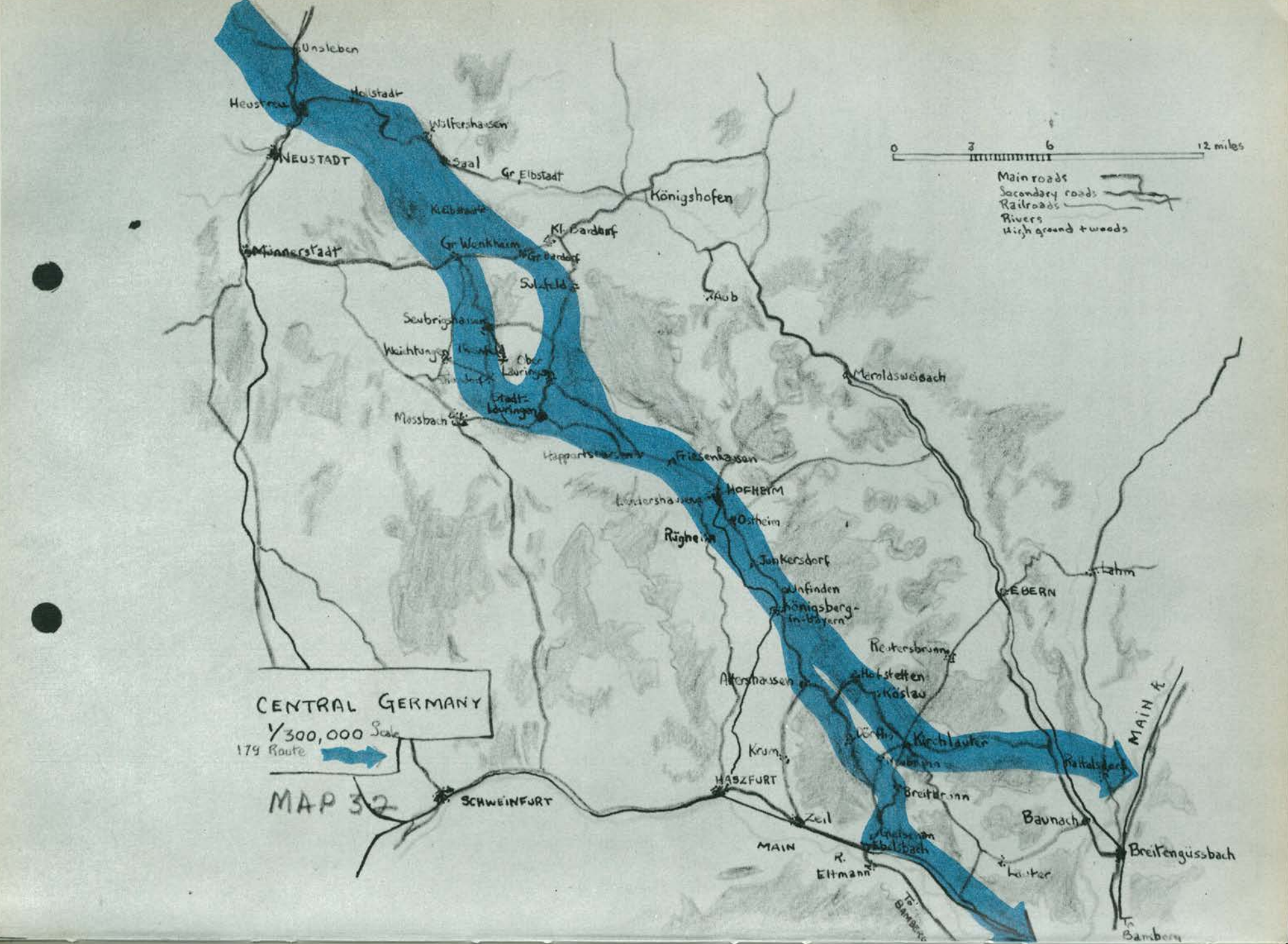
Following recon cars and a lead infantry platoon riding TDs and tanks, the main force of doughboys with their heavy weapons came on at the ready a short distance behind. Immediately on meeting resistance—enemy fire, road blocks, snipers in houses—the scout cars raced back with the information. Doughboys dropped to the ground from their armored mounts, raced up while TDs and mortars and tanks blasted the immediate opposition, and attacked. The pocket wiped out, the soldiers remounted and the column sped on.

By the afternoon of April 3 Company G had reached Aura, and was engaged in a hot fire fight in the strongpointed town as enemy snipers and machine gunners fought grimly in the path of the advance.

At Aura, like a car that shoots past its turning, the whole 179th threatened to overrun its own forward elements. For the CP group dogged the heels of the attacking unit. To drop behind for long meant complete loss of contact; possibly a fire fight with by-passed krauts; perhaps even taking a wrong road still held by the enemy! So it was actually safest the closer to the front line one could get!

The Command convoy had made flag halts along the road at each point the lead elements were held up by German resistance. Just short of Aura, at a crossroads in the woods, again the CP elements held up, in a slanting rain, waiting for the town to be taken. The 1st Battalion's long column of unit vehicles and big "ducks" carrying whole platoons pulled up behind the staff vehicles, for the 1st

FULDA
Wüstensachsen
Hettenhausen
GERSFELD
Schmalnau
Ober Elsbach
Dalherda
Ffieden
Motten
BISCHOFSHEIM
Reussendorf
Wildflecken
SCHLÜCHTERN
Speicherz
NEUSTA
Oberbach
Riedenberg
BRÜCKENAU
STEINAU
BAD SODEN
Bad Brückenau
Geroda
SALMÜNSTER
Zeilhofe
Hupboden
Ober Leichtersbach
Aschach
Marnes
Jossa
BAD ORB
Oberssinn
Mittelssinn
Burgjoss
Obernaid
Aura
Pfaffenhausen
Fellen
Burgsinn
Flörsbach
Lohrhaupten
Ruppertshütten
Rieneck
Frammersbach
Wiesthal
Partenstein
Neuhütten
Rechtenbach
LOHR
MAP 31
CENTRAL GERMANY
THE MOUNTAINS
1/300,000 Scale
Route of 179
Main roads
Secondary roads
Woods
Terrain: mountainous
0
3
6
9


Unsleben
Hollstadt
Heustreu
Wolfershausen
NEUSTADT
Saal
Gr. Eibstadt
Königshofen
Kl. Eibstadt
Gr. Wenkheim
Kl. Bardorf
Gr. Bardorf
Sulzfeld
Aub
Sennfeld
Sennbrigshausen
Oberlauringen
Stadtlauringen
Mossbach
Memlasweisbach
Happertshausen
Friesenhausen
Lülsfeld
HOFHEIM
Ostheim
Rügheim
Junkersdorf
Sulzfinden
Königsberg-in-Bayern
Lahm
EBERN
Reutersbrunn
Holzstetten
Altershausen
Käslau
Kirchlauter
Kraisa
HASSFURT
Breitbrunn
Zeil
Gaustadt
Ebelsbach
Baunach
Breitengüssbach
MAIN
R. Eltmann
R. Lauter
To Bamberg
SCHWEINFURT
0 3 6 12 miles
Main roads
Secondary roads
Railroads
Rivers
High ground + woods
CENTRAL GERMANY
1/300,000 Scale
179 Route
MAP 32

Battalion was waiting to pass through the 2nd.

Until dark men clustered around fires that glowed along the roadway. It was cold and raw. The rain was penetrating. Vehicles were jammed endlessly back down the road: hardy little peeps, the few supply trucks still operating after a month of long hauls and continuous driving without maintenance, the boat-like amphibians, numerous oddly assorted captured vehicles pressed into service. And on either side of the parked convoys other doughboys with rifles cocked scouted through the woods, hunting for any isolated enemy soldiers.

At 2050 the CP moved into the 157th's sector and set up in Pfaffenhausen for the night. Then, as the 2nd pushed beyond Aura, the 1st Battalion rolled on into town. And, as the 1st's motorized infantry jumped off through White at daylight, the C.O. took off again with his C.P. from Pfaffenhausen. This was just as well: illustrative of the endless enemy pockets that existed everywhere—uncoordinated but stubborn pockets—three successive battles took place in Pfaffenhausen. After the infantry had captured the town, another German force moved in from the hills to engage reserve elements the next day. And still later, a third group of Germans returned to town to harass QM troops moving up.

The 1st Battalion swept on through the mountains, through Zeiflofs and Bad Bruckenau, to Zuntersbach. The Americans weren't complaining, but the German tactics were incredible. In its sweep across Baden and Bavaria the 45th took 60,000 PWs—four German divisions. Those same numbers deployed in the ideally defendable mountain passes as guerillas, instead of isolated in groups defending the towns (without even normal precautionary defenses in the surrounding hills to prevent encirclement), could have stopped the advance cold, time and again. The enemy seemed totally paralyzed.

However, he had not quit by any means. And now prisoners reported 5000 men of the 6th SS Mtn Div moving southeast to engage the doughboys. On April 5 these crack German troops, thin as their extenuated line was, threw up increasingly savage resistance. In each town the Americans encountered grim, savage SS troopers. Pagan Red fell under three artillery barrages that day.

But Company C took Volkers. Baker took Speicherz and pressed on toward Kothen. A thereupon moved up behind B, only to run into a furious fire. The enemy had crept in behind Baker. Able wiped out the resistance, and Company B moved on. The combat-fatigued men cleared Kothen and reached the road junction two kilometers north of town before pulling up for the night. The 3rd Battalion passed through the 2nd and, taking over the second slot in the column of battalions, blocked behind Red.

The 14th AD did some blocking, too. For able but conservative Gen. Patch did not shoot out his armor in advance of his infantry (perhaps because he had so much less than had Patton or Hodges). Tanks clogged the roads and, as armor does with its heavy tracks, tore up the macadam paving.

On April 6, while the 1st and 2nd mopped up enemy infantry in the many small towns in their sectors, the 3rd Battalion attacked north. Seizing Motten, Dalherda and Rodenbach against strong defenses that often required tank and TD heavy fire to show the enemy the error of his ways, Blue swept on to the Regimental objective, the high ground east of Gersfeld. By nightfall the following day its troops had cleared the objective area.

A momentary respite before continuing the thrust northwards allowed the 179th time to investigate a huge Wehrmacht dump at Wildflecken, which held several million chemical shells that, fortunately, could now never be used against the Allies. The Regiment was also busy evacuating some 3500 PWs taken in the past few days. Large as the figure was, it fell far short of telling the whole story. For, with transportation critically short even for their own supplies and movements, the doughboys often refused to *accept* the surrender of German soldiers. Thus, the unique sight of unguarded enemy troops heading rearwards behind the American lines became an every day spectacle.

It was a startling experience to be suddenly confronted by whole squads of Germans materializing out of the woods or from around a bend in the road. But handicapped by language difficulties, and the happy American viewpoint of "let John do it", the doughboys simply went on by and figured somebody else

with more transportation and nothing else to do would collect these prisoners.

The one day pause also gave the troops a chance to catch up on "outside" news: the Reds had reached Vienna in the south and were launching a new mass offensive along the last approaches to Berlin. American armies on the west were consolidating all along the Elbe River, and in Italy the Allies were advancing for the first time since the Rome breakthrough on a scale that paralleled the colossal gains in northern Germany. And immediately to the 7th Army's north, the 3rd Army was turning to move on a more southerly azimuth.

This last switch forced a change in the 7th's axis of advance. So, instead of continuing northeast, the 45th and 3rd Divisions, attacking abreast on a 20 mile front, were to cut to the southeast toward Bamberg.

Jumping off at 0730 April 8, in column behind the 2nd Battalion, the 179th moved south on the 180th's right flank. The 157th became reserve. Again motorized, White's doughboys swept past light opposition along the Bastheim-Heustreu-Rheinfeldshof-Gross Wenkeim axis, then battered down furious but quickly liquidated resistance in Thundorf and Stadt Lauringen, Mailes and Wetzhausen.

While the 1st Battalion mopped up behind the lead elements, the 3rd followed the 2nd to Heustrau, then attacked on the left of White, thus broadening the Regimental front. Clearing six more towns, the infantrymen reached Birnfeld that night. In Blue's bag of prisoners, and among the day's total of 592 taken by the 179th, was Maj. Gen. Franz, 256th VG Div commander, and with him his artillery commander and chief of staff.

The 179th remembered him: the 256th had faced the Thunderbirds at Wingen. But now the 256th was no more, and it being the third command he had lost, Gen. Franz was not averse to becoming an Allied prisoner. Staff officers of the Regiment questioned him, in the course of which the general interrupted: "You've asked me many questions. I should now like to ask one. Why are you Americans fighting us?"

The entire staff began putting forth reasons, all widely divergent. Finally someone hit on the Four Freedoms. Ironically, it was only Gen. Franz who was able to name all four.

Meanwhile through the darkness the troops were pushing on. When pockets were encountered, the artillery cut loose and gouged a path for the infantry. Fires flickered ahead. Searchlights pierced the blackness to mark the front lines for the air arm, for the advance was rolling so fast Allied planes were in danger of bombing behind the wrong lines.

Ober Lauringen was picked as that night's CP. But as direct roads to it were under fire, and several running battles between lone vehicles and hidden Germans in the woods had taken place, traffic was routed out of the 179th sector, through Stadt Lauringen, through territory not yet officially "taken", through towns still crackling and burning furiously from that afternoon's bombings, then back into the RCT's sector.

On April 9 Col. Murphy employed the 2nd and 3rd Battalions to clear the 179th objectives of any Germans. Cleaning out Wettringen, Aidhausen and Happertshausen, the 2nd ran into and destroyed a flak wagon, which the Germans used so murderously to fire directly at infantry. The 3rd also smashed a flak wagon while clearing several villages and the woods east of Birnfeld. Then, with no further mission on the books for the succeeding morning, the 179th began perfecting plans to withdraw into reserve.

But apparently the 179th was to have the dubious honor of never resting. On April 11 new orders superseded the relief plan. Once again the 179th was to jump off to the southeast, on the right of the 180th. By 1530 the Regiment was rolling.

And as the 45th closed in on Bamberg, the Germans, still pursuing their strategy of defending every city and its approaches, put up ever stronger resistance. But with tanks, TDs, mortars and howitzers blasting the enemy and with riflemen throwing grenades and a steady blast of fire, the 179th smashed through Hofheim and Junkersdorf into Konigsberg.

The fighting was savage, but despite Hitler's desperate efforts to organize civilian resistance, it was strictly military warfare. Everywhere the townspeople were relieved to have it over, relieved to be rid of the "bombing terror", ready to obey the American authorities. In predominantly Catholic Bavaria and Baden at least, the Werewolf Organization was non-existent.

Even in reputedly violently Nazified Hofheim, the Germans gave no trouble.

They were motivated in their submissive capitulation by selfish reasons. Possessively, they were preserving their homes in preference to Hitlerism.

Yet these were Germans, and their inbred arrogance was not wholly subdued in a moment. When the Americans first took a town, the people, stimulated by Dr. Goebbels' vicious propaganda, stayed in their cellars, in abject terror, peering out with eyes reflecting their fear. But treated fairly and humanely, the Germans quickly overcame their fright. In a day, forgetting that a few hours ago their lives had been in jeopardy, they were demanding the removal of troops from their homes, accusing them of disturbing property, complaining and whining.

Infuriating as it was, this was as much the fault of the Americans as it was the character of the Germans. Never highly disciplined nor mindful of regulations, the troops drank with civilians, fraternized with the women and usually yielded to most "demands". It is difficult to condemn the American spirit of humanity and decency, but it *is* possible to condemn the extremes to which these violations often led: unchecked, wanton looting and drunkenness, occasional rape, throughout the length of Germany. The extent of these outrages was wide; but incredibly, officers and men alike assumed that because this was Germany, anything went. To the Germans it must have seemed a fantastic exhibition. How could they respect a people whose army was composed, as one 45th officer said, "of hoodlums with expensive equipment". That these same men, at home, were upstanding, respected U. S. citizens seemed impossible!

But the wildest soldier was sobered by the greatest shock the spirit of humanitarianism had received since Lincoln's assassination. On April 12, while the front line troops swept southeast toward Bamberg, capturing 25 more towns and fighting furiously to kill the Fascist dragon, out of the ether into unbelieving ears came word of the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In the foxholes of Germany there was shock, disbelief, silence. The American soldier had lost his C-I-C on the threshhold of final victory. But more than that, he had lost his greatest exponent of humanity and peace, his spokesman for order and sanity in the coming chaos of the post war world. He had lost the man who knew what he was fighting for.

In response to the emotion which touched every soldier in the 45th, the doughboys struck on through southern Germany with renewed fury. The Germans countered with flak wagon fire, machine gun fire, and every field gun they could hurriedly bring up. Their infantry fought stubbornly.

And from somewhere in the confines of the "redoubt area" came enemy planes to slash at the Allied juggernaut as it rolled on. Nor were these the Focke-Wulfs or Messerschmidts of old, but silent, dreaded jet-propelled planes, rushing past the eye at 620 miles per hour, faster than a camera shutter blinks, outracing the bursting ack ack shells, a terrible menace to Allied aircraft. In one moment American bombers glittered in the sunlight overhead, droning on toward their targets, in the next, three were hurtling down to death and two jet propelled enemy aircraft were already disappearing specks in the blue.

But despite every obstacle, attack, attack, attack was the order of the day. Moving east along the north bank of the Main, the acrid smell of battle in their nostrils, the 2nd Battalion's men seized Dorfleins. The 3rd kicked off through Red and, crossing the Main far to the north owing to a lack of bridges southwards, raced south. The 180th attacked into Bamberg and after savage street fights, captured the city.

Unit boundaries changed rapidly as the troops swept on. The 3rd Division took the west bank of the Main-Regnitz River and headed south. The 180th dropped out, its place taken by the 157th on the 45th's left flank. The 179th drove down the east bank of the river.

The advance was delayed time and again by lack of bridges, for the enemy was resorting more and more to demolitions. Now every span bridging every brook or gully had been dynamited, concrete sections lay crumbled in the stream beds. The engineers worked feverishly. In one day the RCT combat engineers filled several large road craters, with small caterpillar tractors, demolished or removed three road blocks, repaired a party blown bridge, filled several more small craters impeding vehicular progress, put in a three span M-2 treadway bridge, cleared out an abatis, and removed rubble and filled craters in two towns with their big "cat" to clear the path for the Regiment's advance ... in addition to smashing a

tank with a satchel charge and killing the crew, and combatting constant sniper fire. Capt. Wayne Bridges, now Company B (120th Engr Bn) C.O., had his hands full.

At dawn April 14 the 1st Battalion jumped off on the right of Blue and by 1800 was closing in on Hirschaid along the main highway as Blue's lead squads pushed through the wooded hills abreast of the 1st. To the east the 157th had reached Stucht and Oberngrub.

But as fast as the infantry sped, it was not fast enough. At 2105 Division ordered its combat teams to commit their reserves if any assault unit was delayed for even a moment. The 179th must reach its day's objective line, Reuth-Weilersbach. So, through the night the weary riflemen kept on. The 2nd Battalion pushed through the 1st.

Under a white moon the companies advanced, smashing enemy resistance, driving south through Buttenheim, through Eggolsheim, through Bammersdorf. The boys rode and ran, wiped out enemy pockets and raced on. As the sun peeped over the crests of the hills, White reached its objective high ground along the Wiesent River. On the left the 3rd Battalion ran into an enemy convoy retreating south, demolished it with tank, mortar and machine gun fire, and plunged ahead. By 0900 Blue had not only reached its objective area but had seized intact the bridge linking Weilersbach and Kirchehrenbach.

The heat of full daylight increased, and the troops began to sweat. Despite fighting all night, all three 179th battalions were still attacking. Mid-morning found the 179th lined up on the river bank with the 1st on the right, the 2nd on the left, and the 3rd already pouring across the bridge in the center.

Blue cleared Kirchehrenbach, managed to consolidate its bridgehead. But with the crossing of the last water barrier before Nurnberg, birthplace of Nazism, the enemy again resisted the Thunderbirds with renewed vigor, determined to fight for Nurnberg to the death. For its loss would be a deadly blow to the Reich's morale, both as a city and as a symbol.

All afternoon the 3rd Battalion's troops attacked against tanks as well as infantry before capturing Ober-Ehrenbach. But the 1st Battalion, crossing behind Blue and striking off to the right, was able to sweep south to take Forth in a blitz-like drive.

That night in the C.P., barely ten miles from Nurnberg, staff sections produced the April 16 field order. Liaison officers thumped in and out of the headquarters, received orders and latest unit positions, gave their units' disposition. Division staff officers came in with instructions, discussed the situation with the Colonel. Maj. Williams mapped out strategy. Sgt. Horace T. Evers, sleepless for days, kept up the vital operations journal.

From the west the Rainbow (42nd) Division was closing in on Nurnberg, on the 45th's right the 3rd Division was moving up. On the left the 14th AD was approaching the city with its armor. The 106th Cav Rcn Group was generally covering the Thunderbird advance. And the 45th had all three of its combat teams, the 180th in the center, the 157th on the left and the 179th on the right, lined up at the city's approaches.

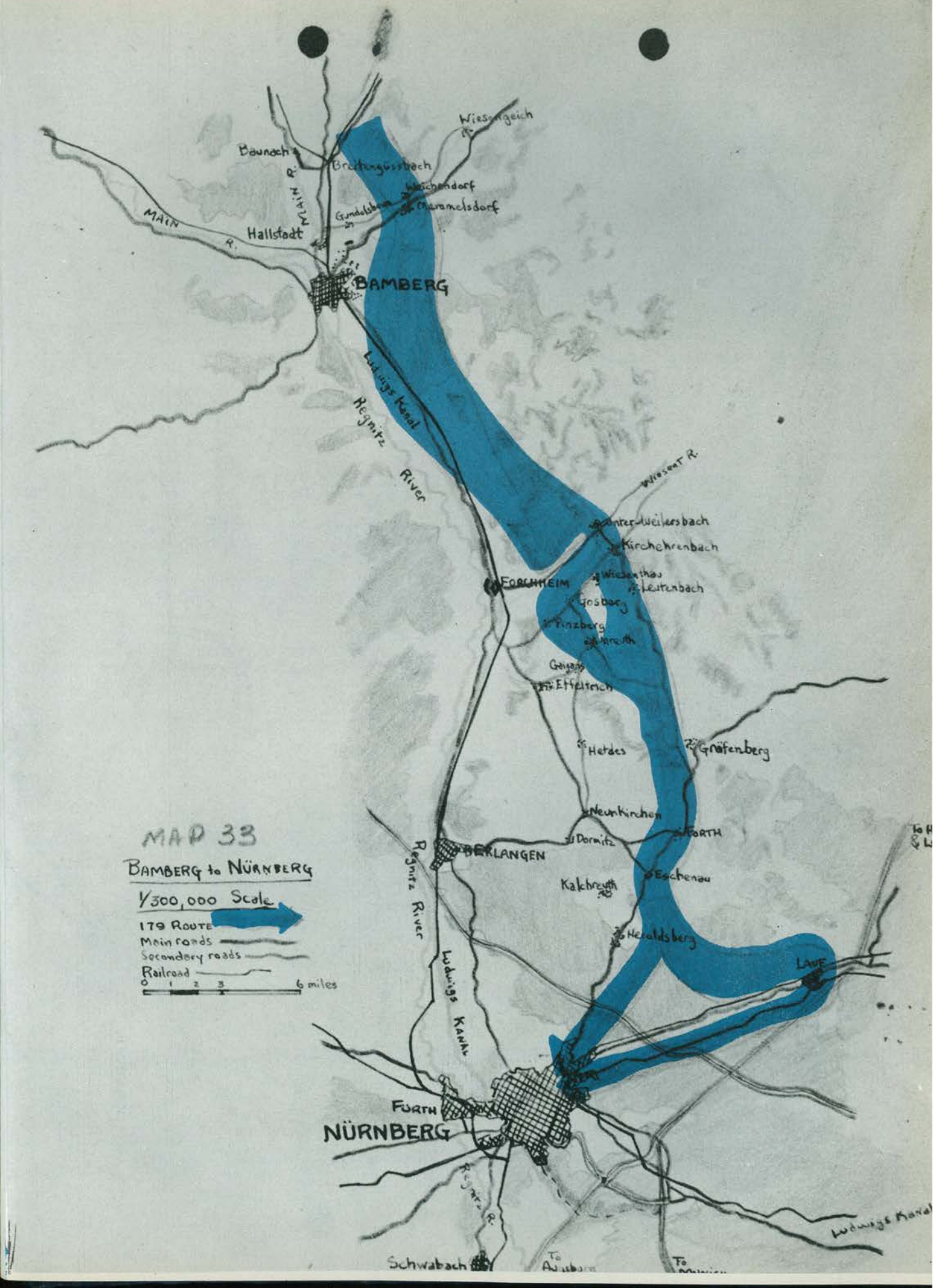
The enemy had 15,000 to 20,000 troops available for the city's defense. Backing slowly along the converging highways, covered by strong rear guard actions and rolling artillery barrages from SP batteries ringing the city in an all-round defense, the Germans, too, were ready for the battle of Nurnberg.

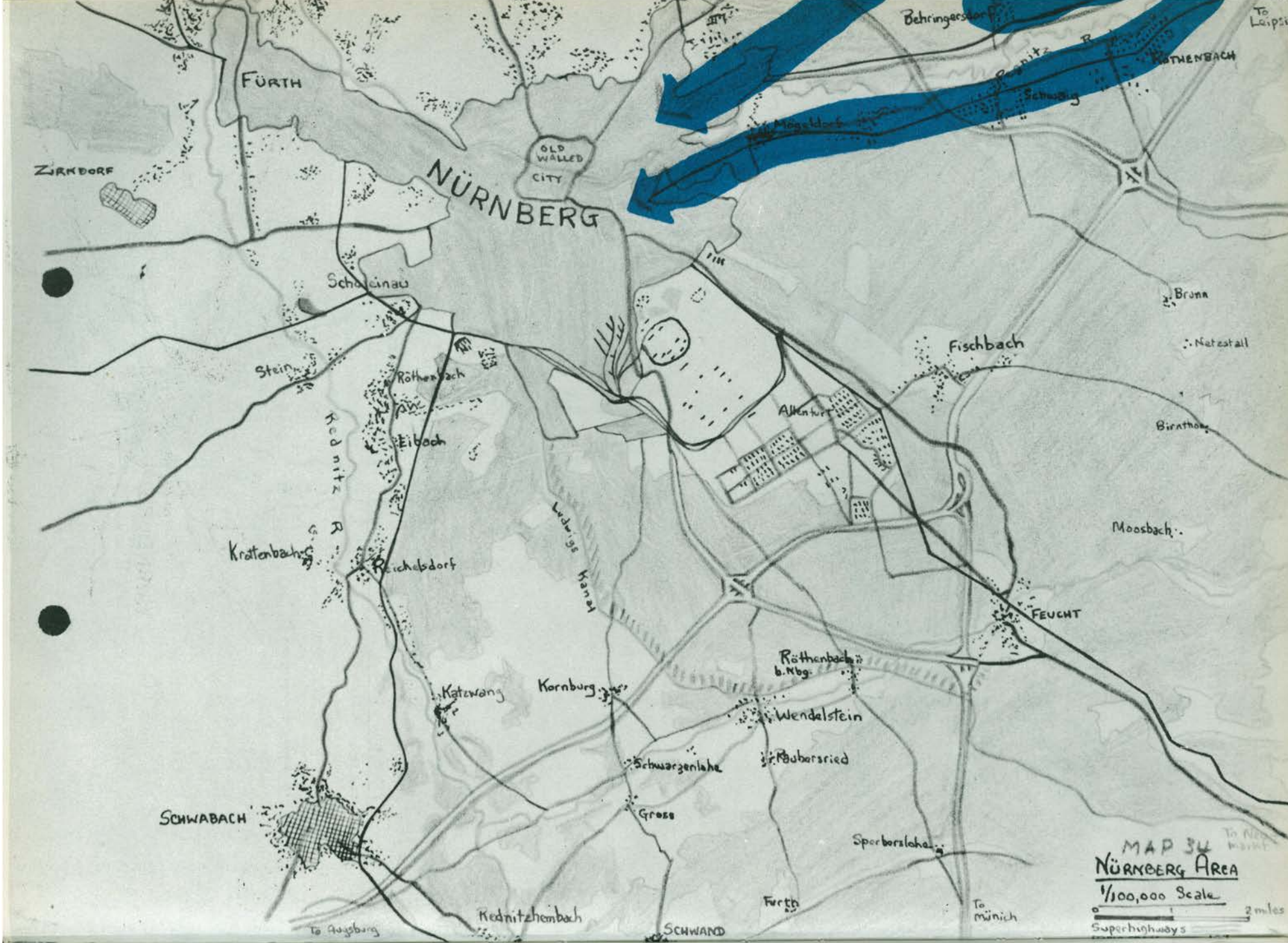
The 179th led off with the 3rd Battalion. Maj. Riggs' forces pounded through the woods northeast of town to seize Ruckersdorf, then rushed over the Lauf bridge and captured Rothenbach, part of the organized MLR the enemy had set up at the edge of the city.

Enabled to strike at Nurnberg itself by the 3rd's swift advance on the left, White jumped off through the woods, cut across the "autobahn"—and with E blocking behind it and F covering the right flank, Company G smashed into the northeast corner of Nurnberg at 1230, the first U.S. troops to enter the city.

As Red raced up to provide flank coverage for the 2nd, Col. Murphy and Maj. Snyder, observing the progress of the leading assault units, were suddenly shelled by enemy mortars. The first burst lit within feet of the two officers, and both were wounded by shell fragments. Lt. Col. William P. Grace Jr. assumed command of the 179th Infantry. Maj. Gardner A. Williams became Regimental Executive Officer.

Fighting went on throughout the night as the 179th pressed home its attack under its new commander. The Germans fought fiercely and, despite Allied


MAP 33
BAMBERG to NÜRNBERG
1/300,000 Scale
179 ROUTE
Main roads
Secondary roads
Railroad
0 1 2 3 6 miles
Baunach
Breitengüssbach
Wiesengeich
Gundelsheim
Hallstadt
MAIN R.
MAIN R.
BAMBERG
Ludwigs Kanal
Regnitz River
Wiesent R.
Forchheim
Gosberg
Kalchreuth
Eschenau
Heroldsberg
LAUF
Neunkirchen
Dormitz
BERLANGEN
Regnitz River
Ludwigs Kanal
FÜRTH
NÜRNBERG
Regnitz R.
Schwabach
Ludwigs Kanal


FÜRTH
ZIRNDORF
OLD WALLED CITY
NÜRNBERG
Behringersdorf
RÖTHENBACH
Schwaig
Schoenau
Stein
Röthenbach
Eibach
Rednitz R.
Kraftenbach
Reichelsdorf
Ludwigs Kanal
Fischbach
Brunn
Birnthon
Moosbach
FEUCHT
Röthenbach b. Nbg.
Katzwang
Kornburg
Wendelstein
Schwarzenlohe
Rübarsried
Gross
SCHWABACH
Sperberslohe
Furth
Rednitzhembach
SCHWAND
To Augsburg
To münich
MAP 34
NÜRNBERG AREA
1/100,000 Scale
2 miles
Superhighways

reports that the Luftwaffe was no more, got strong support from "jet" planes. By morning the 2nd Battalion was in a furious fire fight inside the city. Company G suffered casualties from a friendly bombing mission, but stuck to its guns and smashed a German counter-attack. The 3rd Battalion, fighting in Mogeldorf, drove through SP and rifle fire with all three rifle companies. In the early hours of the morning it reported half the town in its hands.

After snatching a few moments sleep in the midst of a battlefield of crumbling buildings and glowing fires, the 3rd's doughboys were up and attacking again at 0715 April 18 behind a creeping barrage of artillery fire that laid waste everything in the infantry's path.

But hourly situation changes in large cities demand new tactics. That morning the 179th got a new mission. Its sector had been initially a narrow strip of blocks along the Pegnitz River into the heart of Nurnberg. Now with the 3rd Division sweeping into the city from the north, the whole 45th attacked into the half of the city that lay south of the river.

The 179th's White Battalion punched through fierce opposition into the western end of Nurnberg, on the right of the 180th and 157th Combat Teams. But when Company F reached the battalion objective, the junction of three rail lines in eastern Nurnberg, at 0810 April 19, White pulled out and assembled in Feucht as Division reserve.

The remainder of the 179th blocked to the rear and left of its sister regiments. Blue Battalion proceeded southeast, relieved the 157th's 2nd Battalion, and blocked to the east. Red moved over the city's superb network of superhighways and established defenses south of the 3rd, along the Ludwig Kanal from the city limits to the "autobahn" east of Rothenbach.[1]

When it was reported that three SS Divisions were attacking from Neumarkt, Able Company sent a platoon to reinforce Baker on the 1st Battalion left flank. But although small enemy forces did strike in the vicinity of Ochenbruck, the 14th AD on the left wing advised that it had the situation in hand.

On April 20 as the 42nd Division was taking Furth and contacting Pagan's 3rd Battalion, the 45th and 3rd Divisions wiped out the last resistance in the city. Back in Williston, S.C., home town of Pvt. Freddie Whittle, the local paper announced the event in screaming front page banner headlines:

"WHITTLE'S DIVISION CAPTURES NURNBERG!"

1—Although all Germany is a confusion of similarly-named towns, nowhere was it worse than at Nurnberg; in a radius of four miles around the city there were no less than three towns named Rothenbach!

Chapter 30. The Heart of Nazism

The census figure was wrong: there were not 500,000 people in Nurnberg when it fell to the 3rd and 45th Divisions. And the reduction of the population was nothing compared to the reduction of the buildings. What the air corps had left the artillery and infantry had finished. Veterans of warfare in three countries, yet the troops had never seen destruction so utter. It was possible to stand in the center of Nurnberg and look for miles in any direction, one's view unobstructed by any mass of standing edifices.

Awaiting another attack order, 15th Corps held a parade in town. Representative units of the combat forces marched down the pockmarked, littered streets in review before Gen. Haislip, and before the lacklustre eyes of Germans only now emerging from cellars and shelters below the ground.

As metropolis after metropolis fell into American hands, the military government's job grew by seven league leaps and bounds. With totally inadequate personnel to direct the administration of great cities, the Americans were unprepared to handle, from the outset, the task they must have known long ago they would at some time have to cope with.

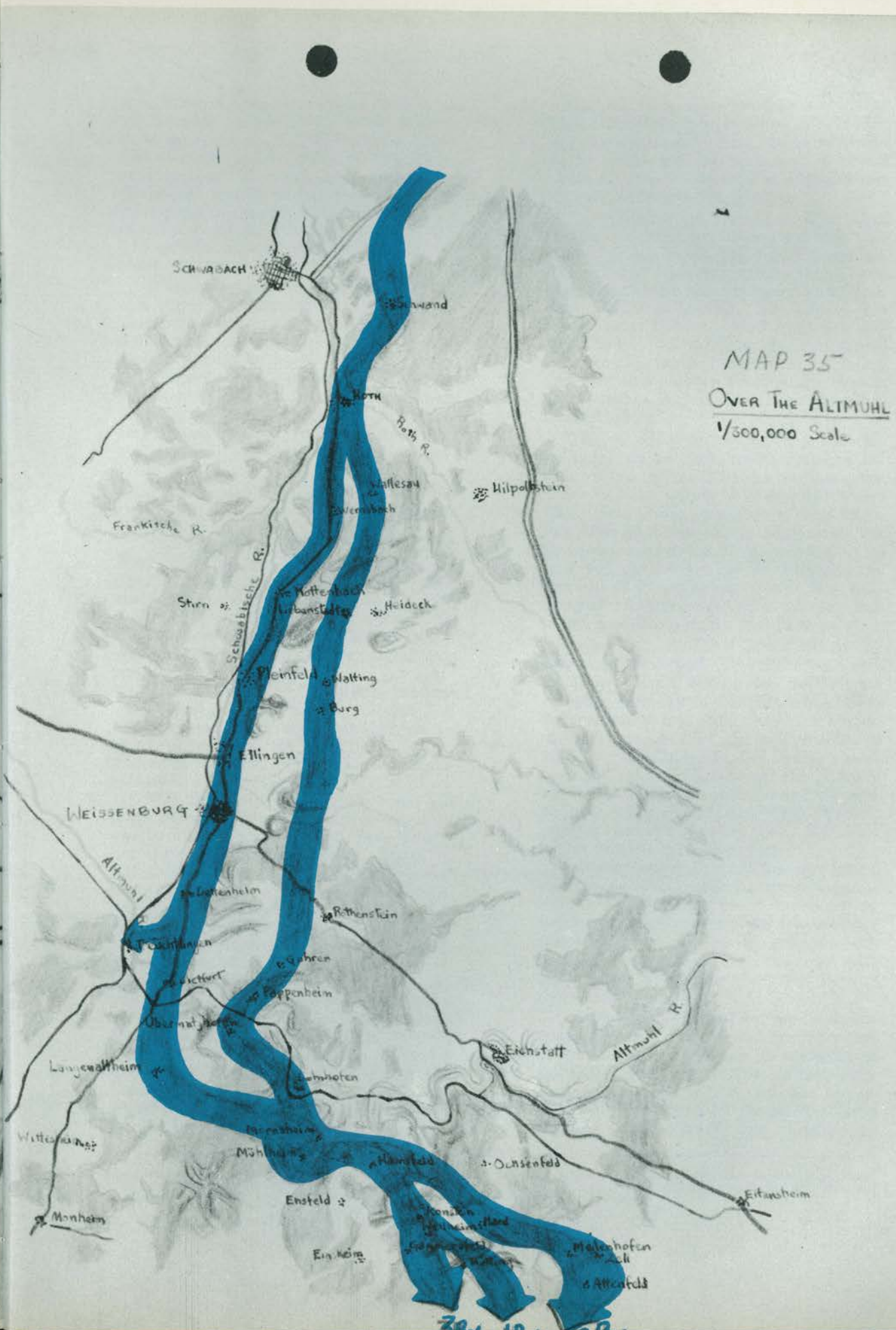
The capture of a city such as Nurnberg was a great feat. Administering it was a greater one. Under MG fell the problems of housing displaced persons, controlling and providing for thousands of Allied PWs suddenly unleashed from liberated prison camps. There were the victims in concentration camps (where typhus was incipient, relief needed desperately) to be attended to. With a desperate call for supplies and food, alone the problem of obtaining critical transportation to make the tremendous runs back to base depots was enormous.

Under MG came the problems of maintaining local government supervision, the selection of German bourgemeisters, the ferreting out of Nazis and former SS troopers, the direction of education, radio, newspapers and all factories and business in the city. The burdens were infinite, vast in their immensity and far beyond the scope of a few men with a short orientation course!

Meanwhile, on other fighting fronts, Allied successes were also so phenomenal, so swift and so relentless that it was clear that, at last, the end was really drawing near. To the far north the Canadians had isolated western Holland. The British, slashing into Bremen, were also shooting armored columns to the outskirts of Germany's greatest port city, Hamburg. In the center the 1st and 9th U. S. Armies were lining up along the banks of the Elbe River. Patton's 3rd Army had reached Leipzig and the Czech border. West of the Nurnberg spearhead, other 7th Army prongs drove on Ulm and Stuttgart.

The Russians were launching their offensive along a 100-mile front from the edge of Berlin to Dresden, pushing west to meet the Americans and sever Germany in half.

And, punching up into the enemy's hard belly, the 5th and 8th Armies in Italy were still moving swiftly. Bologna


MAP 35
OVER THE ALTMUHL
1/500,000 Scale
SCHWABACH
Schwand
ROTH
Roth R.
Hilpoltstein
Frankische R.
Schwabische R.
Stirn
Heideck
Pleinfeld
Walting
Burg
Ellingen
WEISSENBURG
Altmuhl
Rothenstein
Eichstatt
Altmuhl R.
Ensfeld
Monheim
Eitensheim

was about to capitulate, and with it all the German armies of the south. Indeed, victories came so fast that proper appreciation could not be given to any single achievement. A month ago the fall of Nurnberg would have been heralded throughout the world. Now, noteworthy, it was but a part of a rolling snowball that had grown beyond a man's ability to grasp.

The end of the war drew near. But it was obviously necessary to occupy all Germany to effect the finish. And it was realized that the last great battles would probably occur in the 7th Army sector, in the "redoubt area" bounded by Munich on the north and the Italian and Austrian Alps on the south. There still potent enemy forces roamed at large, and they had as their supreme commander Gen. Kesselring.

And so, on April 21, the 45th was alerted to push on once more, to Munich, 148 kilometers away.

The attack would commence at 0800 April 22. The 3rd Division temporarily dropped out to garrison Nurnberg (they could have it). On the right of the 45th would be the 42nd. The 157th, this time, would attack on the right. On the left it was the 179th, *still* one of the assault regiments!

The 1st and 2nd Battalions jumped off abreast on schedule, as the 3rd Battalion followed in reserve. Sweeping south by motor, in a day the 179th took 30 kilometers of territory, and against moderately heavy resistance!

The 1st Battalion, moving down the main Roth-Weissenburg road, overran an enemy airfield south of Roth, then after a hot fight cleared Rottenbach. South of town the troops ran into a road block three kilometers long! The engineers rushed up and cleared the obstacles; the doughboys pushed on to take Pleinfeld that night. White's infantrymen, attacking simultaneously on the 1st's left, drove along secondary roads through woods and slightly rolling hills to reach Walting.

On the left the 14th AD reported stiff resistance northeast of Heideck. On the right the 157th reached Stirn in its sector west of the Schwabische River. And in the 179th zone around Roth the convoys got mixed up with 99th Div (3rd Army) elements moving northeast on the same roads the 45th was heading southwest. This unique situation evolved because the 3rd Army's boundary had been extended so far south that the 45th had to attack south all day to get OUT of Patton's sector and back into 7th Army's!

Continuing the assault at 0700 April 23, the 1st Battalion wiped out the Germans fighting in the Ellingen railroad station, cleared the rest of the town, then thundered down the highway into Weissenburg.[1] All through the streets hot small arms battles raged until the city capitulated at 1322. Then the Americans raced on to reach Dettenheim, with the 2nd Battalion moving through the woods northwest of Pagan Red. Here the companies halted.

But at 1925, champing at the bit impatiently as the doughboys grabbed off mile upon mile, Division ordered the 179th to keep going. With the 157th and 180th assembling preparatory to crossing the Altmuhl River to the northwest, the General wanted the 179th to race south and secure the bridge at Dietfurt. So, through the gathering dusk, the RCT jumped off again. At 2015 the 1st Battalion held Dietfurt, the 2nd Gohren.

And with the next dawn, while the Regiment occupied Treuchtlingen with Company A, the 3rd passed through the 1st and, crossing at Dietfurt, swept over the mountains and with K and L smashed through intense rifle and artillery fire to take Langenaltheim. Lt. Col. Smith's men, behind Company E, bridged the Altmuhl at Pappenheim, then with E and F abreast, pushed south over the high ground against heavy German fire. By dark White had cleared Solnhofen.

Attempting to overrun the opposition and reach the image-inspiring Danube before the Germans could organize defensive positions along its approaches, the 45th command again ordered both attacking regiments to continue south with all possible speed. So the 179th kept to the road.

Because of the long supply lines, the speed of the advance and the shortage of transportation, keeping all elements of the RCTs close behind the leading companies would have been all but impossible had it not been for the unauthorized German vehicles every unit "latched on

---

1—German script apparently confused the map makers, for they had translated the German double S into SZ. Generally anglocized names have been used (Danube for Donau, Munich for Munchen) except in the case of Nuremberg, which no longer seems to appear anywhere except as Nurnberg.

to" as supplementary motor transport. At one time Hqs Co, 179th Inf, moved with 18 vehicles: 2 peeps, 1 GI truck, and 15 assorted captured oddities.

These wierd enemy contraptions, unreliable and unsuited to rough roads, were vitally needed. But as no replacement parts could be obtained, when one of these trucks konked out (and one did on every move!) another vehicle would also stop, take over the casualty's load, and race on to catch up with the rest of the convoy. All along the highways these abandoned wrecks were strewn. But somehow the Regiment accumulated others and kept rolling.

The lead troops swung to the southeast as they neared the Danube, last water barrier to southern Germany's cultural center and the Reich's third city, Munich.

Attacking through the night, by 0645 April 25 Blue's soldiers were beating down stiff resistance in Konstein. The 2nd Battalion met and smashed several enemy convoys scampering south. Leaving wrecked cars and the bodies of grotesque, stiff-legged horses strewn along the highways behind them the troops continued on the Regimental left flank toward the river. Col. Grace recommitted Red in order to gain the objective with the least possible delay. The 1st swept south into Gielthausen. Here, finding no usable roads in his sector, Lt. Col. Crouse swung into White's sector, to reach the banks of the Danube that night in the vicinity of Laisacker. Blue, too, gained the Danube's north bank, at midnight, at Stepperg.

By morning, April 26, the 179th's zone along the river bank had been completely occupied. Simultaneously, exactly one month after the Regiment had crossed the Rhine 400 combat miles away, the orders for the bridging of the Danube were being issued. H-Hour was 1500 that afternoon. Three regiments abreast, the 45th was to attack over the river and secure a bridgehead. As the bridges would be placed at Stepperg and Bertoldsheim, both inconvenient for RCT transportation, the 179th's mission on the 45th left flank was particularly difficult. It would attack with the 1st and 3rd Battalions. The 2nd would prepare to follow on order.

Assault, storm and rubber boats were moved up to the edge of the water by RCT engineers. C Company scouts had already crossed the night before and returned, without being fired on. Now Company I sent over a patrol, just in advance of the company's main forces. It too reached the opposite bank without losing a man.

Everything moved to the edge of the Danube, which proved to be green instead of blue, and proved to be something else not anticipated: swift as hell! In song gracefully flowing, actually its current rushed faster than the Rhine's. The engineers cursed; it doubled their work. The troops cursed; the flimsy assault boats would drift while crossing.

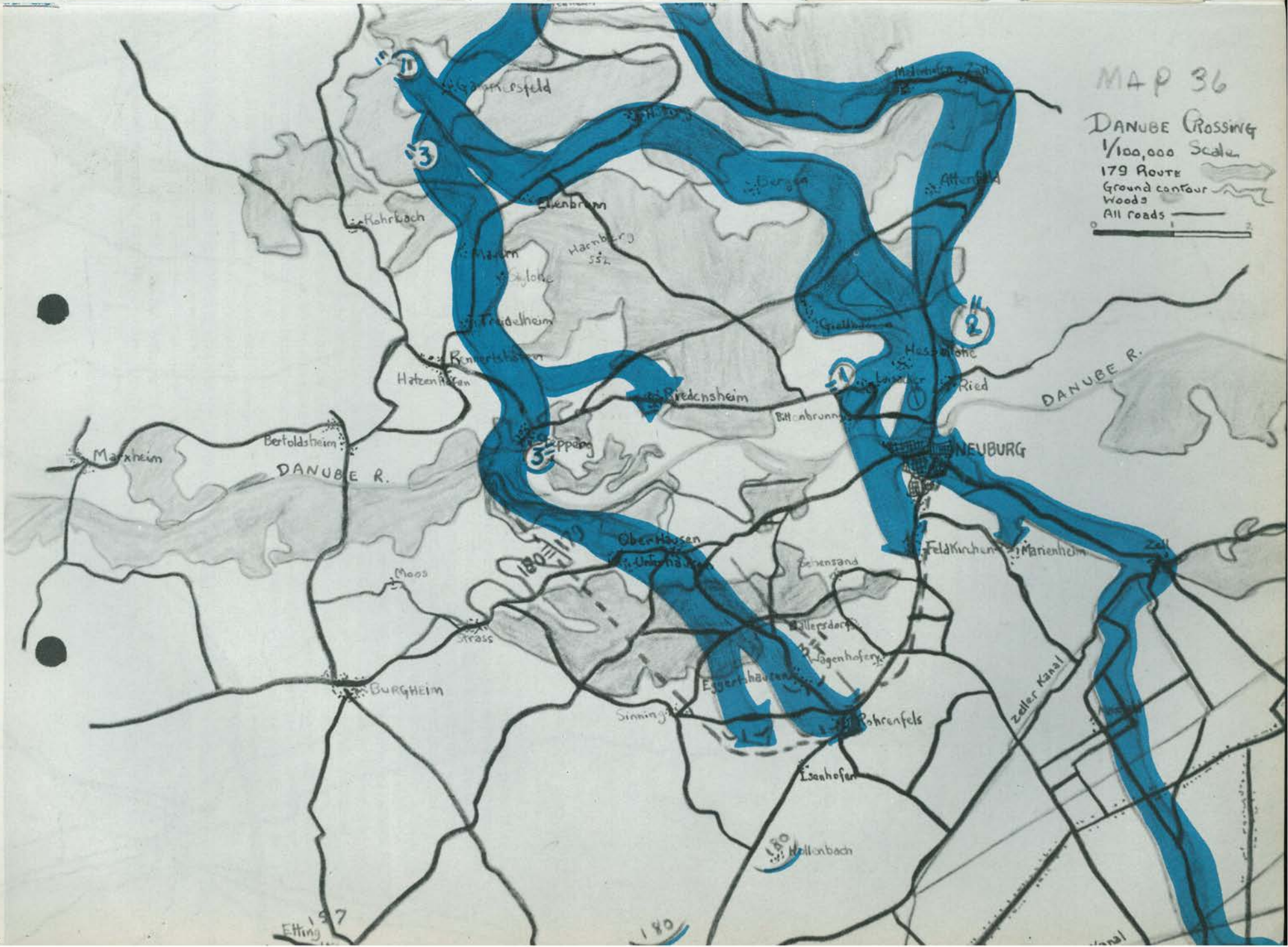
Just before 1500, planes were in the air, their mission to smash any targets spotted in the path of the ground forces. Ober- and Unterhausen were flattened with heavy bombs.

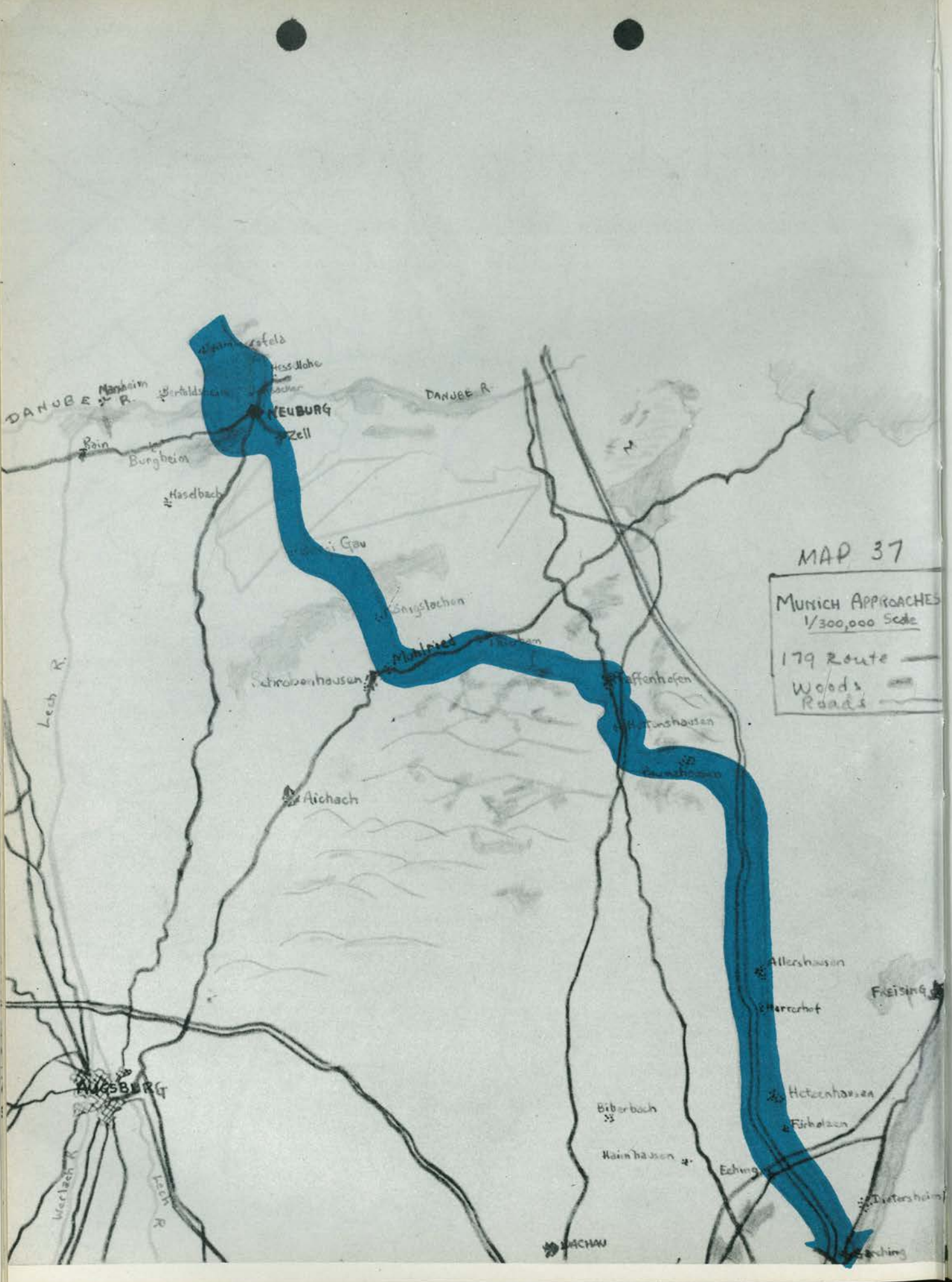
At 1500 Companies I and B started over. Only scattered fire met the Americans as the small boats swarmed to the south bank. I's soldiers raced up the ridge opposite Stepperg, sped along the ridgeline eastwards, and struck downhill into Unterhausen. By 1655 Blue had two companies across the Danube, Red Battalion had Baker over and most of Able.

At 1830 the 179th had all of Red and Blue across. And as the sun dipped below the hills and the deepening shadows dropped over the brilliant green hillside, the 180th was holding Moos and Strass, the 157 was driving south with four companies over the Danube, and the 179th was clearing the city of Neuburg of panzerfaust-firing Germans. First to reach the south bank in its entirety, the 179th had also taken the most PWs in the 45th on D-Day, and with the fewest casualties.

The following morning, while at Torgau the Russians and Americans were at last linking up in the momentous union which sliced Germany in half, the Danube bridgehead was expanded. The 180th pushed out to Hollenbach; the 157th reached Etting and Haselbach. The 179th was in the environs of Neuburg save for the 3rd Battalion, with I and K in Rohrenfels and L in Egertshausen. Supplies and heavy equipment forded the river and massed to roll south again.

Neuburg itself was full of hospital units and Wehrmacht recuperation centers. Also in its sector the 179th found an underground factory (outside of Oberhausen), and a German airdrome two kilometers east of Neuberg littered with


MAP 36
DANUBE CROSSING
1/100,000 Scale
179 Route
Ground contour
Woods
All roads
0
1
2
DANUBE R.
NEUBURG
Ried
Rohrbach
Ebenbram
Hatzenhofen
Bertoldsheim
Marxheim
Moos
Burgheim
Feldkirchen
Marienheim
Rohrenfels
Hollenbach
Zeller Kanal
180
Etting


MAP 37
MUNICH APPROACHES
1/300,000 Scale
179 Route
Woods
Roads
DANUBE R.
Mannheim
Bertoldsheim
NEUBURG
Zell
Rain
Burgheim
Haselbach
Gau
Sandizell
Mühlried
Petrobrunnhausen
Affenthofen
Aichach
Lech R.
AUGSBURG
Allershausen
Marzarhof
FREISING
Hetzenhausen
Fürholzen
Biberbach
Hainhausen
Eching
Dietersheim
DACHAU
Garching

wrecked swastika-marked planes and with many more intact but grounded for lack of fuel.

By April 28 the entire 45th was south of the Danube, so at 0630 the Thunderbirds kicked off again, objective: Munich. And the 179th was still one of the assault regiments!

With the 2nd and 3rd Battalions covering the flanks, Red led off, riding 106th Cav Rcn Trp cars. With the doughboys now were several "fighting mad" Russians, recently released prisoners who "joined up" with the rifle companies to get in their licks against the Hun.

The 1st Battalion rolled swiftly southeast over canals, past villages, through wooded hills. But at Pfaffenhofen the troops were stopped dead for some hours as the Germans laid down tank and SP barrages backed by a stream of small arms fire. As heavy fighting ensued, Lt. Col. Crouse committed his reserves: with the added fire power the doughboys rushed in, smashed the opposition, and rolled on to Hettenhausen. Here, too, the Germans fought back from well dug in positions. Behind mortar and artillery concentrations, Charlie Company attacked and at 2300 the town fell to the Americans.

Gen. Frederick, his forces but 20 miles from the heart of Munich, hurled all three combat teams into the fight on April 29. His order read to attack the city on the right of the 42nd Div. Meanwhile the 3rd Division would be approaching the city from the east.

On the left of the 180th and 157th, with the mission of seizing its sector of Munich and contacting the 3rd Division, at 0700 the Regiment jumped off.

Moving on 106th transportation again, the 1st Battalion, followed by White, roared southeast, then south via the superhighway to the city. The 3rd Battalion was detached and assigned to the T (for Target) Force Hqs out of 15th Corps, now organizing to guard "targets" of military or cultural importance once Munich fell.

By 1100 the 157th had taken Rudelzhofen, the 180th was in Biberbach and just east of Haimhausen, and the 1st Battalion, whipping through Allershausen and Harrerhof and overwhelming token resistance in both towns, had entered Eching.

By 1440 Red was moving into Garching, Baker leading. But as they attacked into the outskirts, the troops were pounded by a furious SP, artillery, antitank and rifle fire. Baker withdrew, and jumped off again with Charlie as the latter company drove on Garching along the Dietersheim road. But even with two companies committed, the 1st was stopped by the fierce resistance.

At 2050 both companies attacked furiously, but were stopped again with heavy losses. The 160th batteries fired a murderous TOT on the Germans in town and the doughboys attacked again. The fighting went on into the darkness.

The CP moved up to Eching. The 2nd Battalion closed in Furholzen. The 1st Battalion troops battled on. Around the 179th area oil dumps were exploding and smashed enemy vehicles still burning. The smoke from battle raging on the Regiment's right hung a white pall over the landscape in that direction.

And beyond the smouldering town of Garching, across the vast level plains, rose a mass of tiny spindles that outlined the city of Munich. And far beyond, rising majestically into the failing light of a clear spring night, loomed the chill, snow tipped mountain masses of the Alps. Even here, 50 miles away, the cold mountain air swept down to cool the plains.

In the C.P., final plans were made for the assault on Munich—the heart of the south German Reich, the heart of the enemy's redoubt area, the heart of Nazism.

On April 30 the 2nd Battalion, with medium tanks attached, jumped off while the 1st Battalion remained behind to mop up the last struggling, rabid enemy in Garching. Company G cleared Dirnismaning, and E and F charged abreast down the superhighway, through growing numbers of buildings, into the suburbs and, at 1250, still side by side, into the city limits. Once again the 2nd Battalion had entered a major city of the Reich before any other Allied force!

While G Company was contacting 3rd Army elements to the east, the CP was moving into Munich at 1400. E and F Companies penetrated a kilometer into the city, having already secured the northernmost Isar River bridge east of the superhighway's terminus.

Then, on Division order the 2nd, still smashing through the battered streets, turned east, secured intact two more bridges, and by 2025 had crossed the Isar and were tramping through the streets of town east of the river. By dark contact

had been established with the 42nd and 3rd Divisions.

Resistance within the city was very light. Most streets were deserted, and windows shut tight. The infantrymen went in and killed or captured the few snipers that did crop up.

The previous day 42nd and 20th Armored Division press agents had somewhat anticipated their units' entry into Munich. But by April 30 the city *had* fallen. And by May 1, only momentarily discomforted by the war in its very streets, city business was back to normal. Civilians on the streets seemed oblivious to a change in regime. The only shots heard were those fired by an occasional celebrating GI. A summer sun brought out hordes of sun-worshipers, in the parks, along the canals, on porches and lawns.

For the first time Americans became aware that German women are attractive too, and extremely well developed. But what impressed the troops most in Munich was how much more similar to American standards were its customs, clothes, mechanical facility and general viewpoint than any other European cities they had seen. They had disliked the dirty Italians, the grasping French, yet individually they admired the Germans—as people, not as political thinkers! They expressed again and again the regret that when taken en masse, the German could be an animalistic, inhuman beast.

The 179th C.P. was set up on the east bank of the Isar, in the apartment that was Adolph Hitler's private residence in Munich! After the initial treasure hunt, everyone settled down to carry out the 45th's mission—the occupation of the city. To the 157th fell the actual garrisoning. The 180th policed PWs. The 179th took over all special missions.

The 2nd Battalion joined the 3rd as a T Force, guarding buildings in the metropolitan area. The 1st Battalion organized riot squads and manned guard posts in Dachau, that unforgettable blot on the record of the human race which, from its boxcars piled with dead to its starved bodies stacked like firewood awaiting the crematory, was Gen. Franz's answer as to why Americans were fighting Germany.

On May 3 the 2nd and 1st Battalions relieved all 3rd and 42nd Division posts in Munich to release those units to continue south towards Innsbruck and the Brenner Pass, west towards Salzburg. And the same day the 45th had its "victory" celebration, after which any festive occasion, even the war's end, would be anti-climactic. For at 1215 the Thunderbirds were advised that they would see no more combat in the European Theater!

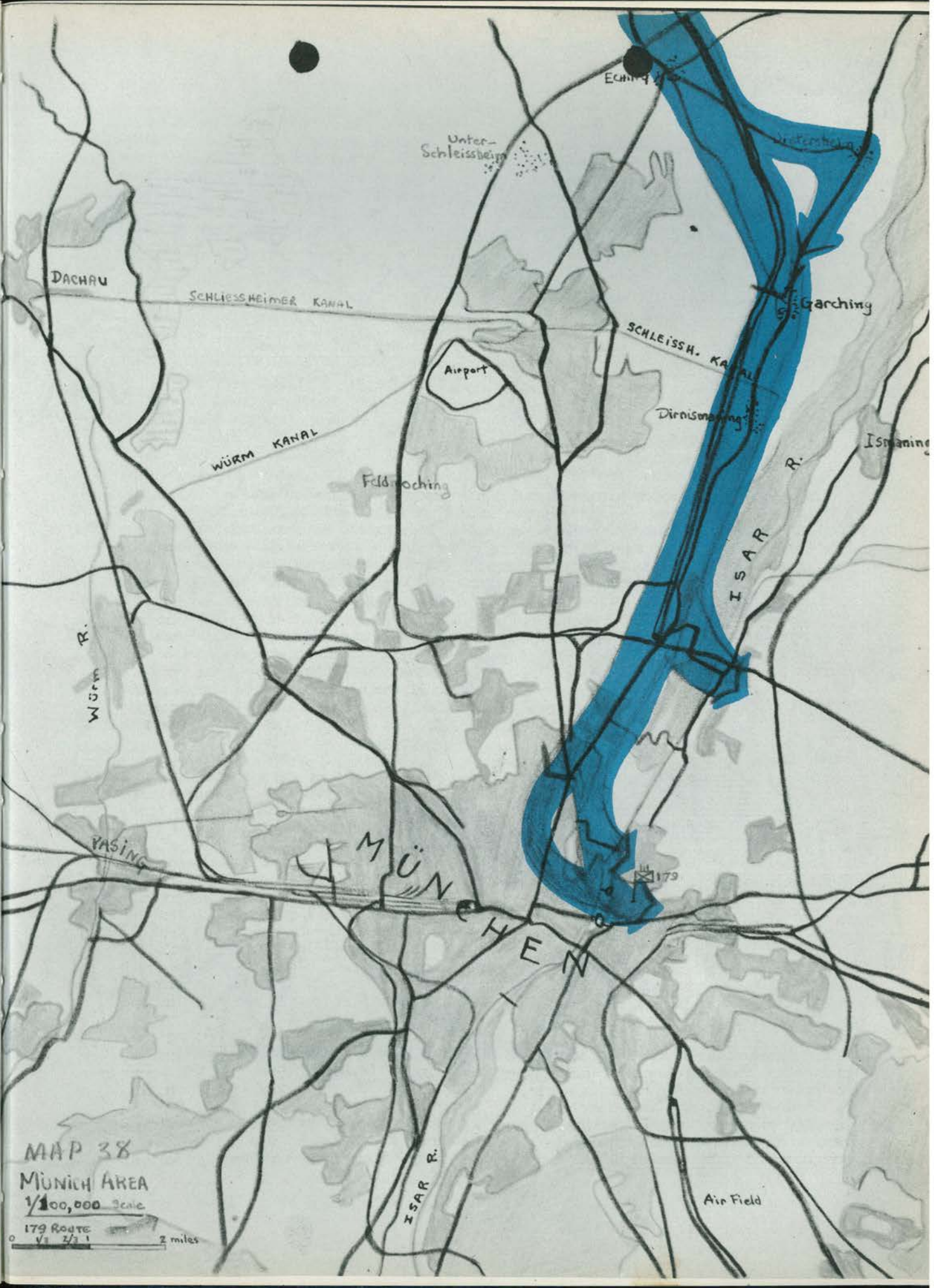
That last bit had an ominous ring—in the ETO. But to hell with it. For the nonce it was enough to celebrate the good tidings, toasted with Franco's specially labelled liquor—from Hitler's own wine cellar. Though many did not join the Bacchanalian festivities. For after so many months, the wished-for reality was benumbing. One GI expressed the thoughts of every infantryman: "Holy Mackerel! It's over—and I'm still alive!"

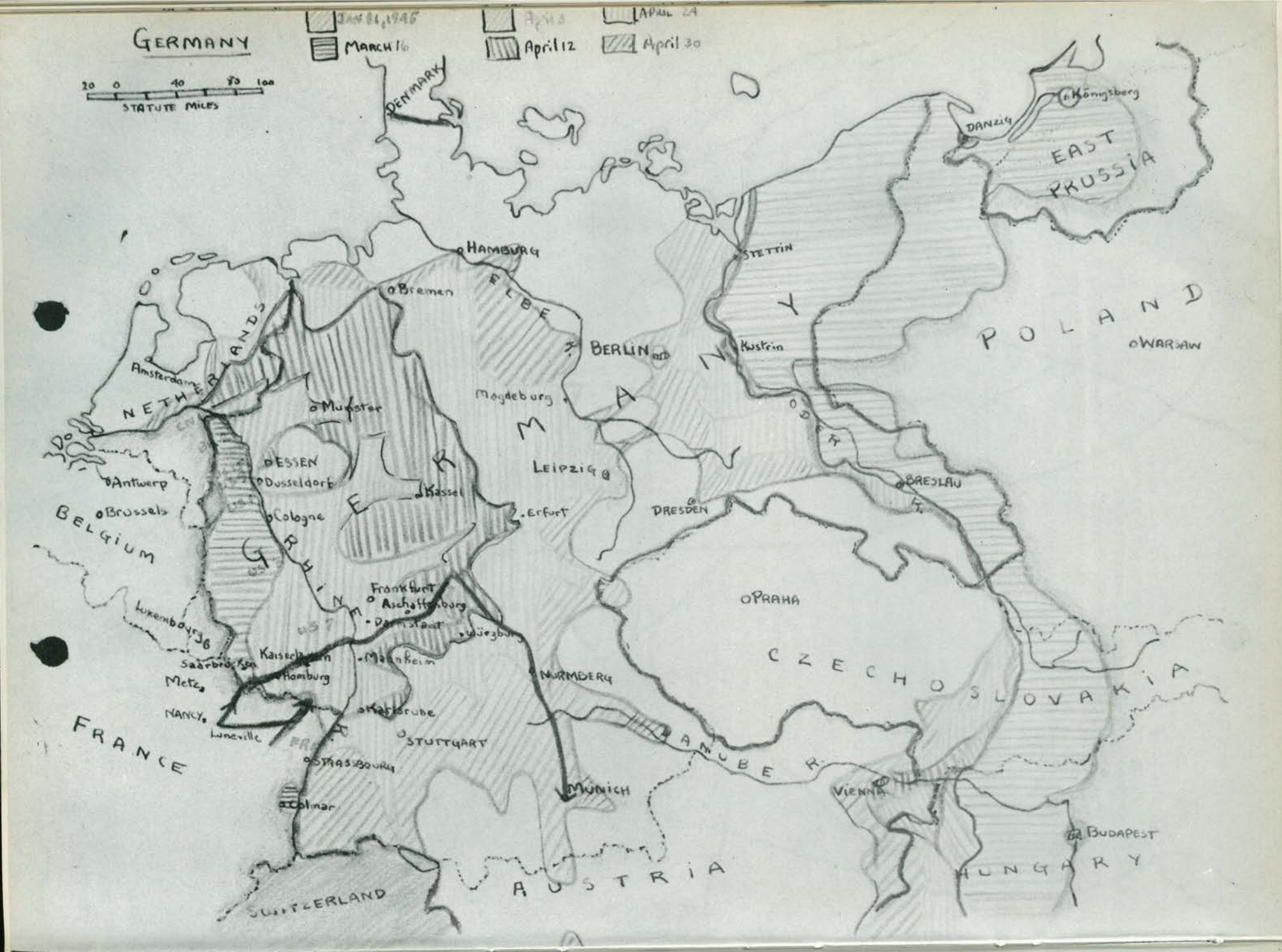
The 179th began to readjust itself to garrison life. But it had a moment, too, to reflect on the past 45 days of combat—a famous combination of numbers, and an appropriate one. For only 45 days ago, on March 15, the 45th had jumped off at Saarguemines (an eternity of happenings ago!). In those 45 days the Division had helped produce military miracles.

In 45 days it had breached the Siegfried Line, cleared the Saar Basin and the Palatinate, crossed the Rhine, the Main and the Danube, captured Aschaffenburg and Bamberg alone and, with the 3rd and 42nd Divisions, taken the two great cities of southern Germany, Nurnberg and Munich.

In those same 45 days, alone of the Division's RCTs the 179th had been committed every day. It was the 179th which had taken Homburg, first entered Nurnberg and Munich, and made the initial assault crossings of all three major rivers. Of the 45th's 60,000 PW haul in this one period the 179th had taken 18,370. It had captured 560 towns, travelled over 400 combat miles and occupied incalculable square miles of Germany. It had killed or wounded 800 Germans, smashed 750 vehicles and tanks, destroyed or damaged 200 field guns and captured untold quantities of chemical warfare supplies, ammo dumps, trains loaded high with goods, airfields littered with planes, and Wehrmacht QM stores (including vast liquor caches, which were needless to say absorbed rather than destroyed). Yet in the accomplishment of these feats, the Regiment had suffered but 87 killed, 375 wounded and 9 missing in action!

As an integral part of a vast offen-


Unter-
Schleissheim
DACHAU
SCHLIESSHEIMER KANAL
SCHLEISSH. KANAL
Garching
Airport
Dirnismaning
WÜRM KANAL
Feldmoching
ISAR R.
Würm R.
MÜNCHEN
179
Air Field
ISAR R.
MAP 38
MUNICH AREA
1/100,000 Scale
179 Route
0 1/2 1/2 1 2 miles


GERMANY
JAN 31, 1945
MARCH 16
APRIL 12
APRIL 24
APRIL 30
20 0 40 80 100
STATUTE MILES
DENMARK
HAMBURG
Bremen
ELBE R.
BERLIN
STETTIN
Königsberg
DANZIG
EAST PRUSSIA
POLAND
WARSAW
Kustrin
ODER R.
Magdeburg
Leipzig
Dresden
BRESLAU
Amsterdam
NETHERLANDS
Münster
ESSEN
Düsseldorf
Cologne
Kassel
Erfurt
Antwerp
Brussels
BELGIUM
RHINE R.
Frankfurt
Aschaffenburg
Darmstadt
Würzburg
Luxembourg
Saarbrücken
Kaiserslautern
Mannheim
Hamburg
NÜRNBERG
Metz
NANCY
Karlsruhe
Luneville
STUTTGART
FRANCE
STRASSBOURG
Colmar
MUNICH
PRAHA
CZECHOSLOVAKIA
DANUBE R.
VIENNA
BUDAPEST
HUNGARY
AUSTRIA
SWITZERLAND

sive which for speed and success was as impressive as those famous Russian steamroller drives, the 45th and the 179th had done more than a fair share. In shattering the heart of the Nazis' redoubt area they had helped assure the death of Nazism, and immeasurably hastened its execution.

General Eisenhower congratulated 7th Army, on behalf of the entire AEF, for its capture of Munich, lair of the Nazi beast. The sunny days slid by. And the end came round, faster and faster and faster.

Time Magazine, May 28, 1945

MARK OF THE FIGHTING MAN

(Selected by TIME were sample combat divisions. Representing the infantry in the ETO were the 1st (Regular Army) and the 45th (National Guard.)

The Forty-Fifth. Indians in the 45th Division staged a war dance at Camp Patrick Henry, Va. just before the outfit headed overseas. In July, 1943, the 45th landed in Sicily. "The Thunderbirds", a National Guard outfit from Oklahoma, Colorado and New Mexico, had been well and lengthily trained. The 45th did all right in Sicily.

Fighting under Major General Troy Middleton, the 45th overran 1,000 square miles in three weeks. German prisoners complained: "Don't you Americans ever sleep?" In September, alongside the 36th (a National Guard division from Texas), the 45th landed at Salerno to begin one of the war's most grueling campaigns. Another National Guard division, the 34th (from Iowa and Minnesota), helped hold that beachhead.

The 45th slogged north through the Appenines for four months, with virtually no rest. Its infantrymen were the men Sergeant Bill Mauldin, himself a 45th Division soldier, drew in his cartoons—unshaven, unkempt, unbeatable. They were pulled out of the line only after they had cleared the approaches to Cassino, given a few days rest. Then they were sent into the smoky, battered beachhead at Anzio. A headquarters commandant grimly noted: "In the last months I have seen six battalion commanders come and go."

With the 3rd and the 36th, the Thunderbirds landed in southern France, cracked the brittle shell of German resistance and slogged north. The 45th spearheaded the VI Corps' drive towards the Belfort Gap. By mid-December of 1944, the 45th had been 18 months overseas, and 365 of those days in combat.

They were not through. Under one of the youngest division commanders in the Army, 38-year-old Major General Robert T. Frederick, they drove on into Aschaffenburg, where they ran into some of the nastiest opposition yet, fanatical Nazi boys, girls and old men. They smashed on into the Nazi shrine of Nurnberg, crossed the Danube, and with the 42nd liberated prisoners of Dachau. A week before V-E Day, the weary 45th marched into Munich.

EPILOGUE: MISSION COMPLETED

May 1-7 were six epoch-making days more eventful than Napoleon's 100 Days. With Mussolini already dead and Hitler's death a "certainty", Goebbels and Henlein and hundreds of other Nazi henchmen committed suicide. Admiral Doenitz took overall command, fought on primarily against the "Red Menace". But resistance was crumbling faster than new editions, rolling off the presses, could report it. A million Germans laid down their arms in Italy and southwestern Austria; Berlin capitulated; all Holland, Denmark and northwestern Germany surrendered; 7th Army released from captivity Leopold, King of the Belgians, and captured von Papen, Hermann Goering, Gens. Kesselring, Rundstedt, List, and joined hands with the 5th U. S. Army at the Brenner Pass.

An overeager press and radio jumped the gun and reported peace. But it was not far off. Two German armies in the residue of Austria gave up. This left only a misguided force of martyrs or madmen fighting in western Czechoslovakia. And thus, at 0141 May 7, the Germans did sign the peace, surrendering unconditionally to the armies of the United States, Russia and Great Britain. Effective 1201 May 9, the War in Europe was over. V-E Day, in all its long dreamed of finality, had arrived.

It was justice that at the end the 45th, once wearer of the reversed swastika shoulder patch, held in its palm the heart of Hitlerism. And it was a fitting climax for the 179th Infantry, which had played so great a part in bringing about the finish, that it welcomed the war's termination in Hitler's own apartment.

The 179th could be proud of itself, proud of the vital part it had played as a member of the team which was the 45th Division. Any man in the Division could be proud. The Thunderbirds had seen a total of 511 combat days, the record in the ETO. In that time they had captured 101,080 enemy soldiers.[1] They had fought in three countries and on every European front, and they had beaten, and beaten soundly, the best divisions the Germans threw at them.

The 45th had not taken Palermo, Naples or Rome, Marseilles or Strassbourg. But the capture of cities has little to do with an outfit's ability, however good it looks on the books. Munich was one of the easiest fights the 45th had in 24 months of foreign combat service! What does count, what makes the 3rd and 45th two of the war's outstanding combat units, are the enemy attacks they stopped, the enemy divisions they decimated, the difficult missions they executed, their ability to stick in the line for interminable periods without failing, and the fact that they went ahead regardless of obstacles, weather, terrain and opposition.

The 45th was not publicity-conscious. It was not the most decorated division. It had bad points and good ones, ups and downs. But no division fought harder, longer or more gruelling battles. And no matter what the task it was assigned, in all its combat *the 45th took every one of its objectives!*

Now, with the defeat of Germany, the 45th had completed its last mission. The Army began the huge program of shifting its European forces to the Pacific at once, in reverse order to which the divisions had come to the ETO. But the old timers, the 3rd, the 45th, the 36th, and the 34th were through. The agonizing horror and stupidity of war was over for them. It was still "two down and one to go", but two-thirds of a global war is enough for any outfit.

And that is the story of the 179th Regimental Combat Team.

1—This figure broke down into: Sicily 11,266, Italy 3,045, France 16,350, and Germany 70,429.

APPENDIX

A. Organization by unit of the 179th RCT

1. INTEGRAL UNITS OF THE 179th INFANTRY REGIMENT (WITH LATEST T/BA ALLOWANCE) AND T/O STRENGTH AS OF JUNE, 1944

O	WO	EM	*UNLETTERED COMPANIES*
11	4	96	Service (Sv) Co.: Furnishes supply, first echelon maintenance, transportation for Regiment.
7	0	152	Anti-Tank (AT) Co.: Motorized, it has 9 57mm AT guns.
6	0	109	Cannon (Cn) Co.: Motorized, it has 8 105mm howitzers, towed (Originally had 2 105s, 6 75s, all self-propelled).
10	0	126	Medical Detachment: Provides Regiment with medical and dental services.
4	1	91	Headquarters Co.: Services C.P. and staff, provides communications, guard and I & R (Intelligence and Reconnaissance) personnel.
			1ST BATTALION
9	0	112	Bn Hqs Co.: Services Battalion staff as Regtl Hqs Co, also has AT platoon with 3 57mm guns, and A & P (Ammunition and Pioneer) platoon.
6	0	187	Company A: Has 3 rifle platoons, 1 Weapons plt. with 2 light machine guns and 3 60mm mortars.
6	0	187	Company B: Same as Company A.
6	0	187	Company C: Same as Company A.
8	0	152	Company D: Heavy Weapons Company, has 8 heavy machine guns, 6 81mm mortars.

(For 2 Bns)			*2ND BATTALION*	*3RD BATTALION*	
18	0	224	Bn Hqs Co)	Bn Hqs Co)	Same composition as 1st Battalion with first 3 companies rifle companies, fourth heavy weapons company.
12	0	374	Company E)	Company I)	
12	0	374	Company F)	Company K)	
12	0	374	Company G)	Company L)	
16	0	304	Company H)	Company M)	
153	5	3049			

2. NORMAL ATTACHMENTS COMPOSING REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

160TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

Hqs Battery: Serves same function as Infantry Hqs Co.
Sv. Battery: Serves same function as Infantry Sv. Co.
Battery A:)
Battery B:) Firing batteries, each with 4 towed
Battery C:) 105mm howitzers.

COMPANY B, 120TH ENGINEER "C" BATTALION

Does combat zone demolition, bridge and road construction and repair work.

COMPANY B, 120TH MEDICAL BATTALION

Removes casualties from forward combat aid stations to clearing station and provides further emergency treatment.

3. INCIDENTAL ATTACHMENTS DEPENDENT ON SITUATION

Tank Company (throughout the war 1 company of the 191st Tank Bn)
T.D. Company (throughout the war 1 company of the 645th TD Bn)
Chemical Mortar Company (Chiefly 1 company of the 82nd Cml Mtr Bn or the 2nd Cml Mtr Bn)

Attached tanks were either medium or light; tank destroyers had 3-inch naval guns and were used as their name implies; chemical mortars (4.2) were used to provide additional mortar fire power, smoke or—although the occasion did not rise—chemical warfare.

B. Awards and Citations

These are the figures on awards presented in the 45th Division. They do not, however, tell the complete story. Many soldiers who never saw combat wear more decorations than veteran combat infantrymen, for the inevitable human equation affects the conferring of individual citations. Theoretically units engaged in similar action of equal duration should decorate approximately the same number of soldiers in their commands.

It doesn't work out that way. Indeed, it is more circumstances beyond a soldier's control than it is a man's actual achievements which govern the recognition of his service by the presentation of an award:

1. The personal relationship between soldier and C.O.
2. The writing of the proposed citation. The same action can be approved for a DSC, Silver or Bronze Star purely on the story's literary merit.
3. Some commanders consider only exceptional feats of valor, others try to get all the decorations they can for men under their commands.
4. Witnesses are necessary to initiate an award, hence many unobserved, unassuming heroes go unrecognized.

The Americans are lavish in handing out decorations, even so cheapening awards as to issue them on quota! Thus the 179th was allotted (say) 150 Bronze Stars. To fill the quota, recommendations were made wholesale. Later when the Regiment had hundreds of deserving cases, only a few such awards were available. The most infamous such incident occurred in North Africa. Some thousand officers had been decorated with Legions of Merit, when it appeared that for every officer receiving an "LOM" two EMs should be so cited. Hastily 2000 men were rounded up, and some results were masterpieces of

irony: one soldier was cited for "bravely" volunteering three days in a row for K.P.!

Obviously most men earn the medals they wear. Yet it is well to remember that the same award means different things on different chests: the man with two legs blown off and the man who was scratched on the wrist wear the same Purple Heart.

Awards in 179th Inf and 45th Inf Div
July 10, 1943 to May 31, 1945

	179 Inf Regt		45 Inf Div	
	Rcd	Pending	Rcd	Pendg
Medal of Honor	0	1	6	3
OLC* to Distinguished Service Cross	1	0	2	0
Distinguished Service Cross	18	8	75	11
Distinguished Service Medal	0	0	2	0
OLC to Legion of Merit	0	0	2	0
Legion of Merit	16	13	79	19
3rd OLC to Silver Star	0	0	1	0
2nd OLC to Silver Star	2	0	3	1
1st OLC to Silver Star	16	0	45	0
Silver Star	312	78	1064	164
DSFC§	0	0	2	0
Soldiers Medal	9	2	35	5
2nd OLC to Bronze Star	1	0	3	0
1st OLC to Bronze Star	33	11	89	32
Bronze Star	671	475	2530	626
OLC to Air Medal§	0	0	58	3
Air Medal§	0	0	34	2
Presidential Unit Citation	0	1	4	2
Star to Meritorious Service Plaque	0	0	1	0
Meritorious Service Plaque**	1	0	12	0
Div. CG Citation√			69	0
Foreign (British, Russian, French & Italian)	5	15	17	109
	1085	604	4133	966

*—Oak Leaf Cluster

§—Awarded to Air Artillery observers, Distinguished Service Flying Cross.

**—Awarded to each service unit in the 45th

√—Awarded by Division. Figures not available for 179th Inf Regt.

C. Combat Time, 179th Inf Regt

Campaign	Period	No. Days in Line	Combat Sea Time	Total Cmpgn	Total 45 Div	Combat Miles	Combat Mi. Per Diem	No. Towns Captured
SICILY	June 8 - July 10, 1943	0	(16)					
	July 10-31, 1943	22	3	25	25	330	15.	75
ITALY	Sept. 10 - Oct. 18, 1943	39	4					
	Nov. 1, '43 - Jan. 5, '44	66	0	109	123	185	1.5	40
ANZIO	Jan. 29 - Feb. 1, '44	3	1					
	Feb. 10 - Mar. 7, '44	27	0					
	Mar. 12 - Apr. 15, '44	35	0					
	Apr. 28 - May 7, '44	10	0					
	May 11 - June 5, '44	26	0	102	120	55	.5	10
FRANCE	Aug. 16 - Nov. 7, '44	84	4					
	Nov. 24 - Dec. 13, '44	20	0	108	125	805	8.	515
GERMANY	Dec. 14 - Feb. 16, '45	64	0					
	Mar. 15 - May 7, '45	54	0	118	118	560	5.	560
		450§	12*	462	511**	1935	4.3	1260

§—Minimum estimate. By "squeezing" days when elements were in the process of entering or withdrawing from combat areas the figure could be increased.

*—Many records include this figure as Combat Time.

**—Time in which Division elements were in action. In 484 of these days the 45th was actually in command of a sector of the front.

D. Casualties, 179th Inf Regt

1. *OFFICERS*

	Battle Casualties					Non-Battle		Replacements		
	KIA	DOW	MIA	POW	WIA√	B. C. Total	Sick Total	COMPENSATION BFA§	RTU#	Reinf. &
Sicily	2	1	0	0	10	13	12	0	8	12
Italy to Anzio	13	4	0	3	60	80	96	15	75	117
Anzio to Rome	21	1	10	22	84	138	92	2	94	83
France	13	2	7	10	78	110	91	18	101	19
Germany	8	0	0	0	25	33	27	16	26	12
Totals	57	8	17	35	257	374	318	51	304	243

2. *ENLISTED MEN*

Sicily	37	8	1	2	149	197	300*		300*	310
Italy to Anzio	245	49	14	54	1111	1473	2187		1687	2032
Anzio to Rome	389	51	123	453	1173	2189	3606		3271	2529
France	295	50	190	164	1408	2107	3054		2228	714
Germany	70	9	9	0	350	438	623		5537	315
Totals	1036	167	337	673	4191	6408	9779		8023	5900

3. *GRAND TOTAL*

	KIA & DOW	MIA & POW	WIA	BC Total	Non-BC	Grand Total
July 10, 1943 to May 6, 1945, O & EM	1268	1062	4448	6782	10,088	16,870

4. *COMPARATIVE FIGURES* (Battle Casualty)

US 5th Army Losses, (American only)	KIA & DOW	MIA & POW	WIA	Totals	179 % of losses
Sept. 9, 1943-June 15, '44	3777	1875	14,979	20,631	
179 Inf, Sept. 10-June 15	773	679	2,428	3,880	19%
45 Div, entire war				27,553	
179 Inf, entire war				6,782	25%

√—Does not include more than one wound per individual
§—Battlefield Appointment
%—Returned to duty
&—Reinforcements (replacements)
#—Estimated
Average rifle company turnover: 1500%!
Division total casualties were second only to 3rd Div losses in the ETO
The 179th losses in Italy were staggering when it is considered that it was but one regiment of some 24 involved, although but 12 of these were constantly committed.

E. List of Achievements

Campaign	Date	Event	45th Inf Div
	Sept. 1, 1939	Poland invaded. Outbreak of War.	
	June 20, 1940	France fell.	
	Sept. 16, 1940	Draft Act became US Law	Called to Active Duty
	June 22, 1941	Germans invaded Russia	
	Dec. 7, 1941	Pearl Harbor. Germans retreated from Moscow.	
	Oct. 23, 1942	British began El Alamein drive.	
	Nov. 8, 1942	US & British invaded Algeria	
	Jan. 18, 1943	Reds raised Stalingrad siege.	
	May 12, 1943	Cap Bon surrender marked end of North African Campaign	
SICILY			
	July 10, 1943	Sicily Invaded.	179, 180, 157 RCTs landed on D-Day
		First major city, Vittoria, captured.	179 RCT
	July 11, 1943	Comiso, first airport, taken.	179 RCT
	July 22, 1943	Palermo capitulated.	
ITALY			
	Sept. 3, 1943	British invaded Italy's "Toe".	
	Sept. 8, 1943	Italy unconditionally surrendered.	
	Sept. 9, 1943	5th Army landed at Salerno.	179 RCT landed D plus 1
	Sept. 12-14	Victories at Persano and Shrapnel Corner helped save beachhead.	179 and 157 RCTs
	Oct. 1, 1943	Naples fell.	
	Oct. 15, 1943	After 157 RCT took Benevento, captured Mt. Acero	179 RCT
	Nov. 4, 1943	Crossed Volturno, took Venafro.	179 RCT
	Dec. 4, 1943	"Big Three" met at Teheran.	
	Jan. 5, 1943	Ended 66-day combat stint.	179 RCT
ANZIO			
	Jan. 22, 1944	6th Corps made Anzio landing.	
	Jan. 24, 1944	Preceded rest of 45th to Anzio.	179 RCT lands D plus 2
	Feb. 11-19	Beat off 2-Div. German attack at Factory, helped save beachhead.	179 RCT, 157 & 180 RCTs 179 RCT
	June 3, 1944	Won Battle of K-9.	179 RCT
	June 4, 1944	Rome fell.	
	June 6, 1944	Normandy invaded.	
FRANCE			
	June 27, 1944	Cherbourg taken.	
	July 27, 1944	Russians reached Vistula.	
	Aug. 15, 1944	Southern France invaded.	157, 180 RCTs (and 179 RCT) land on D-Day
	Aug. 23, 1944	Took Grenoble after 225 mile push.	179 RCT
	Aug. 25, 1944	Paris liberated.	
	Sept. 1, 1944	Won battle of Meximieux,	179 RCT
		Bourg taken.	157, 180 RCTs
	Sept. 8, 1944	Doubs bridgehead established.	180, 179 RCTs
	Sept. 11, 1944	9th Army entered Germany.	
	Sept. 22, 1944	Moselle bridgehead established.	180, 179 RCTs
	Oct. 2, 1944	Grandvillers captured.	179 RCT
	Oct. 3, 1944	Warsaw patriots gave up.	

Campaign	Date	Event	45th Inf Div
	Oct. 5, 1944	British invaded Greece.	
	Oct. 20, 1944	Russians entered Bulgaria, East Prussia.	
	Oct. 23, 1944	Broke through Vosges Line.	179, 180, 157 RCTs
	Nov. 24, 1944	Strasbourg fell.	
GERMANY			
	Dec. 15, 1944	45th crossed German border.	180 RCT
	Dec. 20, 1944	Germans pierced Allied lines at Ardennes.	
	Jan. 12, 1945	German Saverne Gap push stopped.	179, 180, 157 RCTs
	Jan. 15, 1945	Enemy in full retreat from "Bulge".	
	Jan. 17, 1945	Reds jumped off, took Warsaw.	
	Jan. 20, 1945	Hungary quit.	
	Feb. 2, 1945	"Big Three" met at Yalta.	
	Feb. 13, 1945	Reds took Budapest after 49 day seige.	
	Mar. 2, 1945	US troops reached Rhine River.	
	Mar. 6, 1945	Cologne fell. Reds jumped off with seven armies for Berlin.	
	Mar. 8, 1945	US troops seized Remagen bridge.	
	Mar. 19, 1945	7th Army breached Siegfried Line.	179, 157, 180 RCTs
	Mar. 21, 1945	Homburg taken.	179 RCT
	Mar. 26, 1945	3rd and 45th crossed Rhine.	180, 179 RCTs
	Apr. 4, 1945	Russians captured Vienna, Aschaffenburg fell.	157 RCT
	Apr. 12, 1945	Pres. Roosevelt died, Bamberg taken.	180 RCT
	Apr. 17, 1945	US troops entered Nurnberg.	179 RCT
	Apr. 19, 1945	Leipzig fell, Czechoslovakia entered by 3rd Army.	
	Apr. 20, 1945	Nurnberg capitulated.	157, 180 RCTs
	Apr. 27, 1945	Reds, US linked up at Torgau.	
	Apr. 29, 1945	Mussolini killed in Milan.	
	Apr. 30, 1945	179 entered Munich first, city fell that night.	157, 180, 179 RCTs
	May 1, 1945	Hitler reported dead. Doenitz took helm, US and British in Italy linked up with Tito.	
	May 2, 1945	Russians captured Berlin. Million Germans in Italy and Austria gave up.	
	May 3, 1945	British took Hamburg.	
	May 4, 1945	Germans in Denmark, Holland, northwest Germany surrendered. 7th and 5th US Armies joined at Brenner Pass.	
	May 5, 1945	Germans in Austria capitulated.	
	May 7, 1945	Unconditional surrender signed.	
	May 9, 1945	At 1201 War in Europe officially ended.	

F. Commanding Officers, 179th Infantry

I. During Training
Sept. 16, 1940-June 8, 1943

Col. Murray F. Gibbons
Lt. Col. Charles F. Barrett, Jr.
Lt. Col. Harry B. Parris
Col. Leo J. McCarthy
Col. Robert B. Hutchins

II. During Combat

Col. Robert B. Hutchins	—	June 8, 1943 - October 26, 1943
Col. Malcolm R. Kammerer	—	October 26, 1943 - February 18, 1944
Col. William O. Darby	—	February 18, 1944 - April 3, 1944
Lt. Col. Preston J. C. Murphy	—	April 3, 1944 - May 2, 1944
Col. Harold A. Meyer	—	May 2, 1944 - October 6, 1944
Lt. Col. Preston J. C. Murphy	—	October 6, 1944 - December 7, 1944
Col. Preston J. C. Murphy	—	December 7, 1944 - April 17, 1945
Lt. Col. William P. Grace, Jr.	—	April 17, 1945 - May 9, 1945

III. During Occupation

Lt. Col. William P. Grace, Jr.
Col. Preston J. C. Murphy

G. In Memoriam

OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN KILLED IN ACTION IN THE 179th REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM. 10 JULY 1943 TO 9 MAY 1945

I. CO. B, 120th MED Bn (Collecting Co.):

Pfc. Theodore Fleetwood
Pfc. John P. Linker
Pfc. Arthur T. Selph

II. CO. B, 120th ENGR BN (Combat):

Pvt. Alfredo Aragon
Pvt. Jeff R. Campbell
Pfc. Grant W. Chavez
1/Lt. Ira D. Cooper
T/5 Acey C. Glover
T/5 Mariano K. Gonzales
1/Lt. Alfred S. Inzerelli
Pvt. Hanson H. Jones
Pvt. Edward A. Le Maire
T/4 Alvin R. Lester
Cpl. Adolph J. Mesec
Pfc. Gustav Ruckert, Jr.
Pvt. Delmer L. Sellers
Pvt. Andres J. Sandoval
Sgt. Dale T. Sunley
1/Lt. Julian A. Yocom

III. 160th FIELD ARTILLERY BN

Sicilian Campaign

Pfc. Leo F. Bell	Btry A
Pvt. Jerry J. Boyles	Btry A

Italian Campaign

Cpl. William A. Alexander	Hq Btry
Pvt. John T. Anderson	Btry A
S/Sgt. Richard J. Baloun	Hq Btry
Pvt. Harry Barr	Btry A
2nd Lt. Billy D. Bennett	Btry C
Pfc. Payton V. Boren	Btry C
2nd Lt. Jack K. Bumpas	Hq Btry
Pfc. Virgil Cantrell	Hq Btry
Pvt. Clay C. Cook	Hq Btry
Pvt. Everett I. Cox	Btry C
2nd Lt. James M. DuBose	Btry C
Sgt. Howard L. Enslow	Btry A
Pvt. Edward F. Grycel	Serv Btry
Pvt. Valentine V. Lisiecki	Hq Btry
Capt. Oran N. McCain	Btry C
Prs. Maynard R. Mehrekens	Btry B
Sgt. William F. Morgan	Hq Btry
S/Sgt. Halford J. Rhue	Hq Btry
Pvt. Craig H. Sory	Btry B
2nd Lt. Woody E. Stokes	Btry A
1st Lt. William L. West	Btry A
Pfc. Edward J. Ziemba	Btry A

French Campaign

2nd Lt. Edward D. Watson	Hq Btry

German Campaign

1st Lt. Paul U. Avritt	Hq Btry
Pvt. Lloyd E. Baily	Btry B
T/5 Edward J. Bovshis	Serv Btry
Cpl. Allen C. Crane	Hq Btry
2nd Lt. William A. Dwyer	Btry C
Pvt. Forrest G. Foster	Btry A
1st Lt. William W. Hood	Btry A
Sgt. Thomas M. Jones	Med Det

IV. 179th INFANTRY REGIMENT

Sicilian Campaign

Pvt.	Eugene D. Armour	A-T Co.	Cpl.	Frank A. Lombardo	Co. K
Pvt.	James C. Beaty	H-1	Pvt.	Charles F. Marks	Co. L
Pfc.	David D. Castleman	Co. A	2nd Lt.	Oscar A. Newton	Co. K
Pvt.	Joseph F. Campbell	Co. F	Pvt.	Leon E. Ormand	Co. A
Cpl.	Saville B. Dickson, Jr.	Co. L	Pvt.	Arthur E. Packer	Co. I
Pvt.	Bonner M. Dosher	Co. L	Pvt.	Manuel S. Pino	Co. F
Pvt.	J. F. Drake	Co. L	Pvt.	Findley Pollock	Co. E
Cpl.	John Forbes	Co. A	Pvt.	William E. Pyland	Co. K
Pvt.	Clifford J. Gann	Co. A	1st Lt.	Paul C. Rawdon	Co. H
Pvt.	Albert Gregalis	Co. A	Pfc.	Llovd L. Robertson	Co. A
Pfc.	Herman C. Grubbs	Co. E	Capt.	Garvice L. Robinson	Co. C
Pfc.	Vincent Guardiano	Co. A	Pvt.	Michael J. Rondinone	Co. L
Pvt.	Louis E. Guillemette	Co. C	Pfc.	Harold P. Rose	Co. B
Pfc.	Conrad T. Hendrick	Co. F	Pfc.	Frederick L. Sicheri	Co. M
Pfc.	Jack V. Henley	Co. F	Pvt.	Bernhardt V. Semberg	A-T Co.
Pfc.	Clyde W. Henry	Co. I	Pvt.	Robert L. Stuart	Co. D
Pvt.	Frank Hetzel	Co. K	Pvt.	Raymond Soltycki	Co. A
Pvt.	Jacob Himmelbrand	Co. C	Cpl.	Benedict A. Toomey	Co. H
Pfc.	Alexander M. Hinek	Co. F	Pfc.	Johnny M. Trolinger	Co. C
Pfc.	Raymond O. Hopp	Co. K	Pvt.	John A. Vanic	Co. I
Cpl.	Cecil F. Janney	Co. L	Sgt.	William H. Walker	Co. A
Pvt.	William A. Kaitanowski	Co. A	Pvt.	Ronald E. Wasson	Co. E
Pvt.	Daniel J. Ledwith	Co. G	T/5	Frank Wysocki	H-1
Pvt.	Paul Lizzotte	Co. K	Pvt.	John Zelinsky	Co. M

Italian Campaign

Pvt.	Willian J. Acre	Co. M	Pvt.	Walter R. Beavers	Co. F
Pfc.	Amon Adkins	Co. I	Pvt.	Taylor Begay	Med. Det.
Sgt.	James J. Albany	Co. I	Pvt.	William J. Behling	Co. I
Pvt.	James C. Alexander	Co. L	Pvt.	Clyde V. Belew	Co. I
Cpl.	Shelby R. Alford	Co. C	Pvt.	Samuel A. Bell	Co. A
Sgt	Harry E. Allard	Co. A	Pfc.	Leonard M. Benda	Co. A
Sgt	Charles B. Anderson	Co. G	Pvt.	Robert J. Bendtsen	Co. F
Sgt	Eligio L. Angiono	H-2	Pfc.	Edwin G. Benner	Co. L
Sgt	Daniel Antonacci	Co. B	Pfc.	John W. Bennett	Co. B
Cpl.	John Arbachus	Co. A	Pvt.	Hartvig E. Berg	Co. M
1/Sgt.	Cloyce M. Archer	Co. A	Pvt.	Alton E. Bevers	Co. K
Pvt.	Frank Armano	Co. F	Pvt.	Curtis B. Beville	Co. F
Pvt.	Raymond L. Armitage	Co. K	Capt.	Lloyd J. Bex	Co. C
Pfc.	Omer C. Atchison	Co. D	Pfc.	Earl W. Bicknell	Co. G
Pvt.	James A. Babb	Co. C	Pvt.	George J. Biffer	Co. K
Pfc.	Samuel Babbey	Co. I	Pvt.	Virgil R. Billings	Co. I
Pvt.	Howard S. Baldwin	Co. A	Pvt.	Paul Bitchenen	Co. G
Pfc.	Delbert Banner	Co. H	Pfc.	Eugene E. Bixler	Co. H
S/Sgt.	Clarence R. Barber	Co. K	S/Sgt.	Ralph Blackburn	Co. I
T/Sgt.	Paul F. Barber, Jr.	Co. B	T/Sgt.	Roy B. Blanchard	Co. I
S/Sgt.	Wallace J. Barnes	H-3	Pvt.	Morris C. Blegeberg	Co. F
T/4	William P. Barrie, Jr.	Co. B	Pvt.	William Blovelt	Co. A
Pvt.	William L. Barron	Co. C	Pfc.	Edward A. Blum	Co. E
Pfc.	James R. Barry	Co. M	Cpl.	Fred Blumenthal	Co. D
Pfc.	William J. Bauer	Co. C	Pvt.	Ray Bohanan	Co. H
Sgt.	James D. Beatty	Co. M	Pfc.	Kenneth K. Boise	Co. G

Cpl.	John E. Bone	Co. I
Pvt.	Ralph H. Bonsell	Co. F
Pvt.	Fred J. Borys	Co. F
Sgt.	Melvin Bowles	Co. A
Sgt.	John H. Boyajian	Co. A
Pvt.	Peter Boyer, Jr.	Co. E
Pvt.	Morley G. Bradford	Co. F
Pvt.	Harold V. Brady	Co. L
Pvt.	Joseph C. Brady	Co. C
Sgt.	Valentino A. Brazzale	Co. C
Pvt.	Edwin H. Brenneman	Co. D
Pfc.	Lester F. Brewster	Co. F
Cpl.	Joseph H. Brink, Jr.	Co. A
Pvt.	Earl A. Broker	Co. B
Pfc.	Pete C. Brooks	Co. M
S/Sgt.	Archie T. Brown	Co. C
Pvt.	Cecil H. Brown	Co. A
Cpl.	Charles T. Brown	Co. K
Pvt.	Kelly B. Brown	H-2
Pfc.	Thomas W. Brown	Co. K
Pfc.	Herbert J. Brunell	Co. I
Pfc.	Leo S. Brunt	H-2
2nd Lt.	Frank F. Bryski	Co. G
Pvt.	Leroy R. Buchanan	Co. K
Cpl.	Jesse E. Buchert	Co. C
Sgt.	Roy E. Buck	Co. I
1st Lt.	Harmon L. Buckley	Co. I
Pvt.	Wayne Burcham	Co. M
Pfc.	Lee Burks	H-2
Pvt.	Clarence M. Burley, Jr.	Co. L
Pvt.	Alfred A. Burmood	Co. C
Pvt.	Charles W. Burns	Co. E
Pvt.	Walter F. Burns	Co. F
Pvt.	Julian A. Burrow	Co. K
Pfc.	Guy H. Butler	Co. C
Pfc.	Stanley J. Buynack	Co. G
Pfc.	Stanley Buzar	Co. K
Sgt.	Jack M. Callender	Co. C
Pvt.	James B. Campeau	Co. E
Pfc.	Donato Caramia	Co. C
Pfc.	Rudolph A. Carbone	Co. D
Pvt.	Edgar J. Carpenter	Co. I
Pvt.	Norman H. Carter	Co. C
Cpl.	Harold R. Chandler	Cn. Co.
Pvt.	Gordon B. Chapman	Co. L
Sgt.	John P. Chase	Co. I
Pfc.	Stephen F. Check	Med. Det.
Cpl.	Ben Cheek	Co. C
Pfc.	Leo Cherry, Jr.	Co. E
Pvt.	Steve W. Chopek	Co. C
Cpl.	Albert R. Christian	Co. E
Pvt.	Neno J. Ciarmitaro	Co. B
Pvt.	Francis W. Clark	A-T
Pvt.	Redmon F. Clark	Co. A
Pvt.	George E. Clinton	Med. Det.
Pvt.	Paul A. Cloud	Co. M
Pfc.	William H. Clowdis	Co. A
Pfc.	Ivan H. Coday	Co. H
Pvt.	William P. Cody	Co. B
2nd Lt.	Samuel H. Cohen	Co. B
Pvt.	Charles Colbert	Co. D
Sgt.	Delparde Cole	Co. M
Pvt.	Trav W. Collins	Co. A
Pvt.	Martin Comrad	Co. G
Pvt.	Inez D. Compian	Co. L
Capt.	John T. Compton	Hq. Co.
1st Lt.	James A. Conrady	Co. K
Pvt.	James A. Conway, Jr.	Co. C
Pvt.	Orville M. Cook	Co. G
Pvt.	Richard E. Cook	Co. K
Pvt.	Donald R. Cooke	Co. A
Pvt.	Hansford L. Cooke	Co. H
Pfc.	James N. Cooper	Co. I
S/Sgt.	Alvin J. Copeland	Co. C
Pvt.	James W. Corson	Co. M
Cpl.	Joseph Cota	Co. E
Pvt.	Ervin T. Crabtree	Co. A
Cpl.	Miles H. Craven	Co. I
Pvt.	Oswel Crews	Co. M
Pvt.	Benjamin L. Crow	H-1
Pfc.	James Cumo	Co. F
Pvt.	Clyde T. Curlee	Co. L
Pvt.	Charles L. Currier	Co. I
Pvt.	Rodney B. Curits	Co. L
Pfc.	William F. Cusick	Co. D
Pvt.	Thomas R. Daley	Co. K
Pfc.	William A. Daly	Co. B
Pfc.	Louis C. Dannenbrink, Jr.	Co. B
Pfc.	Willard E. Dame	Co. F
Pvt.	Donald C. Danitz	Co. K
Pvt.	Lawrence D'Asaro	Co. I
Pfc.	Floyd W. Davis	Co. L
Cpl.	Russell T. Dawson	Co. D
1st Lt.	Ernest D. Dean	Co. F
T/4	Robert A. De Angelis	H-2
Pfc.	Cleo W. DeClark	Sv. Co.
Pvt.	Robert H. Delaney	Co. E
Pvt.	Michael A. Delgado	Co. C
Pvt.	George J. Demers	Co. L
Pvt.	Cono DeNegris	Co. G
Pfc.	David M. Denham	Co. K
Pfc.	Anthony W. DeRose	Co. K
Pfc.	Frank E. Deveney	Co. H
Pfc.	Adrian DeVisser	Co. G
Pfc.	Isidro S. Diaz, Jr.	Co. B
Pfc.	Dominic A. DiBlasio	Co. B
Pfc.	Bob N. Dillard	Co. I
S/Sgt.	Gaetano T. DiPasquale	Co. I
Pvt.	Anthony DiRubbio	Co. G
Capt.	Stewart R. Dobbins	Co. B
Pvt.	Henry J. Doell	Co. K
Pvt.	Harry J. Domanski	Co. A
Pfc.	George F. Dombi	Co. C
Pvt.	John J. Donlon	H-1
Pfc.	Thomas J. Donnell	Co. K
Pfc.	Edward J. Doran	Co. A
Pvt.	Ogle E. Doss	Co. B
T/5	Wilmer F. Dotter	Co. C
Pfc.	Samuel O. Dowd	Co. A
Sgt.	Alois L. Dreikosen	Co. E
Pvt.	Alonzo H. Duke, Jr.	Co. G
Pfc.	Benedetto A. D'Urbano	Co. M

Pfc.	Alphonse T. Dursh	Co. K
Pvt.	Andrew Dushan	Co. G
Cpl.	Keith E. Dye	Co. A
Pvt.	George C. Escher, Jr	Co. G
Pvt.	George Evanoff	Co. E
Pfc.	Delmar A. Fari	Co. H
Pfc.	Sammy S. Farbo	Co. A
Pfc.	James L. Farmer	Co. B
Pvt.	Robert E. Farrar	Co. B
Sgt.	Lester J. Farrelly	Co. K
Pvt.	John Ferraro	Co. G
Pvt.	Elmer W. Ferrell	Co. B
Pvt.	Benjamin Fine	Co. E
Pfc.	William R. Fischer	H-1
2nd Lt.	Jack C. Fleming	Co. C
Pvt.	James C. Flippin	Co. D
Pvt.	Andrew L. Ford	Co. B
2nd Lt.	Dillard M. Ford	Co. I
Capt.	Harry V. Forsyth	Co. D
Pvt.	Paul W. Fowler	Co. K
Pfc.	George Fox	Co. G
Pvt.	Stewart E. Fox	Co. I
Pfc.	Franklin M. Frederick	Co. I
Pfc.	Rush B. Freeman	Co. L
Pfc.	W. C. Freeman	Co. B
T/4	Benjamin C. Freeny	Med. Det.
S/Sgt.	Carlton O. Freng	Co. E
Pvt.	William F. Freund, Jr.	Co. I
Pvt.	Howard G. Frye	Co. M
Pvt.	Esta L. Fugett	Co. G
Pvt.	Robert H. Gaeschke	Co. A
Pfc.	Walter A. Galary	Co. D
Pfc.	Clarence A. Gardiner	Co. L
Pvt.	Luther E. Garletts	Co. K
Sgt.	Dorsey L. Garrow	Co. F
Pvt.	William N. Gates	Co. I
T/Sgt.	Glen A. Gauger	Co. I
Sgt.	Joseph J. Geiak	Co. E
Pfc.	Joseph Gerek	Co. K
Pfc.	Herve Germain	Co. A
Pvt.	Morris E. Germany	Co. C
Pvt.	Donald E. Garow	Co. M
Pvt.	Raymond S. Gibler	Co. I
2nd Lt.	Wilson C. Gilmore	Co. E
Pvt.	Theodore F. Ginder	Med. Det.
Pvt.	John S. Gitch	Co. G
Pvt.	Falco D. Gizzi	Co. A
Pvt.	Thaddeus T. Glapa	Co. G
1st Lt.	Paul Goforth	Co. A
Pfc.	William J. Gorce	Co. G
T/Sgt.	Edward Gosselin	Co. C
Pfc.	Wallace C. Grapes	Co. L
Pfc.	Ernest M. Gray	Co. E
Pfc.	Claud H. Green	H-3
Pvt.	Everett A. Greenwood	Co. L
Pfc.	Joe E. Griego	Med. Det.
Pvt.	Henry J. Griffiths	Co. C
Pvt.	Samuel J. Grove	Co. K
Pvt.	Antonio H. Guerrero	Co. G
Pfc.	LeRoy R. Guinter	Co. H
S/Sgt.	Sam L. Gunn	Co. F

Pvt.	Arthur V. Gunnoe	Co. E
Pfc.	Robert W. Gustin	Co. D
Pvt.	John H. Gwin	Co. C
Pfc.	Robert L. Hachey	Co. K
Pvt.	Leslie W. Haines	Co. L
Sgt.	Oscar J. Hair, Jr.	Co. G
2nd Lt.	Eugene B. Haggerty	Co. C
Sgt.	Irvin S. Hall	H-3
Pvt.	Leonard J. Hall	A-T
Pvt.	Lester Hallberg	Co. H
Cpl.	Alfred J. Hamilton	Co. I
Pvt.	Raymond J. Hanna	Co. H
Cpl.	Melvin H. Hanceford	Co. M
Pvt.	Allen J. Hancock	Cn. Co.
Pfc.	James J. Hannon	Co. M
Pvt.	Gordon H. Hansen	Co. F
1st Lt.	Joe R. Harbeson	Co. L
Pvt.	Philip L. Hardie	Co. F
T/4	Jack Hardin	Co. L
T/5	Denton C. Hargrove	Med. Det.
Pfc.	Franklin Harper	A-T Co.
T/5	John Harper, Jr.	H-2
Pfc.	Dalton K. Harris	Co. L
S/Sgt.	Richard S. Harris	H-3
Pvt.	Parker Harrison	Co. F
Sgt.	Robert A. Harrison	Co. F
T/5	Burnhard K. Hart	H-2
Pfc.	Eldon L. Haskell	Co. K
T/Sgt.	Tommy P. Hattensty	Co. H
Pvt.	Harold R. Haupt	Co. H
Cpl.	James J. Hayes	Co. F
1st Lt.	Jack Hazelton	Co. M
Pvt.	Kenneth E. Heasley	Co. H
Cpl.	Ray L. Heckathorne	Co. G
Cpl.	John F. Hefele	Co. A
Pvt.	Frederick E. Hencken	Co. L
Pfc.	Elbert C. Henderson	Co. G
Pvt.	Herschel C. Hendrickson	Co. B
Cpl.	Jack M. Henry	Co. A
Pfc.	Samuel C. Henry	Co. C
Sgt.	Carrol S. Henson	Co. D
Pvt.	George O. Hermann	Co. K
Pvt.	Walter W. Herrman	Co. A
Pvt.	William Herz	Co. F
S/Sgt.	Raymond V. Hightower	H-3
Pfc.	George E. Hink	Co. L
Pvt.	Philip B. Hirat	Co. G
Sgt.	Vincent J. Hmielewski	Co. C
Pfc.	William L. Hobbs	Co. K
Pfc.	Harry O. Hoffine	Co. D
Pvt.	Lambert W. Hoffman	Co. E
S/Sgt.	Billy Hood	Co. L
Sgt.	George P. Hood	Co. F
Sgt.	Hubert A. Hooven	Co. H
Pvt.	Robert C. Hoskins	Co. K
Pfc.	Warren G. Howard	H-2
Pvt.	Leroy E. Howland	Hq. Co.
Pvt.	Mike Hrivnar	Co. C
Pvt.	Donald E. Huff	Co. E
S/Sgt.	Norman N. Hughes	Co. M
Pvt.	Robert L. Hughes	Co. K

Pfc.	William E. Huber	Co. K
Cpl.	J. B. Jackson	Co. H
Pvt.	Warren Jacobs	Co. C
Pvt.	Edward C. Jaglinski	Co. M
Pvt.	Kenneth D. Jamison	Co. A
Pfc.	Hillis F. Jenkins	Co. E
Pfc.	Andrew J. Johnson	Co. H
Pvt.	Arthur Johnson	Co. F
Sgt.	James S. Johnson	Co. C
Pfc.	Paul T. Johnson	Co. F
Pfc.	Robert R. Johnson	Co. B
Pfc.	Alva E. Jones	Co. G
Pvt.	Arthur E. Jones	Co. K
Pvt.	Claud R. Jones	Co. C
2nd Lt.	William P. Joseph	Co. B
S/Sgt.	Frank J. Jumper	Co. F
Pfc.	Floyd L. Justice, Jr.	Co. D
Pfc.	Timothy M. Kalagher	Co. L
Pfc.	Edward J. Kaminski	Co. I
Pfc.	John J. Kannigiser, Jr.	Co. I
Sgt.	Max J. Kastner	Co. F
Pfc.	Carl F. Kauff	Co. A
Pvt.	Charles H. Kaufmann	Co. C
Pvt.	Earl Keaton	Co. K
S/Sgt.	Calvin E. Kelley	Co. D
Cpl.	John W. Kelley	Co. L
Pfc.	Lee D. Kellogg	Co. D
Pfc.	Gilbert A. Kempen	Co. F
Pvt.	Joseph H. Kenna	Co. B
Pvt.	Cecil Kennedy	Co. C
S/Sgt.	Richard M. Kenny	Co. A
Pvt.	William T. Kent	Co. I
Sgt.	Forrest L. Kerby	Co. B
S/Sgt.	Blair G. Kerr	Co. L
Cpl.	Jesse J. Kersey	Co. M
Pfc.	Stanley B. Kessler	Co. G
Sgt.	Hubert H. King	Co. K
Pvt.	Lester J. King	H-1
Pfc.	Raymond K. King	Co. C
Pvt.	Frank J. Kirn	Co. F
Pfc.	William D. Koontz	Co. E
Pfc.	Melvin F. Koppes	Co. L
Pvt.	Frank J. Koris	Co. E
Pfc.	Dale R. Korn	Co. B
Pfc.	William Kosiak	Co. F
Pvt.	Michael Kozel	Co. B
Pvt.	Myer Kreponitsky	Co. E
Pfc.	Billy Krug	Co. E
S/Sgt.	John J. Kruwel	Co. F
Pfc.	Frank J. Kubal	Co. I
Pfc.	William A. Kuhn	Co. I
Pfc.	Stanley M. Kusek	Med. Det.
Pvt.	William LaCroix, Jr.	Co. I
Pvt.	Joseph P. Laface	Co. M
Pvt.	Thomas E. Lahey	Co. D
Pfc.	Russell S. Lang	Co. I
Pvt.	Charles J. Lange	Co. C
Pvt.	Eugene M. Laroux	Co. E
T/Sgt.	William H. Lasley	Co. B
Pfc.	Paul A. Laspina	Co. M
Pfc.	Francis W. Latham	Co. B
S/Sgt.	Michael L. Lawnick	Co. C
Pfc.	Charles R. Leddin	Co. K
Pvt.	Meyer Lederman	Co. C
Pvt.	Harry L. Lee	Co. C
Pfc.	Michael E. Lefko	Co. L
2nd Lt.	Israel Leites	Unasgd.
Pvt.	John D. Lemley	Co. L
Pvt.	Paul Leschuk	Co. L
Pvt.	George F. Lewis	Co. C
Pfc.	Henry P. Lewis	Co. F
Pfc.	John R. Lewis, Jr.	Co. B
Pvt.	Marcus Lichtstein	Med. Det.
Pfc.	Archibald S. Lilly	Co. H
Pvt.	Karl O. Lindgren	Co. C
Pvt.	Norman E. Lindhurst	Co. I
Sgt.	Roy A. Linthicum	Co. D
Pvt.	George T. Little	Co. I
Pvt.	Frank Livoto	Co. C
Pvt.	Felix S. Locicero	Co. K
S/Sgt.	Albert J. Lohman	Co. D
Sgt.	Teno Lopez	Co. M
Pvt.	Jack O. Lowery	Co. A
Cpl.	Victor A. Lubinskas	Co. F
Pvt.	Isidore J. Lucassen	Co. L
2nd Lt.	George F. Luce	Co. H
Pfc.	Michael Luevanos	Co. L
1st Lt.	John S. Lukoski	Co. B
Cpl.	Herve J. Lussier	Co. M
Pvt.	Arthur Lykins	Co. L
Cpl.	Warren R. Lynn	Co. K
Pvt.	Richard C. MacArthur	Co. I
S/Sgt.	Charles W. Mahalak	Co. G
Pfc.	Leroy Maier	Co. M
Pvt.	Joseph J. Malara	Co. H
Pfc.	Alexander Mallett	Co. L
Pvt.	Paul Mallia	Co. C
Cpl.	William P. Maloney	Co. K
Pfc.	Frank Manall	Co. G
Pfc.	George A. Maness	Co. M
1st Lt.	William J. Mangan	Co. F
2nd Lt.	Jack E. Mann	Co. I
Pvt.	Tom H. Manzano	Co. L
Pvt.	August V. Marchini	Co. A
Pvt.	Albert J. Marchinko	Co. L
Pvt.	Harry J. Marek, Jr.	H-3
Cpl.	Angelo M. Masone	Co. L
Pvt.	Jesse D. Massey	Co. E
S/Sgt.	Tom R. Matthews	Co. A
Pfc.	Mario Matos	Co. F
Pvt.	John G. Mauro	Co. I
Pvt.	William H. Mayers	Co. F
Pvt.	Henry P. McCann	H-2
Pvt.	William L. McCarthy, Jr.	Co. B
Cpl.	Frank McCauley	Co. K
Pfc.	Willie T. McCulloch	Co. L
Pvt.	Francis W. McCuccings	Co. B
Pvt.	Young C. McDowell	Cn. Co.
Pvt.	Edward J. McFadden	Co. B
Cpl.	Nathaniel T. McIntosh	Co. L
Capt.	Gail C. McLain	H-1
Pvt.	Ceddie E. McLendon	Co. D

2nd Lt.	Edward C. McMahon, Jr.	Unasgd.
Pfc.	Orby W. McMillion	Co. K
Pvt.	Kenneth A. McNally	H-3
Pvt.	William J. McNamara	Co. L
Pvt.	Gerald E. McNeely	Co. B
Pvt.	Charles W. Means	Co. K
Pvt.	Jewell Mears	Co. M
Sgt.	Paul E. Merriman	Co. E
Pvt.	Carmen S. Miceli	Unasgd
Pvt.	Mathew J. Michalski	Co. C
Pfc.	Henry P. Michaud	Co. C
Pvt.	Lawrence L. Michetti	Co. E
Pvt.	Arthur Microulis	Co. A
Pvt.	John R. Middleton	A-T Co.
Pvt.	Clarns M. Miller	Co. C
Pvt.	Hebert Miller	Co. K
Pvt.	Ralph W. Miller	Co. C
Pvt.	Harold A. Millhorn	Co. L
Pvt.	Fred N. Mills	Co. C
Pfc.	Joseph P. Mills	Co. C
Cpl.	Peter K. Mills	Co. B
Cpl.	Harry W. Mithlo	Cn. Co.
Pvt.	Michael Mizine	Co. C
Pfc.	Nicholas V. Mogus	Co. C
Pfc.	William Mohr	Co. L
Pvt.	Ralph Monroe	Co. F
Pvt.	Juan C. Montemayor	Co. F
2nd Lt.	William C. Moore, Jr.	Co. K
Pvt.	Joseph F. Morelle	Co. D
Pfc.	Howard Morgan	Co. A
T/Sgt.	Howard J. Morois	Co. A
Pfc.	Arthur E. Morris	Co. K
Pvt.	Harry W. Morse	Co. L
Pfc.	Norman E. Morse	Co. H
Pfc.	Joe E. Mose	Co. K
Pfc.	Norman R. Mueller	Co. K
Pvt.	John F. Muldoon	Co. K
Pvt.	Donald J. Mulligan	Co. I
Pvt.	Benjamin H. Mullins	Co. L
Pvt.	Everette E. Mullins	Co. E
Pfc.	William P. Mullis, Jr.	Co. K
Pvt.	Frederick Muntzner	H-1
Pvt.	William Murdoch	Co. C
Pvt.	Owen S. Murray	Co. L
Pvt.	William K. Mutter	Co. C
Cpl.	William C. Nale, Jr.	Co. K
Pvt.	Wayne E. Nelson	Co. G
Pfc.	Max E. Nestor	Co. B
Pfc.	J. D. Nix	Co. I
Pfc.	Lloyd M. Norris	Cn. Co.
Pfc.	Willard P. Norris	Co. E
Pvt.	Walter R. Norwood	H-3
2nd Lt.	Howard E. Nuessle	Co. M
Sgt.	Tommy J. Novak	Co. C
Pfc.	Bronislaus Nowak	Co. F
Cpl.	Richard E. Noyes	Co. L
Pvt.	Dennis M. O'Connel, Jr.	Co. M
2nd Lt.	Nelson A. O'Dell	Unasgd.
Pvt.	J. C. Odom	Co. A
Pfc.	James F. Olds	Co. L
Pvt.	John Olear	Co. C
2nd Lt.	Robert M. Oliver	Co. K
Pvt.	Arthur J. O'Neil	Co. D
1st Lt.	John D. O'Neil	Co. G
Cpl.	Johnnie Onesky	Co. M
S/Sgt.	Robert L. Orr	Co. G
Pvt.	Walter J. Osborne	Co. C
2nd Lt.	Peter Ostroski	Co. D
Pfc.	Stanley A. Owczarz	Co. B
Pvt.	Raymond R. Pagden	Co. K
Pvt.	Armando Paliotta	Co. I
Pfc.	James L. Palmer	Co. I
Pvt.	Robert R. Palmer	Co. K
Pvt.	Edward Paniccia	Co. H
Pvt.	James R. Panner	Co. B
Pvt.	William M. Parker	Co. I
Sgt.	Adam F. Parzych	Co. G
Pvt.	Domenic R. Pasini	Co. A
Cpl.	Flavy M. Patrick, Jr.	Co. I
Pvt.	Donald H. Pawley	Co. B
Pvt.	Harry Paxon	Co. B
Sgt.	David D. Payne	Co. F
Pfc.	Ransom Payne	Co. I
Pvt.	Andy W. Perkins	Co. G
Pfc.	Charles F. Perlick	H-1
Pvt.	Benjamin Perlman	Co. L
Cpl.	Herbert R. Perry	Co. F
Cpl.	Cliffton P. Pershing	H-3
Pfc.	Paul E. Petit	H-3
Pvt.	Leonard A. Petitt	Co. C
Pvt.	Thomas Petrone	Co. G
Pfc.	Robert B. Pfeiffer	Co. I
Pfc.	John Piekar	Co. H
Pvt.	Henry J. Pietkiewicz	Co. I
Pfc.	Anthony Pikulik	Co. E
Pvt.	Ernest J. Pileni	Co. I
Pvt.	David F. Pirrone	Co. G
Pvt.	Ray L. Pitts	Co. C
Pvt.	Isaac E. Planck	Co. L
Pvt.	Meyer Plotkin	Med. Det.
Pfc.	Carl R. Polatas	Co. M
Sgt.	Marcel F. Pons	Co. H
Pfc.	Charles Potak	Cn. Co.
Pvt.	William C. Powell	Co. F
Capt.	Gordon A. Prachar	Med. Det.
Pvt.	Gerald H. Preder	Co. H
Pvt.	Carlo N. Prestigacomo	Co. B
Pvt.	Cecil J. Puckett	Co. C
T/5	Andrew Quagliafifello	Co. E
Pvt.	Daniel L. Quickbear	Co. C
Pfc.	Adolph L. Quintiliani	Co. D
Cpl.	Edward G. Rabe	Co. I
Pvt.	Jessie A. Radcliffe	Co. G
Pvt.	William R. Radtke	Co. C
Pvt.	Clare R. Ramaley	Co. M
Pfc.	Raymond D. Rapp	Co. H
Pvt.	James O. Ramsey	Co. F
Pvt.	James Q. Ratliff	Co. B
Pfc.	Daniel C. Rauscher	Co. A
T/5	Roy E. Reed	Co. B
Pfc.	Virgil F. Reed	Co. C
Pfc.	Earl E. Rehling	Co. L
Pvt.	Robert R. Reichelt	Co. L
Pvt.	Claude Reitenauer	Co. K

Pvt.	Frederick A. Relleke	Co. E
Pvt.	Zelio V. Renelli	Co. C
Pfc.	William F. Rethmeier	Co. H
Sgt.	Curtis E. Reue	Co. K
Pvt.	Pete S. Reynosa	Co. F
Pfc.	John Rezendes	Co. D
Pfc.	Albert Rhine	H-1
Sgt.	Charles A. Rhodes	Co. L
Pvt.	Leo F. Rice	Co. L
Pfc.	Harold S. Richardson	Co. L
Pvt.	John M. Richardson	Co. B
Pfc.	John G. Rigabert	Co. L
Pvt.	John J. Ritz, Jr.	Co. E
Sgt.	Leonard C. Roberts	Co. K
Pfc.	Eddie E. Robertson	Co. F
Pvt.	Donald M. Rodes	Co. I
Pvt.	James E. Roe	Co. L
Pfc.	Henry C. Rogers	Co. I
Pvt.	John T. Rogers	Co. C
Pvt.	Thomas J. Rohan	Co. L
Pvt.	Don A. Romack	Co. E
Pfc.	Albert J. Romanskas	Co. A
Pfc.	Andrew Root	Co. B
Pfc.	Haskell Rose	Co. I
Pvt.	James R. Ross	Hq. Co.
Pvt.	Merle E. Ross	Co. L
Pvt.	Michael E. Ross	Co. M
Sgt.	Willis M. Ross	Co. E
Pvt.	Tony M. Rossi	Co. E
S/Sgt.	Russell H. Rottmann	Co. D
Pvt.	Carl E. Roush	Co. G
T/5	Seldon C. Roy	Hq. Co.
2nd Lt.	Frederick A. Rozzi	Co. H
Pvt.	Edwin E. Rudes	A-T Co.
Pfc.	Russell W. Rueter	Co. K
Pfc.	Manuel F. Ruiz	Co. M
Pfc.	Frederick W. Rupp, Jr.	Co. H
Pfc.	Chester F. Ruskowski	Co. E
Pvt.	Harold E. Russell	Co. B
1st Lt.	Emanuel P. Russo	Co. E
Pfc.	Daniel A. Ruvo	Co. L
T/Sgt.	Clemon C. Ryan	Co. C
S/Sgt.	Edward A. Safer	Co. B
Pfc.	John P. Sagar	Co. I
Pfc.	Louis Salerno	Co. G
Pvt.	Manuel Q. Salinas	Co. G
Pfc.	Leslie E. Salisbury	H-2
Pvt.	Michael J. Sammartino	Co. L
Sgt.	William J. Saner	Co. D
Pvt.	Henry B. Sartor	Co. F
Pfc.	Junior E. Saulsbury	Co. C
Pvt.	Benjamin F. Saunders, Jr.	Co. C
Pfc.	Raymond E. Savage	A-T Co.
Pvt.	Raymond C. Schacht	Co. A
Pvt.	Glendon E. Schafer	Co. F
Pvt.	Charlie O. Scheibe	Co. K
Pvt.	Willard O. Scheppler	Co. A
S/Sgt.	William J. Schfranski	Co. K
Pvt.	Harold E. Schipler	Co. B
Sgt.	Raymond S. Schmitz	Co. C
Pvt.	William A. Schoolcraft	Co. K
Pvt.	Philip A. Schramm	Co. M
Pvt.	Paul E. Schultz	Co. C
Sgt.	Edward A. Schuster	Co. B
Pvt.	Jack J. Schwortz	Co. L
Pvt.	Fred V. Sciacca	Co. C
Pvt.	Anthony J. Scialdone	Co. K
Pvt.	Robert S. Scott	Co. A
Pvt.	Ellie J. Screws	Med. Det.
Pvt.	Charles R. Searcy	Co. E
Pvt.	Clair E. Sechrist	Co. C
Pvt.	Joseph Seminuk	Co. F
Pfc.	Salvatore Senape	Co. E
Pvt.	Robert G. Shears	Co. H
Pvt.	Robert I. Sheldon	Co. I
Pfc.	Lester A. Shelton	Co. K
Pvt.	Thomas L. Shelton	Co. C
Pvt.	John B. Shields	Co. E
2nd Lt.	Nathan Siegel	Co. K
Pfc.	Herbert A. Sill	Co. E
Pvt.	Alex Silverman	Co. L
Pfc.	Henry A. Simmons	Co. I
2nd Lt.	Fred N. Sinclair	Co. B
Pfc.	Charles R. Sires	Co. E
Pvt.	Herman S. Sislo	Co. G
Pvt.	James F. Sklenar	Co. C
Pvt.	Clovis W. Slusher, Jr.	Co. L
Pfc.	Ralph H. Smethurst	Co. B
Pvt.	Albert H. Smith	Co. F
S/Sgt.	Earl D. Smith	Co. F
Pfc.	Edmond D. Smith	Co. K
Pvt.	Robert Sneddon	Co. B
Pvt.	Everett E. Snider	Co. E
Pfc.	Cecil E. Snipes	Co. D
Pvt.	Michael Solazzo	Co. K
Cpl.	Theodore T. Songaila	Co. L
Pfc.	Virgil O. Sowders	Co. K
Pvt.	James A. Spain	Med. Det.
Pvt.	Benjamin Spearline	Co. M
Pfc.	Clarence H. Spice	Co. K
Pvt.	Gentry Spurling	Co. B
Pfc.	Walter J. Sroka	Co. D
Pfc.	William E. Stacey	Co. A
1st Lt.	James E. Stanley	Co. A
Pfc.	William Stanley	Co. F
Pfc.	John J. Stauber	Co. L
Pvt.	Leonard R. Stensrud	Co. D
Pvt.	Berdelle Still	Co. A
Pvt.	Norman E. Stinekraus	Co. L
S/Sgt.	Henry J. Stogniew	Co. L
Cpl.	Francis N. Stonebarger	Co. G
Pvt.	Stanley I. Stonis	Co. B
Major	Richard M. Strong	H
Pvt.	Frank Stroud	Hq. Co.
Sgt.	Ralph J. Strozzi	Co. E
Pfc.	James E. Stump	Co. C
Pvt.	James Sullivan, Jr.	Co. F
Cpl.	Marion R. Sumner	Co. H
Pfc.	Kazimierz Swiszcz	Co. H
Pvt.	John J. Szostak	Co. E
Pvt.	Richard L. Szramcz	Co. A
Pvt.	Walter A. Szutowicz	Co. B

Pfc.	Lester L. Tabor	Co. I	Pvt.	Wyatt L. Webb	Co. E
Pvt.	Lawrence E. Tacik, Jr.	Co. G	Lt. Col.	Edward E. B. Weber	H-3
Pfc.	John A. Takach	Co. F	Pvt.	Frederick O. Webber	Co. C
Pvt.	Norman C. Tallon	Co. G	Pvt.	Charles A. Weber	Co. C
Pvt.	Wilbur Terrana	A-T Co.	Pvt.	Rubin Weiner	Co. G
Pvt.	Reginald R. Tessier	Co. G	Pvt.	Gustav Weiss	Co. B
Pvt.	Charles F. Tharle	Co. F	Pvt.	Roy C. Wells, Jr.	Co. I
Sgt.	Edward L. Theriault	Co. K	Sgt.	William G. Wenke	Co. A
Pfc.	Karl W. Thieroff	Co. B	Pvt.	Theodore S. Werczler	Co. L
S/Sgt.	Denzell L. Thomas	Co. K	Pfc.	Robert J. Wertz	Co. C
Pfc.	George S. Thompson	A-T Co.	S/Sgt.	Everett K. West	H-1
Pfc.	Gerald Thompson	Co. I	Sgt.	James J. West	Co. B
Sgt.	John Elmer Tibi	Co. L	Pvt.	Edward T. Wetherall	Co. C
Pfc.	Edward A. Tobias	Co. C	Pvt.	Eugene E. Weyant	Co. K
Pvt.	Matthew A. Tomaszewski	Co. A	Pfc.	Robert W. Whetsell	Co. L
Pvt.	Henry F. Tondla	Co. A	Cpl.	Stewart Whitley	Co. I
Pfc.	Walter L. Townsend, Jr.	Co. E	Pfc.	Belvie G. Whitlow	Co. L
Pvt.	Harry R. Trainer, 2nd	Co. F	Pvt.	Raymond V. Wickham	Co. E
Cpl.	Ignatius Tripoli	Co. E	Pfc.	Harold M. Wieneke	Co. L
Pfc.	Tony T. Trosan	Co. K	M/Sgt.	William B. Wier	Hq. Co.
2nd Lt.	Augustus D. Turner	Co. C	Pfc.	Rudi H. Wilk	Co. C
Pfc.	John Turner	Co. A	Pvt.	Andrew L. Williams	Co. I
Pfc.	Andrew B. Twiford, Jr.	Co. A	T/5	Charles A. Williams	Co. E
Sgt.	Bronislaus Tyniec	Co. I	Pfc.	Clarence L. Willams	H-1
Pfc.	Torrence F. Uhler	Co. I	S/Sgt.	Clifton H. Williams	Co. C
Sgt.	Frank Uinski, Jr.	Co. K	Pvt.	Edward L. Williams	Co. A
Pfc.	Aloysius M. Urtz	Co. L	Pvt.	John R. Williams	Co. B
Pvt.	Heiden Van Der	Co. H	Pvt.	Claude H. Willis	Hq. Co.
S/Sgt.	Frank E. Vandervort	Co. I	Pvt.	Delbert Y. Willis	Co. B
Pvt.	William Veitenheimer	Co. F	Pvt.	Jack R. Wilson	Co. K
Pfc.	Robert L. Venator	H-3	Pfc.	Miller N. Wilson	Co. B
Pvt.	Leon J. Venskowski	Co. L	Pvt.	Troy C. Wilson	Co. G
Pvt.	Warren J. Verner	Co. K	Pvt.	Edward J. Winter	Co. M
Sgt.	Glen M. Vernon	Co. C	Pfc.	Harold C. Wise	Co. G
Pfc.	Frederick J. Vertucci	Co. L	Pvt.	James P. Wiseman	Co. L
Pfc.	John C. Veselany	Co. C	Pvt.	Edward A. Wisniewski	Co. F
Pvt.	Albert G. Vigneault	Co. I	Pvt.	Sigmund W. Wisniewski	Co. K
Pfc.	Robert L. Viney	Co. L	Pvt.	Erwin H. Wohlert	Co. L
Pvt.	Nateli T. Visalli	Co. I	Pfc.	Arthur A. Woodcox	H-1
Pfc.	Corrado J. Vittoria	Co. F	Sgt.	Logan W. Wooley	Co. F
Pfc.	Clarence E. Vogt	Co. H	Pfc.	John A. Worley	Co. M
Pvt.	Patsy P. Volpe	Co. L	Pfc.	Ferd M. Wrege	Co. F
Cpl.	Edgar M. Voss	Co. L	Pvt.	Robert D. Wright	Co. L
Cpl.	Sonny M. Wade	Co. M	Pvt.	Wesley L. Wright	Co. F
Pvt.	Wayne R. Wade	Co. F	Pvt.	Thomas L. Yancy	Co. G
Pvt.	Arnold L. Wagoner	Co. M	Pvt.	Joseph Yarabinec	Co. I
Pvt.	Sumner R. Waldron	Co. E	Pvt.	Vaughn E. Yeater	Co. F
Pvt.	Robert A. Wallace	Co. E	Pfc.	Nick Yenchochic	Co. K
Pvt.	Arthur Walsh	Co. M	Pvt.	Benjamin Youdovitz	A-T Co.
Pvt.	Emmett I. Warden	Co. K	Pfc.	Charles H. Young	Co. H
Pvt.	William C. Washburn	Co. B	Pvt.	Harry A. Young	H-1
Pvt.	Robert J. Washek	Co. M	Pvt.	Woodrow W. Young	Co. I
Pvt.	Maxon W. Waugh	Co. E	Pvt.	John R. Zielsdorf	Co. L
Pfc.	Stanley F. Waxmundsky	Co. F	Pfc.	George Zink	Med. Det.

French and German Campaigns

Pvt.	Samuel B. Abbott	Med. Det.	Pfc.	Lawrence I. Albert	Co. A
Pvt.	Irving B. Adel	Co. L	Pvt.	Charles D. Alberts	Co. F
S/Sgt.	Herbert F. Aland	Co. G	Sgt.	William H. Alexander	Co. I

Pfc.	John A. Alotta	Co. B
Pvt.	John H. Amburs	Co. B
Pvt.	Clyde H. Anderson	Co. I
Pfc.	Leslie M. Anderson	Co. B
Cpl.	Albert H. Arendt	Co. F
Pfc.	Albert C. Arrighetti	Co. G
Pvt.	Alfred G. Ashabranner	Co. K
Pfc.	James A. Askin	Co. G
Pvt.	Clyde T. Atkins	Co. K
Pvt.	Frank P. Atkins	Co. K
Sgt.	William J. Babeuf	Co. C
Pvt.	John V. Banerdt	Co. C
Pvt.	John Bard	Co. F
Pvt.	J. D. Barnard	Co. K
Pvt.	Charles F. Barnes	Co. B
Pvt.	Louis A. Barone	Co. E
Pvt.	James A. Barton	Co. E
Pvt.	Forrest E. Bassett	Co. D
Pfc.	Joseph K. W. Baust	Co. K
S/Sgt.	William T. Beck	Co. E
Pvt.	Howard R. Becker	Co. K
Pfc.	James W. Becker	Co. I
Pfc.	James W. Bedwell	Co. B
Pvt.	Alanson Bell	Co. E
Pfc.	Jacob Bendel, Jr.	Med. Det.
Pfc.	William R. Bennett	Co. E
Pvt.	Morten C. Berl	Co. C
Pfc.	Thomas W. Bertram	Co. F
Pvt.	Gilbert R. Beynon	Co. K
Pfc.	William C. Biggs	A-T Co.
Pfc.	Charles N. Bijeau	Co. A
Pfc.	Stanley J. Blazniak	H-1
T/Sgt.	Carl Boggs	Co. M
Pvt.	James H. Boothe, Jr.	Co. E
Pvt.	Adam Bowman, Jr.	Co. I
Pvt.	James F. Bowman	Co. F
Sgt.	Francis E. Boyd	Co. M
Pfc.	Carl S. Bozarth	Co. G
Pfc.	Joseph P. Bradley	Co. E
Pvt.	Donald L. Braithwaite	Co. I
Sgt.	Charles K. Briggs	Co. G
Pvt.	Reeves A. Brittain, Jr.	Co. B
Pvt.	Oscar Broder	Med. Det.
Pvt.	Wesley W. Brofford	Co. F
Sgt.	Frederick A. Brown, Jr.	Co. C
Pvt.	John W. Brown	Co. E
Pvt.	Albert Bryan, Sr.	Co. B
S/Sgt.	David Burback	Co. K
Pfc.	Acil V. Byers	Co. I
Pvt.	William F. Byrer	Co. F
2nd Lt.	Walter M. Cabaniss	Co. F
Pfc.	Paul J. Cacioppo	Co. K
Pfc.	Robert A. Calabrese	Co. F
Pfc.	Salvatore A. Calcagno	Co. L
Pfc.	Lyle B. Capen	Co. E
1/Sgt.	Herbert J. Carlton	Co. E
Pvt.	Earl E. Carpenter	Co. L
Pvt.	Archie B. Carter	Co. L
Pfc.	Victor Celio	Co. I
Pvt.	Marcelina Chavanette	Co. I
Pfc.	Edward C. Chesney	H-1
Pfc.	Emile E. Chevalier	Co. C
Pvt.	Clarence E. Chick, Jr.	Co. A
Sgt.	Dominick J. Ciocca	Co. A
Pfc.	Willard F. Clark	Co. I
Pvt.	Leslie G. Clifford	Co. K
Capt.	Clarence E. Coggins	H-1
Pvt.	Doyle A. Cohea	Med. Det.
Pfc.	Bert Cole	Co. G
Pvt.	Alvin M. Collins	Co. G
Pvt.	Kenus Combs	Co. G
Pvt.	Albert F. Cooper	Co. C
Pfc.	Samuel Cooper	Co. A
Pfc.	Wendell Cooper	Co. G
Pfc.	Deal R. Corbitt	Co. H
Pvt.	Joseph F. Cordova	Co. L
Pvt.	John T. Costello	Co. H
Pfc.	Robert T. Cothran	Co. L
Pfc.	Harold P. Cottle	Co. G
S/Sgt.	Harold E. Coulthard	H-1
Pfc.	Henry E. Cowan	Co. G
Pvt.	Rollin B. Coyer	Co. G
Pfc.	James E. Cronin	Co. B
Cpl.	Edward J. Cuneo	A-T Co.
Pfc.	William M. Daggett	Co. B
S/Sgt.	James R. Davis	Co. K
Pfc.	Jesse B. Davis	Co. E
Pfc.	John H. Day	Co. K
Pvt.	Lester F. Dearinger	Co. G
S/Sgt.	Roland N. DeCarlo	Co. L
Pvt.	Pelham E. Dewitt	Co. K
Pfc.	Joseph R. Dezenzo	Co. E
Pvt.	Ernest W. Dion	Co. B
1st Lt.	Robert H. Doherty	Co. F
S/Sgt.	Edward E. Doyle	Co. L
Pvt.	William H. Dragschitz	Co. A
Pvt.	Joseph F. Duffy	Co. L
Pvt.	Lovel J. Dye	H-2
Pvt.	Howard C. Easter	Co. C
2nd Lt.	Delbert P. Easton	Co. D
Pvt.	Eugene W. Edwards	Co. G
Pfc.	Myron A. Egan	Co. K
Pfc.	Thomas C. Egly	Co. L
Pfc.	Vechil N. Eller	Co. I
Pfc.	Jack R. Elliott	Co. L
S/Sgt.	William J. Eskuri	Co. E
Pvt.	Kenneth Evans	Co. M
Cpl.	Paul Evans	Co. F
Pfc.	Herbert L. Falls, Jr.	Co. A
Pfc.	William Fanok	Co. B
Pfc.	Harold D. Farr	Co. A
Pvt.	Charles S. Fauci	Co. E
Pfc.	Charles W. Feigles	Co. B
Pfc.	David W. Fellows	Co. A
Pfc.	James S. Ferguson	Co. L
Pvt.	Anthony Ferro	Co. F
Pvt.	Ira L. Fields	Co. M
T/Sgt.	Donald G. Fisher	H-1
Pfc.	Shirley D. Flint	Co. A
Pfc.	Kenneth E. Foss	Co. L
T/Sgt.	Bernard Fox	Co. A

S/Sgt.	Gleason O. Friend	Co. E
S/Sgt.	John E. Fry	Co. M
T/Sgt.	Robert S. Fulton	Co. E
Sgt.	Manuel Gallegos, Jr.	Co. E
T/5	Oral H. Gallop	Hq. Co.
Pvt.	Robert E. Gardner	Co. B
Pfc.	George H. Garman	Co. L
Pfc.	Joseph G. Gelson	H-1
Pvt.	Samuel Giarratano	Co. L
Pfc.	Salvatore P. Giordano	Co. D
2nd Lt.	Wesley S. Glenn, Jr.	Co. C
Pvt.	Gregory M. Gonzalez	Co. K
Pfc.	Donald C. Good	Co. L
Sgt.	Walter C. Gloodrich	Co. L
Pfc.	Maughn S. Gordon	Co. L
Pvt.	Sanford E. Gourley	Co. C
Pvt.	Jerome Gourmelen	Co. L
Pvt.	Hubert G. Graham	Co. L
Pvt.	George W. Graubner	Co. H
S/Sgt.	Roy V. Gregory	H-1
Sgt.	Harry W. Griffiths	H-3
Pfc.	Earnest L. Groves	Co. H
Pfc.	Eugene C. Growall	H-1
Pfc.	Dean E. Guy	Co. G
Pvt.	Edward H. Hahn	Co. A
Pvt.	Ted Hale	H-2
Pfc.	Arthur C. Hall	Co. F
Pfc.	Robert J. Hall	Co. I
S/Sgt.	Harry Hammock	Co. D
Pvt.	Frank Hamilton	Co. E
Sgt.	John B. Hancock	Co. B
Pfc.	John B. Hanlon	Co. F
Pfc.	Adam J. Harney	Co. L
1st Lt.	James R. Harper	Co. C
Pvt.	John D. Harper, Jr.	Co. M
S/Sgt.	George M. Harris, Jr.	Co. G
Sgt.	Paul W. Haulman	H-3
T/Sgt.	W. A. Hayes	Cn. Co.
Pvt.	Malcolm A. Heath	Co. A
1st Lt.	John E. Headd	Co. F
T/Sgt.	William E. Heil	Co. A
S/Sgt.	Atlan R. Hengst	Co. K
Pvt.	John H. Henson	Co. L
Pvt.	Billy F. Hewitt	Co. B
Pfc.	Edward W. Hill	Co. E
Pfc.	Clair A. Hillard	Co. C
Pfc.	Dannie W. Hilliard	Co. D
Pfc.	George T. Hobson	Co. G
S/Sgt.	Joseph Hoffman	Co. D
Pvt.	Cecil J. Holland	Co. B
Pfc.	Turner P. Holloway	A-T Co.
Pvt.	Michael Holowchak	Co. I
Pvt.	Joseph W. Holt	Co. B
Pfc.	William A. Horsley	Co. G
Sgt.	William R. Hosea	Co. E
S/Sgt.	Alton W. Humiston	Co. K
1st Lt.	Charles M. Hunter	Co. A
Sgt.	Jack F. Hurst	A-T Co.
T/Sgt.	Vestal E. Hyde	H-2
Pvt.	Joseph Inama	Co. E

Pvt.	Thomas J. Jacobs	Co. G
Pvt.	Allan R. Jamieson	Co. I
Pfc.	Ostell F. Jarrett	Co. I
Pvt.	Costa C. Jeffers	Med. Det.
Pfc.	Charles L. Johnson	Co. I
Pfc.	Forest G. Johnson	Co. E
Pfc.	James L. Johnson	Co. A
Pvt.	Thomas V. Johnson	Co. C
Pvt.	Homer E. Jones	Co. E
Pfc.	Michael F. Jordan	Co. A
T/Sgt.	John L. Juby	Hq. Co.
Pvt.	Robert C. Kalfaian	Co. H
Cpl.	Thomas R. Kane	Co. C
Pvt.	Edward Kaszuba	Co. K
Pvt.	Thomas F. Keating	Co. L
Pfc.	Raymond R. Kelley	Co. C
Pfc.	Delphus E. Kern	Co. C
Pfc.	Thomas B. Kimble	Co. A
Pvt.	Martin J. King	Co. A
Pfc.	Murvin D. King	Co. D
S/Sgt.	Ralph E. King	Co. A
Pvt.	Harold E. Knode	Co. F
Pfc.	Donald W. Knowles	Co. K
Pfc.	John W. Knusel	Co. I
Pvt.	Ray N. Kohr	Co. B
Cpl.	Richard M. Koleski	Co. B
1st Lt.	John Kopczynski	Hq. Co.
Pvt.	John J. Kowalewski	Co. F
Pfc.	Kenneth W. Kramp	Co. M
Cpl.	Frank F. Krasoc	A-T Co.
Pfc.	Alexander S. Kulesza	Co. A
Pvt.	Walter J. Kuzniak	Co. B
Pvt.	Stanley A. Kuzniar	Co. A
Pfc.	Conrad V. Labbe, Jr.	Co. H
Pvt.	Mario Lancia	Co. L
Pfc.	William R. Lantz	Co. A
Pfc.	Medford B. Leach	Co. I
Cpl.	Boyce V. Lee, Sr.	Co. E
Cpl.	Paul J. Leonhart	Cn. Co.
Sgt.	Adolphe D. Levinson	Co. A
Pfc.	Gail D. Lewis	Co. B
Pfc.	James S. Lewis	Co. F
Pvt.	Peter D. Linale	Co. F
S/Sgt.	Arville W. Littleton	Co. A
Sgt.	Howard L. Livingston	Co. E
Pvt.	Thomas P. Logan	Co. K
Sgt.	Peter C. Loizides	Co. K
Pfc.	Albert O. Longhenry	Co. D
Pfc.	James T. Looney	H-2
1st Lt.	Gilbert E. Lore	Co. K
Pfc.	David L. Lyons	Sv. Co.
Sgt.	Joseph S. Macuga	Co. F
Pvt.	Tony J. Mancuso	Med. Det.
Pfc.	William J. Manning	Co. C
T/5	Alfred L. Manso	Co. B
Pfc.	Perry Marchant	Co. F
Pfc.	Steve J. Markolia	Co. B
S/Sgt.	Marcos C. Martinez	Co. B
Pvt.	Virgil L. Matheny	Co. E
Pfc.	Henry E. Matthews	Co. D

Pvt.	Raymond A. Mautner	Co. E
Pfc.	Russell H. Mayberry	Co. I
Pvt.	George Mayes, Jr.	Co. L
Pvt.	Edmund Z. Mazur	Co. B
1st Lt.	Terrence McCay	H-1
Pvt.	James W. McCollum	Co. E
Cpl.	Joseph C. McConaughey	Co. F
Sgt.	Andrew A. McCusker	Co. I
Cpl.	Norman A. McGlashan	Co. C
Pfc.	William J. McGuinness	Co. A
Pvt.	Charles C. McHenry	Co. H
Pvt.	Lionel T. McLemore	Co. B
S/Sgt.	Joseph A. McManmon	Co. B
Pvt.	Bayless C. McMillan	Co. L
Pfc.	John E. Meadowcroft	Co. K
Pfc.	Samuel W. Medlin	Co. F
Pvt.	Edward J. Melone	Co. L
Pfc.	Frank Merilic	Co. E
Pfc.	Ira A. Meshcon	Co. I
Pvt.	Loyd Messer	Co. L
Pfc.	Glen W. Meyer	Co. I
Pvt.	Donald A. Miller	Co. A
Pvt.	Clyde J. T. Mitchell	Hq. Co.
Pfc.	James M. Mizell	Co. L
Pfc.	Eugene G. Mobley, Sr.	Co. F
Pfc.	Harold E. Moffett	Co. K
Pfc.	Leon Mondin	Co. B
Pfc.	Frank J. Mongioi	Co. A
Pfc.	Orley D. Moninger	Co. B
Pvt.	Robert Moomey	Co. C
Pfc.	William J. Morris	Co. F
Pfc.	Thomas W. Morrissett	Co. E
Sgt.	Herbert B. Mucklow	Co. A
Sgt.	Ray F. Muhic	Co. E
Pfc.	Francis A. Mullen	Co. M
Pvt.	John A. Mullen	Co. E
Pvt.	Martin J. Murray	Co. L
Pfc.	Joseph Murzyn	Co. G
Pfc.	Frank F. Myers	Co. L
T/Sgt.	Lucien V. Nadeau	Co. L
S/Sgt.	Edmund O. Nelson	Co. A
Pfc.	George M. Nelson	Co. I
S/Sgt.	Lyndle E. Newingham	Co. A
Pfc.	John Newsome	Co. A
Pvt.	Donald L. Nickel	Co. K
S/Sgt.	Ernest Nielsen	Co. I
Pfc.	Bruno Nishnick	Co. A
Pvt.	Robert H. Nodler	Co. F
S/Sgt.	Berry B. Norris	Co. E
Pvt.	Monroe H. Nunley	Co. A
Pfc.	Charles A. Oliver	Co. C
Pvt.	Charles W. Olliff	Co. K
T/5	Andrew T. Olson	Med. Det.
2nd Lt.	Elmer E. Olson	H-3
Pfc.	Lyman L. Oppelt	Co. C
Pvt.	John C. Outen	Co. G
Pfc.	Joe M. Padilla	Co. L
Pfc.	Carlos A. Palacio	Co. A
Pvt.	Harry Palmer	Co. L
Pfc.	Tony Parise	Co. G
Pvt.	Daine O. Parkey	Co. I
Pvt.	Robert D. Pendleton	Co. E
Pfc.	Bruce F. Peters	A-T Co.
Pfc.	Bernardino J. Petrarca	Co. F
Pvt.	Sammy J. Petrone	Co. L
Pfc.	Robert A. Phillips	Co. M
Pvt.	Michael Picarello	Co. K
Pfc.	Mario J. Pierluca	Co. F
Pfc.	Albert M. Pitts	Co. I
Pvt.	Daniel H. Pitts	Co. K
Pfc.	Kenneth D. Pitts	Co. A
Pvt.	Earl C. Plagman	Co. A
Pvt.	Joseph S. Polutanovich	Co. G
T/Sgt.	George L. Ponder, Jr.	Co. L
Pfc.	Lewis P. Poore	Co. I
Pvt.	Otho T. Powell	Co. M
T/Sgt.	Melvin A. Presley	A-T Co.
Sgt.	George O. Preuss	Co. K
Pfc.	Lewie A. Price	Co. H
Pfc.	Henry L. Prieur	Co. I
Pfc.	Joseph C. Przybysiski	A-T Co.
Pfc.	Harry M. Pschirer	Co. I-
Pvt.	James E. Queen	Co. F
1st Lt.	Marshall H. Quesnberry, Jr.	Co. G (cav)
Pvt.	John D. Quigley	Co. B
Pfc.	Merril F. Raab	Co. E
Pvt.	John C. Rae	Co. K
1st Lt.	John G. Rahill	Co. B
Pfc.	Anthony A. Randina	Co. B
Pvt.	Clennie L. Randolph	Co. G
Pfc.	John E. Rath	Co. E
Pvt.	James L. Ray	Co. G
Pfc.	James Q. Rayburn	Co. H
Pvt.	Bruce E. Reas	Co. B
Pvt.	James E. Rector	Co. F
2nd Lt.	William A. Reeb	Co. L
Pvt.	Fred H. Reece	Co. I
Pvt.	Edward N. Rennon	Co. E
Pfc.	Thomas D. Reilly	Co. M
Pfc.	Joseph J. Reuschle	Co. I
Pvt.	Edward M. Reynolds	Hq. Co.
Pfc.	Paul M. Reynolds	Co. E
Sgt.	Robert G. Reynolds	Co. F
Pfc.	Clarence Rhea	Co. D
Pvt.	Alonzo S. Rhinehart	Co. E
T/Sgt.	Lloyd G. Rhoads	Co. B
Cpl.	Andrew E. Rhudy	Co. F
Pvt.	Doyle L. Rickman	Co. G
Pfc.	Gilbert A. Rickmar	Co. G
Cpl.	Billy J. Riddle	Co. G
Pvt.	Clemens F. Riedemann	Co. L
Pvt.	Lawrence E. Roach	Co. A
Capt.	William J. Robertson	Co. B
Pfc.	Michael Robuck	Co. K
Pfc.	Elmo R. Rolph	Co. F
Pfc.	Daniel R. Roote	A-T Co.
Pfc.	Clarence E. Roseland, Jr.	Co. M
Pfc.	John J. Rotondo	Co. E

S/Sgt.	John A. Rowlen	Co. L
Pvt.	Louis Rubino	Co. L
Pvt.	David B. Russell	Co. E
Pvt.	John E. Russell	Med. Det.
Pvt.	Michael A. Saleem	Co. M
S/Sgt.	Carmen W. Salvat	Co. K
Sgt.	Nick A. Salvi	H-1
Pfc.	Joseph A. Santomenno	A-T Co.
Pvt.	De L. Sayles	Med. Det.
Pvt.	Carmine Scaglione	Co. G
Pfc.	Leo M. Schaeffer	Co. B
Pvt.	Victor H. Schepker	Co. E
2nd Lt.	David Schimpf	Co. G
Pfc.	Harold A. Sealy	Co. B
2nd Lt.	Zeddie R. Sears	Co. G
Pvt.	Joseph Sepanski	Co. E
Pvt.	William H. Shaner	Co. C
Pvt.	George Shoback, Jr.	Co. G
Pfc.	William A. Shoemaker	Co. C
Pvt.	Jack B. Silver	Co. E
Pvt.	Dean W. Simpson	Co. G
Pvt.	Curtis W. Sitting	Co. C
2nd Lt.	Anton L. Skogsberg	Co. C
Pvt.	Peter W. Skrutt	Co. C
Pvt.	Edward J. Skwiat	Co. F
Sgt.	Noah Slone	Co. A
Pfc.	Harry W. Smith	Co. I
Pfc.	Jefferson D. Smith	Co. G
Pfc.	Larue A. Smith	Co. B
T/Sgt.	Ralph C. Smith	Co. C
Pvt.	Stanley A. Smith, Jr.	Co. F
Pvt.	Wayne F. Smith	Co. A
Sgt.	David W. Sneesby	Co. K
Pvt.	Raymond E. Snipes	Co. H
Pvt.	David Sokol	Co. L
Pvt.	Patrick A. Sorrentino	Co. I
Sgt.	Henry R. Southard	Co. E
T/5	George W. Spain	Co. G
Sgt.	Julian S. Spalding	Co. B
Sgt.	Eugene R. Spicer	Co. L
Pfc.	Lovie T. Starostka	Sv. Co.
Pfc.	James Stephens	Co. A
2nd Lt.	George A. Steponaitis	Co. C
Pfc.	Walter J. Stupak	Co. L
2nd Lt.	Warren W. Sullivan	Co. F
Pvt.	James R. Surface	Co. F
Pvt.	Alfred R. Sutherlin	Co. L
Cpl.	Lester Sylvester	Sv. Co.
Pfc.	Francis E. Talty, Sr.	Co. B
T/5	Richard J. Taylor	Med. Det.
Pfc.	Herman M. Teem	Co. A
Pvt.	Donald P. Thomas	Co. G
Pvt.	George Thomas	A-T Co.
Pfc.	George F. Thompson, Jr.	Co. B
Pvt.	Marvin E. Thompson	Co. A
T/Sgt.	Charles A. Toby	Co. L
Pvt.	John Tomao	Co. D
Pvt.	Milburn F. Travis	Co. F
S/Sgt.	Paul D. Triplett	Co. K
1st Lt.	Clarke E. Tucher	Co. B
Pfc.	William W. Turner	Co. K
Pfc.	Gerhard VanEngen, Jr.	Co. K
Pvt.	Harry G. Viitanen	Co. B
S/Sgt.	Willie H. Vines	Co. E
T/4	William K. Wallis	A-T Co.
Pvt.	John M. Walsh	Co. I
Pvt.	Charles M. Walter	Co. L
Pvt.	Virgil A. Ward	Co. A
Pfc.	Clayton L. Westover	Co. E
Capt.	Howard A. Wheeler	H-2
Pvt.	Glen T. White	Co. L
Pvt.	Joseph J. White	Co. A
Cpl.	William C. White	Co. K
Pfc.	Charles W. Willard	Co. K
Pfc.	John A. Willett	Co. I
T/Sgt.	Frank D. Williams	Cn. Co.
Pfc.	William P. Williams	Co. F
Pvt.	Edward Willins	H-2
Pvt.	Leo Y. Winner	Co. A
Pfc.	Earl F. Winslow	Co. A
Cpl.	Willie W. Wood, Jr.	Co. L
Pfc.	James W. Woodward	Co. C
Pvt.	Marvin T. York	Co. M
Pfc.	Robert L. Young	Co. E
Pfc.	Steve Zugrovich	Co. F

Photo Section

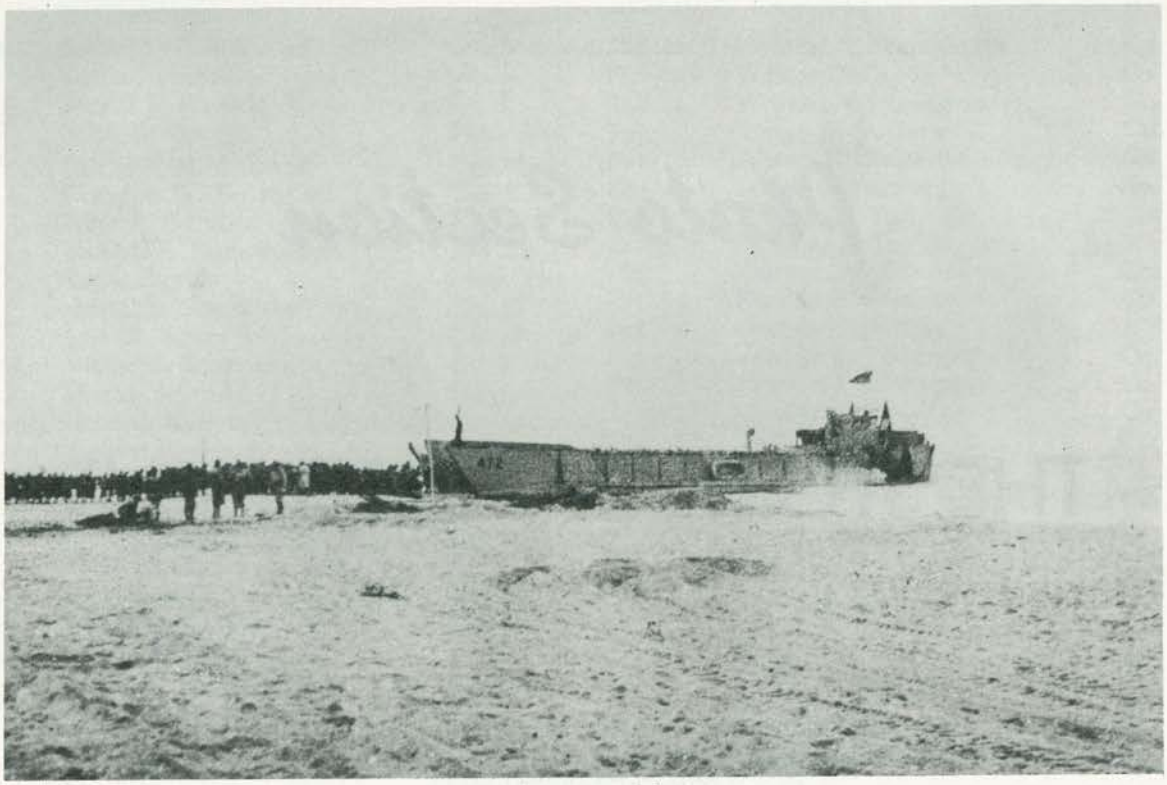
THE STORY OF A REGIMENT

(Photographs by 179th Infantry, U. S. Signal Corps, and 45th Division official photographers)

ORDER OF CONTENTS:

1. IN TRAINING
2. ON THE WAY
3. SICILY
4. ITALY
5. ANZIO BEACHHEAD
6. FRANCE AND GERMANY

I. In Training



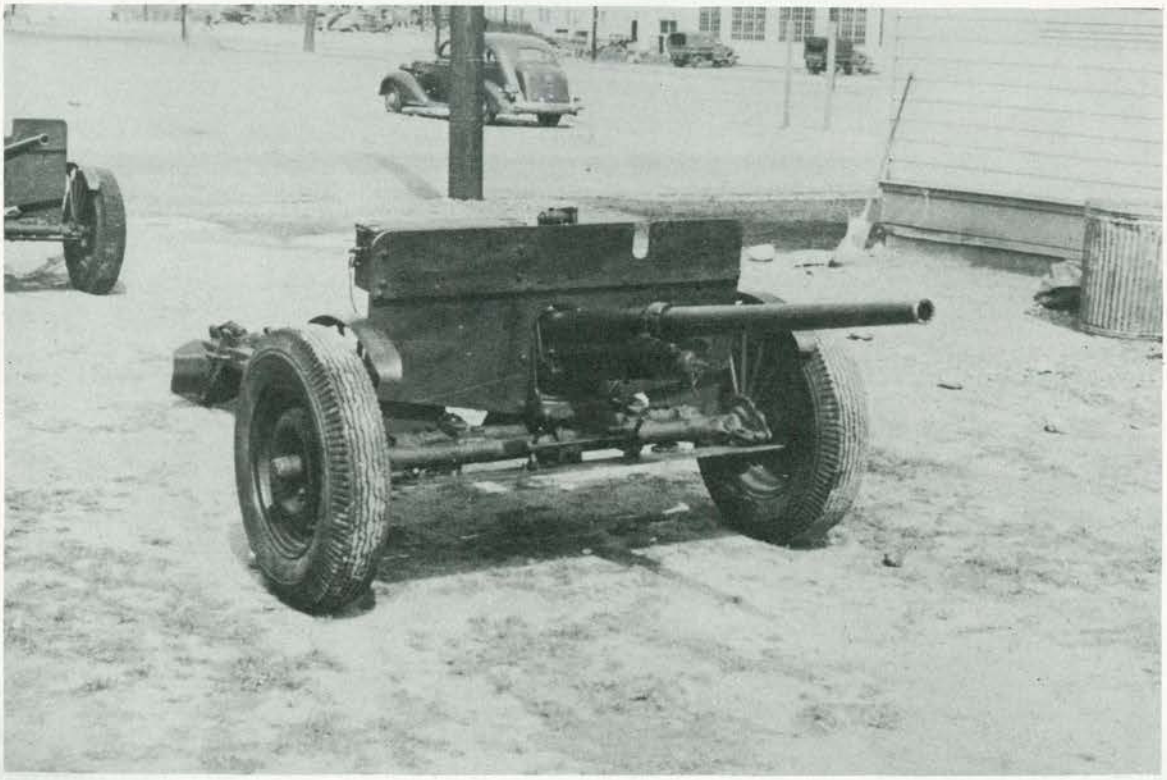
"Solomon Islands", off the Maryland Coast, practice landing from LCI

"Dress Rehearsal", waiting to debark

The beach, "Solomon Islands", Maryland

Climbing down the nets into small boats for the "practice invasion"

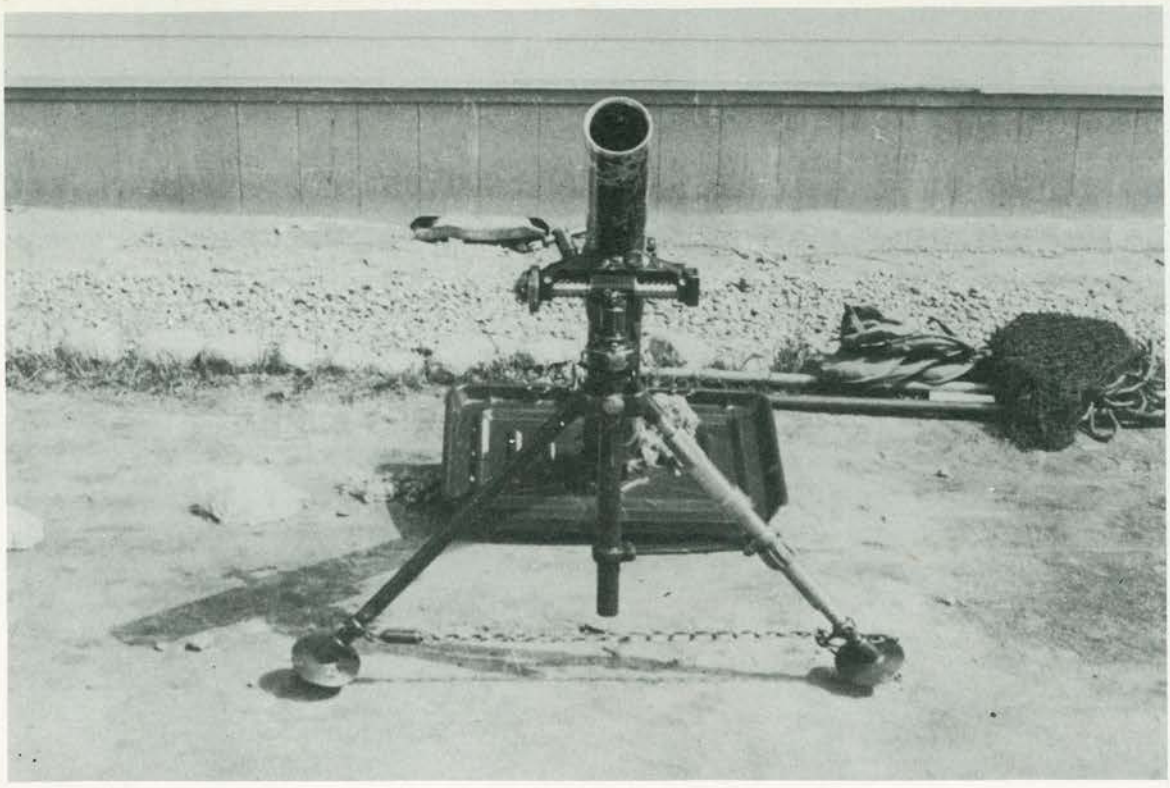
Sweating out inspection



Anti-tank gun

Tramping inland through sleet after landing in the "Solomon Islands"

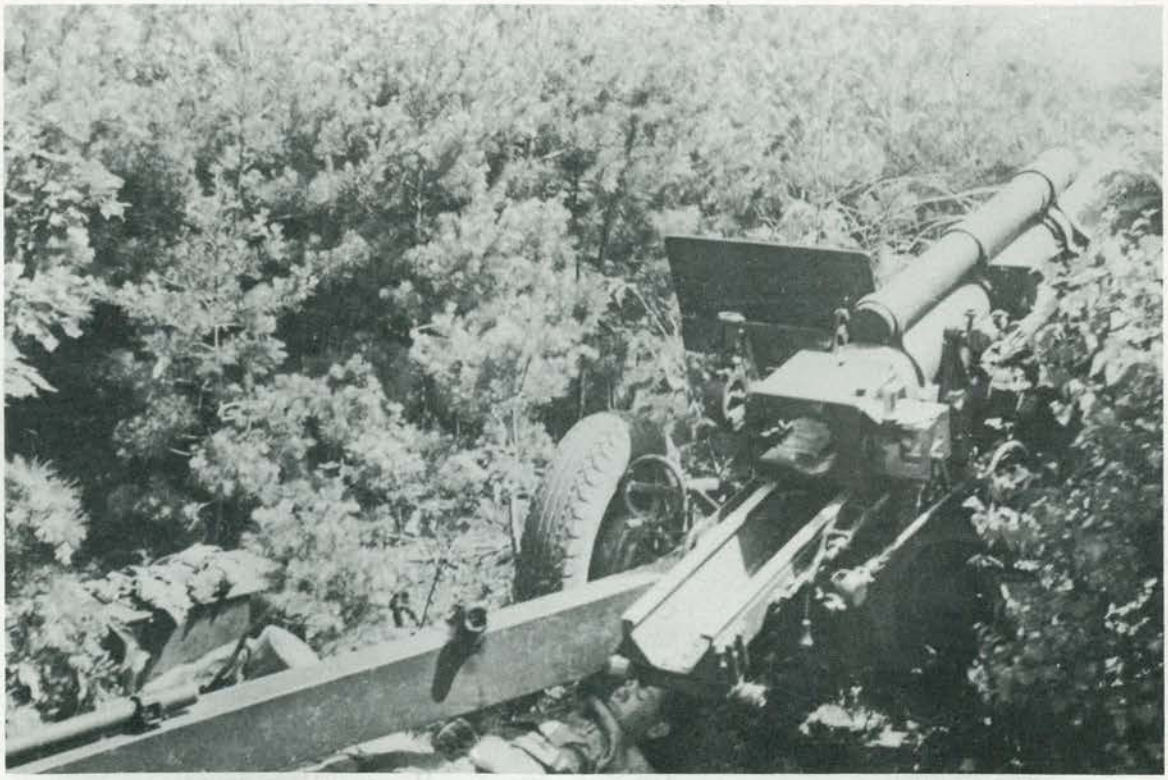
Horseplay in training



Machine Gun

Mortar

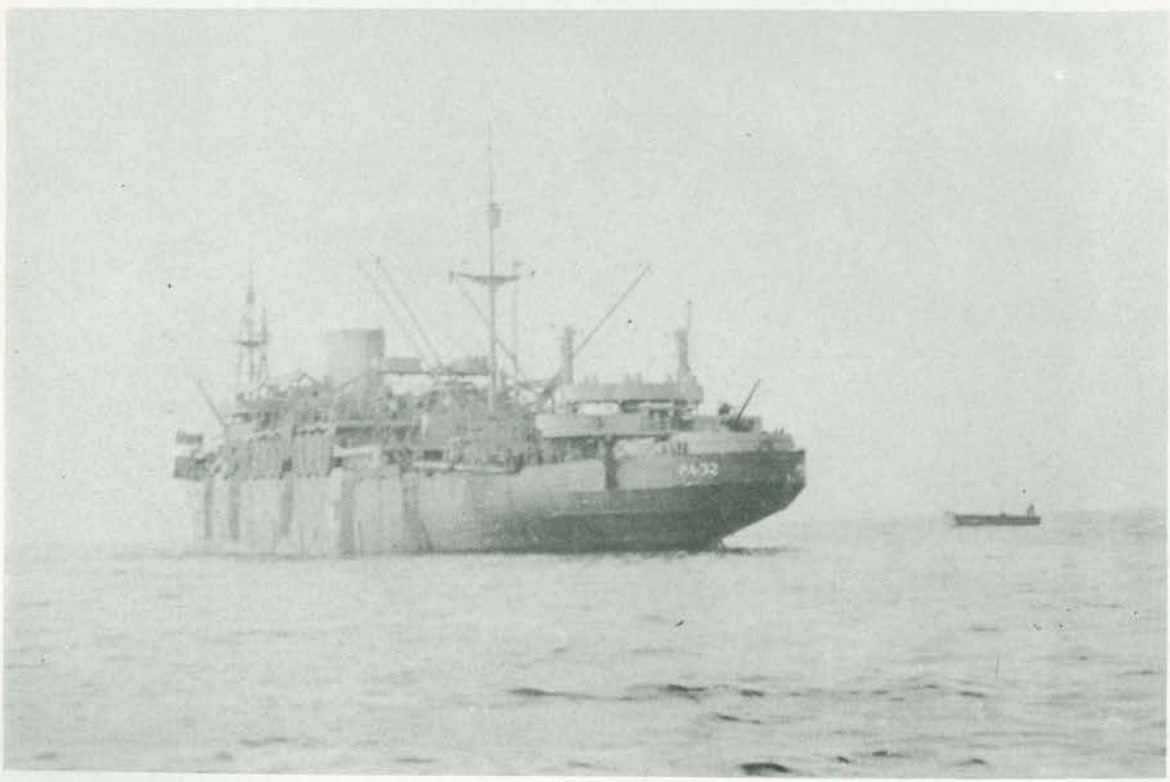
Field artillery gun



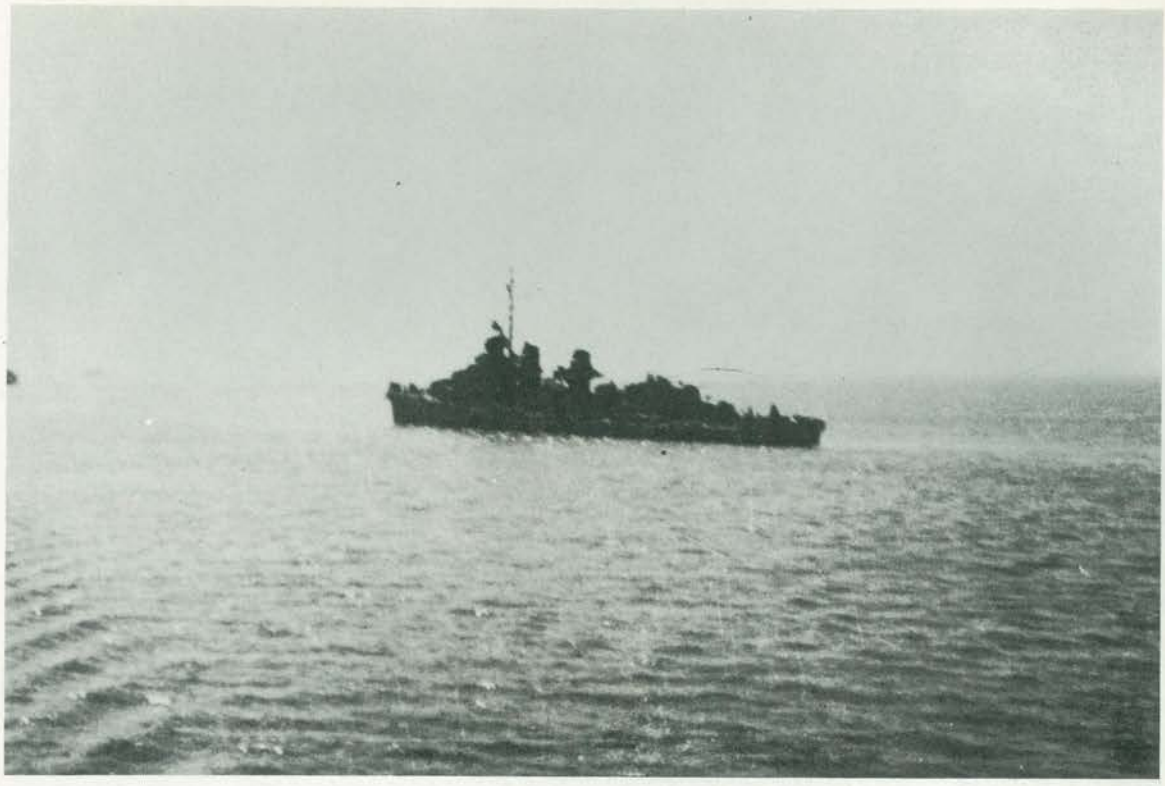
Field artillery gun

II. On The Way

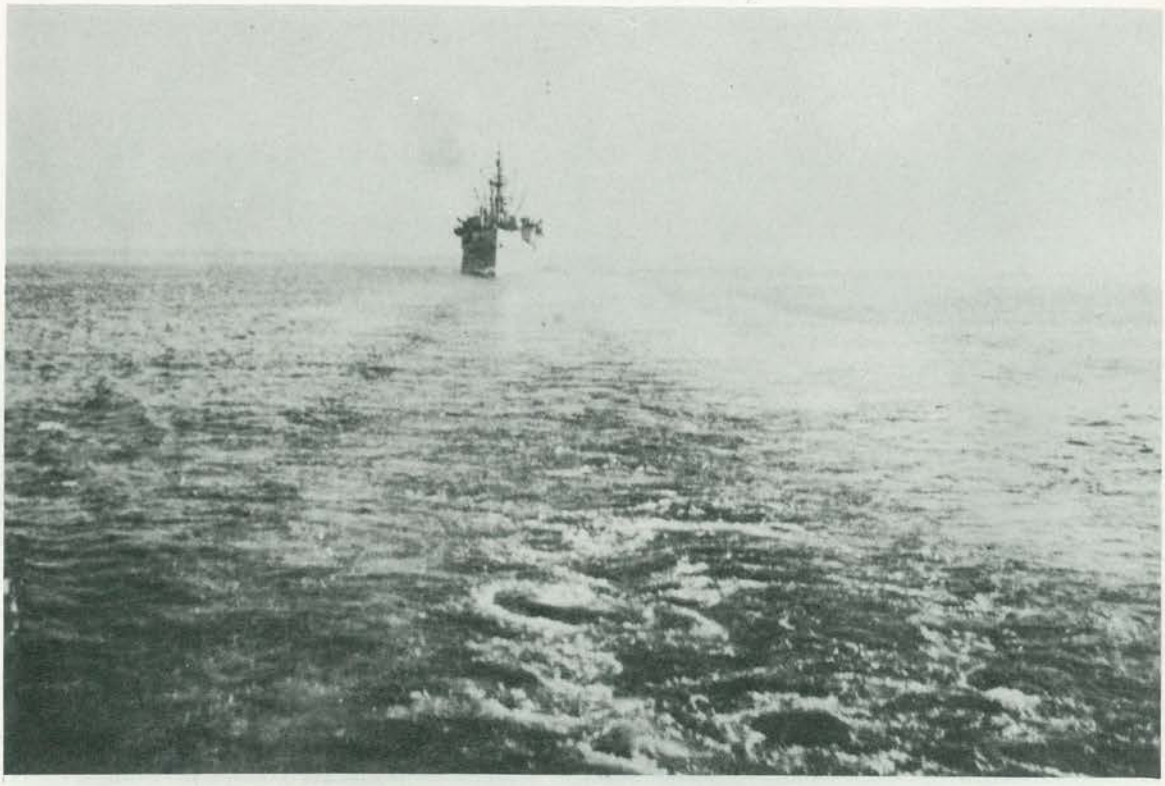
So long, U.S.A.!



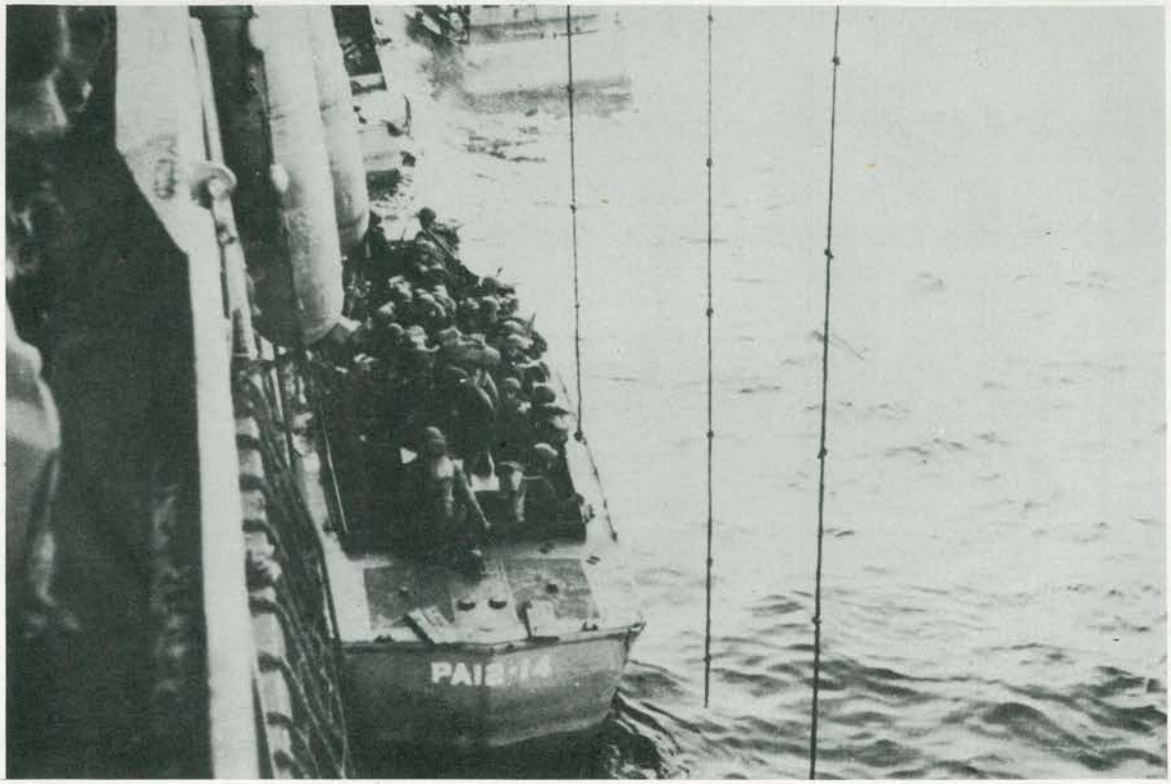
179th Infantry transport



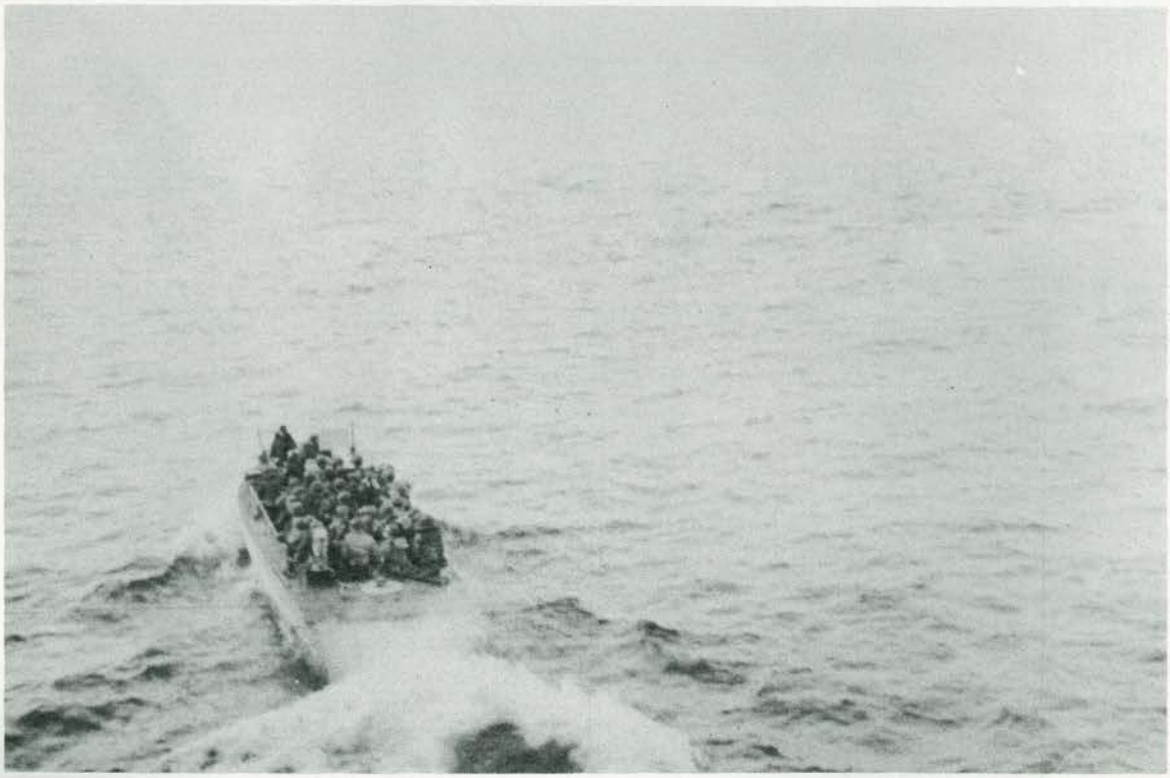
Destroyer escort



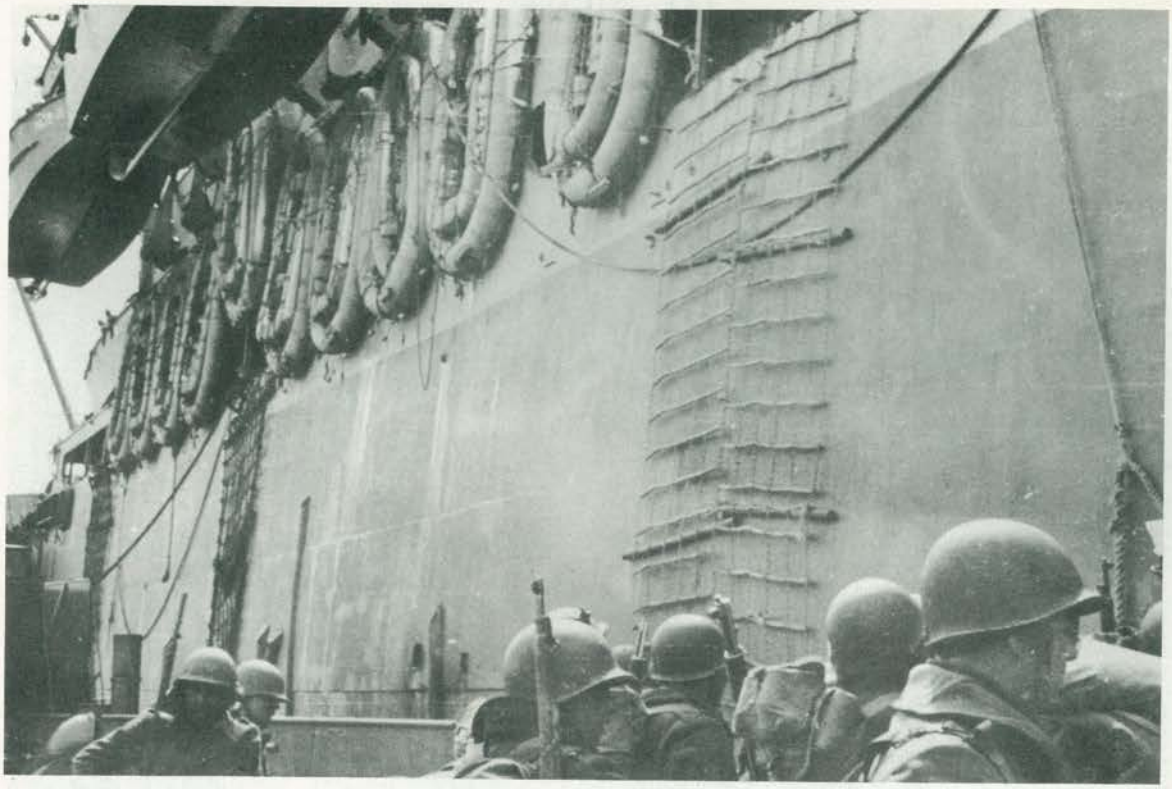
The USS Harry Lee



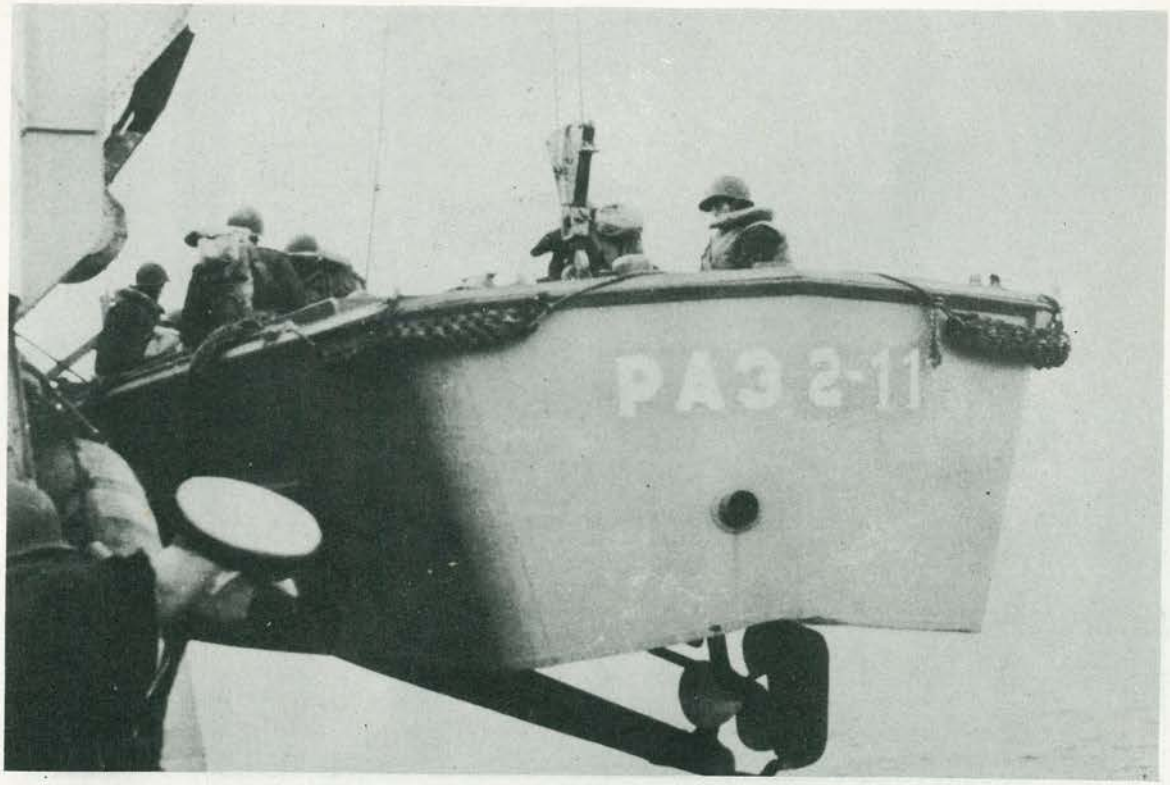
All, aboard, LCP invasion boat



First assault wave



Ready to head shorewards



Over the side with the first LCP

III. Sicily

Sicilian Beachhead conference: (L. to R.) Generals Middleton, Bradley and Patton

Fascist Youth HQs in a captured Sicilian city

Tramping into Caltanisetta, Sicily

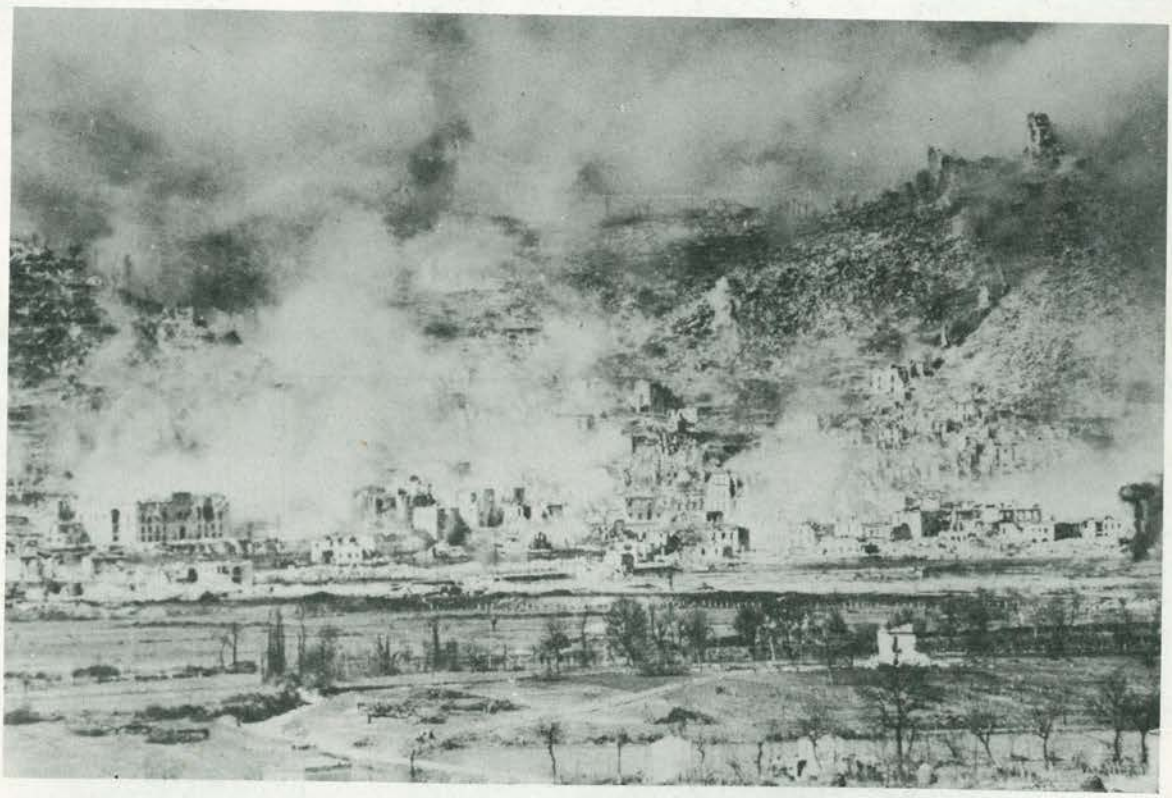
Above Scoglitti, Sicily, a few hours after H-hour

IV. Italy

Hunting snipers in a south Italian village

Street fight in Italy

Striking north through the battered towns of central Italy



Air power blasting a path for the infantry

Slogging through the Italian mountains

V. Anzio Beachhead

In a ruined town on the breakthrough from the Anzio Beachhead

A battered church on the road to Rome

A temporary OP in the drive past Rome

Chow line while resting in the "pinewoods" Anzio Beachhead

About to jump off for the push out of Anzio area, Anzio Beachhead

American Cemetery, Anzio Beachhead

The "Factory" area, Anzio Beachhead

VI. France & Germany

Infantry and a TD roar through a burning German village

Jumping off through the ruined streets of an Alsatian city

Doughboys and TD smashing into a German rail center

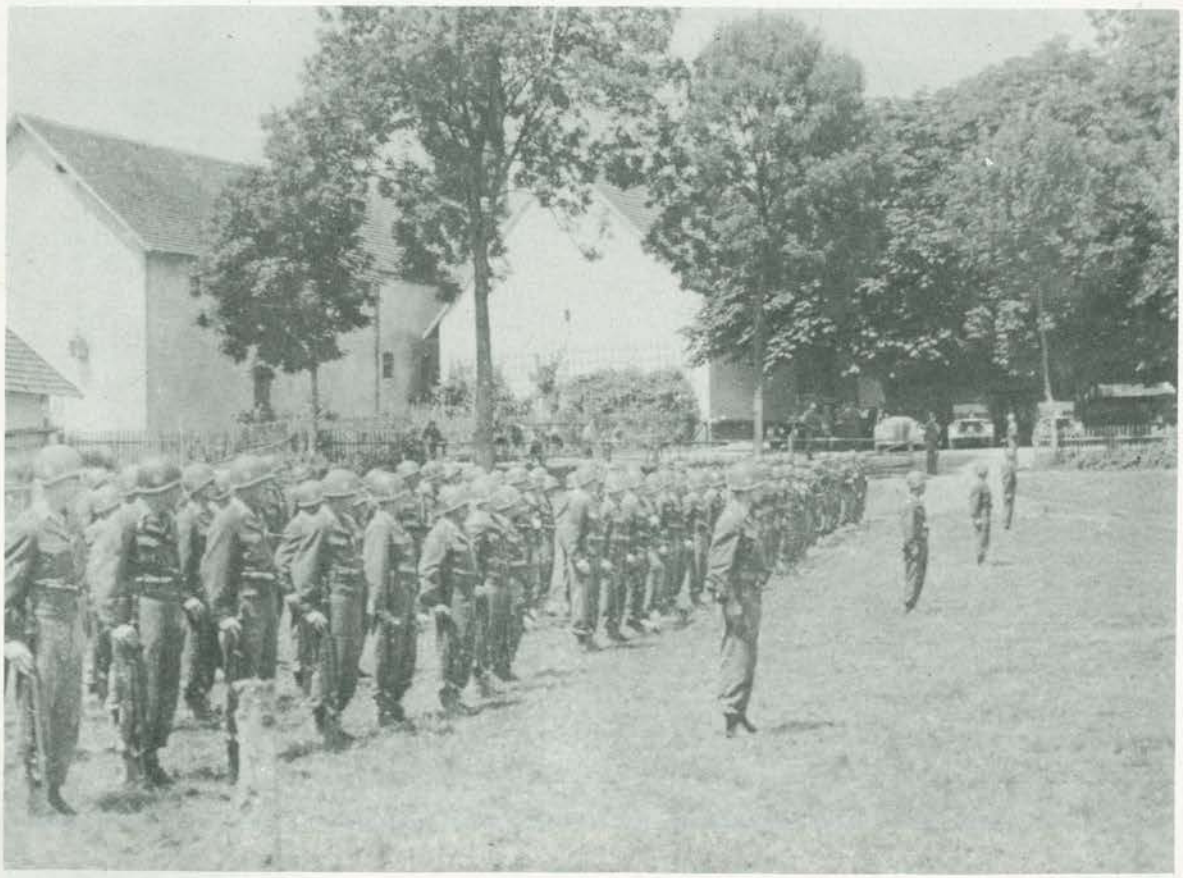
Hunting snipers outside Nurnberg

White flags of surrender don't fool these cautious riflemen in southern Germany

Advancing through the remains of Nazism's birthplace, Nurnberg

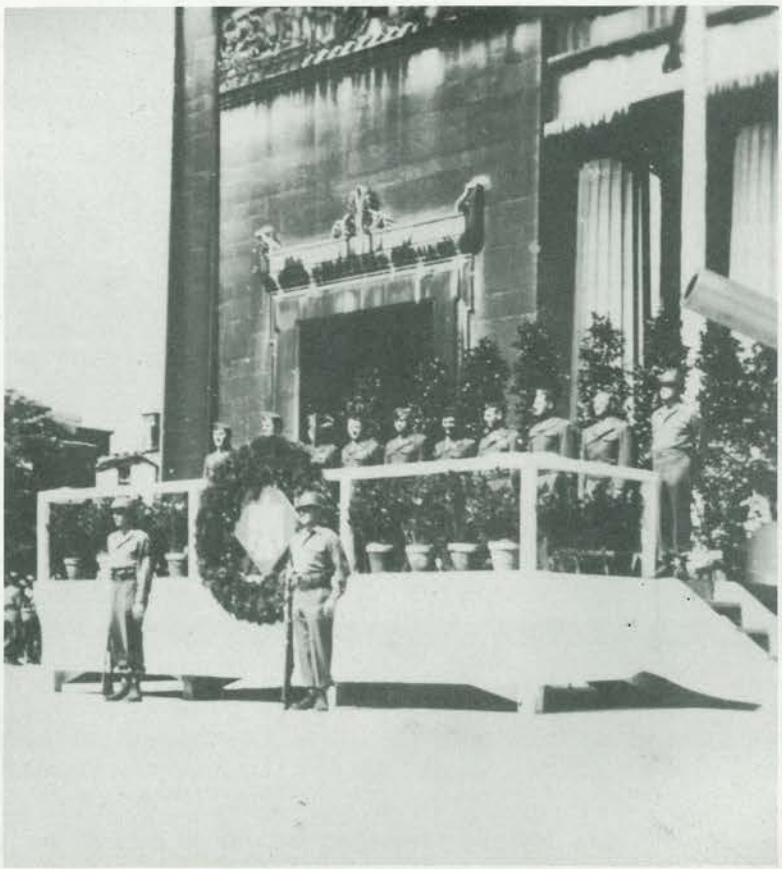
Maj. Hillman in front of the castle at Birnfeld, Germany, with captured Gen. Franz's jeep

D-Day, Southern France. A battalion staff takes a breather



179th Infantry in review

179th Infantry on parade



In memory of those who died in action,
Munich, Germany

Col. Murphy presenting awards to men of the 179th Infantry