

1945

## Hilltown Able: a unit memoir of Battery A--744th Field Artillery Battalion to V-E day

William F. Sandford

United States Army

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# HILLTOWN ABLE



BATTERY A · 744<sup>TH</sup> F.A. BN.

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1944/45

# H i l l t o w n A B L E



Btry. A – 744<sup>th</sup> F. A. Bn.  
1944/45

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# HILLTOWN ABLE

A Unit Memoir

*of*

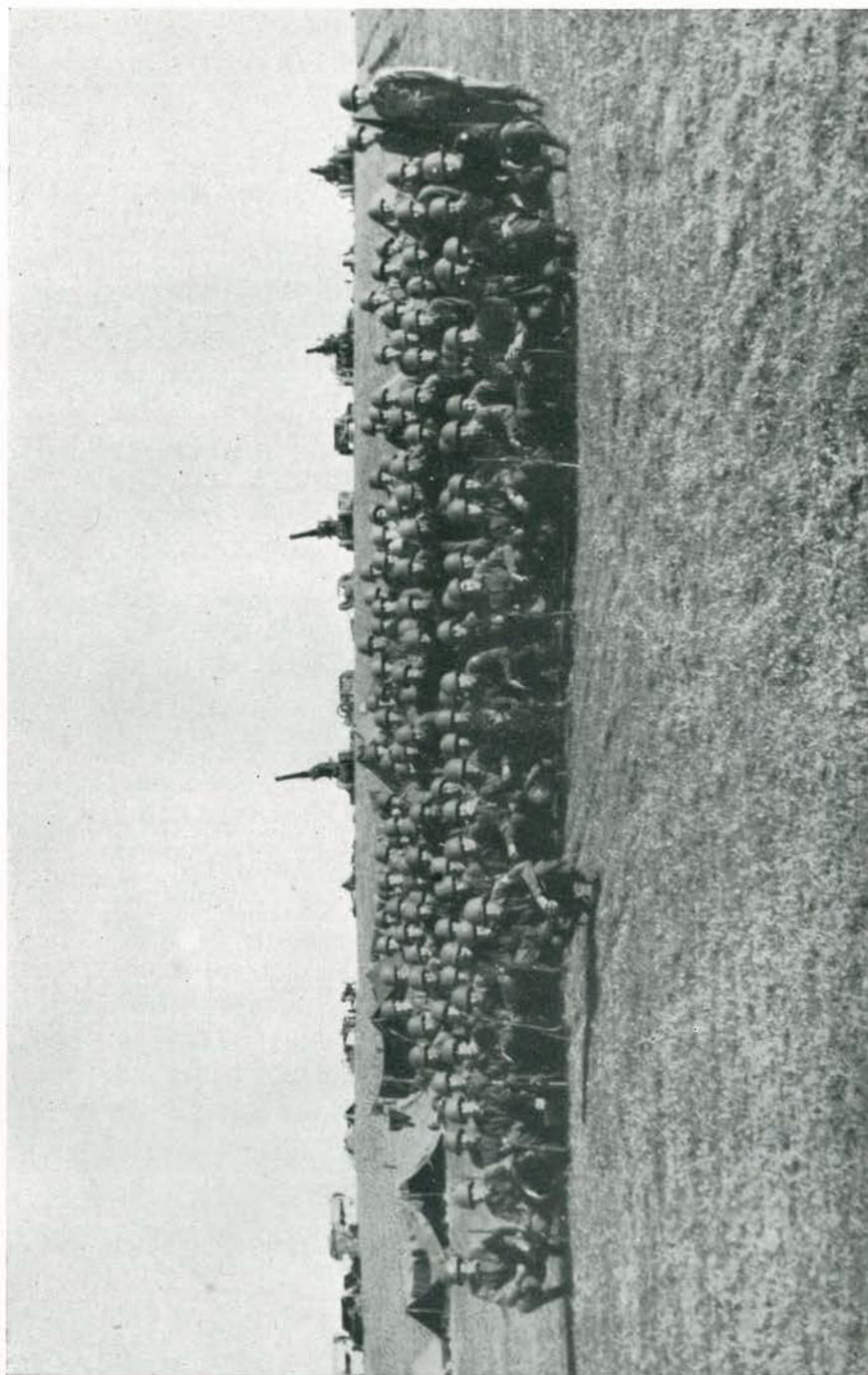
Battery A-744<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion

To V-E Day

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COMPILED AND EDITED BY WILLIAM F. SANDFORD

PHOTOS AND PUBLICATION BY JOHN SOKOL



BATTERY A, 74th F. A. BN.

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# THE THIRD ARMY

## FOREWORD

(Reprinted from *Life*: "Salute to the Armies")

*The American Third Army is the cockiest of all the armies and the fastest-moving. Long on armor, it is led by Lieut. General George S. Patton Jr. and, like him, it is colorful, proud and bold. Its motto is speed and more speed. Its record is the best possible evidence that Marshall and Eisenhower were right when they refused to fire Patton after the face-slapping incident in Sicily.*

*Last week a captured German officer was asked who the most important American generals were. Without hesitation he answered, "Patton and Eisenhower". All over Germany the speed of the Third Army's advances has made Patton a name to strike terror into Nazi hearts. The soldiers of the Third are proud of this, as they are proud of their commander. They like to boast that once this winter the general, aged 59, swam across the Sauer River to lead his men.*

*The Third has been one of the smallest U. S. armies and yet as of March 30 it had taken 311,000 German prisoners since August, a total second only to that taken by the First Army. The reason for this is its armor. It attacks with tanks, exploits a breakthrough, keeps going. North Africa, Sicily and Normandy perfected the Patton tactics until today the history of the Third is studded with armored breakthroughs across France, through the Saar, across the Rhine and into the hills beyond Frankfurt.*

*In almost all these armored thrusts the way has been led for the Third Army by its hard-riding 4th Armored Division. Last week the 4th Armored also got a Presidential citation.*



HEADQUARTERS XX CORPS  
APO 340

June 10, 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO: All Units Assigned or Attached to XX Corps.

1. It gives me great pleasure to publish to the Command, the following letter which was handed to Lieutenant General Walton R. Walker, by the Commanding General, Third United States Army, upon his departure from Europe:

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

SUBJECT: Commendation.

May 21, 1945

TO: Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker

From the landing of the XX Corps in England until the termination of hostilities in Europe, you and your Corps have been outstanding for dash, drive, and audacity in pursuit and in exploitation.

Your determination and great tactical skill were evinced in your capture of Metz and subsequent advance to the Saar and capture of Saarlautern.

Your reduction of the Moselle-Saar Triangle and the capture of Trier was a brilliant feat of arms. The operation starting March 13 and terminating May 9, during which you turned the Siegfried Line, destroyed the center of enemy resistance, and crossed the Rhine, finally terminating your victorious advance in Austria, were in keeping with your previous exploits and standards.

Of all the Corps I have commanded, yours has always been the most eager to attack and the most reasonable and cooperative.

You and your Corps are hereby highly commended for your outstanding achievements.

/s/ G. S. Patton, Jr.

G. S. PATTON, JR.,  
General."

2. General Walker has sent this letter to me from the United States with the remark that this commendation was earned by the officers and enlisted men of the XX Corps, rather than by himself.

3. I know that the XX Corps will continue to maintain these high standards attained by the constant effort and devotion to duty of each officer, warrant officer and enlisted man.

/s/ Louis A. Craig  
/t/ LOUIS A. CRAIG,  
Major General, U. S. Army  
Commanding.

PART ONE  
BATTERY HISTORY

# CHRONOLOGY

## *April—1944*

April 13—Battalion activated in ceremony at Camp Chaffee, Ark., parade ground, on orders from 25th Headquarters, Special Troops, Second Army. Battalion colors presented to Maj. (later Lt. Col.) Robin B. Gardner, battalion commander. Lt. Robert J. Elliott named Battery A commander, Lt. John H. Folks assistant battery commander and Second Lts. Sidney P. Howell and Philip L. Lawrence battery officers. 663rd, 742nd and 743rd battalions, which with the 744th made up the 416th Group, activated in same ceremony.

April 30—Second Lt. Herbert M. Shapiro assigned as battery officer.

## *May—1944*

May 18—Battery assigned four Schneider 155 MM howitzers.

May 28—Second Lts. Henry Shenloogian and Thomas L. Skripps attached to battery, unassigned.

May 30—First battery overnight bivouac near Diamond Grove, Chaffee Reservation. Returned May 31, 1800.

## *June—1944*

June 7—Lt. George Cunningham assigned to battery (executive officer).

June 13—Second Lt. August K. Krometis assigned as battery officer.

June 21—Second Lt. Gerald K. Ebbesen assigned to battery as motor maintenance officer. Lt. Howell transferred to B battery.

June 26—Lt. Elliott promoted to captain.

## *July—1944*

July 18—Furloughs started. (Continued through Nov. 15.)

## *August—1944*

Aug. 7—Lt. Shenloogian transferred to 743rd F.A. Bn.

Aug. 10—28 EM replacements, transferred from 544th AAA AW Bn., assigned to battery.

Aug. 15—Two EM from F.A.R.T.C., Ft. Sill, Okla., assigned.

### *October—1944*

Oct. 2—Lt. Cunningham transferred to B battery. Lt. Krometis assigned assistant battery commander and Lt. Skripps to motor maintenance officer.

Oct. 12—Lt. Krometis transferred to B battery. Lt. William E. Dykes became assistant battery commander (executive officer).

Oct. 15—Lt. Lawrence transferred to Headquarters, XXXVI Corps, Fort Riley, Kan.

Oct. 24—Lt. Ebbesen transferred to 627th F.A., Camp Chaffee. Eight EM assigned to battery from 518th F.A., Camp Joseph T. Robison, Ark.

### *November—1944*

Nov. 4—One EM moved to Camp Kilmer, N.J., N.Y.P.E. staging area, as advance party.

Nov. 14—Three E.M. assigned to battery from 628 F.A., Chaffee.

Nov. 19—Battery departed Camp Chaffee by rail at 1905 for Camp Kilmer, N.J.

Nov. 23—Arrived at Camp Kilmer at 0230, completing rail trip of 1850 miles, touching 13 states: Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and New Jersey and the District of Columbia. Cities passed through included Kansas City, Chicago, Davenport, Terre Haute, Washington, Baltimore, Wilmington, Philadelphia and Trenton.

Nov. 30—Departed Camp Kilmer at 1800, traveled by rail to Jersey City, thence by ferry to Staten Island port of embarkation. Boarded "Excelsior".

### *December—1944*

Dec. 1—Departed N.Y.P.E. pier at 1000 for overseas.

Dec. 12—Entered Southampton harbor, completing trip of 3,742 statute miles from New York.

Dec. 13—Disembarked at Southampton at 1625. Left pier by train at 1845 for Tattenhall Road Station, Cheshire.

Dec. 14—Passed through outskirts of London just after midnight. Arrived Tattenhall Road Station, marched to barracks, Tattenhall village, took up station at 0630. Distance traveled from Southampton, 265 miles. Elapsed time: 11 hours, 45 minutes.

### *January—1945*

Battery remained at Tattenhall through the month of January awaiting and preparing for movement to the Continent. Sixty-five men received seven-day furloughs.

### *February—1945*

Feb. 6—Lt. Dykes transferred to Headquarters, 416th F.A. Group.

Feb. 8—Lt. Jacob W. McGee Jr. assigned as assistant B.C. (executive officer).



Feb. 17—Advance detail of two officers, four enlisted men departed Tattenhall for continent.

Feb. 20—Battery left Tattenhall 0630 by motor convoy via Worchester, Warminster, to staging area vicinity of Weymouth. Distance traveled from Tattenhall: 190 miles.

Feb. 21—Battery, minus 48 men who remained at staging area, arrived Weymouth 1000, boarded LST's. Left harbor 1800 to cross channel.

Feb. 22—Reached Le Havre harbor 0800, anchored awaiting favorable tide. Left Le Havre 1630, traveled up Seine to Villequer and anchored for night at 1930.

Feb. 23—Left Villequer 1030, continued up Seine to Rouen, arriving 1800; disembarked 1852. Motor convoy to Twenty Grand marshalling yards, arrived 2000. Distance: Weymouth to Le Havre, 136 miles; Le Havre to Rouen (via Seine), 72 miles. Total, Weymouth to Rouen, 208 miles.

Feb. 25—Remainder of battery left staging area, boarded LCI's at Weymouth to cross channel.

Feb. 26—Second group disembarked at Le Havre, transported by motor truck to Twenty Grand.

### *March—1945*

March 6—Battery departed Twenty Grand by motor convoy at 1340, for Third Army combat assignment, via Rouen, Beauvais, Compiègne, arrived Soissons 2330.

March 7—Left Soissons 0235, via Reims, arrived Doncourt (near Longwy) 1430. Billeted in French Maginot barracks. Distance traveled from Twenty Grand, 265 miles. Advance party moved forward to position area. Battalion assigned to XX Corps under command of Brig. Gen. Slack.

March 8—Departed Doncourt at 0700, arrived at first firing position near Felsberg, just within German border, at 1430. Guns set up to fire across Saar river in Saarlautern sector on perimeter of deepest Siegfried Line defenses. Traveled 87 miles from Doncourt. Battalion assigned to 204th F.A. Group under Col. Charles A. Pyle.

March 9—Registered battery at 0315. Fired four missions, 30 rounds.

March 10—Fired three missions, 24 rounds.

March 11—Three missions, 20 rounds.

March 12—Two missions, eight rounds. Battalion reassigned to 416th Group.

March 13—10 missions, 90 rounds.

March 14—One mission, 14 rounds.

March 15—Seven missions, 51 rounds.

March 16—Six missions, 67 rounds.

March 17—12 missions, 69 rounds.

March 18—29 missions, 145 rounds. Base piece moved forward to 1½ miles S.E. of Alt Forweiler, conducted high burst registration.

March 19—Remainder of battery moved forward to Alt Forweiler. Traveled five miles. Fired eight missions, 82 rounds.

March 20—Left Alt Forweiler position at 1115, crossed Saar at Saarlautern and billeted at Saarwellingen at 1600. Traveled 16 miles.

March 21—Departed Saarwellingen 1320, arrived Gottelborn 1500 and established bivouac. Traveled 20 miles.

March 23—Departed bivouac area 2000, arrived Homburg (Saar) 2340, continued march.

March 24—Arrived Nerzweiler (near Offenbach) at 0630. Established billet. Distance traveled from Gottelborn, 54 miles.

March 25—Lt. Skripps, who had been promoted to first lieutenant, transferred to C battery. Departed Nerzweiler 1600, arrived at Marienborn at 1930. Traveled 51 miles. Set up guns to fire into Rhine bridgehead area near Mainz. Conducted high-burst registration, expended seven rounds.

March 26—Fired six missions, 28 rounds.

March 27—Seven missions, 98 rounds.

March 28—Five missions, 129 rounds.

March 31—Departed Marienborn 0630, crossed Rhine on pontoon brigade at Mainz, passed close to Frankfort and traveled via Autobahn. Arrived Birklar at 1600 and established billet. Traveled 78 miles.

### *April—1945*

April 1—Left Birklar 1000, arrived Reibelsdorf 1400 and established billet. Traveled 49 miles.

April 2—Left Reibelsdorf 1330, arrived Lutzelwig 1500; established billet. Traveled 12 miles. Capt. Elliott temporarily assigned to battalion S3, Lt. Folks assuming battery command. Second Lt. Perry G. Glunt assigned to battery as motor officer.

April 3—Departed Lutzelwig 1330, arrived Hertingshausen 1545. Traveled 18 miles. Established guns to fire into Kassel area. Fired three missions, 25 rounds.

April 4—Fired three missions, eight rounds.

April 5—Departed Hertingshausen 0700, through Kassel to Bergshausen (12 miles). Arrived 0900, guns emplaced to fire on enemy pocketed by First Army north of Kassel. Fired two missions, 15 rounds, and calibration mission, 15 rounds. Billeted at gun position.

April 6—Left Bergshausen 1530, arrived 1½ miles S.W. Hess Lichtenau at 1940: 21 miles. Established bivouac.

April 7—Departed bivouac area 1300, arrived ⅓ mile S.E. of Langenheim at 1500: 21 miles. Placed guns to fire into Mühlhausen area; registered battery with 12 rounds.

April 8—Took battery's first officially accredited prisoner.

April 9—Capt. Elliott resumed command of battery; Lt. Glunt assigned temporarily to B battery.

April 10—Departed area at 0945, stopped at Heroldshausen 1415. Base piece moved forward to Ballstadt, near Gotha. Remainder of battery followed, arriving 2000. Traveled 51 miles. Established guns, did not fire.

April 11—Left Ballstadt 1420, arrived  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles N.W. Schina at 1930: 30 miles. Guns aligned on vicinity of Erfurt. Turned over two prisoners. Battalion reassigned to 204th Group.

April 12—Fired 19 missions, 76 rounds.

April 13—Left area at 1030, arrived Grossehaufhausen 1410, emplaced guns but did not fire. Departed area 1640, arrived  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles E of Closewitz (near Jena) at 1830. Established guns, did not fire. Turned in three prisoners. Traveled 30 miles.

April 14—Departed 1620 through Jena to 1 mile N. of Eisenberg, arrived 1900. Bivouaced off Leipzig-Berlin Autobahn. (30 miles.)

April 15—Left 1430, arrived Tettau at 1830: 31 miles. Established guns but did not fire. Turned over 35 prisoners.

April 16—Departed Tettau 1500, arrived Hartmannsdorf 1745: 20 miles. Established guns to fire into enemy concentrations north of Chemnitz. Fired two missions, 46 rounds.

April 17—Fired one mission, 13 rounds.

April 18—Motor convoy left Hartmannsdorf at 0700, traveled via Autobahn west past Meerane, Gera, Jena, to south of Erfurt, then south through Arnstadt, Koburg, Bayreuth to Gleussen. 173 miles, arriving 1905. Bivouaced through the 19th.

April 20—Left area at 0330, stopped at Trockau 0900 to 1115. Crossed Autobahn to Penzenreuth, 1215, established guns but did not fire. Moved to Auerbach and established guns at 2145. Total distance: 90 miles. Turned in 14 prisoners.

April 21—Left area 1820, arrived Riglasho and established guns at 2030: 9 miles.

April 23—Departed Riglasho 1130, arrived Iachazandant at 1330: 11 miles. Turned over two prisoners. Bivouaced.

April 24—Left area 1000, traveled to Eggelsee, then Unterhub, established gun position at 2000. 47 miles. Fired four missions, 26 rounds in Regensburg area. Turned in six prisoners.

April 25—Broke gun positions 1330, arrived Nittenau at 1555; left 1830, arrived Addlmannstein 2000: 25 miles. Established guns and fired five missions, 18 rounds, in support of Danube crossing east of Regensburg.

April 26—Base piece went forward to Worth-on-Donau, went into position on north side of Danube river, registered with high burst fire. Remainder of battery followed, guns



emplaced at 2300: 28 miles. Fired three missions, 22 rounds, into flank of bridgehead opposition.

April 27—Fired two missions, 22 rounds.

April 29—Left position 1100, crossed Danube on pontoon bridge at Walhalla (east of Regensburg), moved southeast to Rain, arrived 1600: 30 miles. Bivouaced.

April 30—Struck bivouac 0125, moved through Straubing to Ganacker, arriving 1320: 21 miles. Emplaced guns and fired five missions, 34 rounds, in support of Isar River crossing in Landau area.

### May—1945

May 1—March-ordered pieces, remained in area overnight.

May 2—Left area 0630, arrived assembly area, Wolfsdorf, 0930. Traveled 11 miles.

May 3—Left area 0700, stopped at Obermunchausen, continued to Gangkofen bivouac area: 16 miles. Arrived 1330. Battalion assigned to 193rd Group under Col. Harry A. Cooney.

May 7—Battery moved to new bivouac area at Hotzl, near Simbach: 41 miles.

May 9—V-E Day ceremony.

## STATISTICS

Total number of rounds fired in combat: 1191.

Note: Of the total, 600 were fired into the outer Siegfried defenses in the Saarlautern area; 258 in support of the Rhine River bridgehead at Mainz; 221 in the drive in Central Germany through Kassel, Eschwege and Erfurt to Chemnitz, and 122 in the Danube and Isar River crossings in and around Regensburg and Landau.

Distance traveled by battery between Nov. 19, 1944 (departure from Camp Chaffee) and May 9 (V-E Day): 7,713 miles.

“ “ by boat (across Atlantic, English Channel and up Seine to Rouen): 3,950 miles.

“ “ by rail (Chaffee to New York PE and Southampton via London to Tattenhall): 2,160 miles.

“ “ by motor convoy (Tattenhall to Weymouth, and Twenty Grand through France and Germany): 1,603 miles.



## NARRATIVE

Arkansas had some cool days that spring, but April 13 wasn't one of them. There wasn't a wisp of a cloud to alleviate the discomfort of the searing afternoon sun and some 2,000 G. I. 's, O. D.-clad and packed at close-interval, stood at stiff attention and ached and perspired while the 416th Group went through the ritual of activation.

Not everyone survived it. One lieutenant in the front rank rocked slightly, pitched forward on his face and was helped to his feet by the men nearest him. Two minutes later he again hit the turf, this time for the count. He had to be carried from the field, and, while heads remained at attention, 4,000 eyes enviously watched his unconscious retreat to comfort.

But the ceremony went on. Battalion colors were presented and Battery A, 744th F. A., was in official existence.

Although battalion personnel were organized into batteries before activation, it was not until some time later that proper equipment for field training could be obtained. The battalion received three 155 MM Schneider howitzers and for several weeks these were shared by the three batteries. A month after activation, enough howitzers were obtained to supply each section with a piece, and field work went into high gear.

Although the group had been organized as a unit of eight-inch howitzer battalions, the number of these weapons was limited and those being turned out were being shipped overseas to meet combat demand. The antiquated Schneider proved to be a worthy stand-in for training purposes, however, and when the larger howitzer was received later the cannoneers quickly adapted themselves to its technical differences.

Meanwhile there had been nothing to interfere with "basic training" and old army men grumbled a little as they went through the motions of learning to execute a right face and the hand salute properly. But the few field pieces available were something more like it to the former coast artillerymen and they accepted work with them as compensation for the ordeal of rookie training.

Overnight field work was added to the schedule late in May and after the first bivouac experience many of the men rubbed sore spots and complained that

they would never be able to sleep on the ground. After two months of combat, during which anything resembling a bed was seldom seen, some of the same men wondered if they would ever be able to sleep in a bed again.

"Weather clear, morale high" was the morning report comment for July 24 after the battery had established bivouac on the Chaffee reservation for a one week stay. That comment would hardly have been appropriate four days later when the weather went into one of its Mr. Hyde acts and sent morale into a temporary tailspin.

The newspapers later described it as "local storms which caused some crop and property damage". The "local" that came through the bivouac area in the middle of the night must have been on express schedule. Permanent structures in the vicinity lost roofs and chimneys, trees snapped or were torn out by the roots, and pup tents were easy pickings for a gale that seemed bent on plucking the earth bare. As shelter halves ripped their moorings and took off down wind their occupants, doused into sudden wakefulness by the accompanying deluge, took off after them in the direction of the nearest of their more fortunate neighbors' shelters.

Those whose tents had somehow withstood the onslaught found themselves suddenly all too popular as increasing numbers of their rain-soaked buddies crawled in with them and, between loud and profane comments on nature's way of doing things, begged refuge. While pup tents weren't designed to house public gatherings neither can you turn a friend out in a hurricane. Most of the involuntary hosts accepted the situation sleepily, dropped their heads back on their pillows and, as new layers of dripping humanity piled up on them, sank quietly into the mud.

When the storm began to abate at daybreak some thought their troubles were over, but they reasoned without due appreciation of the forces that make for adversity. Someone decided that a gas attack at this time would be just the thing. A smoke grenade was tossed, the alarm was sounded, and bedlam reigned again.

Gas masks that had been abandoned along with everything else in the storm now became objects of a frantic mass search and at least one individual claims to have come within an ace of drowning when he hastily clapped his mask to his face and found it brim full of water. Some of the tents that had survived the gale succumbed in the near-panic as visitors, making hurried exit to get to their own equipment, tangled with stay ropes and dived into the gooey earth, dragging their recent benefactors' houses down around their ears.

Even those who had found time to dress during this chaotic interval were a



little reluctant to re-don their soaked clothing and when the command to fall in was given shortly afterward, one erstwhile member of the battery joined the formation in a uniform that consisted of a gas mask and a pair of socks.

"Jeez', this tops everything", said one disgusted Pfc., digging his rifle out of the mud to make the formation. "What else could happen now?"

He didn't have to wait long for an answer.

"There'll be a rifle inspection right after breakfast," the first sergeant announced.

Although this is related as an example of a "bad day" in the training period, it wasn't quite typical, and when the sun and carbines shone again the men knew they had come through one of the toughest phases of the "Battle of Chaffee".

There is some slight basis for Able's claim to have been the training medium for the battalion's executive officers, two of the battery's Chaffee "grads" having gone on to lead B and C batteries' gun sections ably through the European campaign. The arrangement, on the other hand, was a reciprocal one and Lt. McGee, who had been with C battery through the training period, exec-ed Able's combat effort. Of the battery's original officers, only Capt. Elliott and Lt. Folks remained in their posts throughout the outfit's European experience, the former with the exception of a few days' temporary assignment to the battalion S3 office in Germany. Lt. Skripps remained until March 25, 1945, when he was transferred to C battery.

This "Battle of Chaffee" had had its compensating moments, but it hadn't been all beery bull sessions at P. X. 7, battery parties in the day room and weekend passes to Ft. Smith and Fayetteville. There had been many hours of hard work under an intolerably hot sun or in rain and knee-deep mud, and there had been hundreds of fox-holes and slit trenches dug only to inculcate the habit of digging. There had been close order drill, stuffy parades and hours of class-room monotony; and there had been heat rash and chigger bites and those damned M. P.'s. So when "final exams"—corps and AGF tests—loomed on the horizon with the prospect of repeating training in the event of failure, the men bent an earnest effort to preparation and took the tests—in the manner accredited to Grant at Richmond.

November found the battery up to its ears in POM activity. A few men were enjoying late furloughs and some who lived on the Atlantic coast made the 1,500-mile trip back to Chaffee only to find themselves, a few days later, again bound for the coast and POE.

Camp Kilmer will probably be most remembered for its good meals—which

included a bounteous Thanksgiving Day spread—and retreat-to-reveille passes. Men living in the New York-Philadelphia area took advantage of these to spend a few final hours at home while others accepted the opportunity for a last-minute look at the metropolis bright lights and a “fling”.

But the New Brunswick stay was a short one: just long enough for the fellows to decide the place was a bit of all right, and few were as anxious to leave as they had been at Chaffee. Sgt. Weddle probably voiced the feeling of most of us. Just as he was about to board the train he hesitated and loudly inquired: “Is this trip necessary?”

The “last mile” trek from the train to the ferry at Jersey City, and from the ferry to the loading platform at the Staten Island pier taught us the wisdom of regulations limiting the luggage to be carried. The military band playing “Jersey Bounce” at the entrance to the pier was evidently intended to revive sinking spirits, but with most of us it was muscle and not spirit that needed a lift. The Red Cross ladies at the top of the incline to the boat deck pier twisted our arm and made us stop and sit down for a cup of coffee and a doughnut. Without that breather we’d probably never have made it up the gangplank.

Once on the boat, a guide took us in hand, led us tripping over shipboard paraphernalia through a brief maze of hatches and passages to a hole through which we looked down into a dimly-lit dungeon.

“That’s it”, he said, and disappeared in the blackness.

The next day we surveyed the steep stairway into the hold, wondered how we ever got down it with all that equipment without even a broken bone, and decided we wouldn’t try it again without a rope and pulleys. The officer at the bottom said something like, “Climbintoabunkrelaxandstaythere”. Bunk? So that’s what those things were. We’d thought those pieces of canvas had just been washed and were put on those racks to dry. We climbed into one and wondered how long it would take us to learn to relax with a cartridge belt on, a packed musette bag on our back, a full duffel bag, carbine and overcoat on top of us and on top of that the guy in the next bunk above, who was only partially supported by the sagging canvas.

The ocean trip was for the most part uneventful. No one ever got quite comfortable in the cramped quarters, and waiting in line for meals occupied a good portion of the day. But entertainment was organized and movies were shown. The most popular shipboard pastimes were reading, cards and another game played clandestinely in secluded passageways with a pair of marked cubes. The South



Atlantic weather was warm, but there were spells of bad weather and moderately rough seas and the usual number of men were introduced to the agonized indisposition of seasickness. After a few days, however, stomachs became adjusted to the roll of the sea and most of those who had been victims were willing to admit they were glad they hadn't died.

While still a few days out of England we watched the convoy's destroyer escort go into action off our starboard stern and could hear the detonations of depth charges. We were then within the patrol range of the British Catalina flying boats and one of these could be seen circling the area over which the destroyers were racing under full head of steam. There were reports later, none of which was corroborated, of several U-boats destroyed in the action.

The "Excelsior" entered the channel late on the 11th, came around the Isle of Wight, through Portsmouth harbor and into Southampton on the 12th. After lying overnight in Southampton Bay, the battalion disembarked on the 13th.

There wasn't much to be seen on the blacked-out train ride through dimmed-out England to Tattenhall, but those who were still awake after midnight caught a glimpse of the tenements of London's outskirts in the dull glow of its shaded and rustic-looking street lamps.

The long walk from Tattenhall Road Station to the billet area did not help to relieve men already fatigued from the long rail trip. It was agreed before we arrived at the barracks that anything in the way of quarters would look good and the station we went into approached pretty closely the outside limits of our definition of "anything". The absence of lights in the pre-dawn blackness accented rather than concealed the unkept aspect of the place and the crude, flimsy nature of the buildings and furnishings. In daylight, after an early breakfast and a few hours of sleep, it had improved and with a little cleaning and straightening up was made fairly comfortable.

The men found England interesting. The little differences in manner of speech, social and political custom (we found that they didn't even employ the simple implements of knife and fork the same way we do) aroused curiosity. And more than that—although of interest only to the single men, of course—the girls were friendly. The policy on passes was liberal and there was ample opportunity to study the ways, and byways, of a country that was much older than ours and acted its age; a country that had been at war for over five years.

Some of the customs we didn't understand, like the daily cessation of all activity in order that undiluted effort might be given over to a ritual called "tea", and like the subservient reverence with which they looked on the sacred national

traditions, some of which seemed to us pitifully outmoded and impractical. And there were things that amused us; like the national institution known as "Time, please!", loudly heralded twice daily through the length and breadth of the land at the given hour of pub curfew, and the national addiction to the habit—amounting almost to a mania—of gum chewing, bringing upon the American visitors a hundred times a day the query: "Any gum, chum".

There was sufficient evidence of wine, women and song despite the long years of war. Although the "wine" consisted chiefly of two barely palatable (but much partaken of) potions called "mild and bitter", the women spoke the same language and the song was entered into at the slightest provocation and often continued until the last baritone lost his voice. It was evident that England did not list her morale among her war casualties.

Chester, only a few miles from Tattenhall, was hardest hit by the invading forces of our particular unit although many extended spearheads north to Liverpool and Manchester during the 48-hour diversion campaigns. Each of these cities has its share of pubs, which in England serve as friendly public gathering places, and the numerous movie houses featured Hollywood productions. The cities offered points of interest such as cathedrals, parks etc., and each was served by an American Red Cross servicemen's center that provided meals and lodging.

The points of historical interest in the Tattenhall area included a number of castles. Beeston Castle, the ruins of which lay atop a hill some two miles away and within sight of the barracks area, was said to have been built by Richard Couer de Lion late in the 12th century and destroyed by Cromwell in the 17th century. A more modern castle near the same site was occupied by the Duke of Gloucester until a few years before and was now used to house children evacuated from the heavily-bombed London area. On the invitation of the owner and occupants of Bolesworth Castle, a privately owned structure built in recent years, the battery one morning toured the grounds of that estate.

The portion of the battery that made up the "first wave" of the boat trip to the continent found it a pleasant interlude. The LST's sleeping quarters were warm and comfortable and adjoined complete shower facilities. The channel, often rough and a strain on even seasoned stomachs, was calm and flat throughout the night crossing. The halt off Le Havre during the major portion of the second day while awaiting a favorable tide for the trip up the river afforded an opportunity to view the effect of the war on that recently publicized city.

A few months earlier the Nazi armies, in frenzied flight before the Allied ava-



lanche that had rolled out of the Cherbourg peninsula, had found the Seine a costly obstacle to their retreat. On the trip up the river from Le Havre to Rouen we stood at the starboard rail and saw the wreckage strewn along mile after mile of the south bank of the winding stream: the modern and expensive equipment of an "invincible" army, destroyed and abandoned in the mad run for Nazi lives. The trip also afforded our first glimpse at what had been actual battleground in the war. Industrial sites that had spawned German materiel of war and therefore had to be eradicated by our air forces were twisted, crumpled ruins. Here and there a gaunt wall or two, rising tombstone-like out of acres of brick dust and ashes, marked what had been a town in which the retreating armies had elected to stop and wage a delaying action.

Even in the States you encounter little language difficulties. Represented on our battery roster are many sections of the country, each with its own language peculiarities that are either baffling or funny to anyone but a native of that section. In parts of the South, for example, the word "carry" is used not only to denote "bear" but also as synonymous with "take", "drive" and even "accompany". One of our Dixie bred non-coms one morning assembled the battery and after making an announcement was asked a question he was unable to answer offhand.

"I'll have to carry you down to the colonel to find out about that," he replied.

"Don'tcha' do it, sarge," counseled a small voice from the last row back. "Make 'im walk."

And then there was the quiet Sunday letter-writing session back in Chaffee during which one of the Brooklyn lads stopped to inquire as to the proper spelling of the word "dough". Asked whether he referred to the stuff you bake bread with, a female deer, or what a soldier hasn't got any of a few days after payday, he explained: "You know, 'Dough', like in the song, 'Just as Dough You Were Here'."

In England it got worse. We found that a truck was a lorry and a line was a queue, and we heard a lot of words we hadn't known were in the English language.

But the real difficulty of a language barrier wasn't encountered until we reached France. On the ride from the Rouen dock to the marshalling yards at Twenty Grand we saw one of our members, in a feeble effort to make himself understood, talking to a group of French children in broken English. It was a humorous introduction to a problem that has hounded us ever since and will continue to do so until we get back into English-speaking country.

After a long walk from the truck park that included several detours and much back-tracking with most of our equipment plus a folding army cot, we finally found quarters in the pyramidal tent colony of Twenty Grand. After one more change of quarters the next morning, we settled down to the task of final preparation for our entry into combat.

The 48 men who had remained at the UK staging base and crossed the channel in the second wave did not have as easy a trip as the first group. Boarding the smaller LCIs, they sailed into a channel that was far from tranquil and spent an uncomfortable and, for most, nauseated night rolling and tossing. This group disembarked at Le Havre the following morning and traveled the remaining distance to Twenty Grand in trucks.

Evidences of France's war damage on the trip from Rouen to the front were largely repetitions of the scenes along the Seine. Some towns and villages were untouched or bore only minor shell and bullet marks. In others, especially the larger cities, areas totaling many acres had been reduced to rubble. France had caught some of the war's heaviest blows full in the face, and her scars would show for a long time.

At 1800 the convoy stopped near Ste. Chatteau for supper and, although the only visible house was over a half mile away, we were almost immediately surrounded by a dozen ragged children of from three to nine years of age. They didn't speak, but their anxious eyes and hungry faces pleaded for them. We studied their clothing, the most conglomerate collection of rags we'd ever seen beyond a remnants bargain counter, and wondered what the younger of them, who had never experienced it, would think of a normal peace-time world. K ration is a meager dose for a hungry grown man, and that was all we had to eat on the trip, but when we left each of the children had a small box or two of K ration odds and ends that we'd tossed his way.

After a refueling stop at Soissons, the convoy continued the trip through the night and arrived at Reims at daybreak. In the latter city the leading battalion vehicle missed a turn and before the route was straightened out we witnessed the confused spectacle of different segments of the column going in four directions at the same time and the lead vehicles, at one crossroad, crossing through the middle of their own convoy at right angles.

Later in the day the convoy came into the area of the rear line pillboxes of the Maginot Line, France's "impenetrable" defense system, constructed at a cost





*FULL RECOLL: CHARGE 7*

*Our base piece rears back on its haunches to spat 200 pounds of fire and steel into enemy lines at Chemnitz.*

of millions, that had delayed the German armies only a few days when they invaded the country. At 1430 the battalion halted to billet for the night in a group of empty Maginot barracks. After a late afternoon meal, parts of the wire and survey sections went forward to Bedersdorf, Germany, as an advance party, thereby becoming the first members of the unit to enter the combat area.

Leaving the billet area the next morning, the main body entered the combat zone at Thionville, crossed the German border and went into position at Felsberg, near Bedersdorf. The position faced the Saar river in the Saarlautern area on a front that had been for the most part stagnant for some time. In this area the Siegfried Line, protecting the rich Saar basin, was some 35 miles deep and reputed to be stronger than in any other area.

As far as mobility is concerned heavy artillery is definitely not in the mudder class, and it so happened that for our initial trip to the post in a race against time for the money, it came up mud. The position was between two hills in a narrow basin into which drained all the rainfall of several acres of ground. A cold rain had been falling for three days and when the heavy equipment attempted to navigate the soft ground it became a quagmire. All four of the pieces and their prime movers became stuck. The gun crews had experienced mud before, however, and this obstacle did not prove insurmountable. Using the expedients which had proved effective at Chaffee, plus a lot of hard physical labor, they finally succeeded in emplacing all four pieces.

It was not until 0315 of the following day that a registration mission was received and the battery fired its first combat round into enemy lines.

That first position proved to be as nearly perfect as any we were to run into in the European campaign. The natural contour gave ample defilade, there were trees for partial cover, and the buildings of the farm that adjoined the gun position provided shelter for the C.P., switchboard, supply room, kitchen and exec position. In addition there were temporary shacks, constructed by a unit that had occupied the same position before us, that were used by the gun crews. The battery remained in this position ten days, considerably longer than in any other one firing position, and fired 517 rounds, almost half the total number fired in combat.

The O.P. was situated in Felsberg atop a steep hill overlooking the valley of the Saar to the hills beyond. For the first few days most of the battery's fire was directed from there on targets of opportunity: pillboxes, visible troop concentrations and suspected gun emplacements. After five days the number and

frequency of missions increased, night time-on-target concentrations were fired and the general tempo of the artillery barrage was stepped up. Air forces joined in the attack on the positions in the same area with a night raid in force and the flashes of their incendiary and HE bombs were clearly visible from the gun position. General Patton's armored forces, meanwhile, had broken through the defense to the north at Trier, swept up the north bank of the Moselle River to



#### *EQUINE CASUALTY*

*The German army used many horses, and when it came to retreat they were outclassed by the modern machinery of war. This one (foreground) was one of many that finished "out of the money" in the race for survival.*

Coblenz and were now swinging south with several spearheads already across the Moselle. Thus pounded from the front and threatened from the right flank, the enemy, it became apparent, was beginning to pull out of his Westwall positions in our sector of fire. The battery then concentrated on harassing and interdiction missions, shelling important arteries of retreat and intersections, especially at night. On the 18th the battery fired a total of 29 missions, most of them of the H. and I. type, expending 145 rounds. These 14½ tons of high explosives were the greatest amount fired by the battery in a single day in the European conflict.



On the afternoon of the 18th the base piece moved up 5,000 yards to a new position in a field closer to the Saar and registered. The remainder of the battery, which had continued to fire harassing missions from the old position, came forward and went into position early the following morning. During the day eight more missions were fired but the enemy was now in hasty flight and on the 20th the no-fire line had moved beyond the range limit of the howitzers.

After leaving the forward Saar position we crossed the river at Saarlautern and proceeded through the rubbish that had been that city. There was an aura of deathly stillness about it and all the dead had not been cleared—and probably at this writing still have not been cleared—from its debris. Weeks after the war ended Saarlautern was still counting an average of ten casualties a day from mines and booby traps, and two months after we passed over it the road from Felsberg into the town was still blowing up under vehicles that ran over its mines.

A few miles beyond we came into Saarwillingen, a town in which the Germans had holed up and which had therefore been subjected to heavy shelling. Our own guns had been among those that had fired on the coordinates of the town. Here, in those of the battered houses that were still standing, we billeted for the night.

The bivouac position at Gottelborn, which we moved into the following day, was on a wooded hillside overlooking a power plant. It was here that we saw the first slave labor camp, several of which we were encounter as we traveled deeper into Germany. The internees, who worked the power plant, complained of poor food and some harsh treatment, but there was little of the evidence of brutality that we found at subsequent camps of the type. The laborers, mostly Poles and Russians, were happy at being liberated and told of "sweating out" a discussion by the retreating Germans of whether or not they should take the prisoners with them. A few, fearing they might be taken, had fled into the woods and were just returning after three days in hiding with only a portion of a loaf of bread each for food. Here, too, we took advantage of the shower facilities of the power plant to take a much appreciated shower and to wash the dirty clothes that had been accumulating in duffel bags.

After remaining in this position for two full days, the convoy departed at night and traveled east, passing through Homburg, a small industrial city, just before midnight. Homburg's multi-storied buildings showed the effects of heavy air attack. Although exterior walls were standing the interiors were largely burned out and you could look through the ground floor windows up into the moon-





RHINE BRIDGE  
*World's longest tactical span at Mainz.*

lit sky. The convoy traveled in a northeasterly direction through the night and arrived the following morning in Nerzweiler. Here the battery established a billet and remained until the following afternoon.

Until this time we had been on the receiving end of very little enemy action. At the Saar position the firing battery had been well concealed and defiladed and, although the men at the forward O.P. had felt their building rocked by shells that the enemy had been pouring into our installations nearby, the men at the guns had experienced only the occasional whine and thud of an incoming shell that always passed safely overhead or landed a comfortable distance short of the position. There had been no sign of enemy air action.

At Marienborn, our next position, the situation was somewhat different and distinctly on the warmer side.

After traveling 51 miles from Nerzweiler, we arrived at the position, just west of Mainz, at nightfall. One of the major air battles of the war had been fought over the area the day before, Mar. 24, and the enemy was evidently attempting to land a last round punch in that battle as we came into the flat field where the guns were to be emplaced. To our south our A.A. was throwing up a cone of machine gun fire, and the entire area was illuminated by hundreds of flares that evidently had been dropped from the planes. Thus illuminated, and with the air-ground battle to the south of us continuing, the battery went into position and made ready to fire. Meanwhile a lone unidentified but unfriendly sounding plane kept flying back and forth above our position, low under the heavy clouds, and we wondered what notes he might be taking on us to turn over to the enemy artillery.

Although the occupation was completed and a high burst registration—at about 3,000 yards range—conducted without incident, the aerial activity continued far into the night. An occasional burst of the white tracers of German guns indicated that the Luftwaffe was not alone in the night sky, and twice P61's passed low over the position. Later a JU 87, unmistakable against the light sky in a break in the clouds, passed directly overhead at an altitude of only a few hundred feet, and after the battery had rolled into bedsacks for the night an occasional plane was heard diving and strafing the positions to our immediate right.

The following morning our own planes patrolled the skies unopposed but the situation still was not conducive to great comfort. Whereas in the previous positions we had had the advantage of concealment and from our O.P.'s could observe

all the enemy's activity, here, we now saw, the situation was reversed. Our territory was a broad level plain, bounded on our left and left-front by the enemy held hills, forming a huge ampitheatre in which we held the stage and the Germans occupied the box seats. Whether it was merely good fortune or the fact that the enemy was so preoccupied with the task of getting himself elsewhere in one piece that he didn't concentrate on returning fire we'll probably never know,



MENNONITE COLONY

*At Reibelsdorf the natives wore the old Hessian style of dress, top-knot hair-do.*

but the trouble we felt certain we were due for never materialized. On our third night in the position a fast and furious hail of 88's (48 of them landed in a little over a minute) came in close enough to rip things up and tear holes in the tent of an attached anti-aircraft unit to our right rear. But no further damage was done and the six-day stay in that position was marked by no other serious incident.

Firing, in support of the expanding bridgehead at Mainz, was comparatively light on the first day, increased to 98 rounds on the 27th and early on the 28th the battery fired 102 rounds in two hours to harass an enemy that was then in



full retreat. By the 29th the no-fire line had moved beyond our maximum range and we remained until the 31st awaiting our chance to cross the river.

Departing Marienborn early in the morning, we passed through Mainz and crossed the Rhine on the longest pontoon bridge the army had ever constructed, 1890 feet of rubber rafts and steel treadways. The convoy then passed within sight of Frankfort to the north and swung northeast on the north-south Autobahn.

As soon as we had crossed the Rhine we began to encounter the legion of slave laborers that had been released by the spearheading forces before us and which we were to see in endless columns throughout the remainder of our campaign through Germany. Singly, or in groups of from two to fifty, they walked or cycled along the shoulders of the road with all their worldly goods in packs on their backs or loaded on little carts they pulled behind them. Most wore old, tattered clothes, and although an occasional one was well-dressed you could usually tell the German from the refugee by the quality of the clothing he wore. All of them were hungry, and none was bashful about accepting a proffered cigarette. There were many Poles, French and Russians, and a smattering of Belgians, Netherlands, Italians, Morrocans and a host of other nationalities. And all kept moving, most of them did not know whither or why, but they just couldn't take this new found freedom sitting down.

We spent the next three days catching up to a front that was rapidly fanning out into central Germany. Just above Frankfort we found that a C 47 base had already been set up for ferrying supplies by air and an endless train of transports was landing, unloading and taking off when we passed. We spent that night at Birklar, a small town a short distance off the Autobahn where an abandoned Nazi warehouse provided a few tools that were needed by our drivers. Back on the Autobahn the following day we found the northbound lane of the dual roadway buzzing with traffic and looking much like the similar highways at the Jersey shore on a summer weekend, jammed on one side with homeward-bound vehicles while only an occasional one passed in the opposite lane. Here, however, the nature of the vehicles and their mission gave the scene a distinctly different aspect.

Continuing in a northeasterly direction, we moved into the town of Reibelsdorf Easter Sunday and billeted in a Mennonite settlement. Interest here was provided by the peculiar dress of the native sect, a gasoline fire in the mess truck that nearly eliminated our meager source of food, and discovery of snipers in a nearby wood that was promptly sprayed with machine gun fire. While searching



for a water point a detail of men from the battery came upon a German stalag near the town which had only recently been overrun by our tank men and housed over a thousand American and British PW's as well as Russians and Poles. The men told of being on starvation ration for from two to three months and most had declined in weight to less than a hundred pounds. When advised of the situation, the battery made a collection of cigarettes and candy that was turned over to the former prisoners.

The next day we traveled 12 miles to Lutzewig, deployed trucks and guns in a hillside field and after several hours of unsuccessful effort to get them out of the mire to hard ground, billeted in the town for the night. The task of bringing the pieces out of the muddy field to the road again occupied the entire morning of the following day and in the afternoon we moved 18 miles to within firing range of Kassel and set the guns in firing position at Hertingshausen.

Our original mission, upon entering the position, called for fire on the immediate area of Kassel and the base piece, after some difficulty because of the rain-soaked earth, was lined on a compass of 1100 and reported ready to fire. The fast-moving fire line, however, had already moved out by that time and it became necessary to re-lay all the pieces on a compass of 100 mils to fire into the area north and northwest of the city where the enemy still held. The weather, running to its recent form, added its own handicaps and registration was conducted in a hard, driving rain.

At Hertingshausen we had our first experience with enemy aircraft in broad daylight when, while the guns were still being jockeyed into position, two F-W 190's came out of the clouds overhead and were driven off by anti-aircraft units to our right. While this was going on a flight of P 47's which had just passed spotted the enemy and swung around to give chase. Members of a unit to our left front, hearing the ack-ack and not observing the retreating Focke-Wulfs, evidently mistook our own craft for the objects of all the fire and we watched anxiously as a machine gunner and someone with what sounded like a carbine, fired into the formation. We learned later that one of the pair of enemy craft had been downed by anti-aircraft a few miles to our rear. The next morning a lone Focke-Wulf came in hedge-hopping along the crest of the hill immediately to our front and was also brought down by AA units to our right.

After two days of light firing in this position, the Kassel area was cleared and we moved forward, through the city, and swung east. A few miles to the east of Kassel, in the town of Bergshausen, we emplaced the guns to fire north into a

pocket of German troops in the Munden area, to the southeast of the First and Ninth Army's huge Ruhr pocket. The guns were set between the houses at the outskirts of the town, affording the unusual and happy combination of firing position and billet. The battery slept that night in houses for the last time for two months. The corps order prohibiting use of buildings by the battalion had been announced that day.

Thirty rounds, 15 of which were expended in a calibration test, were fired into the pocketed enemy on the first day in that position and on the second day the battery moved east in the direction of Eschwege. After bivouacing overnight in the woods near Hess Lichtenau, the convoy moved on the following morning to a firing position near Langenheim northeast of Eschwege and the guns were lined in on the vicinity of Mühlhausen. After firing a registration mission upon arrival, the battery remained idle for three days for want of a target. While we were in this position, Capt. Elliott, who had been temporarily transferred to battalion duties April 2, resumed command of the battery.

On the 10th the battalion moved through Mühlhausen and then south to Heroldhausen, below Langensalza, the latter the site of a large airport that had been captured intact with a number of German planes. Although a firing position had been selected at Heroldhausen, the no-fire line had already moved too far forward when we arrived there and the base piece was sent forward to a new position at Ballstadt, just north of Gotha, to register. Although all the pieces were moved into the new position by nightfall, the same situation prevailed as at Heroldhausen and we were unable to obtain clearance to register.

While the guns were being laid a formation of three ME 109's, flying high, came over to the west of the position and were subjected to heavy and accurate fire from ack-ack units to our left front. Two flew through the fire but the third fell off on one wing and into a 90-degree dive, plummeting to earth beyond the slight rise to our front. The pilot was seen to hit the silk at the start of the dive and was carried out of sight by the wind.

We were on the move again the following afternoon and brought the guns into position just before nightfall near Schina, a suburb of Erfurt. That city was taking a heavy artillery pounding to which we added 76 rounds during the night and the next day.

Our next jaunt brought us to Grossechaufhausen on the afternoon of the 13th, but the front had again moved forward too far and the pieces were march ordered and brought up to Closewitz. Here they were emplaced on a steep hillside over-



looking the Saale river on the west, from which we had a birdseye view of Jena and the industrial area north of that city in the river valley.

It was at Closewitz that occurred the incident of the cook and his prisoner. By this time, the speed of our armies' advances and the German retreat were too great for some groups of Nazi soldiers who were being left behind in little uncombed areas to face the prospects of giving themselves up or chancing starvation



#### LLIAISON PLANE

*Our Cubs could "set down" almost anywhere. Lt. Boehm here patches a wing-tip after tackling an exception to that rule. Immediate removal of a man from the convoy to a hospital made the tight landing necessary.*

in their hiding places. Most of them did not hesitate long in making a decision and as a result we were continuously encountering them, singly or in small groups, practically begging to be taken prisoner. Despite Nazi superman propaganda, these men were, as a lot, just a scared, hungry, dirty mob who were having more trouble finding someone who would accept them as prisoners than it was to avoid capture.

Nevertheless, our cook, whom nature and the years has made more fitted for cooking than prisoner taking, usually left such adventures to his younger comrades. He must have been feeling his oats (and being in the kitchen stood him in better opportunity to get enough oats to feel) that day when he talked another



cook into accompanying him on a prisoner chase. It's unlikely that either of them went at it very seriously and both probably were surprised when they did come across one who gave up after they had fired one shot at his retreating figure. Just as they were starting to search the prisoner for weapons they heard the motors of the prime movers and realized that the battery was getting ready to pull out. Inasmuch as they were a half mile from the position, our cook's friend decided that he'd better go ahead and hold the battery, and amid loud protest from the cook he took off, leaving the latter alone with the German. The cook thus found himself not only alone with an enemy soldier but facing the possibility of being left even more alone if the battery pulled out without him and it didn't take him long to decide that this wasn't exactly a predicament he'd bargained for.

When the first sergeant approached the scene in a jeep a short while later he found captor and captive involved in a mad race. The cook, having abandoned all thought of taking a prisoner, was well out in front but tiring fast in a headlong dash to elude the Kraut, and the latter, having evidently decided against accepting the prospect of being left behind, was rolling along easily 30 yards behind and gaining with every step.

The position proved no less a dud than the two previous ones and, after bivouac-ing there overnight, we moved south through Jena, crossed the Saale on a pontoon bridge and moved east on the Autobahn. At the intersection of the Leipzig Autobahn the convoy turned north to Eisenberg where we spent the night just off the highway.

On the afternoon of the next day we moved eastward again to Tettau where the guns were set up to meet the possible threat of a concentration of enemy tanks that had been observed in the area. Here the reconnaissance party, surprising a large group of German soldiers while they were eating, took 35 prisoners. A formation of four FW 190's flew over the position after the guns had been put into position and although our own attached AA unit had left us earlier in the day another unit nearby fired upon them and they made no attempt to attack the positions.

The tank threat did not materialize and the next day we moved into Hartmannsdorf, northwest of Chemnitz. The guns were brought into position to fire east but, before laying had been completed a change was ordered that necessitated swinging them 1,000 mils right to fire in the direction of Chemnitz. Before that change could be completed, however, a second one came down and the battery was swung 2,000 mils to the left to fire on a concentration of SS troops that had been spotted by a forward observer. Just as the last piece was laid a "battery nine rounds" order was given. The first two salvos were sensed as "range correct, deflection

correct" and after the seven-round fire for effect which followed the observer reported "results completely satisfactory; no further fire necessary."

The Luftwaffe, having found daylight attack in the face of heavy allied air force supremacy and efficient and heavy A. A. fire expensive, had adopted what we came to know as "Bedcheck Charlie" tactics, coming in low at dusk or after dark and depending on gun flashes to expose targets while the planes themselves



ROYAL TIGER

*Typical of the materiel littered roadside scenes was this one of a knocked-out German tank.*

remained concealed by darkness. The first night at Hartmannsdorf one of these came into our position area from the immediate front. The plane, an ME 109, was clearly visible in the waning light, however, and attracted such a hail of AA fire that he swung away to the south. An AA unit to the south of us, we learned from an officer of the unit attached to us, succeeded in downing it. At approximately the same time the next night another came in, this time from our right rear, but was driven off by heavy ack-ack before he came close to the gun positions. This one too, according to the AA men, was downed before it could get back to Naziland.

On the second day in the Hartmannsdorf position the battery fired one 13-round mission, and on the morning of the third day began a long trip to a new



sector. We had been traveling along the northern flank of the Third Army sector and had reached a point, near the longitude of Berlin, where juncture with the Russian armies appeared not far off. Our new assignment, we learned, was on the southern flank of the sector where the Seventh Army was meeting stiff resistance in its drives for Nürnberg and Munich.

Backtracking along the Autobahn, we passed south of Meerane and north of Gera. While crossing the Saale on the same pontoon bridge we had used at Jena on the trip east, our kitchen trailer failed to negotiate the steel treadways and crashed through the framework of the structure. It had to be unloaded and abandoned.

At Erfurt the convoy turned south and traveled through Arnstadt, Koburg and Bayreuth to Gleussen. After a 173-mile trip, we bivouaced in a field near a group of tents which we were told housed XX Corps headquarters. The battalion remained in this position through the 19th and departed at 0330 on the 20th for a firing position at Trockau, just west of the north-south Autobahn in the Nürnberg area. The position was found to be out of range, however, and at noon we moved across the Autobahn to Penzenreuth and again went into position, this time aided by 14 prisoners picked up in the area who were perfectly willing to help dig foxholes at the guns. Before the day was out we set a new record for the battalion by moving a third time. The final trip brought us into a field southwest of Auerbach which was occupied by 2145. And the guns remained silent.

In our movement into the next position near Riglasho on the following day the battery became involved in the most thoroughly and irremediably snafued situation we'd encountered yet—and we had encountered some. It all started when a guide and a road marker got their signals crossed and Able, which was leading the battalion, went past its release point on a rain-soaked, single lane road.

When we attempted to turn around we found that there was no place to do so. One vehicle, a prime mover, went down a lane between two farm houses and, after a great bit of difficulty, did get turned around and came back on the road again to come face to face with Baker battery's leading prime mover. From this writer's view point the only part of the tangle visible was those two prime movers, parked nose to nose in the one-way road with several individuals running around them futilely. We asked one of our non-coms what went on and he summed it up, rather nicely we thought, thus:

"Our position's up there", pointing in the direction from which we'd come, "but we can't get there because B and C batteries are in the way. B and C batteries' positions are down the other way, but they can't get there 'cause we're in the way."



And even if they do get past this first piece they can't get by the next one because it's wedged in between two houses on opposite sides of the road and can't go backward or forward. And besides, even if we could get all our vehicles past all B's and C's vehicles, we'd still have to get by Headquarters and they have three trucks stuck in the middle of the road. Otherwise everything's all right."

But we did get by, after about two hours of slipping and sliding, sticking and un-sticking, in a cold driving rain that did little to soothe sore tempers. Once the battalion column was straightened out and each battery got into its own position we found new difficulty in getting the two left flank pieces into their selected spots on the side of a rather steep incline which, with the mud, looked for a time as though it would defeat all efforts to navigate it. Another hour and a half was consumed in this task and the number two and four pieces wound up in swapped positions, but all the guns finally were emplaced.

The commander of a higher headquarters unit, who came upon the position at that moment, surveyed the situation and commented to our officers, "a nicely executed job of occupation, gentlemen."

And still the guns remained silent.

After two quiet days in that position the battalion moved on to Iachazandant, leaving there the following day to move south 47 more miles to Unterhub.

On a number of occasions during the westward trek through central Germany we had found ourselves getting well up forward toward the lines, passing the 105's and even the 57 millimeter guns of the infantry. But in the push south, starting at Unterhub, it became commonplace for the battery's advance party to travel with and even in front of the infantry, and on some occasions it seemed that our battery positions marked the forward point of our lines.

As we approached Unterhub the doughboys in fields on either side of the road poked their heads out of foxholes to peek at us and we wondered why the caution. After we turned right in the center of the town, which was burning, and headed west toward the position area a salvo of 88's landed in the field just to our right. The advance party told of having received heavy mortar and even rifle fire.

The guns were brought into position and laid to fire into the Regensburg vicinity without further incident.

The omnipresent refugees, when they weren't just pathetic, were usually a comical sight in their varied and peculiar dress with their grinning, friendly approach and futile efforts to make themselves understood. But the best laugh we had at the expense of one of them occurred just after the guns had been laid in in this position.

Almost immediately a command came down for a battery-three-round mission. The guns were pointed across the road and only thirty to forty yards back from it. A Russian was walking up the road directly in front of the position but the guns were elevated enough to prevent his being actually injured by the muzzle blast, so the command to fire was given. He had just stopped and raised two fingers in a V greeting when all four guns went off directly over his head with the usual charge 7 commotion. There was apparently only one explanation of the situation in the mind of the Russian: the Americans had mistaken his identity and opened up on him with a whole battery of big cannons. He hit the ditch in one dive and stayed there until the reverberations died. Then he got up and with two shaking finger raised high over his head, advanced toward us cautiously, shouting frantically, "Me Russke! Me Russke!" Just then two of the guns went off almost simultaneously in the second of the three volleys and the Russke turned and fled up the road in terror. As he disappeared over the crest of the hill we could still hear, between the ensuing salvos, his frenzied cries: "Me Russke. Me Russke!"

"Bedcheck Charlie" was busy that night in an overcast sky and tarry blackness, strafing positions behind us and dropping a stick of anti-personnel bombs that exploded with a fireworks effect along the ridge of the hill to our rear. Several times he buzzed our area and once we were certain he dropped one right in the center of B battery's position. We learned later, however, that as the plane passed overhead a B battery cannoneer had tripped over the lanyard, discharging the loaded gun with the resultant roar that we had mistaken for a bomb burst.

The battery fired four missions and a total of 26 rounds in that position and moved forward in a southeasterly direction the next day, crossing the Regens River to Nittenau and, after a short stop there, into position near Adlmannstein.

Mud was again the main source of resistance in the occupation of the position and each gun became stuck at least once before it was emplaced. The number one piece slipped off a narrow driveway into a duck pond where it reposed hub deep, and the number three prime mover winched an apple tree out by the roots without moving an inch. A full-trac prime mover, borrowed from the 662nd F.A., in an adjacent area, saved the day, towing the prime movers and howitzers into position one by one without difficulty and handling one 2½-ton and two ¾-ton trucks in one trip.

The guns here were pointed south to fire in support of a Danube River cross-



ing east of Regensburg. Five missions were fired that night and one the following morning for a total of 22 rounds.

After 24 hours in that position the battery closed station and the base piece moved forward alone to the north bank of the Danube, arriving opposite the newly established bridgehead east of Regensburg in time to watch the infantry, fully deployed, moving across the flat terrain across the river. From here the piece



WORTH-ON-DANUBE

*An old castle, used as a hospital, stood on the hill overlooking our position on the Danube.*

moved east along the river to a position some five miles downstream on the flat north bank. A high burst registration was fired while awaiting the remainder of the battery.

Held up by an accident in a battery traveling in front of us, the other three pieces came into position via another route, arriving well after nightfall. During the trip we had an opportunity to observe the efficiency of our attached ack-ack unit (of the 455th AA Bn.) when two groups of FW-190's, totaling 12 planes, appeared overhead. One group started to maneuver into position for a strafing run, but the A.A. unit dropped its Bofors gun and in 15 seconds was sending up fire. Thus dissuaded, the planes turned and hightailed it for other parts.



From the gun position on the river flats we had a ringside view of a large expanse of the no-man's-land in front of us. Our own lines extended in a semi-circle directly across the river from the original crossing place upstream from us and the left perimeter was immediately to our front. During the first night exchanges of machine gun fire were easily visible across the river. Down to our left a tank moved across the flats on our side of the river, broadening our east flank salient to the river bank. Its course was marked by the tracers from its machine guns.

During the night and through a good part of the following day the town across the river, held by our infantry, received continuous and heavy artillery time fire, the origin of which remained for some time undiscovered. On the afternoon of the second day an observer in a Cub called for a battery three rounds on an azimuth to the extreme right of our center line at a range beyond the southern limit of the bridgehead, an area that had not previously been fired upon. From the roadway just behind the gun positions the bursts could be seen to raise havoc in an area of a normal sheaf. When the rounds were completed the observer reported highly satisfactory results. Just how satisfactory they were was seen at first hand the following day when several members of the battery went into the area of the impact. Six small German field pieces lay in various stages of an apparently sudden and unsuccessful attempt to march order. The casualties had already been cleared. It was not determined whether these had been the source of the harassing time fire, but after the mission no more of the fire was observed.

Four missions totaling 40 rounds were fired in the position. The third day was quiet and on the fourth we moved upstream, crossed the pontoon bridge and swung left to travel southeast parallel with the river. After a 15-hour stop at Rain, the convoy moved out again at 0125 on the 30th and traveled through Straubing to a position on the edge of an airport near Ganacker.

The Ganacker position was one in which our advance party arrived a good 12 hours ahead of the infantry and the battalion party could claim to have taken two nearby towns because they were the first American troops to enter them. A concentration camp whose internees were "liberated" by our advance party, adjoined the gun position, and scores of Luftwaffe planes, most of them destroyed by the fleeing Germans, littered the field around the position. As the howitzers were brought into position a battery of 105's that had dropped trails a few hundred yards behind us fired a registration mission over our heads.

The position was just off the Isar River and the guns were lined in to fire in support of a crossing near Landau. That evening the battery fired 34 rounds on five missions, the last of which was completed just before midnight and proved to be our final mission in the European campaign.

After remaining through the next day, May 1, in the position the battery closed station and lined up to march order, only to receive a change of orders to the



#### OVER THE DANUBE

*A heavy smoke screen lay over the pontoon bridge when we crossed, but we saw the Beautiful Blue Danube.  
It was green.*

effect we would remain there for the night. The men bedded down in a cold, wet, unseasonable snowstorm for the night and the march was continued the next day, May 2. Crossing the Isar at Landau, we moved forward over a bomb damaged gravel road to a bivouac position near Wolfsdorf, arriving at 0930. On the third we moved further south, through Obermunchausen, to Gangkofen and went into a four-day bivouac on a farm. On the seventh we moved again to Hotzl, a village near Simbach, and occupied a position, adjacent to another farm, on a hillside overlooking the Isar river and Austria, and within view of the Bavarian Alps.

It was in this position, on May 9, that we heard read the V-E Day proclamation announcing the end of hostilities in Europe. The end had come so gradually

—it had actually ended for us when our last round was fired April 30, more than a week earlier—and was so certainly anticipated that it lacked much of the exultancy we had thought it might bring. It had been a long-awaited day, however, and the sudden lifting of the constant threat of danger and the worrisome restrictions it imposed was accepted with relieved content. Now you could have lights



*SUNSET, V-E DAY*

*Our guns, silent and idle in peace, stand silhouetted on a Bavarian hilltop as the sun sets on one of the most momentous days in world history. A few minutes after this picture was taken the lights were going on again all over Europe after five and a half years of fear-imposed darkness.*

again, and a fire, and there would be no more need of foxholes. And everyone was glad. But there was little exultancy.

After all, most men felt, it had been a long, bitter struggle and its end marked only the completion of one phase of the job at hand. Where, most of us wondered, do we go from here?



## B.C.'s-EYE VIEW OF COMBAT

Our aspiring publishers have asked that a few highlights or sidelights, as the case may be, be set down here for the consumption of all men in the battery. In an effort (feeble) to oblige, allow me to state that it will not be a literary masterpiece but rather the scratchings of a novice.

In the beginning, whether you were or were not a bit worried by mines is still a moot question; from the two-bit seats the battery detail rode the subject of land mines and booby traps was extremely important. Despite the expert services of our mine detecting specialist, Sgt. Smalarz, time consuming effort was necessary to check the entire area in our first few positions. We soon discovered that the most expeditious method was to decrease our weight to fifty pounds and tip-toe over the area on our reconnaissance to determine the presence of mines. Luckily, none was found by this method, but it did provide a few thrills.

Contrary to popular opinion, we did fire on and knock out a few pillboxes while in our position at Saarlautern. One in particular, at the request of the infantry during our last day in our first position, was visibly and definitely destroyed to the complete satisfaction of the doughs.

The greatest desire of any artillery officer is to be able to fire for "money" on live targets in the open, and the writer's desire was completely fulfilled at Mainz, Germany, during the latter part of March just prior to our crossing of the Rhine. While scanning the terrain through a B.C. scope we observed four covered wagons, in enemy territory, moving through an open field and eventually stopping. Thirty Krauts jumped out and started walking toward a central location. "Fire mission" was commanded immediately, and after the first round landed all the wagons had stopped with all men (estimated 120) moving together in a group. The second round landed squarely in their midst and the command "fire for effect" was given. When the smoke had cleared only one wagon was visible with its top blown away and all eight horses and 120 men had completed their journey (a short one) to ethereal Krautland. All of this had the same visible effect as would result were the tops of several ant hills kicked off or disturbed. For thousands of yards in all directions the area became alive with movement. Wagons, carts, trucks, bicycles, motorcycles, guns and men were moving in all directions with no reasonable or

apparent destination. However, following the movement of a stream of men into a woods nearby disclosed a battery of 88's in position and fire upon them was delivered immediately. Complete results of the battalion's fire were not entirely determined, but the 88's never fired again that week. Numerous other targets were fired upon with good effect and destruction was interrupted only by a request from: Corps that a machine gun at the end of a bridge across the Main River be knocked out. It was holding up our doughs' advance. The second round hit a three-story warehouse at the bridge and it belched flame and smoke from every window and door. It must have been an ammunition dump, and as far as I can determine, is still in the process of falling down today. The fire for effect on the machine gun also silenced it forever and a day. It was later definitely determined that there were many, many more widows in Germany after that firing than there had been when dawn broke in the morning of that day.

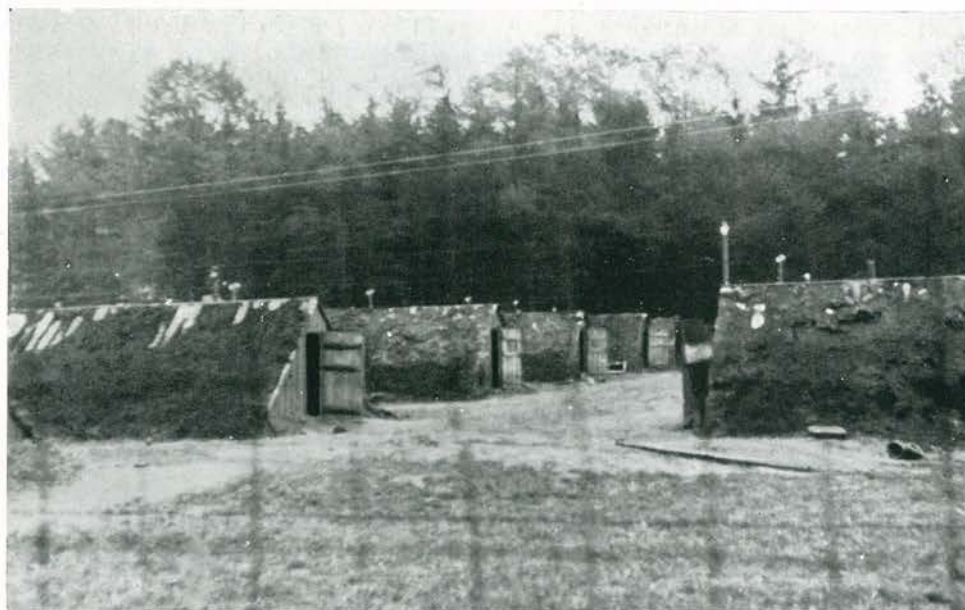
A more or less tear-jerking experience occurred at a position near Landau, Germany, in April after we had crossed the Danube River where you must have read the sign at the approach to the bridge, "Just another damned river." After passing through a German airfield to a new position, we saw a wire enclosed hut area and upon cautiously approaching the same we were shocked at what we saw. Emaciated, starving, haggard, pale and weak looking individuals started pouring toward us with outstretched hands, crying, kissing, laughing and talking several different languages simultaneously and confusing us no end. When the excitement had abated, a Belgian professor stepped forward speaking perfect English. It was then discovered that we were the first Americans they had seen for nine or ten years and, what was even more awe inspiring, we had liberated about 200 Nazi political prisoners who were lucky to be still alive. We later found freshly dug graves which bore out the story of Nazi brutality related to us by the Belgian professor. There were many mixed sentiments that afternoon among the "liberators", but one fact that was certain was that all had the feeling of hate for a nation capable of perpetrating such heinous crimes.

Another peculiar incident which left us all nonplussed but nevertheless impressed occurred early in the morning following the liberation of the prison camp. At approximately 0600 hours I was awakened by Lt. Folks. He asked me if I thought he should tell "them" we were in the woods before "they" took a shot at us. Upon looking out to see who "they" were, I saw four Sherman tanks and a company of doughs poking their noses at us through the trees and deployed over a wide front with guns and rifles held ready for action. Needless to say, I decided in a hurry that we should tell them we were there. Just another case



among many in which we "got there" ahead of the infantry. Go ahead and laugh, but it wasn't funny then.

The appearance of the battalion reconnaissance parties on an open hill brought about a similar experience. After ducking a few sporadic rounds from German small arms in a woods, we quickly brought about the capture of several Krauts by rolling four .50 caliber machine guns up on the ridge on  $\frac{3}{4}$ -ton trucks and



*PRISON CAMP: GANACKER*

*"... we saw a wire enclosed hut area."*

spraying the woods with 600 rounds of ammunition. The Krauts came out waving the traditional white flags. Soon thereafter, upon looking around to our rear, we saw (yep, you guessed it) the infantry coming across the fields, running and hitting the ground in echelon. Chalk up another foray with the enemy for the eight-inch howitzer infantry.

The crowning success of "close up" support of the infantry by the eight-inch "105" howitzer battalion was effected somewhere in Bavaria. The reconnaissance parties were spearheading the attack one day with a group of four tanks and a company of doughs when we were suddenly held up in a small town beside



a stream. When the smoke finally cleared away a chicken colonel took form and approached asking, "Who is in command of this outfit?" Yours truly, being the ranking officer present, stepped forward and saluted. The colonel, in biting and no uncertain terms, spoke thusly: "You eight-inch artillerymen have been following us so close and fast that you have clogged up the roads and haven't fired a round. Get your vehicles off the road and keep them off! This is my sector! Is that quite clear?" To which our meek reply was, "yes, sir." Some gratitude! Fine appreciation! Rather testy old boy, wasn't he? I might add that we removed our vehicles from the road.

If you now have a wee bit better insight to our operations and what we accomplished in combat, I can cease firing and consider the mission accomplished. Oh, well, you can always use this paper to start fires in the morning—or something.

... Capt. Robert J. Elliott.

## R. O. ROVINGS

The editors have requested me to write of my experiences in the battery with particular emphasis on O. P. experiences. My desire is not to write of this, but to write of the men whom I feel deserve the real credit for whatever success we may have had; of the the cannoneers, the ammunition men, the wiremen, the drivers and of the many others who stood by their jobs, eating what there was whenever it came, complying with all orders without flinching. I shall never forget that all the men in our battery performed whatever their task as real men.

"But I must do as I'm told".

That cold, muddy, hungry night when we entered the line at Saarlautern stands so clearly in mind. A portion of the battery failed to make a turn and I went back for it. Just as Coleman got the jeep turned around and headed back, the guns from all sides began firing. I was certain they would draw fire and had little doubt that both of us would be killed instantly as no foxholes were to be had. There were undoubtedly more knees shaking for very soon I learned Riggle had walked through a hole in the barn loft and barely escaped falling on a jeep wire catcher. At daylight I was still alive.

Then came the O.P. at Saarlautern. The survey section had not been in the old house an hour when one of those mournful 88's came whizzing over. It hit at least two hundred yards away, but my middle section was the same as dead. Ask "Pat" Doonan if I didn't have comrades. Have you heard of Mora's experience with the road marker at the O.P.? I remember him clearly sitting in the "chick-sales" with a carbine on his lap and grenades in each hand. Frightening, wasn't it Mora?

Of all the positions we entered I had most concern for the lives of our men when I first entered the position at Mainz and learned the location of the enemy. To this day I say, "Sheer luck saved us." You may be interested in knowing that the tower in the cathedral at Mainz was explored by Sgt. Knubel and myself as a possible C.P. and that we felt like pigeons sticking our heads out of the top window in full view of the Germans on the opposite side of the Rhine.

The prize movement of the advance detail was the time near Chemnitz when we rode all one cold night, waiting time and again for machine gun fire to cease crossing the road in front of us, and when at last daylight came I looked at the speedometer and learned that in 12 hours we had gone 44 miles.

It would be possible to go on and on but the "Skipper" was always where I was and he has covered our days well.

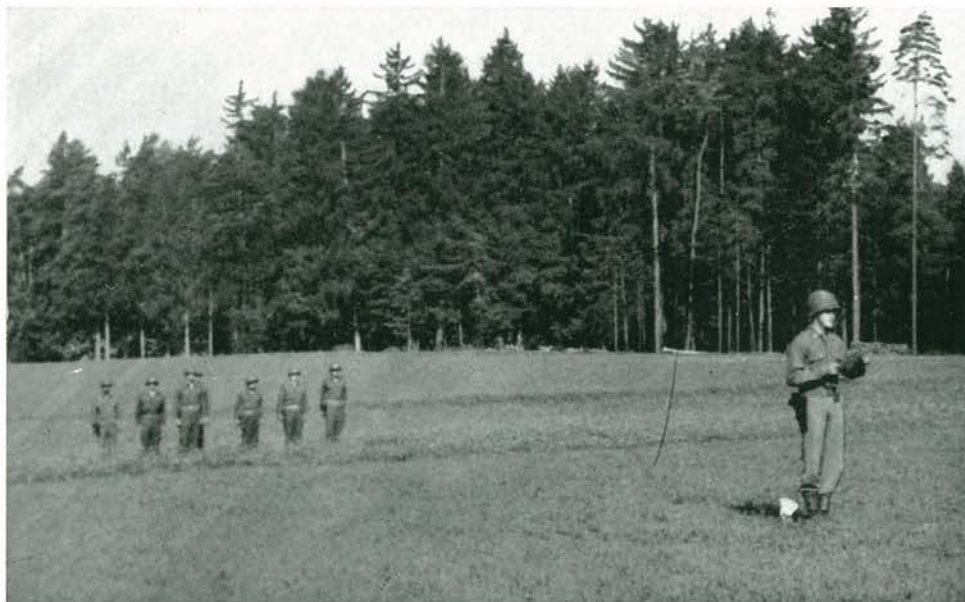
P.S. When in Sallisaw, Okla., ask for the man that has the white faced cattle and drop in for some fried chicken.

Lt. Folks.



PART TWO  
PERSONNEL-ITIES

## V-E DAY PROCLAMATION



The 744th marked V-E Day with a battalion ceremony and parade at Hotzl, near Simbach, Bavaria, at 0900 hours. Chief Warrant Officer L.P. Byrne, adjutant, read the following proclamation, issued by Brig. Gen. Slack, commander, Twentieth Corps Artillery.

HEADQUARTERS  
XX CORPS ARTILLERY APO 403

May 9, 1945

### Order of the Day:

1. A representative of the German High Command signed the unconditional surrender of all German land, sea and air forces in Europe to the Allied Forces and simultaneously to the Soviet High Command at 0141 hours, Central European Time, May 7, under the terms of which all forces ceased active operations at 0001B hours today.

2. In 11 months and two days since crossing the beaches of Normandy, the Allied Armies have brought complete defeat to the ambitions of the German people to be masters of the world. The once powerful armies of Germany have been driven from the lands they sought to dominate and have been brought to a final crushing defeat on the soil of Germany itself. One phase of this gigantic world struggle has come to a close. Europe is rid of the forces which sought to subjugate human beings as slaves. The forces of freedom and democracy have asserted themselves again on the continent of Europe.

3. The magnificent accomplishments of the XX Corps of the Third U.S. Army could not have been realized without the able, vigorous and ever alert work of units of the XX Corps Artillery. You demolished enemy strongpoints, harassed enemy supply lines, and cut a path through the defenses of the Siegfried Line. At all times you delivered accurate, heavy and timely fire when called for by our advancing forces. You silenced the hostile batteries that attempted to slow the progress of our troops. You have in every way justified the faith placed in you.

4. You are now entering a new phase, occupation of a conquered country, as important in its way as the phase just completed. You must demonstrate by exemplary conduct, military appearance and attention to duty, the highest traditions of a victorious army.



## THE OFFICERS



*Lt. Jacob W. McGee, Executive Officer; Capt. Robert J. Elliott, Battery Commander;  
Lt. John H. Folks, Reconnaissance Officer.*

First—and we do mean first—is Capt. Robert J. Elliott, the battery skipper. Have you heard “Up in the Yukon”? It will only cost you a short beer, for every once in a while the skipper pauses, you ask for more and he says, “order another beer”. So if you have some short beers to spare come around and listen. “The chief” is from Minnesota and post-war plans seem to hang around the popcorn business. He’s married and has a little junior, all the more reason why he counts and recounts his points every day.

Lt. Jacob W. McGee, executive officer, was with his boys most of the time during combat, sleeping and eating at the exec position. Recently, however, he’s become a full member of the “City Hall” gang. Lt. McGee hails from North Carolina and is a true rebel. He’s quite a personality and between him and the captain there’s always something going on to amuse the headquarters boys. Another

proud papa, he hasn't seen the little one yet but, like the skipper, is always counting his points.

Lt. John H. Folks, battery reconnaissance officer, hails from Oklahoma, sister state of Arkansas. Has anyone ever heard of Arkansas? He's another married man, giving us married men a substantial majority in the C.P. One incident I will always remember about Lt. Folks was the time we were looking for an O.P. outside Regensburg. While we were looking for a satisfactory site we suddenly began to receive mortar fire. The lieutenant was some distance from us and right in the center of the enemy's bracket. Finally he found a shell hole and dug in. When the firing ceased he returned and said, in a very low voice, "Harvey, I believe we better get out of here." Seems his post-war plans are South American way.

Second Lt. Perry G. Glunt, our newest member, came to us twice. We saw him first at Reibelsdorf when the battalion took the skipper for a time. He went to B battery at Kassel but recently returned to become a permanent member. Battery motor officer, he is single, calls Indiana home and is running a race with Kulp for points. (See you in C.B.I., lieutenant.)

... Sgt. Harvey



*Rear row: C. W. O. Louis P. Byrne, Maj. Frederick B. Haddad, Capt. Rosario M. Gualtieri, Capt. Thomas C. Whitworth Jr., Capt. Rudolph Iacobellis, Lt. George Hepworth, Lt. Charles West.  
 Foreground: Lt. Col. Robin B. Gardner.*

## STAFF OFFICERS

Just as an eight-inch firing battery is incomplete without its guns, so is a battalion without its staff. Necessary evils or not, they remain the "Big Guns" at battalion headquarters of the 744th Field Artillery Battalion.

Lt. Col. Robin B. Gardner, intimately known as "the old man", received the battalion standard from Col. Porter, 416th Group commander, on activation day, April 13, 1944. He has commanded the battalion through all its battles from Chaffee to Simbach. The colonel claims Mount Holly, N.C., as his home.

Ablly assisting the colonel in his command is Maj. Frederick B. Haddad, battalion executive officer. More than any other person, the major is responsible for the smoothness of the road marches and controlling the battalion column as it roared through Germany trying to keep up with Gen. Patton's famous tanks. Maj. Haddad sprang from Connecticut soil.

Battalion fire direction center was put through its paces by several S-3's or gunnery officers, Maj. Haddad, Capt. Elliott and Capt. Sandelius, in that order.



At the end of hostilities, Maj. Hofmann assumed the duties. Never a dull moment seemed to be the case in fire direction. The battalion was fortunate in having a number of qualified officers who each in turn did excellent work in this all-important department.

Capt. Rudolph Iacobellis, assistant S-3 and gunnery officer at fire direction center is the man who kept calling down all of those after-midnight fire missions. He shouldn't be forgotten soon by the cannoneers. He hails from New York, Bronx, Brooklyn or Queens (you pick it) and is known as "Ike" to the officers but, respectfully, as "Captain" to the men.

Heading the "Rag Department" or, in military circles, battalion supply, is Capt. Thomas C. Whitworth Jr. Throughout combat his ears burned from being talked about for food and clothing shortage. His was the unsung task of keeping a hungry battalion fed, clothed and well supplied with ammunition.

Capt. Robert T. Stephens, Ohio native, headed the intelligence section of the battalion. His duties of S-2 and battalion reconnaissance officer kept him busy marking roads for advance and keeping the battalion up to date on the latest information.

Lt. Charles West, assistant S-2, earned the plaudits of all who worked with him by his leadership and knowledge in survey. He tied the battalion position with the survey data. Lt. West comes from Illinois.

Sick call early in the morning of each combat day was supervised by Capt. Rosario M. Gualtieri, the battalion medic, and his staff of pill rollers. The doctor claims his cheerful disposition cured more ailments than his medicine. From New York; the captain says it's Brooklyn.

Mr. Louis P. Byrne, C.W.O., is responsible for the efficiency of the administrative function at battalion headquarters. His clerks know all, see all and are the first out with the news. It is rumored he recites AR's and War Department circulars for his insomnia, acquired from working tirelessly under a deluge of forms and red tape. An interesting fact: he is from Virginia, USA.

The man that "keeps 'em rolling" is Lt. George Hepworth, battalion motor officer, fire marshall and general handy man of the staff. A natural born "grease monkey" is he and he makes no excuse about it. He is from Massachusetts.

That concludes the panoramic view of the battalion staff. No amount of praise we are able to give them speaks louder than their deeds in executing the responsible positions they held as the "Big Guns at Headquarters."

... Lt. Jacob W. McGee



*Rear row: T/4 Lester Swift; 1st/Sgt. Paul Weddle; Sgt. Robert Harvey; Pfc. Donald Verne, Peter Scott.  
Front row: Pfc. George Kulp, James Wood; S/Sgt. Henry Day; Cpl. Harry Hull.*

## HEADQUARTERS SECTION

### "CITY HALL"

In correct nomenclature, this is the headquarters section, but since we entered Germany someone coined the name "City Hall". But the other members of the battery admit that this section is the "brains" of the outfit. We admit it, anyhow.

First Sgt. Paul A. Weddle—P.A. to you—is boss of "City Hall": the guy who tucks you in at night and gives out in the morning with, "Let's hear the pitter-patter of feet on the floor". If you're ever walking down the street in civilian clothes back home and hear "We shall never surrender", don't look around. It's only P.A. still refusing to give up. Know what I mean? "The Zebra" is married, another old family man. Blacksburg, Va., is his homestead and there's also a three year old girl waiting for him when his points total discharge.

S/Sgt. Henry W. Day is skipper of the supply room. A number of amusing incidents center around Day but one we enjoyed occurred while we were firing into Regensburg. Day was sitting on a cot in the C.P. when our battalion and another battalion fired at the same time. He made a perfect swan dive under the



nearest cot. (I tried to get under the same cot but he was in the way.) Home is Roanoke, Va.; he's another married member and a subscriber to the "First In-First Out" school of thought.

Sgt. Robert B. Harvey Jr. is only my pen name. If you ask the rest of the boys, it's "City Hall Harvey". Between P.X. rations, helping Day and driving a jeep, there's still time to listen to the rest of the boys' tales of woe. Lately I believe I have been substituting for the chaplain. A big believer in "First In-First Out"—there's a family waiting, you know. A boy three years old included. Home is in Richmond, Va.

Pfc. Donald L. Verne is battery carpenter and handy man. Give "Uncle Don" a hammer and nails and he will build anything. The oldest member of our section, "Uncle Don" says they should discharge all men over 35. Seems to me I once heard him say he would stand on the dock and wave goodbye to the rest of us on our way to C.B.I. But those points don't add up to 85, do they, "Uncle Don"? Married, has two children and is a yank from Waukegan, Ill.

Pfc. Scott, the driver of the supply truck, is from Pennsylvania and single. Once a ME-109 came over our position outside Kassel. Scotty was in the truck with all curtains buttoned up. When he looked up no one was around. Whey he got the curtain unbuttoned all guns were firing at the plane and "Scotty", after much difficulty, hit the ditch. But he was a comical sight getting there. Can't get "Scotty" to talk about his post-war plans but he says it could be marriage.

Pfc. James P. Wood, better known as "Woody", hails from Virginia, drives the B.C. and is a new member of "City Hall". He's another married member, but his points didn't count. His post war plans are not complete as yet but they will certainly be big deal operations. What's the odds, Woody?

T/4 Lester V. Swift, battery clerk, is the gone but not forgotten member of the circle. His time is spent at battalion headquarters, at present, and he is known as "Point Man" Swift. Another Yank from Pennsylvania and his post war plans are not known. But all members will agree that he has done a good job.

Pfc. George H. Kulp, the battery mail orderly, also comes from Pennsylvania and is single, girls. A die-hard bachelor, he says, but we think otherwise. "Junior" says he financed England's war effort while he was in the U.K. and also helped cement Anglo-American relations—a sort of ambassador of good will. He's also known as "37-point Kulp".

And so that's "City Hall"—just a brief introduction. Here's hoping that the future holds for each and every one of this battery the fullest measure of happiness, health and prosperity. If our trails split, and I'm sure they must soon, good luck to you, and don't forget "City Hall of Battery A". ... Sgt. Harvey





*Top (on tube): Pfc. Nicholas Buyan, Emil Dugi, Edward Stepka.  
 Standing: Sgt. Henry Redmond; Pfc. Willard Colt, John Toltin; Cpl. Elmer Long; Pfc. Sol Goldwasser,  
 Nelson Baggett; Cpl. Leroy Carlson.  
 Sitting: Pfc. Alfred Picerno, Howard Roby, Donald Biddle, Robert Anderson; Cpl. Louis Heersink.*

## FIRST SECTION

„IT THEY MAKE IT — THE REST WILL.“

We reached Germany on March 8th, 1945, and Section One was the first to get stuck. But so did the rest. The outcome was that the first section became base piece. We did a good job — so good that we had “Soko” sweating it out.

So meet the men of Section One:

Here is our chief of section, Sgt. “Hank” Redmond, a good soldier even if Stepka does think he’d make a better number 13 man. He’s also a good ball-player and gave a neat demonstration of sliding home the day he gazed into the muzzles of that low-flying F.W. 190. He was “safe” under the ammo trailer.

Cpl. Leroy Carlson, our gunner, is okay as gunners go. But we kept a strict eye on him after he lit his cigarette lighter to check the powder temperature.

Ammo Corporal Elmer Long, was by all means a perfect soldier. We’d like to know, though, what it was Elmer had that made all the English girls want him back so badly. I don’t think he’d mind it either.

Pfc. Donald Biddle was the best of number one men as long as he didn't get tangled up in the lanyard, firing the gun when no one expected it and making everyone think we were getting counter-battery. The numbers two and three men, Pfc. Dugi and Buyan, the "elevating" buddies, were good cannoneers. But that first section never could put up a net according to Dugi's way of thinking. Wonder what ever happened to that "buffalo" that ran through our position at Marienborn. Eh, Dugi? As for Buyan — Hey! That's me. Oh, well, I'm good. But I wasn't so good on planes the day I told the boys to be at ease, that the planes overhead were P-51's. Then they started shooting. Did we get out of that truck? But quick! Pfc. David Wertz, number four, came to us when he left the second section. Being a master of German he certainly came in handy for getting eggs, etc.

Now for the rammer staff men, Pfc. John Toltin, Robert Anderson, Edward Stepka and Sol Goldwasser. We often wondered why the projectile didn't go on through the bore when these huskies rammed it. Toltin must have been a circus worker, for he was certainly good with the sledge and axe. Anderson's packages were appreciated by the entire crew and we really missed him when he had to leave us after that accident. As for Stepka, although we were ready to shoot him many a time, his ever-busy clapper kept morale up. Yappity, yap! What kept Goldwasser from freezing to death we'll never know. He always looked like a bowl of jello on a cold morning.

Cpl. Louis Heersink, number nine, powder man, was one of our hardest workers and managed to stay always on the straight and narrow. But he finally broke down and promised to have a short beer when we reach New York. Our ammo carriers, Pfc. Howard Roby, Fred Picerno, Willard Colt and Nelson Baggett, did a lot of hard work and did it well. As soon as we'd get the quadrant set there'd be the mellow voice of Roby calling, "I got the tray". And Picerno always trying to talk to Germans in Italian. Wonder if he ever did any good. Baggett certainly fell in love with the army—always eating C ration. I hear he may even volunteer for the C.B.I. But I never could understand why Colt was angry the day I presented him those suspenders. Oh, those sagging pants!

When it was just about over we got two more men, Pfc. Edwin Glickstein and Jimmy Bezdek. We were all sorry for "Glick" when illness caused him to leave us just after we entered Germany. Worst of all was his missing that ride through Berlin on a bicycle. And Jimmy wanted to see combat so badly I hope he can go to the C.B.I. with us. Well, that's all of us. So, gang, if we do go into combat again, here's hoping that our dog tags never part. . . . Pfc. Buyan





*Back row: T/4 Stanley Smalarz; Pfc. Dock Dover, Donald Young, Raymond Dwyer, Christy DiBella, Earl Spooner, Elmer Rush, Edward Newman, Ralph Wortham; Cpl. Frederick Wilkins.*  
*Front row: Pfc. Carl Stultz; T/5 Cletus Darr; Pfc. Charles Fines, Stanley Klichowski, Carlton Walsh; S/Sgt. John Sokol; Cpl. Kenneth Roberts.*

## SECOND SECTION

This section was the base piece and during the European Theater operation fired 464 rounds of ammunition. It's my opinion that ours might best be called the "character section".

S/Sgt. John Sokolousky, of Canton, Ohio, did a wonderful job. For some reason the boys of his crew call him "Chow Hound Number One"—probably because it's shorter and easier than his right name.

Cpl. Kenneth E. Roberts, who shares his allegiance to both Ohio and Pennsylvania, kept the gun pointed in the right direction. If you ever want to know anything about Ken just ask his bunkie, Fines, who knows all the answers. He could have told you, f'rinstance, of all that talent for music that Ken kept secret until the beer party at Freising.

T/4 Stanley Smalarz, chief of ammo, hails from up-state New York. Nice job, Stanley. We hope someday you'll no longer have to worry about how many rounds have been fired.



Cpl. Frederick C. Wilkins, another up-stater, held the number one position and probably has quite a few Krauts to his credit. Now he's sweating out points and a discharge. . .

T/5 Cletus L. Darr, a tarheel, did a swell job at the number two post. He practices that North Carolina slow-poke motion and was late for all formations—even chow call. . . Pfc. Charles O. Fines comes from Virginia. A former member of "City Hall", he lost out in the last election and is working hard for re-election in the coming one. . . Pfc. Christy J. DiBella, another New York state boy, consumed an awful lot of C and K ration holding down that number three job. . . Pfc. Raymond F. Dwyer, number four man, will probably be yelling "Charge seven, plug it!" for a long time to come. We'll bet he has a lot of tall yarns to tell the boys back in the bar rooms of St. Louis. . . Pfc. Stanley Klichowski, our little man from Connecticut in the number five job, yelled "Home, ram!" and rammed—with gusto. He also shone on the softball diamond as our ace-in-the-hole pitcher. . . Pfc. Elmer E. Rush, or "The Old Senator from Wisconsin", worked the number six post on the rammer staff. He will be remembered as a morale builder with his poetry and jokes. When going was rough Elmer always came up with one to bring the boys out of the dumps. . . Pfc. Dock Dover was number seven on the ramming staff. This South Carolina lad has been looking worried lately. Wonder if it could be those 88 points. . . Pfc. Edward F. Newman's address just goes to prove that this crew is full of upstate New Yorkers. Ed fell in at number eight and will long be remembered as "My Old Friend Back-flip" . . . Pfc. Carlton L. Walsh, Richmond lad at the number nine position, will probably dream about powder temperatures long after he gets out of the army. But to most of us he'll be remembered as the ladies' man. It must have been that ducky little mustache. . . Pfc. Ralph L. Wortham, the Georgia Cracker, did a good loading tray job, and will probably be better known to the boys as "Sir Freddy". One more thing we'd like to know, Sir Freddy, is what you're going to do with all your beetles. . . Pfc. Earl L. Spooner, of North Carolina, handled those 200-pound projectiles right handily. He and Stultz teamed up to form a nice ammo handling duo. . . Pfc. Carl H. Stultz came from Indiana and joined us a little too late for the excitement. He is the newest member of the crew. . . Pfc. Frank Ferris, our real American Indian lad from Sunny California, is missing from this picture. He must have been in the chow line, as usual. But he handled a loading tray like a man with know-how.

That's all. Add them all together and you've got the shootin'est crew in the whole outfit — we think.

. . . Pfc. Fines



*Rear row: Pfc. William Renning; Cpl. James Trinclist; Pfc. Edward Hirt; Cpl. Robert McLaughlin; Pfc. Kelly Willis, Fred Cyr, James Hoskins; T/4 Reuben Whitson.*  
*Front row: Pfc. Leslie Lagomarsino, Floyd Sheets, Edward Burns, Philip Erbe; Cpl. Victor Gramigna; Sgt. Robert Rudder; Pfc. Nelson Meador.*

### THIRD SECTION

With "This is it!" ringing in our ears we entered Germany and went into our first position. The Siegfried Line, that day, was a secondary obstacle. Our big problem was the mud and weather. Although we were under strict blackout regulation, the "Mad Russian", Kopsky, decided to find out whether throwing a powder increment into the stove in his shack would cause combustion. Result: the "Mad Russian" spent a sleepless night in the cold and rain.

In that same position a "battery adjust" in the wee hours of the morning brought the boys dashing from their improvised shacks and cozy "sacks" into the rain, mud and darkness. It wasn't until then the men of the section found where "Newfee Jim" Trinclist had dug his foxhole, each man tumbling into it as he ran to the gun. Then, when it seemed that everything was set, we found ourselves without a gunner. "Rube" Whitson, it developed, was still trying to get out of another foxhole that he'd discovered too late. The next morning we found one



of "Lagy" Lagomarsino's boots in the mud and the only explanation he offered was that, in the excitement, he hadn't noticed that he'd lost it.

Although the situation never actually reached the sublime, it wasn't always that ridiculous and we were able to operate at the rate of one round per 13 seconds under our able leader, "Rebel Bob" Rudder.

"Eric Von" Erbe must have anticipated the point system and his deficiency on the score the night he stepped off the trail into the path of five tons of recoiling gun tube. But to no avail. "The Head" received no Purple Heart and no extra points, for he climbed back on the trail undamaged. . . "The Handle" Sheets got that name for his ability to handle the wheel on the gun. We've decorated him with the Haystack Medal, with clusters, for his fondness for sleeping in the horses' fodder. . . "Sackster Mac" McLaughlin had a fondness for food that was the only thing that could budge him from his "sack". The section's Rip Van Winkle.

"Frenchy" (The Vocabulary) Cyr—the Webster contemporary who wrote his own dictionary. Typical Frenchyisms: "She's the hugliest damn thing I never did see"; "I think I'll cosmorine my German rifle". And he writes his own song lyrics, like "How Many Heart Have You Breakin', You Great Big Beautiful Doll?"

E.P. Hirt was called "The Voice" for his sweet tenor pipes. . . "Duke" Meador, the musically inclined lad, kept section morale high with his guitar and vocalization.

"He J." Burns and "Wavy" Hyland, two swell funsters, were always good for a laugh with their wit and humor. Why do they call you "Scarface", "He J."?

We knew it was reveille when "Rebel Bob" and "Hillbilly" Willis sang "Pins and Needles in My Heart" every morning at six o'clock. . . "Pop" Hoskins, our able driver, had a voice that was always music to our ears when it came to close harmony.

"Snake" Helvin had a good laugh on the boys as he observed the effects of the rolling seas on their stomachs and laughingly invited them to "Have another pill, Bill". But the rest of the battery proved to be "he who laughs last" and thoroughly enjoyed "Snake's" debut at the railing.

"Goomba" Gramigna, ammo corporal who is here telling on the rest of the crew, admits hereby that if he can't get out on points, he hopes length of service or a dependent will get him back to the States. He has both.

Renning is a newcomer to the outfit but we'd appreciate the services of what looks to us like a good pitching arm.

Hoping that soon the inevitable victory over Japan will be gained and wishing the best of luck to all, we bid you adieu from Number Three.

. . . Cpl. Gramigna





*Rear row: Pfc. Robert Yates; Sgt. Michael Barbaro; Pfc. Albert Wagner, James Bates, Harold Brogla, Albert Esposito, James Vaughan, Harold Bower; Cpl. Floyd Blood.*  
*Front row: Cpls. Howard Simplican, Frank Smaha; Pfc. Tully Mutchler, William Bitterman, Fred Owens, Jacob Leffler; Cpl. Talmadge Sanders; Pfc. John Cantwell.*

## FOURTH SECTION

Most gun sections in the army are composed of many different types of men, and we were just another section. However, to the men of the Fourth, there was no other crew in the army that could out-shoot, out-drink, out-argue, out-cuss us or show us up in any way.

Back in Chaffee we all wondered if we were physically fit for combat. Now we're wondering if we're physically fit for the U.S.

Cpl. Blood, "The Chief", says he is certainly going to miss the wonderful chow we've been getting when he has to return to Vermont. Or will it be Arkansas?

"Lamebrain" Leffler and "Deadhead" Cantwell still swear that neither of them speaks German. But who lived better than they did during combat?

Cpl. Smaha and Pfc. Vaughan are still wondering why the Krauts didn't use that secret weapon that they had concealed in the brief cases.

Cpl. "The Whip" Simpican claims that his contribution to the section photo would lower enemy morale in case of capture.

Pfc. Brogla says the Jerries can't farm and often argued long into the night to prove his point. Now Pfc. Bates says that Brogla can't farm.

There's one man in the section who should ask for a transfer to the signal corps. Whenever he saw a fraulein he would wave his hands in a wolfish manner. I wonder if the girls in Massachusetts appreciated your art of love making, Wagner.

There was a time when it was almost impossible to get anyone to dig a fox-hole, but when "Bedcheck Charlie" paid a visit Pfc. Owens and Cpl. Sanders looked like a couple of moles trying to get to C.B.I. the short way.

Pfc. Bowers seemed to be awfully tired after that pass to Paris. Maybe next time you won't have to ride so far, "Flat-top". Oo, la la!

"Wild Bob" Yates can't wait till he gets back on the range. We hear there are plenty of horses along the Burma Road, too.

Pfc. Bitterman did a bit of all right over here too. Just anyone couldn't get eggs for breakfast every morning.

And there's "Don Juan" Esposito. It's still something of a mystery but most of us have an idea why he kept us awake nights humming that old familiar tune, "Somebody Else Is Taking My Place". Don't you know that absence makes the heart grow fonder of someone else, "fer Chris' a'mighty"?

Pfc. Mutchler did quite a bit of sight-seeing and rambling east of the Rhine and we still wonder what was on the other side of that hill when the whole convoy was delayed waiting for the boys to get back.

Pfc. Rollins wasn't with us long but it was long enough to find out who the "big deals" of the crew were. Just stick with Wagner, Rollins, and you'll be shell-shocked.

... Cpl. Sanders



*On truck (top): Pfc. Robert Keefer, Edward Hale.  
Bottom row: Pfc. Donald Young; Cpl. James Mann; Sgts. William Madison, Aubrey Evans; Cpl. Perrow Maddox.*

## FIFTH SECTION

Ammo was the Fifth's business, and business was almost too brisk at times. There was the day number 13 unit, truck and trailer, had a total of 208 rounds aboard, making our gross weight just under 54 tons. That's more than even our heaviest tank, and Driver Reigel found it something of a problem to get around corners with his front wheels off the ground. And it seemed that just as soon as we'd get the last round off the trailer and in the ammo pits at the guns, somebody'd yell "C.S.M.O." and we'd have ten minutes to do an hour's work. But it wasn't all that bad and we had our share of laughs, even though everyone on the crew lost a little weight hustling those 200-pounders. Sgts. Madison and Evans and Pfc. DiDonato agreed they could spare a little *avoirdupois*.

"Pappy" Madison, section chief, claims women and liquor are more in his line than ammunition, but he looked worse after those three days in Thionville than he did after two months of combat. Must have been out of practice.

We couldn't pin anything on the other "Pappy", Sgt. Evans, whose conduct



was exemplary and who is now anxious to get home to the wife and those 24 points that gained him his nickname and a possible discharge.

Sgt. "Chips" Barbaro was battery security man and kept those .50's well cleaned and oiled all the way through Germany. We'll bet he was a little peeved at that one guy for dirtying one of them up firing at that incoming ME-109 near Chemnitz, but it was effective in scaring the Kraut away. Of course, the four sections of ack-ack that were firing at him might have had something to do with it too. Any hot tips, Chips?

No one knows why they call Cpl. Mann "Sleepy". It's rumored, though, that when someone asked him on May 9 how he felt about the war being over he replied, "What war?" Take it from Mann, C ration isn't fit to eat. He ate six cans of it at one sitting one time and felt sick afterward.

Cpl. "Toad" Maddox is another whose nickname is of unknown origin. Who ever saw a toad smoking a cigarette? And who ever saw Maddox without one?

Pfc. Eddie Hale, after two months in the E.T.O. without a drop—well, hardly a drop—was singing "Cary Me Back to Old Virginie", with an emphasis on the "gin".

Pfc. Bob Keefer knew more ways of coming by stuff like cameras, pistols, etc. than all the other men in the section combined. We fully expected to see him come in from one of his forays some day dragging an 88 with him.

Pfc. DiDonato is said to have been a barber in civilian life and the boys are still trying to get him to cut someone's hair to find out if it's true. He never could find that ladder for getting on and off the truck and we always had to use the ammo loading rollers.

"Hey, Pappy! Ten more rounds for number two piece. We ran out right in the middle of a fire mission."

... Sgt. Madison

## THE DRIVERS

When a motor pool was formed for A battery the group of future drivers was quite varied in experience and ability. By the process of elimination the right driver was found for each vehicle. Those men felt each other out, gave and took, until they had the "hang of it". Today these men are a well organized team. Each man has acquired the knowledge necessary to qualify him as an expert in his specific line of duty as a driver. It took a lot of work—but we had fun too.

"Big Mack" Davey, our able motor sergeant, is as good a morale booster as he is a motor sergeant. Davey can make a guy enjoy a tough job just by talking about it in that clever way which won him his nickname.

"Cannonball" Hull is a number one jeep driver whose nickname needs no explanation. He could make his jeep do tricks, and it was a comforting feeling to know that "Cannonball" was out in front when a convoy had tough going. He always got us through.

T/5 Moates, the survey driver, sometimes got up there where things were rather hot. But he must have known how to get that three-quarter-ton over the rough spots because he always had the survey team where it was supposed to be when it was supposed to be there.

If you happened to be around sometime when a truck was bouncing over a plowed field or taking off 'cross country as if it was trying to catch a jack-rabbit, it was probably T/5 Waters or Pfc. Williams laying wire. Those two have seen more German countryside than most Germans.

Pfc. Maddalone saw to it that our kitchen was in its assigned spot. To a bunch of hungry G. I. s, the kitchen driver was a pretty important fellow. Maddalone seemed to be allergic to pontoon bridges, but we haven't gone hungry yet.

The man who "delivered the goods" for the battery was Pfc. Scott, better known as "Scotty", the service and supply truck driver. His 2½-ton was usually loaded with all those "interesting" things a supply truck should be loaded with.

The six 7½-ton Mack drivers are the boys who had a lot to handle. Wheeling over 60 feet of the army's heaviest equipment over the roads found in combat areas was no child's play.

Pfc. Yendes' Mack, "Cora", led the convoy with number one gun. "The Copper" always had a ready laugh for every incident. Necessity sometimes called for a little speeding, but Yendes will go back to being a cop after the war.

Nowadays you'll see "Vera" in the second section spot. Pfc. Young can handle

his Mack with the best of them. Don had a spot with the ammo boys before he traded it for a gun. He says, "As long as I'm wheeling a Mack I don't care what I tow."

Pfc. Hoskins keeps "Ethel" in the best of condition, and the third section can depend on their driver in any emergency. We all enjoy Hoskins' wit. His favorite expression is "Who? Me?" He's old enough to be discharged and we'll miss him in C. B. I. . . .

"J. P." Rayl is an old-timer in the driving game. His "Margaret" hauls the number four piece. He loves the purr of a powerful motor—with a straight exhaust—and he knows the tricks of the game.

"Helen" pulls number one truck in the ammo train. Pfc. Reigel likes the ammo trailer better than a gun because you "go slower uphill and faster down". Reigel says the name of his truck-trailer combination makes up for the number: A-13.

The number two ammo truck is always under control with Pfc. Huzina behind the wheel. "Huodini—he dood it again" alway came through the toughest spots. He's another old time driver and a good man on either a gun or trailer. He has pulled the number two piece but likes the ammo job better.

T/5 Johnson and Pfc. Allen are our two expert maintenance men. They're the men who had to be right there, rain or shine, whenever any of the drivers had work to be done. Thanks to them, we've been able to "keep 'em rollin".

Although he was usually with the exec section, Pfc. Franklin seemed always to be handy when there was water to be hauled or the boys needed straw for bedding. He found many things "drastic", but anything that would help the fellows wasn't included in that category.

... Pfc. Reigel





*Back row: T/5 Jacob Cuvelier; T/4 Stephen Doonan; Pfc. Pedro Mora, Harold Kabakow; T/5 John Moates.  
Front row: Cpl. Rawley Coleman; Pfc. William Reichert; T/4 Carl Ellenberg.*

## SURVEY SECTION

The survey section, the advance and reconnaissance party, reports:

Shortly after we arrived in the combat theater we adopted the theme song of the Lone Ranger. We were always racing ahead, never knowing exactly where to, with ambiguous orders and in a state of confusion, but everything was normal.

We miss Lt. Folks, reconnaissance officer and acting battery commander for a short time, who is temporarily with S-3. Our favorite expression was "Up front with Folks". We remember, too, his lessons in German between fire missions and that picture he took of Capt. Elliott with the castle in the background. He got all of the castle in that shot.

Chief of survey, wire and radio detail sections, S/Sgt. William A. Knuble was indisposed and could not make his appearance for the photograph. He was the "sympathetic ear" for all our chronic gripes and differences. Once, when he tried to explain something and said, "I think", a certain officer said, "Sergeant, you shouldn't think". His favorite songs are "Don't Fence Me In" and "Roll Me Over in the Clover".

Cpl. Coleman, instrument corporal, was always greeted with, "Any mail, Pussy?" His greatest obsession was his belief that he should have a jeep. There was absolutely no reason for shooting that black cat.

Pfc. William A. Reichert, had fraternal leanings, but he also had divorce in one eye and alimony in the other. We recall the bicycle and laborious search for its component parts and then how he was compelled to leave it at Saarlautern.

T/4 Ellenberg, our tape man, was our poultry and egg man. Domestic fowl seemed to be attracted to him. He was always hustling rations from the infantry. He professed to know the German language, but we slept in the field that night, too.

T/5 Jack Cuvelier, transit man, whose heart wasn't with us at Chaffee. Neither was the transit tripod when we got out in the field. We remember him at Saarlautern, searching to "loot" a washing machine.

T/4 "Pat" Doonan, chief of survey section, is a 30-year man. As special services non-com he was instrumental in getting movies and promoting dances in England. Didn't he smoke a lot of Chesterfields in Rouen?

Pfc. Mora, computer, was the playboy of Mainz. All we can say is, "Mora along the Champs Elysees and side streets in Paris". He was tight lipped when he came back, but we know he smoked a large quantity of cigarettes while there.

Pfc. Hal Kabakow, computer, was the latest acquisition of the section. He is card sharp, with dreams of furnishing an apartment in New York. When asked what his biggest gripe was he said, and I quote, "Being in the army".

T/5 John Moates, our driver, kept us sitting tight and worried about our trailer. We venture to say that he was cursed with more flat tires than any other driver in the E.T.O. We can't recall what he said whenever this happened.

Pfc. Edward S. Schwartz, computer, was on detached service at fire direction center and could not make an appearance for our group picture. He professes to have a liking for figures. We missed Schwartz a lot in this section and we were sorry to see him go to fire direction center, but it was for the good of the battalion as a whole. One of Schwartz's favorite expressions was "Sarge, I don't care who said it. You've got to show me."

To all you men in this battery we now say, "Alles gute".

Tec 5 Cuvelier





*Rear row: Pfc. Arnold Merritt; T/5 Oscar Suzuki; Pfc. Carl Vorgity, Curtis Garrett, Dwight Hamlin;  
T/5 Robert Bolling.*

*Front row: Pfc. Fredrick Maggi, Chester Mancik, Vincent Rosati; T/5 Elia Lorenzo; Sgt. William Bennett.*

## WIRE SECTION

What a day the 8th of March, our first combat day, was for our section. We started by repairing lines almost every hour and then, to add excitement, in comes "Leave Me Alone" Garrett with an old, rusty hand grenade. After much earnest persuasion from the boys, he finally takes it from the head of his bed and throws it away. Not ten minutes later in comes Vorgity with the same grenade yelling "Look what I've got." Thus began wire's combat career.

The section was divided into three groups. The first, the well known "Spear-headers" or "Great Story Tellers", consisted of Sgt. Bennett, T/5 "Chubby" Lorenzo, T/5 "Jolly Jack" Waters, Pfc. "Built Mac" Maggi, Pfc. "R. A." Hamlin and Pfc. "Grumpy" Vorgity. The repairers were T/5 "Buzz" Bolling, T/5 "C.B.I." Suzuki, Pfc. "Always Picking on Me" Garrett, Pfc. Williams and Pfc. Merritt. The third group, the exec's detail, included Pfc. "Third Lt." Mancik and Pfc. "Sinatra" Rosati. The latter served with the repairers for the first month of combat, then switched with Merritt in the exec post for the last round.



Whenever we met the advance party we always heard the same story: "We didn't eat yet; we're hungry." I wonder what they carried the frying pan for? Possibly just to make noise on V-E day. Suzuki was left behind with all the troubles. Bullets were nothing compared to what "C.B.I." had to put up with. "Leave Me Alone" Garrett was always griping about the work he had to do. Give him a bicycle and he would have peddled all the way to Berlin and back, thinking nothing of it. "Buzz" Bolling timed V-bombs and polished medals. He also bought his share of medals and is ready for action in any parade. Williams sat on pins and needles waiting for his mail. His wife was expecting a child and the mail was delayed. That, of course, put him a little on the grouchy side. Vorgity is a natural griper, so he was going from morning to night. Suzuki didn't have much time in so he volunteered for everything they picked him to do.

"Third Lt." Mancik and "Sinatra" Rosati, the Battery Adjust combine, were always looking for "eier". They could never get enough to eat because of their delicate stomachs. "What! Pork roll again?"

Sgt. Bennett, toward the end, finally found what he was looking for—a few prisoners and a pistol. "Chubby" Lorenzo was never in on the big deals (he says). His famous words are "I never get a pistol. I'm just not lucky, that's all. I'll try again in the C.B.I." (No points.) Pfc. "Built Mac" liked to rest. He was also pistol happy. No stone was ever left unturned and prisoners never got by the Maggi "touch". T/5 "Jolly Jack" was our driver so there wasn't much he could do in the way of picking up souvenirs. But he finally got a pair of field glasses, which was all he wanted. Pfc. Merritt, "The Mole", couldn't get his mind off his wife long enough to worry about the war. He was also called "Honest Abe" because of an alleged resemblance to a certain Yankee president. Both good men.

Pfc. "R.A." was never afraid of anything—and always the first man in a foxhole. We hope he does plenty of fishing in his next 25 years in the army.

Well, this winds up our session so it's back to bed we go, dreaming of our furloughs and hoping we don't have to write another book in the C.B.I.

Battery adjust! . . . Never mind, fellows. Dry run.

. . . Pfc. Rosati



*Back row: Pfc. Leo Franklin, George Williams; T/4 Oris Crews; Pfc. Edward Dillon; Sgt. William Sandford.  
Front row: T/4 John McGartland; T/5 Kenneth Parker; Pfc. Leonard Wald; T/5 Robert Wright.*

## RADIO SECTION—PLUS

T/4 McGartland, as chief of section, was seldom in contact with his section other than by voice. He was usually shackled up somewhere around the exec along with his assistant, T/5 Wright. Mac and Bob were a good team, especially at locating enemy positions—abandoned but laden with loot. Mac always referred to Wright as “Long Bob from Tennessee” while Bob insisted that Mac might be Irish all right but he surely played poker like a Scotchman.

They were both in love with their babies, Mac being a proud papa and Bob being just in love. But that is another story. It is rumored that “Long Bob” liked to “kiss the baby” too, but last reports have it that the Paris trip changed all that and what he needs most is a blood transfusion.

Pfc. Wald, or Junior, was the R.O. operator and chief cook at the O.P.'s. Leonard had always been a slick chick and was excellent at procedure—for radio, not cooking. For a while he was suspected of trying to poison the O.P. personnel and was about to become a licensed member of the mess, but fate

intervened and, with the Cubs acting as O.P.'s, it was no longer necessary for Junior to practice with the pot and skillet.

T/5 Parker was B.C. operator and official worry-wart of the section. He still claims the record for getting the wettest and coldest of anyone living or dead. The B.C. vehicle was continually trying to throw Kenneth and would have succeeded one time if he hadn't landed right on the captain's shoulders. (And that's a fact.)

T/4 Crews, as gun mechanic, was kept busy making repairs and performing an upside-down act he called writing. He was called "Molly" by the exec section for certain alleged reasons. It is known that he suffered terribly while waiting to hear that he was a papa. Or maybe it was just frostbite from his custom of sleeping with his feet uncovered.

Pfc. Dillon was the battery aid man or "Doc", better known as the "Calamine Kid". He was always on the job either looking for food or playing checkers. Of the two, he was far more adept at the food part.

Last on our list of characters is Sgt. Sandford, official recorder and unofficial assistant exec. "Wild Bill", or "Sandy", was later called "Flash" due to his sparkling play on the diamond. "Flash" had no bad habits, neither had he any good ones, probably due to his shady past. It is whispered that he is an alumnus of Temple University. (Gad, the pity of it all.) "Wild Bill" has had numerous offers from leading film studios, not because of his profile, but solely for the right to depict his famous episode entitled "Madness in Manchester".

Well, kids, I guess that is all for the radio-and-sundry section. As a whole they were usually in one, but that is still another story.

... T/5 Parker.



## THE MESS STAFF

### "PTOMAIN LOUIE'S THREE-RING CIRCUS"

This will introduce to the readers of this album the most abused section in the United States Army, the kitchen section of Btry. A, 744th F.A. Bn. Even though they have been and at this writing are still being abused, the boys have to admit that they have done a fairly decent job, and you have to give even the devil his due.

We'll begin the introduction of personnel with S/Sgt. Louis A. Hernandez, from Long Island, N.Y., mess sergeant. He has had to scratch his head on numerous occasions to figure out how he could accumulate enough food for everyone to eat a little at the next meal. I think you will agree that, for the little experience he had, the "Cisco Kid" did a good job.

T/5 Anthony DiTondo, from Union City, N.Y., was first first cook and did well with what he had. He also did some of us favors by filling in as barber, even when he was "tired" and "not feeling well".

Then there was Pfc. Harry Lovejoy, of Council Bluffs, Iowa, and all points west. Harry was second first cook but gave up his cooking career and devoted his time and efforts to keeping those wonderful gas burners going and at the same time tried to make each member of the kitchen force as comfortable as possible. He is the one who had to load and unload the kitchen trailer so many times each day.

Pfc. Henry J. Borvansky, Cicero, Ill., was third first cook. "Pollack", as he was called, made himself known to the entire outfit for his cooking, snoring and talking.

Pfc. Ralph Avella, a Fairview, N.J., lad, was first second cook and assistant to the "Pollack". "Red" was confronted with the extra duties of butcher and therefore had some trying tasks to perform.

Pfc. Fred V. Farley's home is in Fort Smith, Ark. (Where've we heard of that place before?) As a regular kitchen cop and dining room orderly Fred had to put up with a lot trying to find enough food to go around and give seconds to the fourth section, of which he was previously a member.

A more reliable man than Pfc. Charles E. Finch, of Eureka, Mont., would be hard for the army to find. He demonstrated his devotion to duty by diligently washing all the pots and pans those lousy cooks dirtied.

Dillion, Mont., gave us Pfc. John Holden. John was, as he says, slow but sure. He never seemed to have a worry in the world and was one of the few men capable of "straightening out" the mess sergeant.

The newest member of the kitchen section was Pfc. Fred Picerno, the best natured man in the battery. In civilian life he was a street car conductor and promises to give us all a free ride on the trolley when we visit New York after the war.

Pfc. Paul Maddalone, of Brooklyn he'll have you know, was the driver of the kitchen truck—and trailer. Though he ran into difficulty on one occasion, Paulie did a good job and always got where we were going along with the rest of the battery. And regardless of flat tires and other details he was always ready with a helping hand in the kitchen.

Yours truly, Dellward P. Wilson, is from Lancaster, South Cah'lina, suh, "The Garden Spot of the World". There's no use of mentioning what I did and am doing. Think of a pair of pliers, a cleaver and a can opener and you know exactly what I contributed to the cause.

In conclusion we—yes, all of us—wish to say that even though some of you are sweating out C.B.I., we hope that none of you has to encounter the same food shortage that existed in the E.T.O. Remember, fellows, "All the food goes to the front-line soldiers." Honestly, we didn't eat it.

... Pfc. Wilson.

## ABLE BATTERY FAVORITES

Our battery is composed of men from many states and each fellow has a favorite expression or two, some of them sectionalisms that they brought from home and others that they coined on the spur of the moment while they've been in the army. Many of these proved contagious and spread throughout the battery, others are so closely associated in our minds with those who used them that they will always remind us of their authors—and vice versa. We therefore herein set down, "for the record", a few of the more popular of these, along with some of the extemporaneous witticisms that we'll long remember.

While we were in Camp Chaffee, everyone was disgusted with the intensive training and the heat that we had to struggle through day after day. Then we heard that the outfit was hot and an overseas trip was in the offing, and daily developments seemed to corroborate the rumor. T/4 "Pat" Doonan is the accused instigator of the rhyming phrases fad that started at that time with "Will you be at ease overseas?" and "You'll be ailing at the railing". The latter one proved prophetic for many of us. One exception was our first sergeant, Paul A. Weddle, who did very little ailing at the railing. The poor fellow wasn't able to get to the rail. The ineffectiveness of our seasickness pills in that situation inspired "Snake" Helvin's little gem, "Have another pill, Bill".

The fad took, and the first thing we heard from the natives when we arrived in England was "Any gum, chum?" and "Any candy, Andy?"

Some of the fellows found the English girls very interesting, indeed. The A.T.S. girls were popular but the boys weren't satisfied with the official name the initials designated so they coined some of their own like "Always Teasing Soldiers", "Any Time Sugar", etc.

The Yanks were soon teaching the girls American expressions, explaining some while retaining the meanings of others for reasons not hard to guess. The girls took to it all too readily in some cases though and were soon using expressions they didn't know the meanings of. The resulting incidents were too humorous to mention here.

Battery A, like all such units, has a group of fellows that hold down the jobs we in the gun sections would like to have. As my old friend "Back Flip" used to say, "you can't have your cake and eat it", but we could coin our own pet names for this group. "The Big Seven", "The Golden Circle" and "City Hall" were only a few of them.



I'll not mention any names in this little tale because I don't know how the fellow may take it, but the fellows got such a laugh at it that I can't let it pass. We were boarding the "Excelsior" for England and a member of this battery was going up the gangplank when the cry arose, "You're in, Steve!" Immediately afterward the air was filled with laughter. All this, at a time like that, evidently was too much for the soldier.

One member of the battery whom we were all glad to have had with us was Lt. "Ernie Pyle" Folks, who has been with us ever since our activation. He was a swell fellow, one of the few chosen from above to reside with the brains. One incident the battery will always remember about him occurred one morning in Camp Chaffee. He was conducting calisthenics and we were afraid he was going to leave us out in a storm that was coming up. He relieved our worried minds when he turned to one of the sergeants and said, "If that cloud up there starts to rain down here, dismiss your battery."

Erfurt was pretty badly beaten and in flames when we pulled into position near there. It was then that our senator from Wisconsin, Elmer Rush, ordered his flunkie, "Back Flip" Newman, to "Throw another house on the fire".

"The Greasy Four", in my estimation, deserve some kind of a medal. Something different, I mean, from any other medal. They were often the sole cause of our being fatigued in the evening. Remember this one, fellows: "No seconds. Survey is out yet. Thirty more men to feed".

One fellow in this battery whom everyone will remember is the sergeant who sees to it that there is sufficient guard posted. You've probably heard him sing his familiar song, "Is You Is or Is You Ain't Essential". What's new, Chips?

It's amazing how some of these expressions take hold even in foreign lands. It was surprising enough to hear the English lassies replying to G.I. jibes with, "Smarten up, Johnnie", but what really stopped us cold was hearing the little German goils—as we have on several occasions—come out with, "Take a powder, Bud" and "Get off my back".

This wouldn't be complete without something from the "Skipper". I always knew there was a catch in it when he said, "Boys, I'm damn glad to be one of you. We are going overseas and I am going to bring every one of you back with me." What he didn't say was WHEN.

Most of Lt. McGee's pet expressions were in German. Wonder if he's learned to say "nicht ferstehe" all in one breath yet.

Probably the most shop-worn of all was the one the boys always used when an order didn't meet their approval: "Boy, is that chicken!" Let's pray this isn't censored. If it is you can all say, "Alas, I knew him when."

... Pfc. Nelson B. Meador

## "OUR BALL TEAM"

Back in Chaffee we didn't get much time to play ball due to the intense training program. The little time we did have was spent on pass. You couldn't very well blame the boy's, it seemed they knew what was in store for us in the near future.

With time on our hands now that the war is over, here in the E.T.O. we are beginning to hear that old familiar cry of "Play Ball".

Leading off for "Able" B'try was Cpl. "Frankie" Smaha. Playing shartstop he was noted for his rifle peg to first. A natural ball player, he was tough in the clutch... At third base and hitting in the No. 2 spot was T/5 "Al" Lorenzo... Our star pitcher, Cpl. "Ken" Roberts, hit 3rd. A converted outfielder, "Kenny" was fast with plenty on the ball and also a good hitter. He pitched his best game in beating undefeated "B" B'try 2 to 1 in 10 inning's... Our clean-up hitter and manager Sgt. "Hank" Redmond, a former "pro", could really drive that pill. "Hank" broke up many a game with his long clouts... He could also go for them out in the garden... Playing second base and hitting 5th was Pfc. "Jimmie" Bates. Teaming up with Smaha around the keystone sack, they could really knock of those twin killing's. A heads-up player, "Jimmie" could also hit... Cpl. "J. P." Trinclist, hitting 6th, played first base. He could really stretch for them. New at the initial sack "J.P." learned fast under the able tutoring of Redmond... Our center-fielder, T/4 John McGartland, hit in the No. 7 spot. "Mac" was good when he wanted to be. A good fielder, he was at home out in center-field... No. 8 and playing right field was Pfc. "Don" Young. Good out in the field, he could also give that ball a ride... In short field and hitting 9th was Pfc. "Junior" Kulp. Fast afield and a good sticker, "Junior" was noted for his hustle... Also playing the field was Pfc. "Stanley" Klichowski, and our No. 2 pitcher. Stan was hot in the Baker game when he cut off a run with a beautiful peg to the plate... Our catcher Pfc. "Red" Fines hit 10th. Steady behind the plate, "Red" was the pepper-pot of the team. He kept the boys on their toes with his chatter....

T/5 "Al" Lorenzo.

# GERMANY

by

Two Artillerymen

(This verse was written Mar. 27, 1945, on the Rhine opposite the Third Army bridge-head near Mainz. The authors' calculation as to the end of European hostilities later proved quite correct.)

G is for the German,  
The Nazi supermen;  
We'll get them all, and Hermann,  
We heavy-artillerymen.

E is for the Excellence  
Of the vaunted Siegfried Line;  
We brought its guns to silence  
Before we hit the Rhine.

R is for the River Rhine,  
The last great Nazi stand,  
Thought to be a rugged line  
'Til they felt our power from  
air and land.

M is for the Momentum  
Which is growing day by day.  
Shells hurled by Patton's men  
Will bring the peace by May.

A is for the Armies,  
In strength and valor go,  
Fighting for our lads and lassies  
To keep our democracy so.

N is for the Nazis  
Who are backing step by step,  
And as for their autocracy,  
They've nothing but regret.

Y is for the yearning  
For the loved ones left behind,  
But now the tide is turning  
For God had felt it time.

Put them all together  
And this is what they spell:  
GERMANY, shamed forever,  
And Hitler damned to hell.

... Henry Wadsworth Esposito  
and  
Alfred Lord Bates



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PART THREE

PICTORIAL



*OUR BALL TEAM*



*PIRING UNIT*

*The base piece, march ordered and ready to step out in combat dress, complete with trailer, loaded gun trails and water cans slung over the truck sides.*





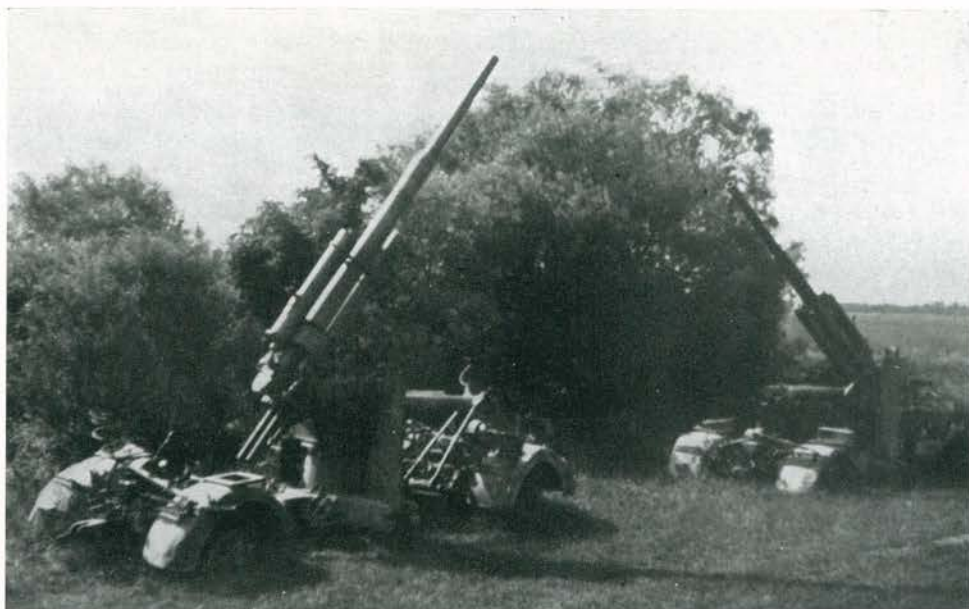
#### ROADSIDE SCENE: GERMANY

*Minus its tracks, this ditched German tank constitutes no more menace than a minor traffic obstacle.*



#### NAZI FAVORITE

*The Germans had a lot of .88 MM guns and kept them busy, and we were close enough to the receiving end of the business a number of times to know what kind of results they produced. These pictured here were abandoned by the fleeing enemy along our line of march.*



*This pair evidently sang their swan song in the role of AA battery.*



*And this one had its tube blown off.*



*LUFTWAFFE (Gefallen 1945): R. I. P.*

*What was left of the German air force, once the scourge of Europe, was destroyed by retreating Nazis. This junk-pile was scraped up by policing G. I.s at an airport just south of Munich.*



*"BEST IN THE AIR"*

*The jet-propelled Messerschmitt was said to outperform everything of its type, but it had to be destroyed with the rest. Scores of them went into the Munich junk-pile.*





#### DEAD DUCK

*The Nazis didn't use heavy bombers on a large scale in the late phases of the war, but they still had a few. This four-engine job, destroyed and abandoned at Munich, was one of those that lasted to almost the end.*



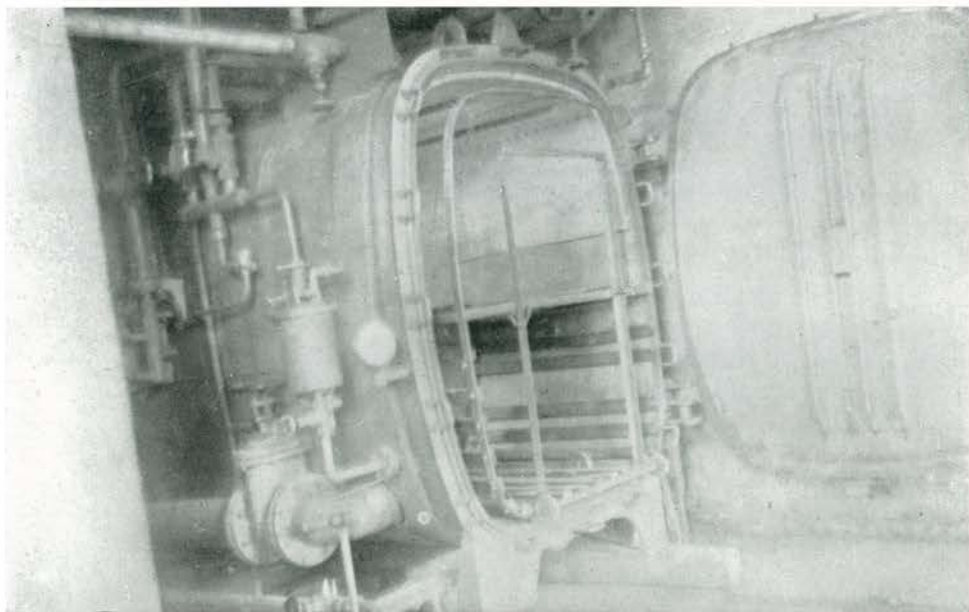
#### GOING OUR WAY

*As the Wehrmacht disintegrated we encountered long lines of Nazi prisoners marching back to PW cages.*



#### DEATH CAMP

*These scenes, made at a prison camp near Kassel, were repeated in a score of such camps throughout Germany. The skeleton-like bodies of starved and murdered political prisoners of the Reich lie in row upon row awaiting decent burial by the conquering forces.*



#### CREMATORY

*Here, in this huge oven, the bodies of the victims of the camp's gas chamber or SS firing squads were reduced to ashes for easy disposal. Some prisoners related that not all the victims were fortunate enough to be dead when they reached this stage of the fiendish process.*



#### LIME PIT

*Mass murder preceded the capture of the camp by the Allies and the SS guards were not able to dispose of the bodies. Some were burned in a large, open incinerator which was then covered with lime.*



#### FIRING BATTERY

*Battery Able's four pieces lined up for inspection after V-E Day.*





*IN FORMAL GARB*

*After two months of mud and dust it was a pleasure to be dressed up again for the V-E Day ceremony.  
Here, entering the parade ground.*



*EYES RIGHT*

*The battery passes the reviewing officers in the V-E Day parade near Simbach.*



#### V-E DAY PLUS . . .

*The war over, comes now inspections and such. The firing battery stands an equipment check at Hotzl.*



#### HITLER YOUTH

*That part of the non-fraternization rulings that applied to children was lifted and one of our men decided to find out how these boys would react to military commands in German. They promptly fell in and dressed down at close interval.*

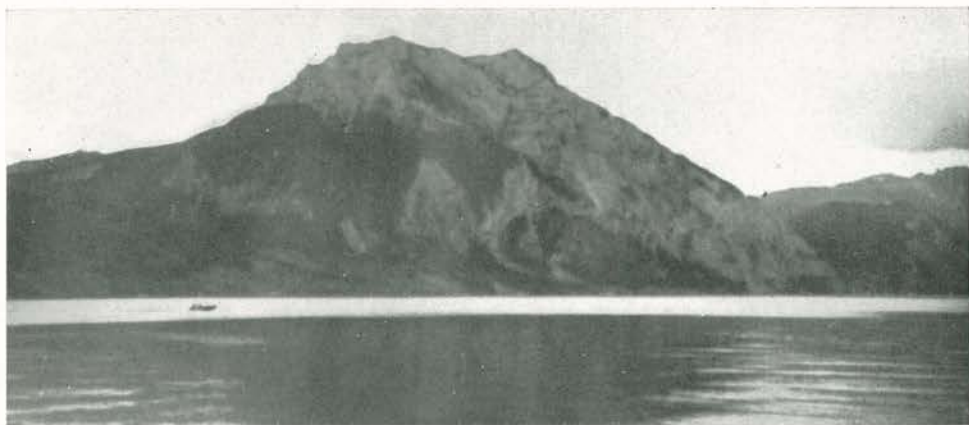


FELDHERRNHALLE, MUNICH  
(Field Marshall's Hall)



MUSEUM OF GERMAN ART, MUNICH  
*One of a few of Munich's public buildings that escaped with slight damage  
from Allied air raids.*





*MOUNTAIN LAKES (TRAUNSEE)*

*With the end of war came more passes and some sightseeing trips. Many went to Austria to view the Traunsee, in the Alps, where these pictures were taken.*

