

After a little rest, a few movies and some "hot" Bible Talks by Chaplain Edgar, the training began. The rain grew even more continuous and the mud, even deeper. There were passes to Naples, "parties" in the tents at night, Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners in the rain and mud and a New Year's day march through a blizzard, to a new area at Pianura.

Then, more training, Vino, Cognac, a little trouble with "un-authorized visitors to the company areas", hikes to Pozzuoli and amphibious training at the docks, barracks bag thieves in the areas and rumors, rumors and more rumors! This time the arrival of waterproofing equipment only stepped up the rumors.

During the practice landings at Pozzuoli, Col. Tardy asked a Third Division sergeant, "How many of these amphibious operations have you been on?"

"Three", said the doughboy.

"How do you like them?" asked, Col. Tardy, expecting an outburst of bitching in reply.

"Beats the hell outa walkin'!" said the doughboy, nonchalantly.

On January 20th the tactical elements of the 601st were loaded aboard LSTs and LCTs and at daybreak on the morning of Jan 22nd, the Battalion made its third D-Day landing, this time at Nettuno, Italy, with the Third Division.

It is military history that there was no real opposition during those first days on what soon became famous as "The Anzio Beach-head", then "Bungle Beach", or, as the krauts called it, "Death's Head". Elements of the 601st Recon Co. rode to within seventeen miles of Rome without drawing fire. Not a man out of the Battalion, nor a vehicle, was lost on D-Day. (As a matter of fact, the 601st never lost a man on a D-Day operation.) The first Kraut to put in an appearance came riding down the highway on a bicycle, on his way to work at Nettuno. He'd never even heard of the landing!

In the air, the story was quite different! The Kraut was over the harbor all day and all night. He threw everything from anti-personnel bombs to radio controlled jobs that were so big, they looked like falling planes. Dogfights were a dime a dozen and the 99th Fighter Squadron, a colored outfit seeing action for the first time, did a magnificent job of blasting the Germans out of the sky.



*"Anzio Dugout"*  
*Anzio — Italy — 1944*



*"Road to Rome"*  
*E. of Cori — Italy — 1944*



The first real ground fighting occurred at the Mussolini Canal and it was there that the Kraut armor showed up on the fourth day. Three tanks came down the road and two were promptly knocked out. The next day, S/Sgt. Ritso of "B" Company lost his life and his M-10 while helping the 15th Infantry clear the Kraut from what later became known as Britt's Crossroad. He was awarded the D. S. C., posthumously. At about that time, Lt. Vargo "disappeared".

On January 30th, Lt. Salfen made a wild dash up "Broadway", in an attempt to help the desperate Rangers who were then in the middle of their ill-fated attempt to take Cisterna. A minefield, just short of Isolla Bella, tore the tracks off his M-10 and blocked the road.

Shortly afterward, "A" Company pushed out with the 7th Infantry in an attack through Ponte Rotto and toward La Villa. Kelly's platoon passed Ponte Rotto and got to within a half mile of Cisterna while Moon's smashed its way to within a couple of hundred yards of La Villa!

On February 4th, the Third Division was ordered to withdraw from those hard-won positions. There just wasn't enough stuff on the Beachhead to permit a further advance and the retention of that huge bulge would have required a tremendous expenditure of men and equipment.

"A" Company withdrew to the vicinity of Torpedo Junction and to House S 3 on Center Street and then, the boundaries of the Beachhead were about settled. It wasn't until the 24th of May, nearly four months later, that American armor smashed its way to La Villa, Ponte Rotto and Cisterna! Those were four of the most trying, most terrible and most exasperating months in the history of modern warfare.

The Beachhead was a flat chunk of filled-in marshland, about ten miles wide and seven miles deep. It had no real harbor and every inch of it could be observed from the Kraut OPs in the mountains behind highway S 7. Kraut artillery in the hills around Cori and Velletri was out of the range of Allied guns but nothing was out of range for the Krauts.

There was no rear area or rear echelon on Anzio. Colonel Snyder's MPs and their VI Corps brethren took a terrific shellacking. The bakery was hit; the QM was hit; the hospitals were hit; the Anzio Express had no conscience and showed no mercy!

The forward positions around Carano, Miner's Hot Spot, House S 1 on Center Street, Isolla Bella and Albany Road were constantly shelled, mortared, dive bombed and nebelwerfered. There was no rest, no break and no sleep except the sleep that comes with complete exhaustion.

At the same time, the rear areas took a pounding such as they had never taken before and never took again. Thousands of rounds were thrown at the Battalion CP but miraculously, no one was killed. Thousands upon thousands of rounds were fired at the Division CP at Conca and many of them scored direct hits. One "88" passed clear through the thick stone wall of the castle and landed in the Division Surgeon's bed — then failed to explode. He couldn't speak for three days!!

If the D.U.W.K.S., affectionately known as "The Ducks", hadn't brought supplies into the Beachhead in a never ending flow, the Kraut might have pushed the invaders back into the sea. Those drivers went through hell to get their stuff ashore and they never turned back!

One Recon man who'd been classified "Temporary Limited Service", because of an injury sustained at Beja Letina, came up and begged for a transfer back to Recon. "God", he said, "I can't stand it back there in the hospital. It's too rough!" All the hospital tents were dug in and even so, a man wouldn't go back there unless he was too sick to argue.

Captain Miner had his Company CP near Torpedo Junction, about two hundred yards behind the front lines. Tens of thousands of shells landed in the vicinity but only one got into the quarry in which he had his "office". After a while, the 4.2 mortars set up in that quarry and nothing the Kraut did could get them out. Those were brave men, those 4.2 mortarmen: their ammo was hit, and exploded so often that it became a routine affair; the Kraut threw everything at them but his old gun barrels but they stood right there in the open and dished out two and three and four for one — when they had the ammunition!

It wouldn't be fair to mention the mortarmen without mentioning the 9th and 10th F.A. Battalions. They were dug in, not too far behind the M-10s and they took everything the Kraut had without pulling back. It seemed incredible that they could remain there, in their flat, open positions, with shell's crashing all around them but they not only stayed; they threw them back as fast as the could load — and that was plenty fast!



Later, when the weather improved, cycling and horseback riding — half a mile behind the lines — became popular sports. Foxholes and dugouts began to show the results of American ingenuity. There were gadgets of all kinds, everywhere. Small stills became the rage and the production of alcohol zoomed.

There were air-raids, never ending, day and night raids. After a while the Ack-Ack was unbelievably heavy and at night, indescribably colorful. Our planes came in ever increasing numbers and almost always, the Krauts got a bomber or two. It was heartbreaking to see them crash or explode in bursts of flame. And when Bill White wrote of the "Flying Forts", "The Queens Die Proudly", he knew whereof he spoke.

Colonel Tardy went to the hospital and the Battalion damned near went into mourning. Major Lokey, "The Man-And-Helmet-Inseparable", came "to help out" and brought a little laughter back to the CP. "Esquire" Munn began his "Munn for Rotation!" campaign. Ruderman went to work on the mosquitoes — when he wasn't digging in the TDs or burying dead horses. Col. Toffey of the 15th tried to make a trade for Ben Fuller and Bill Desforge. He offered two Captains, a Major, a Command car and a left fielder but Col. Tardy said, "Not enough!"

There were underground movies at the Conca Castle and speed records were constantly being broken on the way in and out of that artillery target. Nobody wanted to go to the Rest Camp at Caserta because that involved a trip to the docks and exposure to the Anzio Express, to air raids and to submarines.

Every day, the Messerschmidts chased the Piper Cubs and never caught them. It was almost funny to watch the Pipers plummeting earthward or whipping around the corner of a house with a Messerschmidt or two, close behind. At least one Kraut pilot found out, the hard way, that a Messerschmidt can't pull out of a dive quite as close to the ground as a Piper can.

"Jungle Jim" Fuller went on one man night patrols and led armored raids. There were "Snake Patrols" and "Battle Patrols" and Infantry-Armor-Sneak-Raids.

The 34th relieved the 3rd and then, the 3rd relieved the 34th but the 601 stayed on! There was never a dull moment on Anzio and after a while, the horror of the place wore off and life became

almost normal, in a gruesome sort of way. Soon there was everything on the Beachhead — even a little VD — everything but daylight movement! On clear days, both sides of the Anzio shooting gallery seemed entirely uninhabited from sun-up to sunset. With the fall of night, the very bowels of the earth poured forth men and tanks and trucks and jeeps!

A Recon man learned, one night, that he was to go home on rotation at eight o'clock the next morning and complained, "Geez, I'll probably get on the boat at eight o'clock an' I'll bet it don't pull out til ten!" And another guy got a post-malaria telegram from home saying simply, "Come home at once. Your health demands it."

Then, in May, after months of cussing, fuming, raging, waiting, fighting, dying and wishing: wishing always for reinforcements, the Beachhead Force got so big and so powerful that a breakout became inevitable. There was a greater concentration of men and guns and tanks and destroyers on that little beachhead than anywhere else in the world. Toward the middle of May, there was a lot of shifting of troops and Sally let out the news about "The Sleds!" There were conferences and phone calls and reconnaissance trips to the mine fields and the brass began to visit the OPs and there was digging and sandbagging in the ravine that ran toward Ponte Rotto.

Maps were issued and aerial photos. The boys who'd broken through at Casino were getting closer and closer. H-hour was set, then postponed and set again and postponed again. Lanes were taped through the minefields. Then, at 0430 hours, on the 23rd of May, we let 'er rip!!

That preparatory barrage was frightful and deafening but it didn't get the Krauts out of their stone caves and underground fortresses. The enemy was too well dug in to be routed by anything but small arms, grenades, bazookas and such. The doughboys had to get out there, through the mines and the boobytraps and the artillery and the mortars and the machine gun crossfires; they had to get out there and dig the Kraut out of their holes or kill them in their holes. There was no mechanical substitute for guts, that day, but the Doughboys didn't need any. They had plenty of what it takes!

As usual, the 601 was in there with the Third: shooting and moving and blowing up on mines; shooting and moving, slowly, then faster, then finally, busting out of the cage to La Villa and the railroad and highway S 7 — hell bent for Rome!



The infantry tried, a dozen heartbreaking times, to take the high ground overlooking Ponte Rotto. They got to the top, nearly every time, but they couldn't hold. The Kraut had every inch of that knob zeroed-in with all sorts of stuff. Armor couldn't get up there in daylight. The Kraut tried it on Feb 19th and lost six tanks to the combined shooting of Kelly's and Welch's platoons. The 751 boys lost two of their tanks when they tried it and the 601 Destroyers got off the knob just in time.

One great day, Moon's platoon got nine tanks on the road between La Villa and Ponte Rotto for the loss of one. Richardson's, Elliot's, Anderson's and Bell's platoons all took their toll of Kraut armor at one time or another.

On the 29th of February, the enemy launched a fierce all-out attack. The air was thick with flying shells and the noise was deafening. There were planes and tanks and infantry and Goliaths and Nebelwerfers; there was everything that might break the back of the Beachhead and plenty of it.

The Kraut got so close to Wiedman's platoon at Carano that the muzzle blast of the three inchers knocked them down. The 509th Paratroopers fought the kind of fight that you read about in books. The Krauts had everything, especially numbers, but the Doggies, the Tankers, the Tank Destroyers, the Artillery, everybody stuck to their guns and when the noise had quieted, the Beachhead was knee-deep in dead and dying Kraut.

After the 29th, there were local attacks but never anything so big or so fierce. The Kraut was beaten and he was simply going to hold on and sell the ground as dearly as possible. Mines "grew" by the millions. Both sides laid barbed wire and dug in for a siege.

There were ammunition shortages, "Paratrooper" scares, "Spy" scares and the funny, ineffective propaganda leaflets. Sally was on the air all day and night with her "Easy Boys, there's danger ahead!" and the names and addresses of the recently captured. The "Foxhole radio" came into wide use.

The weather was terrible but the food was magnificent. The cattle on the Beachhead and the chickens and the pigs managed to "run into shrapnel" at the most opportune places. Fresh meat became a bore!

The 601 that broke out of the Anzio Beachhead was a tough experienced, battle-hardened, confident battalion. The men had "got" forty-three Kraut tanks on the Beachhead for the loss of three and they weren't afraid of anything the Kraut had, or made or manned. They'd knocked out his IVs and VIs and his Panthers and his Ferdinands and they were going to get to Rome if they had to put wings on the M-10s and fly 'em there!

The actual break out of the Beachhead didn't come until the second day. All of the first day it was just Buck! Buck! Buck! against the stonewalled Nazi defense. The casualties on both sides were appalling. On the second day, the stone wall began to crumble. Some of the crack First Armored Tanks and Tom Kelly's platoon got through on the left and Lew Elliott's platoon slipped through the minefields on the right. By nightfall of the 24th, those 601 Destroyers that hadn't been blown up in the minefields or knocked out, were all in the vicinity of Cisterna and on or around Highway S 7.

That was a weird, terrifying night. Everybody fired at anything that moved. Radio communication was out! Ration and gas trucks and jeeps wandered all over the countryside, through minefields and, in many cases, through enemy positions. More than one ration detail got to the Destroyers in the morning only to find the water and gas cans full of bullet and shrapnel holes.

At daybreak on the third day, "A" Company was north of Cisterna and "B" Company was south of that terribly beat up shell of a city. "C" Company was directly in front and finally smashed it's way into the town with the 7th Infantry. Several hours later, the Kraut defenses were Kaput! The attack gathered speed and took off for Cori.

In the meantime, the First Armored had assembled a huge array of tanks and M-7's, just north of Cisterna. They sat out there in the flat, bald open and never got hit despite the fact that the Kraut threw a load of flat stuff at them. During that time, the 81st Recon did a beautiful job of flushing the Kraut out of the brush north of Cisterna. The Recon men just rode up to the edge of town with all their guns blazing, literally blazing, and mowed down everything in their path.

American planes snafued and bombed the hell out of the columns moving on Cori. Perhaps that was due to the fact that the attack moved too quickly once it had got going. Still it was none the less.



heartbreaking to see a battalion of doughboys bombed and strafed by the very planes that they'd been waving at only a moment before. The same sort of snafu occurred twice more, before Rome fell.

Recon went through Cori and pushed on toward Velletri and Artena. The Kraut put up a tough, determined fight at Artena and the SSF took heavy casualties before accomplishing its mission. The Battalion lost Lt Myers and Lt Spielberger in that same melée.

It took two days to bust out of Artena and then Kelly's boys cut Highway S 6 and the attackers were on the main road to Rome.

Valmontone was reduced to a complete shambles. The French came barging down Highway Six, from Cassino, racing for Rome. A friendly but nervous unit got Shorty Hale at Tor Sappienza. Once again the ration drivers were all over the country, covering hundreds of miles, looking for the Destroyers.

On the 3rd day of June, those officers who weren't actually fighting, began to dig out their pinks. Many headed for Rome but had to turn back because there was still some fighting on the outskirts. On the night of the 4th, Rome fell! The whole 601st seemed to be in the city the next morning, tactically, on pass and "just seeing Rome".

The Romans gave the American Army a very enthusiastic welcome. It went something like this, "Viva Americano! Cigarette! Caramelli!" Chewing gum didn't enter into the routine for nearly a whole day.

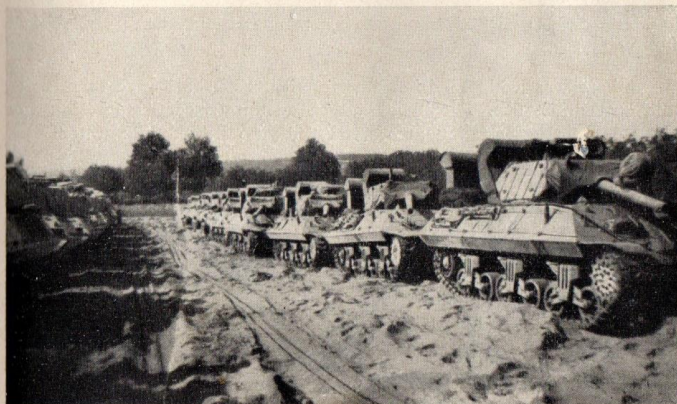
Rome was clean, beautiful, full of lovely girls and it had hardly been touched by the war. Of course, there was at least one jerk in every company who looked at the Colosseum and said, "Boy! We sure bombed the hell out of that place!"

On the 6th, there came the tremendous, electrifying news of the Normandy Invasion! Hope ran high in Rome that day and Vino flowed freely.

There were trips to the Vatican and to less holy places. The Battalion was "attached to the Third to garrison Rome", then detached and transferred to II Corps, then to the 85th Division, then back to the Third. There were billeting details out every day. Finally, the battalion did move into the woods at Lido Ostia, just far enough away from Rome to make the big city inaccessible.



*"Eternal City"*  
Rome — Italy — 1944



*"Ready Again"*  
Qualiano — Italy — 1944



On the 19th the Battalion moved back to Anzio, in the rain, of course, and from there to Qualiano and more training.

There were movies, trips to Naples, — where the local Chamber of Commerce representatives now greeted visitors with “Bifsteak!, Cognac!, Spagetti!, Signorina, tirteen years!” — trips to the beach, “back”-breaking speed marches, riots at the officers’, non-coms’ and privates’ clubs, “unauthorized visitors” to the company areas, night problems, and of course, days and days of amphibious training.

The Third Division patches and vehicle markings were on again and off again and on again and off again and every little three year old “gook” knew that the Third Division was training for another amphibious operation. Then Sally made that historic crack, “There will always be a Third Division so long as the blue and white paint holds out!” Rumor ran riot again but everyone knew that no matter where it was, it would surely be an amphibious landing.

Then the 601 was “restricted” to the Battalion area. Naples harbor became a tightly packed “parking lot” for ships of every shape, size and description. The MP’s began to pull sneak raids in the Company areas in search of “unauthorized visitors”. And the vino flowed like water!

Major Fuller got married. The Battalion exchanged insults with elements of the 45th Division while passing them on a speed march. Some of the vehicles were loaded on LSTs and LCIs. Then, in the beginning of August, the maps began to pour in. And the vino flowed like water!

There was a big Division parade with the usual “give them hell” talk on August 5th. The “gooks” took advantage of the occasion and cleaned out the Battalion area. And the vino flowed like water!

By the 8th of August, all the tactical elements of the Battalion were on board ships in the Naples harbor. There were ships everywhere — as far as the eye could see. Some of the commanders permitted the “passengers” to swim. Others did not. Several of the officers sneaked over the side and hitch hiked into Naples every night.

Deep sea melon peddlers came out to swap melons for cigarettes. They tossed the melons up after the G.I.s tossed their cigarettes down. One peddler had a good looking gal in his boat and nearly cause a riot. “Throw up the signorina! Not the melons!” was the wolf-cry.



*“Fourth and Last”  
St. Tropez — France — 1944*



*“The Liberators”  
Southern — France — 1944*



The invasion fleet sailed at about sunset on the 12th and Churchill came by on a speedboat just as the convoy got out of the harbor. The word got around that "Eleanor" was coming next.

The ships were very crowded, the food "uninteresting", the chow lines fantastically long, the sleeping and toilet facilities practically nil, but the weather was warm and the sea smooth and everybody was too scared and too worried to give a damn about anything.

The Navy fired its rockets and its big guns, the Bombers dropped their eggs and the assault boats went in. Nothing happened! The D-Day landing at Collobiere, in Southern France, was less trouble than some of the practice landings in Naples Harbor. The Krauts had taken off, inland. The date: August 15, 1944.

By the time that Recon's "assault-wave" M-8's were brought ashore, the MP on traffic duty simply pointed up the road and said, "Your Battalion assembly area is about three miles up that road." There was some confusion but little excitement. It was hard to believe that all that sweating had been totally unnecessary.

Almost immediately, the gun companies loaded up the infantry and pushed inland. Recon dispatched platoons in several directions and the rat-race was on!

On the 17th, Jimmy Ezzell earned his DSC by tackling a three man Kraut machine-gun crew with a jammed M-1 rifle. He used the stock as a club and took the gun from the Krauts while Recon and a colorful and very well organized company of Maquis fought to break through a tough block on the road to Hyeres and Toulon. There were women fighting with that Maquis outfit but the minute the shooting started they ceased to be women. They were all fight, no show.

Within a few days, "C" Company had run into some terrible luck in the form of a mess of anti-tank guns in the town of Brignoles. The casualties were heavy on both sides. It was here that Barney Ruderman jumped into a service station grease pit, aimed his pistol at a Kraut in the window of a nearby house and yelled in his almost-like-German, Yiddish, "Come on out, you lousy kraut'."

The Kraut turned toward Barney, yelled, "——— you! You Jew bastard!" and shot Barney through the shoulder!

In the meantime, Recon Company had been attached to the 3rd Provisional Reconnaissance Squadron under the command of Major O'Connell. For the next few weeks, there was never a moment's rest; always a mission. It was sweat! sweat! and more sweat!

In retrospect, the advance up the Rhone Valley seems to have been little more than a rough, tactical, motor march but it would be rather dangerous to mention that to a guy who was, shall we say, a lead scout or a tank driver. All they heard was "Keep 'em moving all the time! Load up and move! Keep 'em on the run!" No maps, no gas, no tires, no tracks, no spare parts, no ammunition but keep moving! That list should include, NO MAIL!

"C" Company had another scrap at Aix. Recon had at least one daily. There were wild, never-to-be-forgotten receptions in every little town along the melon and flower strewn road, north.

After fighting alongside of the F.F.I. and witnessing the hysterical celebrations, the head shavings, the "accidental" shootings and even a few hangings, it became easier to understand Napoleon's march from Marseilles to Paris during which his followers grew from a corporal's guard to an army.

There were torchlight parades and "The Marseilles" and champagne and beautiful girls who insisted on kissing the "the Liberators", and volunteer spys and scouts and yellow-headlighted motor patrols. There was a fever about the war in Southern France; a wild, inspiring, patriotic fever; a contagious fever that effected everyone, sooner or later. It made men try harder and push harder. The Kraut didn't stand a chance. They were spied upon and misled and ambushed. And the Champagne was wonderful!

A Recon sergeant captured a Kraut Captain and talked him into surrendering his whole company. There was a tough scrap at Donzer, where the Nazis set up a machine-gun behind the French civilians and forced them to wave at the oncoming Americans. Then all the companies caught up with Herman at Montelimar. That was a day!

The highway running parallel to the Rhone River was jammed with just about everything the Kraut had left in Southern France. A 36th Division Task Force had blocked the road from the north and the Third was battering its way up from the south. There was no escape for the enemy. Everybody had a field day. "B" Company alone, knocked out some two hundred vehicles.



On September 1st, the Battalion moved 95 miles to the vicinity of Voiran. The Third Division was hell bent for the Belfort Gap! After several more small scraps, the 601st really went to town in the fortress city of Besancon. All four companies waded into the Kraut and beat them into bloody submission. On September 8th, Besancon was clear of the enemy.

The Destroyers then chased Kraut through Boulton, Rioz, Rigney, Loulans and Magnoray. On the 12th, the Kraut was driven from Vesoul; then, Esprels, Noroy, Saully, Lure, Bresson, Belmont and suddenly, at Faucogney, the Nazis dug in and smashed back! A platoon of Recon Company caught it that day!

From there on, it was slow, tough going. Recon fired 60mm mortars from the front porch of its CP. Major Hinman lost a CP to the Krauts at Rupt. Kraut tanks ran riot in Vagney after the 7th had moved in. Rain and the enemy made things rough at the Moselle, at Sapois, Le Tholy, St. Ame and Don Martin. Recon patrolled a Division-sized area between the 3rd and the French with Kraut running all over the place. Then, "C" Company was attached to the 179th Infantry Regiment and the remainder of the Battalion got a break.

There were passes to Remiremont, movies, cognac, girls, MPs and delinquency reports.

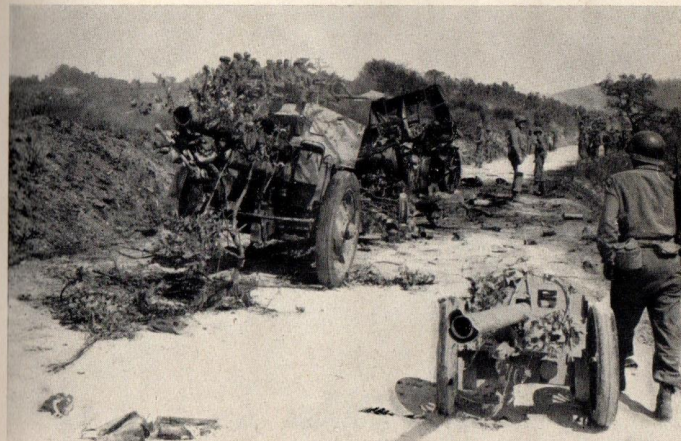
While the Battalion minus "C" Company was resting, Clyde Choate did a pretty good imitation of Superman, KO'd a Kraut tank single-handed and earned a C.M.H.

On the 21st, the 601st joined in the attack on Bruyeres; then Vervezelle and Domfaing. Kraut armor fought hard and well and the Battalion took some casualties. There was Rouges-Faux and then bloody Haute Jacques where the Kraut kept their mortar-men firing by placing machine guns at their backs. Later in October, there was Nompelize and La Bourgence and early in November, La Salle, Herbaville Biarville and Brehimont. Then, the Battalion was given another breather at Housseras.

All companies supported the Meurthe River crossing on the 20th. ("C" Company was with the 103rd.) There were battles at Saales, St. Blaise and Colroy. On the 27th, a platoon of Recon led the dash into Strasbourg. "C" Company fought at Ville.



*"Destruction Truc"*  
Montelimar — France — 1944



*"Alles kaputt"*  
Vesoul — France — 1944



Strasbourg was a wonderful place: luxurious CPs, plenty of liberated champagne and cognac, beautiful, friendly "Alsatians", not too many MPs, and not too much trouble with the Kraut — just a regular exchange of hot lead across the Rhine.

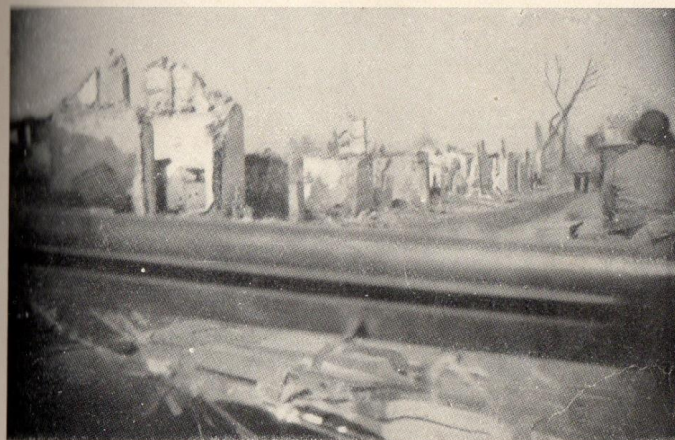
On December 15th, "C" Company was ordered to Ribeauville, in support of the 30th. On the 17th "B" Company moved to Seltz in support of the 117th Recon Squadron and the next day, "C" Company joined the 30th in the costly but very successful attack on Kayserberg.

The remainder of the Battalion left Strasbourg on the 21st and many a beautiful dream of Christmas in a warm, lovely house went smash. The mere mention of Alspach, Leutenheim, Krentzheim, Ammerschwir, Ostheim, Beblenheim, Mittelwihr, Guemar, Benwihr, Zellenberg, Kientzheim and Sigolsheim should be enough to remind any 601st veteran that Christmas Week, 1944, was cold, miserable, anything but joyous. The Destroyers were all over the Division area, firing at the Kraut, blocking roads and catching plenty of hell. The news from the north was terrible. There was constant talk of a coming Kraut push. Recon was up in the hills with the French Ghoums. Morale was "Excellent" on the morning reports but nowhere else!

One Recon platoon spent New Year's Eve, patrolling in front of the barbedwire around the 30th Infantry's machine gun outposts. The Krauts chased the Third Division Officers' Club, waitresses and all, out of Strasbourg. "B" Company sent a couple of platoons to Orbey and Le Bonhomme to support the French. There were parachutist scares and rear area patrols. "A" Company had two platoons with the 254th and one with the French.

The 20th of January, 1945, found all the gun companies and Recon busy painting their equipment white and cutting "snowsuits". The Division was preparing to resume the offensive and on the 23rd it jumped off.

The fighting in the Colmar Pocket was vicious, bloody and costly. The Battalion lost heavily in men and equipment. It was bitter cold and the ground was covered with snow. Maneuverability was very poor. The Kraut had plenty of antitank guns, tanks, artillery, men, guts and bazookas! There was the tragic collapse of the armorbridge across the Ill River. There was confusion and there were vicious determined counter-attacks. The French were late in arriving and indifferent to schedules. They fought very well but there was no depending on them to be anywhere at any agreed time.



*"Going In"*  
Colmar Pocket — France — 1944



*"2<sup>o</sup> Below"*  
Colmar Pocket — France — 1945



Houssen fell to the 7th. "A" Company fired 1680 rounds in support of the first attack. Lebo's platoon got six Kraut tanks in a few minutes. Riedwihr was taken and lost and recaptured, half a dozen times. "C" Company got to Jepsheim with the 254th and a Recon lieutenant gave the French CC 6 "permission to pass through them and through the town", which wasn't taken. "Soupy" Campbell got captured and talked his fourteen captors into surrendering despite that fact that his knowledge of German is limited to two, strictly non-military phrases.

Holtzwihr fell and Wickerschwihl fell and Jepsheim fell. Then the 7th crossed the Colmar Canal and Bischwihr and Wihr were taken; then, Fortschwihl and Muntzenheim. Kelly mounted his cannon and "charged" Colmar. "A", "B" and "C" Companies were in there, slugging it out, every inch of the way. There was no rest, no sleep, no relief!

Kunheim was taken and then Biesheim and Vogelsheim. On the night of February 5th, a Recon platoon ran an M-8 into the moat around the fortress of Neuf-Brisach and got it out without drawing fire. The fighting in the Colmar Pocket was about over! The French were coming up fast from the south and the Krauts were pulling out whatever they could salvage.

Members of the Battalion who fought in the Colmar Pocket are entitled to wear both the French Fourragere and the Presidential Unit Citation and they well earned both. The gun companies paid a heavy price for victory but they inflicted a frightful amount of damage on the enemy.

On February 20th, the Battalion moved back to Pont-A-Mousson for rest and rehabilitation. The people of that city probably will never forget the 601st; nor will the MPs. A great deal of work was accomplished during that rest period. The M-10's were exchanged for M-36's and the crews had to learn to use them and to shoot the new "90". Maintenance sections worked day and night, cutting, welding, adjusting. But when the Battalion wasn't working, it wasn't wasting any time!

There was much wailing and wringing of hands when the 601st moved out of Pont A Mousson on the night of March 13th. There were fond goodbyes and wild, soon-to-be-forgotten vows. The convoy moved all night to an assembly area in the vicinity of Etting, in preparation for supporting the Third in the assault and destruction of the Siegfried Line.



*"The new Ones"*  
Pont a Mousson — France — 1945



*"Our the Hump"*  
Siegfried Line — Germany — 1945



The entire Battalion went into action on the 16th. The fighting was very tough in some spots and comparatively easy in others. "A" and "B" Companies suffered some casualties but all three gun companies inflicted very heavy damage on the enemy. They knocked out tanks, self-propelled guns, artillery, many, many pillboxes and a tremendous number of Kraut infantrymen.

On March 21st, the Division was in Zweibrucken and the Siegfried Line was a thing of the past. Almost everyone was slightly dazed by the speed with which the job had been accomplished. Years of expert propagandizing had convinced all the world including Colonel Tardy's men, that the Siegfried Line was one of the most formidable defense systems in the world. It had proved to be anything but that.

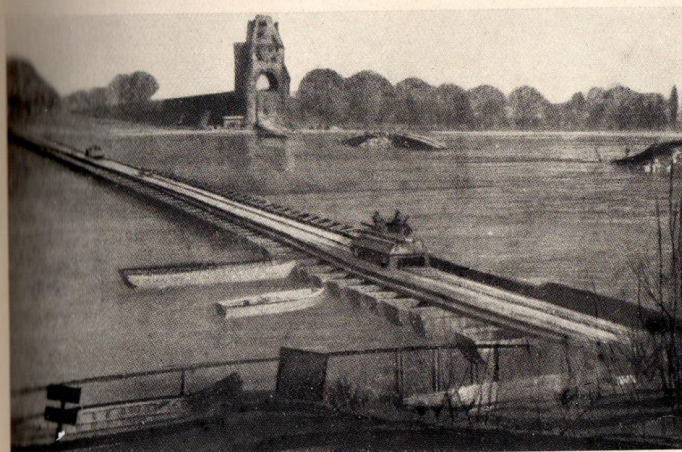
The leading elements were just beyond Zweibrucken when Captain Richardson dashed up to an M-56 that was actually engaged in a close-range duel with an "88" and dragged the Chief of Section out for a trip to the States. Colonel Tardy left and Major Harrison took over the Battalion. That completed the transition of the 601st from a Regular Army outfit to a civilian soldier unit.

The next day, the Destroyers raced for the Rhine, carrying doughboys of the Third's three regiments. On the 22nd, a week after the attack on the Siegfried Line, the entire Battalion was in the vicinity of the west bank of the Rhine. For many of the men, that made the third time that they'd fought their way to the West Bank.

Two of the big thrills of that week were the spectacular take-off of the Sixth Armored Division from just beyond Zweibrucken and the frightful carnage on the road to Ludwigshaven where the armor and the air corps had annihilated huge German columns racing for the bridge across the Rhine. Kraut civilians were busily looting their own dead and suddenly, white flags fluttered, everywhere.

On the 26th, the gun companies fired up a storm in support of the Regimental Rhine River crossings and on the 27th, they were across and away.

The Krauts were disorganized and their resistance was spotty. There was far, far more sweating than fighting. Lindenfels fell and Lohr fell and Bad Kissingen fell. Recon had a terrific scrap at Alt Erlanger and then the Battalion smashed its way into Nurnberg.



*"The last Jump"*  
Rhine Crossing — Germany — 1945



*"Flag Raising"*  
Nurnberg — Germany — 1945



That was a new kind of fighting for the men of the 601st. The enemy was in the cellars and on the rooftops and in every window and on all sides. The Battalion took some casualties but it inflicted tenfold and more, upon the Kraut. Those "90s" were everywhere and in several instances the tubes were literally inside the windows of the Kraut strongpoints. When the fighting was ended, Nurnburg was a neat pile of well-looted rubble.

There was supposed to be a rest after Nurnburg and the 601st moved out toward the designated area near Rothenberg. En route, the "road march to a rest area" suddenly became a mad dash to the Danube River where the 12th Armored had siezed a bridge at Dillingen. Beat up tank tracks lined the road from start to finish but somehow, the Battalion made it.

The Kraut dealt out one of the worst shellings of the war from across the river at Augsburg but the city itself fell without much of a struggle. Without a moment's rest, it was, "Off to Munich!"

During this stage of the hostilities, Recon was out in front of every task force, sweating and spearheading every attack. It was in the very last days of the fighting that Recon lost a man who'd been in the thick of things since D-Day in Africa. Munich was "delivered" by the civilian population. When SS men tried to fire Panzerfausts at the Destroyers, they were siezed by the local citizenry, beaten up and turned in as prisoners. The welcome on the main streets of Munich was fantastic. Everybody turned out to cheer, applaud and weep. The whole thing seemed a little unreal.

By this time, the Destroyers were so full of Lugers and cameras and watches and other "souvenirs", that the crews could hardly find room to stand.

Task forces pushed out again! This time, toward Salzburg, Austria. Now, the Kraut was completely demoralized. It was nothing for a water detail to go out and come back with three hundred prisoners. The highways were jammed with the remnants of the once proud Wehrmacht trudging, unbidden, to the rear area P. W. Camps. It was like the end in Africa only a hundred times as big!

Salzburg fell without much fuss and another Task Force raced to Berchtesgaden. For the 601st, that was the last assignment of the war. V-E Day found half the Battalion drinking champagne, liberated

from Hitler's Berchtesgaden cellars. For a teetotaler, Der Fuhrer carried a wicked supply of everything good to drink — good and alcoholic!

V-E Day brought a sudden increase in the number of men going to the States, to the Riviera, to Nancy, to Paris and to the hospital. Counting points became the number one pastime and "Fraternization" with "DPs", of course, a close second.

The Battalion began to get acquainted with Salzburg, "The City of Wonderful Shacks". There were trips to Berchtesgaden and to Fuschlsee and to Mad Ludwig's palace at Chiemsee. "When are we going home?" became the universal greeting. The rule against "Fraternization" was relaxed; not that it made any difference.

As this history is brought to a close, the 601st is still billeted in Salzburg, sweating it out; only this time, it is sweating-out going back to the States for deactivation.

There have been many omissions in the writing of this history, some of them intentional, but that was inevitable; for after all, this could not possibly be anything more than a very brief resume of the highlights in the composite career of the 1800 men who fought eight campaigns, made four D-Day assaults, spent five hundred forty six days in actual combat, suffered six hundred eighty three casulties, had one hundred ten men killed, knocked out at least one hundred fifty five tanks and self propelled guns and destroyed a fantastic number of enemy personnel.

#### ED JOSOWITZ

P.S. Anyone who knows the historian must realize that any resemblance between this document and the true history of the 601st is purely accidental.



## CAMPAIGNS

- ★ ALGERIA — FRENCH MOROCCO  
November 8, 1942 to November 11, 1942
- ★ TUNISIAN  
November 17, 1942 to May 13, 1943
- ★ SICILIAN  
July 9, 1943 to August 17, 1943
- ★ NAPLES — FOGGIA  
September 9, 1943 to January 21, 1944
- ★ ROME — ARNO  
January 22, 1944 to September 9, 1944
- ★ SOUTHERN FRANCE  
August 15, 1944 to September 14, 1944
- ★ RHINELAND  
September 15, 1944 to March 21, 1945
- ★ CENTRAL EUROPE  
March 22, 1945 to May 8, 1945

## IN MEMORIAM

Pvt Joseph A. Auderer  
Pfc Albert M. Babcock Jr.  
Pvt Mason E. Bailey  
Pvt Robert L. Baldwin  
Tec 4 Gregory Barone  
Tec 5 George M. Beal  
Pfc Paul C. Behrendt  
Tec 5 Orland J. Bianconi  
Cpl Lawrence R. Bickford  
2nd Lt Beverly S. Blackburn  
Pvt Harold N. Blair  
Sgt George L. Bliss  
Tec 4 Paul O. Blumberg  
Cpl Wilson R. Bridgers  
Tec 5 Willard E. Brooks  
Tec 5 William B. Brown  
Pfc Otto J. Bruske  
Tec 5 Eddie F. Buffkin  
Cpl Clelland C. Call  
Pfc Cyrus J. Cardosi  
Pfc Verne P. Cardoza  
Sgt Paul A. Chamberlain  
Sgt James C. Childers  
S/Sgt Eugene C. Clayton  
Pfc William G. Condos  
Cpl Craig E. Cookson  
Pvt Richard C. Corthell  
Pfc Jesus V. Covarrubias  
Pvt Michael J. Cronin  
Pvt Alfred F. Curatolo  
Pvt Edward A. Dabulas  
Tec 4 Evan S. Dalrymple  
Pvt Robert B. Davis  
Pfc Thomas Davis

Dubuque, Iowa  
Brockton, Mass.  
Birmingham, Ala.  
Keysville, Va.  
Worcester, Mass.  
Highlands, N.C.  
Freeport, L.I., N.Y.  
Cresson, Pa.  
Rochester Heights, N.H.  
Harrisonburg, Va.  
Afton, Iowa  
Clyde, N.Y.  
Corona, L.I., N.Y.  
Laskar, N.C.  
Richmond, Va.  
Eclectic, Ala.  
Vandercook Lake, Mich.  
Fair Bluff, N.C.  
Valley Falls, Kansas  
Kankakee, Ill.  
Livingston, Calif.  
Albion, N.Y.  
No Bend, Ohio  
Glasgow, Va.  
Courtdale, Pa.  
Luber, Mo.  
Haverhill, Mass.  
Encinitas, Calif.  
Brooklyn, N.Y.  
Pittsburg, Pa.  
Scranton, Pa.  
Frenchtown, N.J.  
Arcola, N.C.  
Brentwood, Pa.



Pvt Thomas F. Duggan  
 Sgt Kenneth F. Egloff  
 1st Lt Lewis P. Elliott  
 Pfc Melvin F. Freeman  
 Pfc Theodore P. Gelbstein  
 Pfc John A. Gibeau  
 Cpl Robert D. Griffith  
 Tec 5 William P. Hale  
 Pvt Clarence L. Hamm  
 Sgt Richard G. Hammond  
 Tec 5 Carl W. Hard  
 1st Lt Tolbert Hays Jr.  
 Pfc Charles M. Hird  
 Sgt Alfred Hoffmann  
 Pfc Virgil O. Homan  
 Tec 4 Austin A. Hritchewitch  
 Pfc Henry H. Hunt Jr.  
 Cpl Patsy M. Iovino  
 Sgt Harold B. Jarrett  
 Pfc Nathan P. Johnson  
 Pvt Walter J. Kielar  
 Tec 5 Theodore S. Kordana  
 Pfc Emanuel D. Lalla  
 Pvt Albert La Rocca  
 Pvt Paul R. J. Le Blanc  
 Tec 4 Joseph Lopacki  
 Pfc James L. Loper  
 S/Sgt Kenneth Lynch  
 Cpl James E. Markel  
 Sgt Benjamin J. Markowski  
 Pvt Michael E. McDonough  
 Pvt Burl E. Meeks  
 Pvt Walter Miller  
 Cpl Charles A. Mitchell  
 Cpl Robert H. Moore  
 Cpl Clayton F. Muller  
 Pvt Charles J. Murphy  
 2nd Lt. Robert E. Myers

Worcester, Mass.  
 Buffalo, N.Y.  
 New York, N.Y.  
 Augusta, Ga.  
 New York, N.Y.  
 Lawrence, Mass.  
 Swissdale, Pa.  
 Miami, Florida  
 Marion, Va.  
 Northwood, N.H.  
 Providence, R.I.  
 Orland, Calif.  
 Providence, R.I.  
 E. Schodack, N.Y.  
 Valentine, Nebraska  
 Elizabeth, N.J.  
 Providence, R.I.  
 Stamford, Conn.  
 Salisbury, N.C.  
 Valatie, N.Y.  
 Philadelphia, Pa.  
 Adams, Mass.  
 Brooklyn, N.Y.  
 Union City, N.J.  
 Manchester, N.H.  
 New York, N.Y.  
 Homestead, Florida  
 Brooklyn, N.Y.  
 Randolph, Mass.  
 E. Norwich, L.I., N.Y.  
 Norwood, Mass.  
 Waverley, W.Va.  
 New York, N.Y.  
 Odessa, Mo.  
 Eastville Station, Va.  
 Paul Smiths, N.Y.  
 Kingston, N.Y.  
 Tamaqua, Pa.

Pvt Oucie Nelson  
 Pvt Johnny H. Pennington  
 Tec 4 Alphonse J. Petteruto  
 Sgt Alvin L. Pierce  
 Sgt George Pollet  
 Cpl Forrest F. Powers  
 Tec 5 William C. Powers  
 S/Sgt Earl L. Prauman  
 Pvt Lloyd J. Prevo  
 Pfc Thomas J. Pruse  
 S/Sgt John C. Ritso  
 Pvt Jefferson S. Rogers  
 Tec 5 David Rosenfeld  
 Sgt John S. Sabala  
 Pvt Toney T. Sandoval  
 Pfc Clarence J. Schwebach  
 Pfc John J. Schweizer  
 Pvt Morris Silverstein  
 Sgt John A. Smith  
 Pfc Chester E. Snowden  
 Cpl Lynn A. Spicer  
 Capt Robert N. Steele  
 Capt George E. Stevenson  
 S/Sgt Kenneth H. Stone  
 Pvt Henry R. Swygert  
 Pvt Michael Syrko  
 Pfc Robert P. Teff  
 Tec 4 Joseph Thomas  
 Cpl Philip J. Turano  
 Pfc George R. Uhlinger  
 Pfc Gilbert J. Van Elk  
 Cpl Frank A. Vargo  
 Pfc Francis J. Wasilk  
 Pfc Richard Watters  
 Pvt Wilbur M. Wedell  
 Pvt Dominick Yadaresto  
 S/Sgt Joseph S. Zielewicz

Elba, Ala.  
 Tutwiler, Miss.  
 Lawrence, Miss.  
 Elizabethton, Tenn.  
 Litcher, La.  
 Coeburn, Va.  
 El Dorado Springs, Mo.  
 Manchester, N.H.  
 Detroit, Mich.  
 Struthers, Ohio  
 Worcester, Mass.  
 Harlan, Ky.  
 New York, N.Y.  
 New Salem, Pa.  
 Roy, New Mexico  
 Granville, Iowa  
 Penrose, Colo.  
 Minneapolis, Minn.  
 Chateaufay, N.Y.  
 Mechan Junction, Miss.  
 Cleveland, Ohio  
 Detroit, Mich.  
 Buffalo, N.Y.  
 Croveton, N.H.  
 Gaston, S.C.  
 Aliquippa, Pa.  
 Dorchester, Iowa  
 Campbell, Ohio  
 Houston, Texas  
 Lackawana, N.Y.  
 New York, N.Y.  
 Detroit, Mich.  
 St. Paul, Minn.  
 Bridgeport, Pa.  
 Chicago City, Minn.  
 East Haven, Conn.  
 Cleveland, Ohio