

35TH

W: ZD--HNCB-HJZON·ΓΔΖΓ-Ω



A



Camp Ellis

Camp Crowder

Camp Polk

New York

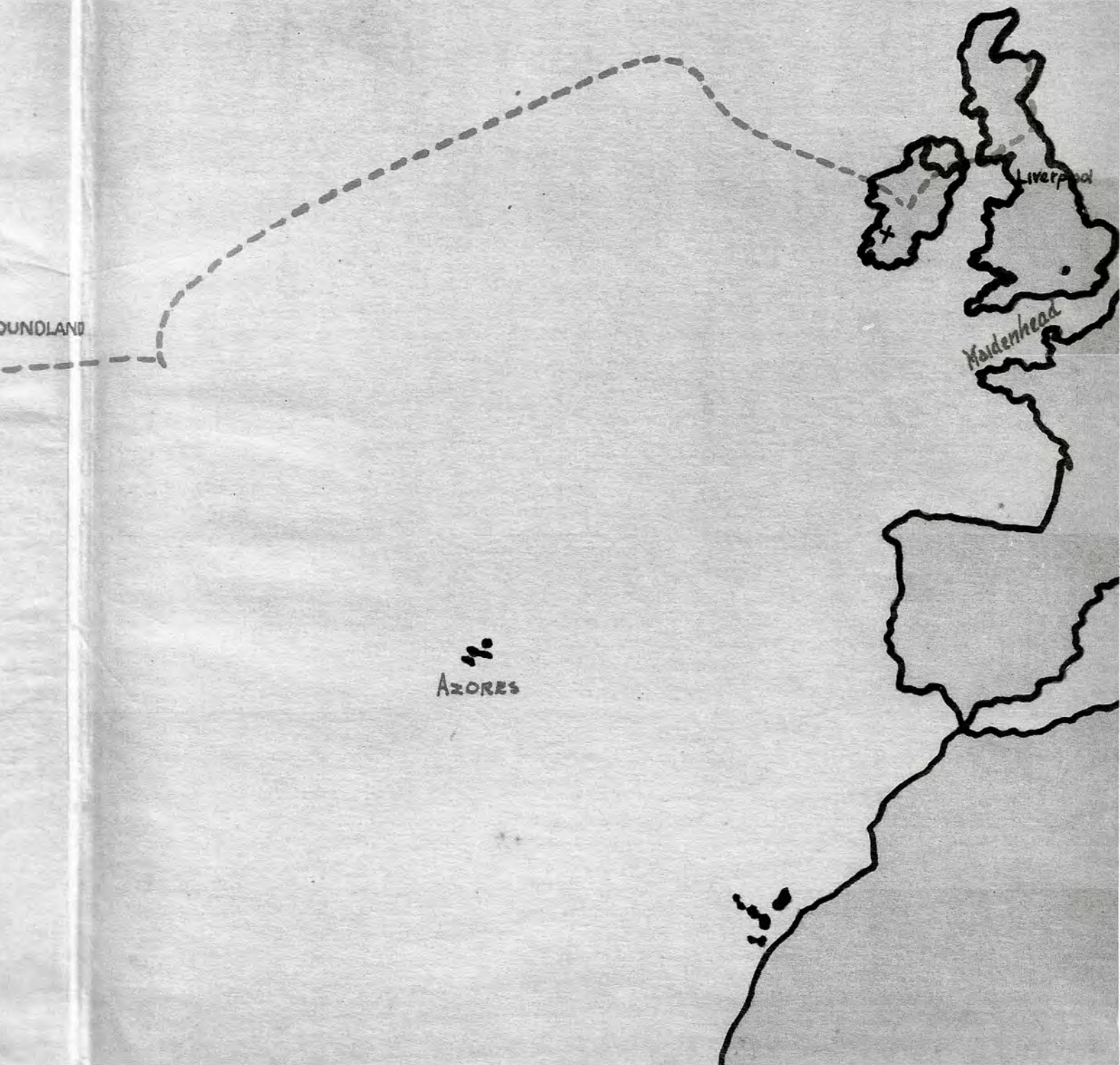
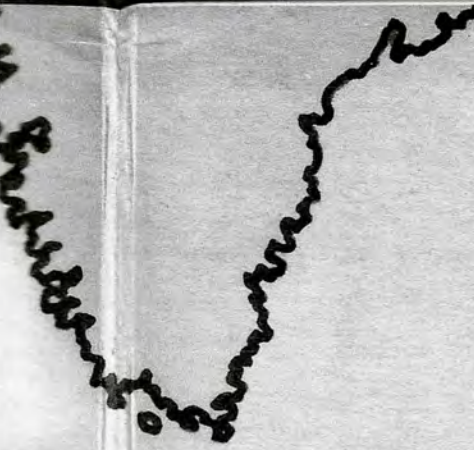
Norfolk

NEWFOUNDLAND

WEST INDIES



Private Library
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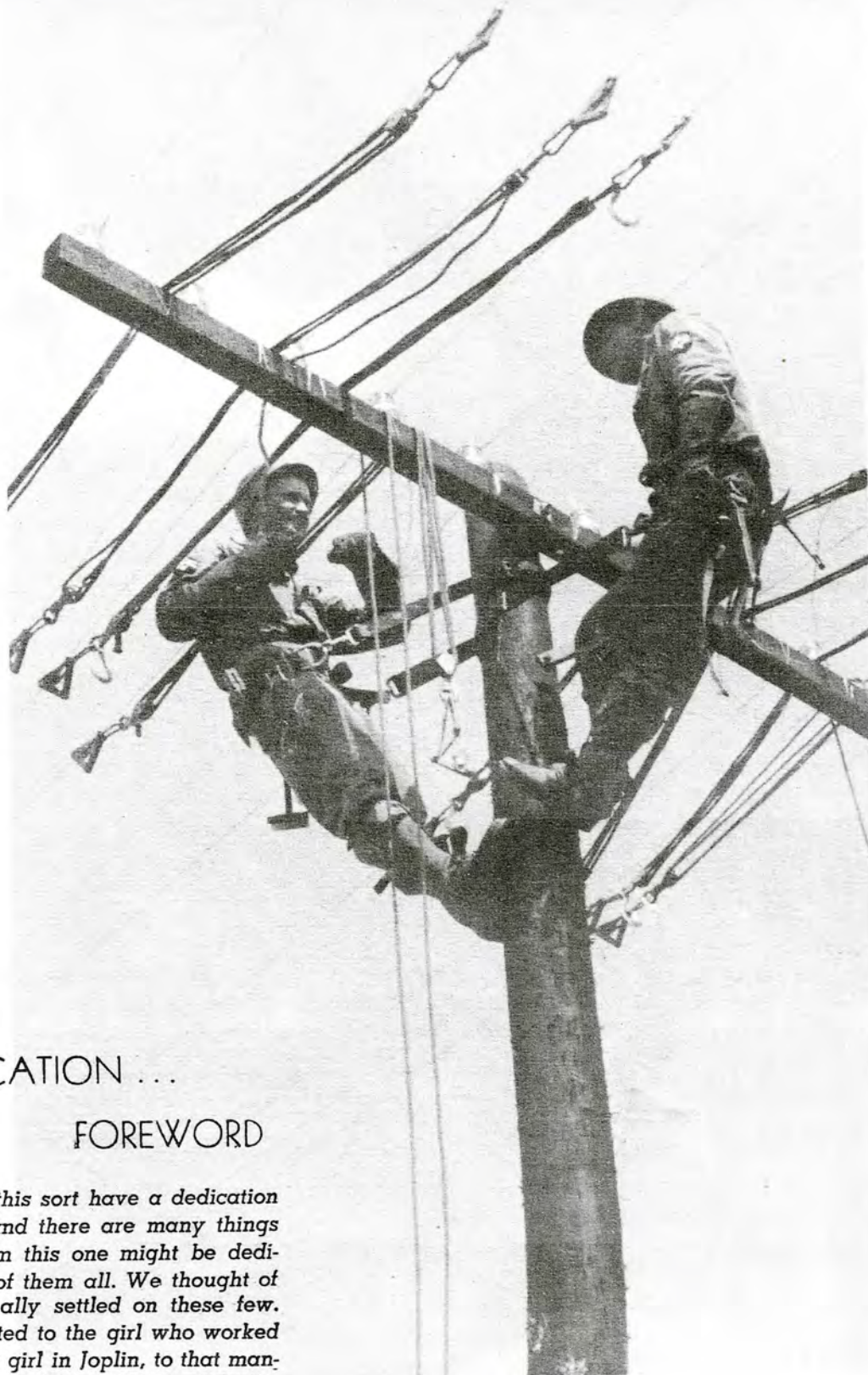


DUNDLAND

Liverpool

Maidenhead

AZORES



PREFACE . . .

DEDICATION . . .

FOREWORD

Most books of this sort have a dedication along about here, and there are many things and people to whom this one might be dedicated. We thought of them all. We thought of all of them and finally settled on these few. This book is dedicated to the girl who worked in PX No. 11, to the girl in Joplin, to that manicurist in the hotel in Peoria, to the girl who used to pass Horton Grange each morning tugging at the hem of her skirt as she cycled by, to Dennyse in Senlis who giggled at our every word, and to the Mole and to the Weasel in Spa.

CHRONOLOGY

- 15 Feb. 1943 35th Signal Construction Battalion created at Camp Crowder, Missouri.
- 27 May 1943 Battalion moves to Camp Ellis, Illinois.
- 4 July 1943 Movement Orders Received.
- 18 July 1943 Advance Detachment leaves Camp Ellis for New York Port of Embarkation.
- 31 July 1943 Advance Detachment arrives in United Kingdom.
- 20 Aug. 1943 Battalion boards USS Argentina at Hampton Roads, Virginia.
- 3 Sept. 1943 Battalion arrives at Liverpool, England and is assigned to Services of Supply, European Theater of Operations.
- 4 Sept. 1943 Temporary headquarters established at Hungerford.
- 12 Sept. 1943 New home found in Maidenhead, Berkshire.
- 11 Jan. 1944 Battalion relieved from assignment to SOS and reassigned to FIRST US Army.
- 13 Mar. 1944 Battalion relieved from attachment to SOS and training as a FIRST Army unit begins.
- 28 Apr. 1944 Lt. Lester Wright and 21 men killed off English Channel coast in E-Boat attack.
- 18 May 1944 First detachment of battalion arrives in marshalling area near Cornish coast of England in preparation for mounting cross-channel operations.
- 1 June 1944 First detachment of battalion boards L.S.T. No. 483.
- 6 June 1944 First section arrives at Omaha Beach, Normandy.
- 7 June 1944 First portion of battalion lands on French soil.
- 14 June 1944 Last detachment of battalion arrives at Omaha Beach.
- 26 Aug. 1944 First man sneaks into Paris on unofficial business.
- 27 Sept. 1944 Bn. Headquarters leads movement to Spa, Belgium.
- 18 Dec. 1944 Bn. Headquarters leads movement the Hell out of Spa, Belgium.
- 5 Jan. 1945 Bn. Headquarters leads return to Spa, Belgium.
- 11 Mar. 1945 Last portion of battalion leaves Spa for Germany, while over 100 kilometers away two construction teams place two 15-quad cables across the Rhine at the Remagen Bridgehead.
- 21 Apr. 1945 First bivouac set up at barracks near Weimar, Germany.
- 8 May 1945 Germans surrender.
- 11 May 1945 Battalion relieved from assignment to FIRST US Army and assigned to NINTH US Army.
- 10 June 1945 Battalion leaves Weimar bound for Camp Lucky Strike.
- 19 June 1945 Aboard Navy Transport USS Monticello the battalion leaves Le Havre and Europe behind.
- 26 June 1945 Monticello pulls into a parking space at Pier 16, Staten Island.
- 14 Aug. 1945 Japs surrender.
- 1 Oct. 1945 Date on which, prior to Japs surrender, the battalion was supposed to have been ready for movement to the Pacific.
- 5 Oct. 1945 35th Signal Light Construction Battalion is inactivated by the War Department.

Ricochet, New Jersey
5 February 1946

WE were sitting around, the other day, in the tavern down at the end of the block, and while toying with a nickel glass of Herkelheimer's Best we were idly thumbing thru the stack of aged magazines they have piled on a bench beside the pin ball machine. In a tattered old copy of Newsweek we found a little brief about a voyage to Europe the Duke and Duchess of Windsor had made aboard the USS Argentina, and this stirred all sorts of memories. We slipped into a quiet mood and spent several more glasses of Herkelheimer's Best reminiscing.

We got to thinking about the time we first arrived at Camp Crowder and about that sergeant we met that night at the PX. We had just dropped another nickel in the juke box to hear "Don't Get Around Much Anymore" when this sergeant, who would rate as a character by anyone's standards, accosted us and said that he was very glad that he was leaving that particular section of Missouri on the morrow. We asked why he disliked life there, and breathing a very beery breath in our face he said, "Look, I been inna army lotsa years, and this camp is strickly — — .I'm gonna' get myself transferred back to Fort Armstrong where they is some real soldiers and none of this — — ."

Well, we hung around Crowder for about three months, and we didn't think it was too bad. Oh, sometimes working with the local U.T.C. boys involved some weird procedures. As soon as Sgt. Cover got his company records in order you were certain that a U.T.C. inspector would drop around to direct that they all be revised in accordance with the latest idea on how such things should be done. There wasn't much in the way of equipment available either. It was quite an event when we'd borrow a line truck or a digger from U.T.C. No one knew anything about spiral-four, and no one seemed too greatly interested in field wire. But as long as the poles held out we climbed them. At both Crowder and Ellis the battalion spent more time learning to climb poles than most other outfits did, and it paid off. There were many times when an ability to climb of so many of the battalion's men proved valuable in the E.T.O.

Crowder was the first place where most of us had ever encountered many WACs. In fact, in those days they were called WAACs. Several of them used to work in the motor pool behind the battalion supply, and in the mornings they would march by in formation singing, "The WAACs are going to win the war, So what in the Hell are the soldiers for."

We even had a training program. It certainly wasn't hard, although it seemed so at the time. But on Saturday nights we were usually available for whatever was happening in Carthage, Joplin or Neosho. A few people had access to automobiles, and they could venture as far as Kansas or Oklahoma. But those who traveled about by the Hot-Shot Bus Lines or any of the other local ferrying systems were restricted to the little triangle bounded by those three towns. Carthage was a pleasant little town with an attractive town square and not a great deal more, and it was at its best at about nine or ten on a drowsy Sunday morning. Joplin, on the other hand, was definitely a Saturday night town. From the Connors Hotel down to that joint by the tracks there were an adequate number of bars, cafes and dance spots. In Joplin you could buy out of town papers, and there were enough big stores open on Saturday afternoons that you could wander through them feeling almost like a civilian shopper.

Neosho, however, had shops of a different type. In fact, Neosho amounted to little more than about two dozen army goods and cheap jewelry stores held together by a tired town square. Someday if someone ever undertakes to write a thesis on army camp towns, Neosho would make a swell case history. Overnight it turned from a quiet little town tucked away in the Ozarks where people raised strawberries to a glorified honky-tonk where the only music came from juke boxes, the only art was the roses painted on silk pillow covers to frame a poem, the only scents were the greasy sweet smells of cheap hamburger stands, and the streets were batteries of windows crammed full of soldiers' items—Blitz cloths, O. D. socks, water-proof covers for garrison hats, shiny brass insignia with crossed flags, T/5 stripes, shoe brushes, house-slippers, neckties. The pulse of Neosho varied as the length of the lines at the bus station.

At Crowder we fired on the range and ran about the reservation gracefully drooping folds of wire here and there, but such activities were restricted greatly by the weather. The third week of April in 1943 was the week in which it didn't rain at Crowder. But it rained just about all of the rest of the time. One of the storms washed out a section of the Frisco Line's tracks, and the battalion worked for a few days helping to restore the line. That, however, was about the only incident to relieve the monotony of the rain.



Over all of Missouri it rained and it rained, and the rivers rose until the corner sections of Kansas and Oklahoma that elbowed Crowder were flooded, and all of their little towns were isolated except for radio contacts. The red soil sloshed under your feet and turned soft and slippery, and you wondered how if it were so soft and mucky it could be so hard to dig holes in. One of the more familiar sights at Crowder were long lines of men, an orange bound manual in hand, lined up before a class room while the rain dripped from their raincoats onto their trousers and from their sleeves into the pockets of their raincoats. And while we sloshed about in the rain at Crowder the remnants of what was once the Afrika Korps surrendered to Lt. General Eisenhower on Cape Bon Peninsula in Tunisia, and a task force made up chiefly of the Seventh Infantry Division checked a Jap invasion of North America by wresting from them the icy fog and tundra of Attu.

About the end of May we loaded our trucks on to flat cars and moved from Crowder to Camp Ellis. This was quite a trip. All we did was go up to Kansas City, then over to Quincy, and on to Camp Ellis. We often recalled with wonder the bare and stark simplicity of that trip when in Germany we were moving seventy miles at a time with half of the trucks deadlined and with three hundred reels of spiral-four to carry along. But that move was pretty tough then. We even fired on a "saboteur" in the K. C. yards; he may have been a saboteur trying to burn up our trucks, or he may have been a crummy old bum looking for a place to sleep. Capt. Miller, the train commander, decided officially in favor of the saboteur school of thought. Just outside of Camp Ellis the train was pulled to a stop and some medical officers from the camp boarded to give the battalion the army's favorite type of physical examination. This completed, the train proceeded into the camp where a band and a delegation from Post Headquarters were waiting in the dusk to receive us. It was a nerve wracking trip, we guess. We spent most of the time reading comic magazines, but upon arrival at Ellis, Capt. Miller, the train commander, was so exhausted he was admitted to the station hospital.

There was a good reason why the band and the delegation from Post Headquarters were on hand to greet us on our arrival. Camp Ellis was a new camp, and we were its first customers. This was the first in the 35th's string of firsts: The First tactical unit to occupy newly established Camp Ellis, it was also the First unit to depart from there for overseas. It was the First US unit to reoccupy Maidenhead after the North African Invasion. It was assigned to the First US Army.

Its men were among the First Signal construction troops to hit the Normandy Beaches. Among the First units to enter Paris, the First French and American flags to fly over that liberated city were hung by some of its members on the Eiffel Tower. It laid the First cables under the Rhine. When the European war ended the 35th was one of the First units to be returned to the United States for redeployment. It was the First redeployed unit to arrive at Camp Polk, and there it was the First redeployed unit to be inactivated upon the ending of the war.

Camp Ellis differed from Camp Crowder mostly in its newness. Instead of lawn and hard surfaced roads and rocks painted white to border a walk or painstakingly spell "871st", there were dusty roads, rows of as yet unused barracks, all of only one story in height and of a much cruder design. Instead of lawn there were barren areas that had once been rich Illinois corn fields. Cars and trucks sped by on the roads whipping up swirls of dust that sifted into barracks to settle on the bunks and freshly shined shoes and into the offices to settle on papers so that they became gritty and scratched when they were put into a typewriter. The B.O.Q. was built over land that had been for many years a hog pen, and when the hot June and July sun beat down on it that fact became apparent to all. That June and July sun beat down on all of the buildings, and their tar-papered roofs breathed the heat into the buildings making ovens of them. After a day of heat and dust and training most of us were content to sit on the steps outside the PX and eat a quart of ice cream or drink beer.

If you had the time you could go into town. Table Grove and Ipava didn't count much because they were too small. That left Lewiston, Havana or Macomb. Of the three, Havana offered the most. But you couldn't make those towns very easily on a night during the week. So we sat outside the PX and griped about this or that.

At about the hottest part of summer came the fourth of July, and inasmuch as Camp Ellis was a new camp, it was decided to fling open the gates of the camp to the citizenry on that day. Like girls planning a picnic who say, "You bring the pickles, Gladys, and I'll bring the potato salad," each unit on the post was allotted its share in the day's program. The Quartermaster truck companies spent a couple of days inching trucks forward and backward until they had achieved a motor sergeant's dream of a hundred feet of olive drab bumpers melting into one straight line. We scurried about preparing many intelligent exhibits of telephone construction details for the occasion, and we also planned some exhibits portraying army life.

The repair and maintenance section bustled about with hammer and saw and paint pot transforming the Headquarters Company messhall into a model mess for public inspection. The Headquarters Company cooks hoarded their clean linens for that day, and there was talk of giving Sgt. Bruno a pass to Peoria over the 4th. Like a football coach, Lt. Fred Smith rehearsed some of his linemen in a performance called "pole top resuscitation" in which a lineman rescued from the top of a pole another lineman who was assumed to have received an electrical shock. This was a feat requiring skill and training. While others were setting poles and digging holes, Lt. Dinen and Lt. Carlson laid out displays of the varied items of a cable splicer's equipment and an aerial cable was set up where splicers could work at splicing large lead covered cables. At battalion headquarters the clerks emptied the papers out of the in and out baskets into desk drawers and tacked up a sign announcing a model headquarters.

The Fourth of July came, and with it came larger crowds than anyone had anticipated. A few women became separated from the crowd long enough to look in the model mess and to remark to the cooks that they wouldn't like to cook in the army. The cooks didn't much care for it either. But these kind ladies quickly rejoined the crowd at the motor pool and spent the remainder of the day there. Lt. Smith's men executed the pole top resuscitation for a small cluster of people who happened to be standing there at the time. Mrs. Genser and Mrs. Hess politely asked questions about the cable splicing exhibits. But hardly anyone else came around; everyone was busy by the motor pool forming a line several blocks long to get a free ride in a jeep.

We had been together long enough by this time that we could function on the parade ground as a unit should. So we spent several hot afternoons carrying our Enfield rifles across the parade ground in retreat parades. We were getting good at it too. But it was still hot, and when you got back to the barracks after one of these parades and took off your shoes and socks, even the hot air felt cool on your feet.

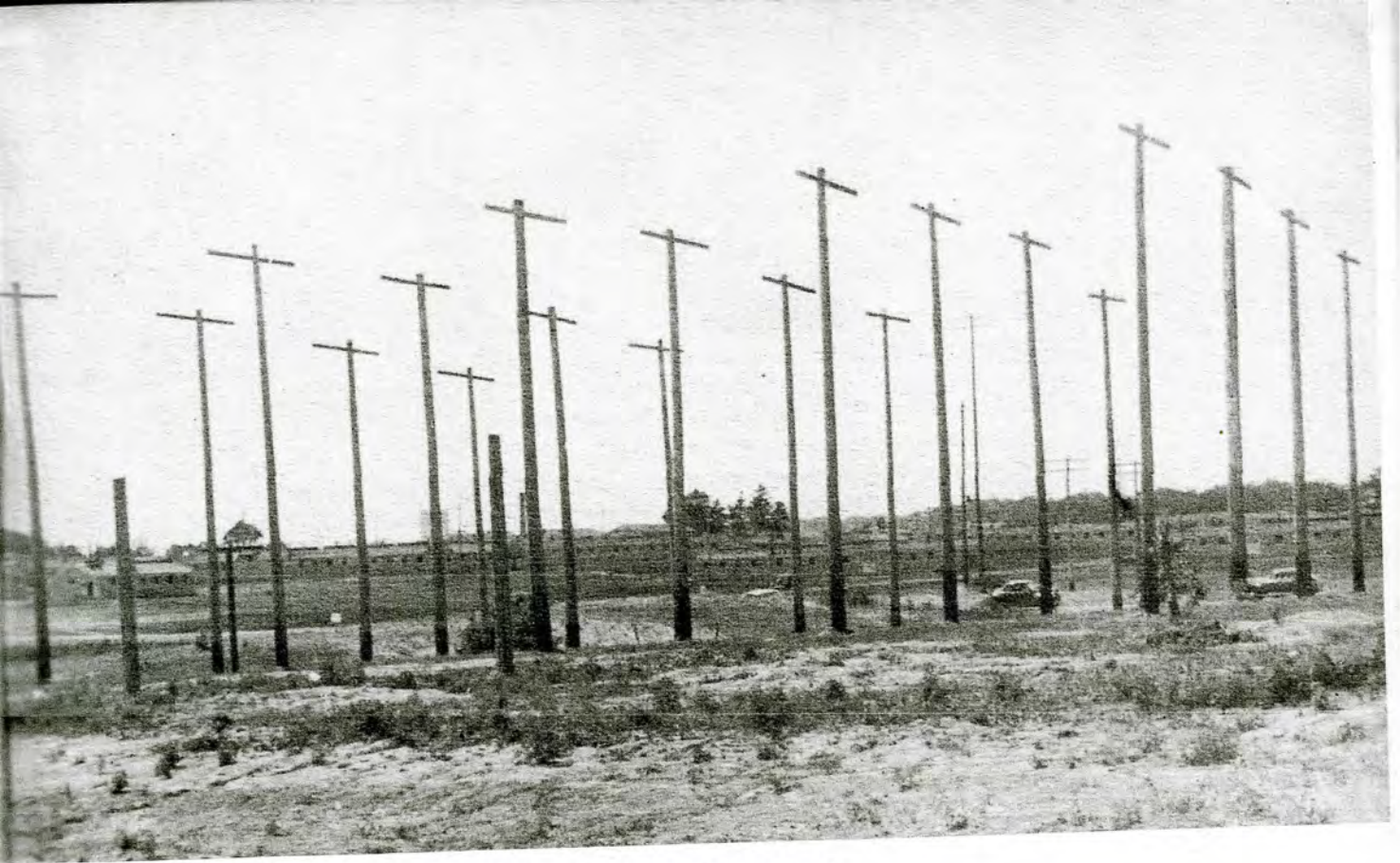
Furloughs were fairly available while we were at Ellis, and most of us got to spend a few days at home that summer. But when we got back from that furlough the tempo began to quicken. There was some sort of showdown inspection each day. On one day our leggings would be O.K., and on the next day they would be declared unserviceable. We began to think we would wear out our barracks bags carrying our equipment out to inspections in them. The supply and personnel men began to work until later in the evenings, and there were many new men transferred in and many old members transferred out. In the midst of all of this, almost unnoticed by most of us, a detachment made up of Lt. Lavelle Smith, Mr. Mason, Sgt. Kendall and Cpl. Aleksander left one night for the port of embarkation.



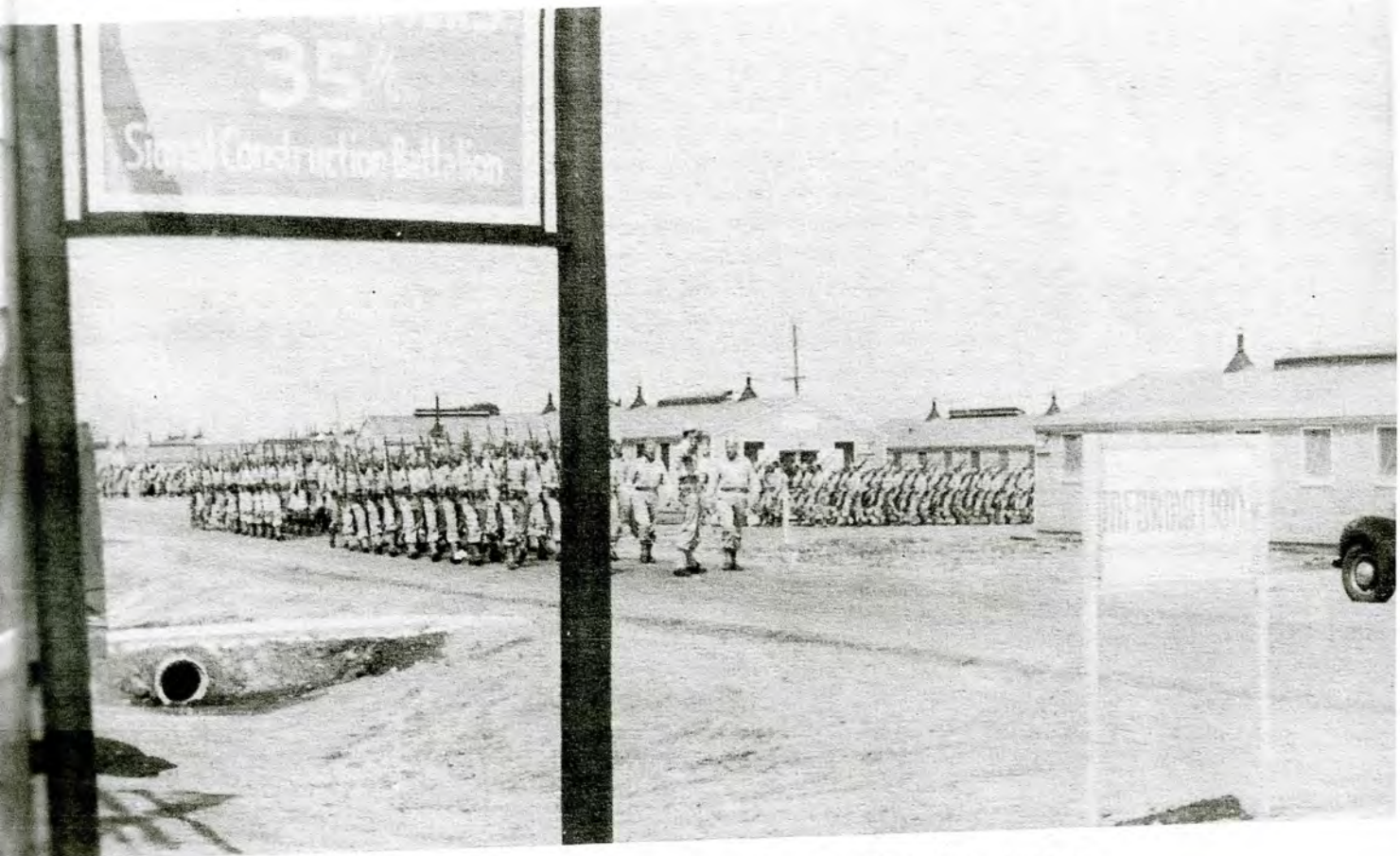
FOURTH OF JULY AT ELLIS



LT. CARLSON DISPLAYING A TE-56-A



POLE YARD AT CAMP ELLIS



THE BATTALION MARCHING TOWARD ANOTHER PARADE

There were a few week-end passes after that, but by the middle of August we, ourselves, were ready to leave for a port of embarkation. We left Ellis one mid-afternoon, laden with new carbines and A and B bags, leaving from the same place where only two and a half months before we had arrived to the accompaniment of a band. This time there was no band and no delegation from Post Headquarters. Sgt. Deem used to offer the guess that the post authorities were seated at that precipitous moment at Post Headquarters waiting to uncork bottles and to pass cigars in celebration of our being off their hands. The 35th was never the sort of outfit to go unnoticed.

The trip to Hampton Roads, Virginia was hot and uneventful. Camp Patrick Henry, our port of embarkation, was hotter. They say that to build Camp Kilmer the army cut down a small forest of trees. Well, at Patrick Henry we had about as little liberty as we'd ever had. The personnel and supply men were still busy, and one night Lt. Hess took some men down to run the QM laundry. But the chief activities were perspiring, shooting craps, griping about shots in the arm, and trying on protective clothing for size.

About this time sixty B-17s were shot down over Schweinfurt and Regensburg in the great raids that were the start of the campaign of the Allied Air Forces that destroyed the German ball bearing industry.

In the third week of August we took off for the E.T.O. on the Argentina. We were told that it had once been a sumptuous luxury liner plying between the Americas. This was hard to believe. Ours was the only white unit aboard, the other units being mostly colored port battalions. It would be nice if on transports you could ride along for a while on your pep or a reserve of strength and buoyancy. But you can't. Life on a troop transport will beat you up or wear you down within a few hours until you are numbed for the remainder of the voyage. There wasn't enough latrine space, the food wasn't good, the ship smelled. There just wasn't enough room. The sight of everyone dressed alike soon becomes oppressive. There was a brief layover in Newfoundland while one of the ships in the convoy underwent repairs, and then we took off across the North Atlantic. The only thing that afforded entertainment were the discussions about chances of there being any truth to the rumor that one of the other ships in the convoy was loaded with WACs and nurses. The rest of the voyage was the weariness of falling out for life boat drills, the futility of huddling under two thin blankets on deck against an icy northwind, the boredom of listening to the same stories from the same people again and again, the dysentery that comes from bad food and the nausea from smells of vomiting and excreta. One of the best sights we've ever seen was blacked out Liverpool, and even spending the night in an inky railroad station was better than another night on the Argentina.

We caught an English train and had a swell time remarking about how it was "just like in the movies," and we couldn't get over how small the railroad cars were. The little GI Guide to Britain told us that they were goods-wagons. We sped south and east through green countryside seeing names of towns we'd always heard of and arrived on the morning of the fourth of September at the railroad station in Hungerford.

Our stay there amounted to only about one week because a part of the 101st Airborne Division was scheduled to occupy that billet. So the British Quarters Commandant who was charged with billeting us moved us to Maidenhead, only about thirty miles west of London. Our stay there, like the time spent on the continent, will probably be remembered by most of us in terms of personal experiences with the country, the people, and their customs. But there are a few common memories that we all share. There was High Street in Maidenhead ... for that matter, there was a High Street in almost every town taking the place of our Main Streets ... Around Maidenhead there were names like Cookham ... Marlowe ... Bray ... Burchett's Green ... Holyport ... Cliveden ... High Wycombe ... Taplow ... Burnham ... Slough ... During the summer season the Thames was filled with punts and canoes and electric canoes ... And each day the Salter's River Excursions boat would come up and down the river loaded with sun burned sightseers ... Everything used to close on Thursdays in Maidenhead ... Kimber's Lane ... Ray Mead Road ... along the road by the Thames alternate trees were pruned the remaining trees were untouched ... walking along that road at night you could easily stumble over the chains across the steps leading down to the boat landings ... there were the Rialto and the Plaza ... seats ranged from 1/9 to 3/6 at both of them, only between shows at the Rialto you didn't have to hear that arrangement for two tinkling pianos of "Johnny Got a Zero" ... there were trips into London to Piccadilly ... Leiceister Square ... Subway stops late at night that ran: Picadilly, Oxford Circus, Regents' Park, Baker Street, Marlybonne, Edgware Road, Paddington ... Blacked out stations along the Great Western Railway such as Ealing Broadway, West Drayton, Slough ... There were the men in doorways in London who purportedly sold electric torches, but who tapped you on the shoulder and offered you other wares ... Rainbow Corner, the Jules Club ... There was Reading through which you passed on the way to Thatcham ... and Thatcham was where G-45 was located ... where personnel clerks sweated out payrolls and where supply men sweated out lines to have requisitions edited, sweated out tea times to have them filled, and where you could usually pick up a hot rumor.

... Newberry and Oxford where there were hospitals ... The Bear Hotel, the Hind's Head, the Bell and Dragon, the Reform, the Jolly Farmer, the Swan, Swindle's, the Riviera, the Dumb-bell, Ray Lodge Club, the Thames Hotel where Sgt. Tennis was known to play the piano and where impromptu floor shows were made up of GI performers ... dart-boards ... push-penny games ... poker dice ... Simond's, Guinness, Bass, Worthington's Ale ... 'alf and 'alf, light ile, mild and bitters, shanty ... drink up, gentlemen, closing time ... Sorry, sir, we've 'ad no Scotch for almost a fortnight now ... Roll Me Over In the Cover ... Tike Me Back to Dear Old Blightey ... Bless Them All ... You Are My Sunshine ... God Bless, and T.T.F.N. ... There were Home Guard soldiers quietly peddling back from maneuvers on Sunday mornings ... Blocks of houses, each with a name, each with a hedge, each like the others ... Movies and USO shows in the New Drill Hall ... There were British pay phones with A-Buttons and B-Buttons and complicated instructions printed on the phones ... "Just a moment, I'll connect you with trunks," and ten minutes later, "Sorry to keep you waiting." ... The Thames Valley bus line with women in shiny blue serge uniforms clipping tickets in the slot machine-like device they wore corseted about their waist and shrilly screaming, "Kindly step to the front of the bus, please ... 'ere, 'ere, let them off first, please ... Mind the doors." ... Double-decker red busses ... driving up the left side of the road ... Florence Chance was the taller girl who worked in the Valet Cleaners ... Nurses from the 44th Evac wandering aimlessly about town looking in windows ... Tobacconists ... sweetshops ... fruiterers ... fish mongers ... iron mongers ... Chimes of Big Ben ... Nine o'clock, this is the Home and General Forces program of the B.B.C. Here is the news and this is Stuart Hibbler reading it. Planes of R.A.F. Bomber Command were out again today in great strength ... Music While You Work ... Workers' Playtime which comes to you today from the canteen of an aircraft factory in the Midlands ... tea and toast, fish and chips ... bread and drippings ... tea and tea and tea ... WRENS in Navy Blue uniforms ... WAAFS in R.A.F. Blue uniforms ... ATs in OD, Women's Land Army in Corduroy knickers ... When the Luftwaffe was over London from Kimbers the whole scene was like the Northern Lights or like the fireworks at a state fair ... Brown bread—no white bread ... The Eighth Air Force and the Ninth Air Force ... British automobiles ... Wolsleys, Vauxhalls, Rolls-Royces ... You put your right foot in. You take your right foot out. Your put your right foot in, and you shake it all about. You do the hokey-pokey and you turn about.

... The D.C.R.E.—hardly anyone knew that it stood for Deputy Commander, Royal Engineers ... Queue this side on even dates ... Leeks, Brussell Sprouts, Swedes, Greens ... British Restaurants ... The grassy banks of the Thames by Boulter's Lock ... English girls with one or two locks of hair bleached lighter farthings, 'apennys, pence, thruppenny bits, sixpence, shillings, two bobs, two and six, ten bob notes, quids, guineas ... taw, taw, ever so taw ... P-47? Oh, yes, that's your American Spitfire with clipped wings, isn't it? ... Stones, hundred weights, and long tons ... Monthly P.O.L. reports and coal reports ... Calls to Oxford, Salisbury, Cheltenham and to Bristol ... Who? Oh, he's with the platoon down at Chichester ... Bobbies who always looked pompous without seeming ridiculous ... Bank Holidays and Boxing Day ... You Americans surely have many uniforms ... You Americans are always in some sort of rush ... You Americans ... Pinball-on-the-Tilt? Well, ye keep on oop the 'igh street and past the roundabout. Then tike the first left, and then the second right, and keep t' the right until ye've passed the farm with the clock tower. Then tike the first left and keep straight on. You cawn't miss it ... God Save The King ... There'll Always Be An England.





HIGH STREET, MAIDENHEAD



THE BRIDGE,
MAIDENHEAD



BOULTER'S LOCK,
OPPOSITE HORTON GRANGE



THE THAMES HOTEL

KIMBERS



SKINDLES





AN ENGLISH STREET SCENE



BATTA



TRAI

HORTON GRANGE

LOWER HIGH STREET





BATTALION DISPENSARY



ADJUTANT AND SGT. CHARY
WORK TO SGT. KRELING'S
SINGING

TRAINING IN ENGLAND



OPERATIONS

PERSONNEL SECTION



Most of the battalion's time in Britain was spent working for the British Post Office Telephone System. Our working with it gave us added experience and training, and the work we did enlarged the British communications network making it better able to handle the loads placed on it during the days of the European invasion. Many new men were trained to perform additional jobs in schools operated by the battalion. Using materials scrounged from everywhere, Lt. Royson set up a school at Horton Grange to train cable splicers with the result that the 35th had far more skilled cable splicers than the average signal construction battalion. These newly trained technicians were used to aid in accomplishing jobs like these:

Hilsea, Hants—Reinforced 23½ miles of existing pole route and erected 23½ miles of maximum size 384-pair lb. P.C.Q.T. Over 600 poles and 800 guys installed en route from Petersfield to Chichester in the reinforcing work. By introduction of an improvised cable guide and by obtaining permission to use cable straps, greater construction speed was achieved and a more permanent line was installed. Average of 100 men. 3 Jan. 1944 to 6 Mar. 1944.

Stokenchurch—Installed 7 miles of interruption cable. 13 men 11 Jan. to 31 Jan. 1944.

Tidworth, Hamps—Installed underground cable. 9 men. 10 Jan. 1944 to 26 Feb. 1944.

New Quay, Cornwall—Installed underground cable. 19 men. Jan. to Mar. 1944.

Torquay, Devon—Installed 9 miles of underground cable and 9 miles of open wire. 6 miles of poles strengthened and 3 miles of new pole line erected. 50 men. 1 Feb. to 26 Feb. 1944.

Bude, Cornwall—Installed 5 miles of new pole line, 8 miles of aerial cable. 26 men. 1 Feb. to 29 Feb. 1944.

Lobscombe Corners, Wilts—Placed underground cable. 19 men. 31 Jan. to 6 Mar. 1944.

Maidenhead — St. Albans—Placed from Pinner to Watford to St. Albans 25 miles of 400-pair underground cable and rebuilt pole line at Slough Airfield. 38 men, 20 Oct. 1943 to 2 Feb. 1944.

Ramsbury Airfield—Placed aerial and underground cable. 26 men. 10 Dec. 1943 to 3 Feb. 1944.

Blakehill Farms—Aerial and underground cable and open wire placed. 30 men. 12 Oct. 1943 to 11 Feb. 1944.

Reading — Ascot—Placed 17 miles of underground cable. 47 men. 21 Nov. 1943 to 24 Mar. 1944.

Tunbridge Wells, Kent—Pole line construction and aerial cable installation. 11 men. 3 Nov. 1943 to 29 Jan. 1944.

Swansea, Glam.—12 miles aerial and underground cable placed. 29 men. 7 Nov. 1943 to 31 Jan. 1944.

Banbury, Oxon—Installed 60 miles of open wire. 15 Nov. 1943 to 4 Feb. 1944.

All of this work was completed under unfavorable weather conditions and using materials and methods unfamiliar to the men. Yet each job finished won praise for the men of the battalion from the post office officials and the members of the cable companies.



WHILE THE LINE COMPANIES TRAINED
NEAR MARLOWE . . .



THE MEDICS PREPARED MONTHLY
VENEREAL REPORTS



LT. SPRAGUE PLANNED A DANCE
AND LT. PEACOCK PERUSED THE
COMPANY PUNISHMENT BOOK

AND THE BATTALION SUPPLY WOR-
RIED OVER A TALLY OUT SIGNED IN
THE WRONG PLACE



Working in Britain for the General Post Office proved an effective way in which to study the country—its people, its scenery and climates. In autumn traveling to the job site often meant to drive through wooded stretches of countryside where the morning sun shining through the leaves of giant beeches, already turned yellow and painted by the frost, drenched the road with golden light that glowed warmly in contrast to the crisp coolness of the morning. Near the little stream that slid through the tall grass beside the woods you'd wave at the Women's Land Army girl who was leading huge draught horses out to the field. In the fields farmers were busy weaving thatches to roof their haystacks and the stacks of wheat that would not be threshed until the spring.

And in the spring the same journey would take you through what seemed to be different woods. The sunlight danced through the leaves of the beeches, through the fresh new leaves that were green with the lightness of spring, down to the floor of the woods that was sprinkled with tiny white primroses and yellow cowslips. The haystack would very likely be only half of its original size and would show where huge pieces of it had been cut away during the winter in sharp clean cuts as you would cut a cake. By the same little stream you'd wave at the same Women's Land Army girl leading the same big Clydesdale.

But in winter everything was different. There wasn't any snow—oh, once when S-4 took several trucks up into the Midlands to draw some rapid pole line construction materials you saw snow. But around Maidenhead there was none. In the morning when you rode to the job site you sat wedged into the 2½, hands thrust into pockets, wool knit cap pulled down over your ears, chin resting on the rolls of your mackinaw collars, and you stared glumly at the grease smear on the fatigues of the guy opposite you. You didn't notice the trees. They didn't look like trees—just gaunt black skeletal shapes with tendrils that lost themselves in the swirls of fog. You were too absorbed in regarding the grease smear to look at the haystack. You didn't wave at the Women's Land Army girl with the horse because it was too damned cold to take your hands out of your pocket, besides you couldn't see her in that fog anyway, and besides—she probably wouldn't even have looked up this morning.

Such morose and dour beginnings of the day were not to be unexpected. To most of the men in the battalion winter was a gigantic collection of adversities heaped together to make life miserable. It was still dark when you separated yourself from the bed in the morning.

Just why a person should be reluctant to crawl from those beds remains one of the great all time mysteries. The bed was a curved sheet of plywood or several slats of wood laid between a couple of X-fixture ends, and a curiously shaped bag filled with lumps of straw was used as a mattress and was called a palliasse. Now this was probably called a palliasse instead of a mattress because that word sounds less like "mattress" than any other word in the English language—and that is proper and fitting. Palliasses were a phenomom common to all Nissen huts in Britain.

The Nissen hut itself was a fiendish affair, a place where in odd moments a man might go mad trying to figure out where the walls ended and the ceiling began. Usually such perplexities were inspired by trying to erect a shelf somewhere along its arched periphery or by trying to arrange the clothes that they would hang on Saturday mornings against its side in the manner that the bulletin board said they would hang on Saturday mornings.

Along about the time you'd gotten the building settled down and had given the blankets, which you always swore were woven of bristle and steel wool, a last contemptuous toss aside, still not disarranging things too much to interfere with remaking the bed easily, you had fortified yourself for a quick trip to the ablutions hut. The ablutions hut was another Nissen hut in which crude wash troughs had been erected, where the light was never any good, and where whenever you raised up from washing you'd be sure to crack your head on the pipes or faucets. You made your way to the ablutions hut by stumbling over walks of concrete blocks guided at that hour more by instinct than by reason, and you wondered half-heartedly why for once the sun couldn't shine and why door knobs had to feel so clammy when you grabbed them, and for the 374th time you decided that mild and bitters tasted like Hell.

So you stumbled about through the damp clammy fog that clung everywhere, piling and building upon itself until finally it fell upon everything in big silent drops. You didn't do much thinking; you kinda wished that you'd written a couple of those letters you owed instead of staying until they closed last night. You dumbly performed all of the regular early morning rituals, but you weren't very wide awake. The rattle and clatter of mess kits in the chow line didn't wake you—even the banging when you tried to clean the meat can by striking it against the sides of the GI can didn't stir you. The smell of the dehydrated eggs gave you a little momentary nausea once as you were putting a whole spoonful of them in your mouth there in the hot steamy messhall. But even that couldn't break through the armor with which you'd fortified yourself against the outer world of fog and boredom.



So you sat there in the 2½ just beginning to become awake. You remembered a notice on the bulletin board Lt. Genser had put up about the PX—you would read it that night—you were just about out of smokes. You were about through with this Reading-Ascot job so you wondered what would be next. Every morning one of the G.P.O. inspectors came out in his toy automobile to see what you were doing. He was a mousy little guy, and he always carried a brief case with a fancy GR tooled on its side. From the looks of the brief case you figured it was the George before the present one. From the looks of the fellow you always figured it should have been V for Victoria instead of G for George. He'd come around and talk about "jointing" instead of splicing and "spirit torches" instead of blow torches. Then about ten he'd drive back to Reading for tea. Well, that wasn't so dumb. He'd be back in a warm office drinking hot tea, and you'd still be standing beside a manhole greasing a cable they were pulling in, trying to keep warm and still trying to keep the grease off the only mackinaw you had so you'd still have something to wear on pass. And all around you the fog would be dropping down, quietly hiding everything under the dirty white that was making you stand with your shoulders hunched together and your fingers clenched into a fist even when you kept them in your pockets. All in all, it was a lousy job in the wintertime.





AMERICAN VERSION OF CRICKET IN MAIDENHEAD



OFFICERS OF THE BATTALION IN EARLY APRIL IN MAIDENHEAD

At Crowder and Ellis the companies of the battalion lived in adjoining rows of barracks. Even in Maidenhead A and B companies were together most of the time, and Headquarters was only a few miles away. But from the time the outfit landed in France until it stopped at Weimar, it never functioned as T/O 11-27 had intended that it should. Instead of being a battalion of two construction companies with accompanying administrative and service sections, it became a heterogeneous collection of skeletal companies, detachments, corps teams, test teams, and what-have-you. It left England and arrived in France in segments, and the segments remained scattered until collected after the German surrender.

With a situation like this, life was no longer instances of what the battalion did or even what a company did. It became a series of experiences shared only by the few men at Marco Switch or in the teams with Jayhawk. We could only recall a few events that would mean much to even a majority of the battalion.

There were, for instance, the spectacles at night in Normandy when the skies would suddenly burst into streaks of brilliance when AA outfits opened up their guns and spewed rockets and tracers in fiery arches across the sky. When the 90 mms. fired, their recoil slapped the ground with such violence that you could feel it a thousand yards away.

Then there was the night we had the gas attack. Someone coming from St. Lo that afternoon had returned with stories of how the infantry doughs were all wearing their masks. About midnight we were awakened by rifle shots and gas rattles. Everyone stood about in his mask until someone took his off and proved that it was a false alarm. So we went back into the sack. Only we couldn't sleep for all of the rest of the night a sound truck cruised up and down the beach broadcasting, "There has been no gas; there has been no gas. Do not give the alarm unless you, yourself, see or feel gas."

There was the bridge at Carentan that was for so long under 88 fire from some cleverly concealed German gun. Everytime you crossed it, it was at full speed.

There was K-ration Katy, the little girl-basso who used to come every night at Colombieres with a shopping bag in which to gather any parts of the 10-in-1s we didn't use.

And remember Calvados? There was a factory in St. Lo where, it was rumored by some, Calvados was made. Some others said that it was a powerful explosive that was made there, and still others thought that there was no difference. The wags all said that Calvados was the stuff you put in 180 proof alcohol to give it a kick.



IN FRANCE THE REPAIR AND
MAINTENANCE SECTION
BUILT ITS FIRST LATRINE

WE STARTED
CROSSING
BAILEY
BRIDGES



AND WE STARTED
SEEING
WRECKED
TOWNS





THE FOUR-STAR H-FRAME
BUILT AT MASTER
NEAR CANISY, FRANCE



There was M.A.L. We hauled jumpers, pickets, poles, stakes and clamps across the channel with us, and once we did put up a short M.A.L. line. But we replaced it with field wire or spiral-four later. It's hard to establish a date for the demise of M.A.L. It just faded away.

At Colombieres Capt. Sneider, who acted as our medical officer until Capt. Gundling was assigned to the battalion, didn't dig a foxhole. Instead he made a sort of bunker with the walls revetted, and each night he'd instruct the sentry to post himself near this fortress.

On the 25th of July about 4000 planes blasted St. Lo to open the way for the breakthrough that ended the beachhead days and carried the Allies to Paris and the Siegfried Line. From the shade of an apple tree one sergeant watched the mighty armada drone southward. When the last plane had roared by he said, "Well, every little bit helps." Then he went back to his nap.

There were warm Sundays after we left the beach when the French dressed in their finery and if you drove along the road as they were going to Mass or returning the road became an avenue of V-signs and smiles and waves. This led to Paris. There were all of the excuses and reasons we could invent to go in to Paris. Those first few days of its liberation when every GI was a hero and even the French wouldn't let you pay for the drinks. A woman named her first child after Sergeant Lambert. You filled your trucks and jeeps with girls and no one said anything about it. Never did a city seem gayer and more charming than the City of Light during those last few days of August. Capt. Peacock loaded some Headquarters Company men into a truck to take them into Paris and Colonel Williams arrested him. Capt. Peacock always was one to get into trouble.

Then there was the time gasoline was so scarce. Whether or not a company moved to a new bivouac area depended not on the tactical situation, but on how much gasoline was available. Trips of three hundred miles for gasoline became not uncommon.

Then Belgium with its red, yellow and black flags and its truly enthusiastic welcomes. In Belgium we had some *creme glace* in the first ice cream store since the States.

Winter forced us indoors, and indoors turned out to be Spa. What a setup that was. With the exception of the corps teams and the test teams, everyone roughed it in hotels and chateaux. There were the shows at the casino and Lt. Sprague's announcements at those shows. While waiting for the picture to start, the boys in the balcony would blow up balloons and toss them down.

Vol. 4 No. 109

Heavies Rain 360,000 Bombs on Berlin

U.S. Bombs 5



Did the American bombs hit their mark in Berlin? Bomb bursts shown are right in the

Berlin Forts, Libs Aflame

Miles After Second Pierce Air Battles in the Luftwaffe

night bombing yesterday. A force of incendiary bombs and 10,000 high-explosive bombs were scattered over the city, and returning airmen said that a rain could be seen 100 miles away.

and 10 fighters were lost in the operations. U.S. Strategic Air Forces headquarters claimed 83 enemy aircraft destroyed; 10 were damaged.

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SIX men from a signal construction battalion liberated Paris in their own way Aug. 29 and raised an American flag alongside the Tri-color atop the Eiffel Tower. The flag, provided by a Frenchman, was an American Legion banner which had been hidden throughout the occupation.

Led by T/4 Lester W. Dorksen, of Cleveland, the men from Company B were passing through Paris en route to a new assignment when they were stopped by a Frenchman. He explained Gen. De Gaulle had ordered the Stars and Stripes to be flown beside the French flag, and the Americans were asked to perform the ceremony.

T/5 Clifford E. Nesby, of Richmond, Ky., hoisted the flag while the other five men fired three salvoes from their carbines. Others in the group were: T/5 Wyman M. Rogers, of Rierestown, Md.; Pvt. Thaddeus F. Buczek, of Joliet, Ill.; Pvt. John W. Craig, of Charleston, Ill.; and Pvt. Cecil Elkins, of Swainsboro, Ga.

When troops of the 30th Infantry Division entered Evreux, they found that the FFI had done a thorough job of chasing out the Germans and that city officials were busy proclaiming a new French government. They also discovered that Lt. Col. Walter M. Johnson, of Missoula, Mont., and 1 Lt. Arne Nielsen, of Oakland, Cal., were waiting for them. He entered the town earlier to see how well the FFI had done.

Counter-Blows Slow Russians

Reds Push Within 6 Miles Of Tarnopol Despite Stiff Resistance

Strong German counter-attacks by a tank and infantry force under Gen. Fritz von Manstein yesterday Soviet sweep toward Rumania yesterday, but in spite of the mad dash going of the winter campaign Marshal Gregory Zhukov's Russians pressed forward within six miles of the important junction of Tarnopol, 42 miles east of the base at Lvov.

Zhukov's advance threatened three vital railway points on a front 130 miles along the Odessa-Lvov trunk—Tarnopol—from which an important line branches off to Chernovitz, Rumania, 65 miles away, where another line branches off to Rumania, and Zampetina, a keystone of Nazi defenses during the Kiev battle.

The speed of the Soviet advance since the offensive began five days ago created the contention in Rumania, and Hungarian troops received in general Switzerland and the Rumanians were forcing their way onto trains leaving the eastern border, in spite of government orders to the contrary.

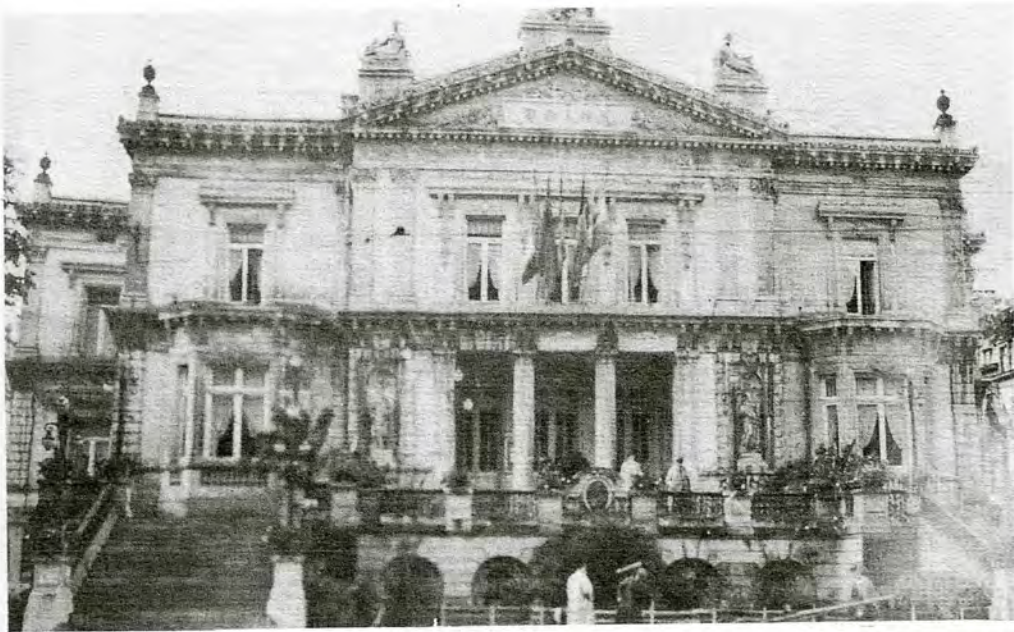
Not only in the western Ukraine but all along the front the Soviet pressure was kept up. Axis reports admitted the Rumanians had breached head lines south of Krivon Rog in the Dniester Bend and attacked on the central front, west of Gomel, between the Beresina and Dnieper rivers.

377 Miles—From Toronto To N.Y.—in Just 55 Minutes

TORONTO, Mar. 8.—A 377-mile flight in 55 minutes—at an average speed of 411 mph.—was disclosed today by James F. Foy, chief test pilot of Bell Aircraft Corp.

RAIL STAT AT VEF





BATH HOUSE . . . SPA STYLE



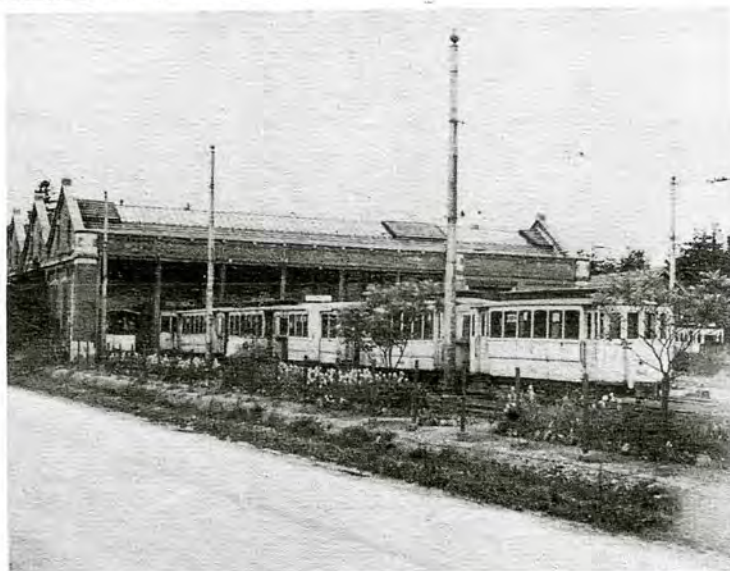
RAILROAD
STATION
AT VERVIERS



A TYPICAL
BELGIQUE
WELCOME



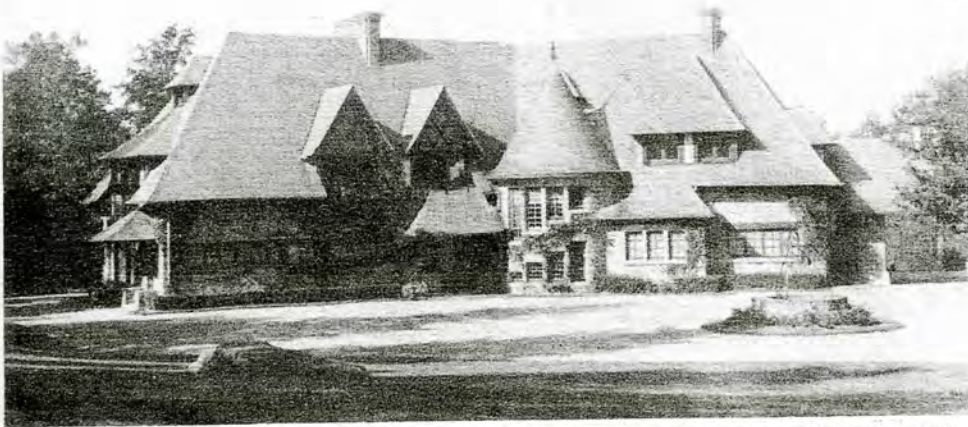
THE CASINO AT SPA



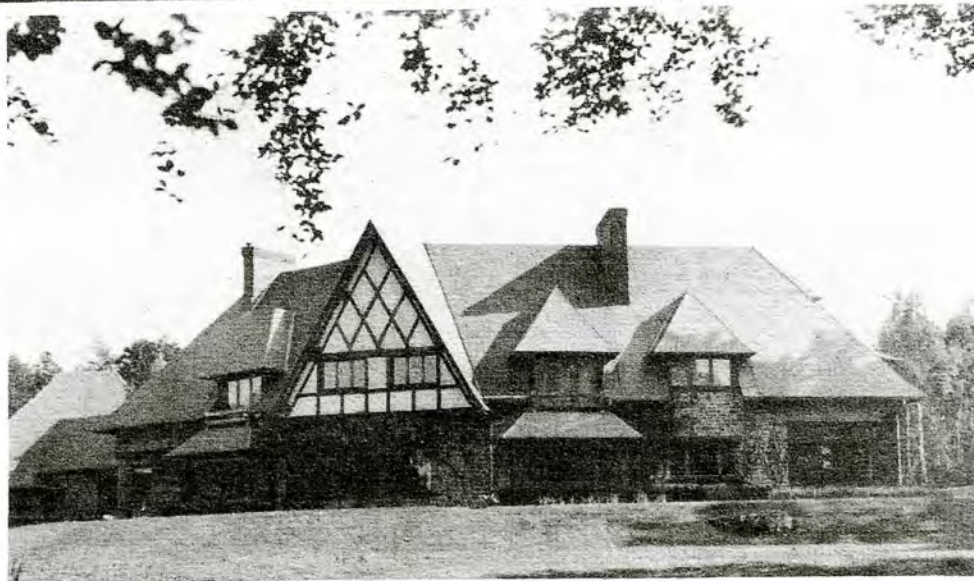
THE CAR BARNS BY
THE HOTEL BALMORAL



SPA AND THE
HOTEL BELLEVUE



THREE VIEWS OF
VILLA PONCIN



BATTALION
HEADQUARTERS
AT SPA





HEADQUARTERS COMPANY, SPA



ABOVE — A LITTLE TOWN THAT
COULD BE ALMOST ANYWHERE IN
SOUTHEASTERN BELGIUM



RIGHT AND LEFT: STATUES IN SPA



WINTER IN BELGIUM



The Armed Forces Network used to broadcast programs by Major Glenn Miller's band and by T/Sgt. Ray McKinnley and Sgt. Mel Powell. And at station breaks the B.B.C.'s Expeditionary Forces Network would play *Oranges and Lemons* on chimes.

There were a few parties at Spa, and it was warm and dry at night, unless you had guard duty.

Then there was the Bulge. The Germans crossed the I. P. on the 16th of December and headed for Liege. We heard stories of Kraut advances and someone brought word up that they were not far from Malmedy. But sitting in the warm orderly room at the Spaloumont watching Cpl. Ruth give someone a haircut while Lt. Colin-Tirado's discourse to Capt. Smith and Sgt. Cover on his days at Purdue lazily melted into a sleepy drone, or standing by the stove in Sgt. Tennis' supply room while he fumed to a quietly nodding Jones his theories on the ancestry of a certain team leader who had lost a sleeve rolling tool for which he had signed, it was not easy to become alarmed or worried about the fact that the town of St. Vith was not ours, but theirs now. But when on the morning of the 17th you started seeing hastily loaded convoys rumbling out of town, you began to wonder. So you checked to see that all of your gear was in one place, and you waited. Then that night after it had become apparent that the plot to get their Tiger Royals with our carbines, M-1 wasn't apt to succeed, we pulled out of Spa. We went through Verviers to Mischeroux, and the skies were lighted by tracers and by the fiery exhausts of the buzz bombs snarling overhead on their horrible trip to Liege.

We started to work then. We put out spiral-four and five-pair cable as freely as the cooks dished out stew, until we'd traced every narrow muddy road around that corner of Belgium. When Master moved to Tongres, A and HQ companies moved to nearby s'Heerenelderren for the holidays. We spent long days shivering and freezing. We shot 50 calibers at the Luftwaffe and brought several planes down. Great white coldness lay over everything, and at night men huddled by the fire or sought a bottle of sugar beet cognac. And that was the pattern until we returned to Spa.

Along about this time the Germans tried a mass planting of parachutists in GI uniforms. So the Allies threw up road blockades to screen all traffic. In trying to find your way through Liege you'd encounter so many blockades you soon came to wear your dog tags outside your shirt. We like the story about Lt. Hess' driver, Davis. An M.P. looked at his dog tags and saw that his father lived in South Pasadena. "What's Pasadena noted for?" he asked. Davis responded, "Well, I dunno, I'm from South Pasadena."



PIEDBOUFF BIERE



ELMER
AND
ANTHONY





THIBAUT AS A BELGIOUE SANTA CLAUS AT A XMAS PARTY IN SPA



TIGER ROYAL TANK



LOAD OF JERRICANS



VAPOR TRAILS



LOOT



IDA AND FRIEND



AACHEN



ESCHWEILER



EXTREME GRIEF EXPRESSED BY DAVIS AFTER DESTRUCTION OF HIS TRUCK BY TWO ANTI-TANK MINES



DUREN



COLOGNE



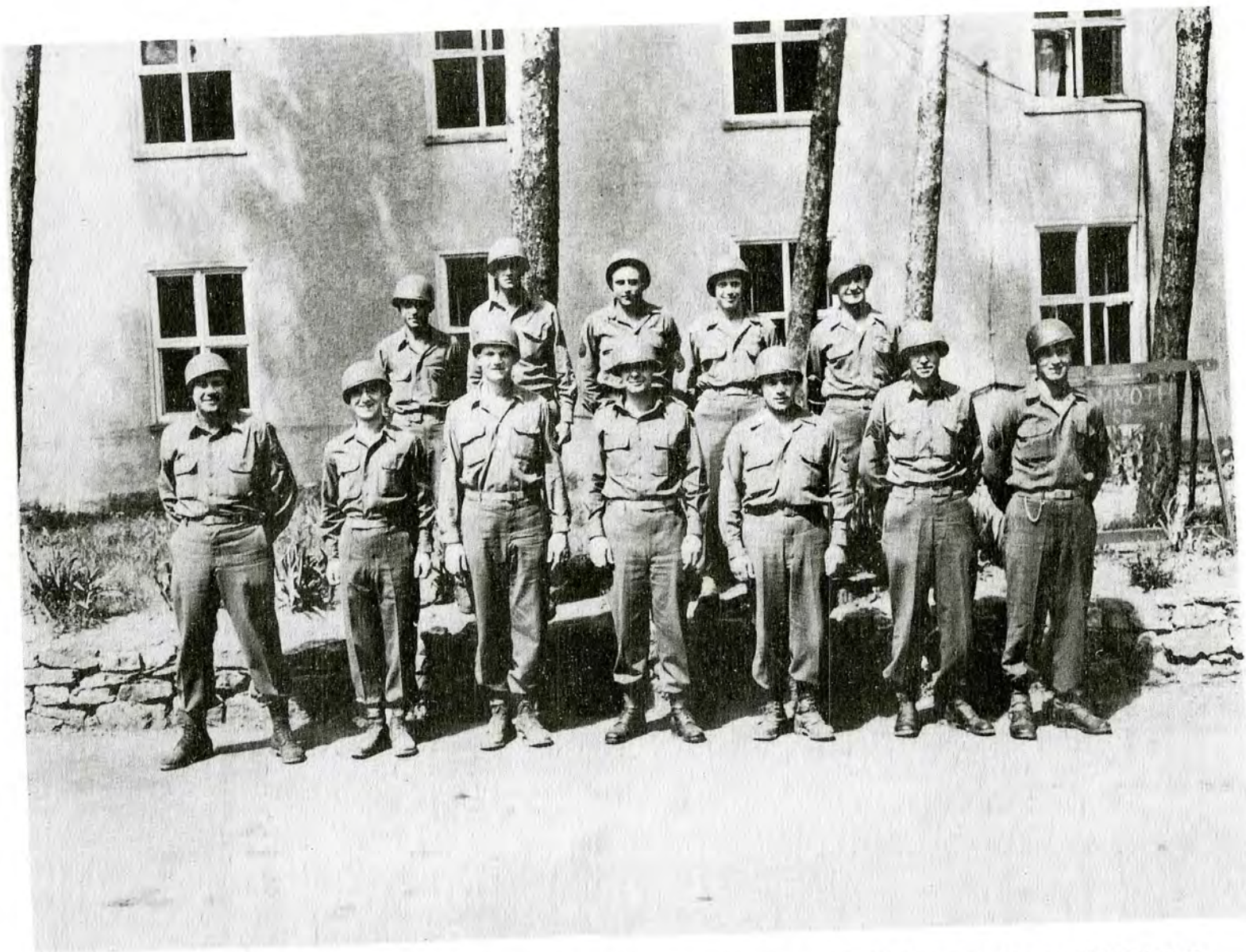
CAPT. CRIGLER AND SGT. SCHOMP WORKING ON A CABLE
NEAR MONSCHAU



A CLASS C GERMAN BILLET WITH
NON-ESSENTIAL FURNISHINGS
PLACED OUTSIDE

SMOKE SCREEN ALONG THE RHINE





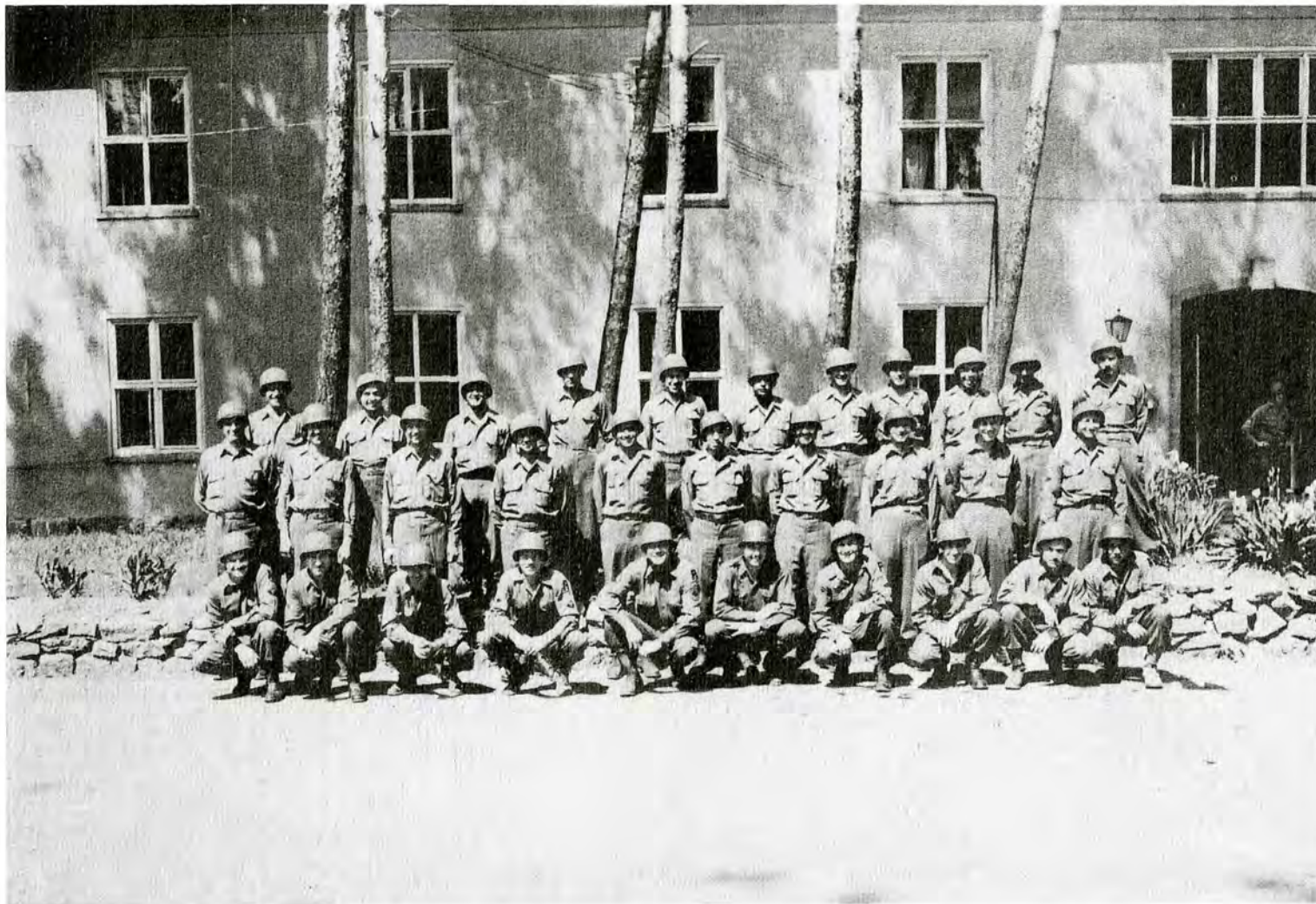
TEAMLEADERS — TROUBLETEAMS, Co. A, 35TH SIG. CONS. BN. FRONT ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: T/SGT. J. D. SLAYDEN, T/SGT. G. G. SCIROTTO, M/SGT. J. C. MULLIGAN, CAPT. L. L. WILSON, M/SGT. F. H. AKLUS, SGT. P. FLOWERS, T/4 E. L. TURNER. SECOND ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: S/SGT. C. E. McDONALD, SGT. C. C. HAMES, T/4 N. FORD, S/SGT. A. HOLLAND, T/SGT. A. F. McGRADY



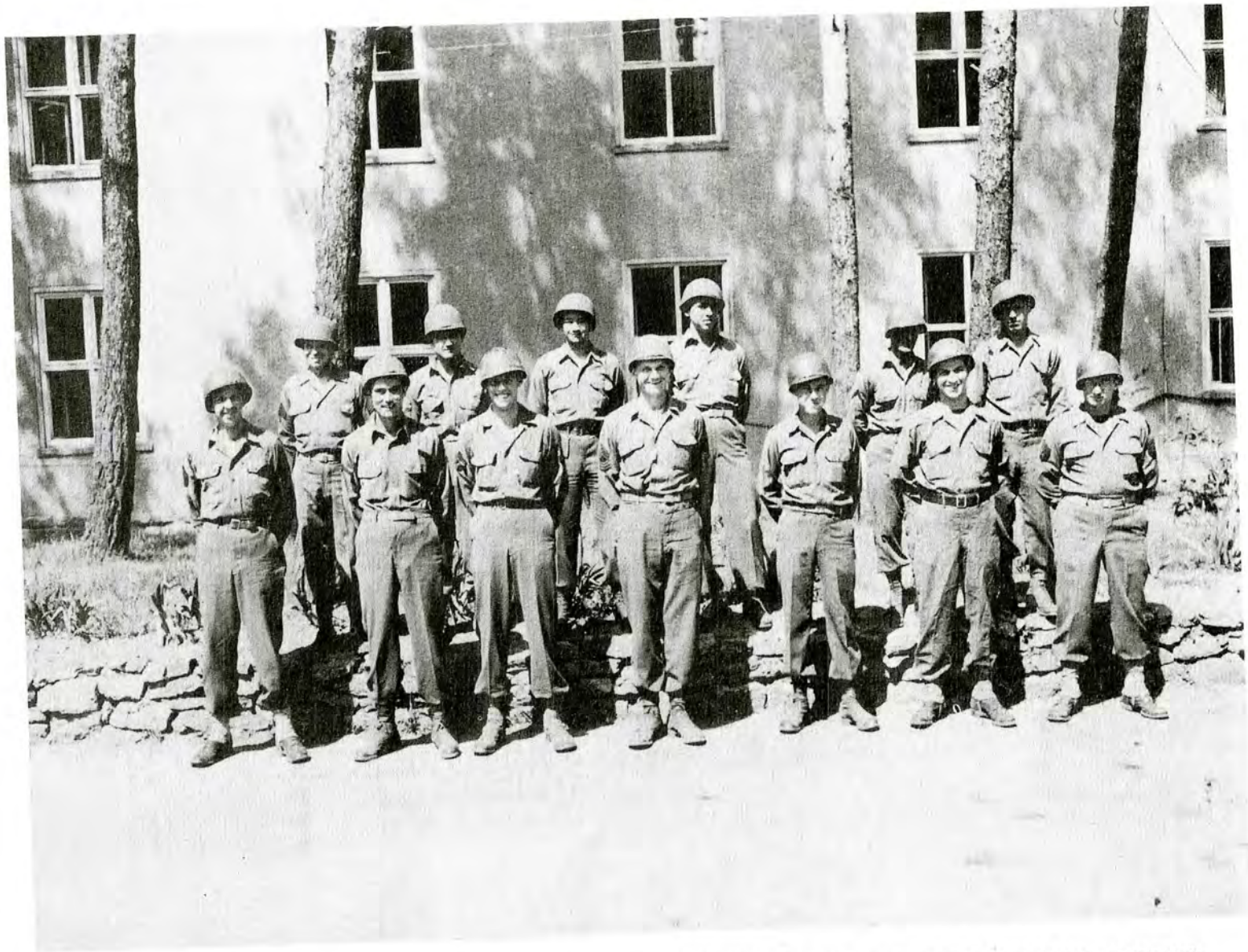
TEAM "2" CO. A, 35TH SIG. CONS. BN. FRONT ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: PFC. G. ZUCCO, T/5 A. L. HACKWORTH, T/4 W. C. COMERFORD, SGT. C. C. HAMES, T/4 N. FORD, PFC. N. G. HILLERS. MIDDLE ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: PVT. E. J. JORDANECK, T/5 C. H. FUGATE, PFC. T. W. OLSON, PFC. A. R. BURROWS, PFC. L. POALINO, PVT. C. GIORCELLI. LAST ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: PFC. P. S. LAFATTA, PFC. G. C. STRAVER, PFC. C. WRIGHT, T/5 T. T. MILLS, PFC. H. T. HARRISON, PFC. A. J. GENTILUOMO



TEAM "9" CO. A, 35TH SIG. CONS. BN. FRONT ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: T/4 A. PIAZZA, PFC. M. ESTES, T/5 F. MAHONEY, PFC. J. L. JOHNSON, T/ 5 C. M. SCHILLING. BACK ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: T/SGT. G. G. SCIROTO, T/5 W. J. BRIDGEWATER, PFC R. NEACE, PVT. E. J. ROWINSKI, PFC. L. R. LARSEN, PFC. J. V. HERNANDEZ, PFC. E. S. TABERSKI, PFC. F. A. KRAMER, JR.



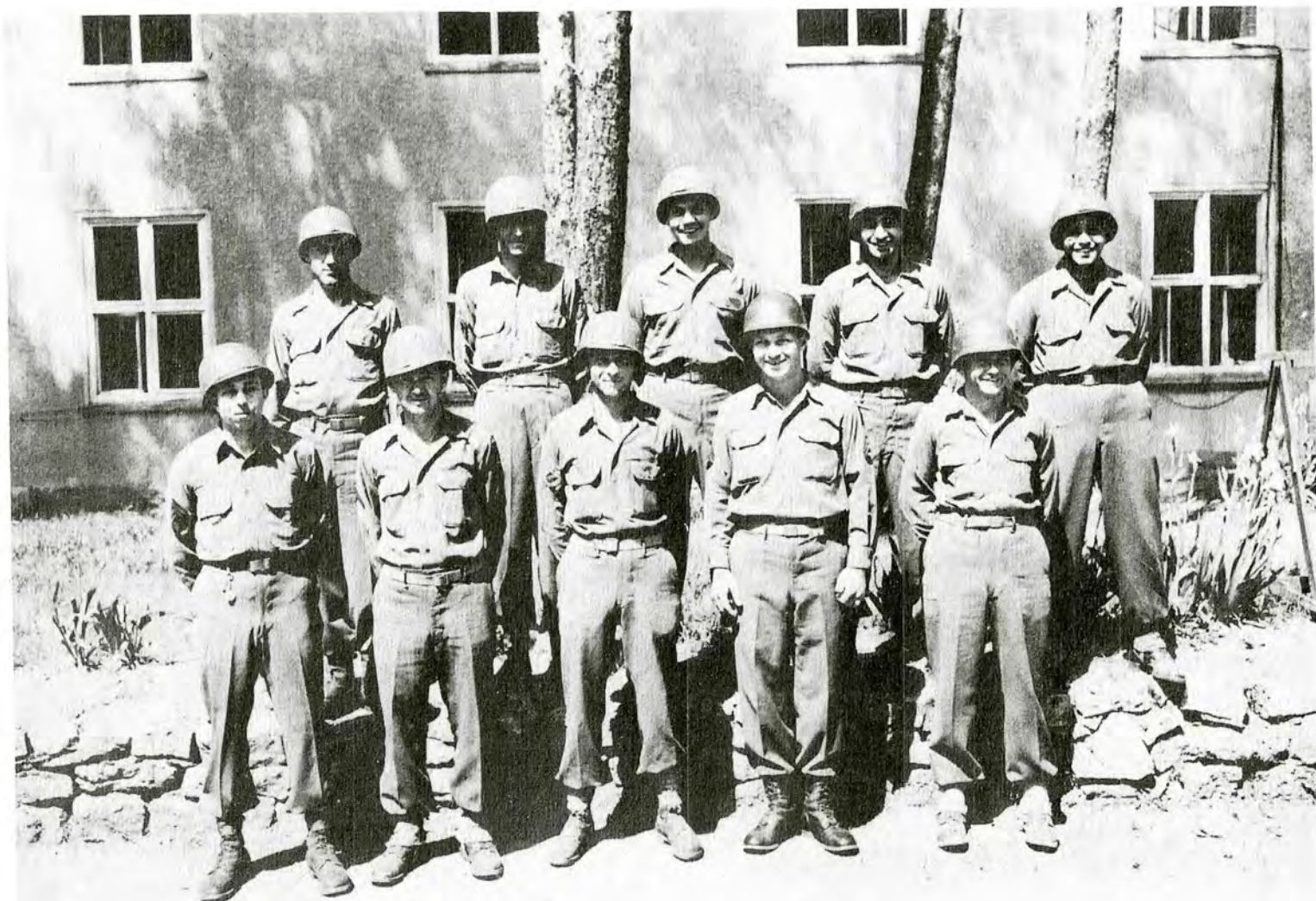
TEAM "11-12" CO. A, 35TH SIG. CONS. BN. FRONT ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: T/5 L. E. PATTERSON, PFC. H. A. CHARLET, T/5 H. T. HESS, T/5 A. R. JOHNSON, T/SGT. J. O. SLAVDEN, LT. R. W. STEWART, T/SGT. A. F. McGRADY, T/5 C. J. O'NEILL, T/5 E. D. POTT'S, PVT. J. G. ARMIJO. SECOND ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: PFC. M. E. BROWN, PFC. G. E. HUDSON, PFC. D. E. HUSKINSON, PFC. J. NOWAK, PFC. G. P. SINCLAIR, PFC. L. G. MAINES, T/4 W. A. LUM, PFC. S. ABRAMSON, T/4 C. J. BELL, T/4 E. R. HUGGINS. LAST ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: PVT. C. L. ZABROWSKI, PFC. D. MUCCI, T/4 M. D. MAZYRACK, T/5 I. VALDEZ, PFC. A. PETERSON, PFC. M. M. NAVARRO, PFC. A. H. JOHNSON, PVT. N. H. WALKER, T/4 R. J. CORRIVEAU, PFC. M. A. PERREAULT, T/5 A. R. MORDEN



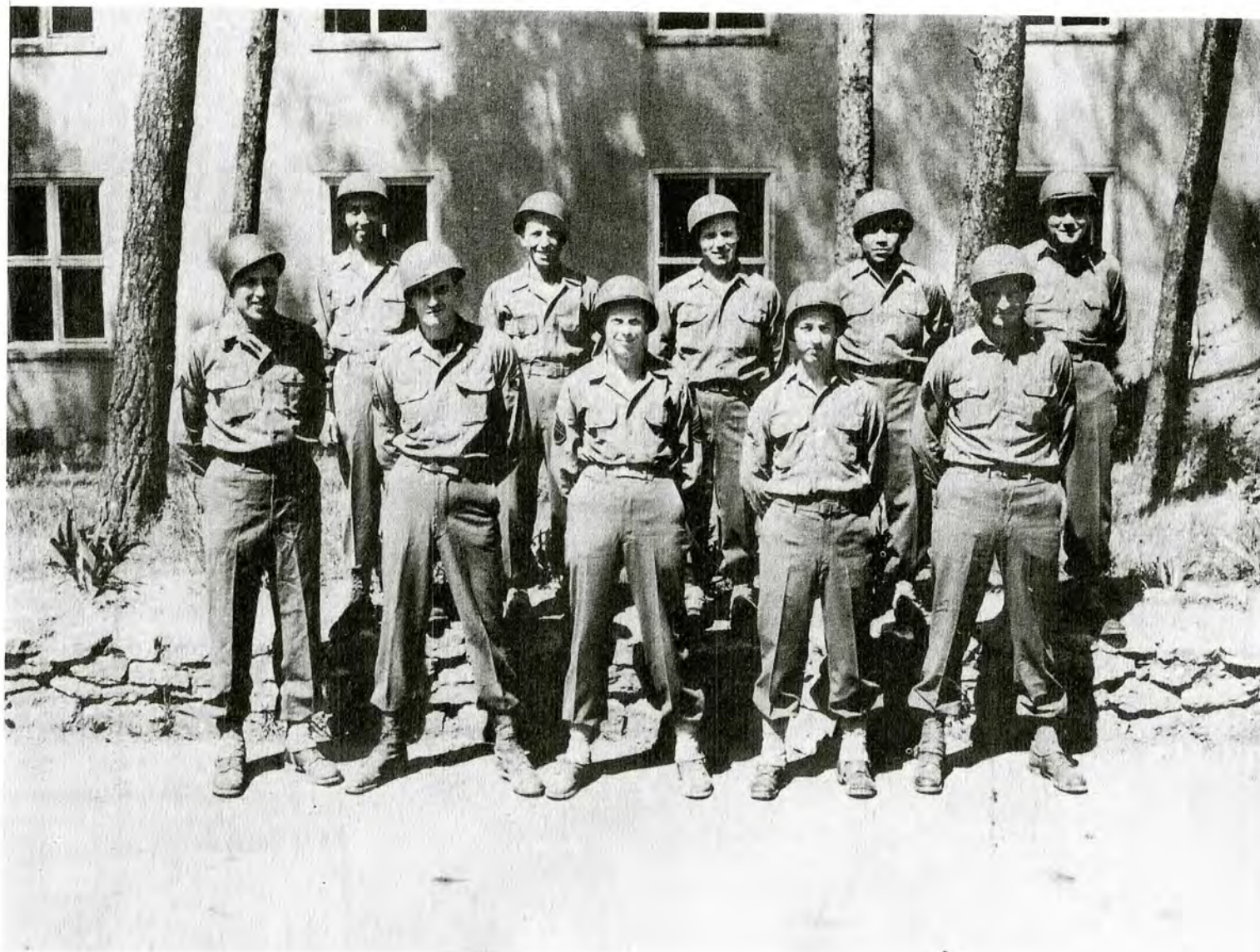
TEAM "10" CO. A, 35TH SIG. CONS. BN. FRONT ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: T/4 C. L. EDWARDS, PFC. B. E. PRESLER, T/5 J. E. WOOD, M/SGT. J. C. MULIGAN, PFC. P. E. LAND, PFC. J. N. PELLETIER, T/4 T. E. MACOCATIC. SECOND ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: SGT. L. W. DAILY, T/4 W. REGISTER, T/5 H. C. PRICE, JR., T/5 W. E. KIM-BROUGH, PFC. P. J. DUGAN, PFC. G. VIROVATZ



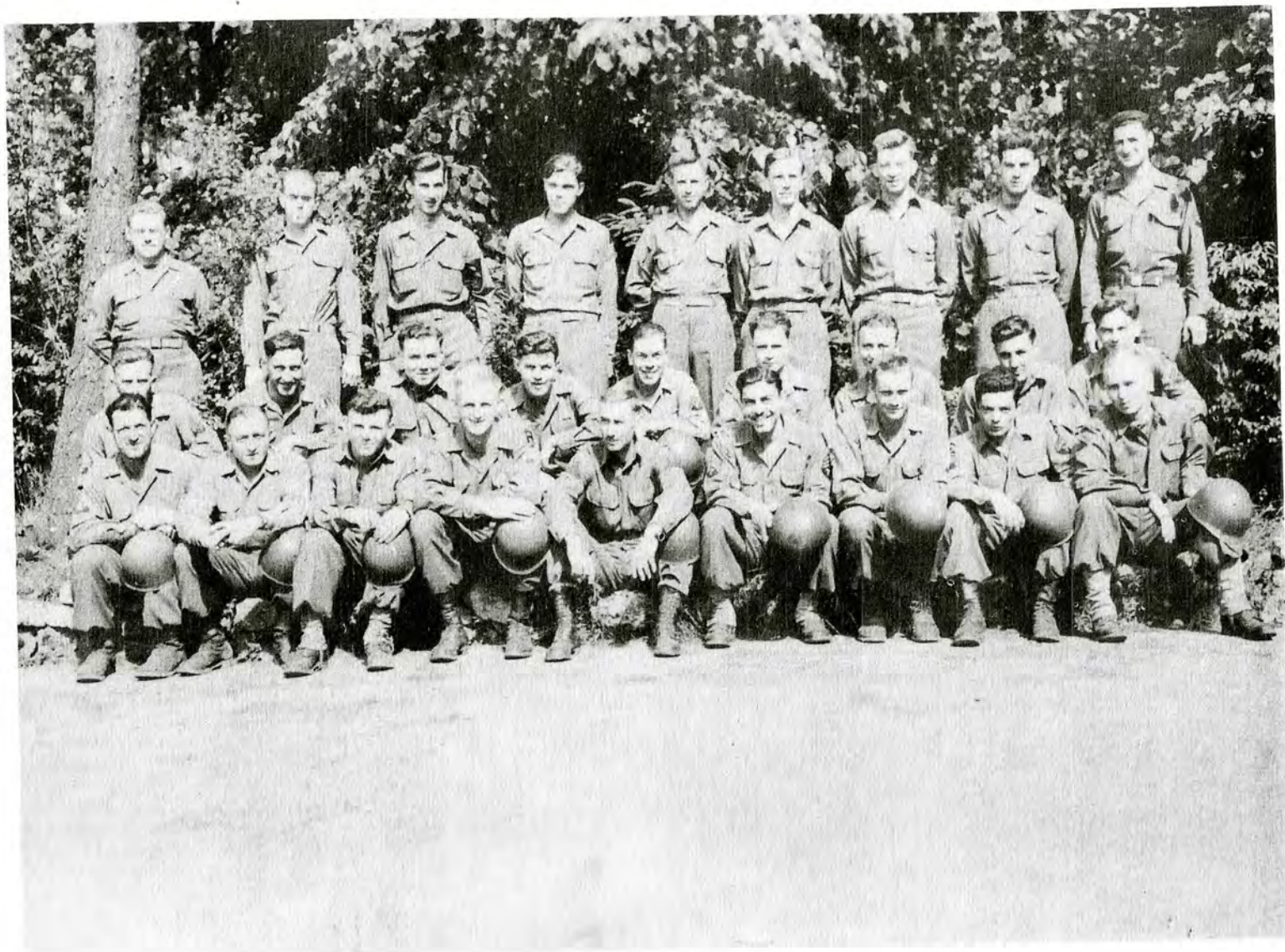
TEAM "12" Co. A, 35TH SIG. CONS. BN. FRONT ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: T/5 J. F. BYRON, PFC. A. GONZALEZ, PFC. A. E. GIBSON, SGT. P. FLOWERS, T/4 E. L. TURNER, PFC. R. H. PAINTER, PFC. H. J. WACKER, JR. LAST ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: PVT. E. J. LEARY, PVT. N. L. BARTON, PFC. H. GILES, T/4 E. HASTON, PFC. C. E. HARDISON



TEAM "3" CO. A, 35TH SIG. CONS. BN. FRONT ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: T/4 J. W. DUPREE, PFC. E. R. BUDKA, S/SGT. C. E. McDONALD, T/5 W. E. HIGHT, T/5 R. L. ROGERS. LAST ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: PFC. E. R. JETT, PFC. E. K. PYLE, T/4 L. L. KEIM, PFC. B. EPSTEIN, PVT. S. B. BRAVERNICK

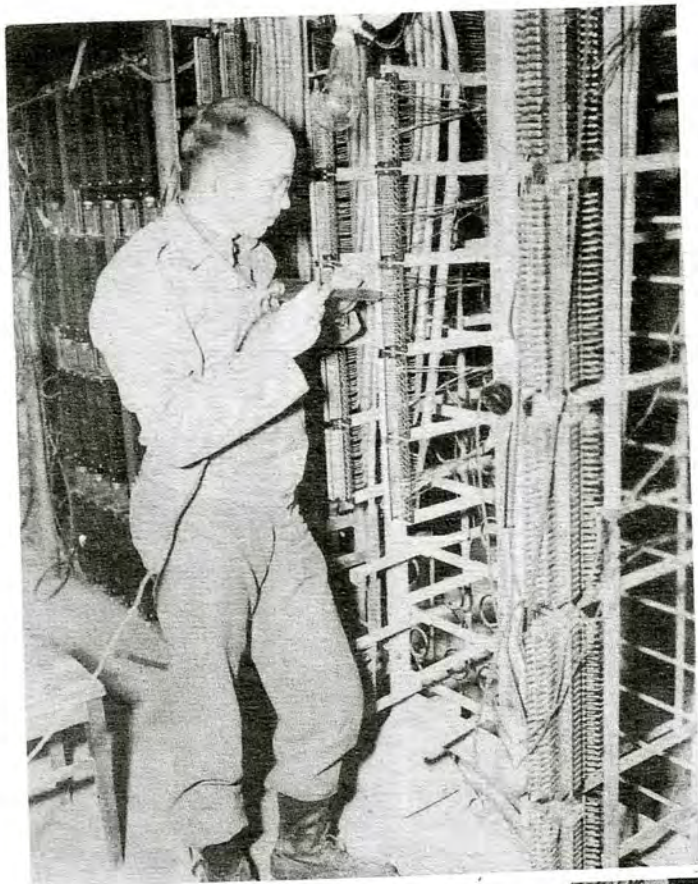


TEAM "7" CO. A, 35TH SIG. CONS. BN. FRONT ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: PFC. F. R. GRAVES, T/5 A. F. KASICA, S/SGT. A. HOLLAND, PFC. L. L. BREWSTER, T/5 W. S. MCGINNIS. LAST ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: T/5 I. J. BEYL, PFC. M. KEEGAN, PFC. J. E. KRZECZOWSKI, T/5 A. WANYA, PFC. J. E. KYGER



TWO "B" COMPANY TEAMS





THESE FOUR VIEWS ARE OF WORK ALONG THE 33 CAR.E. AN ITEM THAT OCCUPIED OUR ATTENTION FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. HERE ARE HARTLEY WITH A TEST BOARD, BERRY WITH THE SOLDERING IRON, AND T/SGT. QUEEN WITH THE HOOPLA.





You'd leave Spa early in the morning. It had rained the night before, and as you rode up the hill to the Bal Moral you could watch the sparkle of morning sunlight shining on the tiny houses and farms in the valley. N-29 took you past General Hodges' house and past the car barns—that combination always seemed incongruous. Just beyond Tiege the road turned and crossed several miles of rolling hills over which were spread little farms.

Probably you had to swerve aside a couple of times as you passed a farmer and his cart. He plodded along beside his horse, and they urged the cart full of steaming manure or sugar beets caked with frozen mud along the shoulder of the road. The farmers all looked alike. After the first few months in Britain you gave up expecting farmers to wear overalls and to look like farmers in the States, and this fellow wore old gray pants and an older darker gray coat that were stiffened from months of wear in the fields. He had a cap pulled low on his head to cover his ears, a muffler about his neck, and he puffed on a rancid looking pipe. His shoes were heavy gray wooden ones that clopped on the stones and slushed in the mud as noisily as the hooves of his horse. As you passed him you thought, "Hey, this guy is a peasant." All of your life you'd heard of peasants, but you hadn't realized before that these farmers were those peasants. Well, they weren't bad off. It's true their houses were just at one end of their barn. But they had warm fires in the kitchens to sit around and cellars with food in them, and there was always a bottle of cognac for special occasions. You thought of plenty of homes in the States that weren't as comfortable.

You drove through Jalhay, and a little Belgique kid ran out and stuck a couple of grubby fingers in a V-salute to you, and the women in the town were busy scrubbing the tiled front steps. Past Jalhay you went through some trees and then came out upon the lake. There was the detour sign, and there was the lion. Rumor has it that there were seven men in the battalion who didn't take a picture of that lion. It couldn't have been many more than seven. You crossed the dam and dropped down through the woods on the hairpin road that finally brought you out by Goe-Bethane.

The road from there was fairly level into Eupen. As you approached that town you became snarled in a string of cars lined up by the ordnance maintenance outfits and the shower point. When you freed yourself from that mess you swung over against the curb and made a turn onto the Malmedy road that led up the hill, nearly clipping the M.P. as you did so.

Through Eupen with its German stores, German signs and people who professed to be anything but Germans you drove. On the other end of town you went past the Victor Rest Camp, under the underpass, past the Master Coal Dump and out into the farms again.

East of Eupen N-28 and N-29 were joined. Together they made a narrow road that hugged the street car tracks in to Aachen. Great numbers of lumbering engineer trucks and tank retrievers shuttled back and forth along this road, and on each tree and pole along the route were signs reading, "Keep Moving or Get Off the Road." You zig-zagged through Eynatten and passed the brick yard to come to the dragon's teeth that marked the international boundary. That first crossing you made onto "sacred German soil" was something of a thrill, but after a while it became so commonplace that the only thing that made you aware of the fact that you were crossing into Germany was the rutted and bumpy stretch of road where the dragon's teeth obstacles had been blown up.

You passed the customs house and drove around the roundabout. The road dipped into a mile of dark trees, and then just past that old white ambulance you came out of them near some sort of restaurant that a 1st Division outfit had used for a motor pool. Past that there was the street car that the engineers had loaded with dynamite and had attempted to push down into the town. Across its sides were various eloquently expressed opinions, and the car was labelled "V-12." Near the street car there were a couple of dead horses sprawling and smelling.

You drove on, turning at a Jayhawk MSR sign, twisting and writhing through the rubble that had once been Aachen. You passed the booby trapped Kraut soldier who lay on his face on the sidewalk, passed the bahnhof, under the underpass and turned left at the M. P. Past the banks and art stores and restaurants where tattered remnants of plastic cloth flapped disconsolately in the gaping windows, the blocks of classic stone facades gouged and beaten by shells and bombs, the yellow arrows and LSR's painted over basement windows, you drove through the gateway into the yard at the central office.

Some lieutenant from the 17th was there when you pulled in. Lt. Royson, who had followed you in Kingery's jeep, went inside with him, and the rest of the men piled out and descended to the vault under the building. That left you with your truck. You got out conscientiously gave a couple of tires a good 55-pound kick to see that they were still inflated. Having completed the morning's first echelon maintenance, there was time to look around the yard.

Kingery said that a guy at the T.P. had told him that one of the M.P.s had found two lugers and a P-38 in a nearby house. Since there was nothing else to do until the men were through working inside you slung the Tommy gun over a shoulder and walked through the gate and around the corner to a store that looked promising. It was hard to tell what sort of place it had been. There were a few boxes of ATA Schur powder lying about on the floor, but there must have been some of that soap in every building in Germany. Over in a corner of the store that had served as an office there was a little desk cluttered with papers. On the shelf above it were ten or twelve file boxes crammed with papers, all filed away. Everywhere there were papers—receipts, letters, bills, memos. The floor was hidden under papers and overturned chairs and stools. On the table by the desk a dusty telephone lay on its side, and above it on the wall a picture of Hitler hung at a crazy angle. There was a quiet smell of ruin everywhere that was oppressive.

The door at the rear of the shop obviously led to some living quarters; they always did. You edged over to it and kicked it open. That was stupid. If it had been booby trapped it probably would have blown off your leg anyway. This was the living room. There were overstuffed chairs and a sofa. The windows were out, and the wind had blown in dirt and the acrid smell of charred wood that had been rained on and the sickly smell of wet mortar and plaster and all of the others that make up the stench of rotting ruins of a dead city. The pictures on the wall hung lopsidedly. On one wall there was a huge and gaudy picture of Christ with a bleeding heart. On the next wall was another picture of Hitler, in some sort of riding costume this time. On a third wall was a photograph of four Wehrmacht soldiers, some members of the family, no doubt. There was a big book on a sort of sideboard. Without opening it you knew that it would be a book of pictures of the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. You pulled a drawer out of the sideboard, forgetting to step aside this time, and a shower of snapshots fell to the floor. They were of old men with beards looking austere and forbidding, soldiers again, and many were of three very plump girls in very tight bathing suits at some beach. One of these you slipped into a pocket. The other drawer contained glasses, nut picks and two old pairs of spectacles and a litter of buttons and strings. There were some books, but you couldn't even tell what they were about.

Opening off the living room were the other rooms of the house. The bathroom was dark and the toilet had too long been left unattended. The bedroom was a scene of the utmost confusion. Drawers had been jerked out of the dresser and their contents strewn across the room. The blankets lay on the floor, and the huge red mattress stretched bare between the head and foot boards. Everything in the room was damp and musty, and there were more letters lying about. Under the window lay a pink girdle, and beside it some crumpled trousers were spattered with mud. There was a top hat on a peg, and beside it was a crucifix. Hung in a ponderous frame was a picture of a very old man and woman. The bedroom yielded no loot at all.

The kitchen was also dark and dingy. Another box of ATA powder was overturned on the drainboard, and a cabinet door was open to show a few pots. The drawers offered only a small collection of knives with broken handles and blades that bent too easily. A dusty calendar said that it was Mittwoch. A little pantry opened off the kitchen. With your TL-122 you could pick out rows of bottled fruits. Some of the jars had been knocked off the shelves to break and make slimy puddles of half congealed syrup on the floor, and grayish green mould had started to form on them. You were about to leave when your flashlight picked out a glitter tucked away in a corner. The glitter was a dagger, an elaborate Hitler Youth's dagger with "Godt Mitt Uns" engraved on the blade.

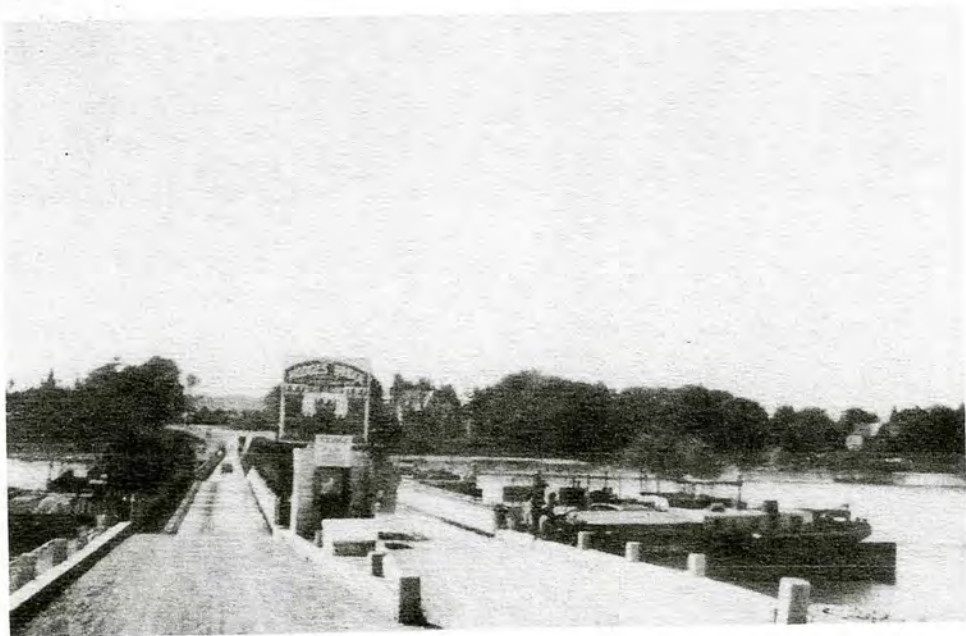
It wasn't a luger, by any means, but it was a souvenir. So you put it in your pocket and went back to the central office. Col. Brooke and Major White and Capt. Crigler were there now. They usually dropped around just as it was time to quit to eat. You opened a K-ration and cut the "Processed American Cheese with Bacon" with the Hitler Youth's dagger. The "Synthetic Lemon Crystals" you threw away.





**KEEP IT
COVERED**
if you want to
SAVE IT!

CAMOUFLAGE



THE HODGES BRIDGE

TURNED
TOWNS
LIKE
THIS



INTO HEAPS
LIKE THIS





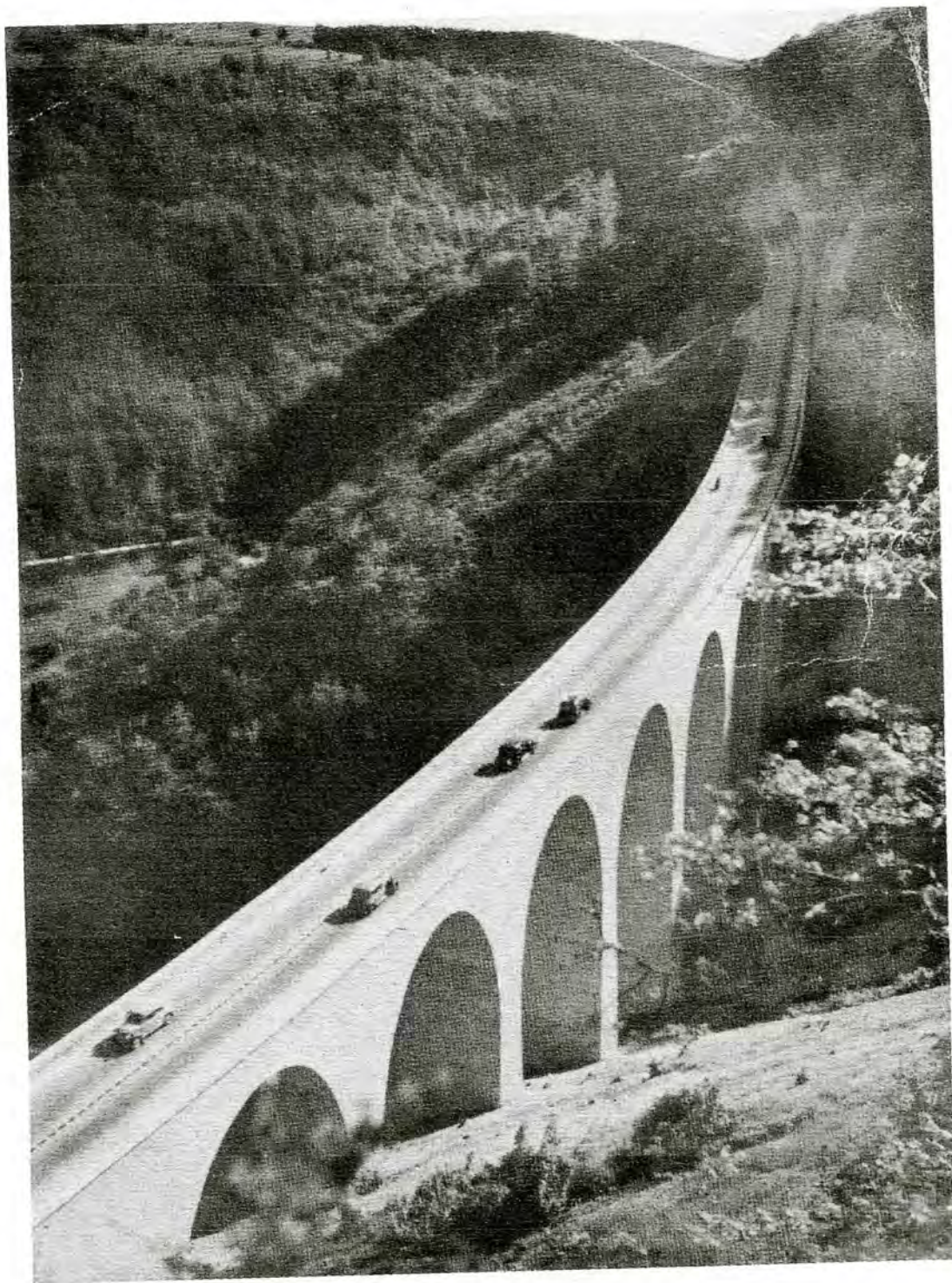
D. P.'s

RUBBLE





When the final phase came that carried us from Aachen to Weimar, the outfit became more widely separated than ever before. The road from Aachen to Weimar was crowded with refugees plodding westward, dirty, weary, liberated slaves who had once been proud and erect men. There were mounds of rubble that had once been towns. There were blocks of stinking, starved, hideous caricatures of human bodies at Nordhausen and Buchenwald. We'll never forget a Belgique standing over a rotting, contorted body, shriveled tight from starvation, sobbing hysterically, "Ici Belge." That was the scenery along the autobahn from Aachen to Weimar.





TYPICAL GERMAN BARRACKS

BAF





BARRACKS AT WEIMAR





THERE WERE GOOD BALL GAMES AT WEIMAR



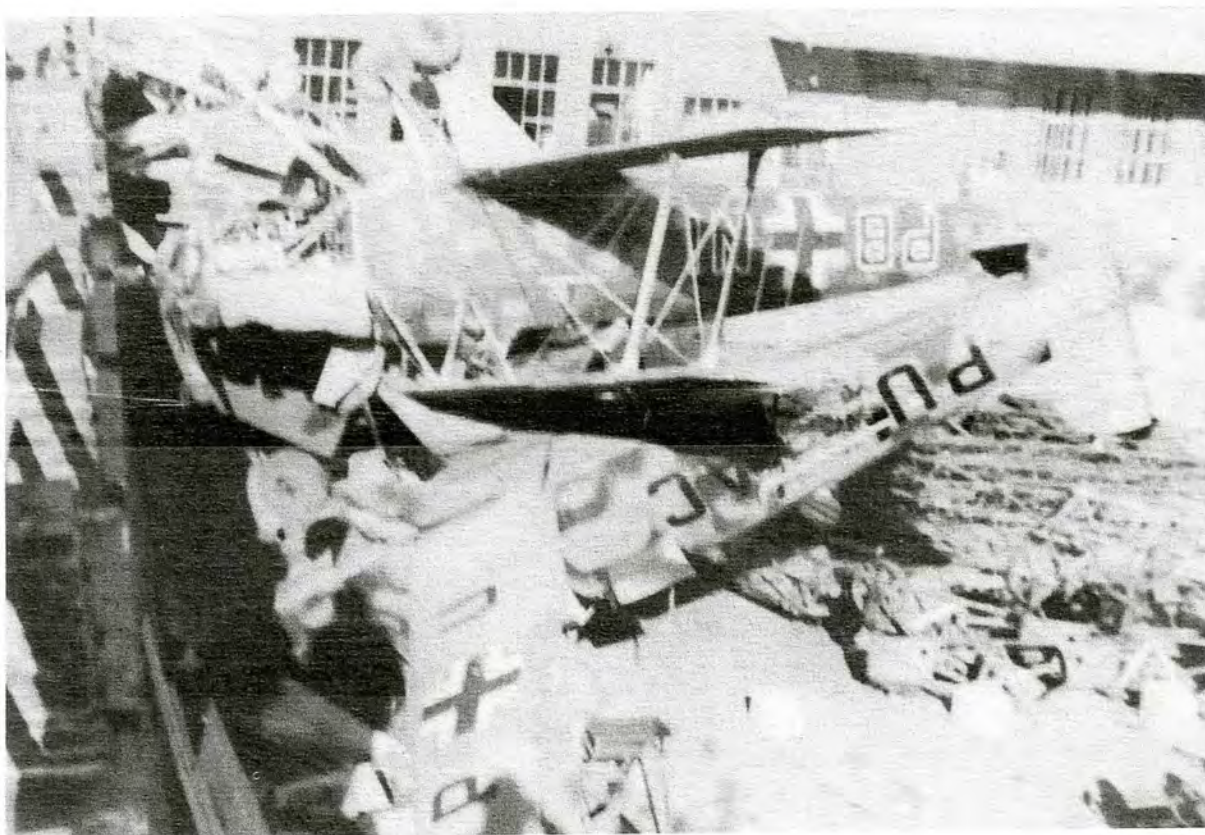


CAPT. HALICKI
AND LT. STEWART
REACH FOR VOLLEY BALL





MOTOR POOL AT WEIMAR



PARTS ROOM AT WEIMAR

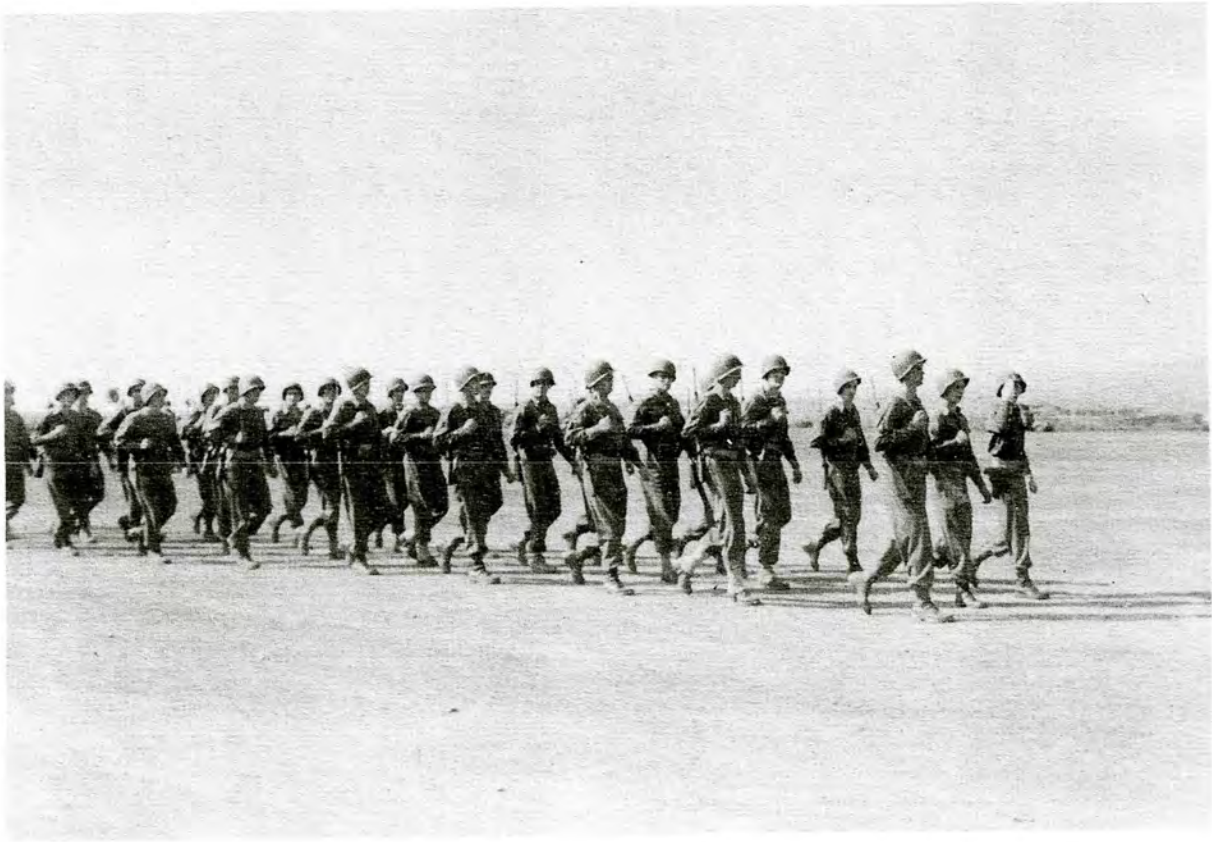


COL. WILLIAMS AWARDED BRONZE STARS TO T/SGT. DONALDSON
AND M/SGT. DODGE





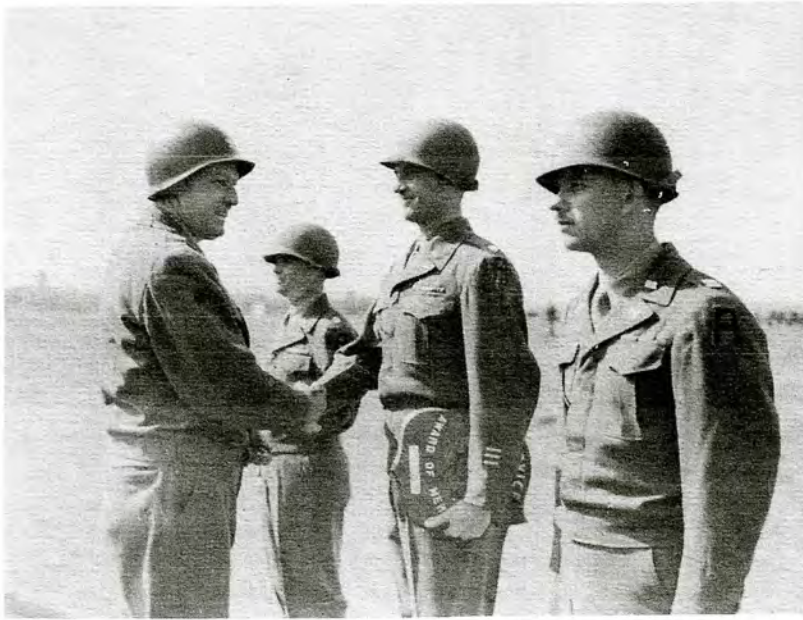
CAPT. PEACOCK LEADS HEADQUARTERS COMPANY AND LT. FALDER-
MEYER GIVES A SALUTE FOR B COMPANY





LT. BUICE READ ORDERS AND COLONEL WILLIAMS REVIEWED THE
BATTALION AT WEIMAR

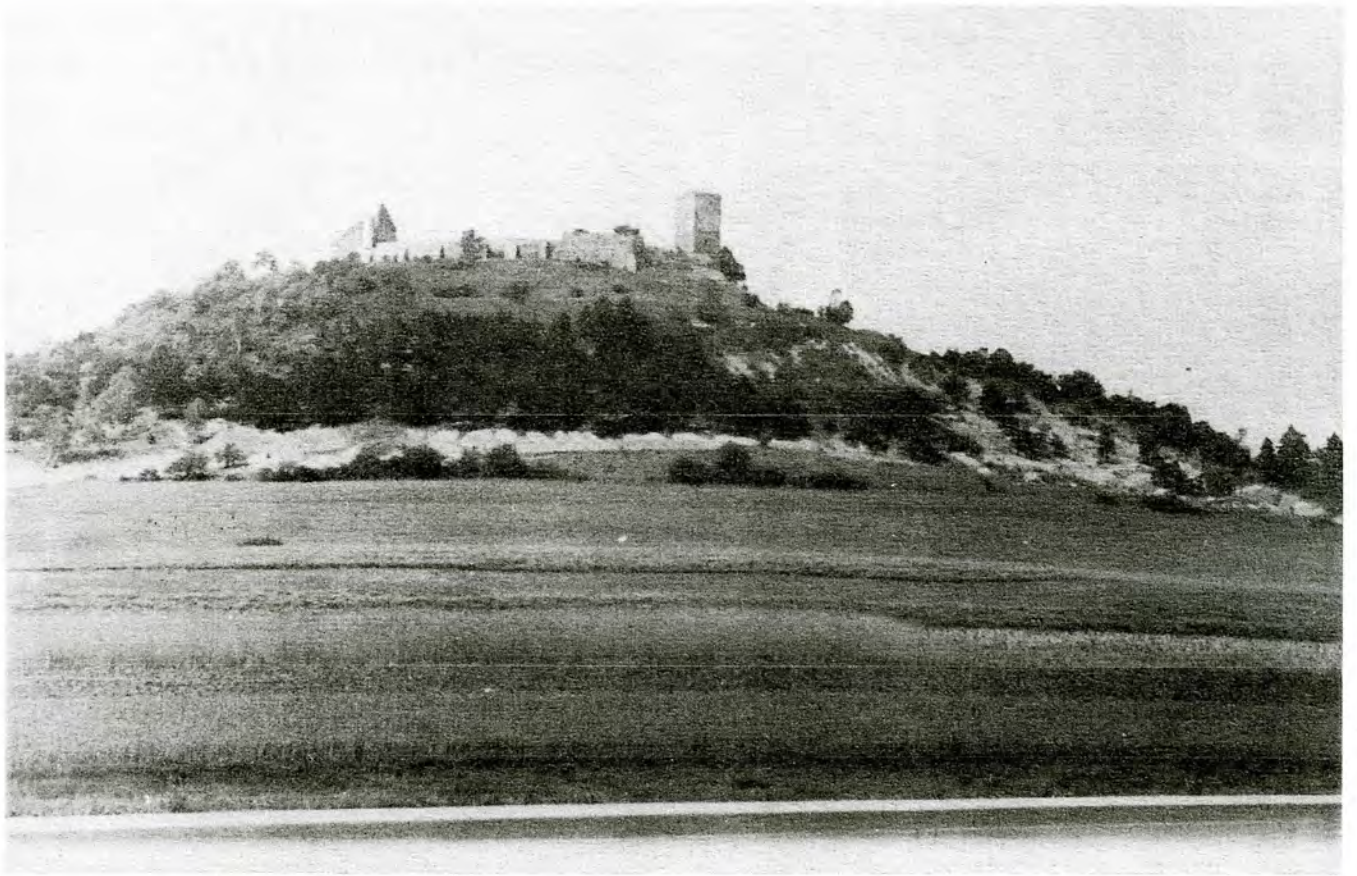




AND PRESENTED A MERIT-
ORIOUS SERVICE UNIT
AWARD TO THE BATTALION

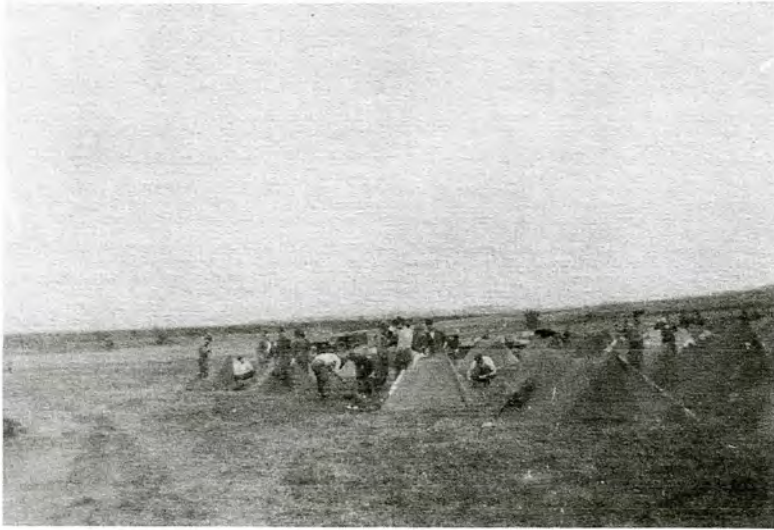
AND BRONZE STARS TO
M/SGTS. AKLUS, DANLEY
AND NASTA





WE LEFT WEIMAR AND THE GERMAN SCENERY





WE LEARNED AGAIN HOW
TO FORM SHELTER HALVES
TO THE RIGHT

AND HOW TO TRAVEL
IN CONVOY





WE ATE ALONG THE WAY





AND DISPOSED OF OUR
LOOT AT FABULOUS PRICES
TO THE FRENCH. NOTE THE
BRUNETTE.





AND DISPOSED OF OUR
LOOT AT FABULOUS PRICES
TO THE FRENCH. NOTE THE
BRUNETTE.





AT CAMP LUCKY STRIKE





WE SWEATED OUT LINES



WE LEFT LUCKY STRIKE AND
SAILED FROM LE HAVRE ON
THE MONTICELLO





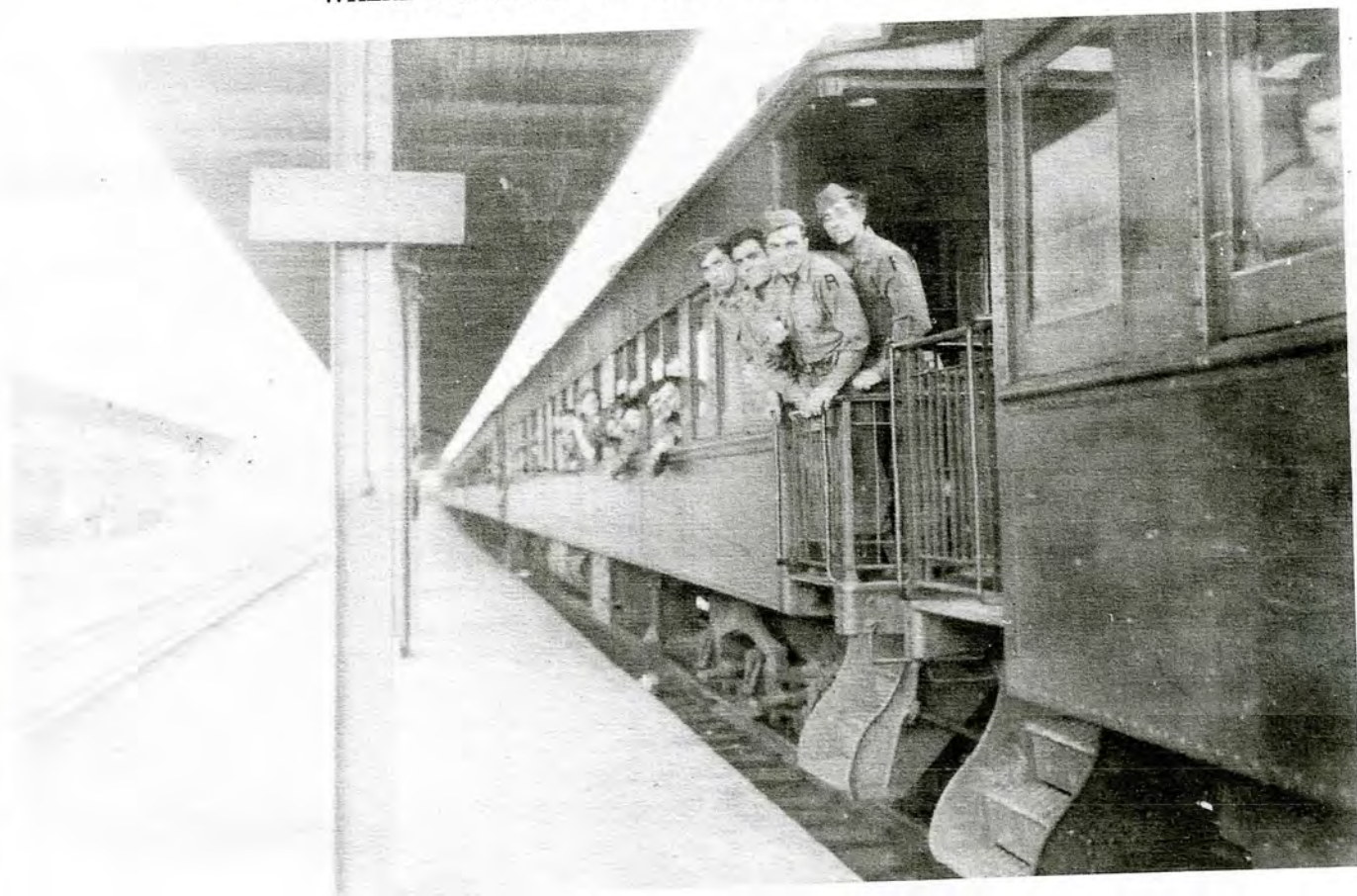
WE LANDED AT PIER 16 ON
STATEN ISLAND



AND TOOK A FERRY PAST
BEDLOE'S ISLAND TO
JERSEY CITY



WHERE WE CAUGHT A TRAIN FOR CAMP KILMER





WE HAD A MAIL CALL AND HEADED FOR HOME



Well, when the war in Europe ended we had already stopped. We sat at Weimar and reorganized under a new T/O, and Capt. Halicki was sent down to Czechoslovakia to make Lt. Hallam and his teams come back. Master was returned to the States leaving us attached to the Ninth Army. Everything that followed seemed to lack the luster of the previous year's experiences. We turned in our equipment without much trouble, drove to Lucky Strike, and sweated out a boat for home. Even that went comparatively smoothly. The trip back on the Monticello was as good as the trip on the Argentina was bad.

In New York Harbor we were met by WACs and a band playing the One O'Clock Jump. The sun obligingly dropped low behind Bedloe Island and made a beautiful background for the statue we'd been wanting to see for four overseas stripes.

At Camp Kilmer we got suntans and troop train reservations for home. The thirty days at home were swell and too brief. Everyone tried not to think of what it was going to be like in Japan on the way back to the outfit at Camp Polk.

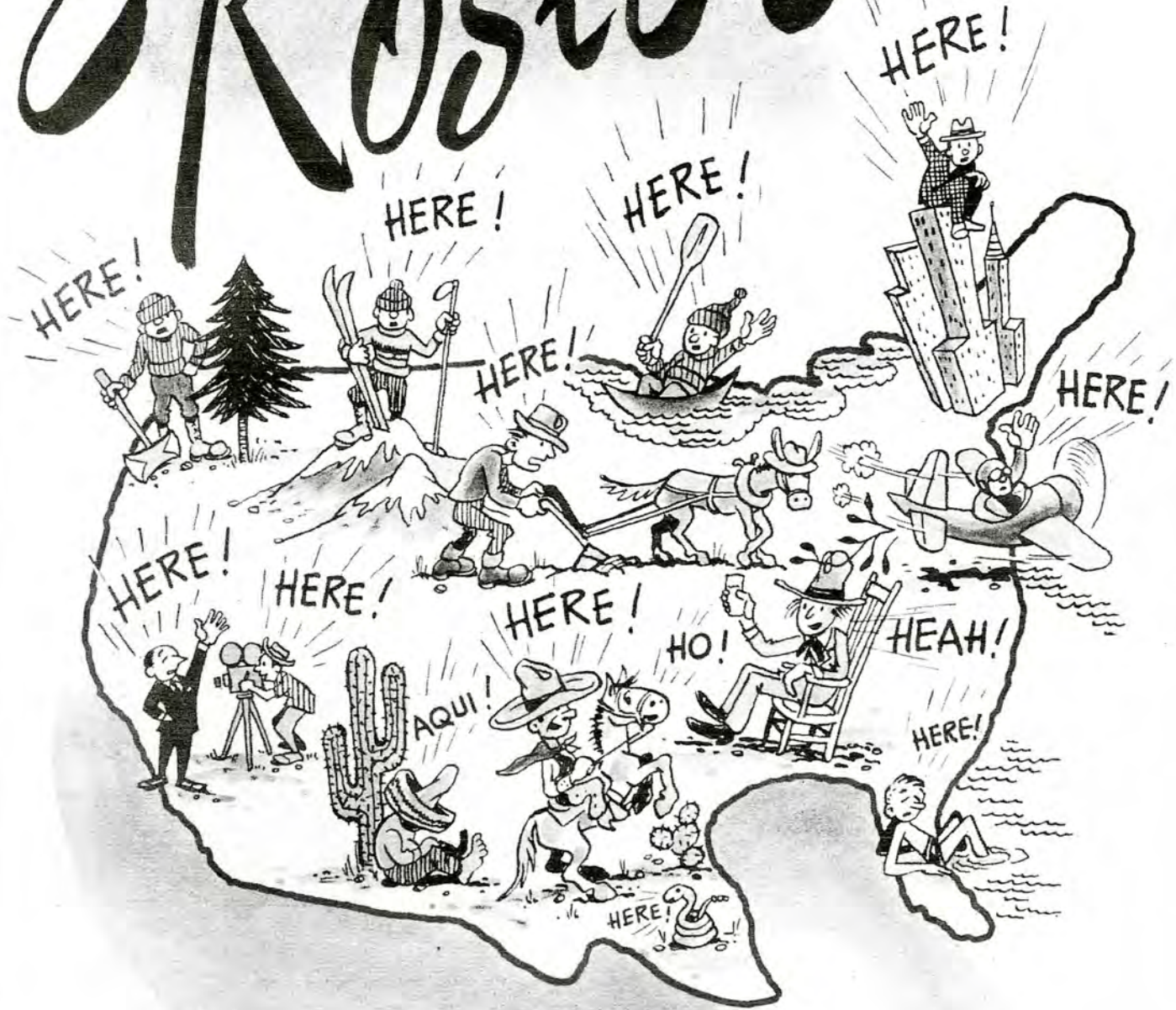
At Polk we met the 32nd Headquarters, a Louisiana version of U.T.C., we were told that we would receive training in spiral-four and field wire, we sweated, and we looked at the countryside—The Pig Trail Inn, The Green Frog Cafe, The Jitney Jungle, dead armadillos on the roads, Coca-Cola machines, and wild hogs.

V-J Day came, and the post complement and the prisoners of war took the day off. But we practiced laying spiral-four and field wire. Then a step up came in the discharging of high point men. Points were announced for officers. Points were lowered. The unit was advised that it was to be inactivated. All enlisted men were transferred out immediately. Finally everyone had been either discharged or transferred to another outfit, and on the 5th of October the outfit died to be buried in the Adjutant General's files. On the next day Lieutenants Buice, Beene, Vaupel and Dinen boarded the train at Leesville. At Shreveport between trains they stopped in a bar and quietly cried into their beers. This was probably the last stand of the 35th.



HE

Roster



Capt. Oscar Genser 3286 Buena Vista Detroit 6, Michigan	Capt. Furman K. Stanley c/o New Jersey Bell 540 Broad Street Newark, New Jersey	Newman D. Fertig Mill Creek, West Virginia	Carl I. Zook Mifflintown, Pennsylvania
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Major Henry R. Crigler c/o New Jersey Bell 540 Broad Street Newark, New Jersey	Raymundo H. Gonzalez Route 3 Tulare, California	Charles J. Dunn 1049 Cherry Street Morristown, Pennsylvania	Gordon J. Robblee 17 Irving Place Passaic, New Jersey
Lt. Col. John J. Mitchell c/o New Jersey Bell 540 Broad Street Newark, New Jersey	John R. Hand 915 North Bentalou Street Baltimore, Maryland	Ben Fraley, Jr. Prestonsburg, Kentucky	Reinhardt H. Kreuger 15 Fobes Street Portland, Maine
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Dewitt W. VanAlstine Route 4 Corning, New York	Jose O. Murillo 462 Second Street Chino, California	Lever R. Smith Tribune, Kentucky	Craig H. Culley 103 West Washington Street Medicine Lodge, Kansas

James W. Troyer 11 East 4th Street Wilmington, Delaware	John H. Shores 105 Church Street, S. Williamsport, Pennsylvania	Stanley W. Powers Roseland, Minnesota	Dewey O. Brewer Fox, Virginia
Fred S. Moore Maple Avenue Hudson, New York	Donald B. Van Brunt 379 Sterling Place Long Branch, New Jersey	William E. Young 334 15th Street Brooklyn, New York	Jessie H. Dennis 604 Hopper Street Kennett, Missouri
Rolland A. Williamson 504 Boyd Street Russell, Kentucky	George L. Warner, Jr. 70 Pelham Avenue Schoolfield, Virginia	Howard H. Palmer 76 Clinton Avenue Newark, New Jersey	Joseph Guillen Sanford, Kansas
Edward C. Alumbaugh Alumbaugh, Kentucky	Bedford A. Wood Route 5 Monticello, Indiana	Joel Aleksander 1869 Pandora Los Angeles 25, California	Fred Rindlisbacher Jultan, Washington
Henry D. Clark 71 West Spruce Street Washington, Pennsylvania	Peter Caudillo 731 Wallace Street Sterling, Illinois	Lawrence E. Kessler 1034 St. Peter Street Indianapolis, Indiana	Delmer L. Glass Southport, Florida
Tillman W. Ervin Ft. Mill, South Carolina	George Contos 201 W. Aurora Street Ironwood, Michigan	George C. Leslie 75 Cabrini Blvd. New York City, New York	Alvah R. Dudley, Jr. 2250 Orville Avenue Kansas City, Kansas
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Raymond A. Fritsch 122 Howard Avenue Lancaster, Pennsylvania	Carl H. Davis Warriors Mark, Pennsylvania	Brady Turner 326 F Street Thomaston, Georgia	Merrill J. Crane Salina, Utah
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Randolph M. Long Route 1 Richmond, Kentucky	George F. Green Newberry, Michigan	Rufus L. Hunter Route 1-A Ramsdur, North Carolina	Stephen Cuiba 68 Canal Street Jersey City, New Jersey
James J. McGowan 68 Oak Street Hyde Park, Massachusetts	William W. Harris 604 S. 5th Street Easley, South Carolina	Lester W. Dorksen 3128 Trowbridge Avenue Cleveland, Ohio	Melvin A. Hill Bosler, Wyoming
George A. Realmuto Highland, New York	Maurice O. Laplante 38 Foliette Street Manchester, New Hampshire	Ernest G. Denison 18 North Main Street Windsor, Vermont	George E. Bowman 320 South Walnut Street Pleasant Hill, Missouri
Wadsworth V. Reynolds 42 Davis Avenue White Plains, New York	William P. Miskill 4011 Swells Point Road Norfolk, Virginia	Michael Brausch 82 Pine Street Brooklyn, New York	Richard W. Berry 209 Highland Court Apt. Spartanburg, South Carolina
Salvatore Rotundo 147-19 105th Avenue Jamaica, New York	Johnnie B. Moody Route 1 Wendell, North Carolina	John F. Strzemppek 212 Lyman Street Holyoke, Massachusetts	James E. Baker 1 Selma Street Montevallo, Alabama
Michael Solon 311 Packer Street West Avoca, Pennsylvania	Edgar E. Quenneville 4 Ralph Avenue S. Hadley Falls, Massachusetts	Jessie O. Moore Route 1 Lake Creek, Texas	Charles E. Barland Hermanville, Mississippi
Dick B. Bretveld Route 2 Momence, Illinois	Francis W. Van Dusen 4301½ Woodland Street Kansas City, Missouri	William H. Smith, Jr. Summerville, South Carolina	Roy E. Bisnett Route 1 Broughton, Kansas
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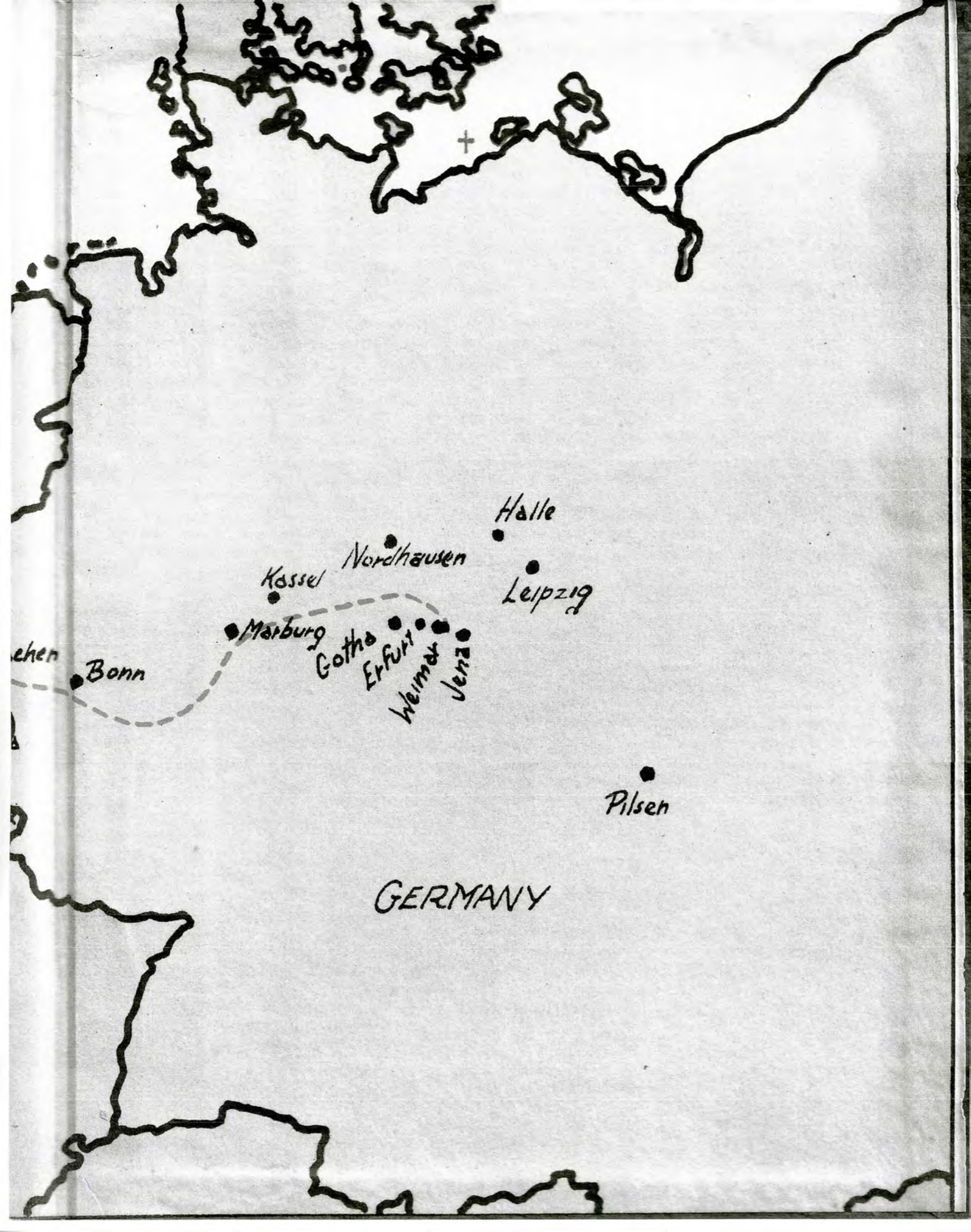
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