

RELIEF FROM THE LINE (except for the Ranger Platoon and 2d Platoon Company 'C' 636th TD Bn)

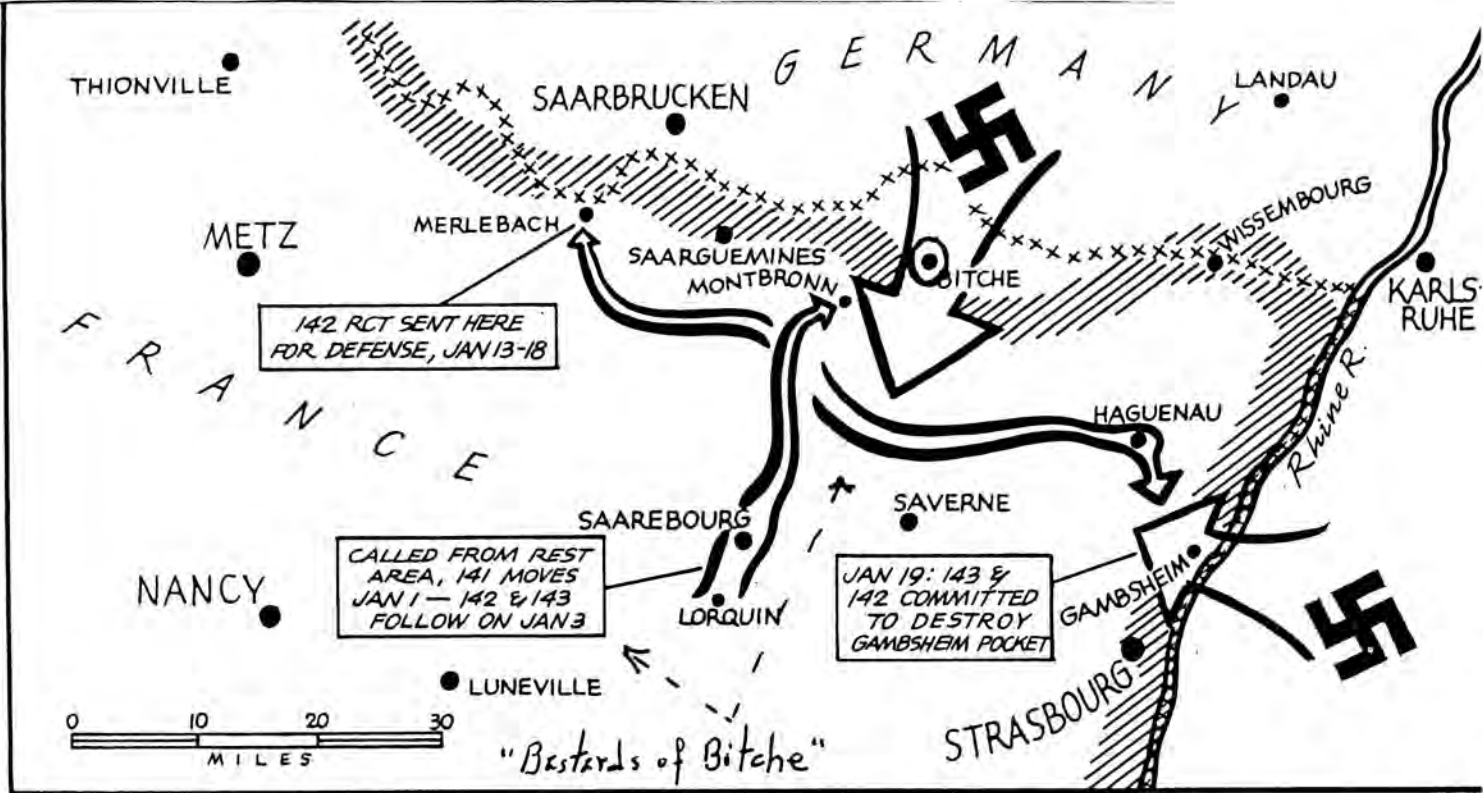
The printed word as presented in the first Div History of the 36th published in late 1945 indicated a few sentences with reference to the town of RIQUEWIHR. Further reading indicates the German's made an attempt to turn the 36th Div's flank which was repulsed. The events I will relate, are not recorded in any report or Unit history. The ~~town~~<sup>town</sup> of Riquewihhr is one of many which perched above the flood plain on the west side of the Rhine river. The town had been (allegedly cleared of German troops by the forward elements of the French 4th Armored Div. 636th TD Bn's Company C had detached its 2d Platoon to make a rest stop in a large wood on the outskirts of the town. A ~~Platoon~~<sup>Section</sup> from the 36th Div Chemical Mortar Company (~~perhaps a Section~~) was also positioned outside the town. The Ranger Platoon which had now been scaled down in size to twenty men, had been given the mission of combing the bushes for any German 'left-overs' and 'Stay-behinds'. The townspeople were mostly Alsatians of German stock who had no love for the French. Div Hq decided to consider this quaint town as a possible site for Div Rear CP. Brigadier General "Uncle Bob" Stack was in command of the Recon party checking out the area as the possible Div Rear CP. After the French armored units had flashed through the town, they left nothing except their exhaust fumes to indicate their transitory presence. Sergeant --- Gonzales, Fats, Tex and Sneaky Pete were my constant Companeros. Gonzales was a fantastic rifleman and had received from me a fine German sniper rifle complete with scope. He drifted back to me as we observed the town from the shelter of a hillside grove. The morning mists from the Rhine river had not yet lifted; they would be completely dissipated by the early morning sun. Gonzales came to me on a dead run. "Lieutenant, something's fishy down there, not a person moving, no one to be seen, and I recon'd the backyard barn areas, all the stock is locked up tight and the cows ain't been milked. I don't like it!" I sent Fats and Sneaky to retrace the path taken by Gonzales. Fats returned within minutes. "Goddamn Krauts are up under the roofs of those houses armed to the teeth, and boat loads are coming across the river under cover of the fog!" I sent Tex to the 36th Div recon party

with the glad tidings that 'maybe' we were in for a surprise fire fight. Brig General Stack sent for me but I was already moving down around the rear of houses lining the single main street with Gonzales close behind. I had to get a look at this for myself. What I observed sent chills racing up my wishbone. At least two full Companies of German troops armed with Burp Guns and MG 42's was infiltrating from the river, up the tree line behind the barn buildings, heading towards the wooded area occupied by the Tank Destroyer Platoon of twelve TDs, which I was fairly certain the Germans didn't know were there. A single shot rang out; a small caliber bullet which struck the stock of Gonzales' rifle. We hit the prone and observed the houses. A window curtain fluttered and a rifle barrel poked out of the window. Gonzales zeroed in and fired. He hit a middle aged woman who was ready to shoot again, what later turned out to be a caliber 22 target rifle. That last shot alerted the tank destroyers and we could hear their diesel engines firing up. More Germans were coming along the single street through the center of town. I made my way back to the Ranger Platoon and we set up a few machine guns to enfilade the area behind the barn buildings and the wooded hill. We heard the loud 'Whump' of an 4.2 mortar and knew the Chemical mortar section had located a target to zero in, as it turned out the hundreds of German troops manning small inflatable boats and crossing the Rhine towards the town of Riquewihr. The TDs were moving individually, then the fire storm began with HE shells slamming point blank into the houses at roof top level; into the single town street clogged with German infantry. We looked down from an angle and saw shells bursting on the cobblestones, mowing down scores of Germans who were trying the press against the walls of the houses. Turning back to run towards the river, running into the Germans who were advancing. Division History states. "This attack made without preparation was a great success." It does not indicate whether the attack was being made in Riquewihr or Kientzheim. It does not state exactly what the French 4th Armored units were up to. The facts later ascertained was that the French had by-passed a sizeable number of heavily armed Germans, who had apparently made wireless contact with elements of Germans on the other side of the river. These unfortunates were German Officer Candidates who had not been tested in battle.

They had picked Riquewihr as a good spot to cross from the other side of the Rhine because the townspeople were sympathetic and 'good Germans' not expecting to find this heavy firepower in the wooded hills behind the town and not knowing the 36th Div had contemplated this area as a good 'Rest area' and Div Rear CP. The French Task Force Commander had to be 'brought' back to see for himself what it was he had allowed to remain in his rear. The 36th Div Hq had been on the verge of losing its assistant Div Commander plus a Platoon of Tank Destroyers and a ~~Platoon~~ Section of 4.2 Chemical mortars- EXCEPT FOR <sup>the quick actions</sup> one Sergeant Gonzales who received a Bronze Star medal for his action. We found a total of two hundred ninety one dead and seriously wounded German soldiers in and around Riquewihr, not a damn one of them more than twenty years old! This could have been the basis for a real life scandal involving the lax and take-it-for-granted <sup>attitude</sup> of the French 4th Armored units who had initially by-passed many of the Germans, by a definite failure of flank reconaissance and security and further by stating in a report that the entire area had been cleared by them. Dozens of townspeople who had participated on the German side as roof-top snipers had been killed and wounded, most of them women.

Not a single word about this had been written into the Unit history. Also not reported was the hilarious situation in which 'Uncle Bob Stack, the 36th Div Assistant Commanding General, who had climbed into a granary to better direct the fires of 'his troops' fell through the floor into the shelled corn below and almost suffocated before he was dug out by his advance Recon party.

I have read the French military historical version of the fierce fighting which relieved the Colmar Pocket and not one word about this fiasco precipitated by the French 4th Armored Division. The town of Riquewihr was located on the north eastern edge of the Colmar Pocket. The city of Colmar was a German bastion on the west bank of the Rhine river. *The German officer candidates had been a training officer candidate Academy located in Freiburg, Germany, directly opposite the French-Alsace city of Colmar separated by the Rhine*



# THE WINTER MONTHS

Strasbourg, an Alsatian mongrel of both French and German influence, founder of the Christmas tree tradition and possessor of one of the world's finest cathedrals, was a far more pleasant spot in which to spend the Christmas holidays than had been San Pietro a year before. The 36th remained in Strasbourg only five days, patrolling the medieval streets in search of German stragglers and agents, who had never left the city even after its capture by French forces under General Le Clerc one month before. Down on the river banks, bordering Germany itself, men of the 36th stood the watch on the Rhine.

Uncle Sam's Christmas present to the 36th Division was relief from the line, whole and without condition. By Christmas Eve the Division had set an endurance record for continuous combat days (with infantry elements in the

line), 133. Dating from the August 15 invasion, it had rushed up from the beaches, plodded on without rest through the bitter Vosges foothills, forced high St. Marie Pass, and stopped the fierce German attacks from the Colmar pocket. Quiet Strasbourg itself was a decided change after all this, but now the Division would move to a rest and training area near Sarrebourg, fifty miles to the rear through Saverne Gap. It started moving on Christmas Day, the day the Division Chaplain, Lt. Col. Herbert E. Mac Combie, gave a party for the city orphanage, and all the G. I.'s chipped in from their Christmas packages.

The relief was short-lived.

In order to contain the Von Rundstedt offensive that had ripped into the First Army line in Belgium and reached its high-water mark on December 24, the Allied Command

**STRASBOURG**, from the pilot's seat of a Piper Cub. Moat-like canal to the right is not to be confused with the Rhine River (not pictured).



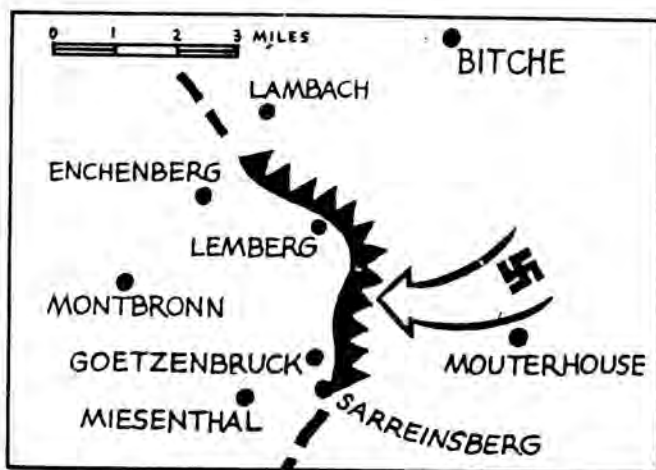
**ON CHRISTMAS DAY, 1944**, members of the Division gave a party for the children of the city.



was compelled to draw troops from the Seventh Army, proportionately thinning out the dispositions in its sector. The Seventh Army line was widely extended to the left to a point near Saarbrücken, leaving units which had reached the German border on the right, near the Rhine, in an exposed position, defensively.

When failure in the Ardennes Offensive became apparent and Allied troops began to bite away at the flanks of the Bulge, the Germans turned their attention to the Seventh Army sector and seized the opportunity to stage a major attack, both in the hope of gaining a psychological advantage and to offset any further shifting of Allied forces to the Belgium battle. They chose for the point of their assault, the area at Bitche, in the center of the Seventh Army line, and struck boldly for Saverne to close the pass there to Strasbourg. Success would have boxed in the whole VI Corps on the right, and imperiled the loss of all Alsace.

Days in advance of the German attack, a feeling of sullen



expectation permeated the chill December air, penetrating even to the rear where Division men, now in SHAEF reserve, started their training. There were several alerts—alerts to be ready to rush to either XV or VI Corps on short notice, alerts for enemy paratroopers supposedly dropped in rear areas.

#### UNEASY FEELING

At midnight of New Year's Eve, traditional hour of celebration, the Germans launched their attack south of Bitche. Before the day was out the 141st had hurriedly departed from Saarebourg, moved forty miles to close a gap on the right of the 100th Division, caused when the Germans filtered through on the left of the VI Corps sector, 141st infantrymen immediately upon arrival took up positions in an eight-kilometer arc to protect the towns of Enchenberg, Lemberg, and Goetzenbruck, with Montbronn at the center of communications. This was on the flank of the German penetration, which in another several days reached its peak at a depth of six miles at Wingen, in the 45th Division sector.

Confusion, near-panic and wild rumors were circulating freely when Division elements arrived. The Germans did what they could to heighten deception by using captured equipment, in wearing Allied uniforms and infiltrating "jeep parties" under the guise of American soldiers. By noon of January 2 all units of the 141st were in contact with the enemy, and a critical situation obtained as the Germans plucked away at Lemberg in the center of the line and threatened encirclement on the south flank at Miesenthal and Sarreinsberg. Part of Company I was cut off in the fighting north of Lemberg, but the enemy did not get through. Next day Germans dented the line between Lemberg and Goetzenbruck, but the loss was restored before dark.

#### INTENSE COLD

The remainder of the Division travelled the icy roads to Montbronn in a snowstorm after dark of January 3, the 142nd and 143rd backing up the 141st Army orders specified the employment of only one RCT at a time, even forbade the stirring up of a fight by any direct offensive action. Because of the intense cold, regiments rotated on line duty for three-day periods. Companies A and C of the 142nd Infantry, in an attack that required special Army permission, sliced off an enemy bulge and netted 50 prisoners on the morning of January 8. Next day the Germans threw a battalion against Lemberg, which, after initial surprise, was driven off under heavy artillery concentrations. On January 11, the 3rd Battalion, 143rd, pulled off a "Chinese" or mock attack that produced a violent German reaction and a heavy shelling of Lemberg.

A very distasteful job during this period emphasized the seriousness of the general situation. With pick and shovel, reserve 141st and 143rd elements and the 111th Engineers hastily prepared a secondary or switch line several miles to the rear. Certainly the Germans had been compelled to do this type of thing all along, but to Division troops this was an entirely new military method. The full weight of a German attack was still anticipated but never developed at Montbronn.

An Army order sent the 142nd Infantry west to the XXI Corps to back up the line before Saarbrücken while a relief of the 103rd Division was carried out, January 13-18. Such quiet prevailed in this sector that hardly a shot was fired.

#### STRASBOURG THREATENED

After January 6 German attacks in the Bitche salient were contained. Gradually the pressure wore off and the enemy retired, discouraged at what little success he had attained. Over on the right of the Seventh Army line however, persistent armored attacks hacked away at the VI Corps positions north of Haguenau. Early in January a large force of Germans had ferried the Rhine and seized a small bridgehead ten miles north of Strasbourg at Gambenheim. Efforts to dislodge the enemy proved futile.

and to their shock ran full tilt into 1st + 2nd platoon Co. C, 636th TDs who made a huge pile of armored junk, effectively blocking the only road.

The photo of an American tank knocked out and still burning poses one of the sad aspects when Command control is lost during the heat of battle. Several American tanks had entered this town from a flank direction during a fire fight between Tank Destroyers and several German tanks concealed in blasted houses along the main street. The TD Gunners saw too late that what appeared to be a German tank moving in from a lateral street was actually an American. The TD knocked it out with two fast rounds before the error was discovered. In the background the helmet of a crew member of the TD which KO'd the American tank can be seen as he looks towards this unfortunate target. The TD Commander was not told about the possibility of American tanks being in the vicinity.

The huge gaping hole in the wall of this stone farmhouse was made by a German Tiger tank mounting a 105mm gun, the first of such weapons ever encountered and to my knowledge the last. This weapon had seen considerable use on the Russian Front and no where in the many historical accounts I have read, had it been encountered in the VI Corps area of combat. An M-10 TD knocked him out from the rear before he could move from his firing position.

I have mentioned quite often that M-10 TDs could carry a few Infantrymen. In this photograph the TDs are referred to as 'Tanks', count the helmeted Infantryman aboard the first one. Then again, have you ever read about or heard of ten or more fully loaded Infantrymen aboard the round turreted, sloping deck of a Sherman tank?



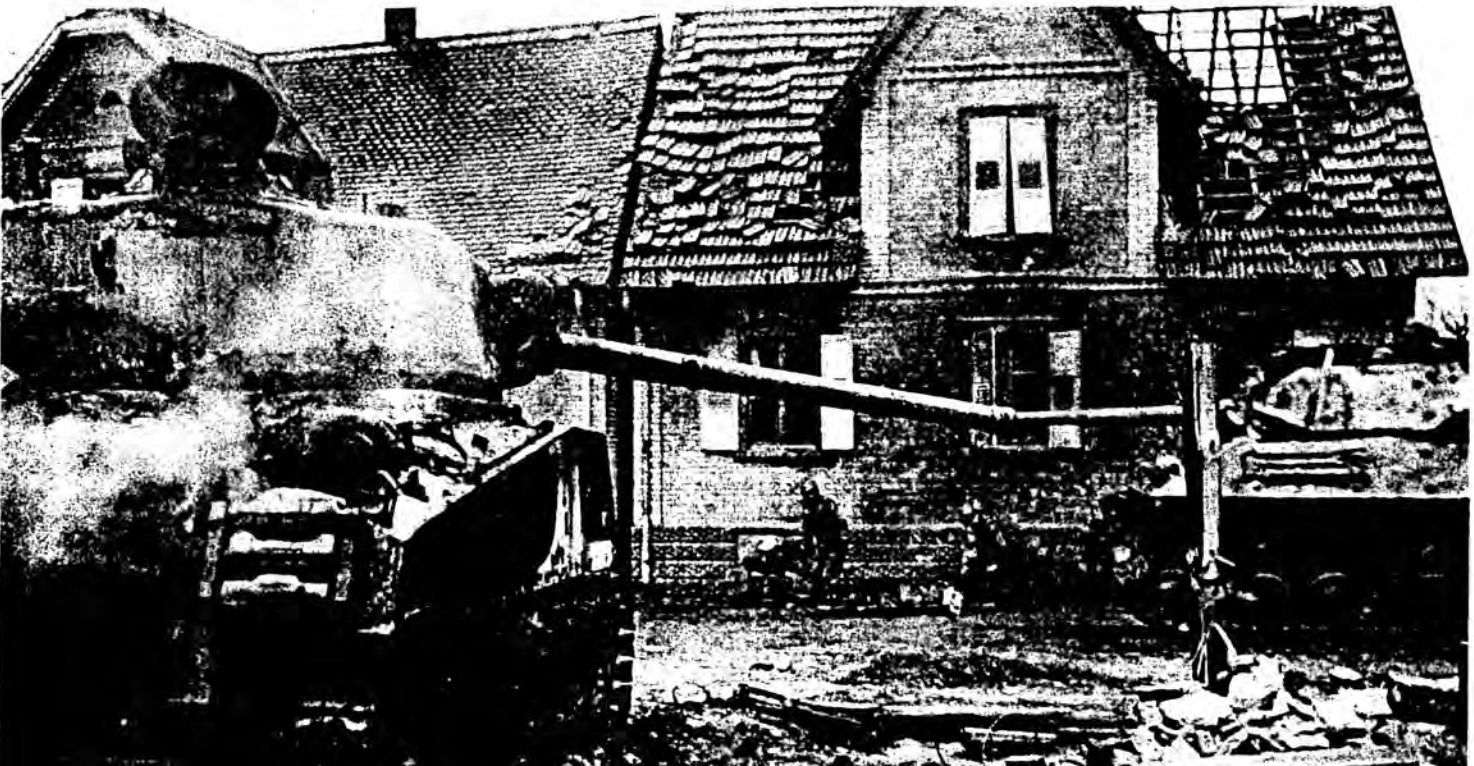
ATTACK ON HERRLISHEIM BY 141st WAS THROWN BACK, BUT GERMANS WERE EVENTUALLY FORCED TO EVACUATE IT.





*Inf. TD took force from Germans on*

**GERMANS IN THE WOODS.** The enemy took full advantage of the wooded area north of Oberhoffen to launch his counter measures. Despite artillery concentrations and bombings carried out on their positions, the Germans attacked from the woods to overrun the northeastern and central portions of the town on February 11. (Below) With an American tank still burning in the foreground, two litter-bearers pick up the body of a dead American.



*Co A, 2d P1 6364 TD*





## HOUSE TO HOUSE

Oberhoffen yielded a large number of enemy prisoners. Germans had to be dug out of cellars at bayonet point or flushed out with grenades. The two pictured above surrendered only after they had received this treatment.

**GERMANS** fired heavily at the bailey bridge linking Bischwiller and Oberhoffen but it remained intact.

**SMOKE** from a German mortar shell envelopes an already battered house in the town.

*M-10 Tank Destroyer*



M-10 TD





636th T.D. Co.

M-10 T.Ds  
always referred to  
as TANKS

ON MARCH 23rd TANK COLUMNS RACED 25 MILES TO THE RHINE, ROUNDED UP HUNDREDS OF FLEEING GERMANS.

A very excellent distortion of military history is revealed in the 1945 published 36th Division volume. Once more a bit of fact to top off the fiction!

Reichsmarshal Hermann Goering surrendered to Brigadier General Stack as a 'part' of the formal surrender of this Nazi son-of-a-bitch to the 36th Division at the Division Hq. He was captured by a band of misfits wearing German Uniforms who had been scouring the forested slopes for a reported Hq of the much vaunted and propagandized "Werewolves" who were to man the Alpine Redoubt in a last stand. So much for our own military intelligence during those crucial months prior and following the end of hostilities. He was picked up with a bedraggled retinue of 'Followers' and alleged servants carrying a nondescript amount of hand baggage. The credit for his capture went to the 36th Div Recon Troop. Goering was relieved of his medals, his fabled baton and several personal items which included his Nazi Party Pin, a 'lucky' or unlucky for him Five Mark silver coin, and a single SS collar flash also in silver. Upon notification that he had been taken, 36th Div Hq immediately ordered an element of the 36th Div Recon Troop to the site of his capture. The initial interrogation of this fellow had been conducted under conditions not later reported but grossly exaggerated by the complaint registered by Goering to the Commanding General of the 36th Div. His medals were returned to him and he was treated as befits an Officer of his rank rather than the war criminal he actually was! Colonel von Brauchitsch alleged to have been the personal adjutant to Goering was not acting in that capacity on the date of the capture. Goering's aide-de-camp was a simpering homosexual Major of the SS. At the time the Major was made to remove his uniform and underwear as the rest of the party was forced to do in a search for weapons and poison, this Major was found to be wearing female undergarments complete with a girdle in which he had secreted the locations of many stolen valuables, gold, and objects d'Art. These flimsy sketches were turned over to the CIC by the men who took Goering prisoner. The made up story about his

capture is a concoction developed and expanded upon by 36th Div Hq Staff officers who will remain unknown. One certain bit of proof of this provided all existing documents can be laid out in a chronological sequence of the happening would be the time element involved from the time the capture was reported to 36th Div Hq, the time this was relayed to General Eisenhower's Hq, the time General Stack made his official pick-up complete with news and official photographers, one may readily see the made up script or scenario will not hold water. There are still two or three items in a small locked box which Goering did not have returned to him; the Nazi Party emblem, the Five Mark coin and the SS emblem. I can well imagine that he didn't relish the idea of having his Nazi Party emblem and SS emblem fall into the hands of his captors. A heavy ornate gold wristwatch was also not given to him because it became 'lost' with one of his captors. The personal Mercedes Benz car in which he was alleged to have been travelling when 'intercepted' by the official greeting convoy led by General Stack did exist, however it was parked in a private estate on the outskirts of Radstadt awaiting Goering's arrival from his mountain hideaway. Unfortunately the mountain hideaway was a sumptuously furnished Forester's hut guarded by several stalwarts who never knew how they died. Goering's wife was treated with courtesy but no kindness was shown her by their captors. Goering's command of English was quite extensive, and he probably understood more than he would admit. His personal papers and files were taken from him and their whereabouts became a matter for much conjecture at a later date when it was ascertained that the bulk of these papers and files were 'missing'. The arrival of Colonel von Brauchitsch at the 36th Division CP with the message for General Devers and General Eisenhower occurred as written, however many months later there was a whisper that he had come to 'make a deal' for himself by giving certain valuable information concerning vital files in possession of the Goering party. Today looking back at that hour in history,

one might well wonder at the contents of those vital files and personal records, wonder how simple it was for the Reichsmarshall to have obtained the poison capsule, which ended his life before his trial had ended, (during a short period in which British MPs were charged with keeping a close watch on him night and day). I spoke about this and other interesting subjects with Albert Kesselring many years later. I will not indicate what he answered. I also mentioned this curious happening to Otto Skorzeny during an interesting chat I managed with him on neutral ground. I will indicate a part of his reply, "When a man dies he takes his personal secrets with him; all else is a matter of conjecture and lies, for he cannot return from the grave to gainsay them".

Today, after all these decades since the events I have written about took place, there are still men who would kill to keep those secrets of the past- secret! However, I have written for the first time a story of events I witnessed, participated in, and heard from first hand accounts. Now I have completed this from notes and memory, I have destroyed those old notes, some which were barely decipherable, for even the paper they were written on those many years ago, has grown old and brittle. I am a writer of sorts, a book-worm at heart and every day there is something new and interesting. After all this is supposed to be a bit of writing about one of many Tank Destroyer Battalions which saw action during World War II. A good and effective weapon is in our country seldom long lived. Thus the M-10 Tank Destroyer began and ended its life in a relatively short time. There is one nation where the Tank Destroyer concept has been developed to a fine military art and that is Russia, which originally took over the Nazi German tank destroyer concept and improved upon it. We in turn took from each what we needed on a short term basis and dropped it after the immediate need ceased to exist. A good and effective piece of materiel is actually not good for business!

# PRIZE CATCH

As noteworthy as the Division's battle feats over a period of twenty months was the magnitude of the enemy leaders it captured during the last few days of the war. Three of these captives, Reichsmarshal Hermann Goering, Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, and Dr. Hans Frank, were later destined to face war criminal charges at the combined Allied trial at Nurnberg.

Germany's Luftwaffe Chief and No. 2 Nazi, Hermann Goering, surrendered to the Assistant Division Commander, Brig. Gen. Robert I. Stack, on V-E Day, following negotiations by his personal adjutant, Col. Von Brauchitsch, son of the German field marshal.

Von Brauchitsch arrived at the Division CP early in the morning of May 7 with a message to Gen. Eisenhower and Gen. Devers, Commanding Sixth Army Group. He explained his mission to Gen. Dahlquist and Gen. Stack, offering to send his driver with the latter to Goering's secret hideaway. Gen. Stack accompanied the driver and intercepted the pompous Goering on a road near Radstadt, about 35 miles southeast of Salzburg. The marshal understood some English, spoke very little. He was accompanied in his Mercedes Benz by his Frau Emmy, daughter Edda, several military aides and personal retainers.

Because of the darkness and the presence of SS troops

**CROOKED-LIPPED, CATTY HERMANN GOERING, NO. 2 NAZI, TALKED FREELY OF HITLER'S ORDERS TO DO AWAY WITH HIM.**



in the area, it would have been dangerous to have returned to the Division that night, so the entire party went with General Stack to a nearby castle which had been occupied by elements of the Florian Geyer S. S. Cavalry Division. The capture of this castle had been accomplished by General Stack and a platoon from the 636th Tank Destroyer Reconnaissance Company and the I & R Platoon of the 142nd Infantry earlier in the day.

In the morning the German leader was taken to the 36th Division CP in Kitzbuhl's swanky Grand Hotel. There Gen. Dahlquist questioned him, particularly for Heinrich Himmler's whereabouts. Goering talked freely but gave no specific tactical information. He explained in detail his quarrel with Hitler on April 23 when he had called the fuhrer in Berlin. As soon as the interrogation was over he was placed in a cub plane and delivered to the Chief of Staff, Seventh Army.

#### VON RUNDSTEDT

Field Marshall Gerd von Rundstedt, brilliant Prussian military strategist, and acknowledged dean of Junker generals, surrendered to 2nd Lt. Joseph E. Burke and a ten-man patrol from Company A, 141st Infantry, on May 1, during the battle for Bad Tolz.

A prisoner taken by the 1st Battalion, 141st Infantry, first revealed that Von Rundstedt was in the area. When further questioned, he told of the house in which the marshal's party was quartered. As Lt. Burke entered the hospital residence, Von Rundstedt, his wife and son, jumped up from their seats before the fire. Said the field marshal, "It is a most disgraceful situation for a soldier to give himself up without offering resistance." The son, Lt. Hans Gerd von Rundstedt, stated that his father had last seen Hitler on March 12 when he had been relieved of his command of all German armies on the Western Front. The aging Rundstedt had been taking a bath cure at Bad Tolz in an effort to heal a leg ailment. Despite a noticeable limp he retained the traditional Junker austerity.

The third of the Nurnberg defendants was the infamous Reichsminister Dr. Hans Frank, Gauleiter of Poland and perpetrator of Jewish extermination pits. Frank was trapped in his office by Maj. Phillip Broadhead of the Division AMG team.

Admiral Nicholas Horthy, the Hungarian regent who consorted with Adolph Hitler, and who is credited with establishing one of Europe's first dictatorships, was found by an advance headquarters detachment led by Maj. Arnim F. Puck in the palatial Schloss Waldbichl near Wielheim.

Max Amann, stodgy Nazi publicist, and the third man to join the National Socialist Party, was seized by security troops of the 141st Infantry on a SHAEF warrant, charging him with war crimes. Amann had been living in seclusion at his summer home near Tegernsee.

The 36th Division bag included 22 other influential Nazi commanders. They were: Air Marshals Ritter von Greim, who succeeded Goering in command of the Luftwaffe, and who committed suicide in captivity; Hugo Sperrle, who invented dive-bombing tactics, planned the London blitz, and defended the Normandy coastline in 1944; SS General Sepp Dietrich, the defender of Vienna against the Russians, and one of Von Rundstedt's cruel fledglings in the Ardennes; and 19 lesser generals.



VON RUNDSTEDT bore his self-termed disgrace—that of a soldier giving up without resistance.



HUGO SPERRLE.



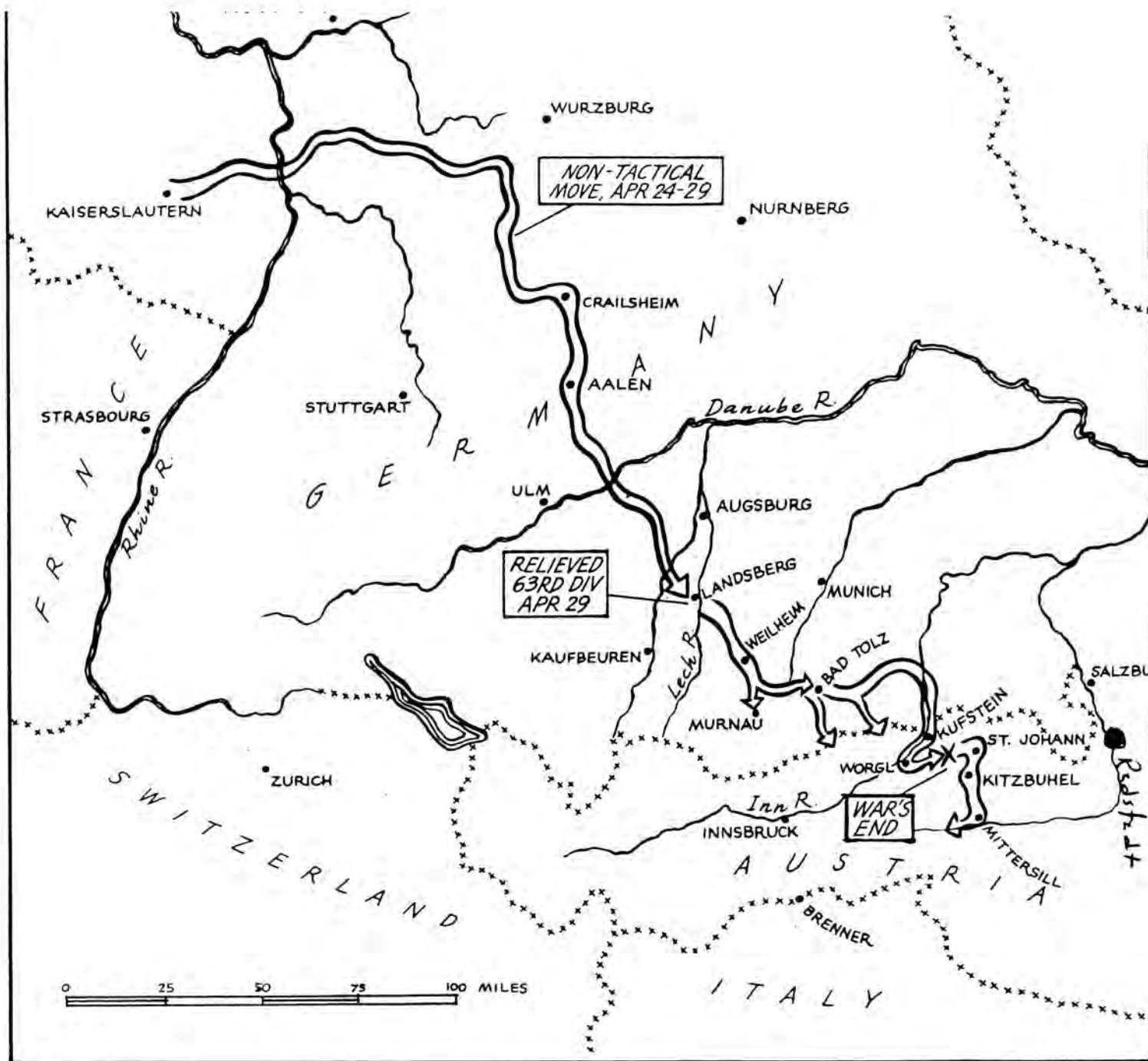
ADMIRAL HORTHY.



GOERING'S CAR, a high-powered, new Mercedes-Benz, featured six-ply glass two inches thick.







**WHEN THE 36th** moved from Kaiserslautern to rejoin Seventh Army, it took three jumps and five days to catch the rapidly advancing Army line. Six days later, in Austria, final victory came.

Meanwhile, in what was to be the final action of the war, the 142nd Infantry on May 4 was sent 50 miles around the heights, through Raubling to relieve elements of the 12th Armored Division in the Inn River Valley at Kufstein. The Division had now entered Austria. One day later the engagement at Itter Castle provided a melodramatic finish. At 1830 of May 5 troops were ordered to halt in place and await further instructions. Down the line passed the good word, "HEY, JOE, THE WAR'S OVER." Joe rubbed his eyes, even cried. . . .

**THE BLUE DANUBE** was muddy and green where 36th crossed it, following up the Seventh Army advance.



I once wrote a short story about a fabulous military character who I called 'Tully Bridgeman' (not his real name). Tully was a unique man, a test-jockey for armored vehicles at Aberdeen Proving Grounds. He checked out one of the prototype models of what later was called the ultimate in Tank Destroyer weapons, the M-36. (What he did to that machine in front of a delegation of military, industrial and neutral observers, would curl the hair on a bald pate!) Yet, this vehicle was introduced with much fan-fare and military publicity, later to be the death trap for many a good soldier- regardless the military cover-up which followed its woeful performance on the battlefield. During the 'Old Days' when anti-tank warfare was a seedling seeking to push its way through hidebound, military orthodoxy; the post-world war I cavalry (horse), the booted and spurred desk soldiers which inundated the old War Department, the Army came up with what they called the Louisiana Maneuvers. During these maneuvers the anti-tank weapons were simulated, the gunners were mostly artillerymen. Then came the WW I French 75s which lost their wooden spoke wheels to rubber tired truck wheels and axels, towed by military pick-ups and one ton trucks, mostly Chevvy's. We graduated from 37mm to 57mm anti-tank guns, then came the first experiments with mounting 75s, 57s, and 37s in the old White half tracks. We had the anti-tank gun fever after the Germans began to push the British around in Africa, although the Germans had quite a concept going when they went into Poland and later when they invaded Russia. Basically its the artillery cannon against another similar cannon, improved by placing it on and in an armored self propelled vehicle. Innovation, trial, and improvement were the watchwords in the anti-tank concept. Today we have missles up the 'Silos' from the small one man back pack jobs to the big ones, and now we're back at square One. The Stock Broker and the Real Estate Broker make 'it' at both ends! So does the military and the industrial Team, there's money in it no matter which way you slice the pie. Sad fact is that where the military is involved, men's lives are needlessly wasted during the battle field ~~wring~~ing out phase, because there's no money in manufacturing a machine

*He literally for it ~~off~~ part on the Proving Grounds.*

that's going to last for a while, so rather than improve on the existing machine, we dump it and come up with something that's supposed to be far better even if it lasts only half as long or less. I guess I am prejudiced in favor of the M-10 Motor Carriage with that old pre-WW II 3" gun which we could have improved upon by giving it more powerful shells and a greater variety of them, rather than deliver the M-36 with its dangerously high silhouette, unstable handling in uneven terrain, a tendency to tip over when negotiating an angled slope.

Finis



I've rambled about in my writing but there are few items for your history of the 636th TDs in hopes when you compile a book - you'll place me down for a copy.

