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3rd Division headquarters, Forward

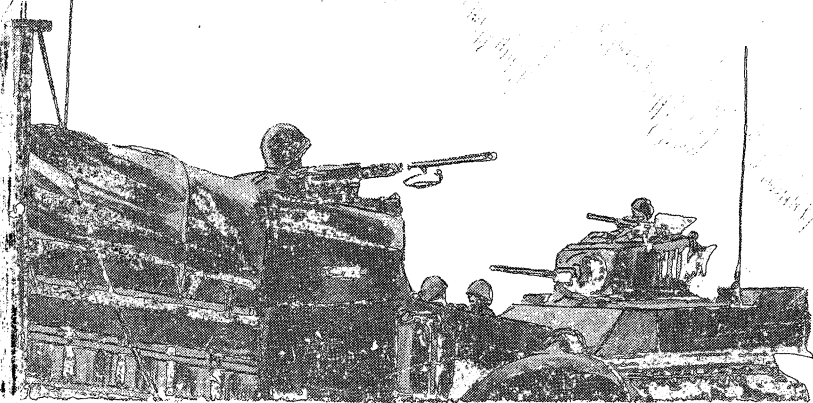
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Division HQ.

THIRD ARMORED DIVISION

Forward Echelon
and
Division Headquarters
Company



APRIL 15, 1945
MAY 8, 1945



DIVISION HEADQUARTERS

Forward Echelon and Headquarters Co

By Sgt Frank Woolner

FOREWORD

The part that Forward Echelon and Headquarters Company played in the big picture of the "Spearhead" from activation to final victory has been told in the narrative history of the division as a whole. Therefore, this summation only intends to fill in those points of interest which will be of concern to members of the Forward Echelon and the Company. These highlights of a four-year odyssey are necessarily brief. They are, however, extensively supplemented by photo coverage.

The story of Forward Echelon and Headquarters Company, 3rd Armored Division, is that of the "Spearhead" from its activation at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana, in 1941, to VE Day in Europe, in 1945. It is a narrative of service and even of heroism in action—although action was not supposed to be the concern of headquarters personnel. In the great drives through France and Belgium and Germany in 1944, however, there were no non-combatants in the 3rd Armored Division. Every soldier was a fighting man in the true sense of the word, and those of Forward Echelon and Headquarters Company were no exception. At Mons, Belgium, in fact, they earned the highest honor America awards to a unit for collective valor: the Distinguished Unit Citation.

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, was activated at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana, on April 15, 1941, by a cadre of 195 enlisted men and six officers drawn from the 2nd Armored Division at Fort Benning, Georgia. Major C. F. Knoblock was the first Headquarters Commandant, and Captain M. E. Kaiser the first Company Commander. The function of the company then, and throughout its career, was mainly to render aid and assistance to the various administrative and tactical branches of the division command. The men of the company were trained thoroughly and there was no armored force weapon with which they were not familiar.

In September, 1941, a large percentage of the original company became a cadre for the activation of the 5th Armored Division. Lt. Willard N. Barr then became commanding officer of the 3rd Armored Division Headquarters Company.

With the rest of the "Spearhead" Division, which was then called the "Bayou Blitz," a nickname coined by Major Haynes W. Dugan—the personnel of Headquarters and Headquarters Company trained at Camp Polk, Louisiana; Desert Center, California; at Camp Pickett, Virginia; and at the Indiantown Gap Military Reservation, Penn-

sylvania. The Company staged for overseas shipment at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, and, early in September, boarded the motor ship, JOHN ERRICKSON, at New York.

Meanwhile, the division's advance detachment, commanded by Brigadier General John J. Bohn, had arrived in England. Headquarters and Headquarters Company was represented by Lt. Colonel Andrew Barr, Lt. Colonel Wesley A. Sweat, Lt. Colonel Frank G. Trew, Major Raymond Knox, Captain Louis J. Staskiel, Captain Ward D. Waits, and WOJG Richard "Chick" Davies. Enlisted representatives were T/Sgt. James Cohen, T/Sgt. Jack Jones, S/Sgt. Bill Baker, T/4 Abe Westrieck, and T/5 Glen Davison.

The officers and men of the advance detachment settled at Devizes and immediately began to prepare for the arrival of the rest of the division. There were countless inspections to be made, overlays drawn, and last minute adjustments in every area assigned to the various units. During their off-duty time, Glen "Old Reprobate" Davison, Jimmy Cohen, Jack Jones, Abe Westrieck, and Bill Baker located a few pubs and a number of Land Army girls. There were no other armored division soldiers in Devizes, or in the other towns which later became haunts of the 3rd. MP's were infrequently seen, and scotch was plentiful. The advance party, it is rumored, "never had it so good."

September 15, 1943, was the third anniversary of the historic battle for Britain. On that date, in 1940, Hitler's Luftwaffe screamed to the peak of its vicious attack on England, faltered, and failed to gain the unconditional surrender it had anticipated. Now, three years later, American soldiers of the 3rd Armored Division landed on this same island to swell the ranks of new world troops then gathering for the forthcoming assault in Europe. The JOHN ERRICKSON docked at Liverpool. Troops of the various commands boarded Britain's tiny, shrill trains for their new camps. Late in the

night, during the stygian blackout, Headquarters and Headquarters Company reached its final rail destination at Wincanton, Somerset. Troops found the advance party waiting for them with a fleet of 2½-ton trucks.

After a five mile drive, the travel-weary men of the command piled out, still in complete ignorance of their surroundings or location. Overhead, the thin, nervous searchlights of Britain darted across the black sky. Otherwise there was no gleam of light at all—and the chill of wartime was very close to each soldier's heart.

A hot meal, prepared by units of the 102nd Cavalry Regiment, helped to dissipate that feeling somewhat but, a little later, after stumbling through the inky darkness to a strange Nissen hut encampment and looking askance at double-decker wooden cots—without springs or mattresses save a straw pallet which looked suspiciously like a burlap bag filled with hay, the headquarters men began to understand a statement they had learned from the Cavalry Joes. "It's rough," they muttered. "It's rough in the ETO!"

Morning, however, brought a pleasant surprise. Headquarters and Headquarters Company was stationed at Redlynch, a great estate which had formerly been the home of the Lady Suffolk. GI's tumbled out of Nissen huts to find that they were billeted in a place of breath-taking beauty. The main road led to two huge stone buildings and a scattering of smaller structures. Paved lanes, winding and picturesque with bordering box and holly, were shaded by unbelievable high beech, maple, and evergreen trees. The view from the terrace was really superb. A wide, unbroken lawn swept down nearly one quarter of a mile to the edge of a jewel-like lake. Beyond the sparkling water, green forested hills were molded in soft echelon against the horizon.

Redlynch House was a compliment to the rich landscape in which it rested. The Old English architecture, wide, high ceilings and royal oak panelling, combined beauty with practicability. Although the house was steam heated, almost every room had a fireplace. Excellent lighting, and the plush comfort which goes with modern fittings, was fully appreciated by officers and men of Forward Echelon. In some respects, such as the appointments of the "water closets," the Americans were pop-eyed with amazement. Those cans were truly magnificent! Each toilet was built for solid comfort: the one in General Watson's suite of rooms actually resembled a throne. No doubt about it, old England still had a few refinements to show to the Yanks.

The stable was another point of interest. Somebody said that the three story structure looked more like a city hall than what it was intended to be.

The stalls were in keeping with the rest of building. Floored in bright tile, walled in oak, they were spotless. The mangers were of porcelain. Forward Echelon's medical section slept in the stable and didn't feel at all put out about it.

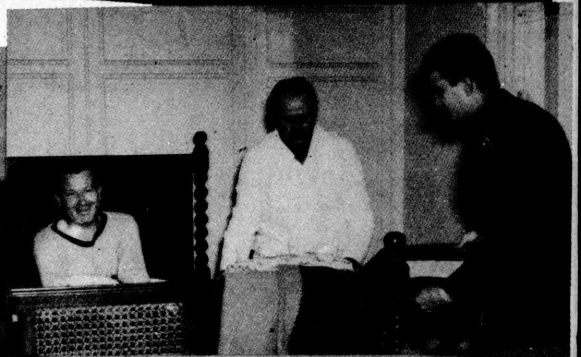
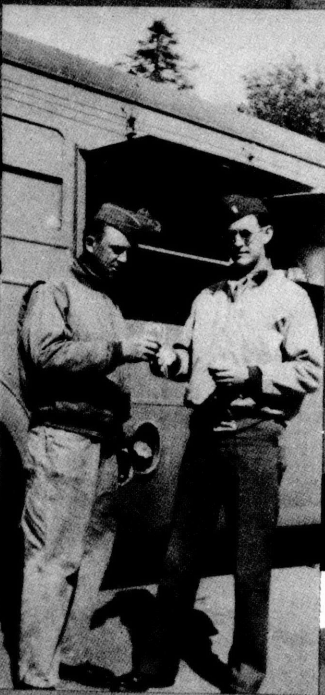
At Redlynch, officers slept in the mansion and enlisted men were quartered in the outlying Nissen huts. The huts were—well, they were Nissen huts! Most of the men claimed that seagulls could fly through the cracks along with the chill wind of England. There were lots of mice, but they weren't especially troublesome—unless you liked to keep a Hershey bar or two lying within easy reach. In that case it was always a toss-up to see who'd get the chocolate first—you or the mice. The things were a nuisance if you didn't clean out your barracks bag periodically. Cpl. Marvin "The Mad Russian" Mischnick, excavated his duffle bag one evening and came up with a whole nest of rodents—quads too!

The first glimpse of England was a favorable one. September weather was not exceptionally wet—for Britain. It only rained four or five days a week. Bruton was the nearest village and it was here that men and officers of Forward Echelon and Headquarters Company made their first English friends. Bruton was a typical little town of southern England: there were thatched roofs and mossy stone buildings steeped in the legend and tradition of centuries. One could well believe that it had not changed in the last 200 years. Its narrow, winding streets were banked with the quaintest of old English buildings. There were roses blooming in the green plots of ground before each small cottage, and victory gardens here were much the same as those at home. (If victory had actually depended upon them—we'd have been sunk!)

It didn't take GI's long to focus their attention on several pubs, and, for the first time in their history, these little, panelled and unpretentious places roared with the laughter and songs of Americans enjoying themselves. The "Castle" was almost entirely an enlisted man's haunt, while both officers and men frequented the "Blue Ball," and the "Windmill." In the little village, WOJG Ward A. Davis, promptly earned the title "Mayor of Bruton."

Alfred's Tower, a slender, three sided structure, dominated a low lying range of hills in the near distance. It seemed to beckon to GI's of the command, and it wasn't long before everyone had made the pilgrimage and climbed the long, winding staircase to the top. The wizened caretaker, "Old John," was a veteran of the last war, and he loved the Yanks, chiefly because they were soldiers. He'd talk your leg off, but he was courteous and hospitable too.

Stourton Estate was another pleasant spot to visit. Its allure was a small and very beautiful lake



which nestled in a setting of trees and flowers brought from every part of the world. The rhododendrons at Stourton were magnificent, and there were always a few Land Army girls or WAAF's to guide American soldiers—as if they needed guiding!

For those who preferred fishing, the pond at Stourton was well stocked with perch. A species of bamboo grew along the water's edge and so it was a simple matter to cut a fishing pole on the spot and go right to work catching a creel full (musette bag) of beauties.

As winter claimed the little sunshine still allotted to England, troops of Headquarters Company found the need for a day room. In the stable was a carriage room which might do. A crew of volunteers went to work and remodeled it into a bright, modern lounge. Lou Jones, Jimmy Shedd, Dan Sousa, and several others pitched in under the direction of Glen Davison, an ex civilian decorator. The men built furniture, painted walls and hung pictures and drapes. The dayroom was then inaugurated with a riotously successful house warming party.

At Redlynch, the division held open house on October 10, and played host to the leading lights of Bruton and vicinity. Democratic Americans invited everybody, royalty and commoners, evacuees and friends from every walk of life and conflicting politics. Englishmen, who took these things more seriously than Americans, were mildly surprised, but the party was a success.

Officers and men of Forward Echelon and Headquarters Company all took part in the maneuvers over chilly Salisbury Plain during the winter of 1943-44. Actually, these training expeditions were more uncomfortable than combat later in 1944 and in 1945. Of course there was the one big difference—out on the downs there was no "incoming mail."

During this period of intensive training, personnel swaps were made with various British armored divisions. Sgt. Don Mahoney visited one "Limey" outfit and came back with nothing but praise. He was especially intrigued by the fact that every non-commissioned officer had a "bat-man," or orderly. Mahoney swore that the "bat-man" brought him his tea each morning and that he ate breakfast in bed.

Between maneuvers, the men were issued passes to London, Bournemouth, Bath, and other towns nearby. Bath was a favorite 3rd Armored Division haunt, although London was a "must" on the list of places to go. It was rumored that Joe Cohen tried to buy a newspaper from one of the old hawkers on a corner in Picadilly Circus. He couldn't do it—the old "news-vender" had only one paper!

Sunday, December 7, was British Legion Remembrance Day. General Watson was invited to make the principle address, but was prevented from attending because of a bad cold. Colonel John A. Smith, Jr., Chief of Staff, made the speech instead, and was very much appreciated by his audience. The ceremony centered around the laying of a wreath on a cenotaph on the grounds of the church at Bruton. British veterans of World War I, bedecked with ribbons, stood at attention while the bugler played "The Last Post." Following the wreath laying, a religious ceremony was held in the church, with the Vicar, the Reverend Lloyd-Oswell giving the presentation. Popular division chaplain, Lt. Colonel Paul Maurer then delivered the sermon.

Headquarters and Headquarters Company celebrated Christmas in England by giving a party for the children of Bruton. The men saved their candy rations for weeks before the big day and then piled them all up in a huge box for distribution by Santa Claus. Saint Nick? Why, Paglugh, of course; he was built for the job!

Probably one of the most touching gestures of the Christmas holiday was the presentation to St. Louis Orphanage, at Frome, of the accumulated "sweets" cakes, etc., which both officers and men of Headquarters and Headquarters Company had collected for the occasion. The GI's of the command were thus able to feel the Christmas spirit by giving, and the children of Britain, so long without sweets, enjoyed the process very much.

On the evening of December 31, a New Year's dance was held at Redlynch. Most of the division staff saw the year in quietly, though. There was a general feeling that 1944 would be a year of great decision.

Training intensified as early spring came to the downlands. By day and by night great fleets of warplanes droned overhead on their missions to Fortress Europe. In March, the 3rd Armored Division Forward Echelon set up its closely guarded and very hush-hush war room. Here, staff officers and a very few selected enlisted men studied the invasion plans, built relief maps of the Normandy area, and prepared for the assault on Europe.

Even with the rapidly accelerated program of preparation, the "Spearhead" was not too busy for a ceremony which seemed to have sprung up at Redlynch many years before. Each military command which had come that way had planted a tree to commemorate its visit. Now, in April, 1944, the 3rd Armored Division planted a blue spruce, symbolic of America.

Shortly before the invasion actually got under way, division elements left their camps and bivouac'd in the open fields. The weather was sunny and





General Watson plants a tree at Red Lynch in memory of the divisions' Stay.

warm. On June 6 it was a strange feeling to hear the news of the great assault after entertaining the belief that you would be a part of that great adventure. Of course there was also the realization that the division might have suffered heavily if it had gone ashore on D-Day. Nevertheless, there was nothing to do but await orders. Lt. Colonel Wesley A. Sweat, and Major Gilbert Palmer left for France on June 11, Colonel Sweat to the XIX Corps, and Major Palmer to the 2nd Armored Division. On June 13, Major General Leroy H. Watson, Lt. Colonel Andrew Barr, and Lt. Colonel Howard McC. Snyder, Jr., boarded a plane at Middle Wallop and flew to General Omar Bradley's headquarters in Normandy. A few days later the entire division was moving toward ports of embarkation.

Headquarters and Headquarters Company crossed the channel from Southampton, and landed on Omaha White Beach below Isigny. The date was June 24, 1944.

In action, Forward Echelon and Headquarters Company closely followed and supported the magnificent drive of "Spearhead" armor. The men of the command were at St. Jean de Daye during the great aerial bombardment which preceded the St. Lo-Perriers breakthrough, and they were well up with forward elements in the push through Normandy and the hard battles of Argentan-Falaise. Like all the rest of the division, men of the headquarters were exceedingly green in their first engagement. They leaped for foxholes at the first whistle of a shell—whether it was friendly or enemy. They learned to get under cover during those periods when German planes crossed the lines. Anti-aircraft fire seemed to kill at both ends!

Immediately after the action at Mortain, the entire division moved toward the never to be forgotten Ranee-Fromental area. At Pre-en-Pail, there was a pocket of resistance to be cleaned up and men

of Forward Echelon and Headquarters Company helped to do the job.

When a highly excited Frenchman came up to the column and said that there were six Germans in a nearby house, Captain Ward D. Waits, Lt. Daniel O. Magnussen, and Sgt. Abe Moskowitz, along with three other enlisted men, decided to take the enemy sextet prisoner. On approaching the house, which had been pointed out by the Frenchman before he took cover, the small squad was immediately met by a burst of fire.

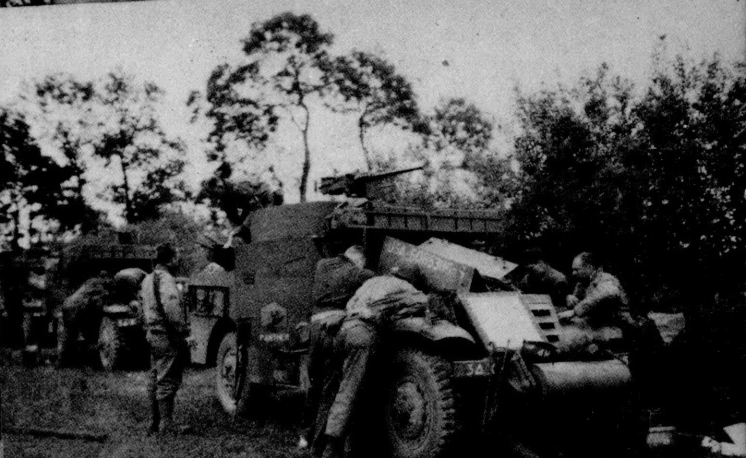
A sharp fight developed and before the action was over, Captain Waits and his squad had taken close to 90 prisoners, wounded several other Krauts, and killed one. Later, Waits was thoroughly "chewed out" for his eagerness in attacking the strong point—and commended for bravery at the same time!

After the Argentan-Falaise struggle the division began its swift dash across northern France. After crossing the Seine, below Paris, Forward Echelon and Headquarters Company began to fight its way along in the manner of a small combat command. At Brie Comte Robert, a German supply column was encountered and destroyed. There were hundreds of SS troops in this area, and men of the command took many of them prisoner. Brie Comte Robert was a sadly battered little town after the CP group pulled on through. Dead horses and smashed artillery limbers cluttered the streets. That night Forward Echelon bivouaced near Mangy le Hongre, on the edge of town in an apple orchard.

At dawn, on August 28, the CP was awakened by German vehicles which were actually trying to run through the bivouac area. A pitched battle immediately developed and the air was full of hot steel and darting lines of tracer. Everyone took part in the combat and very shortly after it had begun, the German infiltration had ended. Jerry lost two 88mm dual purpose cannon, three 20mm anti-aircraft combination weapons, four trucks, two weapons carriers, one motorcycle, and 10 dead. Seventy prisoners of war were taken by the small headquarters group. American casualties were one officer, dead, and three enlisted men, wounded.

Later in the day the CP column arrowed for Villiers Cotterets. Outside of Livignen another German column was intercepted and almost completely destroyed. All of its vehicles were blown up and 18 more prisoners taken after a four hour battle. At this time the Forward Echelon column was isolated, having been cut somewhere to the rear.

There was nothing to do but go on. It rained that night, a cold, pelting rain: but neither hell nor high water kept the Luftwaffe at home. All night



long a series of yellow flares kept blossoming over the American positions. No one got much sleep.

On August 29, the CP group fought another drawn out action for Villiers Cotterets. In fact, the combat in this area was the only notable activity on the entire corps front that date. Several anti-tank guns and machine gun nests were knocked out, and a Kraut ammunition dump which contained 4,000 truckloads of explosives, was blown. Headquarters men were earning their pay the hard way.

Now the route began to wind through territory which was heavily fought over in the last war. The column bivouaced along the famous Chemin de Dames on August 30. Everywhere there were old fortifications, rusty wire, and Stokes mortar duds of 1918.

On August 31, the combat commands moved out due east toward Charleville and Sedan. On this day plans were changed and the entire division switched its axis of attack from east to north. This complex change of direction was accomplished in less than two hours and then the "Spearhead" battered forward toward one of its greatest triumphs, the victory at Mons. Headquarters and Headquarters Company was destined to add a great deal to that amazing action.

The new attack moved swiftly. Forward elements entered Belgium on the afternoon of September 2. The border city of Maubeuge went wild with joy. Pretty girls swarmed over the vehicles and pressed both kisses and drinks upon weary GI's. Captain Milton Giffler, riding in front of the G-2 half-track, took his share of these delicacies, and then mentioned that an American colonel was in the next vehicle. This was all very true, but when the eager mademoiselles reached the next vehicle they found that Lt. Colonel Andrew Barr, G-2, was standing in the .50 caliber ring mount—completely out of range. No matter, M/Sgt. Frank Koukl collected all offerings with a bland smile. Half of the girls thought he was the colonel they had been told about!

On the evening of September 2, the CP—Forward Echelon and Headquarters Company, bivouaced around a country estate some nine kilometers south of Mons. At dawn on the following morning, a furious action began which was to earn a Distinguished Unit Citation for the soldiers of the group.

It was early on the morning of September 3, that German troops of the Nazi 7th Army, thinking they had a 15 mile escape gap south of Mons, had blundered into the 3rd Armored Division all along the front. Once again everyone in the headquarters—as well as in the rest of the division—fought a heavy action. It was a hot, swaying

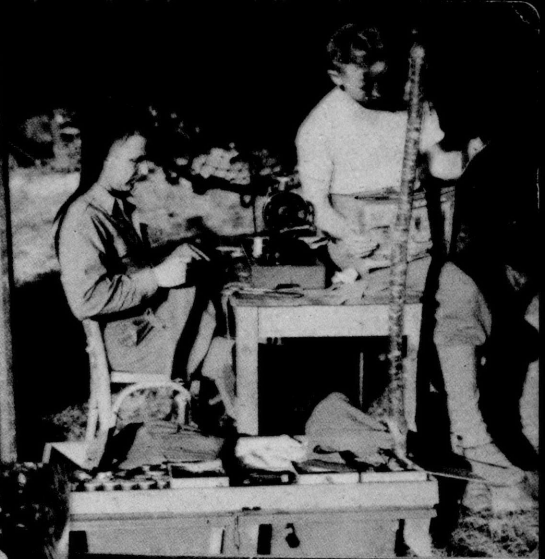
battle with no quarter given on either side. Clerks, drivers, signalmen, and officers of all the staff sections helped to capture or slaughter the disorganized remnants of the enemy force. All day, and all the next night the battle went on as German units attempted to run a gantlet of road blocks and outpost positions. Disorganized, and terribly cut up, they alternately chose to fight and surrender. There was no front line: the melee went on in the fields and woods as well as on the roads. Everyone manned a gun and had a chance to use it. Almost everyone took prisoners as the debacle continued.

A signal section of the 143rd Armored Signal Company changed the breakthrough plans of a number of German infantrymen riding in one of the big personnel carrying halftracks of the Wehrmacht. Cpl. John E. Kelley heard the approaching vehicle in the deep night, but by the time he realized what was happening, the Krauts had passed his post and were racing toward another signal section. Kelley got on the telephone and flashed the good news to Pvt. Leonard Ethridge and Pvt. Stanley Presgrave, who had a .50 caliber machine gun on a ground mount, well dug in and ready for action.

The panzer grenadiers were aware that they were within American lines by this time and they were firing everything from burp guns to rifles as they careened down the road toward the signalmen. Presgrave wasn't overly excited, though. He swung the heavy .50 caliber machine gun and hit the roaring half-track dead center with a long burst. For a moment the vehicle continued on its mad course and then, suddenly, it blew up in a flare of yellow flame and angry sparks. Out of the burning wreck came a number of grenadiers, still shooting and throwing hand grenades. American small arms, adding a background to the steady clatter of the big machine gun, mowed them down systematically. Within a few moments there was no sound on the dark road excepting the snap and crackle of the burning enemy half-track.

The rest of the headquarters soldiers were doing as well. At the division prisoner of war enclosure, an abandoned sugar factory, Major Charles H. Kapes and his MP's had 3,000 of the "supermen" behind barbed wire when a new attack developed. After a wild fight, Kapes and his handful of men were not only still in possession of the ground—they had added 300 more to the total of prisoners! The division IPW team, commanded by M/Sgt. Phillip Zinner, not only interrogated, but helped to capture many of the Krauts who attempted to storm through Mons.

Within a space of two days, Headquarters and Headquarters Company alone had captured more than 600 prisoners of war and had killed many more attacking Germans. For the brilliant action,



men of the command, plus personnel of the 143rd Armored Signal Company, were awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation.

The 3rd Armored Division continued to attack on September 5. Namur, Liege, and Verviers fell in succession and the "Spearhead" began to approach the Siegfried Line. At Eupen, which was a border town, the command gathered its strength for the great assault. The next night, at Raeren, Sgt. Don Mahoney made history by falling into the moat which surrounded a local chateau.

On September 12, the division ground into Hitler's west wall and continued to advance into the Third Reich. By September 21, the drive had practically halted of its own accord. The division was completely played out, sorely in need of rest and maintenance. General Rose, as was his usual custom, wished his CP close to the line of battle. He found an ideal location in the Prym House, which overlooked the battered city of Stolberg and was within small arms range of German forces. Here, Forward Echelon and Headquarters Company settled down for what was believed to be a short period. Actually, the CP did not move again until the division was called upon to help block von Rundstedt's Ardennes counter-attack late in December.

Chiefly, the Prym House will be recalled for its proximity to the front line and for the shell fire which, in most cases, whirled over or short. There were, of course, occasions when German projectiles came in with vicious accuracy. The chow line was hit on a muddy day in early December, and a number of men killed and wounded. The Luftwaffe also paid the CP several visits, unloading hundreds of "antipersonality" bombs over the area. At Stolberg there were passes to Spa and Verviers, in Belgium, plus occasional quotas to visit Paris. Altogether, life wasn't exceptionally hard. At least the CP was not forced to carry on a constant running battle with dismounted enemy troops as it had done during the summer offensive.

While preparations were going forward for the Christmas holidays, the great Ardennes campaign began. Almost immediately the 3rd Armored Division was ordered to move into position to halt or delay the attack. Forward Echelon and Headquarters Company moved out of the area on December 19 to make a cold, miserable night march to the vicinity of Hotton and Manhay. Few of the men would ever forget that night—the pitchy blackness, the cold, and the hundreds of robot bombs passing overhead.

At Hotton, Headquarters Company once again found itself in a fury of heavy fighting. The battle began at dawn on December 21 when German mortar and artillery began to punch the area. Almost immediately, Kraut infantry, supported by

tanks, began to move in. The defending Americans were almost entirely without heavy weapons. There were a few machine guns and bazookas, plus one medium tank on hand to spark the resistance. However, Captain William L. Rodman and 1st Sgt. Denver Calhoun rallied their men and set up a defensive line. After a hot battle with infiltrating panzer grenadiers, the company managed to throw back the first attack. Once again every man of the headquarters dug in and waited for the renewal of the assault.

It came soon enough, but the company held firm. By noon the bewildered attackers had pulled back and were preparing for another all-out effort.

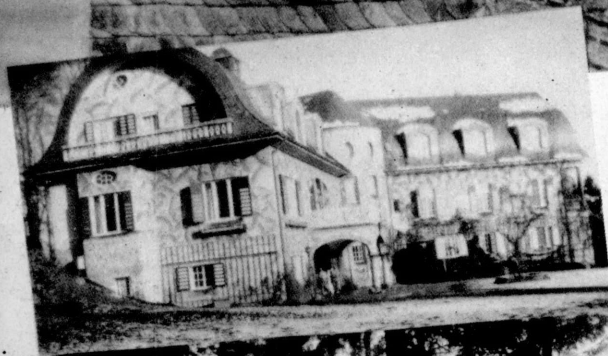
Heroism was a common virtue at Hotton. Most of the men who engaged in that flaming action performed exploits which would have been considered heroic anywhere else. Lt. Colonel Charles L. Steyaert, commanding officer of the 45th Armored Medical Battalion, was with the group. He personally supervised medical care of the wounded and kept morale and spirits high with his gallant leadership. When enemy mortar and artillery threatened the frontline aid station, the colonel remained cool and unshaken. Later, when time was opportune for a breakthrough out of besieged Hotton, Steyaert organized evacuation of the wounded so skillfully that not one man was lost in spite of direct fire from enemy anti-tank and tank guns.

Captain Rodman, and Captain John L. Wilson, of the 143rd Armored Signal Company also distinguished themselves in the battle. It was not until Christmas day that the group was relieved. Hotton never fell to the enemy.

Actually, this was the beginning of the "bitter battle for billets in the Belgian bulge." Forward Echelon and Headquarters Company remained in the forefront of that whole bitter campaign. The men of the command would never forget the terrible days of the Ardennes winter warfare. They'd remember the 1944 Christmas which was the exact and horrible opposite of peace on earth, good will toward men, and they'd remember the grim towns of battle: Bra, and Lierneux, and Hebronval.

Finally the campaign was finished and the command pulled back for rest and refitting. Forward Echelon and Headquarters Company settled at Petit Somme, in a magnificent old Belgian chateau.

With the advent of spring, the "Spearhead" Division again rolled forward to the attack. On February 26, the assault on German forces between the Roer and Rhine began. Within nine days the division had reached Cologne and, on March 7 the entire city, fourth largest in Germany, was secured. Forward Echelon and Headquarters Company was billeted on the outskirts of town. There was a short



period of rest, and there was beaucoup "liberated" wine and champagne to ease the woes of occupation.

The last offensive in the west found Forward Echelon and Headquarters Company in its usual position, immediately behind the spearheading task forces. At Maulsbach, Germany, the CP was shelled by a roving self-propelled gun. Again, at Altenkirchen, part of the company came under the guns of German forces who were fighting a delaying action all along the fluid front.

During the swift drive to Marburg, on March 27, Lt. Colonel Jack A. Boulger, G-1, was captured while travelling from the general's forward CP to the Forward Echelon position. He was liberated several weeks later.

Major General Maurice Rose was killed in action on March 30, and Brigadier General Doyle O. Hickey assumed command of the swiftly moving division. Lt. Colonel Wesley A. Sweat, G-3, was captured at the time of General Rose's death. A month later he was liberated at Fallingbommel by British troops.

The pounding attack went on deeper into Germany. Paderborn, the "Fort Knox" of enemy tankers, fell, and the Rose Pocket was completely encircled by a task force which went to meet the 2nd Armored Division at Lippstadt.

Nordhausen, with its infamous concentration camp, and Sangerhausen were conquered by the rampaging tanks of the "Spearhead," and suddenly everyone was aware that Germany had entered its last flurry of deadly resistance. Task forces of the combat commands had advanced to the Mulde River and to a number of heavily defended towns in the Dessau area.

Again, the division's forward command post was close to front fighting elements. In fact, at Lingenau, Forward Echelon and Headquarters Company was far ahead of many "Spearhead" battle groups. However, this town was the furthest point of advance for these units in the war. Here, the division set up its nerve center of communications and

operations. Heavy guard details outposted the area and defeated any infiltration attempts. Even with the protection this afforded, a few prisoners were taken in the immediate vicinity of the CP. S/Sgt. Sam Ortega, of the Photo Interpretation team, walked into the brush with a shovel in his hand, and came out with two Krauts!

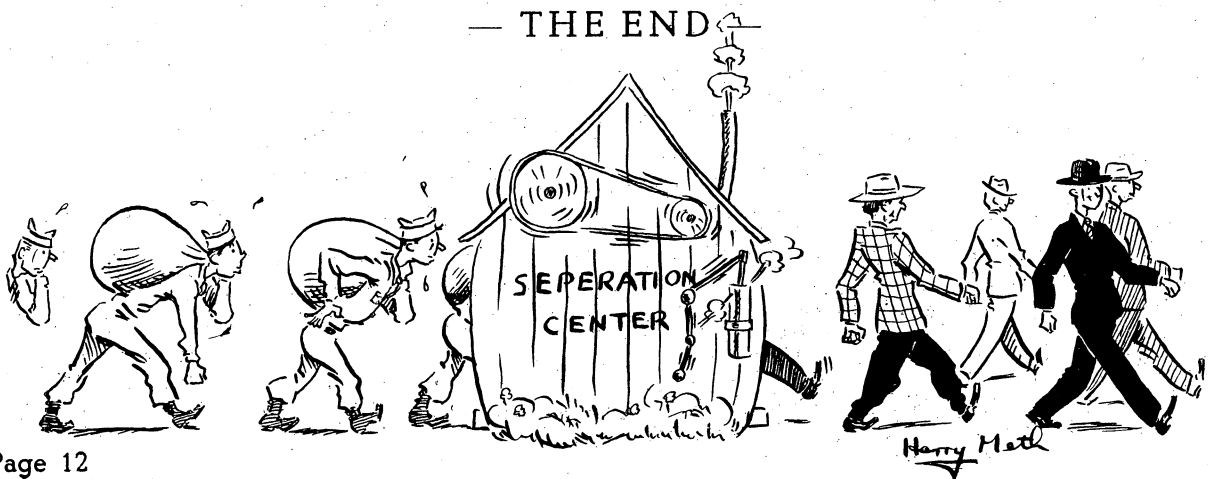
Supply was a problem at Lingenau and the company mess was almost non-existent. GI's of the command subsisted on K-rations and whatever else the cooks were able to wrangle.

The attack on Dessau ground on through five successive days of slow advances and short skirmishes against infiltrating teams of enemy infantry. Every enlisted man in the Forward Echelon and Headquarters Company took his turn at guard. It was a necessary precaution.

For the 3rd Armored Division, the war came to an end at Dessau and vicinity. The CP received one more heavy shelling two nights before it was scheduled to move out on the road back to a rest area. Several men were injured when enemy projectiles hit a barn which was used as the engineer kitchen. On April 25, the 9th Infantry Division relieved all elements of the "Spearhead," and movement to the rear was begun.

Back at Sangerhausen, which had been taken by the division earlier in the drive, the company rested and refitted. From that time on, the old veterans of Forward Echelon and Headquarters Company began to drift away in redeployment back to the states. After VJ Day, in September, there were few of the old timers left. Sgt. Glen Davison probably remained longer than any other man of the unit. He first signed for Pacific service and then, when VJ Day made that choice impractical, remained with the division to direct work on SPEARHEAD IN THE WEST. The old company, like the old "Spearhead" Division, had been almost completely replaced by newcomers in four short months. The mission had been accomplished.

— THE END —





Presentation of the Distinguished Unit Citation.

March 24, 1945 Honnef, Germany: At the house of Mauser on the east bank of the Rhine the Headquarters was presented this highest award for unit action. The citation reads as follows;

As authorized by Executive Order No. 9396 (sec. I, Bul. 22, WD, 1943), superseding Executive Order No. 9075 (sec. III, Bull. 11, WD, 1942), citation of the following unit in General Orders No. 15, Headquarters VII Corps, 24 March 1945, as approved by the Commanding General, European Theater of Operations, is confirmed under the provisions of section IV, Circular No. 333, War Department, 1943, in the name of the President of the United States as public evidence of deserved honor and distinction. The citation reads as follows:

Headquarters Forward Echelon and Headquarters Company, 3rd Armored Division, is cited for outstanding performance of duty in action during the period 26 August to 4 September 1944 in France and Belgium. When the 3rd Armored Division made its rapid thrust from the Seine River to the Siegfried Line, the headquarters forward echelon advanced close behind the leading combat elements, assuring the best possible control and coordination of divisional units. Frequently traveling through territory not yet cleared of the enemy, pitched battles were fought at Quincy, Brie Compté Robert, Mangy le Hongre, Levignen, and Villers Cotteret in France, and on each occasion the enemy was soundly defeated. At Mons, Belgium, the headquarters directly blocked the path of the retreating Seventh German Army, and for 36 hours a battle between elements of German units attempting to extricate themselves and this small headquarters raged unabated. Though surrounded and cut off from outside help, the entire group fought tenaciously against overwhelming enemy forces and by its grim determination repulsed the enemy and inflicted heavy casualties. During these actions, this division headquarters group killed or wounded 237 enemy soldiers, captured 2,432, and destroyed or captured 69 enemy vehicles. The heroic and gallant actions of all personnel of Headquarters Forward Echelon and Headquarters Company, 3rd Armored Division, exemplified the highest traditions of the military service.

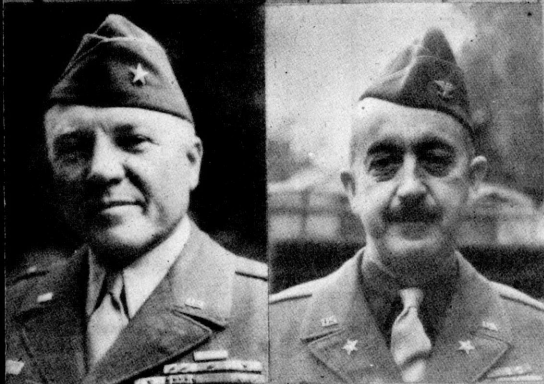


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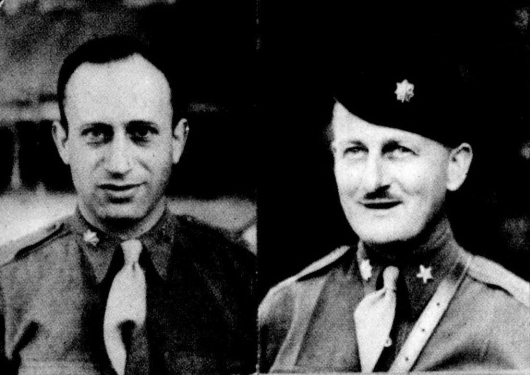
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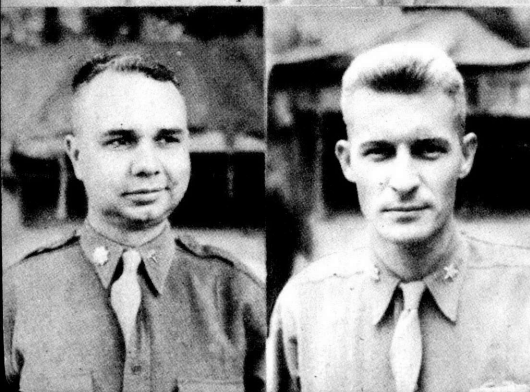
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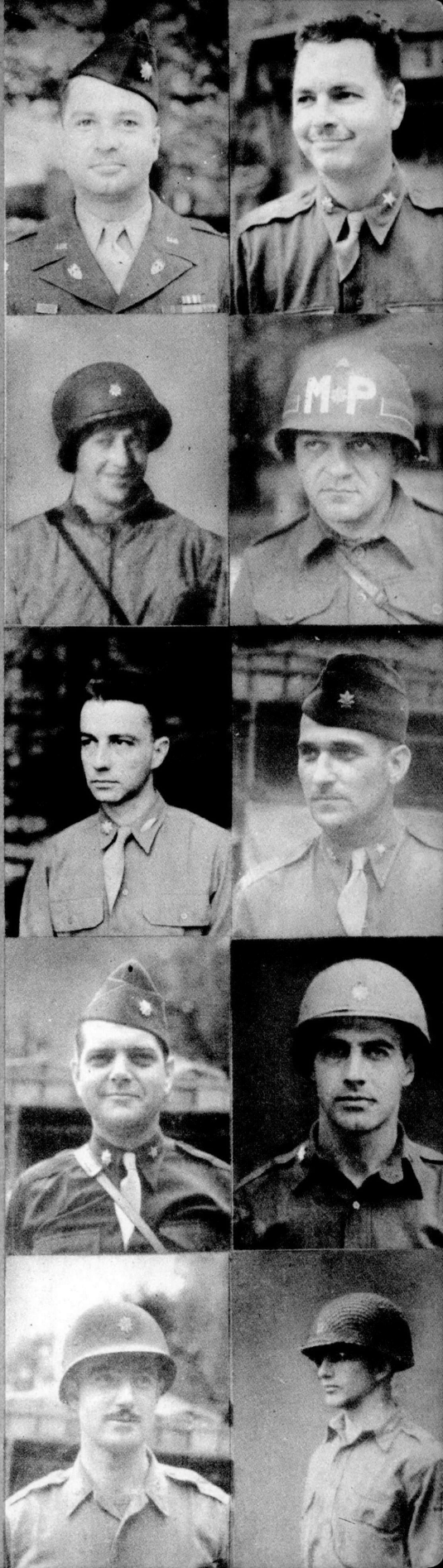
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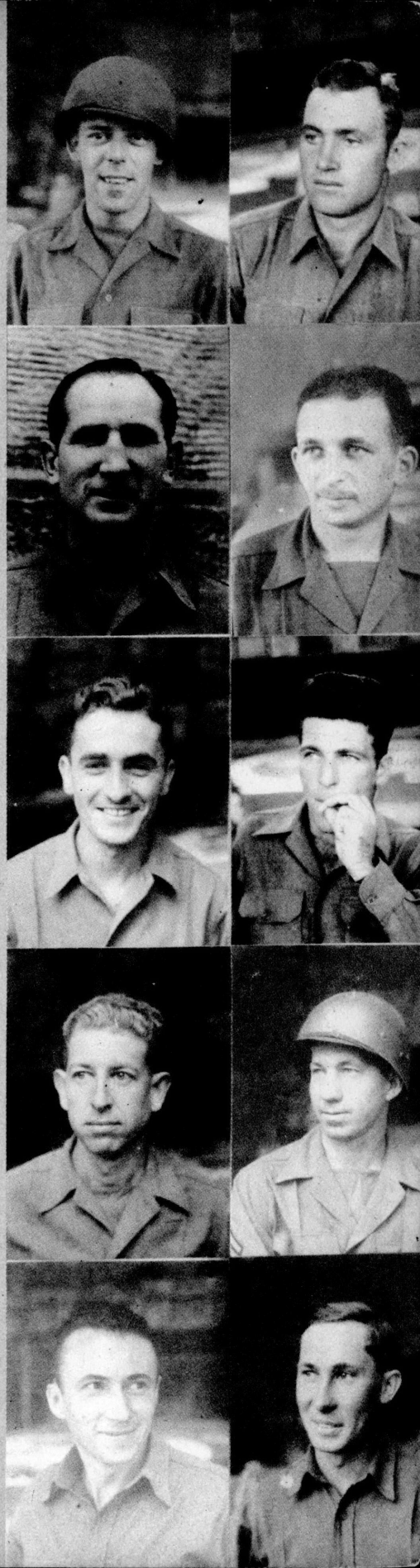
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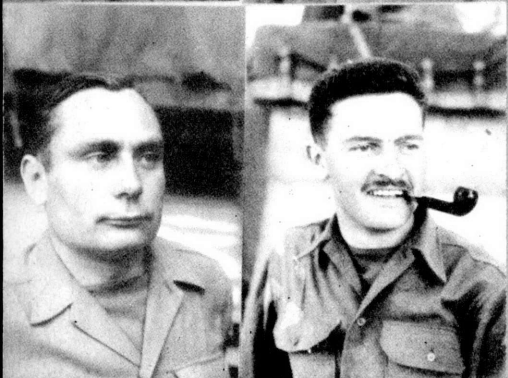
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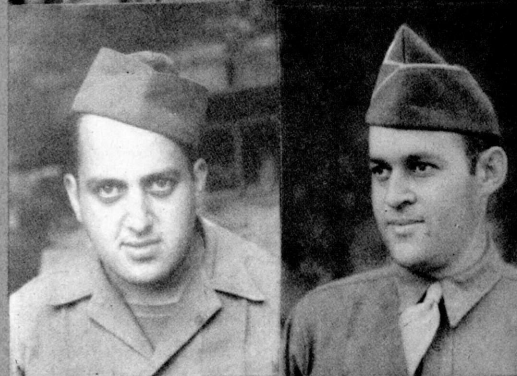
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Pvt. Virgil F. Keys
RFD 2
Luttrell, Tennessee



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Columbia, South Carolina

Pvt. Vernon C. Zahrte
413 Kilbourne Avenue
Toman, Wisconsin



Pvt. William P. Hennessey
37 Cedar Street
Leominster,
Massachusetts

Pvt. John Melnick
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Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania



PFC.
John Blyzniuk
Address unknown

Pvt. Foster L. Judy
RFD 2
Bedford, Pennsylvania



**No photographs were available of the personnel
of Division Headquarters who are listed here.**

Major Edward P. Cawley
108 South Brown Street
Jackson, Michigan

Major Charles E. Gravely (KIA)
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Mobile, Alabama

Major Roscoe E. Miller
1537 Wade Street
Indianapolis, Indiana

Capt. Daniel J. McStay
1840 Wynhurst
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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2333 Knapp Street
Brooklyn, New York

Capt. Francis T. Farrell (KIA)
(c/o Roberta T.)
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1st. Lt. Herman Huni (KIA)
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New York, New York

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Albuquerque, New Mexico

1st. Lt. Andrew J. Nolte
455 Coney Island Avenue
Brooklyn, New York

1st. Lt. Olan Parker Jr.
312 East Nettleton Avenue
Jonesboro, Arkansas

T/Sgt. Joseph Kulaga
Route
Brill, Iowa

T/Sgt. Ralph E. Diets
Route 2
Desoto, Illinois

T/Sgt. Laurence E. Dow
Address unknown

S/Sgt. Albert C. Monferrato
Address unknown

Sgt. Leland M. Anderson
Route 2
Garvin, Minnesota

S/Sgt. John H. Romey
118 North McDonel Street
Lima, Ohio

Sgt. George P. Petrenos
273 Lee Avenue
Brooklyn, New York

Sgt. Henry Zebrowski
5035 South Racine Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

Sgt. Erich O. Lang
341 Westgate Road
Menmore, New York

Sgt. William H. Baker
100 Knepper Street
Council Bluffs, Iowa

Sgt. Linwood E. Todd Jr.
Address unknown

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412 Orchard Street
Fayetteville, New York

T/4 Reuel File
Route 2
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T/4 Kenneth E. Engasser
Transit Road
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T/4 Eugene J. Puel
Address unknown

T/5 James E. Stevenson
Leitchfield, Kentucky

T/5 Franklin D. Mooney Jr.
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559 East Liberty Street
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T/5 Elbert W. Mcleod
1220 5th Street
Palmette, Florida

T/5 John A. Kinworthy
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PFC. Carl R. Nelson
Arcadia, Nebraska

PFC LeRoy B. Young
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PFC. Gene G. Bickford
Tindall, Missouri

PFC. John D. Pfeffer
Mapleton, Minnesota

PFC James B. Thompson
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Pvt. Leo M. Gengler
Route 1
Adrian, Minnesota

Pvt. James G.
Chelamingos (KIA)
Address unknown

John E. Hennessee
Cement, Oklahoma

John L. Grochowik
142 Union Street
Springfield, Vermont

Hans A. Hiller
8 Morris Street
Danbury, Conn.

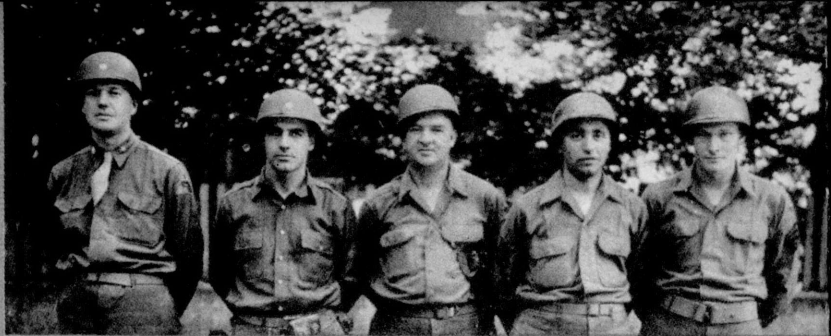
Robert A. Albee
803 West 6th Street South
Newton, Iowa

Harlan R. Collins
1 Ida Street
Fulton, New York

Charles E. Poff
2137 Bradley Avenue
Louisville, Kentucky

Julius C. Godlewski
3755 North Carlisle St.
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

PHOTOGRAPHS



G-1 Section



← **G-2 Section**



G-2 Detachment



G-2 Detachment



G-2 Detachment



Chemical Warfare Section



G-3 Section



Hqs. M. P. Section



**Military Government
Section**



G-4 Section



Division Surgeon Section



**Hqs. Co. Orderly Room
Group**



Division Engineer Section



Provost Marshal



Division Hqs. Medics



Officers' Mess



Hqs. Maintenance Sect.



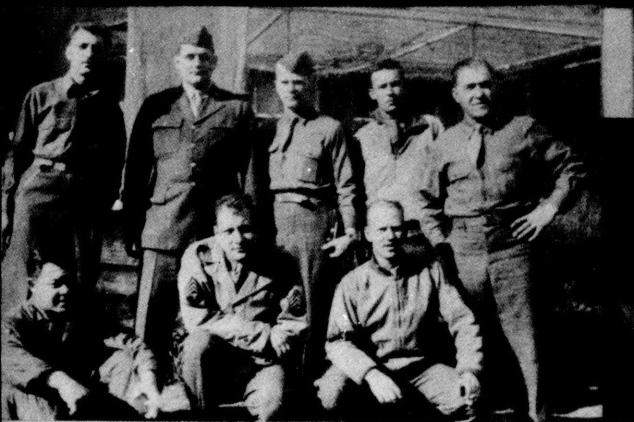
Hqs. Tank Crews



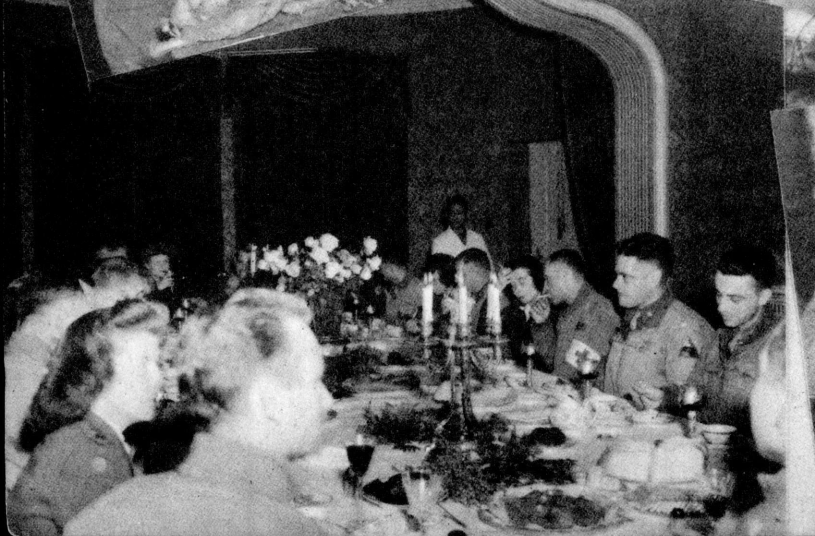
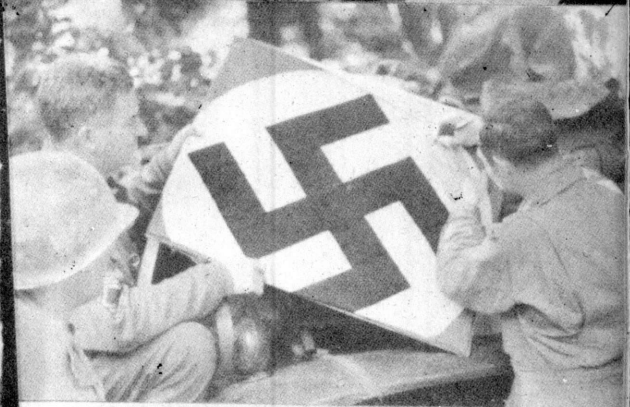
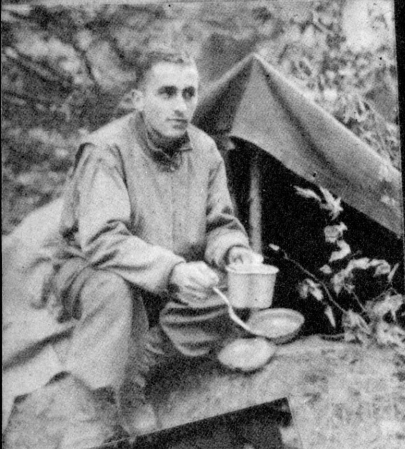
Hqs. Co. Supply Section



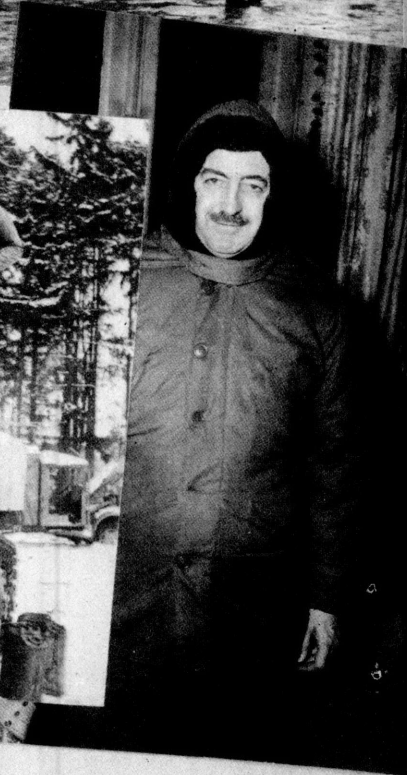
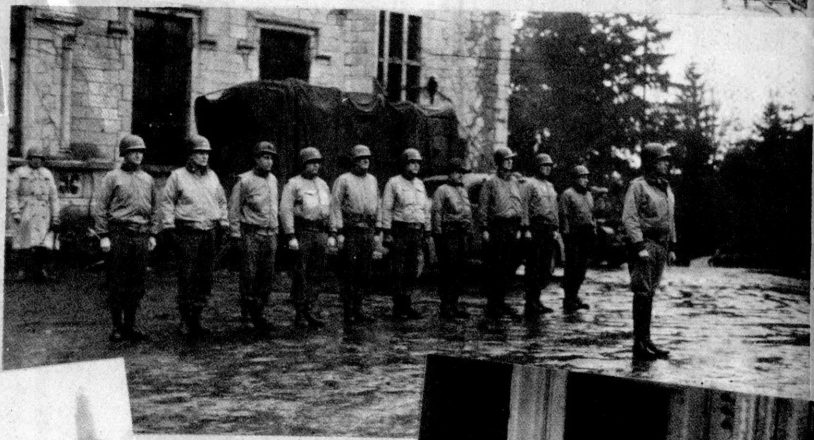


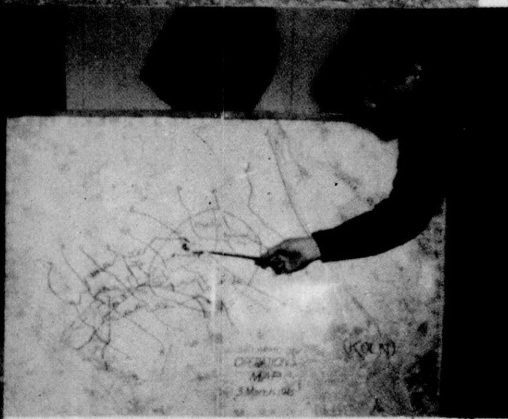


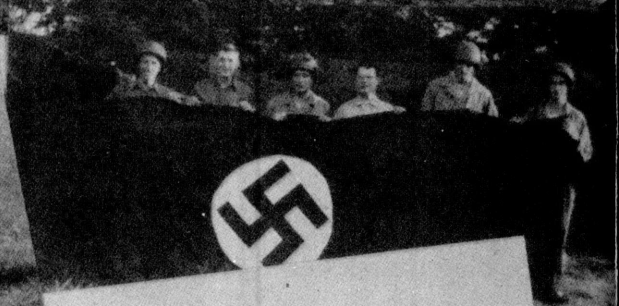




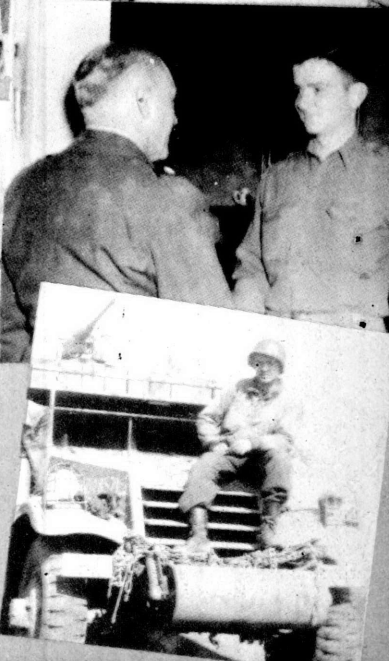


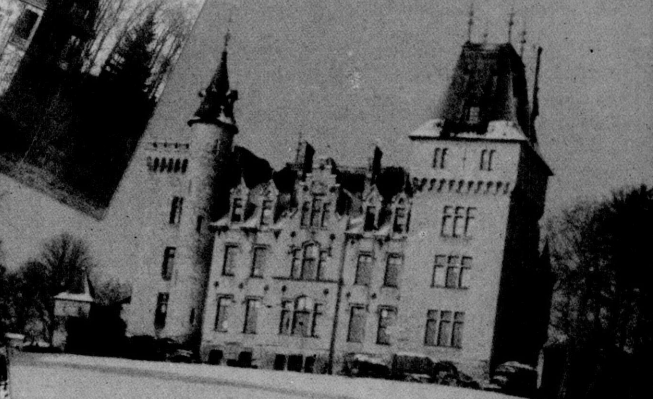
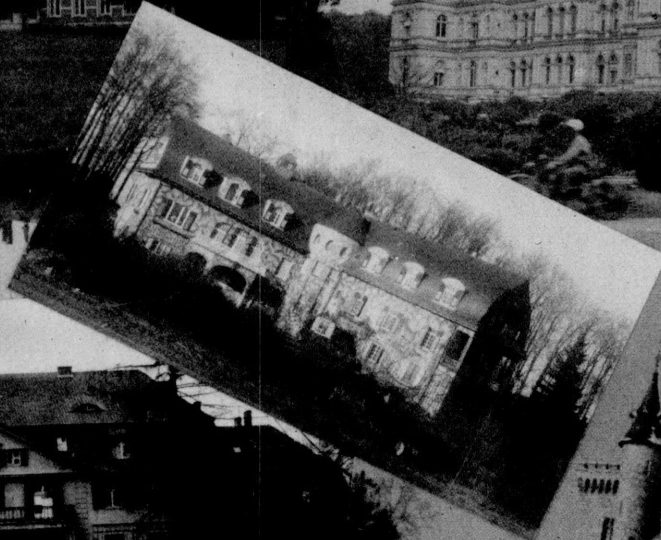












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