



Occupation





Centurymen display shapely "gams" in musical which was an associate feature to ritualistic, official launching of the Society of the Sons of Bitch, colorful 100th Div. Association.

we did our job of policing the Germans, and we did it well. But the guns in Europe were silent, and men can't be criticised for hoping, planning, or dreaming. While the war in the Pacific was still raging, we wrapped our separation from home in the stoic philosophy of the soldier. But with the surrender of Japan, waiting to see our loved ones again became a seemingly unending nightmare.

Home, at such times, takes on an aurora which blinds one to reality. Domestic hardships, financial difficulties—can't get an apartment, baby needs shoes, butter is unobtainable, the boss is unbearable, dad has rheumatism, kids yowling, wives nagging, fiancée two-timing—are problems other people have. But you? Your personal life will be, and always was, a symphony of laughter and belches from T-bone steaks. And your plain Jane had more sex appeal than a bevy of Goldwyn pretties.

While we stewed and griped, however, we continued to perform our vital task of occupation. The complexities of this duty became painfully apparent to officers and men of the 100th when we were assigned a temporary occupation zone on 10 May, one day after V-E Day. The final surrender of Germany had found us in Army reserve, our first break in six months of sustained combat, and we were ready to take up our new duties immediately. The area under our command covered approximately 2,400 square miles and followed the right bank of the winding Neckar River from Heilbronn to the vicinity of Memmingen where our division boundary turned east to the city of Ulm.

Within this huge, rectangular area, some 80 miles long and 50 miles wide, lived thousands of unscreened civilians, an unestimated number of former enemy

troops who had drifted homeward with the collapse of the Wehrmacht, and multitudes of DPs. Two hundred and eighty highly important captured installations such as power plants, ammunition dumps, food factories, railroad yards, bridges, pipe lines, hospitals and miscellaneous manufacturing plants, had to be guarded constantly. In addition, watch had to be kept over our own command posts, supply dumps, motor pools, communications nets, and the various vital materiel of an army in the field. To do this work, more than 3,000 men had to be employed in a 24-hour period. This number did not take into account the routine guard of unit installations.

To effectively apprehend enemy nationals who might prove dangerous to our occupation, teams of linguists were trained to aid our division CIC Detachment. These men conducted initial investigations, culled important suspects from the huge number turned in daily, and sent them to the CIC for final interrogation and disposition. Minor offenders were either dealt with through normal military channels, or referred to civilian authorities for punishment. In order to perform these complex tasks efficiently, sectors were assigned to subordinate units, for which they were held responsible. Division Headquarters acted much in the same capacity as a police headquarters, receiving data from units on installations under guard as well as reports of activities in sub-sectors.

As efficient methods of occupation were developed, the few instances of subversive activities by civilians decreased. Generally, the Germans did not give us too much difficulty. They knew which side their potatoes were coming from, and with Uncle Sam in a mood to spank, Jerry was toeing the mark.



Outstanding among feature USO performers who entertained Centurymen overseas, were Jack Benny, Bob Hope, Ingrid Bergman, Marlene Dietrich, Martha Tilton, Jerry Colonna, and Larry Adler.

For the most part, the Germans were co-operative to the point of being servile. They obeyed occupation edicts with a deceptive eagerness, and after four or five months of occupation, acts of sabotage were almost non-existent.

Getting German civilians to do something constructive, was a horse of another color. With food strictly rationed, and luxuries unobtainable, the motive to earn a livelihood by building new business ventures from the ruins of the old, was sadly lacking. Most of the German's energies during this initial occupation period were devoted to black-market dealings and picking up cigarette butts in the streets. The craze for American cigarettes was not due to the German's desire for nicotine. The cigarette had, in effect, replaced the mark as a medium of exchange. In the system of barter which was in vogue, money had relatively little value although the Allied High Command had stabilized the German currency.

Non-fraternization rulings had some amorous GIs in a sweat until the ban on association was lifted. What most civilians in the States didn't realize was that the average Joe wouldn't care if he never spoke to a German male. The interest was purely in the *genera femina*. There isn't much use in explaining to a man who has not spoken to a woman in a year that some gorgeous blond was his enemy or that "the female of the species is more deadly than the male."

In such circumstances a man can reason rather circuitously. The particular light of his life was not a Nazi. She was merely dragged along with the Hitler "putsch." She loved the Americans, hated the French, despised the Russians. Besides the war was over and it was up to us to educate the Germans as to the benefits of democracy. Anyway, who was interested in her

politics? All the dame wanted was a bar of chocolate or a pack of butts. That was pretty reasonable for a fraulein who was as frustrated as we were. So we fraternized and dreamed of home.

Toward the end of May, 31 Centurymen with over 85 points were sent home for discharge, the first in a long line during the months to come.

Training emphasis was placed on routine exercises. Most Centurymen who had fought through France and Germany were bored to tears with learning how to sight a rifle again. But that's the Army and tears won't help a bit.

In June, Col. John C. Kilgore was appointed division Chief of Staff. Col. Kilgore replaced Col. Richard C. Prather who assumed command of the 397th Inf., a post left vacant by the transfer of Col. Gordon E. Singles to the 6th Army Group.

Gen. Burrell drew a trip to the United States this same month to spark the Seventh War Bond drive. He was accompanied by Lt. Col. Elery M. Zehner, 1st Battalion 399th commander. The general left the division 4 June and returned 3 July.

On the all important food front, the Red Cross workers announced they had cooked their half-millionth doughnut. By the time we left for home, most of us felt we had eaten that many individually.

On 8 and 9 July, the 100th moved westward to a new occupation area approximately 50 miles wide and 35 miles deep. Division Headquarters was set up in Stuttgart. Complicated jurisdictional problems immediately arose since our new area contained 133 important installations and large civilian populations in such cities as Stuttgart and Pforzheim.

Less than two weeks after we had moved into our new zone, the division, on 21 and 22 July, partici-



A few lucky Centurymen left Marseilles for home before New Year's.



The excited shout "land" sent us clambering onto the mastheads.

us felt that we could die with a smile if we could see home once more, even for a little while. Then, with dramatic suddenness came news of the Atom Bomb and the surrender of Japan.

In a ringing note to the officers and men of the Century Division on 17 August, Gen. Burress wrote:

THE TREACHEROUS ATTACK OF THE JAPANESE ON DECEMBER 7TH, 1941 HAS BEEN AVENGED BY COMPLETE DEFEAT. FOR THIS WE ARE GRATEFUL TO OUR COMRADES IN THE PACIFIC AREAS. THEIR DEEDS OF HEROISM WILL LIVE THROUGH THE AGES, SIDE BY SIDE WITH YOUR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS.

IN THE PACIFIC AS WELL AS IN EUROPE WE WRAPPED IN SHROUDS OUR HERO DEAD, AND BLEED THE HEARTS OF LOVED ONES BY SEPARATION. OUT OF THESE SACRIFICES MUST LIVE THE PRINCIPALS FOR WHICH MEN SUFFERED AND DIED. OUR RESPONSIBILITY IS NOT ONLY INDIVIDUAL, BUT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL. WE ARE OUR BROTHERS' KEEPER. OUR PRAYERS FOR PEACE HAVE BEEN ANSWERED AND NOW WE MAY MEASURE UP TO OUR PRIVILEGE OF LEADING THE WORLD INTO A PROGRAM THAT WILL BLESS THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH TOWARD GREATER MATERIAL PROSPERITY AND A DEEPER SPIRITUAL GRATITUDE TO GOD.

For the first time in long and weary months of service, home looked big, real, concrete. A mirage had by some miracle become a reality. We could see the front porch of our house, the long flight of tenement stairs, or the handsome entrance to our city apartment. Always, at the end, there were smiles, and kisses, and love; love in a world we had come to know as hate.

But what was to happen to our alert? Now that the

war in the Pacific was over, would our redeployment notice be cancelled or would we slip under the wire and get a boat home as scheduled? Early the next morning, 18 August, we had our answer. The division was de-alerted. We began sweating it out again.

The Century Information and Education program, which had gotten off to a belated start as a result of our uncertain redeployment status during May, June, and July, finally began to click after the Japanese surrender. Frequent lectures on the point system of discharge, the combat history of our division, current events, and kindred subjects, were conducted while we waited for definite word as to our future. With the end of the world conflict and the probability that our designated category would be changed, however, two units, the 1st Battalion 399th and the 925th F A Battalion, instituted vocational studies for civilian skills. Other units rapidly followed suit. More efficient operation had eliminated and consolidated numerous "targets" in our area, cutting required guards by 75% and enabling virtually all division personnel to subscribe to educational courses within the division. A number of officers and men were even able to attend courses at universities in France and England for specialized studies.

As units were alerted for shipment home and point scores were recomputed, the flow of personnel in and out of the Century Division grew to a torrent. Some 2,300 men with less than 60 points toward discharge entered the ranks of the 100th from the 63rd Div. during August, while 800 men and 33 officers with more than 70 points were transferred to the 447th AAA Battalion, which was returning to the States. By

the last week in September, 4,000 additional men had left the division on age, points and transfer to other units. These consisted of personnel with more than 65 points and less than 45 points, further complicating the outlook for our deployment status.

Signalizing the break-up of the old Century Division was the transfer of Brig. Gen. John B. Murphy, Division Artillery CO since 19 October 1943, to a new post in the States.

And then, on 22 September, Maj. Gen. Withers A. Burress, guiding light of the Century Division since its activation, was separated from the organization he had built into a mighty fighting machine. After almost three years as division commander, Gen. Burress was ordered to assume command of VI Corps, under which he and the 100th had served during a considerable part of our combat operations. Gen. Burress was succeeded by Brig. Gen. Andrew C. Tychsen who, first as CO of the 399th Inf., and later as assistant division commander, had also served with the division since activation. The division feted Gen. Burress at a special review in the Century Stadium at Bad Canstatt where the general bid a touching farewell to the 100th. Gen. Burress' address preceded a slam-bang football game in which the Century *Blue Devils* battled the 84th Div. *Railsplitters* to a 7-7 tie.

Awards won by the fighting men of the Century in combat, continued to pour in throughout occupation. Presidential Unit Citations awarded to the 397th's 1st and 2nd Battalions and the 399th's 3rd Battalion, hoisted unit battle honors to eight.

But the big news for October was classification of the 100th in Category 4 with a tentative sailing date of 15 December. The cheers which greeted this announcement were almost hysterical. Here was a possibility of getting home for Christmas. But there was some lead in our silver lining. The way redeployment stacked up, only those Centurymen with more than 55 points would make the boat with the division. Since all those Centurymen who had been with the 100th from activation, but had not received an award, scored only 54 points, fully half of our original personnel would be left behind. General Tychsen fought a valiant battle to bring the 54-pointers along with us. But it was a losing fight. The big brass, late in November, finally handed down a negative verdict. In reality, that was the break-up of the Century Division.

The *Century Association*, official 100th Division alumni organization, with membership open to all division officer and EM personnel, was launched with

the blessing of Gen. Tychsen on 12 October. Besides acting in the capacity of parent organization to such intra-division groups as the *Sons of Bitch* and individual company, battalion, and regimental clubs, the *Century Association* was to distribute and coordinate the sale of the division history, *The Story of the Century*. Following a torrid election campaign for officers of the association, Russell M. O'Brien was elected president; Joseph J. Weckenman, vice-president; Wesley E. Jones, secretary; and Robert J. Karch, treasurer.

The 3rd Anniversary of the Century Division was celebrated with a stirring ceremony at the Century Stadium. Gen. Burress, as guest of honor, bid farewell to the 100th with the advice that Centurymen should always "be proud of your uniform, be proud of what you have done."

And so it ended. After several additional weeks of nail-biting in fear that our shipping alert would be cancelled again at the last moment, and hoping against hope that we could make the States by Christmas, movement orders finally arrived on 9 December.

Movement by motor and rail to Staging Area No. 1, Calas (Marseilles), France, Delta Base Section, was begun before dawn on 10 December 1945. Those units which moved by motor bivouacked overnight at Metz, Dijon, and St. Rambert, France. Four days and 620 miles later, the first Century units were closing into Marseilles. By 18 December, the entire division had completed the movement.

But we were still a long way from home. Weary, heartbreaking weeks slipped by while we chafed and prayed for our ship to come in. Division Headquarters, Headquarters Company and several Artillery outfits were fortunate enough to sail from Marseilles on New Year's Eve. But most of the remaining units did not clear port until February 1946.

At 0001 hours, 11 January 1946, three years and 53 days after activation, the 100th Infantry Division was officially inactivated.

In June 1946, Gen. Jacob Devers, Ground Forces Commander, reactivated the 100th as an active reserve division and redesignated it as airborne.

We pass on to the "flying infantrymen" of the future a legacy of courage, devotion and *esprit de corps* which measures up to that of any division in the history of the United States Army. Guard our honors, fledglings! Carry our patch proudly! In the names of our hallowed dead, may God grant that the need will never again arise for our banners to be borne to war.