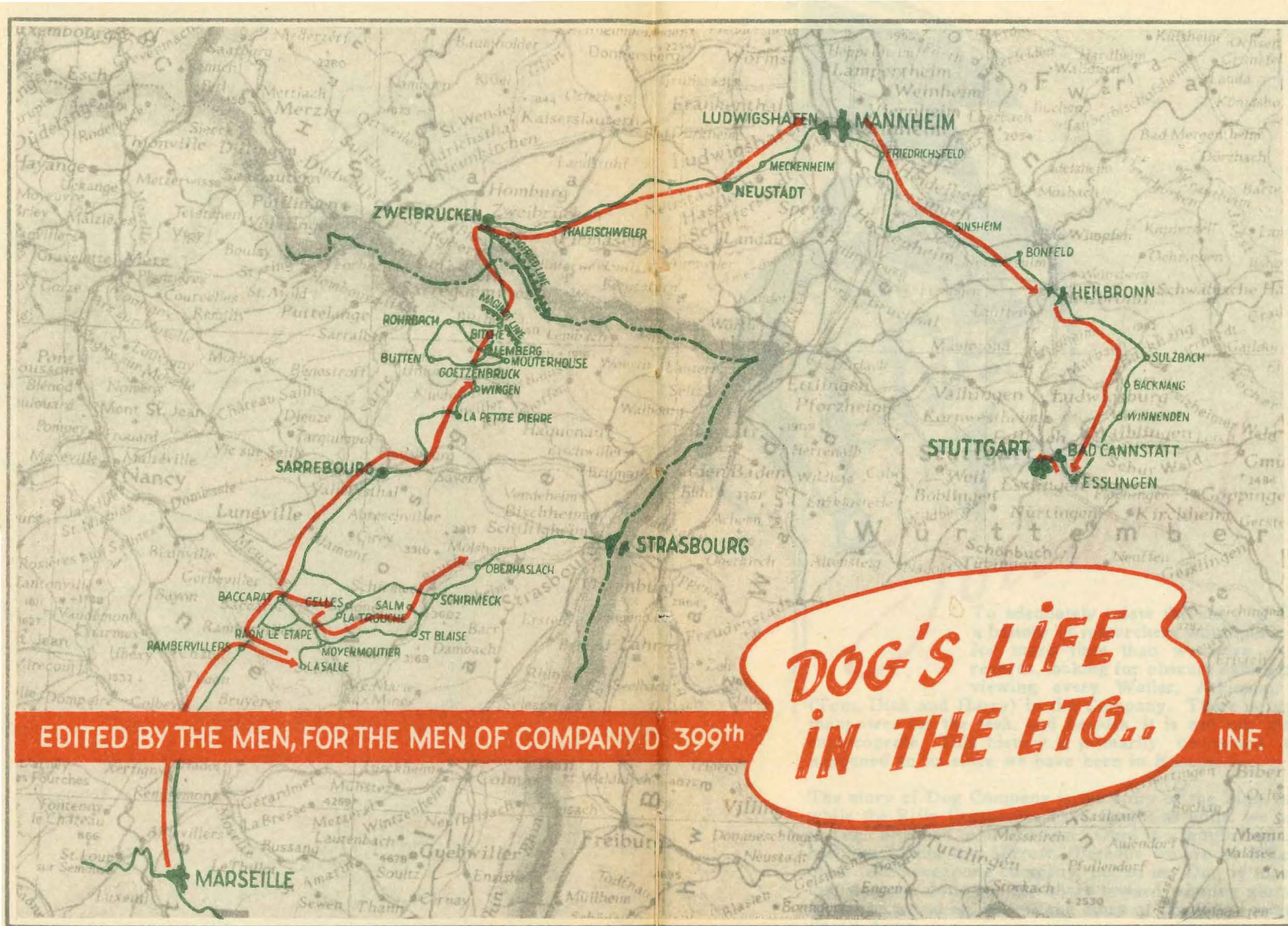




COMPANY **D** 399TH INFANTRY

PRINTED IN GERMANY



EDITED BY THE MEN, FOR THE MEN OF COMPANY D 399th

INF.

DOG'S LIFE
IN THE ETC..



Foreword

To adequately relate the story of Dog Company, a battery of researchers would have to slave away for more time than we have — delving into records, looking for obscure names on maps, interviewing every Waller, Atkinson, and Garman (Tom, Dick and Harry) in the Company. There is neither time nor manpower for the task, and besides, it is not our aim to write an encyclopedia. This history is primarily concerned with what has happened to us since we have been in Europe.

The story of Dog Company is the story of the First Battalion — for while the Rifle Companies have fought as units, we have supported or been attached to all of them. Ours is a lengthy tale, full of action heroism, humor and sorrow. Perhaps we are no different than any other heavy-weapons company, but to us, Dog is tops; and we feel that we have done our full share toward winning glory for the First Battalion. And so, here is the story of the finest company in Uncle Sam's Army — — — — —

HEADQUARTERS FIRST BATTALION 399TH INFANTRY
US ARMY
APO 447

26 August 1945

TO: Officers and Men of Company D, 399th Infantry.

The hopes and desires of a commander are fulfilled only on completion of the mission, through the untiring efforts of the fighting men who compose a command. In you, and through your fearless and devoted courage, my hopes and desires have materialized into a unified, spirited, fighting organization, of which I shall ever be proud and for which I am ever grateful. To each of you in Company D, I extend my sincere appreciation. GOOD LUCK AND GODSPEED to you.

E. M. Zehner
E. M. ZEHNER
Lt. Col., 399th Inf.
Commanding.

COMPANY D 399TH INFANTRY
US ARMY
APO 447

25 August 1945

TO: Officers and Men of This Company.

I find words a poor medium of expressing my sentiment for the whole-hearted loyalty and devotion to duty, which has ever been present-- I know at the outset that there will be more unwritten than written of my true regard for you. Our task has been long and arduous, and at times almost unbearable, and through it all, your will-to-do and stamina has met the situation; the unflinching co-operation of every one has made our Company one well to be proud of. To climax my service in the Army, I could not have asked for a more pleasant command. I extend my sincerest wishes for a long, prosperous, and happy future for each of you.

William E. Hallman
WILLIAM E. HALLMAN
Captain, 399th Inf
Commanding



Phase I...

"I AM READY"

That the Hundredth Division came into being at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, in October of 1942 is of little interest to most of us. Long before we came overseas, most of the men of Dog Company had been sent to the ETO as replacements. Only forty-five of the original men came over with the Company. Of that number, nine were dropped from the roster while we were in combat, and our recent transfers have further depleted that group. Those who joined the Company at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in the Spring and Summer of 1944 now consider themselves the "Old-Timers". From ASTP, the Air Corps, Barrage Balloons, and God only knows what else we came. We were the skeptics who used to say, "The Century Division is a training outfit; we may go overseas, but not as a division". Were we fooled! When the Division sent a provisional battalion to New York City to inaugurate the Fifth War Loan drive, Dog Company was well-represented among the Centurymen who marched down Fifth Avenue. When the Army awarded the first Expert Infantry Badges, Aaron Rogers upheld the honor of Dog. A show outfit, that's what we were — — — — —.

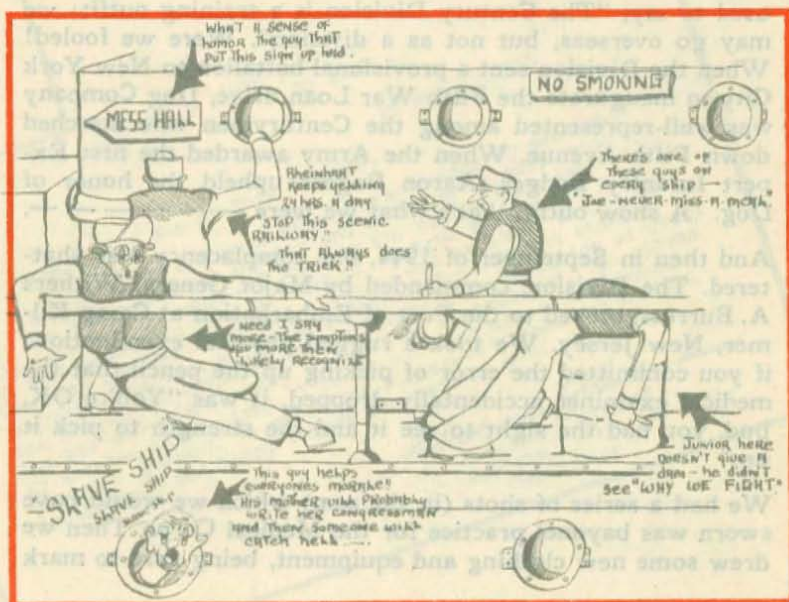
And then in September of 1944, our complacency was shattered. The Division, commanded by Major General Withers A. Burress, moved to the Port of Embarkation at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. We took a rugged physical examination; if you committed the error of picking up the pencil that the medical examiner accidentally dropped, it was "You're OK, bud, you had the sight to see it and the strength to pick it up."

We had a series of shots (in the arm) which we would have sworn was bayonet practice for the Medical Corps. Then we drew some new clothing and equipment, being sure to mark

each item just so. Of Course, we got a world of good out of that when we got over here and our clothes were turned in to RSO — — — after that, they were either too big or too small! After a few days of crawling around on rope ladders, seeing training films and shooting craps, we crammed ourselves into a train and rode to Pier 48 at New York Harbor. After a shot of Red Cross coffee and a chocolate bar, we hoisted our duffelbags over our shoulders and up the gang-plank we went.

The good Ship USS McAndrew was our boat, as trim a craft as ever hauled a hog or tugged a liner into port. Our sturdy puddle-jumper lay serenely at anchor as we boarded, and soon took on the aspect of a sardine can, we were so tightly packed. At least, we were on the promenade deck rather than crammed into the hold. For two days we were in New York Harbor, and 6 October, 1944, we weighed anchor and said "Good-bye" to the Lady with the Torch.

Dog Company, commanded by Captain Condee C. Nason, served as the MP contingent for the trip. The four-hour



shifts grew tiresome, but we managed to avoid KP, and could go to the head of the chow-line. But the guard duty was pleasant in comparison with some aspects of the trip. The crowded holds, the foul odors were as nothing in comparison with the "rollin', rockin', rhythm of the waves". To that insidious motion, many of us succumbed. We lined the rails to feed the fish. Of course, you would have to look a long time to find a more abject mass of protoplasm than poor "Tiny" of Charlie Company, but many of us remember that Roland Jenkins, tried to jump overboard, and swore that he'd go home via Siberia. After a few days of combat, most of us would have chanced swimming back.

The trip was pleasant except for a few days of rough weather that turned our boat into a bobbing chip on the waves. Our first sight of land was the barren cliffs of North Africa, and soon we passed through the Strait of Gibraltar, slipping past the Rock at night. We had more rough weather, and again the men headed for the rails. The sea had thoroughly shivered our timbers and scuttled our scuppers when, on the 20th of October, we sighted the beautiful harbor of Marseille. We were convinced that all land is beautiful.

The French gave us a rousing welcome, almost from the time we left the boat. From all sides came the cry with which we soon became familiar and which we haven't escaped yet: "Cigarettes for papa", "Chocolate for mama", "Chewin'-gum for babee"! That was the battle-cry which has plagued us across Europe.

What a night that first one ashore was! Under full hump, we marched in the blackness for miles and miles. We were startled by anti-aircraft fire. Ben Hellard managed to do a backward-somersault and a ten-foot drop through some brush, which got him out of some subsequent training and did our morale no good that night. We finally reached our area, the spot where we were to spend the next eight days. The baptism we got at that mud-hole helped us to understand why the veterans of the last war speak so cynically of "Sunny France", and why the French are called "Frogs". If our tents had had floors, they would have been house-boats.

On some days, the sun shone and the mud hardened until it was only knee-deep; then we went on practice marches. We were killing time while our equipment was being assembled, most of the time being spent hauling fire-wood to keep from freezing. Most of us visited historical Marseille, France's second-largest city, and although there was little to eat there we enjoyed the visit. The French method of making love proved interesting to some, and to the curious and inveterate sight-seers, the ancient city was one of the most fascinating spots we have visited since we've been over here. Perhaps the impression is so strong because it was the first.

On the 29th of October, the 399th Infantry, commanded by Colonel (now Brigadier General) Andrew C. Tychsen, pulled up stakes and headed north for combat. We had a three-day ride through the Rhone and Saone River Valleys, spent our nights near Valence, Dijon, and Fremifontaine, in Alsace-Lorraine. We were attached to the veteran 45th Division, part of the Seventh Army, for orientation and our baptism. Yes, this was it, and we now appreciated our once-detested months of training, which made our Regimental Motto, "I AM READY", justified.





Phase II...

VOSGES VARIETIES

We had established a record for leaving the States and getting into the fight — — only twenty-five days; and although we still sneer at some other outfits and call them Snafu, we were a green, scared bunch ourselves when we first went on the line. However, we learned quickly. The Battalion's first casualty was a Baker Company man, shot by a fellow-guard. We were itchy-fingered, and everything that moved was an enemy. We soon got a chance to apply our training on the Jerries and the mountains and forests around La Salle and St. Remy formed a tough proving-ground. Our job was to crack the German's Winter Line in the Vosges Mountains, which was intended to keep us from breaking into the Alsatian Plain and reaching the Rhine.

La Salle and St. Remy-

No sooner did we go on the line than we discovered that the weather is almost as bad an enemy as the Krauts. The first few days of combat were comparatively quiet, but rain made mud-baths of the foxholes, and we began to agree with Sherman that "War is Hell". The First Platoon, commanded by Lieutenant Vosberg, was attached to Charlie Company; the Second Platoon, commanded by Lieutenant Kouw, was attached to Able Company, and the Third Platoon, commanded by Lieutenant Schrader, positioned its mortars in a meadow.

Things happened fast and furiously; three days after going

on the line, the Battalion was ordered to take La Salle and the neighboring town of St. Remy. This was our first attack, and we found that confusion reigned. Having been used to only training attacks with time for coordination and a briefing on the enemy, we were a little bewildered at having to make an attack, knowing nothing of the whereabouts of the enemy, or even of our flank units. Yes, confusion reigned, and we later learned that this was the usual, rather than the unusual situation. On the Third of November, we moved into La Salle with little opposition. We began to feel a bit cocky. To get into St. Remy, only a few kilometers distance, we had to cross open ground. It was there that the Krauts pinned us down with artillery and mortar fire; our artillery countered, but it was night before we were able to move into St. Remy, and we found that the Krauts had good observation on the town. The Third Platoon moved into the town on the night of the 4th of November and we all began to get a taste of what lay ahead. We threw away the manual and began to learn what war is like from Professor Experience. We saw our first dead Krauts, and we got our first real taste of being shelled and shot at by the enemy — with the stark realization that someone might get hurt in this war. We also began to get the idea that there would be lots of hungry days ahead; there were fewer chickens in St. Remy when we left. There were also fewer Dog Company men, for the Heinies had got our range. Among the first men to receive the unwanted Purple Heart were West, Gasparre, Heimbaugh, Matthews, Aronsen, Sanson, and Hellard. Before the war had ended, our list of casualties was a long one.

After a week on the line, the First Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Elery M. Zehner, was placed in regimental reserve in a wooded area not far from La Salle. We moved in at dusk, and dug in. The next day, the area turned out to be a mighty poor site for a Rotary Club outing. The Krauts had planted mines all over the place, and there were several men of the Red Battalion who drove over or stepped on them. Private Manson of the First Platoon stepped on a Schu-mine and nearly lost a foot; the medic who went to

his aid also stepped on one. Thereafter, we dreaded and respected this insignificant, unimposing weapon of the Krauts, which gave no warning before striking, and which left one maimed for life. The first Platoon also lost Lieutenant Vosberg, who twisted a trick knee and was evacuated. Lieutenant Yeamans, mortar section-leader, took command of the Platoon. We were much relieved to leave that area! Up until this time, the 399th had been the only regiment of the Hundredth on the line. On the tenth of November, we moved north to the vicinity of Baccarat to go on line as part of the Division. We spent a couple of days in some sparse woods near Baccarat, and our morale went up some when we heard that the Krauts hadn't been putting up much opposition in this sector. As usual, we were whistling in the dark. We learned, to our regret, that the Heinies had plenty in that sector. It was also here that we began a four-month battle with the "G-I's", spearheaded by Sam Resnick. Between this morbid affliction, the weather and the Germans, we were in for a rough session in the Vosges.

Little Anzio

Every outfit has one hill which long remains the topic of conversation, and which is never completely dismissed from memory. For us, it was Hill 462.8 on the map, but known to us as Hill 409, or "Little Anzio". It was for this action that the "Red Raiders" recieved the Presidential Unit Citation, the highest award which can be awarded to a unit for action in combat.

The attack started on the morning of 16 November, 1944, after the Heinies had lambasted us with a terrific mortar and artillery barrage. It was during this barrage that PFC. George Kincaid of the First Platoon was killed, bringing sorrow to all of us who knew and liked him so well. We countered with a fifteen minute artillery concentration of our own, an then jumped off. Able Company, with the Second Platoon attached, spearheaded the attack, followed by Baker Company and the First Platoon, with Charlie Company in reserve. As we soon found out, it would have been

By Direction of the President.

HEADQUARTERS 100TH INFANTRY DIVISION
Office of the Commanding General
APO 447, U. S. Army

GENERAL ORDERS)
NUMBER 206)

23 July 1945

BATTLE HONORS - CITATION OF UNIT

By direction of the President, under the provisions of Section IV, Circular Number 333, War Department, 1943, and with the approval of the Army Commander, the following named organization is cited for outstanding performance of duty in action:

THE FIRST BATTALION, 399TH INFANTRY REGIMENT is cited for outstanding performance in combat during the period 16 November 1944 to 17 November 1944, near Raon L'Etape, France. Overlooking the important Muerthe River City of Raon L'Etape, in the thickly forested foothills of the Vosges Mountains, is a hill-mass known as Tete Des Reclus. That high ground, affording perfect enemy observation, barred an assault upon the vital communications city. On the rainy morning of 16 November, the First Battalion launched an attack to clear the enemy from these strongly fortified hill positions. Fighting through the dense pine forest under intense enemy artillery, mortar, machine gun and automatic weapons fire, the First Battalion, after three hours of effort, drove across a trail circling the base of the hill-mass. A withering, forty-five minute artillery preparation at this point proved ineffective against the deep, concrete and log covered enemy bunkers built into the side of the hills, and it soon became evident that basic infantry assault was the only feasible method for driving the enemy from their positions. In a fierce, close-in, small arms fire fight, which increased in fury as they climbed the precipitous slopes, the First Battalion wormed their way toward the top of Hill 462.8, key to the enemy's defenses. Battling against fanatical enemy resistance, they finally reached the crest. Bitter, hand-to-hand fighting developed as the enemy hurled repeated counter-attacks against the inspired infantrymen. Once the First Battalion was driven from the hill-top, but rapidly regrouping, they regained their positions. At dark, the enemy finally withdrew, leaving the First Battalion in possession of high ground. Throughout, supplies had to be hand carried up the steep slopes under continuous enemy fire. Only the teamwork, coordination and determination of all elements in this heroic Battalion, made the success of this attack possible, opening the gateway through the Vosges Mountains to the Alsatian Plains beyond.

BY COMMAND OF BRIGADIER GENERAL MURPHY:

J. O. KILGORE
Colonel - GSC
Chief of Staff

OFFICIAL:

/s/ Byron C De La Mater
/t/ BYRON C DE LA MATER
Lt Col AGD
Adjutant General

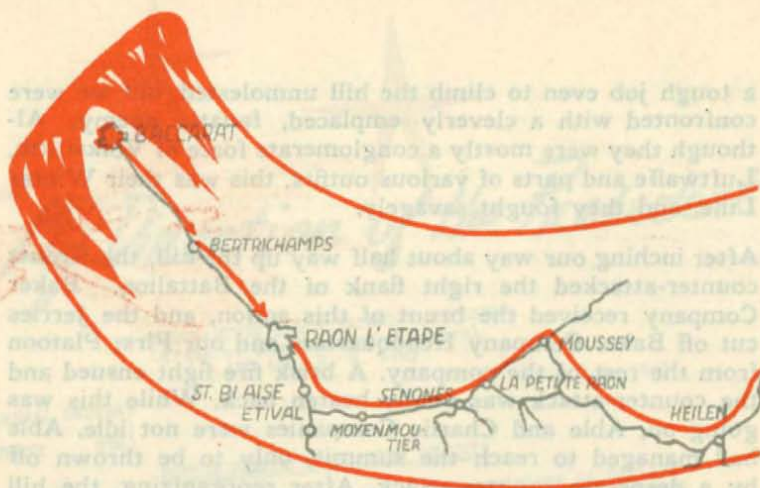
Reproduced: Hq 1st En 399th Inf 7 Aug 45.

a tough job even to climb the hill unmolested, but we were confronted with a cleverly emplaced, fanatic enemy. Although they were mostly a conglomerate force of Volksturm, Luftwaffe and parts of various outfits, this was their Winter Line, and they fought savagely.

After inching our way about half way up the hill, the Krauts counter-attacked the right flank of the Battalion. Baker Company received the brunt of this action, and the Jerries cut off Baker Company Headquarters and our First Platoon from the rest of the company. A brisk fire fight ensued and the counter-attack was finally beaten back. While this was going on, Able and Charlie Companies were not idle. Able had managed to reach the summit, only to be thrown off by a desperate counter-attack. After reorganizing, the hill was retaken and remained in our possession only because Able Company and our Second Platoon refused to give ground against repeated counter-attacks by the enemy.

As soon as the initial counter-attack hit Baker Company, Charlie Company started around their left flank and knocked out a machine-gun position which, along with the counter-attack, had split Baker Company. The First Platoon and the rest of Baker Company joined Charlie Company and continued up the hill-mass with them. By the middle of the afternoon, the Red Battalion had completely occupied the position and Hill 462.8 was ours. This enabled the 397th to take the near-by city of Raon L'Etape, which resulted in passage through the Rabodeau and Plaine River Valleys, and entrance into the Alsation Plain. The Second Platoon moved into the fallen city, while the First and Third Platoons moved into La Trouche, on the 399th's left flank. There, we celebrated Thanksgiving by eating our best meal up to that time.

The mission, completed successfully, proved our prowess. It was only possible through the combined efforts of everyone concerned; the drivers and some of the mortar-men performed the hazardous job of taking supplies and rations up to the embattled Red Raiders, and the Medics did an outstanding job of evacuating and caring for the wounded.



And, in the action just ended, Dog Company had it's share of heroes. Dick Atkinson, then a section-sergeant in the Second Platoon, and Frank Fischl, then a squad-leader, broke up a German counter-attack by firing a dismounted machine-gun from the hip. Dick picked up the gun and sprayed the on-rushing Krauts, while Frank fed after belt of ammunition. There were many casualties among enemy troops and their attempt to regain the ground failed. For their part in this action, Atkinson and Fischl received the Silver Star.

The Dog Company hero who really made the big-time was the Second Platoon's Tech Sergeant (later Lieutenant) Rudolph Steinman. Known affectionately by his men as "Pop", Steinman's action was cited thusly in the Century Division's booklet: "The 46-year-old Chicagoan, commissioned on the battlefield, maneuvered along to the enemy flank during a company approach march, fired his carbine into a machine-gun nest, killing one Nazi, disorganizing the enemy and forcing 16 to surrender. This action paved the way for an ammunition detail to bring badly needed supplies to the main body ahead. Lieutenant Steinman later was awarded The Distinguished Service Cross". After our New Year's Party at Bitche, Lieutenant Steinman also received the Silver Star.



To say that there are many incidents of the Vosges Campaign that are not recorded would be a gross understatement — many remain, and always will remain in the minds of the individuals. Some of the men in the Third Platoon still talk about the time three squads followed Charlie Company through the forest during an attack, with orders to stick with the riflemen, and to dig in when they did. Charlie ran into opposition, and mortar shells were dropping all around. The Krauts knew they were whipped, but the non-com in charge wouldn't let them surrender. PFC Harold Briley decided to end the picnic, so he crept up to where he could get into the fray and shot the Jerry non-com. The Krauts surrendered, and some of the Mortarmen escorted thirty-six "Supermen" to the rear.

On to Strasbourg

After Raon L'Etape fell, the 397th made a seven-mile advance, and the Century was off on a rat-race toward Strasbourg. We passed through the 397th, and gave a lot of Alsatians the pleasure of seeing their first Americans in a long time. They were grateful, naturally, and lined the roads to pass out apples, bread, wine and schnapps. We managed to liberate a bottle of champagne or brandy here and there,

and it was a schnapp-happy Dog Company which beat the path of liberation toward Strasbourg. The Heinies put up spotty resistance along the way, but not for long at any one place.

The Company managed to congregate around a butcher shop in Rathau for a few hours, and a high time was had by all. After the pork chops had disappeared, the men branched out in search of other forms of sustenance or entertainment. There was a German quartermaster depot in town which the Krauts had left in a hurry. Some of us slept in fleece sleeping-bags after visiting the place, though we had already been issued sacks of our own. The Jerries had also left behind beaucoup sardines and cigarettes; we thoughtfully left the fags alone. The men who didn't go to the quartermaster depot found other pastimes; Aaron Rogers and Joseph Michels went horse-backing riding, while still others went in search of liquid refreshment. They found plenty of it.

What a day that was! The Red Battalion continued its advance toward Strasbourg in high spirits. We made a high old time of the rest of the rat-race. The First Platoon was in difficulty once when it got trapped in a dynamite-filled tunnel. The Jerries bracketed the tunnel with artillery, but our men got out without casualties. When we got to Schirmeck, we had a brief pause, during which we again had a chance to look around, and found a railroad station which contained several cases of champagne which the Heinies didn't have time to ship out. We had to go a couple of towns beyond the Battalion objective in order to find a place to sleep that night, and finally bunked down in Oberhaslach and Heilingenberg, which was twenty-four kilometers from Strasbourg. That was as close as we got to the historical French city on the Rhine, for the 45th Division cut us off. The next day, we retraced our route to Moyennmoutier to an assembly area.

After a couple of days in Moyennmoutier, Dog Company moved to Schneckenbusch, a village near Sarrebourg, where the 399th was held in reserve. We got our first real baths



since going into combat. Hot chow, pay and Christmas packages helped to bring our morale back up to TO strength. Dauntless Nick Cigrand, our mail orderly, became the most sought-after man in the company. The Maginot Line lay ahead, so we had some demolition demonstrations. At dawn, on the Second of December we moved forward again. Our second phase of combat was about to begin.

An attempt to reverse Maginot Line, Lemberg turned out to be a tough nut to crack. The Germans had beautiful artillery, mortars, flak, and well organized small arms. They had converted foundations of buildings into pill-boxes with clear fields of fire, and entrance into the town was across exposed terrain. The wooded hills overlooking Lemberg and the roads leading in were loaded with mines. On 7th December, 1944, the third anniversary of the sneak attack by the Japs on Pearl Harbor, the attack began — — — but no one was thinking about Pearl Harbor that day. Charlie Company with our First Platoon attached was to make a frontal assault against the objective while Baker Company with our Second Platoon and Able Company hit the left and right flanks respectively. But the Japs stopped the attack cold with their closely coordinated 20 mm flak and



Phase III...

A BITCHE OF A TIME

It took us a few days to catch up with the fighting. We moved northward, across the Alsatian Plain and into the Little Vosges Mountains. We passed through the towns Schalbach, Petersbach, Puberg, Wingen, and Gotzenbruck. That was not all a sight-seeing trip. The Kraut artillery made things pretty hot in Petersbach and Gotzenbruck, and we heard of a company of the 398th that was lost in Wingen, so we were on our toes most of the time. A near-by ack-ack crew was hit by a Jerry shell, and Max Gregory and Eric Levi gave them emergency treatment. By the time we reached St. Louis de Bitche, the rat-race had stopped.

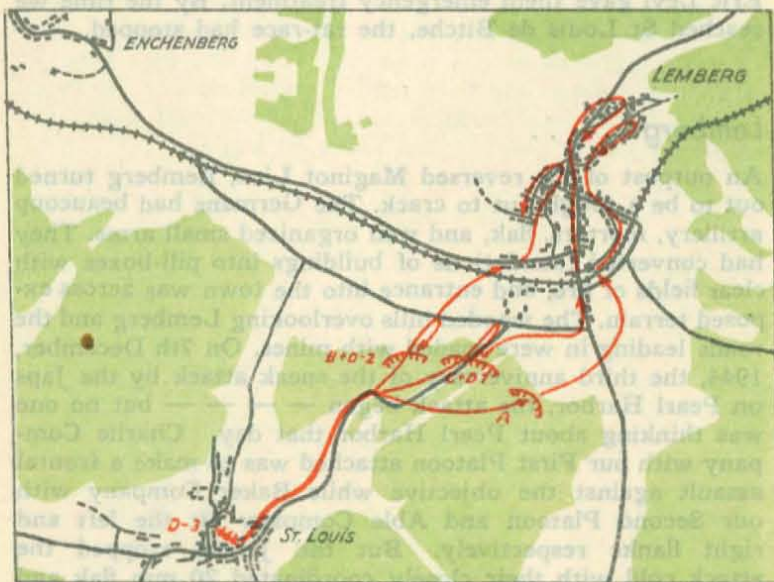
Lemberg

An outpost of the reversed Maginot Line, Lemberg turned out to be a tough nut to crack. The Germans had beaucoup artillery, mortars, flak, and well organized small arms. They had converted foundations of buildings into pill-boxes with clear fields of fire, and entrance into the town was across exposed terrain. The wooded hills overlooking Lemberg and the roads leading in were loaded with mines. On 7th December, 1944, the third anniversary of the sneak attack by the Japs on Pearl Harbor, the attack began — — — but no one was thinking about Pearl Harbor that day. Charlie Company with our First Platoon attached was to make a frontal assault against the objective while Baker Company with our Second Platoon and Able Company hit the left and right flanks respectively. But the Jerries stopped the attack cold with their closely coordinated 20 mm flak and

artillery fires, and the Battalion dug in for the night, short of the objective.

At 1630 on the afternoon of 8th December, Charlie Company and Our First Platoon, reinforced by four medium tanks resumed attack. Three tanks were knocked out by mines before reaching the town, but the sole remaining tank silenced the flak guns effectively and Charlie Company with our First Platoon moved into the outskirts of Lemberg. Able Company moved in shortly afterwards, and Baker Company with our Second Platoon followed the next morning. After some tough house to house fighting, and dodging "beau-coup" artillery, the Red Battalion finished clearing Lemberg on the 9th December, and after being relieved of the real-estate, pulled back to St. Louis for a few days of much needed rest, and to await badly needed replacements.

Every action, however grim, had its humorous incidents, and Lemberg was no exception. Lyon, of the Second Platoon,



having gone back after some water, had returned to the vicinity of the gun position with the water cans when he ran into a column of Heinies who were being marched back as prisoners. Not seeing the guard at the rear of the column, Lyon halted the Krauts. Things got a little mixed up, and when he heard the word "prisoners", Lyon threw up his hands and fell in at the head of the column. He felt pretty foolish when he found out what the score was.

Unfinished Business

On 11th December, 1944, the 399th drove toward Bitche, one of the strongest points on the Maginot Line. The city had never fallen in battle, and some of the strongest forts of the Maginot Line overlooked the city. We were poised on the hill to the south of Bitche, looking down the Jerrie's throats, waiting for the 398th to "bust the boxes" before cleaning out the city.

With a tremendous amount of artillery, the Air Corps supporting us, and Charlie Company already in College de Bitche — — on the outskirts of the city — — we, expected to take the city without too much trouble. But the Wehrmacht, under Von Rundstedt, began the Ardennes Offensive on 16th December, and the Germans poured so much into their drive the Allies had to devote their principal efforts to staving off the Nazi thrust to the north. The Third Army went to work on the Belgian Bulge, and the Seventh had to extend its front to cover the area which the Third left. Consequently, the Century Division had to spread out, and our Battalion wound up with a front which we couldn't adequately cover. To add to the problem, the rifle companies were far understrength.

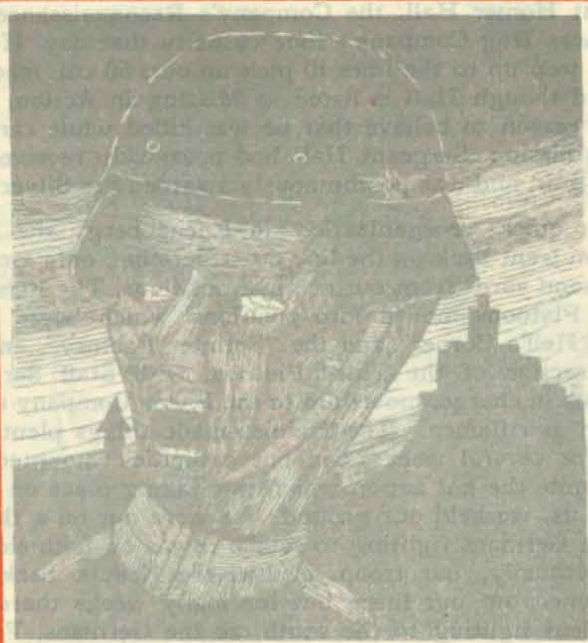
So we sat tight. The Third Platoon, about four hundred yards behind the riflemen, threw rounds at everything that moved, made noise, or seemed suspicious in Bitche. There was a "Short round", when one of the tubes went sour, which dropped about ten feet from Nello Trevisan; but the Third Platoon did a good job of making the defending Krauts keep their heads low, too. Rations, Christmas pack-

ages, letter-writing, and an occasional Heinie night barrage kept things from becoming too dull for the men on the reverse slope. The First Platoon, with Able Company, and the Second Platoon, with Charlie Company, didn't fire for fear of disclosing their positions. However, possibly through courtesy of the Heinies, things were quiet enough in the woods on the hill above Bitche to enable the men to move around without fear of drawing fire every time they left their holes. The Kraut artillery was still throwing enough at the College to make it a hot spot.

Christmas came along, and we had an excellent dinner. Up until that time, we had been blessed with beautiful weather, but after Christmas, it snowed — the days were clear, and the nights were brightly illuminated by the moon. Our armies to the north had slowed down the German push, and we began to feel a little easier. However, Army Intelligence thought the Krauts might try a push in our sector since they had drawn our forces to the north. So there we perched, on Bitche Hill, with the Battalion stretched out tight as a fiddle-string.

New Year's Eve — 2330

We were all set to give the Krauts a New Year's celebration they would never forget: A "TOT" of artillery, mortars, small arms, and anything else that we had available; but the Krauts jumped the gun and gave it to us! At 2330, New Year's Eve, the Krauts attacked. We were told that the unit which hit us was the 17th Panzer Division, but it seemed to us like a wild, disorganized, but determined mob. All night, we staved off the German's thrusts. The mortars, directed by Joe Wesley, fired hundreds of rounds at the Heinies, with devastating effect. The second Platoon, which was in the sector which met the brunt of the attack did a whale of a job against the Krauts. But there were too many of them for us, and nothing would stop them; we were convinced that only doped-men would continue in the face of such opposition. The 117th Reconnaissance Troop, which



had been on the Battalion's right flank, had withdrawn without our knowing it, and our position was threatened. We held the Nazi's off all night, but the next day, they made things too hot for us. They got behind our mortar positions and opened up on the platoon with a heavy machine gun, but the mortarmen were able to withdraw with no casualties — except the baseplates, which were frozen in. The Second Platoon's positions were practically overrun, but more hip-firing by Dick Atkinson and excellent work by all of the men enabled them all, including the surrounded Frank Fischl's section, to withdraw without a casualty. The First Platoon, which had been in a quieter sector, got away more easily. The Mortar's Third Section men, who had been serving under Staff Sergeant Roy McVicar as riflemen with Able Company, found that not a man from any of the platoons had been lost during the German attack.

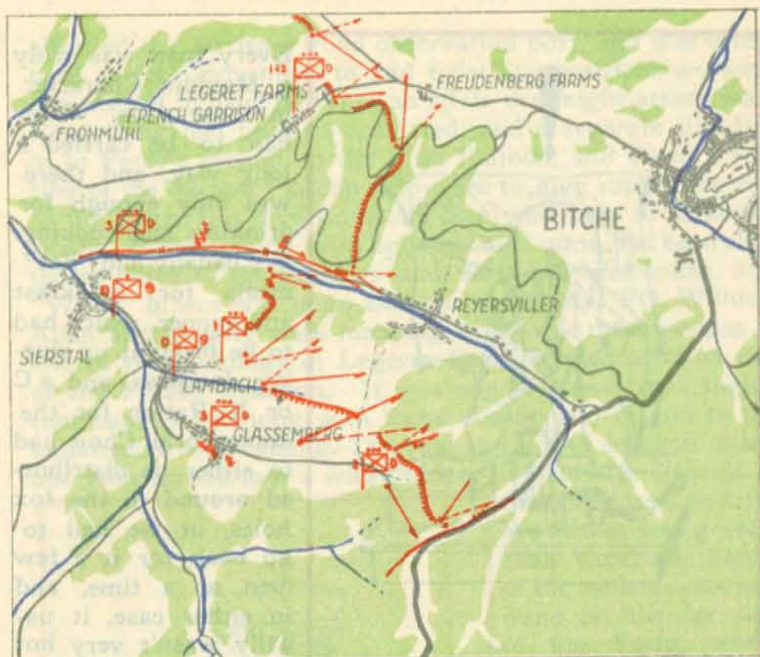
Sergeant Homer Hall, the Company's Reconnaissance Sergeant, was Dog Company's lone casualty that day. He had taken a jeep up to the lines to pick up our .50 cal. machine-gun, and though Hall is listed as Missing in Action, there is good reason to believe that he was killed while carrying out his mission. Sergeant Hall had previously received the Bronze Star, and was posthumously awarded the Silver Star.

After a quick reorganization in Enchenberg, the First Battalion went back on the line near Siersthal, only a couple of thousand yards from our original positions. The First and Second Platoons moved into positions which were nicknamed "Hell's Corner" and the "Splinter Factory", and the second section of the Third Platoon, with Staff Sergeant Joe Roina in charge, moved up to the Baker Company sector to fill in as riflemen. The Heinies made things plenty hot for us for several weeks, and our casualties mounted up. But, despite the hot action which was taking place on three sides of us, we held our ground. We were out on a thumb, with the Germans fighting to retake towns on both sides of us. Eventually, our troops pushed the Krauts back and straightened out our lines, but for many weeks there was still violent fighting to the south, as the Germans, French and Americans tangled in the Colmar Pocket and around Hagenau. By that time the Ardennes push had been stopped and the armies to the north were driving the Wehrmacht back toward the Siegfried Line.

The Winter Line

The nightmare of the enemy counter-offensive on 1 January, 1945, was not an ordeal easily erased from the minds of the "Red Raiders". The casualties of our Battalion were high and our company was cut short to furnish men to fill the gaps in the understrength Rifle Companies. Our mission, which was to hold an unusually wide sector of ground with a minimum of troops, necessitated the cooperating effects of every man.

After going into Regimental reserve in Siersthal for a few days, the Battalion moved into the sector just to the right



of our previous one. Things were still hot-the Germans raised hell with their "screamin' meemies", mortars and snipers. It was during this phase that Staff Sergeant Anthony Pasquale was killed and Staff Sergeant Charles Stone was wounded by a mortar round that dropped in near their emplacement. At the time, Tony's Mortar Section was serving as a reserve Rifle Platoon.

Gradually, our front became quiet, and we soon found out that the Jerries were one of our minor worries, though the basic one for our discomforts. The nights were long and the distances between foxholes great; real sleep was rare, as watching, listening and waiting for Jerry allowed no time for it. And besides, snow, rain and wintry cold were not very conducive to sleeping. The weather was the test of every man, and their sacrifices were a history in themselves-their due praise was but a meager reward.



Every man was truly a Mauldin Character in those days. Water had to be carried a long way, and there was only enough for drinking and cooking. We usually had "hot" meals for breakfast and supper, which had to be brought up during darkness, and a C or K Ration for the dinner meal. Chow had to either be distributed around to the fox holes, or we had to go back for it a few men at a time, and in either case, it usually wasn't very hot when we got it; it didn't take us long to

grow weary of the D and K rations, either.

We settled down to the arduous task of living through it, and counting each day and night. We fell into a routine of spending a certain number of days on the line, and then going into Regimental Reserve in Siersthal or Lambach for half that number of days. Between taking showers, getting an exchange of clothes when it was available, seeing a lousy movie once in a while, and a little training, the rest periods went quickly, and we found ourselves going back on the line with nothing but an occasional raiding-party or patrol to break the monotony.

The most memorable raiding-party was made in February, on Freudenberg Farms, the aiming stake of our entire front. The farm site overlooked the entire left flank of our line,

afforded the Jerries a good observation post, and was a menace to free movement to and from our positions—we were determined to have it. What an affair that night-attack was! Everything had been co-ordinated, and a separate line laid in to Perry's section on the First Platoon, and Fischl's section of the Second Platoon who were to give supporting fire to the Baker and Item Company men who were to make the attack. Bosc's section, with light machine-guns, had been alerted to move to the Farm as soon as it had been taken, and "Willie" Mosca was to go along as the Mortar FO. Willock, Allen and Quinby were manning a .50 cal. machine-gun in one of the buildings of Legeret Farm at the foremost end of the French Garrison. It was one of those black nights that usually go along with those affairs, and to add to the situation, it was raining. The raid started off in good order, but soon turned into a wild melee. Control was difficult in



CAPTAIN - JUST THOUGHT I'D CALL TO
INFORM YOU MY PATROL IS CALLED OFF
TO-NITE! OH SAY! WOULD YOU MIND
SENDING POORE OVER - I REALLY NEED
A HAIRCUT.

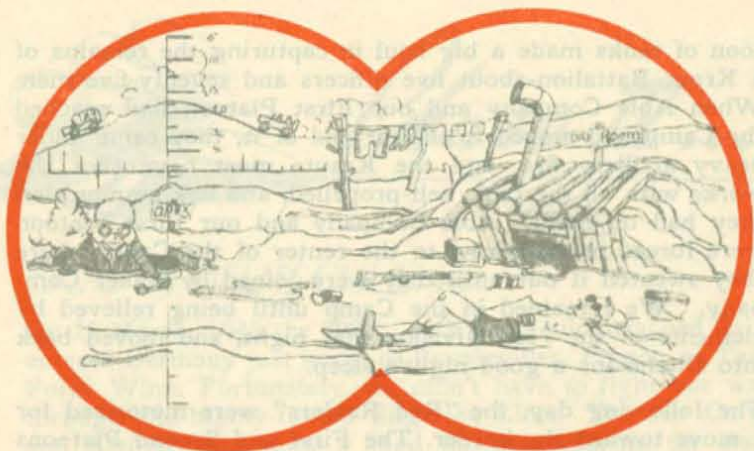
the blackness, and the opposition was greater than expected. Some of the raiders went around on the far side of the Farm, where they were not supposed to go, and were unable to find any entrances to the mass of rubble; supporting fires were called for, and amidst confusion and small arms firing, the raiders withdrew. Incidentally, the table supporting the .50 cal. machine-gun collapsed.

We settled down to the normal routine again, and soon knew the area thoroughly. We had our hopes pin-

ned on the Russians, who were making tremendous strides toward Berlin. We began to get passes to Nancy, Paris and Brussels, though few could leave at one time. And there were humorous incidents like the time the flock of geese flew over and the entire front line opened up at them, throwing discretion to the winds; and the escapades into the winding stairways and unending tunnels of the forts of the Maginot Line. The longer we stayed in that area, the quieter things became, and along with the quietness the brass began to pass out the "chicken".

Speaking of brass, this is a good place to mention some of the changes which had taken place in Dog Company. Captain Nason had become Battalion Executive Officer, replacing Major Lentz, who had taken command of the Blue Battalion. Lieutenant Prather, who had been our Reconnaissance Officer, was Battalion S-3; Lieutenant Kouw who had been the leader of the Second Platoon, served as Company Commander until Captain William E. Hallman arrived. Lieutenant Kouw then served as our Reconnaissance Officer until, at the end of our combat days, he went to Regiment on Special Duty as Liaison Officer between Regiment and Division. In December Lieutenant Schrader had gone to Regiment as Liaison Officer and Lieutenant Nageotte had taken command of the Third Platoon. Tech Sergeant Steinman accepted a Battlefield Commission and became the Second Platoon Leader; Staff Sergeant Chestnut also accepted a Battlefield Commission and became a Mortar Section Leader. Staff Sergeant Trevisan, Philleson, and Waller had become platoon sergeants, and Reconnaissance Sergeant Max Gregory understudied Garret as first sergeant. About a month later, Danny Brandanno, our Motor Sergeant, was transferred to Battalion to "sweat out" his Battlefield Commission as Motor Officer; and Corporal Fred Loeble from the Third Platoon took over Danny's job in Company Headquarters.

We began to wonder how long we must exist in this manner when suddenly there was a thaw, and the ground absorbed the snow so rapidly that we were amazed. We knew that Spring was here, our morale went up and with it the



realization that the inevitable all out effort would come soon. By March, the American Army had straightened out its front, and our sector began to show more activity as our forces massed for the job.

Bitche to the Border

On the 15th March, 1945, the Century Division went after Bitche with an air of finality. Moving in from the flank of the town, the 398th and 399th cleared the town itself. In the initial stages of the attack, the Krauts made things a little unpleasant with artillery, but that was the only opposition we had going into Bitche, and we were relieved that the resistance we had faced back in December was no more. The Second Platoon moved into the College de Bitche, with Charlie Company where they were held in reserve. The First Platoon had the more back-breaking job of moving through Bitche and out to Camp de Bitche with Able Company. The Third Platoon moved to the far outskirts of Bitche and positioned the mortars for supporting fires for the attack on Camp de Bitche by Able and Baker Companies. Able Company, with our First Platoon, moved down the main road to Camp de Bitche while Baker Company moved down a secondary road to the right of Able. It was enroute to the Camp that Baker Company with a pla-

toon of tanks made a big haul in capturing the remains of a Kraut Battalion-about five officers and seventy-five men. When Able Company and our First Platoon had reached the Camp and moved to the far end of it, they came under heavy artillery fire, and the Krauts must have shot the works with all the tank, self-propelled, and flak ammunition they had on hand. Able Company and our First Platoon were forced to withdraw to the center of the Camp where they sweated it out until they were joined by Baker Company. We remained in the Camp until being relieved by elements of the 71st Division that night, and moved back into Bitche for a good night's sleep.

The following day, the "Red Raiders" were motorized for a move toward the border. The First and Second Platoons were dispersed throughout the column with machine-guns mounted for anti-aircraft protection, and the Third Platoon was the rear element of the first serial. We passed through Haspelschiedt, and from there over some trails through the woods that we could barely get the jeeps through into Roppeviller. It was getting dark, and we had to stop for the night; the First Platoon was attached to Able Company and dug in for the night just north east of the town in France, and the Second Platoon was attached to Baker Company, and dug in for the night to the right of the First Platoon in Germany-the first unit of the Company to cross the border. The Third Platoon positioned the mortars in the town of Roppeviller, and laid in protecting fires. The following night we were relieved by elements of the 71st Division again and moved to an assembly area between Bousseviller and Breidenbach, France for three days of relaxation.

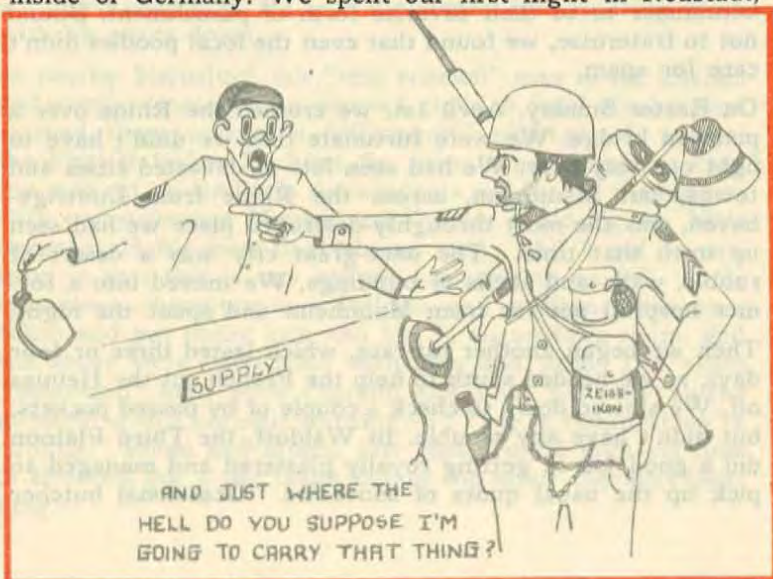
MEMBERSHIP CARD FOR



Phase IV...

DOG IN DEUTSCHLAND

On 22 March, 1945 the 399th, with tanks and attached units entered Germany just north of Bousseviller, France, as Task Force Winn. Fortunately, we didn't have to fight our way through the highly-touted Siegfried Line. The Air Corps and Artillery had done a good job of preparing the way, and the Third Division had broken through the line, making an opening for us. What a battered, desolate area that was! The task force wound its way eastward through the Hartz Mountains, encountering no opposition. The roads were glutted with released slave-laborers of the Germans, and with former "Supermen" heading toward the rear, unguarded. By the end of our first day, we were about fifty miles inside of Germany. We spent our first night in Neustadt,



and found that Germany was truly a land that flowed with wine and champagne-from that night on, them as wanted to git "stinko" had plenty of opportunies to git.

On the twenty-third, we took another fifty-mile ride. This time, we stopped overnight at Maudach, near Ludwigshaven. We began to develop our . . . liberating technique; everyone knew the time of day, and a camera appeared here and there-a bottle became standard equipment. The next day, we moved into Ludwigshaven, and found that the 94th Division had already chased most of the Krauts across the Rhine, but there were still snipers, and "Werewolves". The Rifle Companies established security posts along the Rhine, and our Dog Company machine gun platoons ran motorized patrols throughout the city. There was plenty of good beer, cigars, soft beds, electricity and radios, and food-our morale soared. Nick Cigrand began to receive more packages from the men than he could handle. We stayed in Ludwigshaven for three or four days, and then moved back to Maudach for five days to catch some training which we resented as "chicken". Later we yearned for it. Ernie Poole, Spam Technician First Grade, aided and abetted by fellow hash-slingers, Axson, Misteri, Kennedy, and Bowers, managed to administer to us their favorite form of punishment. Bound not to fraternize, we found that even the local poodles didn't care for spam.

On Easter Sunday, April 1st, we crossed the Rhine over a pontoon bridge. We were fortunate that we didn't have to fight our way over. We had seen lots of devastated cities and towns, but Mannheim, across the Rhine from Ludwigshaven, was the most thoroughly-destroyed place we had seen up until that time. The once-great city was a desert of rubble, walls and shells of buildings. We moved into a former hospital not far from Mannheim and spent the night.

Then we began another rat-race, which lasted three or four days, as we headed south to help the French cut the Heinies off. We slowed down to check a couple of by passed pockets, but didn't have any trouble. In Waldorf, the Third Platoon did a good job of getting royally plastered and managed to pick up the usual quota of souvenirs. Occasional butcher

shops added to what we usually found in the cellars. We moved south through Sinsheim and felt that the fighting was practically over. Things were pretty easy. The First Platoon got in a couple of good licks by profitably visiting a baron's house and by filling a Jerry trailer with liquid refreshment for future reference. As we advanced, we would search houses for weapons, cameras and sending-sets. It wasn't long before most of us had pretty good cameras. Our trailers were loaded down with such items as dress-swords, Nazi Party knives, parts of uniforms, and German rifles. Kraut pistols became more plentiful.

Then German resistance began to stiffen. By the time we got to Schwaigern, we had to set up positions again. The Americans and British Armies were sweeping through Northern and Central Germany, but the Nazis hoped to stage a last stand in the South. So we began to run into a more determined enemy. The Germans threw in SP guns, mortars, artillery and last-ditch snipers. Jerry patrols were more active. Cain, of the Second Platoon, had a patrol in his sight once and the gun jammed. Later he got another opportunity, with better results. The Third Platoon's Shichel was relieving himself when two bewildered Krauts wandered near him. He won distinction by capturing them with his pants down.

In nearby Steinsfurt, our "rear echelon" men of the kitchen and supply-room spent a worried night. A local stool-pigeon warned them against a "Werewolf" night-attack against the First Battalion kitchens. So, nervous and jumpy as cats, the men set up BARs in the windows and loaded themselves with every weapon Meyers and Courter could dig up. Mess Sergeant Hall's most-used phrase was, "All I got to say, men, is that this is one helluva situation to be in". Three suspicious characters—two Italians and a Frenchman—were taken and put under lock and key in an upstairs room, and the stairs were barricaded with pots and pans. The "spam Technician" kept Nick Cigrand and Ivan Kennedy awake all night with a periodic warning — "They're coming—they're coming!" Roina and Mosca, just back from a high old time in Brussels got a big laugh out of the affair the next morning.

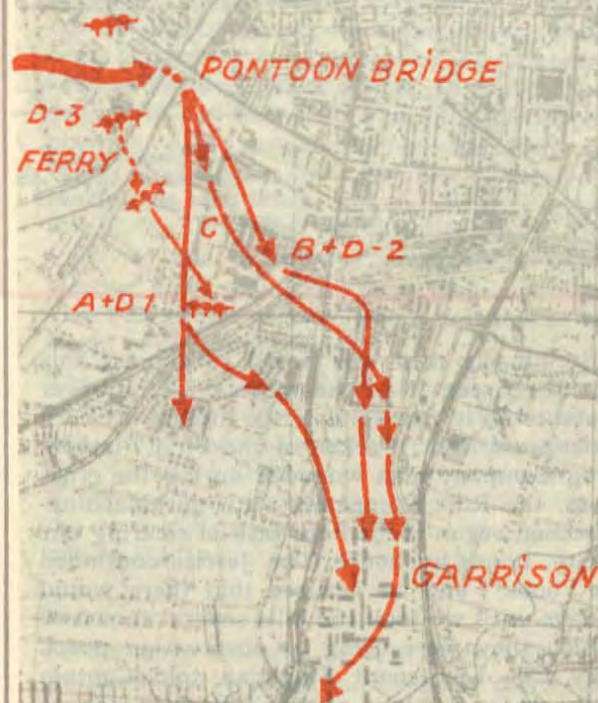
Hell in Heilbronn

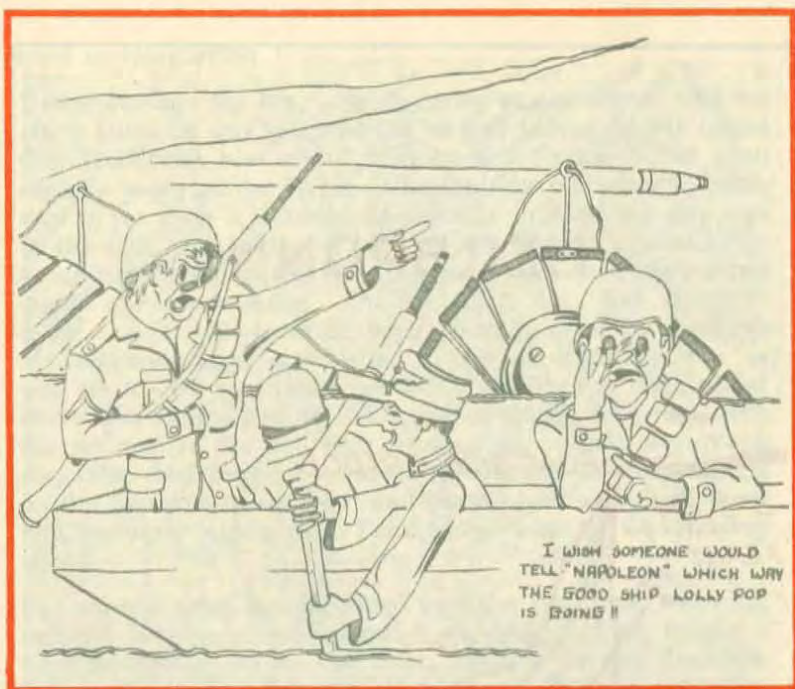
Heilbronn was the big target looming in our sector, and the 100th Division was assigned the task of taking it. We found that Heilbronn was a city split by the Neckar River with slightly more on the Krauts side than on our side; in addition to the river-a tremendous obstacle in itself-the city was at the foot of a series of hills which formed a semi-circle around the city on the Krauts side from which they could watch our every move. On 5th April the "Red Raiders" made a night ride from Schwaigern to Bockingen, a suburb of Heilbronn, and established a line of security there as well as in the southwest portion of Heilbronn itself. That move was simple and no indication of things to come; little did we realize the hell that awaited us in that city. Yank magazine described the action at Heilbronn as the toughest on the Seventh Army front-and those of us who were there will certainly agree that Yank knew what it was talking about.

For several days, we remained in these positions, sweating out the Engineers who were feverishly working to get a pontoon bridge across the river, and for several days the Krauts threw everything they had at us. There were smoke-generators along the Neckar to hide the bridge site, but the Jerries kept up a steady barrage where they knew the Engineers to be working, and enough concentrations throughout the city to make it unsafe to venture into the street anytime during the day or night. They threw in a barrage after barrage of blood-curdling Nebelwerfers, or "Screamin'-meemies", which have plenty of warning, but one never felt quite safe regardless of the thickness of the protecting shelter. Garman and Fischl, leading their sections to new positions, were caught in barrages in the open, and were lucky enough to escape without casualties.

Finally, the bridge was completed and remained intact long enough for part of the battalion to cross and join the 397th which had crossed north of us and were battling in the northern part of the city. The First Platoon crossed with Able Company, and the Second with Baker Company. One

HEILBRONN





of Lieutenant Steinman's men was heard to express this general feeling, "I've seen it in the movies, but I never thought we'd have to do it". In spite of the intense artillery fire, our casualties were light; Parker, of the First Platoon, was the only Dog Company man wounded during the crossing. Once across, the Rifle Companies with our Machine-gun platoons attached began the tedious task of clearing our portion of the city, house by house. The Jerries continued to throw in the "book", and we realized that there would be no peaceful days until we took the hills several thousand yards away, which they were using as observation posts. In the Company CP, Lieutenant Steinman told Captain Hallman, "I really go for this kind of stuff". Perhaps he was prompted to make this statement due to the influence of liquid morale, but hardly anyone enjoyed the experience. The Third Platoon, which had moved to the hot-spot along

the edge of the Neckar to give closer support, now had to be ferried across by the sweating Engineers. There was only enough equipment for one more bridge and it could not be risked until the Krauts were driven beyond artillery range of the river. The Mortarmen set up their guns close to the riflemen and continued to give supporting fire.

We had almost completed clearing our section of the city. Prisoners were filtering back to our rear where they were being used to operate the Battalion supply point and ferry. With the prisoners came a rumor of a strong counter-attack by the Germans. Colonel Zehner pulled our units back into the center of Heilbronn to form a stronger perimeter of defense, leaving outposts to protect the real estate that had been cleared in case there was no counter-attack. Pudlo's squad remained forward with some Able Company riflemen on one of the outposts. The Third Platoon withdrew to a position near the river, not far from the knocked-out bridge, and dug in its guns. The Heinies were still shelling the bridge constantly, and the Third Platoon got caught in one of the "meemie" barrages. Popular PFC Bill Huntley, a driver, was killed; Corporal Robert Fair and PFC John Gordon were wounded. Three jeeps were knocked-out. We didn't mind the jeeps so much, but loss of the men was felt by all of Dog Company.

The counter-attack didn't materialize, so the Battalion moved back to its former positions and continued on the offensive. After several days of house-to-house fighting, we were all a bunch of nerves, but the city was ours. We looked on to the garrison just on the edge of the city and the hills in the near distance, knowing that we must take these also before Heilbronn would be tenable.

The Garrison

In the early morning of 12th April, the attack to take the Garrison started; we had dreaded this task because there were several hundred yards of open ground to be crossed to get to the Garrison, and the Krauts, still in the hills beyond, could watch our every movement, and we knew that the minute we took the Garrison it would be the impact

point of terrified artillery barrages, even as it had been for our artillery prior to the attack.

The First Platoon gave support to Baker Company from the outskirt buildings of Heilbronn, and as soon as the riflemen rushed the first buildings of the Garrison, displaced one section forward to support the clearing of the remaining buildings. The support was excellent, and Captain Flannigan, Baker Company Commander, expressed his appreciation of the machine-gunners, "It was the best machine-gun support I've ever had". The second Platoon supported the attack from buildings to the flank of the Garrison, and moved to the Garrison with Charlie Company. The men came under artillery and mortar fire crossing the open ground leading to the Garrison, and PFC Ray Hall was wounded by shrapnel. Quick action on the part of Charles Durgin and Dick Atkinson saved his life; they moved him into one of the buildings and administered first aid.

There had been a terrific, but brief, fire fight at the outset, but the Jerries decided they were no match for our strength, and either retreated, or remained in the Garrison to be taken prisoners. Spence, directing fire of the mortars from an OP overlooking the Garrison had a good view of the retreating Nazis and made their retreat a hot one. The Garrison was our property—the expected Kraut artillery came, but the basements were deep, and there were no casualties from it.

It was late in the afternoon, and we were sweating out moving on into the hills that same day, but to our extreme relief, orders were changed, and it was postponed until the following morning.

The High Ground Beyond

Waiting until the following morning, Friday the Thirteenth, turned out to be a big point in our favor. The 397th on our left had been making progress, and we found that the Krauts were beating a hasty retreat in our sector. The Battalion was using a pincer, with Charlie Company and

our Second Platoon attached making a three and a half mile move across the hills and through the woods southeast of Heilbronn, while Baker Company supported by our First Platoon moved into Flein, directly south of Heilbronn and Able Company moved down a secondary road out of the Garrison to clear woods between there and Flein. The majority of the Krauts had retreated from Flein, and only a few token shots were fired upon Baker Company and our First Platoon's entrance — about thirty supermen were taken prisoner. Able Company met only slight resistance on their route to Flein. Baker Company moved on to the woods south of the town and our First Platoon remained with Able Company. The Second Platoon with Charlie Company



had some of their most harrowing experiences of the war. They had almost reached the objective when they ran into a strongly defended road-block between Flein and Unter Gruppenbach. It was during this action that Sergeant Robert Van Steenberg, disregarding the enemy fire, went forward to select gun positions to support Charlie Company's attack on the position and was killed by a sniper; Van Steenberg was awarded the Silver Star, posthumously, for his action. The Krauts were driven from the position, and in the action, the Second Platoon became separated from the riflemen, and had to fight their way back to them. It was getting dark, ammunition was low, so an all-round defense was established. The surrounded men repulsed one counter-attack and were preparing for another when all hell broke loose. Tanks and a platoon from Baker Company had come to the rescue. The Kraut resistance was broken, and Charlie Company and our Second Platoon returned to Flein.

The following morning, Able Company with our First Platoon attached moved through Baker Company and proceeded on to the objective. They were pinned down for several hours at a defended road-block, but with the combined results of artillery fire and TD support, broke the resistance, and moved on to the objective. Hardly had they dug in when the "mail" began to come in; it made life miserable, but there were no casualties.

It was evident that the resistance had been broken in our sector; the Krauts were retreating to get out of a pincer by the 10th Armored Division from the north and the French from the west. The "Red Raiders" moved on to Unter Gruppenbach, east of Flein, with spasmodic artillery and mortar fire the only opposition. Baker Company with our Second Platoon attacked and occupied Wustenhausen, south of Unter Gruppenbach, and Charlie Company sent out a motorized patrol to investigate Abstatt, south east of Wustenhausen. The Patrol was to occupy the town if there was no resistance, and Spence and Wilde of the Third Platoon went along as a mortar-observer team. En route, the patrol came under machine-gun small arms fire, and mortar

barrages; the jeeps were knocked out and several casualties resulted, but most of the men managed to reach cover by crawling up the ditch along the road to a farm house. The Germans began to close in on the house, and made things hot for the occupants. Wild's radio had been damaged and abandoned, so there was no contact with the Company. Spence, realising that the men would be lost if they remained in the house after dark, took it upon himself to bring aid. He made a rush from the house and got through a hail of bullets and shrapnel, reached the ditch by the road and crawled for a way, then jumped up and ran back to Wustenhäusen. He reported the situation to Baker Company, and while they sent out a platoon to disengage the surrounded men, directed the firing of hundreds of rounds of mortar fire to cover the action. Spence has been recommended for the Silver Star for his action and at this writing the award is still pending.

At this time, the machine-gun platoons, being short on manpower, were organized into three sections, and a section was attached to each Rifle Company; Lieutenant Yeamans and Bosc's section with Able Company, Trevisan and Fischl's section with Charlie Company, and Lieutenant Steinman and Atkinson had a section with Baker Company.

Trying to catch the Heinies off-balance, the Battalion moved east to Unter Heinriet and south through some woods to hit the Krauts from the east. Artillery remained the principal resistance, and Able Company, supported by the First machine gun section, occupied Helfenberg; Charlie Company with the Third machine-gun section occupied Sohlbach, and Baker Company with the Second machine-gun section, after a brief fire fight, occupied Geggenberg. On the next day, 16 April 1945 the Third Battalion passed through us to attack Beilstein, and zeroed-in Jerry artillery inflicted heavy casualties on the Lentzmen.

Chanosky still breaks into a cold sweat when he thinks of the close shave he had in Helfenberg. It was almost dark, and he was walking across the street from chow when two

figures loomed out of the dusk. Thinking nothing of it, he continued on, when to his amazement and discomfort — he didn't have a weapon with him — he found them to be Krauts. Chanosky threw up his hands, hoping someone would take notice, and was marched toward the edge of town by his captors. He was just about to give up hope when someone fired a shot; he hit the dirt and rolled, and the Krauts took off. Chanosky ran back to his squad, shouting, "They had me, they had me!"

Back Trails to Esslingen

In an effort to cut off the defending Nazis and link up with the French forces driving toward Stuttgart, we made an end-run southward. Returning to Unter Heinriet, we drove through Lowenstein, Prevost, into Nassach where we came upon elements of the 398th who were disengaging themselves from a fire-fight south of Nassach to make a shift to the east as we had done. We stayed there over-night, and the following morning, 18th April, started our drive to Esslingen. Expecting resistance, we found none, and drove through Altersberg, Steinhausen, Klein Aspach, Gros Aspach and into Backnang, where we again came under light artillery fires. We followed the main road south out of Backnang, with Baker Company men riding tanks and our Second machine-gun section attached. At Hertmannsweiler, the lead tank was knocked out by one round of 88 at short range; the Krauts then took off but were later captured while the town was being cleared. It was beginning to get dark, and we thought we would bed down for the night, but received orders to the contrary.

Colonel Zehner, Baker, Company's Captain Flannagan and Lieutenant Steinman went beyond the town to observe the best route of approach into Winninden. Spotting Jerries digging machine-gun emplacements, they called for a mortar observer, and Sergeant Tidswell and PFC Shiechel went forward to direct fire on the Krauts. The Second Section of the Third Platoon, positioned in a draw beside the highway, lobbed several rounds of smoke to zero-in. The Jerries



countered with a heavy SP barrage which went over us and to our rear. Knowing the opposition we faced, we were sweating out moving into Winnenden; the approach to the city was over open terrain, and we had no love for Kraut artillery.

We were scheduled to start the attack at 2100, but plans were incomplete and we were delayed. A few minutes after 2100, two German civilians came from the direction of Winnenden, interrupted a meeting at which Colonel Zehner was giving final plans for the attack, and told him they wanted to surrender the town. They explained that the bridge was still intact, that the roads leading in were unmined, that all but a few members of the Wehrmacht had departed, and that they would lead our troops to capture those few. This smelled of a "booby trap", but we were willing to try anything. The men led a platoon of Baker Company into the town, who found things to be as they had explained, and by morning the whole Battalion was in the town without a shot beng fired. An act of God — possibly — one of the Germans was a priest.

From Winnenden to Esslingen, we met very little reistance, and spent most of our time gathering disorganized bands of the Wehrmacht who were quite willing to give themselves up. We took the back trails into the city, and passed through Buoch, Korb, Klein Heppach, Endersbach, Stetten — where we made a pretty big haul of prisoners —, Hegensberg, and into the city of Esslingen, where our advance halted. The fast-moving Seventh Army units and the French had cut us off. On 20th April, 1945 after 179 days of continuous combat, the Century Division was officially taken off the line.

Rear Echelon Days

We spent a few days in Esslingen guarding hospitals, adding to our collections of cameras and pistols, and getting accustomed to "rear echelon" life. The Second Platoon "found" itself billeted in a female-infested wirtschaft. Drinks flowed freely, and the Company had a good time in general. We deserved it.

From Esslingen, we moved to Stuttgart, which the French had taken. We thought we were going to occupy the city, but the French had other ideas. They hadn't been assigned an occupation zone yet, and they refused to leave. The place was kaput, but full of wine, women, and "souvenirs" for home. We remained there for about a week, with a training-program filling our days, and with our nights our own. The week was pleasantly spent.

The Century Division finally got tired of waiting for the French to leave Stuttgart, so we moved out. Dog Company moved to the little town of Reichenbach, near Esslingen. We were there on VE day, 8th May, 1945. Life was pleasant. The training-schedule was not too rough and the entertainment we could find kept morale high. Men continued to go on pass to Paris, England, Nancy, Brussels, or the Riviera, but the quota remained disappointingly slim. Lieutenant Yeamans felt that he deserved a rest after the ordeal we had been through, so he came down with yellow jaundice and was evacuated. There had been a heavy outbreak of jaundice, especially in the Second Platoon, when we were in combat. Tech Sergeants Philleson and Waller had it before we entered Germany, and Staff Sergeants Atkinson and McVicar were platoon sergeants of the Second and Third Platoons while they were away. While we were in Reichenbach, Captain Hallman was attached to another unit, and Lieutenant George W. Everett commanded the company while he was away.

After about three weeks in Reichenbach, we spent a few days in Weidenstetten, and moved from there to Langenau; then we moved into Goppingen, a lively little city which remains our favorite. As in all of the towns that we occupied, our principal mission was motorized patrolling of towns assigned within the Battalion area. At this writing some of us still go back there occasionally, for "old time's sake". Our houses were nice, and the population friendly. Our training schedule was not over-done, and there was ample time for social activities. There were movies in the evenings and the 399th Band, with drummer Joe Roina

from Dog Company, played for us occasionally. Dog Company put on a show for the First Battalion, with Paul Modlish, Nastu, Tidswell, Carter, Skiba, Shelton, Gregory, Cigrand, Courter, Hamilton and Holm in the cast. First Sergeant Garrett and Tech Sergeant Trevison accepted commissions and became Mortar Section Leaders. Tom Waller returned to the Company from the hospital, and returned to his old job as platoon sergeant of the Third Platoon. Paul Bosc became platoon sergeant of the First Platoon, and Max Gregory took over the job of First Sergeant until First Sergeant Dave Fryfelt joined the Company. The doughty Dog softball team copped the Regimental championship. Even our patrols had their compensations we regretted leaving Goppingen.

Nurtingen was our next town, and we moved into a schoolhouse which was devoid of luxuries and short of toilet facilities. The First Platoon sported an electric organ, and the Second Platoon had pianos in three or four of their billets. The Battalion ate its meals in a sumptuous mess-hall, but after the nice houses we had been occupying, Nurtingen was a let-down. However, we carried on in the good old Goppingen style.

On 19th July, 1945 we moved to Vaihingen and into another schoolhouse. It is here that this tale is drawing to a close. After a few weeks of the old-style training-schedule, Dog Company began to go to school in a big way. With our own men as instructors, we began classes in German, Typing, Algebra, Machine-shop, Welding, and numerous other subjects. With these classes to keep us busy, we are "sweating out" our points. Now that Japan is through, we have lost our desire to remain in Europe. The urge to get back on that tightly-packed troop ship has become mighty strong. Our interest in classes, Fischl's place, PX and liquor-rations pales before our interest in taking our rightful places in the Home Front. **WE WANT TO GO HOME!!!**