



Top: Preparation on Rhine boom . . . HQ at Lintfort . . . Award ceremony at Kamp . . . Billets and church at Lintfort  
 Bn dispatchers . . . Walker, Gay, Eschebach, Ott, Bruneel . . . Bn Area, Lintfort . . . HQ—"CLEAT"—at Kamp . . .  
 Part of S-3 at Kamp—St. Pierre, Midney, Richardson, Badgett and Zielinski . . . Williams, Lanese and Hoger beneath the  
 camouflage nets . . . Biggers and assistant work on boom floats . . . Wash day at Kamp.



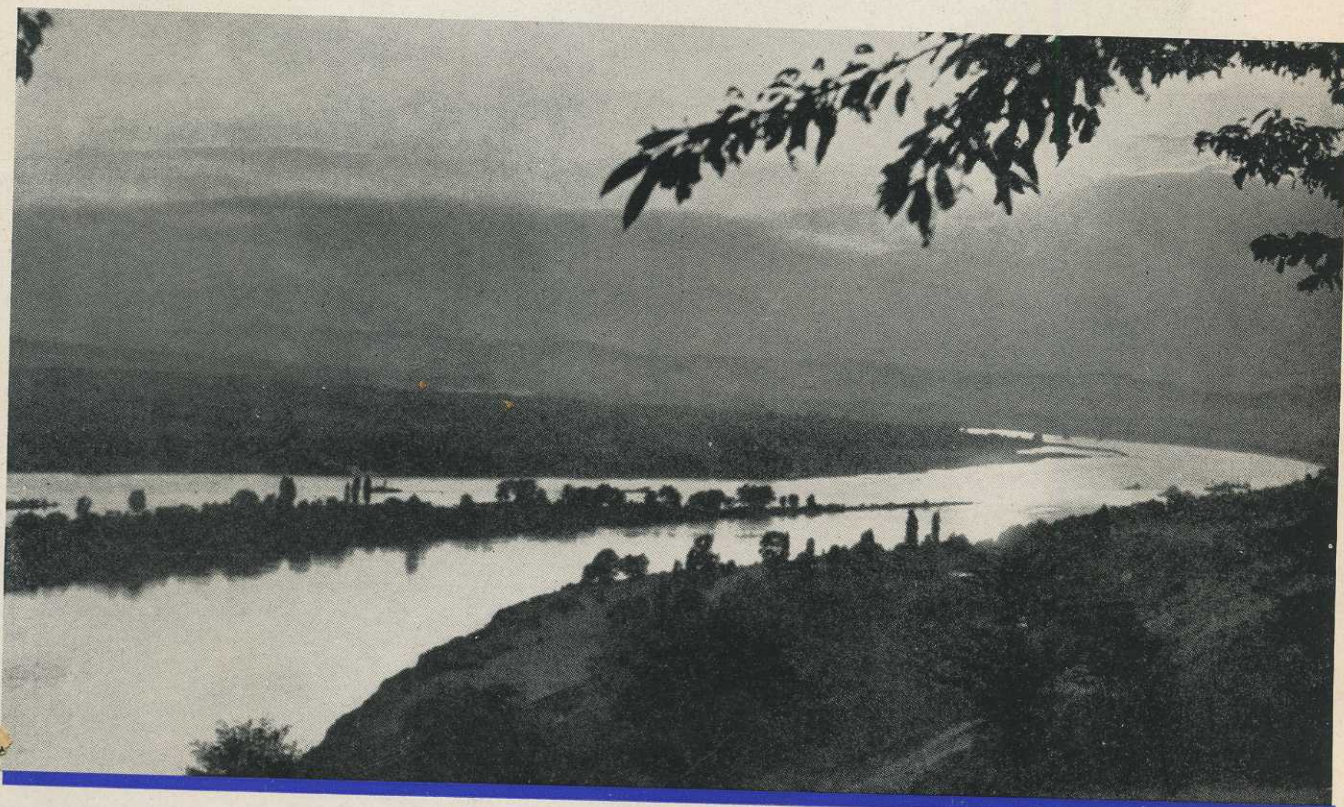
★ *OPERATION FLASHPOINT---Continued*

separated them from the Krauts. Twelve hundred feet that looked like that many miles! Then, after endless minutes, with the men lying on the bottom of the boats and the enemy firing rather wildly thru the smoke screen the boats reached the opposite shore and the infantry started the clean up. It was here that Harris Gould lost his life returning for his boat. Here too, Al Kuiper, Jim Graves and Ed Wood voluntarily returned to evacuate several infantrymen, wounded and stranded on a small island. They were later awarded the Silver Star and Red Rutter the Bronze Star.

While this was taking place the TD's had moved up to the dike and were adding their barrage to the general din. Flares, phosphorus, shells bursting, machine gun and small arms fire—it was as all hell had broken loose. On the morning of March 24th, construction was started on the Bridge in the vicinity of Wallach. Working details were broken into platoons, each platoon to work an eight hour shift. The key to the smoothness and speed of the operation was in keeping fresh men on the job. Wiggins, Hipper and Gregory alternated in command

(Continued on Page 62)

The Rhine—Germany's Impregnable Fortress, Bridged By American Resourcefulness and Guts.





The bridge, pathway to victory . . . Rhine Dike with dug-in tanks . . . Wesel, in the British sector . . . Assault boats after the mission . . . Captain Simpson watches glider trains over head . . . Sunken barges . . . Boom site at Buderich . . . The Jerries even helped.

## OPERATION FLASHPOINT---Continued

of the platoons working from the far shore. Work proceeded under intermittent artillery and sniper fire and occasionally jet planes strafed and bombed, but the bridge suffered no hits altho five men were wounded. At approximately 0100 hours 25 March the connection was made in the middle of the river and 1210 feet of bridging was complete, just twelve feet under the longest ponton bridge ever constructed.

In the meantime, work was proceeding on the boom, but non-delivery of

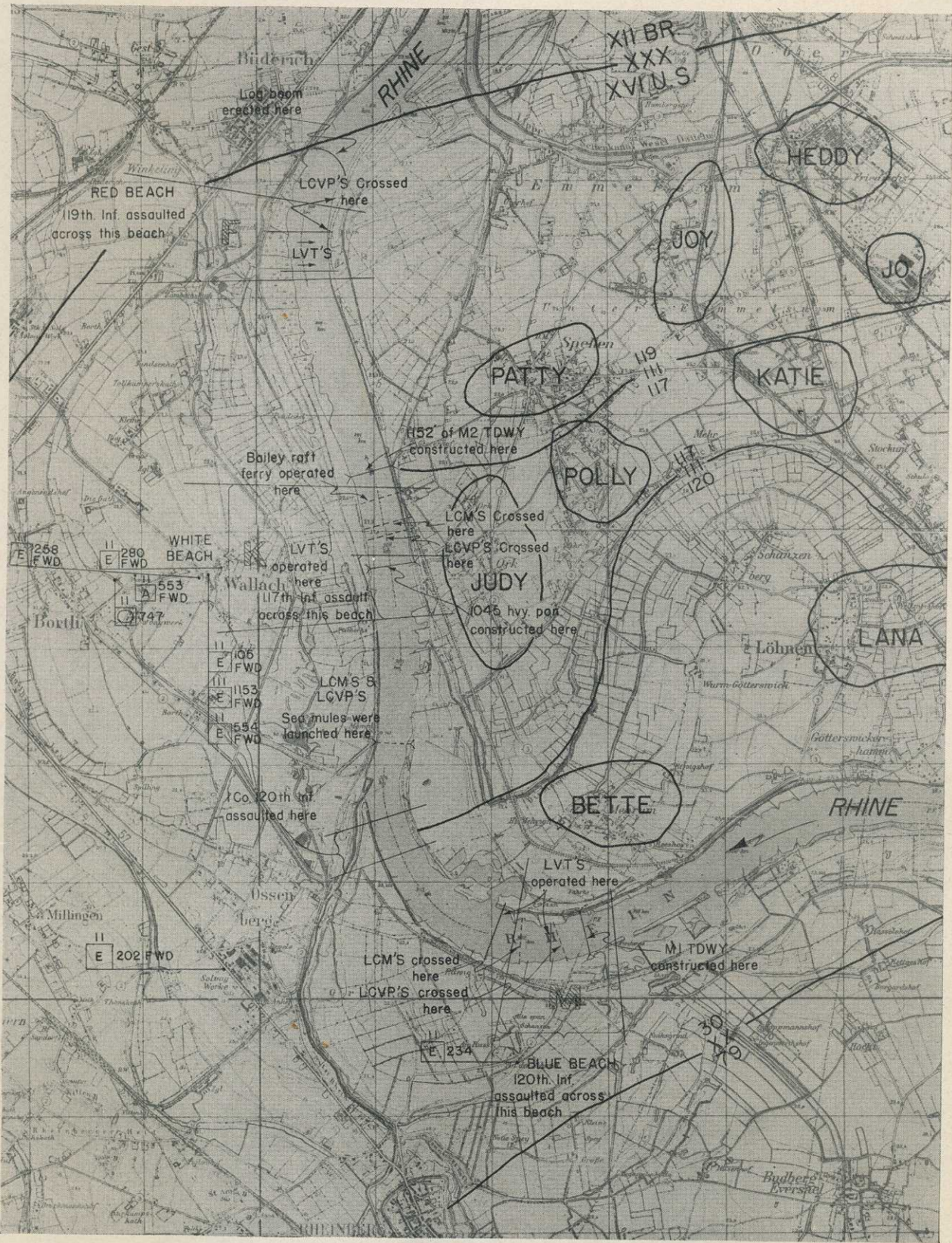
sea-mules necessary to handle the heavy weight in the swift current delayed completion of the work.

Lt. Machen, Andy Sheptak and Alvin Miller lost their lives thru a direct 88 hit on their weapons carrier at the crossroads at Rheinberg.

The job of getting the Ninth Army across the Rhine was an engineering feat in which the 554th played an important part and letters of commendation were received from General Simpson, Corps HQ and from associate units.

An impression of the assault crossing painted by Cec Lantrip.





Operational map showing 30 Division sector in XVI Corps Area.

# T H E P I E D

A few days after building the Rhine bridge both line companies joined in dismantling it, reloaded, drew additional equipment to make complete loads and were all set to roll again. This time the move took us about 150 miles with evidence everywhere of panic in the enemy's retreat. "A" Company billeted in a little town just off the autobahn about twenty miles from Bielefeld. H/S moved into Blomberg where there was still scattered rifle and MG fire in the surrounding hills for although the Armor had moved on thru the Infantry hadn't cleaned up the stragglers. It was during this period that Krauts started to come in and surrender to us. It got to be a nuisance. "A" Company then moved on up to Hameln only to find to their amazement that the town itself was still in German hands. They passed tanks and infantry all along the route and proceeded up to the bridge site on the banks of the Weser—another of Germany's great rivers. It seems the movement orders were about twenty-four hours premature for the abutment was just laid and work started on the trestle when the Krauts opened up with small arms and MG fire

Some views of our bridge across the Weser at Hameln.



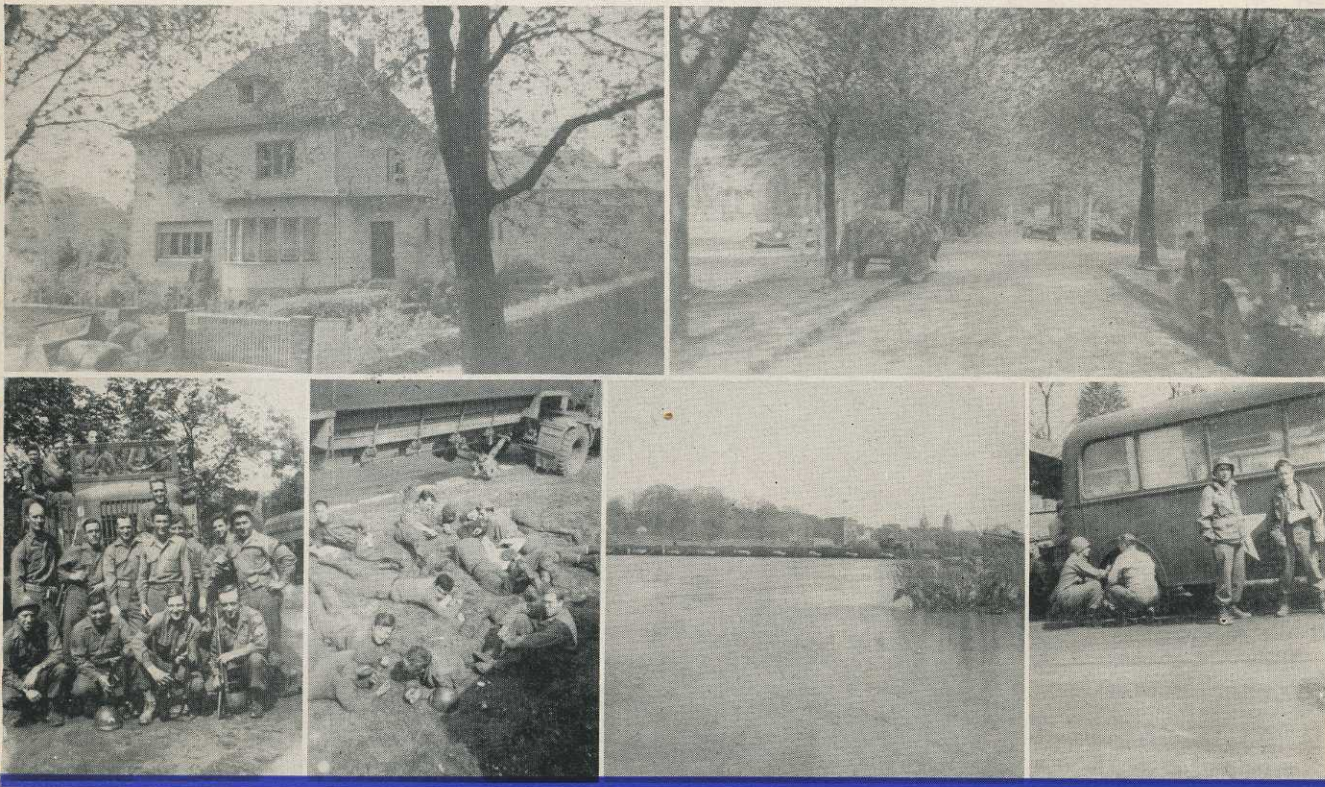
# PIPER TOWN

pinning the men down who were only armed with carbines. Then the order came to withdraw while the Armor and TD's fought it out all night, the next day and night. Then the following morning the Infantry crossed and cleared out the far shore so construction started again at 1000 hours and the bridge was open to traffic (2nd Armor, "Hell on Wheels" Division) at 1615 hours 7 April 45.

The bridge was dedicated to Wilson Barnes who was killed by enemy action. Seven men were wounded.

After opening the bridge both "A" Company and H/S moved into some very nice homes in Hameln and found the wine and champagne very much to their liking. The town itself wasn't as badly destroyed as some others we'd seen and we remembered the name from the story of our school days—how the Pied Piper lured the rats out of town. This time the Americans drove them out—(SS type).

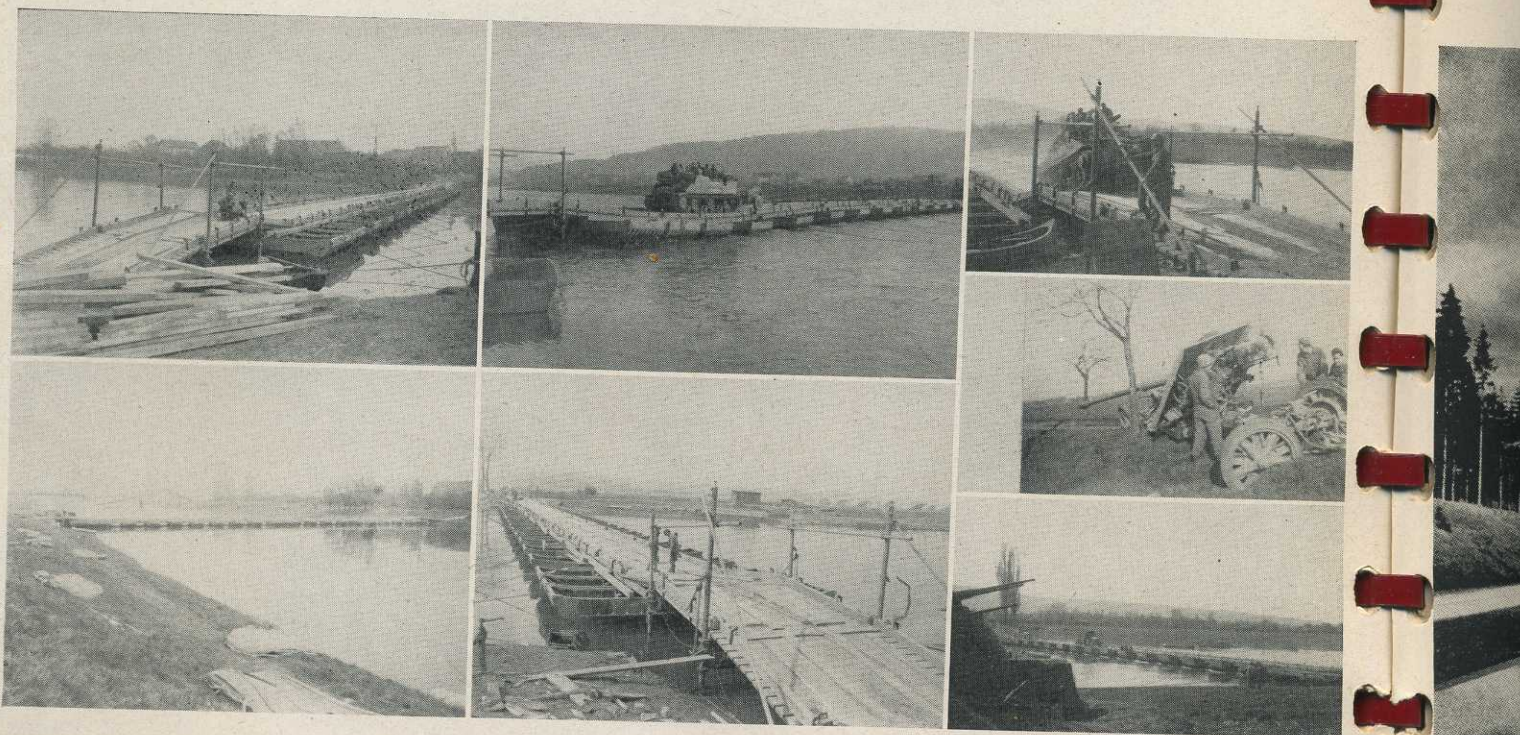
Battalion HQ—Hameln . . . Street in Hameln where "A" Company Billeted . . . Part 1st Plat. "A" Company . . . Part 2nd Plat. . . . "A" Company bridge looking toward Hameln . . . Peltier gets out of work.



# BAD OEYNHAUSEN

While "A" Company was bridging the Weser at Hameln, "B" Company was detached from the Battalion and loaned to the XIII Corps for the crossing at Bad Oeynhausen on the Weser, downstream from Hameln. This was an important bridge for it handled the traffic using the autobahn. By this time the 554th was known as a crack outfit thruout the Ninth Army and all corps were asking for our services.

This bridge was started on the morning of April 7, and completed at 1440 hours of the same day. The completion of these two bridges by our Battalion across the Weser permitted a rapid expansion of the bridge-head on the east bank, although an isolated pocket of SS troops did hold out north of Hameln for





# CROSSING . . . .

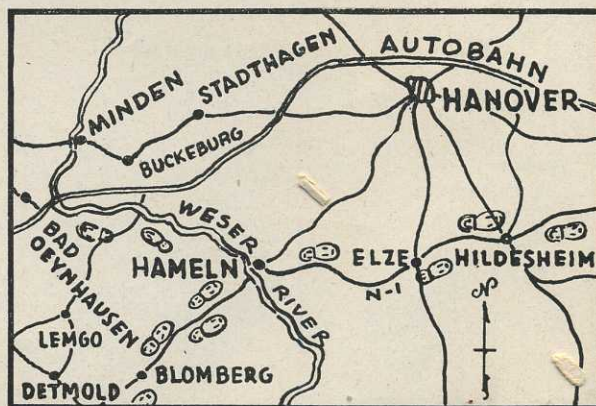


several days and forced our supply trucks to use the longer road on the west bank. At the finish of the operation the entire Battalion cooperated in maintaining and guarding both ponton bridges as well as a treadway bridge upstream at Ohr. Then on the 12th of April "B" Company rejoined the rest of the Battalion at Hameln. Letters commending the smoothness and speed of both operations were received from higher headquarters.

On 13th April we were again ready to move deeper into Germany with only one large river remaining between us and Berlin—The Elbe. The end was in sight.



Left page shows several views of the bridge at Bad Oeynhausen and one shot of a kaput 88. At left is a section of the autobahn near Bad Oeynhausen. This super highway system with no grade crossings criss-crosses all of Germany.



# T H E E L B E . .

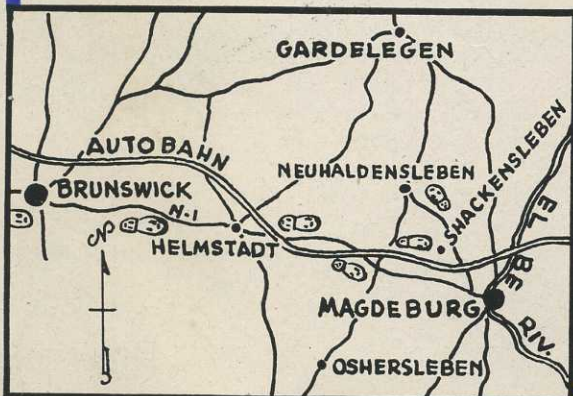
On April 13th the Battalion was again off on a long move —thru Hildesheim, Brunswick (where the 30th infantry was engaged in cleaning up the town), Helmstadt and on to a tiny town named Shackensleben, almost within sight of Magdeburg on the Elbe. We were the first Americans in the town and set up military government. We also shook-down the town for weapons and cameras and some fine souvenirs were acquired.

In the meantime the Russians had taken Berlin and were moving close to the Elbe. The 2nd Armor did have a bridgehead but were forced to withdraw

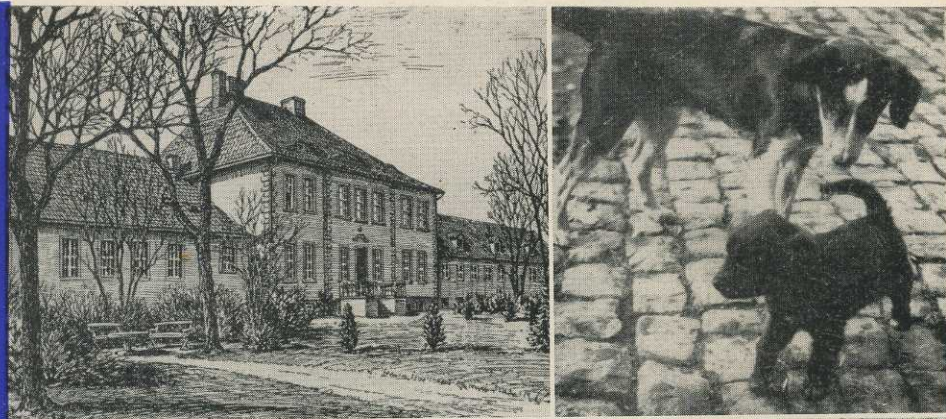
and while the bridge site had been selected and all equipment put in order it became more and more doubtful that we would construct a bridge.

On April 20th we moved to Neuholdensleben, a larger town a short distance north, where we stayed until May 7th. During that period the Battalion was engaged in maintaining equipment, additional training and hauling material and equipment for the Ninth Army.

Contact was made 25 April 45 between First Army Units and the Russians at Torgau and any further need for bridging the Elbe had ended. The Germans were surrendering by the tens of thousands and in our sector were begging the Americans to come across the river and capture them so they wouldn't fall into Russian hands! Victory was in sight.



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Bn. Hq and H/S Billets at Shackensleben . . . "B" Co. Mascots . . . Wingo with "Honey II" . . . Slagle and Zacharia compare notes . . . Near, Ysenchak, Dymerski, Spoolstra, Sapp, Bauer and Stone divide the latest "Esquire" . . . 554th HQ at Neuhaldensleben . . . Captured FW 190 at Stendal . . . Fife goes "high hat" . . . Buddies—Cammarata and Galloway . . . Hamlin, Harrison, Hoffbauer, Cowan and Garrison . . . Matson . . . Streppa gets commando treatment . . . Doc Sible has the Col. at his mercy . . . the demon cooks—Lines and McKee . . . Communications, Inc. — Wines and Serenbetz . . . Fairchild and Sullinger enjoy the spring sun.

# GARDELEGEN!

Friday, April 20, 1945

**This Is the Enemy!**

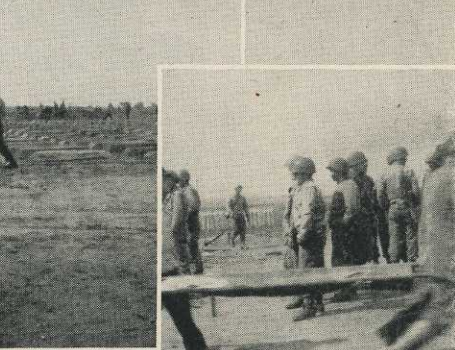
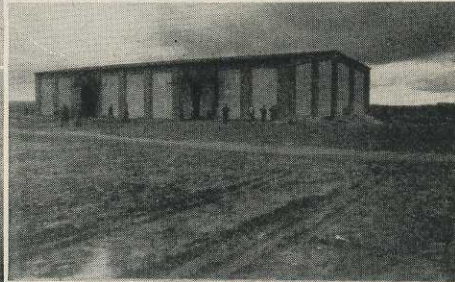
## Nazis Massacre 1,000 With Flares, Bullets

By WADE JONES, Staff Correspondent

GARDELEGEN, Germany, April 17 (Delayed)—Allied Military Government officials were investigating today one of the most overwhelming Nazi crimes yet discovered in western Europe—the mass murder by flares and bullets of an estimated 1,000 German political and war prisoners last Friday.

Their welter of information, coming from many sources, included reports of the seven known to have escaped and the accounts of German civilians who saw the flames, heard the screams of the dying, saw the smoke rising from the great stone barn where the massacre took place.

<p><b>GARDELEGEN MILITARY CEMETERY</b></p> <p>HERE LIE 1,016 ALLIED PRISONERS OF WAR WHO WERE MURDERED BY THEIR CAPTORS.</p> <p>THEY WERE BURIED BY CITIZENS OF GARDELEGEN, WHO ARE CHARGED WITH RESPONSIBILITY THAT GRAVES ARE NEVER KEPT AS GREEN AS THE MEMORY OF THESE UNFORTUNATES WILL BE KEPT IN THE HEARTS OF FREEDOM-LOVING MEN EVERYWHERE.</p> <p>ESTABLISHED UNDER SUPERVISION OF 102D INFANTRY DIVISION, UNITED STATES ARMY. VANDALISM WILL BE PUNISHED BY MAXIMUM PENALTIES UNDER LAWS OF MILITARY GOVERNMENT.</p> <p>FRANK A. KEATING MAJOR GENERAL, U.S. A. COMMANDING.</p>	<p><b>GARDELEGEN MILITÄR-FRIEDHOF</b></p> <p>HIER LIEGEN 1016 ALLIIERTE KRIEGSGEFANGENE DIE VON IHRER WACHE ERMORDET WORDEN SIND.</p> <p>DIE EINWOHNER VON GARDELEGEN HABEN SIE BEGRABEN UND DIE VERPFLICHTUNG ÜBERNOMMEN DIESER GRÄBER EBENSOFRUCHT ZU BEWAHREN WIE DAS GEDÄCHNISS DER UNGLÜCKLICHEN IN DEN HERZEN ALLER FREIHEITSLIEBENDEN MENSCHEN BEWAHRT BLEIBEN WIRD.</p> <p>ERÖFFNET UNTER AUFSICHT DER 102. TEN INFANTRIE DIVISION, ARMEE DER VEREINIGTEN STAATEN. JEGLICHE SCHÄNDUNG DIESER FRIEDHOFES WIRD GEMÄSS DEN VERORDNUNGEN DER MILITÄR-REGIERUNG MIT DEN SCHWERSTEN STRAFEN BEHÄNDIGT WERDEN.</p> <p>FRANK A. KEATING GENL. U.S. A. KOMMANDEUR.</p>
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# AWARDS

## SILVER STARS

Pfc. James R. Graves

Pfc. Albert K. Kuiper

Pfc. Edwin D. Wood

## BRONZE STARS

Lt. Col. William F. Grauch

T/Sgt. Marion Murray

Sgt. Maxwell R. Fife

Capt. Nelson R. Simpson

S/Sgt. Francis M. Rutter

T/4 Raymond C. Pavka

Capt. Richard B. Wiggins

S/Sgt. William T. Stone

## CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

Pfc. Warren G. Summers

Pfc. Paul J. Aherron

Pfc. Verne C. Lease

Pfc. Earl S. Brooks

Pvt. Emmett F. Kelly

Cpl. Delbert D. Seleck

Pfc. Wesley R. Geiger

Pvt. Francis Gaetano

T/5 Rhinold L. Schoenfeldt

T/5 Donald H. Bowdoin

Pfc. Barney Nahigian

T/5 Hilary J. Miller

T/5 Bernard F. Pfenninger

Pfc. Robert L. Felthouse

T/5 Edward L. Butala

T/5 Walter L. Frye

Pfc. Elasczer M. Gland

Cpl. Ervin L. Koss

Pfc. Richard E. Sherwood

Pvt. Marcel Lothrop

S/Sgt. Norman F. Striewski

Pfc. Walter P. Wanat

Pfc. Vernon C. Nichols

## PURPLE HEART

T/5 Kenneth L. Walker

T/Sgt. Florian S. Richardson

Pfc. Frederick F. Schmitt

Pfc. Alvin F. Miller

Sgt. Clarence R. Williams

Pvt. James Young

Pvt. Ellis C. Adams

T/5 Grover R. Serenbetz

T/5 Donald E. Scheland

T/5 Kenneth L. Mitchell

T/5 Lawrence E. Marzolf

Pfc. Stockton L. Shepperton

Pvt. William J. Hovestadt, Jr.

Pfc. Raymond Culver

T/5 Kenneth C. Katzberg

Cpl. Delbert D. Selleck

T/5 Robert A. Garrison

T/5 Frank Cogswell

Pvt. Earl F. Dotson

T/5 Russell E. Wingo

Sgt. John J. Harvey

Pvt. Robert J. McAlary

Cpl. Alford L. Gray

Cpl. Ernest L. McNees

T/5 William O. Partridge

Pfc. Alfonso V. Villa

Cpl. Oliver E. Murphy

Pfc. Ted Slagle

Pvt. Maurice D. Dillenbeck

Sgt. Arnold

# CAMPAIGNS

NORTHERN FRANCE

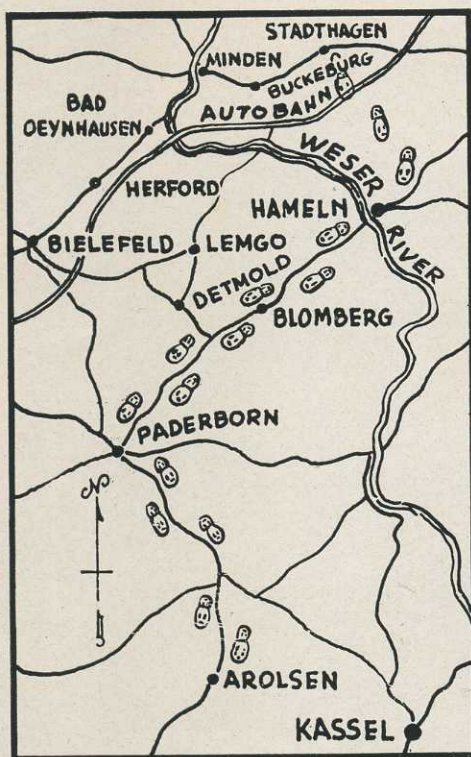
RHINELAND

ARDENNES

CENTRAL EUROPE



# VICTORY in EUROPE



May 7th we moved back toward Hameln to a town by the name of Stadthagen, just north of the autobahn. The move was made amid much excitement for there were all sorts of rumors afloat and VE day actually was proclaimed one day later.

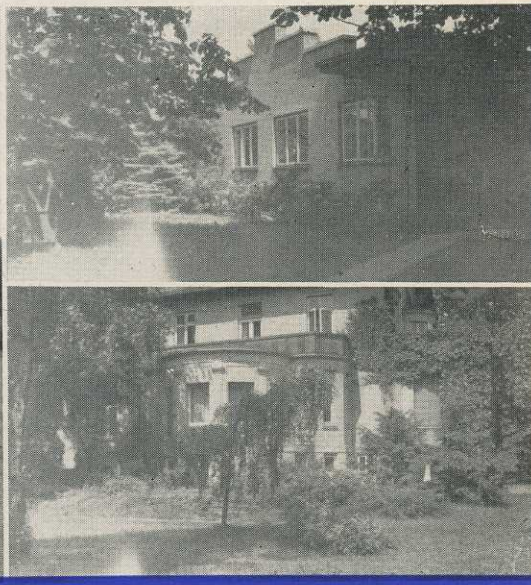
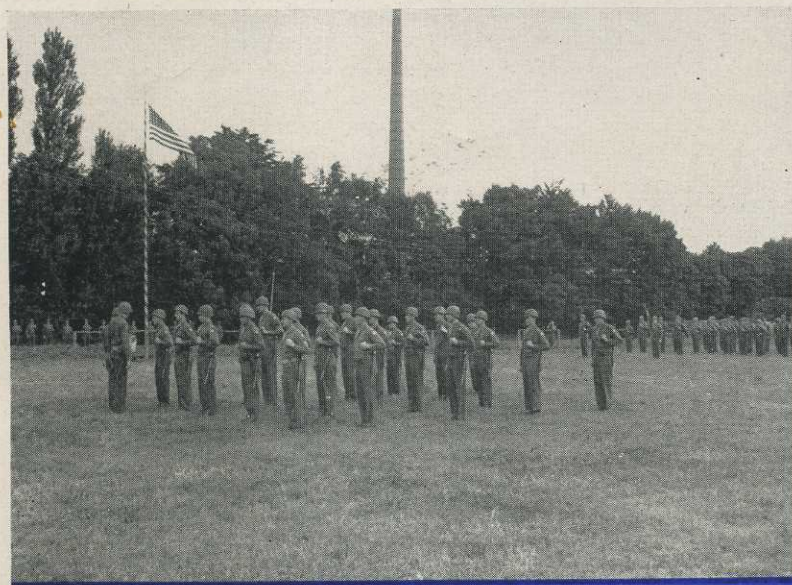
On the Sunday morning following VE day the officers cooked breakfast and the non-coms served it to the men in bed. Will wonders never cease! Later each company had it's own party in celebration with local brewed beer, liquor rations and music.

During the month we lived at Stadthagen we maintained a security patrol using captured German sedans. There were Russian and Polish camps of displaced persons nearby and a constant vigil was necessary to prevent trouble. We also prepared for an extensive information and education program and once more became garrison soldiers with close order drill, etc. The baseball and softball teams were developing and there was ample free

time for recreation. Part of the Bn. was on detached service hauling in the Bremen Area.

On Memorial Day a ceremony was held in memory of those killed and also to honor and present awards to the living. A hand drawn scroll was sent to each family of the men who were killed.

Memorial Day Ceremony at Stadthagen . . . Bn. HQ and Officers Quarters, Stadthagen.





Swan and Sullinger on security patrol . . . Part of "A" Co. at Stadthagen . . . Secan stands (?) guard . . . Kulik and Wolfe inspect an American tank . . . "Yea, it's us" . . . Finesilver and Heinie mechanized mortar . . . La Violette at Stadthagen . . . Comera-hound Reynolds and his side-kick Link . . . Just restin' . . . Chowtime . . . Strang, Minster and Liske . . . "B" Co. Taps a keg . . . Modern "Daniel Boones"—Backes, Sabatino, Sitko and Peck . . . Midney gives orientation to Kopczyński, Calamari and Zielinski—with the help of German brew . . . Simpson and Vuono—bartenders at H/S victory party . . . Tradin' material—a luger and P-38 . . . Squeaky and the HQ-1 Jeep at Bremen . . . Three tired boys (blame Monsere for this one) . . . Some "A" Co. men surround Capaldi's truck . . . No more camouflage! . . . Case in front of a Sherman.



"Schnapps" Bn. Mascot

# A R O L S E N

June 5th the Bn. was placed in Category II which meant redeployment direct to the Pacific, (we found this out later). It was then we moved to Arolsen, a long trip to the south thru Hameln, Blomberg and Paderborn. It was really a hotbed of former SS activity, the people were not friendly, and the fact that we requisitioned entire blocks of houses for billeting didn't make them more so. How different these people when the shoe is on the other foot!

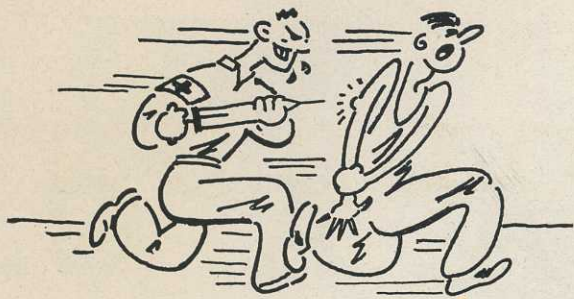


Paderborn was the center of training for German armor units and military installations could be seen all thru the district. Our duties were very light while we were here, but the non-fraternization rule made time drag and when orders came thru to move to France on June 16th everybody was in good humor.

Some of the boys in idle moments at Arolsen







## OH DOCTOR!

The Medical Detachment of the 554th will long be remembered for the many inspections, shots and aspirin tablets.

In every operation the Medical Department of the U. S. Army has played an important role. Less spectacular, perhaps, than the combat forces, but a real contribution to final victory. In World War II advances in the field of medicine together with efficiency and speed in evacuating casualties saved thousands of American lives.

Hospitalization of casualties in a combat zone is based on a chain of evacuation. This consists of Bn. Aid Stations, Clearing Station, Evacuation Hospital and General Hospital.

Our Med. Det. was basically an Army Bn. Aid Station and was usually operated in cooperation with a division with patients going thru the chain as outlined above.

Due to the varied duties of a Hv. Pon. Bn. it was not practical for the Med. Det. to support the entire Bn. Under these circumstances medical service was obtained from other units to which we were attached. The Rhine was an example of this with three different assignments. In this case the Aid Station was established at the boom site and handled both our own men and men of the 30th. Div. as well as a P. W.



Aid Station personnel consisted of Lukasek, Kulik, Wolfe, Hodge, Ellingson, Morton and Wakefield, the last two being new members. Curly Miller was attached to Company "B" and Kincaid to Co. "A".

As mentioned previously Alvin Miller, one of the original members of the detachment was killed in the Rhine operation.

Reading, left to right: Wolfe, Kulik, Hodge, Lukasek, Miller and Ellingson.





# A. A. C.

The trip back to France was made in a two day march, with an overnight bivouac at Trier, Germany. Our convoy route took us thru some of the most beautiful country that any of us had ever seen. We saw Frankfurt from a distance and crossed the Rhine at Mainz. From Mainz to Bingen, vineyards were everywhere, right down to the water's edge. This is the center of the Rhine wine country. Our trip also took us thru the Duchy of Luxembourg and its charming capitol city. Our arrival at Camp Washington, D C, one of seventeen re-deployment camps was a distinct let down. The site was a former airfield with large concrete runways and no trees. We could even taste the dust.

However, this was destined to be our home for about six weeks, so we gradually got used to it. A lot of the men had trips to Marseilles, delivering vehicles for shipment to the Pacific. We also had additional shots for tropical duty, and viewed more training films. Passes were enjoyed to the surrounding towns, as well as to Paris, Brussels and the Riviera. It was also here that a lot of high point men were transferred to other units for eventual shipment to the States. Colonel Grauch was among these, and Major Simmons assumed command with Captain Wiggins as Executive Officer. On August 4th the Battalion again moved, this time via train to Camp Arles, France near the Mediterranean.





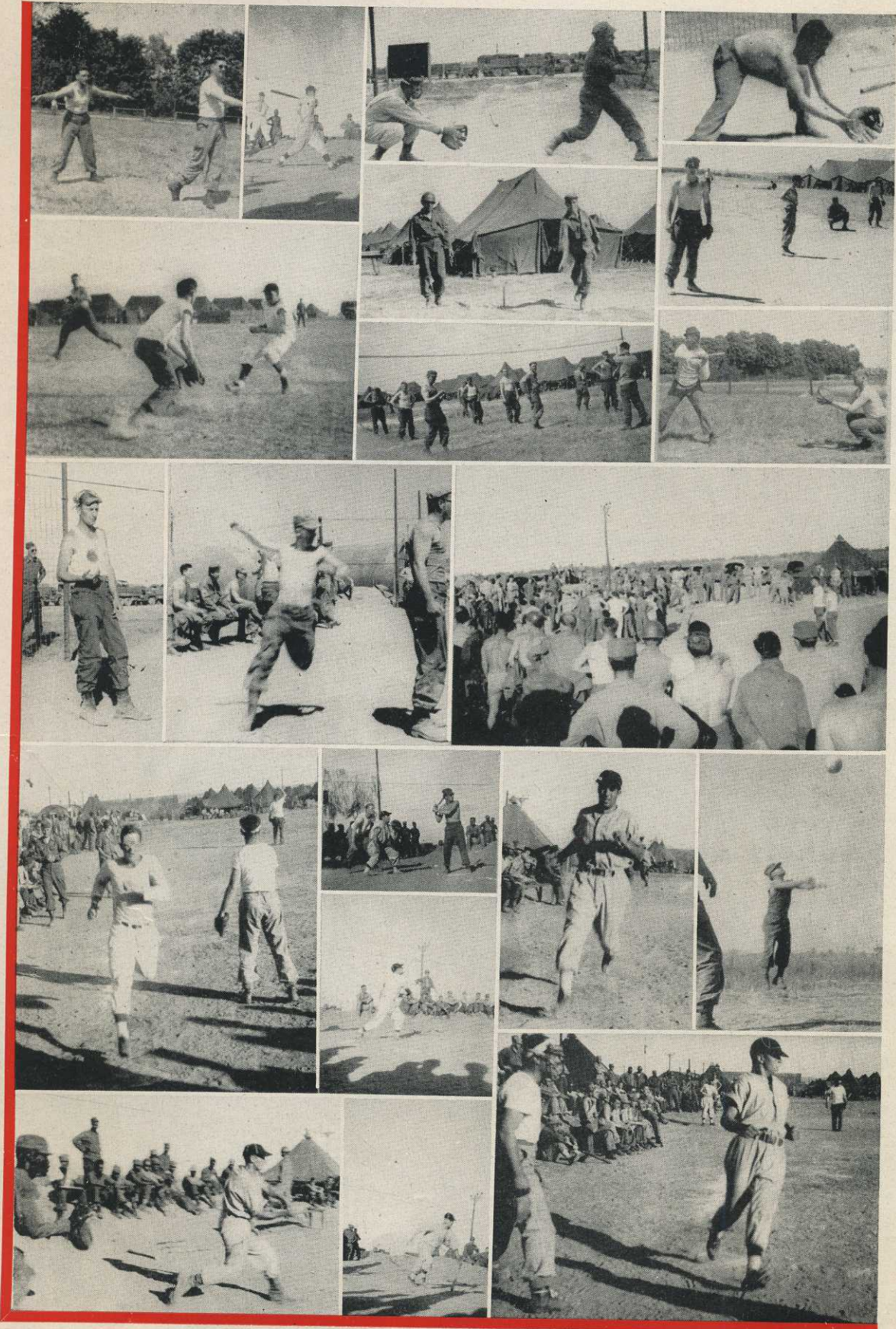
USO show . . . Police call . . . 4th Sq., 1st Plat., "A" Co. . . . Obidzinski, Vettrano, Wazowicz, Peck, Deremer and Johnson beat their gums with the RC gals . . . World War I memorial at Laon . . . some of the old-time H/S boys . . . Wiggins and Johnson in an informal moment . . . Street scene in Laon . . . The 75-85 point men and overagers move out for Camp Brooklyn repple-depple . . . Jane Froman "gives out" . . . 4th row: Left to right, Murphy, Harrison, Lasecki, Capaldi, Mendels, Wolfe, Lanese, Hodge, Minster and Streppa in various activities at Camp Washington . . . Childs, Trammel, Hunt, Johnson, Stemen and Meadows, "somewhere in France" . . . Secan and Morton make with the razor . . . Mail call.

# ETO SPORT ROUNDUP

At the bottom of the page is a photograph of the Battalion Softball Team, and one of the 554th Stadiums which adjoined our tented area. On the opposite page are a variety of action shots taken at Camp Washington, and elsewhere. We believe that you will be able to identify most of the men. These pictures are proof that we didn't work all of the time. From early spring we were able to enjoy many different types of sports. The Battalion softball team compiled an outstanding record and reputation over many weeks of play,

meeting all comers. The final check-up showed 52 games won and two lost, and of the two games lost one was a disputed decision, and both teams were subsequently beaten by our boys. Our team was one of the few equipped with uniforms, and this was due to the energetic leadership of Monte Levin, who supervised all of the team activities. Keen rivalries were developed within the Battalion in horseshoe pitching, volley ball, ping-pong and soft ball. All in all sports did much to furnish many enjoyable hours for the men of the 554th.





# WASHINGTON TO ARLES STAGING AREA

We finally rigged ourselves out as pack mules and staggered out to trucks which carried us to the chemin de fer not 40 and 8's this time, but third class day coaches "liberated" from Germany, very comfortable for the first ten or fifteen minutes; we boarded this Teakettle Express just as night fell and almost immediately draped ourselves here and there for some simulated shut eye. This arrangement for sleeping is worth noting, it easily proves that a human being is both ingenious and flexible; it would be difficult to describe the system here, but let it suffice to say that there was not one square inch of wasted floor or seat space, in the case of two men per compartment, even a certain amount of space in mid air was utilized.

Our itinerary was punctuated by slightly more than several stops. Some of these stops were quite worth while such as the time we came to a screeching, grinding, shuddering halt right beside some huge tank cars filled with, of all things, wine. It didn't take long for some anonymous GI to discover a er ah leak in one tank, which was promptly coaxed and urged into a practical canteen, canteen cup, and jerrican filling stream, then from a vantage point atop a car, the scene resembled two lines of ants, one line coming, one going, some running thither and yon waving their antennae and uttering odd noises expressing joy and amazement. Cans and utensils appeared from nowhere.

(Continued on Page 82)

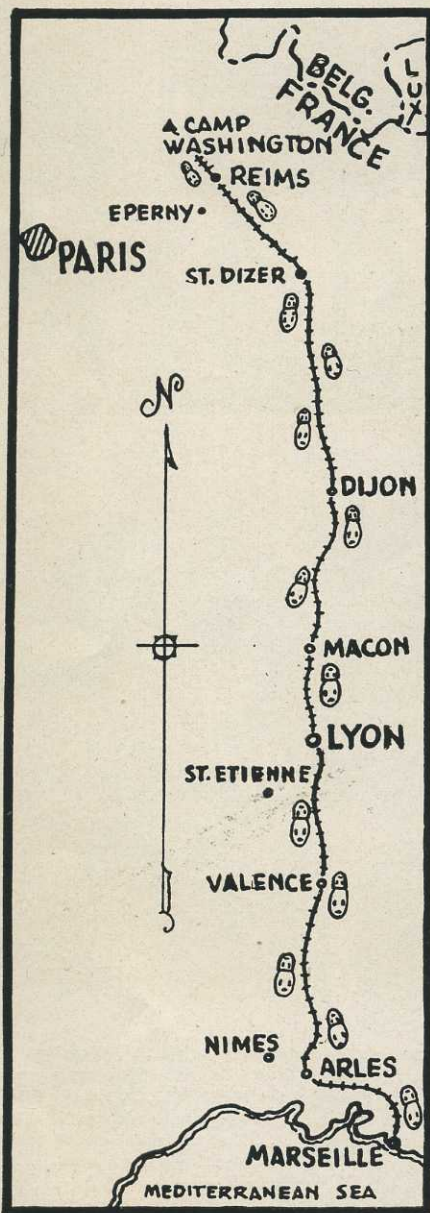




The God-forsaken hole known as Camp Arles, that's supposed to be an olive tree on the left . . . Giramont, Humphrey, Riggensbach, Bruski and Strang . . . The last truck ride in Europe . . . Harbor at Marseille . . . PW's forage for discarded clothing or other items . . . Wolfe, Morton, Wakefield, Miller, Kulik and Hodge of the Med. Det. . . Kramer Beach on the blue Mediterranean . . . Shore area at Marseille, demolished by the Germans . . . Church tower . . . Stone, Williams, Secan, Cammarata, Hall and Ezmirlan get little voluntary exercise . . . "Snack Shack" . . . Zielinski and Badgett at one of the last showdowns . . . This is how we left for the boat . . . Backes, Wiseman and Brown getting their suntan . . . Westward Ho! . . . Hurry-up and wait . . . McNair Theater, Calas . . . The blimp which soared over on V-J Day . . . Peck and Backes on steps from main RR station at Marseille.

## ARLES---Continued

The parade was finally broken up by a large captain—ant, and the wine tank car was not even half empty. About the second day of our journey, we found ourselves rather short of edible provisions, fortunately, the French people are very practical. We stopped in a town where they soon discovered our lack of chow (and also our abundance of cigarettes, and chewing gum and a few oranges). Immediately there was set up an impromptu market, where, for a pack of smokes, one could obtain a loaf of bread or a few tomatoes



or onions or all, depending upon one's ability as a trader. (Note.—French bread, tomatoes, and onions, the latter sliced thin and the whole seasoned with K-Ration bullion powder, makes a very edible and tasty sandwich.) This "exchange of gifts" stopped considerable griping about empty stomachs. We moved on.

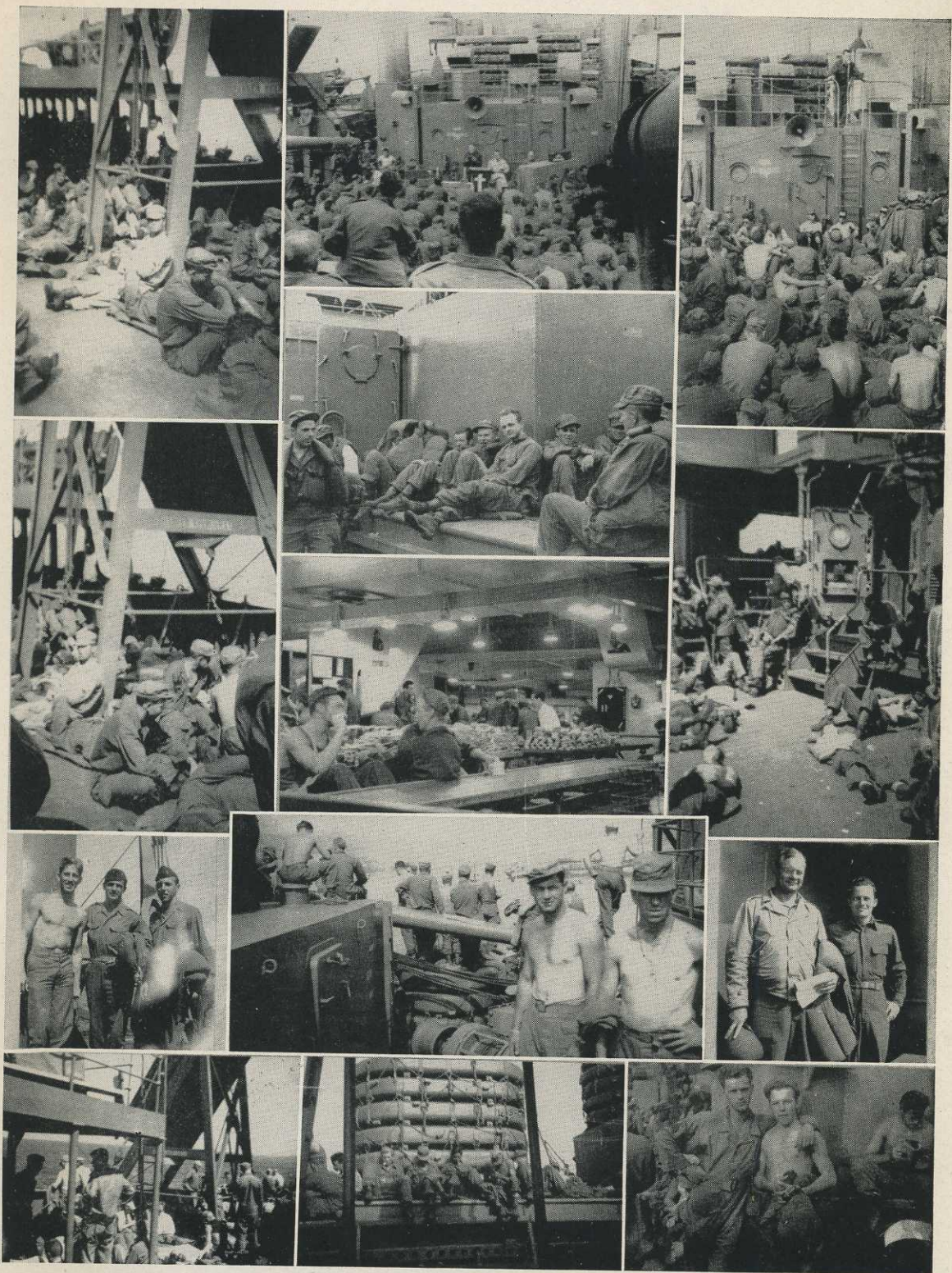
There is always one man who manages to create an interesting diversion and keep the party interesting. In this case, it was a certain line company soldier who, so the rumor goes, was swinging on an open door as we rattled along, fell off, bounced on his head a few times, bull-dozed several pounds of gravel ahead of him with his nose, and came up grinning in triumph when the train was stopped and the whole battalion ran back for first-hand observation of the body. "Betcha fi' hundred francs yo can't do that again!" challenged one man. No Bet.

After several other small incidents not worth mentioning here, we came to the end of the third day and night, and also to our destination, Arles Staging Area. This rocky, dust bound, waterless hole which was to be our jump-off to the CBI, eventually became the last stop before HOME! News of V-J day was received at this location with an indescribable joy. "We're goin' home!" they shouted. And we did, leaving Arles on August 22, 1945.

## HOMeward BOUND

The trip back to the States was made aboard the Santa Maria, and was comparatively uneventful. The 554th was assigned to duties in both the enlisted men's and the officer's mess, and even that unpleasant happening could not dull the thrill of being homeward bound. On September 1st, 1945 the Santa Maria docked at the same pier in Boston from which we had left over thirteen months before.





The above pictures will give you a rough idea of the "tough" life the men led on the return voyage.



The picture at the upper left will give you an idea of the enormous sign unfurled when we landed at Boston. Other shots show the "Welcome Home" Boat. The arrival in the harbor with men cramming every point of advantage, and some of the unloading scenes. Those bags were really light this time!

# HOME AGAIN!

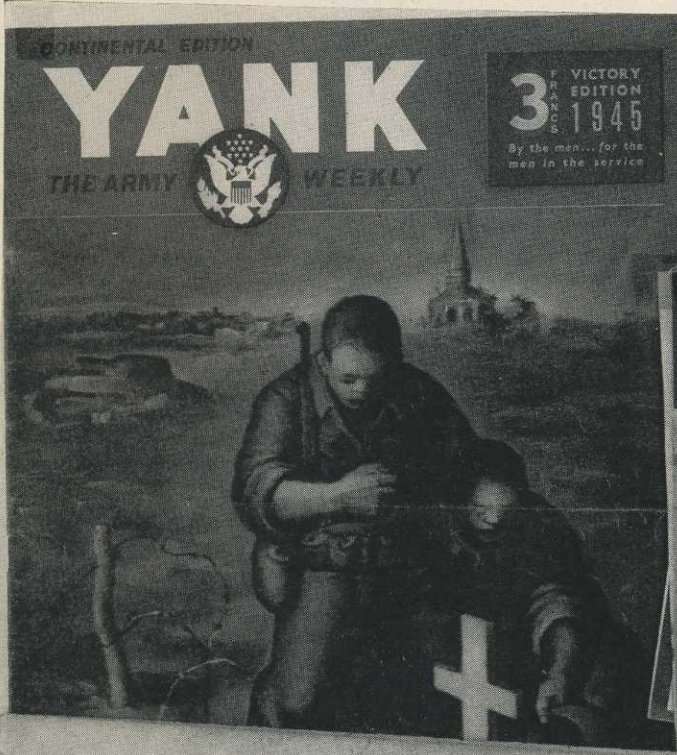
After debarking the Battalion proceeded to Camp Miles Standish, where processing was completed by September 3rd, and all personnel departed on a leave of thirty days. An extension of fifteen days was later authorized, and finally the men were ordered to report to different separation centers. Only about ten percent of the Battalion returned to Camp Campbell, Kentucky on the 27th of October. On the 28th of November the Battalion was reorganized into the 554th Ponton Bridge Company. Practically all of the officers were transferred to other units. Thus ended the story of a proud and courageous unit, that did it's full share in winning the greatest war in history.



# CHOW!



The old saying that an "Army Marches on it's Stomach" is given ample proof by these candid shots of some of the 554 "chowhounds" and of the men who prepared it. There were times when both were entitled to sympathy.



THESE PUBLICATIONS KEPT US INFORMED

# POEMS *by Kohlrus*

## "BRIDGING THE ROER"

The night was cold  
The sky was black.  
Except for the occasional  
Bursting of flak,  
As seen by the men  
Who had duties to perform,  
Another little "D" day  
In the early hours of morn,  
First came the artillery  
Blasting and roaring,  
Combined with the air power  
Who above were soaring,  
Followed by the Infantrymen  
Who took the opposite shore,  
So the river could be bridged  
By the 554,  
Amid falling 88's  
And firing of all type.

The men reached the spot  
That was the bridge site,  
The abutment was laid  
And construction begun,  
They worked like beavers  
Till the bridge was all done,  
But not before  
Some lives were lost,  
Bridging the Roer  
Had taken its cost,  
But not in vain  
For the way was paved,  
To aid untold thousands  
Whose lives could be saved,  
And help bring to a close  
This long drawn out war,  
Hats off to these men  
Of the 554.

## "CROSSING THE RHINE"

The area was quiet  
The night was cool,  
As the men worked cautiously  
For Jerrys no fool,  
Watching and waiting  
From the opposite shore,  
Same as he did  
When we bridged the Roer,  
Suddenly the night  
Turned into day,  
As our men opened up  
Paving the way,  
For the Infantrymen  
To be ferried across,  
And strange to say  
Not a life was lost,  
For Jerry had bungled  
By picking the wrong site,  
As he waited our coming  
During the night,

Too late he discovered  
The error he had made,  
All resistance was broken  
Under the barrage we laid,  
But while retreating  
His guns spoke anew,  
He was still in the battle  
And we knew it, too,  
A couple of shells  
Turned the trick,  
We lost a Lieutenant  
Mail Clerk and Medic,  
The price was high  
That these men paid,  
Amid tears of sorrow  
In a grave they were laid,  
But not forgotten  
The gone in a burst of flame,  
We will always remember them  
God bless their remains.

## "THE WESER RIVER"

It was just another river  
That had to be crossed,  
But same as before  
Needless lives were lost,  
Ahead of the Infantrymen  
Ahead of the tanks,  
The men moved swiftly  
Down to the rivers banks,  
Making the mistake  
Of bridging too soon,  
Under cover of darkness  
Neath a pale yellow moon,  
For Jerry was waiting  
Over on the opposite shore,  
To see that no one bridged  
Not even the 554,  
With machine gun fire  
They held the men at bay,  
And then threw in mortars  
As on the ground they lay,  
The men were defenseless  
Except for the carbine.

As they crawled to safety  
Amid the bullets whine,  
All thru the night  
The battle raged on,  
With still no bridge  
At the crack of dawn,  
When our artillery moved up  
During the day,  
Blasting and roaring  
To pave the way,  
For the Infantrymen  
To take the other shore,  
So the river could be bridged  
By the 554,  
Who did their job  
And did it well,  
Naming it in honor  
Of the man who fell,  
Echoing our name  
Thruout this war,  
The gallant fighting men  
Of the 554.