

The fellow who introduced me to the young man asked: "Do you want to see how tough he is?" *** always looking for a story, I replied in the affirmative—whereupon the fellow wound up and socked the young man in the stomach with all the power he had in his right hand *** I blinked, flinched and prepared to gather up the pieces *** the young man, Private First Class Lee Roy Hennings of Bettendorf, former salesman of the Bell Bakery, took the poke and never blinked an eye *** and that's what life in the Tank Destroyer Battalion, 634, will do for you *** the motto of the battalion is: "Seek, Strike, Destroy" *** Hennings has been in the army since last May, traveling from Fort Des Moines to Fort Sill, to Camp Wood, to Camp Claiborne, La., where he is now *** a Davenport is responsible for some of the hard work Hennings and his friends enjoy(?) down there *** Captain Karl Herd was one of the officers in charge of building the commando course *** it is supposed to be one of the toughest in existence *** "What do you mean, like the one at the Iowa Preflight school?" I asked — Hennings grinned and said: "What do you think we're doing—playing with kids?" *** their commando course includes barb wire entanglements, terrain that is sandy and rough, water holes that are nine feet deep, genuine rivers—and all the time there is actual fire overhead, to say nothing of hand grenades, smoke pots, et cetera *** "Brother, you keep your tail down — or else," the Pvt. explains *** yeah, I imagine a guy would under those conditions ***



PVT. LEE ROY HENNINGS

the tank destroyer battalion has four different kinds of training, infantry, artillery, commando and some engineering *** they started with a good sports program and leveled off to the commando course *** boxing is the top sport down there *** after talking to this pleasant-faced but tough ex-bread salesman, I was impressed with these facts: Despite the hard work, he has put on 14 pounds *** he had the best Christmas dinner he ever had in his life *** right in the middle of war preparations, the soldiers hear little about how the war is going on until they pick up a home-town paper *** Hennings likes the going, wants to get back into the tough training and is anxious to get into the real stuff *** I dunno *** after seeing him take that right hand in the stomach without battin' an eye, I'm convinced that the best thing the Japs and Ratzis had better do is look for a storm cellar.