

The REGIMENT is organized,

A couple of Generals saluted each other, read a bunch of words from a piece of paper, and saluted again as the flag was raised. Everything was according to military Hoyle. The 399th Infantry Regiment had just been activated as part of the new 100th "Century" Division.

That was Fort Jackson, South Carolina on November 15, 1942. Cadre came from the 1st and 76th Divisions, citizen-soldiers came largely from New York, New Jersey, New England. They were new all right. Twelve months of the usual Infantry stuff just a little bit south of North Carolina, grind-studded days of 25 mile hikes, RCT problems, D Exercises. After a special assignment to guard the railroad route of the late President Roosevelt's tour to Parris Island, the 399th left Jackson in November of 1943.

"Tennessee was different from the sand and scrub pines and tableland of Carolina. We were east of Nashville in the Cumberland country, full of red clay and rocky hills and deep cutting rivers. Real dignified towns like Carthage and Rome and Leeville and Gallatin."

"Yeah, we had 15,000 square miles of solid rain to wander around in with the 14th Armored and 35th and 87th Infantries. They always told us the Brass was right out in the weather, too, but the only four stars I saw were General Rain and Mud. Man, was it rough on maneuvers!"

Tennessee separated the men from the boys in January 1944: the boys turned left and the 399th went right, to Fort Bragg, North Carolina with Fayetteville attached. The 399th Repple Depot turned out four thousand topnotch soldiers who shipped overseas



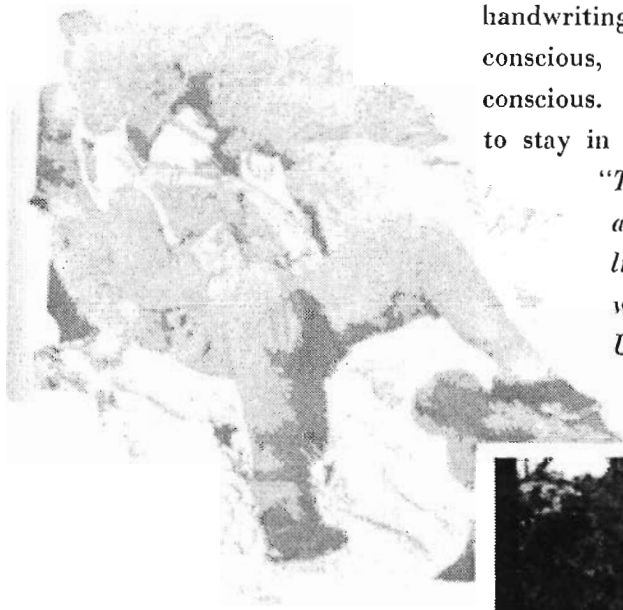
to fight with the 3rd, 36th, and 45th Divisions, famous Infantry outfits the 100th would one day fight beside.

In March the Joes who were destined to fight with the Powderhorn began a modest entry into the Regiment. They were Air Corps, Ack Ack, MP's, Barrage Balloons, and Quiz Kids from the folded ASTP program. A new world of 34 pushups, the Inspecting General, C-47's darkening the sky, and furloughs. Lt. General Leslie McNair pinned the first Expert Infantryman's badge in Army history on Sgt. Walter Bull of Company A, 399th Infantry. Five hundred Powderhorn Doughs were to follow Bull in winning the badge, several thousand 399th Joes would soon win the same blue badge with a silver wreath added. *The 399th sweated out D-Day over CBS.*

In June the Powderhorn went to New York City to march in the Infantry Day parades. The civilians were very Infantry minded about that time and gave the Doughboys a terrific welcome as they came marching down 5th Avenue and Lower Broadway to meet Fiorello LaGuardia at City Hall.

Secretary of War Stimson with hundreds of industrial leaders, brass hats, and publishers were shown through the 399th Model Regiment. By July the handwriting was on the wall. Everyone became "Why We Fight" conscious, "Why We Carry Only 7 Pounds of Personal Stuff" conscious. Nobody wanted to rush overseas, yet no one wanted to stay in the States.

"The band was brassing that sunny September morning and the Stars and Stripes were waving in the breeze just like in the newsreels when we marched to the train. I was really proud of the outfit that morning, even the USO Commando who was my platoon leader."



"Tennessee was different..."



trained...

[illegible]

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

The western sky was aglow with the wake of the setting sun, the whole eastern sky was a tremendous ugly gray thundermass hunched over Europe. The tiny Destroyer Escorts plunged boldly on into the Mediterranean, leading the first convoy of the war to run the German sea gauntlet from America to the backdoor of France.

As the secret convoy sneaked smugly through the Mediterranean, over the ship's radio came: "Good evening, boys. Before we start our sentimental dance music, I'd like to welcome the 100th Infantry Division to the Mediterranean area."

Berlin Sally was in the know.

Marseille and the French on October 20th.

"No sooner did the Army give us back our land legs when they made us march 10 miles from the harbor up into the hills behind Marseille. I was too busy reading all the French signs and looking at the short skirts to get tired. Who said there was a lipstick shortage among the Europeannes?"

Puptents and vino, francs and mademoiselles, historic Notre Dame de la Garde and sinister St. Louis. Yes, and mud. October 28th the 399th Infantry left the rest of the Division at Marseille and struck north toward the battle front.

Uncle Harry wasn't kidding



*"Yes, and Mud"
... Marseille staging area*



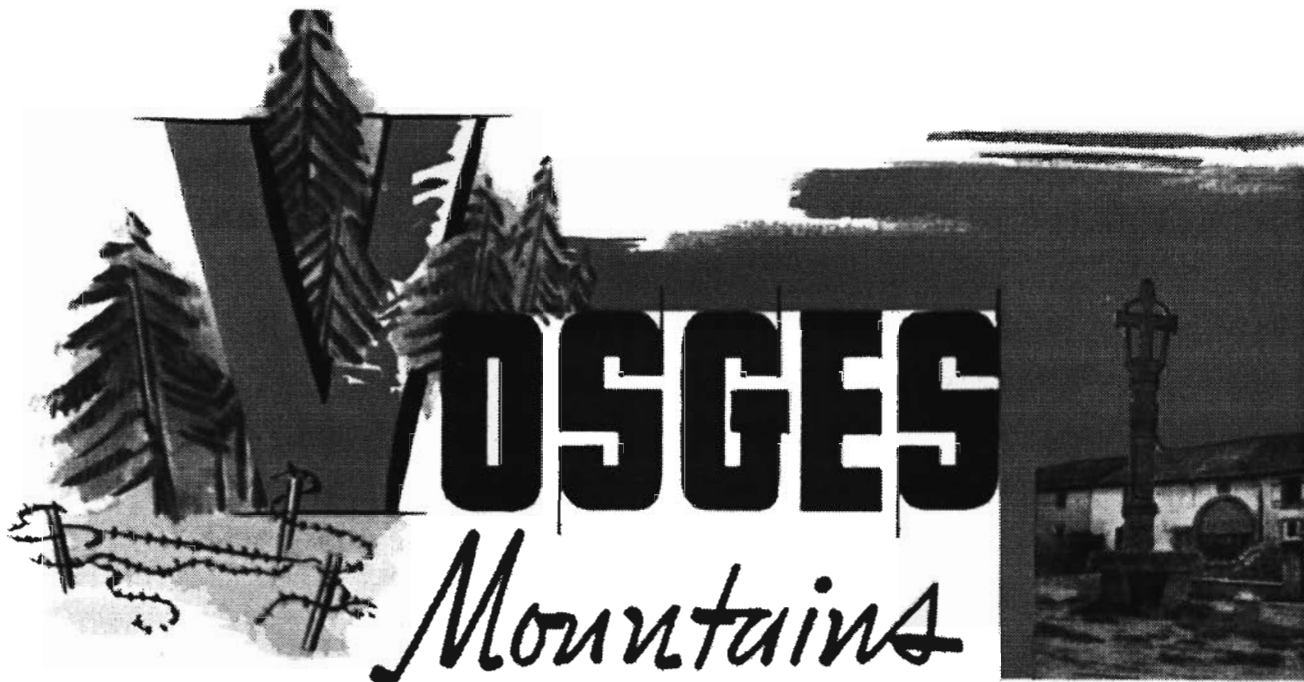
Then





399th in action





After three days of barnstorming in a frosty convoy up the postcard valley of the Rhone, amidst technicolor autumnal hillsides, twisted charred Mark VI's and second story French kiss-throwers, the 399th Infantry Regiment rolled to a stop. Past Aix, le pont d'Avignon, Valence, Chalon, Dijon—420 miles into the northeast corner of France—into the mist shrouded foothills of the Vosges Mountains.

The assembly area near Fremifontaine was a broad horizoned country of sunshine, lush green meadows, and black pine woods. There was no sunshine in the woods, but there were old German foxholes, helmets, potato mashers. No one wanted any souvenirs. The doughfeet went to bed in trim pup tents, woke up the next morning in soggy holes freshly dug. Nobody had told them that the 240's yammering nearby were the property of the 45th Division. It was the last day of October.

"Men, we'll be in this bivouac area at least three days. Tomorrow the Eagle screams and you'll all get paid in francs. Everybody turns in his duffel bag and you'll get 'em back in a day or two."

That was the last the doughfeet heard about their duffel bags for the duration.

The 399th received a hurry-up alert that afternoon and prepared to move up to "the front". Platoons mobbed around like football teams for last minute advice. The Old Man made a little speech that his goal in combat was to lead his company through without losing a single man.

November 1, 1944, just 26 days away from Manhattan, the line companies moved in silent wondering columns past dead Germans and dull green Shermans, through gloomy tapestries of pines in the ghostly Fôret de St. Benoit. In alphabetical order they relieved the companies of Bill Mauldin's 179th Infantry of the 45th — the Thunderbird Division.

"Where are your ammo bags, and packs, and bayonets, and overcoats?"

"Threw 'em away."

"Where are the Jerries?"

"Right in front of you."

"Where are the front lines?"

"You're them."

"ooh."

The nonchalant vets of Sicily, Anzio, and Riviera picked up all their loose equipment — one rifle — and ambled away. “Good hunting, fellas.” The 399th camels threw their military junk in a huge stack, jumped into their foxholes, and peered ahead anxiously into the infinite forest looking for something tangible, like a Jerry, to shoot at. The trees dripped noiselessly on the mossy floor.

At 0950 Pfc Hartmut Arntz of Mike Company sighted his mortar and Pfc Walter Meliere dropped in an 81mm shell, to send the 100th Division’s first round of the war crashing into St. Remy. At 1100 Pfc Edmond Burzycki radioed “Let ’er rip!” to Pfc Richard Dein and a Cannon Company 105 blasted a LaSalle crossroad. In mid-afternoon the 925th Field Artillery opened up with howitzers.

The 399th had entered combat with the other two Regiments several hundred miles in the Rear, but they didn’t know it. Several crack American divisions and the French 1st Army were pounding the German Meurthe River Winter Line. The 399th was sandwiched between the 45th and 3rd Divisions in thick-pined Ramblevillers Fôret in the Vosges foothills. Three miles ahead, the Germans were holding with fanatical firmness on their Meurthe defenses. Beyond the disputed river rose the lofty peaks of the High Vosges. The 3rd Battalion faced St. Remy on the left, the 1st faced La Salle on the right.

Twelve man patrols on November 2nd felt out the flanks of the 45th Thunderbird and the 3rd Rock of the Marne.

“Patrols felt out the flanks of the 3rd Rock of the Marne”



The young Lieutenant slung his carbine and went into the 15th Infantry CP. The two scouts loitered suspiciously outside.

"Hey, what outfit you guys from?"

I said what outfit you guys from?"

"1127th Messkit Repair." *The scouts wouldn't admit a thing.*

A beard emerged from a second floor window.

"Hey, I saw youse guys coming across that long meadow. This town was taken two days ago. What're youse, on maneuvers?"

The Lieutenant came out smiling and the scouts warily brought their rifles to the ready and beat a Fort Benning retreat back over the meadow to the woods.

Lt. Thomas Plante's 2nd platoon of Love Company on November 3rd raided the forested approaches to St. Remy from the west. Scouts Paul Lincoln and Thomas Campbell ran into an ambush of burp and machine guns, and after an hour's fire fight the raider platoon was forced to withdraw. Pfc Estil Crittendon was wounded and captured, first 100th man to fall to the enemy.

Lt. Jack Reid took Baker's 1st platoon into LaSalle and Lt. James Shields led Charlie's 3rd platoon astride the highway approaches to the town. Baker night patrols probed into the soggy, wind-swept fields toward St. Remy.

On November 4th the Regiment went into the attack against St. Remy. Baker Company advanced in battle spread up a long low ravine through a deep plowed pasture with only the church steeple visible to guide on. Charlie, Able, King, Love, and Item lined the edge of the Bois de St. Remy, set to jump off across 800 yards of open ground.

Lt. Colonel Ellery Zehner stormed out ahead of Baker to lead the attack into the battered machinegun-swept village and merit the Divisions's first DSC. Snipers, burp gunners, and machine gunners opened up on the oncharging company, mortars rained down as the rest of the Regiment swung into full attack. The routed Germans withdrew to the high ground to the East and darkness scudded over St. Remy.

Doughboys with rifle in left hand and grenade in right cleared the houses without lights.

"The only thing troubling me was how in hell to pull the pin on the grenade with my hands full. If I was only rugged like Errol Flynn I coulda pulled it with my teeth."

Lt. Reid's boys from Baker Company spearheaded the assault, to chalk up LaSalle and St. Remy for their platoon as the first two French towns to fall to the 100th Division in World War II. The retreating enemy hurled night long barrages of Whistling Annie 88's crashing into the narrow rues of St. Remy. Love Company contacted the 45th Division in the woods to the north of town.

Pfc John Bolin of Love Company peered out of the woods toward the town.

"What's the name of that place?"

"St. Remy."

"Hell, this ain't getting us noplac. My old man took this town in the last war."

In a St. Remy house he later found his father's initials JHB carved in the wine-cellar wall.

Before daybreak of the 5th the Red Battalion was moving East again.

The two scouts squished alertly across soggy pastures in size 13 Shoepaks.

"We gotta reach our objective before daybreak. Which woods did he say?"

"The next patch of pines, I think."

"Sh-h-h, see that shadow moving in there?"

"Must be the wrong woods."

The Company turned around and ran back 500 yards. The CO looked at his map.

"This woods is where we belong. We're not supposed to attack that other one till tomorrow. No wonder there were Jerries there. Musta had my map bent."

Daylight had lifted too soon, however, and an intense mortar barrage fell on the un-dug Able Company.

At twilight of the 5th the Blue Battalion slugged east along the St. Remy-Etival highway for a short advance. Tracers screamed high over the Regimental front while grazing fire clipped into foxholes.

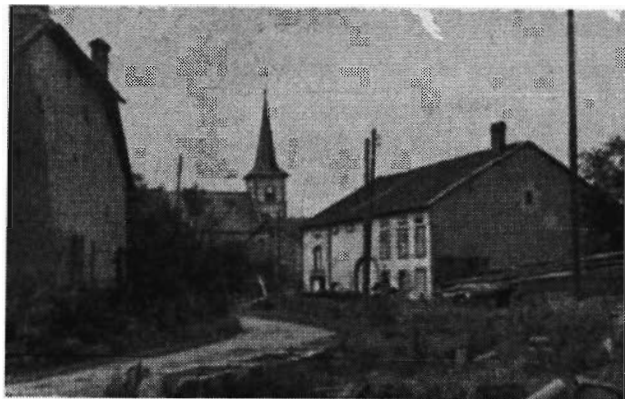
"Boy, this place gives me the creeps. Open rolling ground with a pine woods here and a pine woods there. Machineguns chattering away in those mountains to the left, and in the mountains to the right, too. Listen to that artillery hitting in those pines on top of that next rise. Sounds like a giant bowling ball making a strike. The Old Man told me those babies are the foothills of the Vosges. I'd hate to see the father. Now I know why they call these Frenchies 'the Frogs'. This sunny France they live in is a lake."

"Aw, dry up."

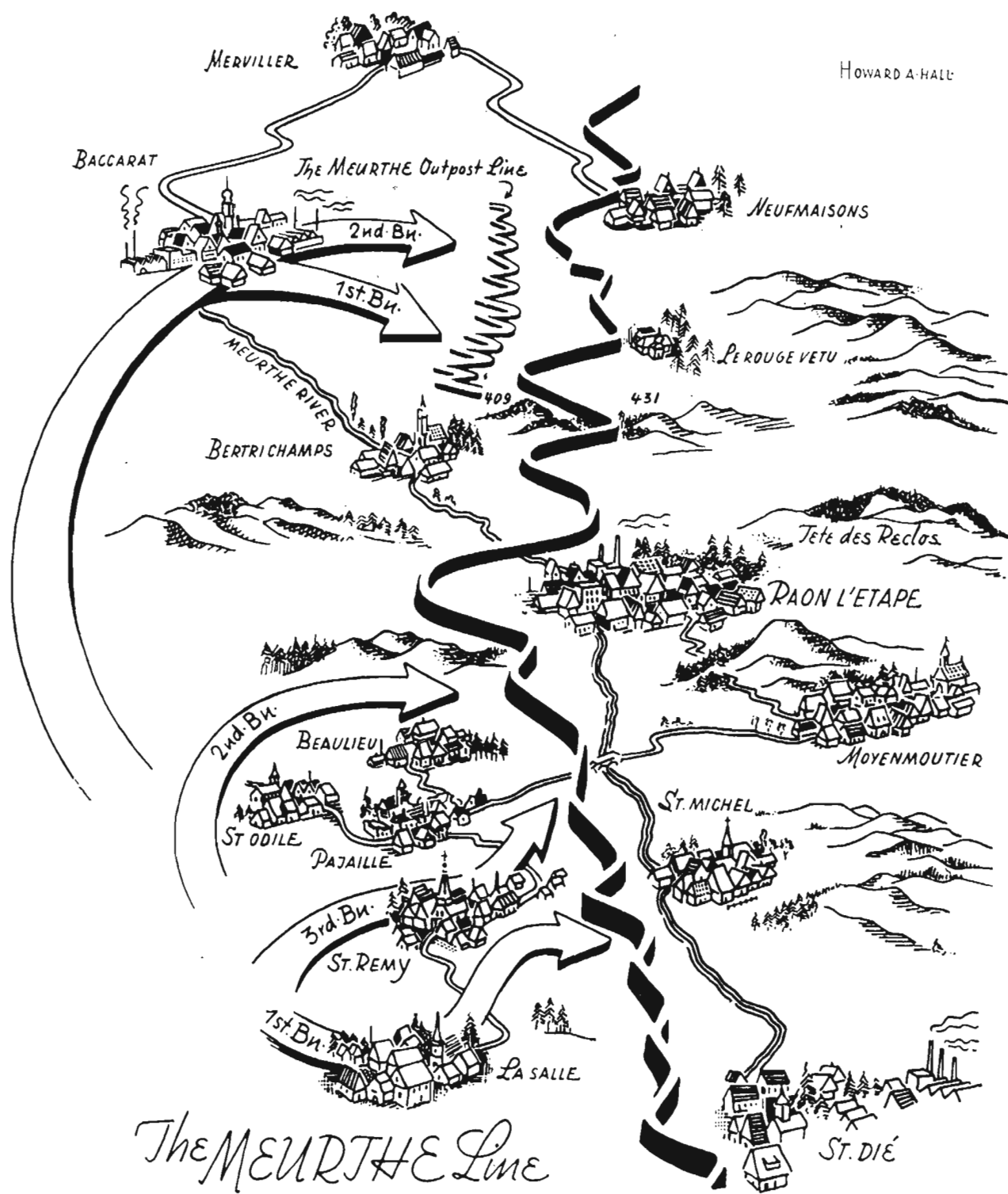
November 6th Item Company came out of the woods on the Regiment's left flank to spearhead the Blue Battalion toward Etival and the Meurthe.

"Our route of attack goes right across the St. Remy—St. Odile highway. Those names are too holy sounding to suit me. Everything's too quiet."

Fifteen minutes after the jumpoff intense machine gun and mortar fire from a balcony of woods overlooking the Greyhounds' route of attack pinned down the company. Pfc Ulysses Henry rose and led the charge toward the entrenched enemy and was killed by a burp gunner. Captain Travis Hopkins was among Item's 32 casualties in the first half hour of their first attack. Crashing



"Item Company came out of the Woods..."





105's of Cannon Company into the German emplacements enabled Item to overrun their objective across a stream to St. Odile.

Able and Charlie Companies moved forward for the Battle of the Six Woods, rectangular pine groves teeming with dugouts and camouflaged machine guns. Able jumped off from Woods 1 and 2, attacked 3, 4, and 5 midway through the rainy afternoon with George Company, 15th Infantry. At twilight Charlie moved with Able against Woods 6.

They attacked across 700 yards of open pasture with fixed bayonets into the face of a German machine gun battalion.

"The battle-wise krauts rode chains of screaming red tracers high over our heads to make us stand up and then let go with invisible knee high fire. When we finally overran the woods there were no krauts around but millions of mortars. I never knew mud tasted so good."

Some of the German machine gunners refused to retreat. Lt. Paul Loes of Charlie Company charged a nest with his Thompson sub and wiped out the crew. Scout Charles Hoak of Charlie took a dive in front of a kraut machine gun and when they shifted fire to the rest of the company thinking him dead, he rose and destroyed the strongpoint. Several kraut gunners got the wooden cross, Hoak and Loes got the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism.

The Regiment dug in for the night in their newly-won woods, and all the doughs went to sleep except 30% who went out to patrol the black flanks, 50% who were on guard against a possible counter attack, and 20% who couldn't sleep in a muddy foxhole with only a soaked combat jacket to keep them warm.

The 399th was little more than a mile from the Meurthe River on November 7th when a shuffling of forces began. After capturing Woods 7 and sending patrol feelers toward the Meurthe MLR, the Red Battalion was replaced by the 3rd Division, Baker relieved Item outside St. Odile, and the Blue Battalion took over 45th Division positions in embattled Pajaille.

During the night of the 6th, the 157th Infantry in the mountains on the left had sent out a call for help: their Baker Company was surrounded. Lt. Bennett Taylor took his 3rd platoon of Love Company and marched all night through the rainy black Vosges. At dawn they attacked toward the surrounded company on a mountain. Sgt. Alfred Coursey and Herman Sodie led and shot their way through the



Shu-mines...tragedy awaited the Brave

ring of Germans, wiping out a machine gun and capturing 14 krauts. Willie Young got an officer. Baker Company was saved from annihilation by Love Company's magnificent breakthrough.

"The Battalion CO of the 157th couldn't believe it, one platoon of a green outfit like the 399th rescuing a whole company of the 45th. They had a lot of respect for the 100th after that."

November 8th the White Battalion moved up to relieve the 157th Infantry in the mountains on the Regimental left flank just short of enemy held Beaulieu. The enemy heard Easy Company digging in and showered them with mortars. The 2nd Battalion never went into the attack: they had a stationary battle against kraut snipers and zeroed artillery.

King Company maintained their toehold in Pajaille, capturing 14 ex-aryans.

"Boy, this sawmill is getting me down."

"Yeah, the basement is full of water and the upstairs is full of 88's."

"I wish all those damn burp-gunners would get furloughs. It would make the war a less noisy unpleasantry."

"Duck!" Bbth-r-r-r-r-r-rip. Bbthr-r-r-r-r-r-rip.

The Red Battalion moved back into reserve in the S-mined St. Benoit woods. November 9th rumor bruited around that the 398th had arrived and would relieve the battle-trying and battle-tired 399th.

"Hear we're getting relieved this afternoon."

"It'll take more than getting relieved to make me feel relieved."

"And this afternoon we go under control of the 100th Division."

"Oh yeah? Why should we let some green outfit like that order us 399th men around?"

"Yuh know, I never thought of that."

November 10th Red, White, and Blue battalions marched through the dark precipitous pines to a convoy IP. The dusk truck caravan rumbled across the Meurthe River through a prosperous city called Baccarat and up into the hills of the Bois de Bingotte outside the city. A thin chain of outposts was thrown up in front of the bivouacing Regiment. The new 397th dug in between us and the River while the mobile 117th Recon stood poised on the left.

"We really put one over on them, eh General?"

"Yes indeed, sir. With the 398th holding the thin line of the entire Division on the west bank of the Meurthe, we send the 397th and 399th through our bridgehead at Baccarat on a left end run around the German winter line. We'll bust right into their backfield."

"Just like that one at Annapolis in '24, eh General?"

On the other side of the Meurthe things weren't quite so clear and rosy. First of all, nobody knew where St. Remy had been, or cared. No one knew why they had crossed a river at Baccarat, or cared. The main issue was that the Regiment was living in dry foxholes, busting open Christmas packages and writing V-Mails. King Company outposts borrowed milk from a herd of cows that grazed unconcernedly out in no-man's-land along the Meurthe.

"They had church services for Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish boys on Armistice Day which was Saturday. And when they do that on Saturday, it don't take no S-2 section

"A thin outpost line"... They who only stand and wait



"The woods were absolutely noiseless..."



to figure out that we're gonna jump off on Sunday. I remember last Sunday we were laying under a mortar barrage outside St. Remy. Seven days seem like seven years over here."

Armistice Day was celebrated by listening to the roaring Corps Longtoms thunder a welcome to the 26th anniversary of peace. An ironical celebration, perhaps.

Tiny Veney fell to Love Company. Snow fell during the night, and the woods were absolutely noiseless as outpost patrols stealthily pushed ahead to secure the Veney-Bertrichamps road. The 100th Division on November 11th celebrated peace, on November 12th jumped off in war.



Crack American divisions had been pounding all along the Meurthe River Winter Line — 3rd, 36th, 45th, 79th, and the whole French 1st Army. Allied grand strategy called for a Bac-

"And when they do that on Saturday..."

“T

he trees had a longer life expectancy



carat bridgehead and a drive down the Eastern bank of the Meurthe to key city Raon l'Etape, thus causing the Meurthe Line to be outflanked, smashed, and driven in retreat into the High Vosges.

The German high command had prepared for such an eventuality and had built impervious defenses on the northern flank of their winter line. In the thick forests of the Petit Reclos and the Grand Reclos between Neufmaisons and Raon l'Etape they built their winter line. *Behind these forests lay a huge silent mountain, Tête des Reclos.*

At dawn of November 12th the Red and White battalions in silent columns felt their way through the white pines up to the outpost chain. Objectives lay through the Bois de Grammont and the Bois de Chamont and the Fôret de Petit Reclos. Silent woods. After thoroughly waking up the Jerries with the Dog Company 50's the two battalions jumped off.



The only living thing in the grim white woods seemed to be the two scouts treading noiselessly along. "Hey, look. See that guy walking through the trees up ahead?"

"Yeah. It must be a GI."

"And there's two more. Shall I shoot?"

"Naw, it must be Charlie Company." A sharp crack came from up front.

"I've got a bullet hole in my raincoat collar!"

"The B-----!"

Rifles, bazookas, anti-tank grenades, BAR's, machine guns, 105 cannons kicked up the cathedral-tall forest 75 yards ahead of the attacking companies. Charlie and Able on the left, Fox and George on the right slugged forward once more, overrunning the German MLR with its machinegun log bunkers and cleared avenues of fire. Companies drew up on skirmish lines and plodded ahead, firing. Doggies wiped the snow off their weapons with hands that were too numb to load clips into rifles. The enemy, flushed from his prepared log defenses, retreated through the woods — stopping for brief firefights.

The Red Battalion pushed through to their objective high ground commanding the spired village of Neufmaisons, the White Battalion drove to cut the Neufmaisons-Raon l'Etape forest-locked highway. The doughfeet dug in hurriedly: they knew what was coming. Two things fell that night — thick snow flurries and dime-hitting 88's.

"Foxholes were invented in the Stone Age, but they're here to stay. The Jerries knew exactly where we were and had us zeroed in. But the only way they could get us was to drop their 88's in the holes. Last night one landed less than 2 yards from our foxhole."

Some did drop in the holes.

*Burpgunners watched George's
scouts from this trench*



The fortress Le Rouge Vetu



*"The twinnight attack ran into
barbed wire..."*



"...the mighty Winter Wall"



General Winn was reported in the 399th area, visiting all three attacking battalions. Winn was the code name for 7th Army CG, Sandy Patch.

No day in combat is lucky, and the 13th is no exception. The first company in the Division to hit the Vosges winter wall was George Company, 399th. Advancing through the snow-bound Fôret de Petit Reclos, the lead scout spotted a battered blockhouse in a clearing on the Neufmaisons-Raon l'Etape highway. It was the fortress Le Rouge Vétu.

Eight George scouts cut through the six barbed wire fences, advanced up to the ominously silent blockhouse, grenaded and searched it. Everything was quiet and the winter wall had been breached. The scouts waved the Company on.

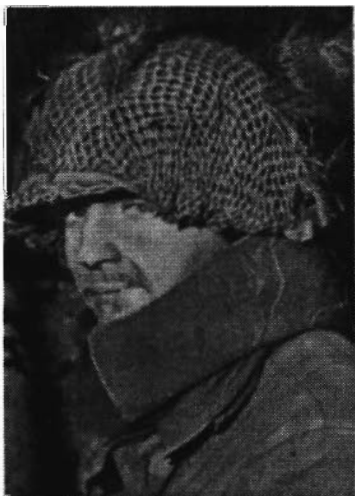
"All of a sudden a million mortars crashed into the company pinning us down. A mob of kraut burp gunners came charging out of the pines behind the fort firing everything they had. Two of the eight scouts, Delbert Steines and Ronald Fett escaped back through the barbed wire. Five officers got hit — Captain Clark, Lts. White, Kerr, Calder, and Lahti. Finally we pulled back out of the mousetrap of automatic fire and zeroed mortars and dug in for the night. *That was Purple Heart Lane.*"

A French scout led Baker and Charlie Companies through the trackless forest to Hill 409—431 saddling the Neufmaisons-Raon l'Etape highway. Their twilight attack on 409 ran into barbed wire and spontaneous machinegun fire supported by plummeting mortars and whistling 88's. *The 399th had brought the war into the German's backyard, and here he intended to hold for the winter.*

On the White Battalion front an Easy Company patrol forcing entry into the strong-point town of Neufmaisons was pinned down by a mortar blanket. Captain William Smith and Pfc James Manwell fearlessly went out to help the all-casualty patrol and were both hit in a second barrage. That night Catholic Chaplain Thaddeus Koszarek led Medics out into the snowy no-man's-land to bring in the Easy wounded. The 2nd Battalion had already lost two of their three rifle company commanders.

"The Vosges Mountains were a two week campaign of misery and rain and snow and pines and fangers that couldn't button pockets and 1000-franc notes for toilet paper. There's a kind of cold dark fog that oozed up out of the deep Vosges forests changing day into hazy twilight and twilight into black night. There were thousands of hills one after another with French names and every one had a number, usually 4 something and the really tough ones were 5 something. Every doughboy remembers at least one hill number."

November 14th was spent hammering at the mighty winter wall of the diabolical German militarists with artillery and men. Baker went after 409 again shortly after dawn. After an advance of 150 yards a murderous hail of small arms, machineguns, and mortars halted Lt. Toth's 2nd platoon. Pfc Joseph Cacace of



GI Joe . . . Wanted:
one million francs

Charlie single-handedly knocked out a machinegun behind the barbed wire. Medic Ralph Lyerly worked on the fire-swept bare slope dragging out wounded. Other Baker medics went forward to help their shot-up buddies and were shot through the big Red Crosses on their helmets by tree snipers.

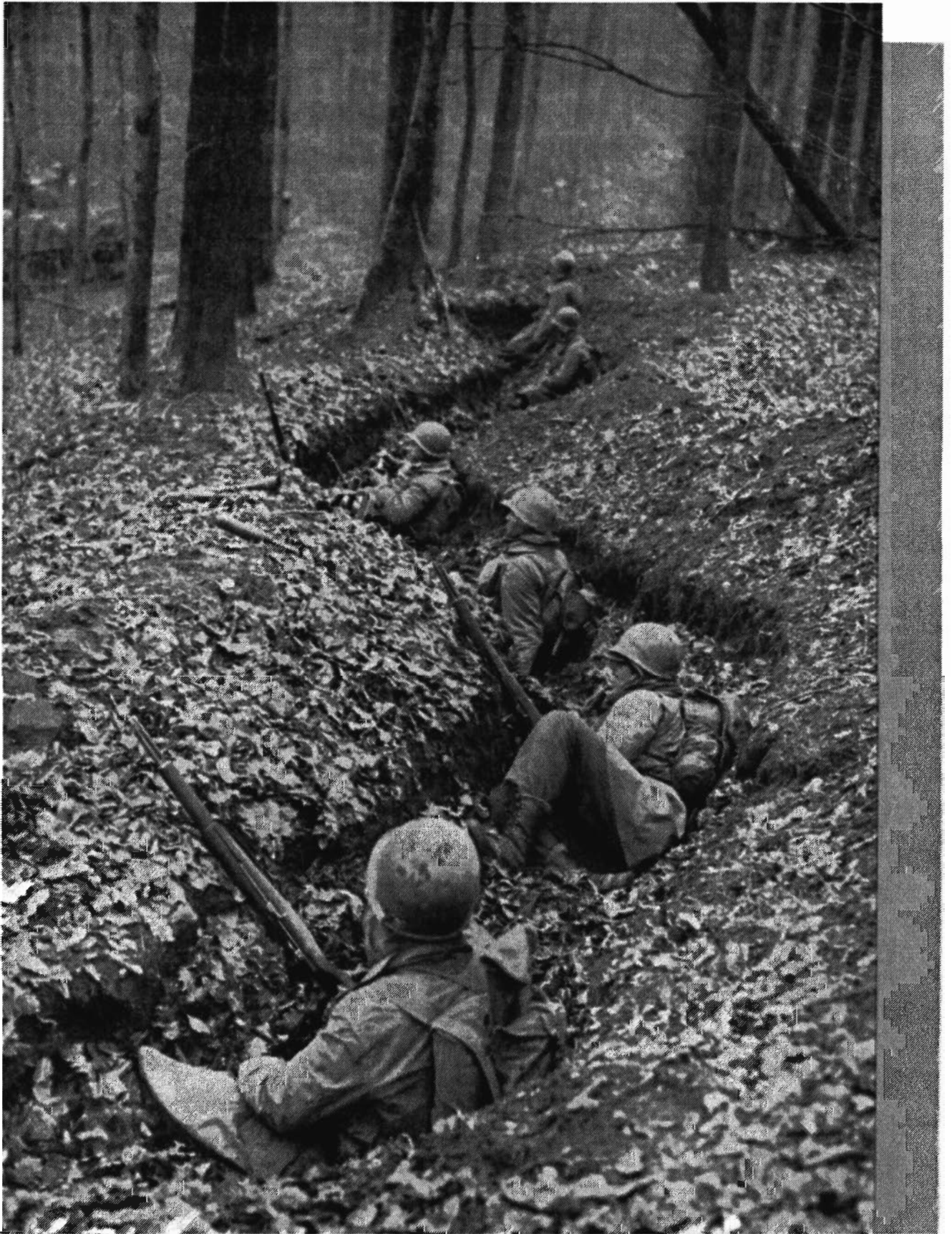
"The Winter Wall was a murder factory. The Germans had thinned out the thick Vosges forest for 200 yards in front of their barbed wire and they dug in on the high ground behind the wire. To break the wall we have to break out of the wooded heights opposite the enemy high ground, run down the open slope in the sights of the kraut machine gunners, charge up into their fire, break through four barbed wire entanglements, and then dig the krauts out of their foxhole forts. It looks impossible to me."

It didn't look impossible to Colonel Tychsen, though, and he ordered every piece of artillery in the 6th Corps backyard trained on hill 409-431. The whole Regiment pulled back 500 yards. Dog, How, and Mike mortars dumped HE on the Murder Factory, and high overhead the be-draggled doughs listened to the rhythmic whisper of high bore howitzers throwing a saturation punch.

"It didn't look impossible to Colonel Tychsen, though", up in the Eagle's Nest



"Medics were shot through the big Red Crosses on their helmets by tree snipers" ... Discretion (left) proved the better part of Geneva (right)



"The whole Regiment pulled back" ... \$74.80 a month for just sitting around

“431 . . . the Big Hill in the Murder Factory”



“Corps Express. That stuff swishing by in the night sky sure sounds nice. Artillery, King of Battle!”

“Yeah, you know why the Infantry is called Queen of Battle, don’t you?”

November 15th was the second anniversary of the 100th Division’s activation. *The 399th celebrated by being the first Regiment in the 7th Army to breach the enemy’s Vosges Winter Wall.*

Grand strategy changed, and the 3rd Battalion went after 431, the big hill in the Murder Factory. The weather improved from rain drizzle to snow flurries as the Blue doughs moved up through the 397th and the stalled Red Battalion to attack. At 0930 Item and King

kicked off behind a rolling barrage across the open saddle between 409 and 431.

“That rolling barrage was a marvel. It chewed up every living thing in its path as it rolled like a tornado across the saddle smack into the Winter Wall. Sam Foster’s 1st platoon of King breached the barbed wire with cutters, the company poured through the gap and fanned out with bayonets fixed. *The boys really meant business that day.*”

Cpl. Roy Kaminske of Mike cut another gap in the barbed wire under heavy machinegun fire and Item charged through. The companies stormed up to the highway when a terrific screen of fire from the trenches of 431 behind the road halted them. Doughs lay on the defiladed road bank, sticking their rifles up over the road to fire.

Pfc Irving Blumenthal of Item rose to his feet and ran up into the woods of 431 yelling “Charge!” like something out of Hollywood. Sgt. Jesse Rosewell of King wiped out a German squad. Lt. Russell Peebles of Mike was firing a rifle, carbine, tommygun, and bazooka.

The determined Blue Battalion overran key 431 and enlarged the puncture by storming relentlessly 500 yards past the Neufmaisons-Raon l’Etappe highway. Hills 411 and 432 were neutralized under intense 88 and small arms fire. The suicide blockhouse of Le Rouge Vetu was overrun by Love Company doughs and Sherman tanks.

By noon the fate of the Vosges Winter Wall was sealed by the 3rd Battalion’s magnificent breakthrough. The Red Battalion was poised on hill 409 astride the Raon l’Etappe highway between the 397th on the right and the Blue Battalion holding 431 on the left. *It was for the Red Battalion to exploit the breakthrough.*



“It was for the Red Battalion . . .”

Baker cleaned up the high ground on the right, Charlie and Able mopped up the left side of the highway as the 399th Infantry spear pierced southward into the black-pined Fôret de Grand Reclos guarding Raon l’Etappe. Charlie unknowingly bypassed a kraut-infested thicket and Able walked into the ambush. Pvt. Edward Cook up front with the Walkie-Talkie was killed by a sniper. Sgt. James Amoroso was knocked down by a bullet in the leg but kept killing krauts until another slug hit him in the shoulder. His courage had broken the ambush force and Able overran the thicket.

F

ashole Artillery "On the way!"

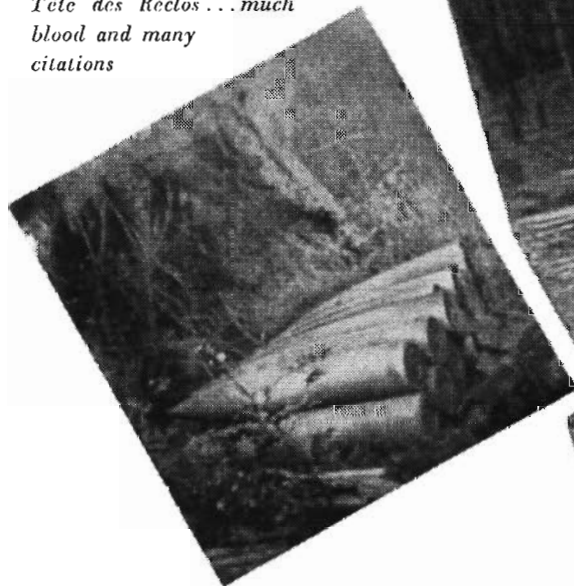




*Tête des Reclos... much
blood and many
citations*



*German foxhole for sale...
the price was high*



American Propaganda



*"The Indian files started across a
swamp at the foot of the Mountain"*

Charlie Company plunged ahead so swiftly that they overran a German mortar section and repulsed a vicious counter attack. A column of supporting Shermans rumbled down the highway to come on line with the rifle companies. The Red Battalion finally halted and dug in to sweat out the wrath of the 88's. One more mile of woods lay between the spearhead battalion and the green open valley of the Shirmeck Pass leading through the Vosges to Strasbourg.

A red-scarfed soldier with a tiny silver leaf on the front of his helmet stood legs apart in front of the lead tank looking at his map.

"Captain Campion of Charlie came running up yelling something about the 88's. Sgt. Steinman of Dog was yelling at his machinegunners to get dug in before the shelling came. Captain Brown was yelling at Steinman to stop yelling if he didn't want shelling. Another captain came running back from around the road bend up ahead of the tanks screaming that Colonel Ellis of the 397th had just been killed by a sniper."

The calm soldier with the red scarf was engrossed in his map.

"Well look here, we're 1000 yards in front of the rest of the 7th Army. Sort of a Lost Battalion. Of course I don't mean a lost battalion, we know right where we are. Watch the open flanks tonight."

The first 88 exploded in an ugly black crash between the first and second tanks. One second later the excited knot of 20 soldiers had disappeared into the ditches or under the squat Shermans.

The stars usually come out at night in the Vosges. Toward daybreak they fade and the dirty scudding rainclouds cover the pines. And it drizzles. Such a day was November 16th.

The Winter Wall, and the forests of the Little and Great Wildernesses had been breached. Ahead lay the crusher, a silent foreboding hill mass Tête des Reclos.... "Top of the Wilds". The Red Raiders shuffled their thin ranks sending Able on the right, Baker on the left, Charlie in reserve. A loud barrage rode into the ranks of the poised battalion.

"There's no use describing how 88's make you feel. They sound like freight trains with long whistles. They're the best sermons I ever heard for praying."

The Red Battalion moved out in silent alert Indian skirmishers through the green-mossed pines. After a 45 minute artillery softening, the Indian files rose and started across a swamp at the foot of the mountain. German sniper companies opened up with their bolt action one-bullet-per-man rifles. These fanatics were crushed by sheer numbers and the trail circling the base of the mountain was crossed on a 1000 yard front. *From all over the mountain automatic weapons opened up and the battle was on.*

"The top was nowhere in sight. The hill went straight up into the sky. It was buddy with buddy, squad by squad, platoon with platoon. Some fired into German foxholes, others climbed to the next tree. Sgts. Clarence Sutton and Lucian Zarlenga reached the top first and Able fanned out to fight on two knobs. Lt. Ballie's 3rd platoon got surrounded on the right knob and Captain Young took Sgt. Bull's 2nd platoon up to retake it, with BARmen Joseph Hoffman, Roy Lee and William Pondrom leading the attack. The cream of the 1st Battalion died on that hill."

Baker Company slugged up on the left and went after hill 538 which rises out of Tête des Reclos. Henry Bader and Milton Reppert of the 1st platoon shot up 10 Germans between them. Lt. Harry Flanagan, Sgt. Harold Fager, Paul Stepherak, and George North spearheaded the 3rd platoon in their drive to the crest.

Down on 462.5 the counterattacks started against Able. Rifle against rifle, BAR against burp gun, pineapple against potato masher, as 100 SS troops charged up the backslope. Everybody was a hero that day. Burp gun-potato masher teams worked up within 20 yards of the wavering Red ranks. Tennessean twins Lester and Chester Fraley sharpshooting from behind twin pines killed two burp gunners with every two shots. Pfc Leonard Herschberg sprayed the attackers with a toy greasegun. Every time Hugh Price squeezed off a shot, Gilbert Moniz yelled "Thanks!" Frank Fischl of Dog Company stood up and fed ammo belts into the blazing machinegun of Richard Atkinson who riddled the assaulting SS from the hip.

The 1st Battalion won the first Presidential Citation in the 100th Division that November 16th. The Citation is called Tête des Reclos, and doesn't mention hill 538 towering high in the dark forest above Tête des Reclos, which Baker and Charlie captured and held under relentless counterattacks. BARman Robert Barringer got three wounds and four krauts. James Kimm and Andrew Powell's deadly shooting combined with William McGee's machine gun to drive the Germans reeling in defeat down the backslope.

Pfc Harold Briley of Dog shot a German officer and captured his 35 man platoon. Sgt. Rudolf Steinman singly outflanked an enemy strongpoint while leading an ammo detail to the summit, shot up 16 krauts with his carbine, won the DSC. At nightfall the handful of men that was the Red Battalion dug in and waited.

The Blue Battalion meanwhile had slugged through the dense heights of the Grand Reclos 2000 yards eastward into the boundless pines to secure the left flank of the 100th Division. Spearhead Love Company was halted by thick machinegun and 88 fire, counter attacked on the exposed flank by a German company under wraps of the 88's.

A prospective rout was averted by the heroic efforts of Sgt. Thomas Campbell, Liberato Di Battista, Lt. Richard Van Allen and Thomas Plante who rallied the company to drive off the attack after two hours. Sgt. William Ansel's blazing machine gun finally turned the tide for which he received the DSC. Medic Harold Becraft of Mike Company was wounded five times during the two day attack but refused evacuation.

"Doughfeet aren't noble. They just don't have the strength to walk back to Battalion Aid to collect their purple heart."

The White Battalion roved the Neufmaisons woods in combat patrol strength to neutralize Neufmaison's defenses.

November 17th on Tête des Reclos, a big man with barbed red whiskers peered out from under a log with a map in his paw.

"All right boys, we'll figure out where the Jerry lines are," said Captain Richard Young of Able. "From Neufmaisons back there in the northwest all the way around to Raon l'Etape over there in the West. We're surrounded on 315 degrees of the compass. Tell the boys to pour a little oil on their shootin' irons."

Tête des Reclos, as Captain Young had figured out, jutted into the German backyard and caused them to abandon their entire Meurthe River Line. The stalled 100th went into action: the 397th rolled into Raon l'Etape, the 398th lunged past the Tête across the open valley floor of Shirneck Pass onto the high ground beyond.

"Life on the Hill was having two foxholes per man — one for an underground latrine. It was watching



l'Etape . . .

Lightning News

rd November Issue

WESTERN FRONT

Nov. 12th, 1944

Robot Planes — an unpleasant weapon

Nobody knows where they come from — And now: V 2!

The British Minister of Health has announced recently the enormous amount of damage done to London by doodles. Up to Sept. 12th, 900,000 houses had been damaged — and of those, 100,000 were

completely destroyed. This does not take into account the damaged houses in other sections, for example in Southern England, where the sheltering of thousands of homeless people is a grave

problem to solve. Armament factories in the South of England have been heavily damaged, as well as numerous works on the Channel coast. Bridges, railways, and communication lines have also suffered.

A message from the British Anti-Air Command states that an army of 200,000 men is devoted to fight the V 1. In addition to this, several hundred thousand specialized workers have been called from Canada and from other parts of England to repair the worst of the damage as quickly as possible. This means we are short that many men at the front.

Our quick advance in France and our violent attacks in Holland and Belgium ought to have prevented the Germans from continuing their V 1 attacks. We should have got this done before winter set in. But we didn't make it. The doodles keep on coming, and nobody knows their exact starting place. Our Air Force dropped thousands of tons of high explosives in an effort to annihilate probable doodle bases — the whole of northern France, part of Belgium as well as of Holland are now in our hands — yet the doodles keep on coming.

Many of us have heard the roaring of these flying bombs. An American journalist writing from London said: "It is a gloomy and dangerous weapon, and it is incomprehensible how anyone can help losing his nerve when these steel monsters approach."

Of late the enemy has used this arm successfully against troops in the front lines. It is also rumored that many other arms — even more violent — have been prepared. Since November V 2, a much more effective explosive has been put in action.



Cheerio! this hits the spot!

Rain, snow and cold

The European winter proves every day more severe than we expected it to be. The sufferings our men are put to is beyond imagination. It often happens that they can't change their wet clothes for several days. Then again they can't get any rest due to the fierce fighting of the Germans, and on top of all this the cold against which they are not sufficiently protected gives them plenty of trouble. These conditions have considerably slowed down our advance and have made us suffer severe reverses. During the attack on Walcheren Island and in the Scheldt area we lost, in a few days more than 1000 tanks, 15 to 20,000 men killed and twice this number wounded. At Aisla-Chapelle one of our fighting units was surrounded and scattered before help could be given. Above all, a great number of prisoners were lost.

The victory which, weeks ago, seemed to be so near is now in the far distance and we are looking forward to a fight in an adverse and intolerable climate, resulting in losses and privations. Let us remember a speech made by Lt. Gen. Ben Luss, Army Ground Forces Commander, at the end of September at Fort Benning, to future officers: "You can be assured of hard work and much suffering before your job is finished."



Japan is still on the map!

The correspondent on naval questions of the "Yorkshire Post" writes that one must not under-estimate the strength of the Japanese fleet. Japan has six big new battleships of 40,000 tons. This means that these ships outclass the "King George" of the British Navy and the six American battleships of 35,000 tons of the "Indiana" and "Washington" type.

The new special corps of the Japanese Air Army, the "Kamikaze" has just made its appearance on the Pacific front. The "Kamikaze" as has already been stated, is composed uniquely of pilots who voluntarily drive a one-man flying torpedo heavily charged with ex-

plodes, against the vulnerable point of a battleship or aircraft-carrier. The special communiqué issued on Oct. 15th by the Japanese Supreme Command states that this corps has already accounted for 3 aircraft-carriers, 1 cruiser, 1 transport, and has gravely damaged 1 aircraft-carrier, 1 ship of the line, 1 cruiser, and 1 transport.

The Japanese War Department published a statement according to which the Kippone, since their occupation of the former Dutch Colonies (Borneo, Java, Borneo, Celebes, etc.) in 1942, have, with the help of the natives, been successful in increasing economic production and bettering conditions of life.

Gen. Alexander makes excuses

General Alexander, Commander in Chief of the Anglo-American troops on the Italian front and to newspaper reporters recently: "Delay in our action in Italy is due to the loss of numerous divisions which had to be transferred to the French front. The enemy also has the advantage of troops using only one language whereas the Allied forces, in addition to Americans, Englishmen, Canadians, and New Zealanders, consist also of Frenchmen, Poles, Czechs, Greeks, Brazilians, Negroes and Indians."

Sees 4,000,000 Men

In Service After War

Sen. Robert D. Thomas (D-Utah), member of the Senate sub-committee on Army and Navy appropriations, predicted today that the U.S. would need at least 4,000,000 men in the armed forces for "five, eight or 10 years" after the war.

Under the circumstances, when can we expect to get rid of our uniforms and live back home with our dear ones as peaceful citizens?

Non-stop record of our long distance bombers

London Radio reports on Nov. 9th that American long distance bombers have bombarded Singapore, the capital of Malaya, for the first time, by flying 4,000 km. This is the longest distance allied bombers have ever come in a non-stop flight.

Two years ago Singapore was still the strongest sea and land fortress of the Britains in the Far East.

But since the Japanese have taken Malaya, with the fortress of Singapore, we are obliged to fly 4,000 kilometers to bombard this very important terrestrial and maritime base.

A life or death job

Those Jews have a job. It's a life or death job and they're doing it 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every week of the month.

(Stars and Stripes, Sept. 19, 44.)
Do people at home realize how cruel and pitiless war is, and what it means to fight not only against the stubborn resistance of the Germans but also against the nastiness of a climate, which we were not prepared for?

Did You vote Republican?

It's a strange coincidence that the two Democratic governments, Wilson's and F. D. Roosevelt's, both promised to keep America out of war; both got her into war, and both were and still are strongly tainted with Jewish influence.



Alfred still believes the fairy tale that he might soon be able to wear such civilian clothes...

Goebbels delivered more regularly than Stars & Stripes...

shadows crawling up the backslope to murder you in the dark. It was every man taking two messkits and three canteens down to chow and muttering 'Chow for two, water for three.' One of the less brilliant cooks couldn't figure how a 65 man company ate chow for 150. It was going all day with pants unbuttoned because our fingers were too numb to button 'em. It was looking up at Orion and Cassiopea through a hole in the trees and thinking of home. It was planning the menu of our first breakfast when we get back to the States. You heard me — WHEN we get back. It was making patrols down into the dark woods below our home in the sky. *We had one consolation: we didn't have to take any high ground — we WERE the high ground.*"

November 19th the gag about Sunny France came true and the valleys got a little sun. The 399th didn't feel it down in the deep woods of the Grand Reclos, though. The 117th Recon rolled into Neufmaisons and the Blue Battalion took hill 468 in the eastern wilds. The Air Corps had bragged that given two days of flying weather they would knock the Germans out of the war. The sun came out the 18th and 19th, a few Thunderbolts played tag in the sky, and the war went on. *The Infantry watched hopefully, and were unimpressed.*

"I'll never forget the afternoon Father Koszarek said Mass up there on a mountainside. The snow was falling thick through the pines and it looked like a misty cathedral. He used one of those K ration crates for an altar. *My knees got soaking wet.*"

... blasted roadblocks up the Plaine River Gap"



King Company's 3rd platoon on November 20th took three light tanks to push further into the weapons-bristling eastern heights. A sniper killed the tank commander, the tankers thought German grenades were Panzerfausts and took off, leaving King stranded. Sgt. Edward Rusinovitch boldly stood his ground firing his machinegun from the hip. Sgt. Thomas Sweeney, Vernon Long, and Robert Talbert took up the fire and King Company beat off the attack and pushed through to take the objective hill.

Baker Company pulled down off Tête des Reclos under terrific shelling, moved to capture La Trouche and plug up Shirmeck Pass to Strasbourg. Sgt. John Borders led a patrol across the Plaine River into the town, when enemy fire forced them to swim back. Lt. Altus Prince took the rest of Baker in the other end of town, and burning La Trouche fell during the night. Fox Company dug in on the northern bank of the Plaine to complete the stopper to Shirmeck Pass. The 325th Engineers removed a time bomb in the Shangri la Trouche sawmill and the 925th Artillery blasted enemy roadblocks back up the Plaine gap. *The Regimental front retained its general shape and the Joes read Herr Goebbels' Lightning News for diversion.*

After the 399th had smashed the winter line on November 16th, the Meurthe River Line collapsed completely. Crack VI Corps divisions poured across the River and drove eastward into the High Vosges toward the Alsatian Plain and the Rhine. The big boys said that resistance was crumbling on the 22nd. November 23rd Frigate relieved Franklin as the 399th came out of the woods for a Thanksgiving Dinner. Millions of letters and packages. Everybody got sick and happy.

Buddy System . . . friendship payed off





*Les Quevelles . . . Rockets fell
on Easy*

*Dog Company enters Shirmeck . . . Ruin today
followed by tomorrow*



. . . Scattering pockets of resistance

*"Forgers of glorious Vosges Vic-
tories" . . . pause to look over their
accomplishments*



"Hey, get a load of this, fellas. It's from my aunt. She says, 'My, isn't it wonderful that you boys can see so much of the world these days. It's really a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see the cultures and quaintness of the French'."

"Yeah, it's once in a lifetime all right," came a pfc's voice from behind a bottle of officer's cognac. "Now, like I wuz sayin', Lootenant —"

Night convoys hauled the 399th through Raon l'Etape and up the Rabodeau Valley toward the front where the 398th and 397th were pushing. In the early blackness of November 24th they passed through the other Regiments and at dawn jumped off toward Strasbourg. The Red Battalion kicked off up the picturesque swollen Bruche River Valley while the White Battalion attempted to keep pace over a rugged range of mountains on the left.

On the rainy morning of the 24th the 399th was once again plodding along under a fresh load of bandoliers and grenades.

The two scouts shuffled along the highway, half alert, half asleep.

"See those little guys running on the other side of the river?"

"Open your eyes, Buster, those longcoats are Jerries."

"Did we hit that guy or did he fall in a ditch?"

"My rifle drowned after one shot. 1000 yards is kinda long range, anyway."

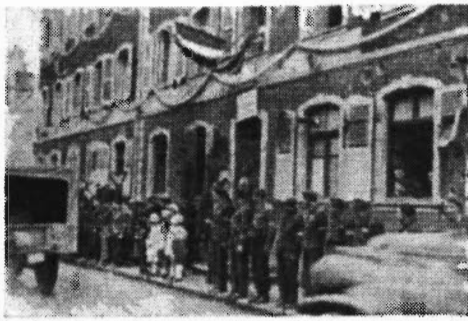
There were no organized lines of defense. Scattered pockets. A little encouragement and the stragglers headed for the Fodderland on the double. The Red Battalion raced 3rd Division tanks up the flooded valley into Rotheau. General Daniels, CG of the Marne Division, raised a howl that the 399th was taking towns in his sector so Baker Company pulled a night attack on Netzenbach to give the Red Raiders a home in their own Division sector.

Easy, Fox, and George drove across tall mountains on the left. The 2nd platoon of Easy was spearheading the White Battalion when they ran into an ambush in a narrow mountain pass outside Les Quevelles. Sgt. Peter Mazzucco took a combat patrol to try to wipe out the strongpoint but heavy machinegun fire broke up the patrol. Before the rest of the battalion could catch up with artillery support, the enemy threw in a rocket barrage which wiped out half the platoon. Pfc Theodore Scanlon, Cpl. Arthur Beuttner and Sgt. Roland Caron did great work during the night reorganizing the platoon and patching up the wounded, as the White Battalion lay out in the shelling and driving rain without foxholes. Easy jumped off in the morning and stormed into Les Quevelles capturing 30 Germans.

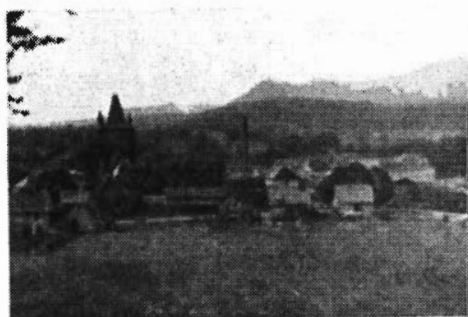
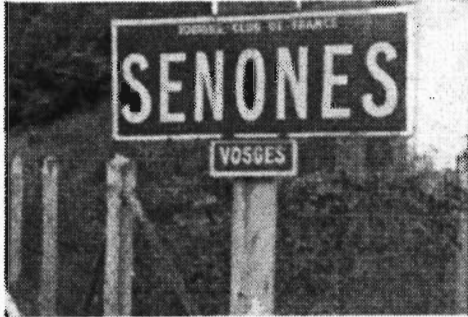
Sgt. Steinman was helping guard prisoners in rainy Rotheau. The German POW was telling what a rough time he had had in the German Signal Corps. He never should have been drafted with two sons in service. His punch line was "I'm too old. I am 41 years of age."

"I'm 47," said Sgt. Steinman, matter-of-factly.

George Company crossed the mountains to capture Wackenbach in a coordinated attack with the 14th Armored. Easy stormed into Framont, Fox grabbed off Vacquenox. *These towns were all on the Raon l'Etape-Strasbourg main drag and sealed off hundreds of square miles of round Vosges.*



"...Nothing but Tricolor flags waving everywhere"



The Red Battalion roared up the valley to overrun Shirmeck, Wisches, Lutzelhouse, Urmatt, Niederhaslach, Oberhaslach. Shirmeck sat at the strategic junction of the Plaine and Bruche river valleys, thus ended the threat of a German counter-attack from the east fanning out into these valleys.

The CG of VI Corps, General Brooks, commended the 100th Division enthusiastically for *".....first breaching the hinge of the German winter line (hill 431 and Tête des Reclos) ...and secondly capturing Shirmeck promptly blocking the enemy on the left..... Your fine Division has written a bright page in the military history of our armed forces."*

"So LeClerc's French 2nd Armored is responsible for this, eh?"

"Don't know how in hell they ever captured Strasbourg, but it's a worthy cause."

"I always did say the French were fast."

"Boy, my feet are burning up from this Rat Race and my head is hot from other things."

"You're merely schnapp-happy, m'boy. Tough life, nothing but Tricolor flags waving everywhere, French style kissing by everybody, le vin rouge in the canteen, champagne bottles among the grenades, apples in the ammo bag. Just a couple of big handsome Libérateurs."

"Is that anything like Saboteurs?"

"Trouble is the babies and grandmothers line up to kiss me while the gorgeous in-betweens are grabbing you."

"C'est la guerre, Tyrone."

The spirited foot cavalry of Colonel Zehner slashed ahead more like an armored division than a doughboy battalion. Charlie captured Heiligenburg at 1700, Able swarmed into Niederhaslach at 1715, Baker buttoned up Oberhaslach at 1800. Fifteen miles from Strasbourg and the Rhine. A night of relaxation. Waking up between clean sheets. *Footprints on the blankets.*

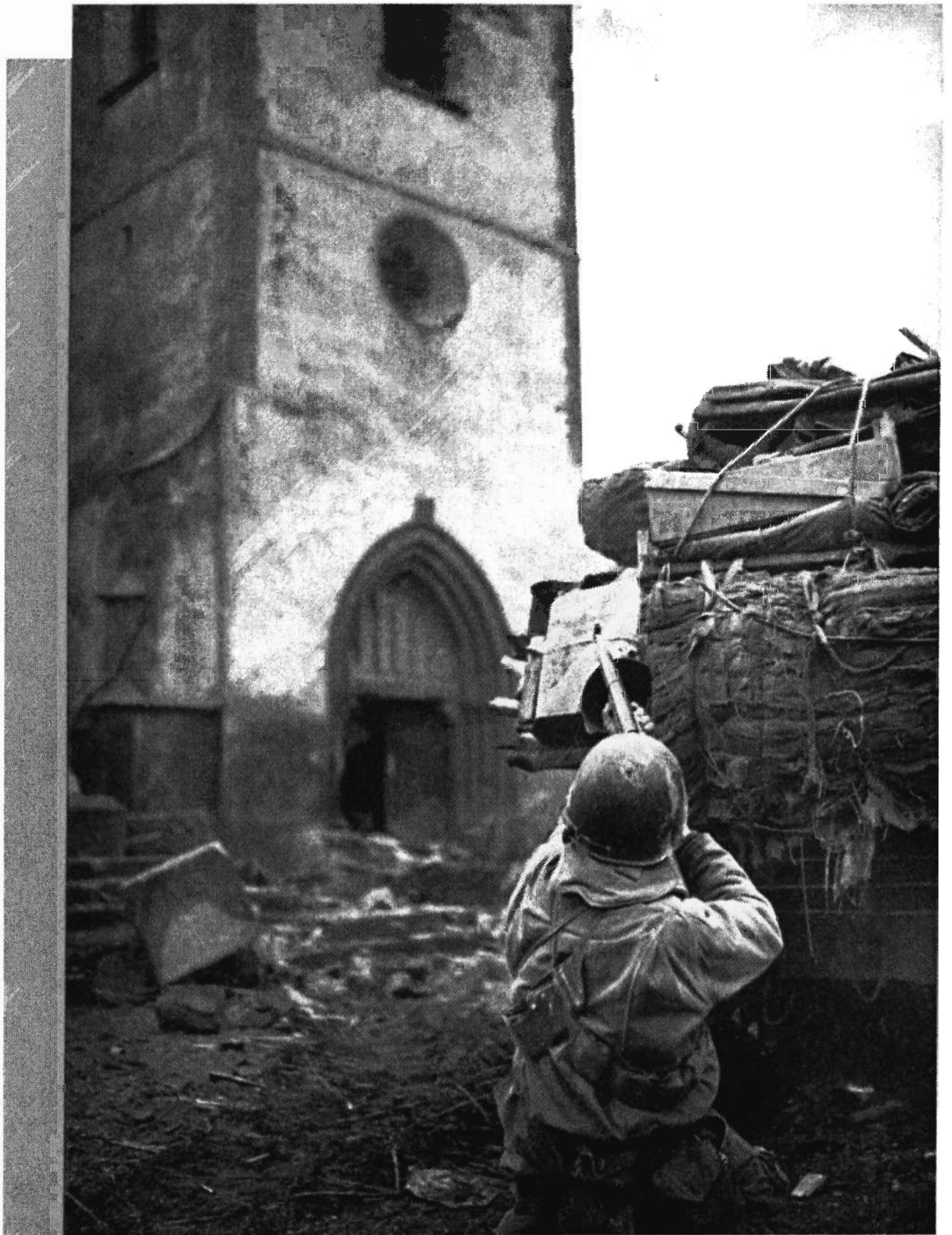
Early morning of the 26th the Blue Battalion raced up through Red and White beyond Oberhaslach and jumped off toward Strasbourg. The armor of the 3rd and 45th Divisions had cut us off, however, and a messenger was sent to recall the battalion. The Regiment moved back to Moyemoutier on the Rabodeau River awaiting assignment. November 28th we were transferred from the 6th Vosges-Breaching Corps to the 15th Maginot-Busting Corps.

"Baker buttoned up Oberhaslach"

T

he French rural scene...



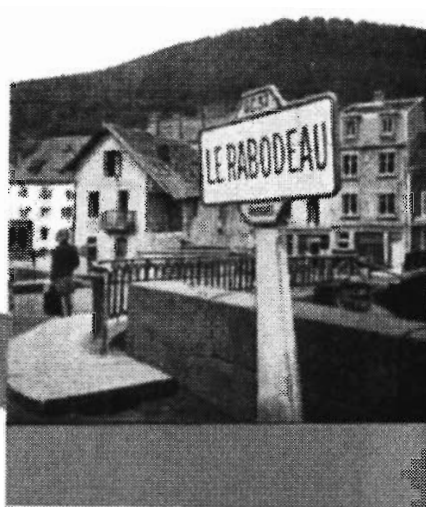


Give us this day...

"Vive l'Amerique et la France!"

Quarterbacks

"The Regiment pulled back to Moyennoutier on the Rabodeau River"



The 399th motored through Raon l'Etape and Baccarat up to Saarburg, 40 miles behind the 240 Hows.

"Outside the movie house in a little town near Saarburg, one Joe was sitting contentedly in the pouring rain listening to a phonograph some officer had rigged up. *They were playing 'I'll Be Seeing You'. It sounded swell.*"



2nd Lt. Rudolph Steinman receives DSC from General Wade Haislip for Tête des Reclos action...the Battlefield Commissions wore their bars in their pockets



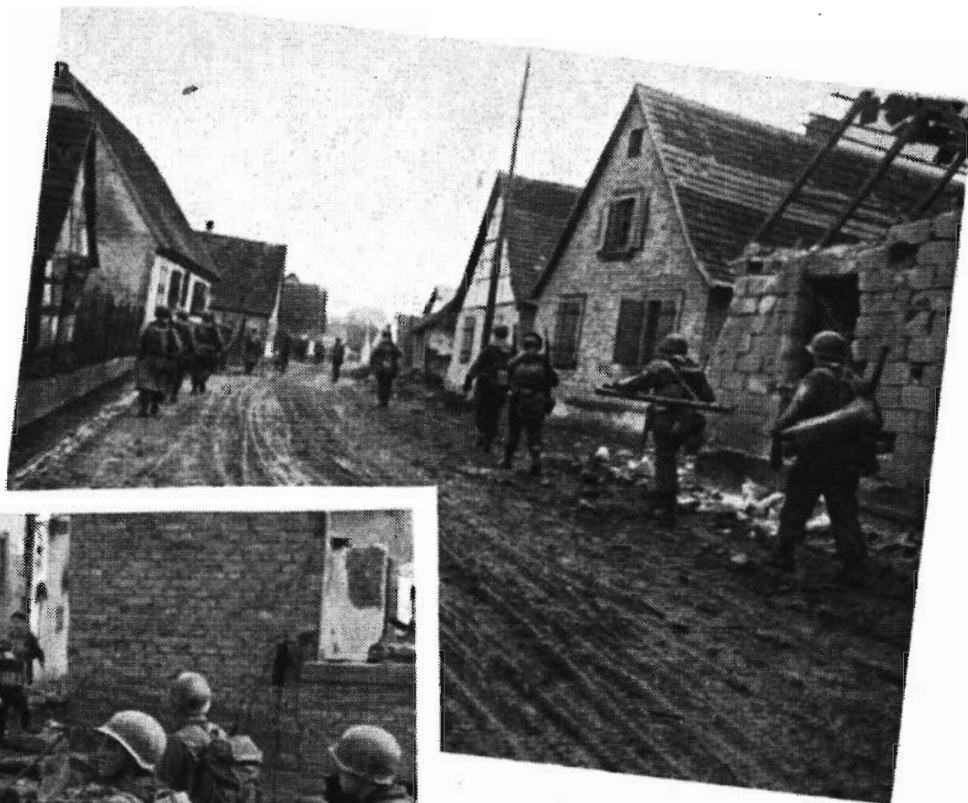


From November 28th to December 2nd Combat Team 399 stayed back in reserve as a reward for joining the 15th Corps. The other two Regiments drove northeast toward the Maginot while the 399th doughfeet holed up in Schneckenbush, Plaine de Walsch, and Bruderdorf, tiny French rural towns in the damp green valley of Saarburg. Writing Christmas cards, attending church, taking in a shower, a movie, a night's sleep, Johnny Burns' Division band...

"Whoopie! They're gonna raise all combat men who were privates up to pfc now. It's not so much getting the stripe, it's impressing these Frenchmen. *In Frog jargon a private is a 'simple soldat' and a pfc is a 'soldat de première classe'. It makes a difference.*"



"Long haphazard files of doughfeet ..."



"Motor March"

Joes found that their high school French was too correct for the Alsace-Lorraine Deutsch. The next campaign was mapped out: everybody got the big picture. Army to Corps, Corps to Division, Division to Regiment, Regiment to Battalion, Battalion to Company, Company to Platoon, Platoon to Squad, Sergeant to Private.

"Okay, fellas, here's the situation. There's a town up ahead called Lemberg and one behind it called Bitche. When we take those it'll straighten out the Western Front. Then we'll cross the Rhine and push into Berlin. Any questions?"

Everybody had the big picture.

At dawn of December 2nd, the 399th slogged northward across the Lorrainian Plains toward the little Vosges Mountains. Somewhere up ahead lay a Maginot and a Siegfried Line. Motor marches were the order of the day.

"Yeah, the brass motor and we march."

Long haphazard files of doughfeet shuffled through the gently rolling farmlands of Lorraine at a 10 yard interval.

"I always used to get a kick out of my history teacher. He was forever toying with a little hunk of land up in the corner of France, Alsace-Lorraine. Every war he'd bounce it back and forth like a chess pawn. I didn't give a casual damn at the time, but now the joke's



Wingen Railroad...the 3rd Battalion kicked off toward "Blown bridge in the road"...a battle started the Maginot

on us. *We just pushed the krauts out of Alsace, and here we are trying to chase 'em out of Lorraine. They can keep it as far as I'm concerned.*"

A column of Paddlefeet winding across Europe is a pretty uniform sight, but the Joes who make up the column are all different. Some wear field jackets, some raincoats, some overcoats. Every Joe has his own style for wearing grenades and bandoliers, and ammo bags. Every bedroll is slung at a unique angle. Guys carry rifles, or carbines, or bazookas, or tommyguns, or greaseguns, or BAR's, or machineguns, or mortars, or .45 pistols. The only similarity among Dog-faces are big Shoepaks and two pairs of pants which made everybody look like Mr. 5 by 5.

The doughfeet were too busy wondering whether they could last till the next break to enjoy the National Geographic countryside, the wayside crucifixes, the black and white cows, the barnyards full of chickens.

"Every time we spotted a Frog standing in his barnyard we tried to bargain with him for a couple of chickens. The Frenchies would always yell 'Pas les miens, pas les miens!' Once when the owner gave us that line that they weren't his we said 'Bon, monsyour, Bon!' and grabbed two. *Who said the bayonet was only a valuable weapon as a can opener?*"

The Regiment rolled northward for three days in the wake of the hard churning Division. Through Schalbach, Weckersviller, Sieweiler, Petersbach, Petit Pierre, Fromuhl, Moderfield, Puberg — French towns with German names. Horizontal rainstorms and groping 88's felt out the advancing 399th. The Blue Battalion sent combat patrols into the Fôret du Petit Pierre. *Finally the awaited order came: attack December 5th toward the Maginot.*

The Blue Battalion moved through the battered 398th in Wingen and jumped off to the north. Love pushed up the left side of the highway, Item slugged through woods on the right. The climbing highway suddenly left the woods and turned sharply past giant camouflaged pill-boxes and roadblocks to a skytop road junction. A panoramic countryside extended to the front. Down in a storybook valley to the left were the villages of Soucht and Meisenthal which the Germans abandoned tout de suite when the Blue Battalion came over the crest. To the front lay Goetzenbruck and behind that another town and another. The Lorraine horizons were lined by columns of sentinel poplar trees.

A heavy snow fell that afternoon as the Red Battalion moved up majestic Ingweiller Gap to Wingen and the White Battalion sent patrols to link up with the 44th Division pushing on our left.

"You know, this beautiful country couldn't just have happened this way. They musta had a priority with mother nature and she planned it all out to the inch."

"Yeah, Alsace-Lorraine sure is beautiful, but the French lost a postwar tourist when they made me fight here. One visit per country is par. What's that fancy name yuh use — Alsace-More Rain?"

The Blue Battalion dug in for the night awaiting the jumpoff against Goetzenbruck at dawn. Lemberg was only 6 kilometres. Where would the German make his stand? Would he make a stand?

Miles to the north at dawn two Wehrmacht staff officers stood on a thickly wooded hill behind Lemberg called Schlossberg. Peering through their special telescope out across Lorraine's scenic garden they watched a skytop road junction and its big pillboxes where the 3rd Battalion had stopped for the night. They counted the tiny shadows coming down the open ground in the early morning mist, still many miles away.

"Iss goot, mein Colonel, iss goot."

"Zih coment im Lemberg dees morgen, Major."

"Ya, ya," laughed the assistant commander, "Alles iss prima."

Down below in Lemberg all was feverish activity. Green clad columns shouldering .31 calibre machineguns and sniper rifles filed into the dense woods to the east of Lemberg. Ugly-nosed flak wagons rolled through the town and stopped on the far outskirts. Down beside Schlossberg in the Lemberg-Bitche cut rumbled an array of aryan armor — three panther tanks, longnosed 88's drawn by clattering horses, a dozen more flak wagons, armored cars. SP guns rolled up on Schlossberg, a machine gun battalion was digging in at all Lemberg street corners. The Major pointed out the defensive axis along the Enchenberg—Lemberg—Mouterhouse road. Zeroed in meadows, criss-crossing machine-guns, sweeping fields of fire for the ack ack guns being fired at Infantry.

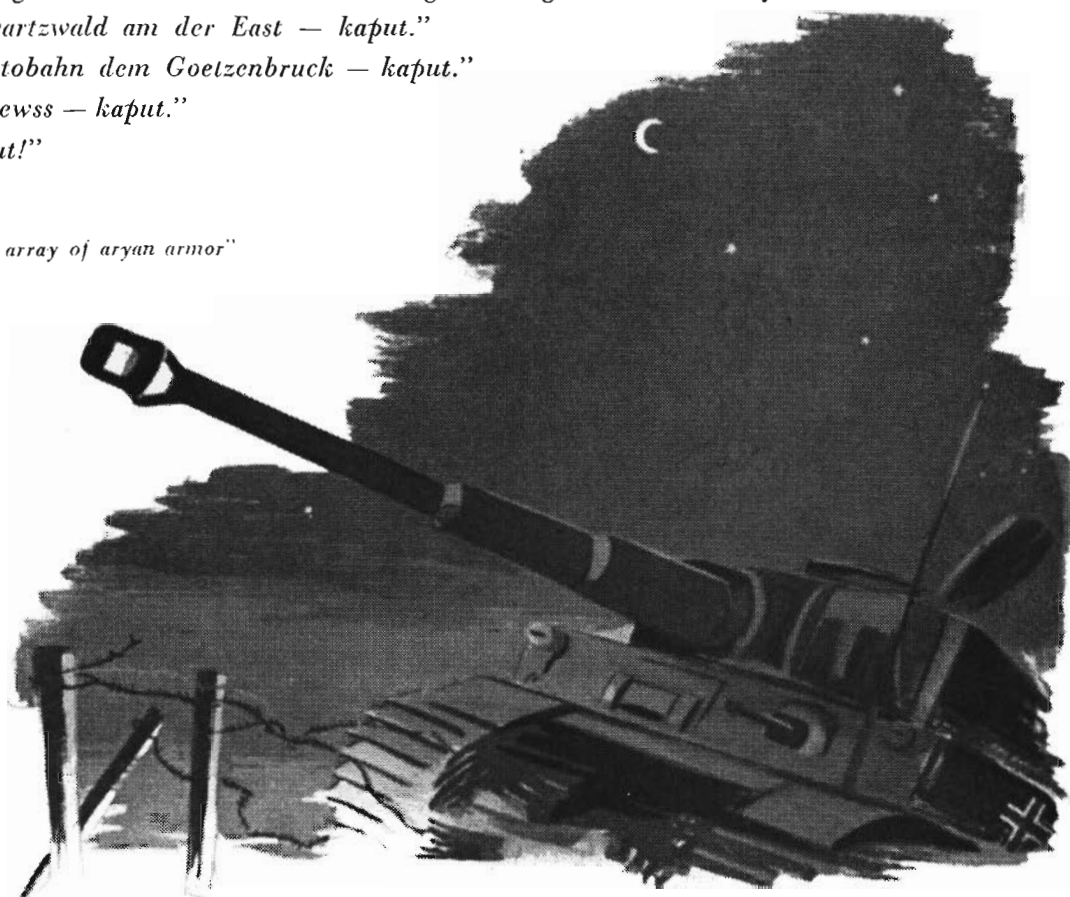
"Fum der Swartzwald am der East — kaput."

“Fum der Autobahn dem Goetzenbruck — kaput.”

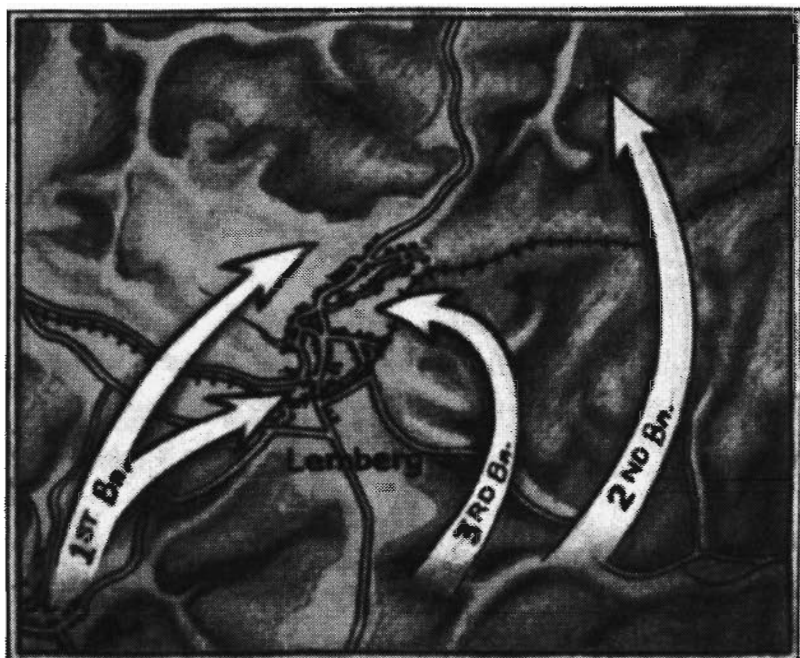
"Fum Zaint Lewss — kaput."

"Alles — kaput!"

"At dawn . . . an array of aryan armor"



"The Regiment threw a pincers attack at Lemberg"



The Major laughed heartily at the Colonel's joke as they got into their staff car and left Lemberg, the outpost of the reversed Maginot Line.

By 0915 the Blue Battalion had swept down from the high ground to capture the twin cities of Goetzenbruck and Sarreinsberg. The attack pushed right through toward Lemberg 3 kilometres up the road. One KM from Lemberg they ran into the stone wall — a blown bridge in the highway, enemy entrenched

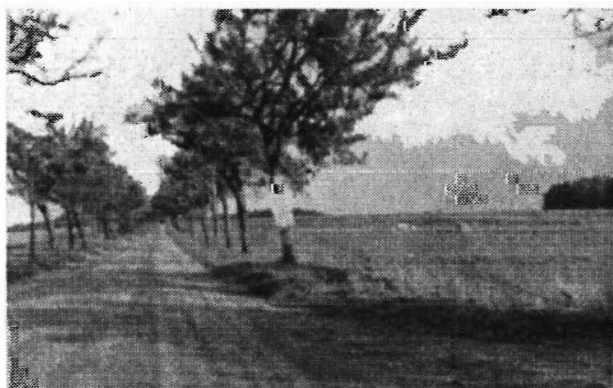
before the city. Mortars answered our rifle fire. The battalion dug in hurriedly, Love on the left in woods across an open field from the plateau city. King on the right of the road was receiving murderous artillery from Schlossberg behind the city. Item on the right flank was pinned beneath a withering umbrella of HE from Suicide Hill.

The Red Battalion moved up to Goetzenbruck and threw patrols out toward the 398th in St. Louis on the left and the 397th near Mortarhouse on the right. American 155's set Lemberg aflame. The Germans sent long whining salvoes of 88's tearing over the high ground into Goetzenbruck, plastered the line companies of the 3rd Battalion with mortars.

December 7th, 1944.

"Gee, whiz, it's the third anniversary of Pearl Harbor. We always attack either on a Sunday or a holiday. What a lousy day for a battle."

The Regiment threw a pincers attack at Lemberg. The Red Battalion was to sweep across



"At 0930 the assault wave crossed the Enchenberg—Lemberg road" ... 51 Bakermen fell by the wayside



"The Red Battalion threw patrols toward the 397th in Mouterhouse" . . . Americans pronounced it Mortarhouse

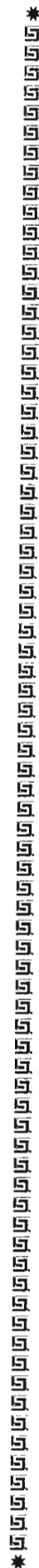
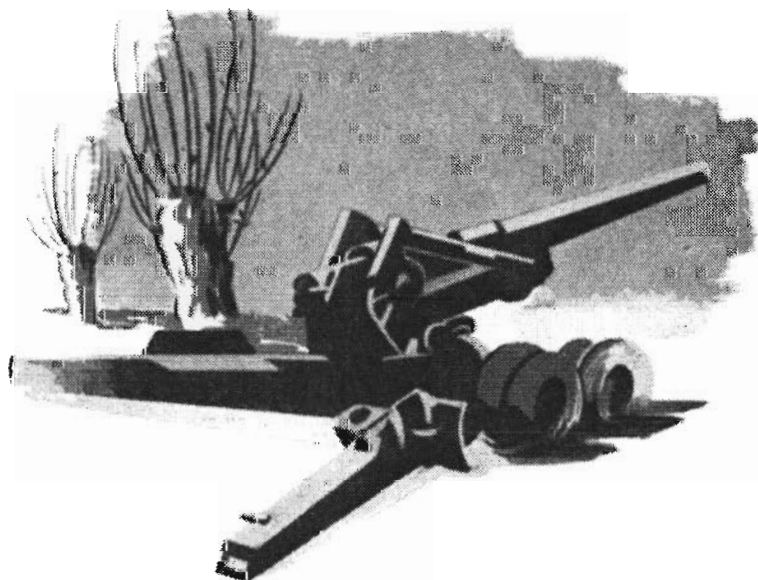
open ground on the left, the Blue Battalion was to drive around through woods on the right. Baker and Charlie jumped off behind five minutes of artillery softening.

"Men, my orders are to cross this open field and take the high ground beyond. Nothing in training ever justified such a move and it looks too peaceful to suit me. But orders are orders and I want every man behind me. 1st on my left, 3rd on my right, 2nd and 4th behind. Let's move out."

At 0930 the assault wave of Baker moved out of the Durrenwald woods and crossed the Enchenberg—Lemberg highway. At 0931 Charlie moved out on the right. At 0932 Able moved up out of the deep canyon from the famous glass-making village of St. Louis onto Christmas tree hill to secure the left flank of the Regiment.

"Hey, look at those guys walking across the field in skirmishers."

"Must be Baker or Charlie."



“T

hree times Itani assault troops tried to slug . . . Overhead, a heavy 50 spoke American fluently



*Suicide Hill . . . 70 Item infantrymen failed and fell
Railroad underpass in mid-Lemberg . . . Love led the way*

"And there are the rooftops of Lemberg behind them. Look at those big shells tearing apart the houses."

"Hey, listen to all that firing. What're those sharp cracking explosions?"

"The skirmish line disappeared. I don't see 'em in the field any more."

"Whew, lucky we're in reserve this morning. Let's get the company into these woods before they spot us."

For nine hours Baker and Charlie lay in the naked shrapnel-swept field under ceaseless machinegun, knee high 20mm fire, and SP guns flashing over on Schlossberg. They tried to fight back. Lt. Harry Flanagan and his six man platoon fought the machineguns until five were killed. Sgt. Charles Adamcek set up his MG in the open field, duelled and knocked out a flak wagon. Richard Jones and Russell Brayall strung a radio wire up to Captain Altus Prince in the midst of the shelling. Frank Rubino and Donald Taylor of Charlie crawled up to two flak wagons and captured them.

On the right King and Item attacked. *Three times Item assault troops tried to slug across the Lemberg—Mouterhouse road, and three times murderous small arms from Suicide Hill drove them back.* Joe Williams, Charles White, and Daniel Goodman led the attack across the fortified road when a death trap of machineguns opened up. King Company got across and drove a 400 yard bulge into the German lines, led by James Praley and Ralph Fortenberry under fanatical fire from deep ravines to the east of the city. King Company was finally forced to withdraw to the battalion line under threat of encirclement. A blockhouse opened up on Item with 20mm's.

All afternoon it rained and the two battalions lay out in the ceaseless shelling. Buffer Able Company cleared Christmas tree hill led by Woodrow Gilbert, Henry

*20MM flak wagon . . . "It was Infantry vs. Armor"
"A blockhouse opened up on Item . . ."*



Kiwior, Eugene Swartz, and Lester Fraley through bouncing betties, flak, and mortars. At dusk the handful of men that was Baker Company stumbled back to the woods dragging their wounded buddies with them. Then the enemy threw overhead 20's into the woods, small ugly black puffs which burst over the foxholes. Baker lost 51 men. Item lost 70. *The lucky guys were the ones who got wounded and evacuated.* Litters were scarce and many wounded lay in the icy rain all night. Some guys were paralyzed by morning.

December 8th was another third anniversary — our declaration of war on Germany. Battle plans were changed and the 2nd Battalion was thrown in, to cross the Lemberg—Mouterhouse road to the east of Lemberg, bust through a rugged range of hills to cut the Lemberg—Bitche RR and highway. That would cut off the city and allow the Red and Blue Battalions to storm into Lemberg from the South.

The White Battalion kicked off early on the 8th, George Company outflanking Suicide Hill and Fox Company overrunning it. The battalion drove relentlessly through the fire-sprayed forest across four hills to breach the Lemberg—Bitche railroad. Thick flak and machinegun fire halted the attack.

Love Company spearheaded the 399th into Lemberg, when they made a dash from the eastern woods to reach the RR underpass in the center of town in midafternoon. The Railroad was the German MLR.

"Lt. Taylor's 3rd platoon reached the RR embankment and Lt. MacDonald's 2nd platoon dashed up a draw to hit the railroad on the right.



"The lucky guys were the ones who got wounded and evacuated" . . . the Infantry became a religion

*Sherman wheeling through Lemberg
... Southerners noted a parallel*

Charley Goldman stuck his head over the embankment and got hit by a machinegun bullet. Sgt. John Butler tried to lead the 2nd across the tracks but didn't make it. They were firing a hail of 20 millimeter stuff and machineguns up and down the tracks. *The only possible way into Lemberg was through that underpass and the Germans knew it.* A bunch of krauts



came charging through the underpass and we wiped 'em out with guns and grenades — Harvey Rohde, Al Lappa, and Bob Binkley shot up plenty. *George Demopoulos of the Medics amputated a Mike boy's arm under fire.* Then two mortars were rushed up behind the RR embankment and set up like Infantry crossed-rifles, each firing a different direction. John Khoury crawled up on the tracks and directed fire to knock out a flak wagon and a machinegun. Then we opened up with everything we had, charged through the underpass, and made a dash for the first couple houses of Lemberg."

At twilight, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were working on the Railroad.

At dusk the Red Raiders stormed into Lemberg from the south with four Shermans from the 781st Tankers. A heavy smokescreen hung over Charlie and Able Companies as they charged across open fields into the blazing city. Lt. William Kizer's spearhead tank roared up the steep St. Louis—Lemberg road and busted into town with Charlie; the other three Shermans were blown up by mines. Charlie smashed ahead in a house-to-house campaign with the Sherman whanging 75's into cellars and the doughboys taking care of the upstairs with grenades. Able swept around to enter Lemberg from the east.

A hunched up shadow with a rifle sprinted up a narrow alley between a flaming house and a low wall. At the end of the alley the opening was bright as day as a fiery barn across the street illuminated the bullet-raked main drag. He peered around the corner of the building, looked up and down the street, pulled his head back in when a burpgun zipped.

"I don't see no Charlie Company who're supposed to meet us here at the center of town, Cap'n, but I don't think we're alone."

A chain of tracers chipped off the corner of the wall next to his head, in confirmation.



Major Bernard Lentz of the Red Battalion and Lt. Bennett Taylor of the Blue Battalion held a midnight powpow as the two battalions joined forces in burning Lemberg.

*"Charlie smashed ahead in a house-to-house campaign"
... the conquest was a bitter anti-climax*

In the woods to the East of Lemberg, Fox Company pushed across the fortified railroad. Captain Newton Heuberger sent out a call for flank support, tanks, anti-tank guns: he got nothing. Alert to the tremendous danger of their exposed position, Lt. Caspar Breckinridge, Sgts Francis Schilberger and Robert White kept every foxhole awake and alert during the night.

At 0500 of December 9th the first of four hit-and-run flak attacks struck when a 20mm wagon rumbled up to the foxholes. Cpl. Steve Balchunas was killed duelling the armored car with his bazooka. Two more scouting attacks with three flak guns and a light tank, and when no anti-tank or tank fire challenged them they grew bolder.

At dawn Pfc Marvin Wilkes' bazooka was knocked out and it was infantry against armor. The crusher came when 80 German infantry with 20mm armored wagons stormed the two platoons firing flak into foxholes. Lt. Breckinridge's 1st platoon put up a valiant fight but were virtually wiped out. Sgt. Louis Snyder charged forward to destroy a burp gunner who had Lt. Duncan Emery pinned, and some of the 2nd platoon escaped.

Fifty-five men were hit before Fox Company finally drove the attack to the flanks. Easy and George reattacked, Easy crossing the tracks on the right and George going after Hochfirst hill on the left. Captain Richard Howard led Easy across the tracks.

"Captain Howard knew what had happened to Fox Company that morning, and his mission was to cross the same railroad. He didn't ask for any volunteers to lead — he was first scout, crossing the RR gap with carbine in one hand and map in the other and striding fearlessly into the woods on the other side. *All of a sudden the woods were filled with the chattering of machineguns and a runner had to go up to bring back the map from the dead Captain.*"

"Four flak wagons came roaring down a firebreak from left to right flitting from tree to tree across the company front like four clay pigeons in a shooting gallery. They were only 75 yards away and would have wiped out the whole company except we were lying in the defilade of the railroad. Charles Boyce blasted one with an anti-tank grenade and Theodore Brundidge stood up and riddled the fleeing crew with his BAR. The other three wagons ran off after that."

The Germans had prepared an ambush for George Company on Hochfirst, but a terrific Corps 155 preparation set two flak wagons on fire and George stormed up onto Hochfirst taking 20 prisoners.

In Lemberg a hit-and-run German patrol had captured Love Company's machinegun platoon during the night. In early morning Item Company, 42 strong, moved into Lemberg as the final push to root the fanatical enemy from the city began. King and Love attacked the fortified houses of hill 423 behind the flak tower against heavy machinegun and 20mm fire. *Sgt. John Rode, who was later to become an officer at 19, routed and captured 12 krauts who had pinned down his platoon. King Company mopped up the stronghouses atop 423, with Lt. Warren Behrens receiving the DSC for leading his 1st platoon to destroy a key machinegun nest.*

The Red Battalion jumped off with Shermans in mid-afternoon to clear the heavily fortified main drag. Tanks belched fire into every house, then the doughfeet went in shooting. Sgt.



"George stormed up onto Hochfirst (high firs) Hill . . . " Flak tower on Hill 423 . . . King checkmated Lemberg

James Langridge of Able Company charged up to a fortress house, kicked brush in front of the door to distract the enemy's attention inside, and then went through a window with his Thompson blasting, destroying the occupants.

Snow flurries threw a sound blanket over Lemberg's chaos as the entire city was mopped up and prodded files of gray clad prisoners were sent to the rear. At the outskirts of Lemberg, the courageous Shermans didn't stop, but plowed ahead into the middle of the retreating Germans. They shot up a dozen flak wagons and 88's as well as enemy infantry digging in. Pfc Ray Carlson of the Love Company medics went out front to patch up one of the tankers. The battle of Lemberg was over.

The 399th had destroyed all enemy resistance around Lemberg, and December 10th the 398th Infantry marched up through the snow of Lemberg to chase the enemy into his Maginot Line. Red pulled back to St. Louis, White went to Goetzenbruck, and Blue outposted the high ground around Lemberg.

"Never expected to get on such a nice warm floor again."

"Nope. Hope the replacements come soon. It's kinda lonesome with just you and me in the squad."

"So the 398th pushed through us to take up the attack."

"Don't worry, they'll call us when they need us."

They did.

