
A complete check-up revealed that on our first day as SP we had accounted for 1 anti-tank gun, and 2 cargo vehicles. But more than that, we had gained confidence in our new weapons, and we were prepared for whatever the future had in store for us.

The next day, the enemy had to contend with the entire Company. The 2nd and 3rd Platoons had completed converting to self-propelled and had been rushed up, for the enemy was beginning to show signs of disintegrating.

After a night's sleep and with the infantry riding the TD's pig-a-back, we took off in pursuit of the routed enemy. For the next few days (17—21 March) we relentlessly hacked away at the enemy. Except for a few instances where the enemy holed up like rats, we were unchallenged all the way to the Rhine. As soon as the rout was noticed, it was decided to keep going 24 hours a day. The Infantry Battalions of the 302nd took turns riding the TD's, but the TD Company had no replacements. Short catnaps had to suffice, till we reached our objective. When we reached Frankenthal, the wear and tear on the tank crews became apparent and setting aside everything else (eating, washing, and shaving) we headed for the nearest bed.

The total casualties, both men and vehicles, inflicted on the enemy in this drive was tremendous. We accounted for 5 Anti-tank guns, 6 Armored Cars, 12 Cargo Vehicles, 1 Self-propelled gun, 1 pillbox (concrete), 1 150 mm Field Piece, 1658 prisoners captured, and approximately 196 Nazis killed. These figures take on staggering proportions when compared to our losses. Not one man was killed or wounded, thank God. The only cost was 405 rounds of HE, 44 rounds of AP, and a couple of thousand gallons of gasoline. It was a job well done, and at such slight cost.

Saarlantern

Sgt Plant's gun was pushed into position. In a split second trails were spread, ammunition was unloaded from the half-track, and the gun lined on the targets. The basic load was pumped into the row of houses, which concealed an enemy machine-gun nest. As soon as these rounds were

expended, Sgt Cafiero's crew pulled in, and went through the same motions in record time. Thus began the battle of Saarlautern for the men of Company "C".

We had been informed in advance as to what the general plans for this battle were. The 95th Inf. Div. was to force a bridgehead across the Saar River and work its way through the Siegfried Line. The mission of the TD's was to give direct support to the infantry. Targets, assigned or otherwise, were to be constantly under fire, until it could be destroyed by the infantry.

Positions were picked, with emphasis on fields of fire. Most of the gun positions were sitting on the bank of the Saar, in view of the enemy, and couldn't be occupied until nightfall. As stealthily as possible, we moved in, dug in our guns, built parapets around the gun, dug foxholes for the men and ammunition pits. Then we waited for the break of dawn, which would herald the beginning of the infantry attack.

Dawn December sixth: The infantry started to attack. As soon as it was light enough, the guns of the company opened up on Jerries in their bunkers with HE and AP. It was a pleasure to watch the destruction of the pillboxes, because we all knew that they were either directing artillery or firing themselves on the advancing infantry.

When a gun fired, the crew would follow the tracer line to the pillbox and see the puff of a white cloud as the projectile smashed the reinforced concrete. The gunners were content the first day to hit the pillbox, but as the days went by you could see them take special care and hit the steel cupolas and vision slots which was no mean accomplishment since most of the targets were a mile to a mile and a half away.

Although we gave the enemy everything but the kitchen stove he gave us all he had, including the stove. The average day would bring in 6000 rounds of enemy mortar and artillery. Life was far from pleasant and the men never left their cellars unless there was a call for a fire mission or to pick up rations and mail.

The first platoon CP and Sgt Cerny's section had a tough time in particular. Both were located near the junction of 88 Ave. and Mortar Blvd. One night will especially be remembered by all concerned. Lt Diltz, suf-

fering from Claustrophobia, moved up to the first floor of his building. The same night the Nazis tossed in five 240 mm shells, and Lt. Diltz decided, after his house collapsed, the cellar was better anyway. The second gun section had to look for a new place to live, for the mate to the shell that ruined Lt Diltz's house shattered their basement. Sgt Cafiero slept through this barrage but lo and behold the following morning a bomb crater was all that remained of a three story building that had been there the night before.

Sgt Joe Aguiar was the only man from the company across the Saar River with the assault waves of the infantry. His job was to direct fire on special pillboxes that the infantry wanted knocked out. He had a rough time in that his radio failed to work and it was necessary for him to cross exposed fields that Jerry shelled constantly, to pick up substitutes for his radio. Between that and using his M-1 he was plenty busy. The communications men in all the platoons had a tough time repairing the telephone lines because they were often caught in the middle of a barrage. It was one place where your knowledge of the sounds of shells paid big dividends. A man who knew his shells could determine just about where a shell would hit. The wiremen, Cpl Joe Gerstenbleth, Sgt Whidden, Cpl Madison, and their assistants Eddy Hill, Maxwell, Tankersley, and Wilkerson managed to have the lines in at all times.

Pfc Frank Holcomb had a very narrow escape. One day as he was firing his gun, a shell landed practically between his legs, knocking out the gun and throwing him to the ground. He headed for the basement as soon as he regained his senses. You could get a bad burn if you over exposed yourself in that climate.

The second platoon roughed it. They had the most precarious gun positions. The position were constantly battered by artillery and mortars. Although the two half-tracks, two peeps, and one gun were destroyed, not one man was hurt. Many of the fellows, Sgts Horne, Howington, White, Cpls La Rue, Goodseit, Resig, and Pfc's Havlicek, Haineck, Glumm, and Magoon especially, had narrow escapes, but always stuck to their guns and delivered fire when called upon, by Lt Polden from his observation post which was under fire also.

On the left flank of the company, the third platoon was having its troubles. Sgt Hendricks gun section was pinned down by small arms

fire. Near misses were scored on Sgts Hamilton, Horsford, and Frantz's gun sections. The runways between the guns and "Kellars" were pretty worn by the time we pulled out.

The most unenvied men in the company were the men behind the men behind the guns. Specifically, the drivers, Herb Luce, Louis Majka, and Joe Quillen and their helpers, Pete Corso, Ed Steiner and Bill Hart. These men made their rounds after dark delivering ammo to guns, and during the day they brought in the rations and mail. These men were always on the go.

There are other incidents, and acts of heroism worth mentioning. However, suffice is to say that the incidents mentioned above are a cross section of the action that took place in "The Hell on Earth" Saarlautern. Needless to say, it was a pleasure to leave even though our future assignments didn't look too bright. This was the week of Christmas 1944.

Headquarters Platoon

The rear echelon doesn't win wars, but a few amusing incidents come to mind. They weren't so funny at the time though.

I seem to recall a place called Verdun where we got our first real bombing. A certain S/Sgt seemed to be looking at one that exploded and judging from the direction of the plane, the next one was sure to land squarely in his tent. So it seemed to him anyway. Out of that tent he came on hands and knees, blankets and all. Lightning never moved faster. Ever faithful "Von Hafner" really had plenty of speed for once.

Anyone forget that famous ambush? I bet John and Sam haven't. From my observation point, I could see a hot stream from a Machine Pistol just breezing over that jeep of theirs. They won the race to the ditch with yards to spare. Along comes Big Andy, "What are you guys doing in that ditch", he says. Was he kidding?

Ever hear of the house that couldn't be hit? We did, and lived in it at Gorze. Trouble was, that no one had informed the Germans about it. Our Barber Louie, brave boy as always, was sorting mail at the time the shell hit, only fifteen feet from him. No one knows if Ferdinand was in bed or not. Anyway they got out in a hurry. Funny what it takes to



"C" Company Headquarters Platoon

get some people out of bed in the morning. Tucker was shaving at the time and got a glass massage along with it. Andy Miller and Pike missed it by seconds again.

Ever hear of a tent in an Air Raid Shelter? Ask Pike for details on how to keep dry under a leaking roof.

COMMUNICATION SECTION

Since our landing in France and all the way through Germany, the communication section of "C" Company has been praised for its excellent work in both its telephone and radio communication.

When the company was given indirect fire missions they very often found their telephone line back to the CP was already in and working, and never was it known to be out for any length of time, although it sometimes required repairing the lines under constant enemy shell fire.

Where it was impossible to use telephones for communication with the Battalion Headquarters, the SCR 608 radio, which under ordinary cir-

cumstances has a maximum range of fifteen miles was used successfully at ranges up to twenty miles.

Of course through all of this, there are incidents that will always be remembered for the little joke that they provided. One of these jokes is the ever present "Hello Fronte, this is Gallagher" or "Hello Mackey this is Bedell", something that has followed the section all the way from the United States and seems as if it never will end. Or when the fellows would come in from a particularly hard time on the radio or switchboard, "Mother Mackey's" ever present pot of hot coffee, something that the boys will all thank him for, no matter how much he is kidded.

Of course there is also the time when we went down to Saarlautern and poor Perrigo had the GI's, and couldn't leave the cellar. Every few minutes if you wanted to find him all you had to do was look in the corner and there he was. He and the bucket which he never left for two or three days.

In closing we wish to mention the men who did the job — S/Sgt "Muscles" Bedell, T/4 "Poleclimber" Gallagher, T/4 "Mother" Mackey, Pfc Vincent E Fonte and Pfc G. W. Perrigo.

KITCHEN CREW

Many months have passed since these events happened but we should like to reveal several occurrences that took place in the early days of the Invasion of France.

The first surprise was having the battalion formation in an open field without any concealment and no foxholes. After the first Jerry Planes came over it wasn't necessary for anyone to tell the cooks to dig holes, they dug them before the kitchen truck was parked. Later on when the fellows got used to seeing shells explode they could keep right on with their job and not burn the eggs or cut the bread thicker than the mess sergeant wanted it. There was always plenty of food because a stray cow or chickens were always coming by, although we made it plenty hot for them. It was a nice change to have fresh food.

Some of the roughest going for the kitchen crew was along the Moselle during the cold, wet windy season, cooking for the 1st and 2nd platoons. There were plenty of shells coming in and no time to build strong dug-

outs. Macioce and Supranowicz found an abandoned shack and rebuilt it. Radulewicz took a bedroll and slept on the serving bench and T/4 Wynne and Kiehart usually played cards to keep warm before going to sleep, until one night the shack caught fire after putting too much gasoline in. We were sure the Heinies would zero in on us that night. The next scare we got was when Steiner mistook some horses for a hundred Nazis coming up the hill in front of us. A pup tent wasn't much protection for Skulski and Jobst.

It was a worrisome task for Kiehart, taking out the good hot food his cooks prepared for the firing platoons during the cold winter. He kept counting the fresh shell holes the Jerries made between meal times. Guess the food was pretty good (it was hot anyway) since a Major told him he was drawing fire on the hilly ground. Our Capt. Stovall said, "Take it up, they wont hit you." They didn't hit any on the road but no one could tell where the next one would hit or when the next shell might come in.

It can be said that the cooks of "C" Company were the best to be had and good soldiers. If they cooked as well as they did under the battle conditions, you can imagine what they could do at home or in a restaurant with enough ration points.

There were no accidents and no casualties, so the kitchen staff consisting of S/Sgt Kiehart, T/4 Wynne, T/4 Macioce, T/5 Radulewicz, T/5 Supranowicz and Pfc Glumm came through and were thankful for it and also the good consideration of the Captain and Officers and grand bunch of men of the company.

First Platoon

"The first few are the hardest".

But not according to Cpl Bob Duval, who got his first two, with two shots.

It was back in France, when we were still a bunch of rookies that it happened, and it was only by chance that Sgt Durbin's gun was in position. Because of motor troubles he had to fall out of column, and while waiting for maintenance, the infantry boys of the 90th Division came up yelling for the TD's.



“C” Company First Platoon

“Enemy tanks are approaching”.

Not having time to dig in the gun, the infantry boys volunteered to hold the gun trail on the hard surface road during recoil. A few were thrown for a loop when the gun went off but the result is what counted. The two Mark V tanks were mute evidence of the deadly efficiency of the gunner and the rest of the crew. Sgt Durbin was awarded the Bronze Star for this action.

Noveant September 1944

We didn't miss the kitchen during our stay in Noveant. Although we couldn't expose ourselves for too long a period of time, our foraging parties always managed to bring back the bacon, as well as the chickens and vegetables. Moselle wine graced every meal and when fortunate, something stronger. Not an uncommon sight was the “Hausfrau” of each section carrying his day's rations. Outstanding in this field of endeavor were Herb Luce and Lt Diltz.

Noveant - Fort Driant

After rushing through France, we arrived at Noveant on the west bank of the Moselle River, to protect the north flank of the 5th Infantry Division bridgehead south of Metz. We took up holding positions and formed road blocks. Things were hot, since the enemy occupied all the high ground in the vicinity, and were pretty well established in the forts guarding the ancient city of Metz. While the First Platoon assumed direct fire positions outside of Gorze, the Third Platoon would cross the Moselle nightly, to throw harassing fire on the enemy.

You never knew what to expect from the enemy, who was just across the river. Patrols would try to infiltrate, and we constantly had to be on the alert. One night the Security outpost helped to repulse a patrol. Lucky for us the boys on the machine gun held their fire, for in the morning we found an abandoned "Panzerfaust" (Bazooka) on the other side of the hill.

Most of these patrols came from the forts. So when we were alerted on the first of October to support the drive of the Second Battalion, 11th Inf. Regt., on Fort Driant, we knew what to expect. For, of all the Forts in the area, Fort Driant was the strongest and was considered the key to Metz. We were relieved by the Second Platoon and on the third of October we moved into an assembly area, awaiting further attachment. We were committed on the seventh, when we were attached to Task Force Warnock, to furnish anti-mechanized protection to the northeast flank of troops attacking the Fort. We were placed in a precarious position, with only a limited field of fire.

No time was wasted; foxholes were dug, down and under. Movement was cut to a minimum for we were constantly under direct observation. Guards were constantly on the alert. It was nerve racking, working in the shadow of the Fort.

For seven days we sweated it out. Unshaven faces were drawn and haggard from lack of sleep and nervousness. Our muddy foxholes were our homes day and night. We suffered our heaviest casualties on the eleventh, when an artillery shell exploded in the midst of Sgt Giordano's Section. This situation was slightly ironical because on the previous day we had read the "Stars and Stripes" full account of the Surrender of

Fort Driant. After a week of trying, the task was given up and under cover of darkness on the 12th we were ordered to pull out of our positions.

The trip back can never be forgotten. Can we ever forget how it seemed like ages before we cleared the wooded area surrounding the fort? Or how we cursed and sweated trying to get around a disabled tank in the road? Or how we worked up to a frenzy trying to get Sgt Plant's gun out of the muddy ditch into which it had slipped? Or how we tried to keep the noise to a minimum and how each sound seemed amplified to us? Time may be the best healer, but it can never eradicate the clear picture and pungent odor of death, fear and suffering that Fort Driant meant to us.

Arry

Many a cold morning, while in indirect fire position outside of Arry, Recorder Perrigo was awakened by Lt Diltz saying, "Wake up Perrigo, we are going to Metz". Said Pvt Perrigo to Lt Diltz, "Go ahead Lt., I'll write the Obituary".

It was in the same position that the cooks got to assist in knocking out enemy installations. Sunday morning Church Services were being held in Arry, and a fire mission on a target came up. Being short of hands, the cooks left their stoves and became loaders and assistant gunners. From the observers reports the Germans must still be wondering who threw everything but the kitchen stove at them.

While in Arry we had our first snow fall. Since we were living in the field, no one was particularly pleased to see the snow. For to us it meant that winter had come and winter isn't a time for camping trips. The shacks and dugouts were remodeled for winter habitation but in no way were we able to find a method of heating the running water. Some of the sturdy huts built during our stay, especially the one Herb Luce built, we are sure is still standing; perhaps in imagination only.

Fort St. Privat

Towards the end of November, we arrived at the outskirts of Metz. Standing in the way of our advance was Fort St. Privat. The first platoon moved up from the air field outside of Augny to take up anti-mechanized positions. The Fort had to be neutralized but the Infantry

Task Force Commander was reluctant to give the platoon permission to take up new positions, for fear of exposing the men unnecessarily. However, as it became more apparent that the Fort had to be neutralized, the Task Force Commander was persuaded to give us a chance. The First gun Section, with Sgt Plant in command, moved into an exposed position and expended close to 100 rounds. One of the rounds smashed the ventilation system, killing and wounding fifty of the enemy. A truce, to evacuate the wounded was rejected when a 75 mm gun was seen being put into position by the enemy. The Fort was neutralized and the next day Metz fell.

Carling

Tomorrow we were to cross into Germany. But, let tomorrow wait for tonight, we were still one kilometer away at Carling, with a hot reception on our hands. Our gun positions were, of necessity, not the best. We made up for it by doubling the guard. Imagine the surprise and confusion when an SS trooper walked in and said "I am your prisoner".

Besch

Although the enemy was only a few hundred yards away our sporting bloods could not be contained, especially after a deer was spotted in the woods. We had venison for Christmas, to supplement our self prepared turkeys. However, the fellows are still trying to live down the performance of Pfc Gressin, who got the buck with his first shot on his first outing. He must have had plenty of practice hunting deer in the Bronx. And the liquor flowed like water — when we managed to get hold of a still in operating condition. It was surprising to see so many men turn out to help in the distilling process. However only Sgt Durbin and his crew managed to have their pictures taken by S&S reporters with the still as a background. You should have heard the regular distillers, Carper, Short, MacDonald, Corso, and Soldingier complain.

Perl

Many acts of valor were unrecognized in those hectic days of the drive through the Siegfried Switch. Terrain features were in favor of the enemy, who was well dug in. Roads were zeroed in and it was impossible to bring up supplies and evacuate wounded with GMC's and Jeeps. Our half-track drivers were called upon to help keep supplies moving forward. The hazardous trip was performed nightly by Sabot, Wiechnik and Waite.

Second Platoon

Mairy France

The enemy was threatening the flank of the 90th Division with an armored breakthrough. Co "C" was dispatched to set up road blocks in support of the 607th TD Bn.

Moving rapidly, the second platoon succeeded in gaining high ground in the vicinity of Mainville. The guns had just been put into position when the first gun section spotted an enemy column of Mark V tanks and armored vehicles approaching in the direction of Mairy. As soon as the column came within range, the gunner George La Ruc, started picking out his targets. Within a period of ten minutes two Mark V tanks and three armored vehicles were destroyed and the rest of the column was dispersed.

As the enemy fled in panic, the other gun sections opened up with HE. The effectiveness and destructive capabilities of the three inch gun was a sight to behold and those of us who saw it will never forget our first major engagement with the enemy.

Firing into Metz

After a cover of darkness had enveloped the countryside, the second platoon moved from the direct fire position across the Moselle River through heavy enemy artillery fire, to indirect fire positions North of Arry.

During operations which took place on the nights of October first and second, the platoon expended twelve hundred rounds of HE. at targets which were assigned by the 5th Infantry Division.

The cold, bleak, rainy nights which were accompanied by heavy enemy artillery barrages probably will never be forgotten by any of the men who participated in this action. With this firing and artillery fire the final out-come of the battle of Metz became a reality.

The preparation of the piece for firing was a difficult one in the total darkness. The only light showing was the terrific flash as the shell was sent into Jerryland. Working from inside a half-track the platoon com-

mander, Lt. Polden, had his light dimmed out and gave his orders to the men at the telephones beside the gun.

Each man had his duty to perform. The gunners often cursed softly to themselves as they squinted to see their instruments. They continuously had to wipe the rain from their eyes and the mud from their sight. The cannoneers had as difficult a job with their individual duties. Despite these difficulties each man performed his job flawlessly even while floundering in the mud. Perfect team work in the platoon enabled us to return to our day time positions with the knowledge that our mission had been accomplished.

Guttweiler

Prior to dawn on March 4th, after moving into Guttweiler, Khalingen and Gurstrath, with elements of the Third Cavalry Group, two sections of the second platoon and two sections of the third platoon took up outpost positions guarding these small towns.

In all there was an estimated 62 men to protect and hold this part of the outpost line.

The day and night that followed was peaceful and quiet. Occasionally there was a whine and burst of an enemy shell on the hilltop just overlooking the town. Nevertheless, it had all the appearances of a routine holding position.

After changing the guard at 0700 on March 5th, an orange flare suddenly appeared in the morning haze. Immediately thereafter came the well known chatter of a "Jerry Burp Gun". Everyone was quickly aroused and alerted. From our position it appeared that perhaps a patrol was putting up a scrap on the next slope. This illusion quickly faded as the entire hillside and adjoining fields seemed to awaken from a sound sleep. A tremendous chatter of small arms fire filled the air and the smell of gun powder was heavy.

Lt Craig, in command of our TD force, raced one hundred and fifty yards to the Cavalry CP and returned with the message that a full scale counter-attack was on and that we were cut off from any possible escape route. Lt Craig then gave the order to mount machine guns and move to the center of town, where we would occupy positions in a perimeter defense. Every man carried out his duties in the usual manner although speed was the keynote. Despite a hail of hot lead, the move to the center of town was performed quickly and efficiently.

Meanwhile Sgt Hendricks' crew were pinned down by artillery fire. They remained at their post and helped the artillery observer in his work. During the observers absence, Sgt Hendricks and his crew spotted an enemy column, and directed devastating fire on the convoy.

All avenues of approach were covered, and the greatest small arms battle in our history took place for the ensuing three hours, as an estimated three hundred troopers of the 15th Panzer Grenadiers endeavored



"C" Company Second Platoon

to liquidate our small force. A radio call was made for tanks and "wil-co'd". The order was given to be on the look out for friendly tanks and every man felt his heart beat faster.

The fighting continued. Sometimes dying out to just an occasional sputter, and then suddenly rising to a thunderous roar. When we saw how confused the Germans became as our tanks came up to their rear, we poured all the more hot lead at them. They started to come in with their hands above their head from all sides. This sight was a relief for

the men who were holding out against a force almost five times as great. Mopping up operations began. Jerries who tried to escape were mowed down unmercifully. As the Nazis were being herded into the town square, the enemy artillery opened up. Round after round landed in the midst of the PWs. It was then that we realized that the flare that we had seen was a call for artillery, but due to the inclement weather, the German signal was not acknowledged till it was too late. Artillery continued to pour in as the fighting subsided, and the battle ended.

The crews returned to their previous positions as the PWs were confined to "Monkey Cages". After a good cup of coffee and a hot chow, the men felt better, a little tired perhaps, but ready if Fritz wished to try again.

Third Platoon Mairy

This was learned by the Third platoon in an encounter with an enemy Mark V Tank early in the campaign. We were on the way to reinforce 607th TD Bn when an enemy tank was spotted in a hull-down position. All four guns joined in "Buttoning up" the tank. Though not a hit was scored, the enemy dismounted and ran into the small arms fire of S/Sgt Andrunaites and Pfc Sneller, Hart, Tanner and Unferth, who had crawled up unnoticed. After suffering three casualties, the rest of the crew willingly surrendered.

Apach

While in Apach, the boys decided to throw a surprise party for Sgt Ed Hunter, Cpl George Exum, S/Sgt John Skulski and T/5 Joe Troise, who all had their birthdays on the 20th of January. The refreshments committee, consisting of the self-elected "Big Three", (Sgts Horsford Gibbons, and Hendricks) and "The Brooklyn Sharpies" (Cpl Frank Martorella and Pfc Dick Stabile) had the inhabitants of the town bake cakes and pies. The whiskey maker, "Our Dearest Friend", kept his word and donated "Beau-Coup" schnapps. The music was taken care of by "Curly and his Apach Trio". Too bad Joe Troise couldn't attend, for the rest of us had a swell time.

We like to remember the look of surprise upon the face of Kermit White when two SS men strolled up to him and surrendered during the fighting at Gustrath.

Nennig

Under cover of darkness we moved into Nennig, to give direct support to the stalemated infantry. No sooner had we emplaced our guns, when, as if by a prearranged signal all hell broke loose. The Nazis opened up with everything they had. Artillery and those nerve shattering rockets battered our positions. The enemy infantry and tanks of the 11th Panzer Division followed close behind the barrage and over ran Sgt Hamilton's gun on the right flank of the platoon defense. For, unknown to him our infantry had been withdrawn. His section fought valiantly as infantrymen, while making their way to the center of town. There they were joined by the second gun section, which had dismantled their gun, after firing with little effect on a Tiger Tank that had attempted to over run their position. Casualties were high. Paladenech was killed while guarding the flank of the gun and Hamilton Staisil, Kudej, Williams, Ueferth and Madison were wounded while defending their position.



"C" Company Third Platoon

Meanwhile everything wasn't too rosy with the third and fourth gun sections. Cut off from the other two gun sections, they were constantly

under enemy fire, and threatened by the possibility of enemy infiltration. Many times during the battle, the cannoneers of these sections escaped death by inches, as they tried without luck to dislodge a cleverly concealed sniper.

Many acts of heroism were performed by the men under fire. Perhaps the best remembered are, T/5 Joe Zizzo's fighting the fire caused by a direct hit on his half-track and the bravery shown by S/Sgt Andrunaites in attempting to break through to the trapped men in his platoon. For his heroic action "Andy" was awarded the "Silver Star" posthumously. By holding doggedly to their positions till reinforcements came, the third platoon helped stifle the German counter-attack. By morning the enemy has retired to lick his wounds. His attempt to re-capture Nennig had failed.

Medical Detachment



Capt. Carson B. Murdy

All of us remember only too-well those occasions when the fiery breath of Mars blew down our necks and Purple Hearts were a very undesirable five points. Those were the dark days that ne'er will be beyond recollection. Those were the days when the call, "Medics" meant — — "Action - Front, Rear, Flank, and Center!" And this is the story of the men who answered that call.

August 8, 1944 and the Utah Beach landings. To the fifteen enlisted men and two officers comprising the Medical Detachment personnel, this day marked the opening up of entirely new and unfamiliar vistas. From now on in, simulation was a thing of the past. What would it be like to apply all the practical knowledge gained along the training road — all those endless lectures and demonstrations — to situations of reality that were fraught with personal danger? How would one react to "under fire" performance of medical duties? Would it be necessary to "throw away the book" and forget the "by the number" lessons? The answers to these, and innumerable other questions, were soon forthcoming.

The disposition of Medical personnel, where they would be of greatest value was made. Functioning within each firing company were three men — two using a medical jeep and the third traveling with the company's maintenance crew. The resulting break-down practically made a separate unit of each group of aid-men — with the Battalion Aid Station as a headquarters and clearing point. In addition, the detachment had one man acting as medical-clerk with the Battalion Personnel Section, and another in the capacity of supply man — leaving a complement of four enlisted and two officers for duty at the Aid Station.

It wasn't until five days after hitting the beaches that the Medical Detachment handled its first combat casualty. Our 2nd "Recon" Platoon,

combing roads east and west of the main advance route near the small French village Pre-en-Pail, ran into a heavily-mined road, causing injuries to two of our men. At that time, the rest of the Battalion was strung out on the road-march and necessary first-aid had to be administered by the side of the road. Thus began the 774th Medical Detachment's nine months of uninterrupted combat, medical service.

Recalling incidents and "off-the-beaten-track" occurrences, over an extended period of time, is truly a difficult task. But, when such happenings become indelibly impressed upon one's mind, all that is necessary to bring about a wave of recollection, is the word, "remember"

REMEMBER, Pfc John Nicosia back in those early in France, when capturing Heinies was still at the novelty stage? 'Twas one "black-axe" night, with nary a star shining to lend itself to better visibility. You were with "A" Co. and had bivouacked for the night in an open field. The area bordered on a fringe of woods, which, as it turned out, harbored numerous, potential PW's. You had just dozed-off when the sound of rifle-fire snapped you awake. More shots came, followed by a long silence. You leaned back, stretched out, and closed your eyes — shrugging off the shots as, "just another trigger-happy Joe, not in the know". When, suddenly, out of the stillness, came the spine-tingling call, "Medics!" You bolted upright, pulled on your clothes, and headed out. Information was soon forthcoming. A group of Heinies, cut off from their unit by our speedy advance, had waited until nightfall to make a break for their lines. As it hapened, they very foolishly chose a route that led them through "A" Co's area. And, upon discovery, elected to trade shots with our boys. Result: — two wounded enemy and sixteen prisoners taken. And there you were now, heading out into the inky-blackness where one of the wounded lay. It was so dark you could barely make out the shape of the trees all around you. Every tree-trunk took on the form of a lurking enemy. Every snapping twig caused palpitations of the heart. The air was pregnant with unfired rifle shots and you expected to have to serve as an obstretician at any moment. Is it no wonder then that it seemed like hours before you finally reached your objective? And then, after treating the mortally wounded man, whose death was inevitable, recall the long trek back to the spot where the prisoner count was rapidly mounting? The consensus that you had used foot-powder, in-

stead of sulfa-powder, on that wound was merely good-natured “joshing”.
REMEMBER???

REMEMBER, T/5 Claude M. Shoemake, that quiet evening on the outskirts of Verdun? Enemy action was negligible at that time. You had retired for the night into the inner recesses of your “pup-tent”, buttoning up both ends, snugly. Then suddenly, came the bombing and strafing Luftwaffe, causing the hasty exit of a certain six-foot-two medic from the aforementioned, completely closed tent — now interested only in locating a previously-shoveled fox-hole. And when the “show” had ended and you returned to your tent, did you ever figure out just how you had been able to make your exit without first unbuttoning the flaps?
REMEMBER???

REMEMBER, S/Sgt N. A. La Rose, that all night vigil in that quaint little town of Xonville, France? You displayed your best bedside manner in patiently waiting with Capt Murdy for that young French girl to give birth to her first child. Diligently, as the hours ticked away and the expectant mother’s pains became more and more pronounced, you examined and re-examined her with touching gentleness. Came morning, and she still held her “mother-to-be” status. There seemed to be no way of persuading her that the time was at hand for her contribution to the population of the world in general, and Xonville in particular! The morning hours dwindled with still no sign of production. By noon a much-harried and overworked civilian doctor arrived, relieving you of your responsibility. So after more than fifteen sleepless hours of “pre-natal” guard, you missed the actual “launching” and never did find out whether ‘twas a male or a female delivery. REMEMBER???

REMEMBER, T/4 Joseph F. Carmelo and T/5 William R. Sybert, that sunny afternoon back in Noveant, France and the road from there to the enemy-held town of Ancy? You were scooting along in your Medical jeep, intent upon reaching two reported casualties just outside of Ancy. And then, from seemingly nowhere, came that ominous sound, “B-u-r-r-r-p” — and the sudden appearance of an evenly spaced row of holes, across your windshield! It is understood that all existing speed records for jeeps were then and there broken. REMEMBER???

REMEMBER, Cpl Maurice R. Spenard, that siege of the well-know “G.

I.'s" back in the wheat-fields of France? You had been suffering, as only a fellow sufferer can appreciate. And then came that sunny morning, with your siege at its height, and the rapidly-disintergrating Luft-waffe decided to put on one of their exhibitions. Can we ever forget your magnificent display of courage and resourcefulness in tending to your needs, unmindful of the lead-spitting planes overhead. REMEMBER???



Medical Detachment

REMEMBER, T/4 Survetus M. Erwin, that November morning of raw, biting wind and drenching rain? You were with "A" Co. as they made their initial Moselle River crossing below Arnaville. The 5th Division doughboys had secured high ground on the Moselle's east bank, and now, armor and artillery were pouring across to take up their supporting role. With the whistle of "88's" furnishing accompaniment to the sound of the "Tracks" grinding over the newly-floated bridge, your thoughts were — "where do we go from here, boys, where do we go from here?" And then that all-day, tension-filled wait, with spasmodic shell-fire making the slimy, bogging mud just that much less bearable. And finally the "move-on" order came, and "A" Company started rolling to take up gun positions high above the devastated town of Arry. A move that was

necessarily halted at times, while men scrambled for protective cover from guns blasting out of the Metz Forts. REMEMBER???

REMEMBER, Pfc Richard H. Parker, that extended "tour of duty" in the role of General Practitioner back in Doncourt, France? You were assigned to "B" Company CP at that time, handling all the aches and pains of the three firing platoons and Headquarters platoon, too. In addition, you were the official "good-will ambassador" (without portfolio) for the area — tending the needs of an over-populated, chateau-like house. Many incidents, thus encountered, are worthy but too numerous to mention. Suffice it to say, after viewing your reluctance to discuss experiences, there is but one conclusion to draw. You are, indeed, a most modest and unassuming young man. All of which does not detract but adds to a record of a job well done. REMEMBER???

REMEMBER, Pfc Alphonse J. La Pointe, those days of the drive on Metz when "trenchfoot" in its early stages was so prevalent among the men? And the countless occasions when you made your rounds to the gun-sections, "country-doctor" style, treating those wet, reddened often painful feet. 'Twas all line of duty stuff to you—but, the Jerries evidently didn't realize it, as they took special care to "give with the shells" during your "Office hour" trips. And that one time in particular, under the very shadows of the enemy-held forts surrounding Metz, when they decided to use your jeep as their "target for the Reich!" You always said that the jeep was without a governor and you were right! REMEMBER???

REMEMBER, S/Sgt Frederick J. Ross, that "quickest-manner-of-descent" exhibition on the boat's rope-ladder at Camp Shanks? When you were unsuccessful in your attempt to convince Army authorities of the practicability of your method, we all believed that you had forsaken the idea. But no, comes six months later, deep in the heart of France and once again you tried to prove your point. Net result — assorted cracked ribs and bruises. (I didn't fall — I was pushed!) Camp Shanks, N.Y. — Tronville, France. What and where next, Sgt Ross? REMEMBER???

REMEMBER, Pfc Grover C. Fennell, that day in Pluwig, German with "C" Company's 3rd platoon? The company was attached to the Third Cavalry Group, furnishing anti-tank support for the drive to mop-up

enemy pockets of resistance in and around the sector. Reconnaissance elements were probing and thrusting amid continuous enemy artillery-fire. That was the situation when a runaway 2¹/₂-ton truck came roaring downhill towards one of our gun-positions. The gun-crew had enough time to scramble to safety, when the truck crashed into a nearby house. However, one of our men unable to reach safety of a doorway, was hurled against the side of the building. With artillery-fire still very pronounced, you managed to reach the injured man to administer first-aid. Subsequent casualties both in our outfit and that of the Third Cavalry, had you "hopping" throughout the day. For your calm efficiency and devotion to duty, you were awarded the Bronze Star. REMEMBER???

REMEMBER, T/5 Ralph E. Hair, Jr., that warm day during the Metz "stalemate"? You had labored so arduously on morning reports, weekly reports, monthly reports, and sundry Medical reports and you felt that you deserved a "rest" from your duties as Medical-personnel clerk. You chose to vacation along the east bank of the Moselle, joining the aid men of "A" Company, for the afternoon. You had grown tired listening to their tales of how "rough" it was with the line companies and were determined to see for yourself. Do you recall the sumptuous meal that was prepared in your honor on the occasion of your "baptism of fire"? There was richly-browned roast beef, crisply-fried potatoes, onions, golden corn-on-the-cob, garden-fresh tomatoes, sweet peas, coffee, French brown bread and butter. And for dessert, there were hand-picked plums. You left finally, after a fruitless wait for the Heinies to produce the climax to your visit, firmly convinced that "There's nothing to this front-line stuff!" What you didn't know, at that time, was that you had chosen the ONE day in which "all was quiet on the Moselle River Front"!! REMEMBER???

REMEMBER, T/5 Glenn Freeman and Alvin B. Garlington, those adjacent towns of Obersehr and Lampaden, Germany, the morning of March 6, 1945? The enemy, in a desperate attempt to cut the main supply route of our troops to the north who were knocking on the gates of Trier, had succeeded in breaking through and practically surrounding these two towns. The hour was early, with the sun still to rise from the east. Fighting had grown into savage, hand-to-hand encounters. Our 30's, 50's and even our 3-inch guns were being fired at point-blank range in a determined effort to prevent any further penetration into our lines.

And there you were, in the thick of it, with mounting casualties and no route of evacuation open. It is any wonder that the drone of our reinforcing tanks, coming in to break the enemy's six hour "stranglehold" on the area came as music to your ears! REMEMBER???

REMEMBER, T/5 M. M. Green, and Pfc Wm. A. Ludwig, that Sunday afternoon in the Saarlautern suburb of Lisdorf? It was the fourth consecutive day of the heaviest concentration of shell-fire to date, that the enemy had hurled at any one objective. And then, above the sound of the exploding shells, came the cry, "Medics!" A lunge for your aid-kits . . . a dash for your jeep . . . and a screeching stop at the urgent beckoning of a solemn-faced "Joe". The injured man, his wounds dressed, was ready to be evacuated when all-hell broke loose. Evidently, your progress had been observed by hostile eyes and the Heinies were now intent upon the systematic elimination of one medical jeep. Two "longs" . . . two "shorts" . . . and the fifth one was right in there! Total damage — a smashed rear-end, four blown tires, and a generous sprinkling of shrapnel through the body. Now, the question was — how to evacuate the wounded man? A hurried consultation disclosed that the shelling had cut all wire-communications, leaving but one alternative, that of sending someone to the nearest platoon CP for a vehicle. Almost as quickly as you can read this, one was brought up and parked out of enemy observation. The casualty, placed as comfortably as possible in the jeep, was supported and prevented from falling out all during that lurching, jarring dash on the crater-marked road to the Aid-Station. REMEMBER???

These few paragraphs would indeed be found lacking if mention were not made of one Capt Nathan Borkow. Capt Borkow left us, most unwillingly, when our changing T/O no longer called for the services of a dental officer. How can we ever forget, he of the long, black cigars . . . He of the laconic expressions and supposedly-bored outlook on life . . . he of the remarkable (and profitable) talent at Pinochle, Red-Dog, Mississippi, Baseball, (not, our national-pastime) Black-Jack, etc . . . he of the insatiable appetite for sleep, oftentimes, with lighted cigar clinched between teeth . . . he of the daily, "guard-watch" from his post, overlooking the town Sierck . . . and, he of the ability to perform his dental duties in a manner, par excellence, with a minimum of wasted time and effort.

A group of men function only as efficiently as the quality of their leader permits. So it was with the Detachment, led by Capt Carson B. Murdy. By careful planning capable utilization, and periodic rotation of the extremely limited personnel, Capt Murdy was able to furnish the maximum in Medical attention and supervision to the Battalion. There were times when he went out to the most forward gun-positions to administer necessary immunization vaccines rather than impair the efficiency of the unit by having the men return to the Battalion Aid Station. For this, and other equally meritorious service, he was awarded the Bronze Star.

Yes, we remember it all . . . the trials and tribulations . . . the laughs and unshed tears . . . the joys and heart-breaks. We remember and achieve a kind of intangible satisfaction from knowing that all add up to a job well done . . . the best way we knew how.

Battlefield Commissions



2nd Lt. Weldon D. Griffin



2nd Lt. Julius J. Holbrooks



2nd Lt. John J. Pendoley



2nd Lt. Joseph A. Bognanni

Battlefield Commissions



2nd Lt. Donnis A. Fields



2nd Lt. Ralph G. Coriell



2nd Lt. Edward G. Beernaert



2nd Lt. William J. Murphy



Sports

The sports record of this battalion, without which this book would be incomplete, is as much a part of the history of this unit as its activities on the field of battle. In it and from it, the men of the 774th obtained that pride of organization, call it, the "esprit de corps", if you will, which was so necessary to produce a fighter and a winner. That these qualities were possessed in France and Germany need not be questioned, or that baseball or basketball had something to do with it: Well, let's look at the highlights of the record:

Basketball

The basketball season of 1942-43 will probably remain as one of the battalion's most successful. The basketeers, led by Leo "Ace" Gottlieb, who in civilian life performed professionally for the Philadelphia Spars, finished its season in a blaze of glory winning the Camp Hood Championship by defeating the 13th Cavalry, 43-40 in the final game of the year. And what a thriller that game was. The Cavalry's strong zone defense forced the TDs to discard their usual type of fast breaking game and resort to a slow back court offensive. The opposition's close guarding of Gottlieb during the first half allowed T. Kelly to shake free and drop ten points through the hoop. At the close of the half the Cavalry was out in front, 22-21. The outcome of the game remained doubtful all through the second half with both clubs matching basket for basket. It wasn't until the last minute of the play in the game that saw even full colonels arguing with the officials, when the Cavalry shifted to a man to man defense, that the TDs broke loose their fast cutting type of game and were able to notch the winning scores. Two quiet baskets by Kimball and Gottlieb put the club ahead by one point. Then, in the final ten seconds, Gottlieb broke up the Cavalry bid for victory by intercepting the ball and passing the ball to Murphy for the last score of the evening. The

lineup for the 774th included George "Juggler" Junjulas, Ray Kimball, Red Carney, Don Fields, Porky Lewis and Bill Murphy.

The 1943-44 basketball season produced another winner, though not as spectacular as the one of the preceding season. Pre-season outlooks were indeed gloomy with the club minus the expert eye and ball handling of Gottlieb and such court-wise men as Kelly and Carney. But with the addition of Jonas, Stenson and Goldberg and the management of Lt John Stewart, the team went on to battle its way into second place in the strong Augusta Municipal League.



Baseball

To the 774th Tank Destroyer Battalion the words baseball and Claude Shoemake are synonymous, for the big Claude revolved the baseball world of the battalion. Shoemake formerly the property of the Boston Red Sox and the team's mainstay on the pitchers mound, teamed up with Tully Folis, his battery mate, to lead the ball club through the 1942 season to a record of 11 wins and 4 losses. So effective was "Big Claude" during that season that, in an exhibition game at Ocala, Florida, against the Birmingham "Barons", a double "A" ball team, he fanned eight of them to cop the decision, 3-1.