

BLUE BOOK

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THESE UNITED STATES...XII—New Jersey
Painted by HERBERT MORTON STOGPS

TWO COMPLETE SHORT NOVELS

STRIKE HARD! BITE DEEP!

Adventures came thick and fast to a
knight in King Arthur's day
by THEODORE GOODRIDGE ROBERTS

THE MAN WHO WAS AFRAID

A story of the Philippines today
by WILLIAM BRANDON

Sixteen Short Stories and Features

ing a white flag, entered the Battalion lines, where he informed Lieutenant Rohmiller of Company E that he was prepared to accept the surrender of the Americans. He elaborated on the hopelessness of the situation, and informed the Americans of Colonel Hardaway's capture. If surrender was not forthcoming by eight P.M., the Americans were to be "blown to bits." This message was delivered to Lieutenant Kerley, E Company C.O. Lieutenant Kerley's reply was classic: "Tell that so-and-so we'll surrender when there's not another bayonet to break in a German belly." The wounded lying about the CP cheered this defiance; they understood that kind of talk. The German attack that night featured tanks, and infantrymen who shouted "Surrender!" as they charged.

Four requests were made to the Air Force for a para-drop on August 9; these resulted in the dropping of two days' supplies at 4:30 P.M., August 10th, many of these bundles landing in enemy territory. Lieutenant John G. Gerl raised the effectiveness of this drop to fifty per cent and earned a Silver Star by leading patrols behind the enemy lines to recover some of the bundles. On August 11 at 7:30 P.M. another day's supply was dropped by the C-47's, most of this falling into enemy hands.

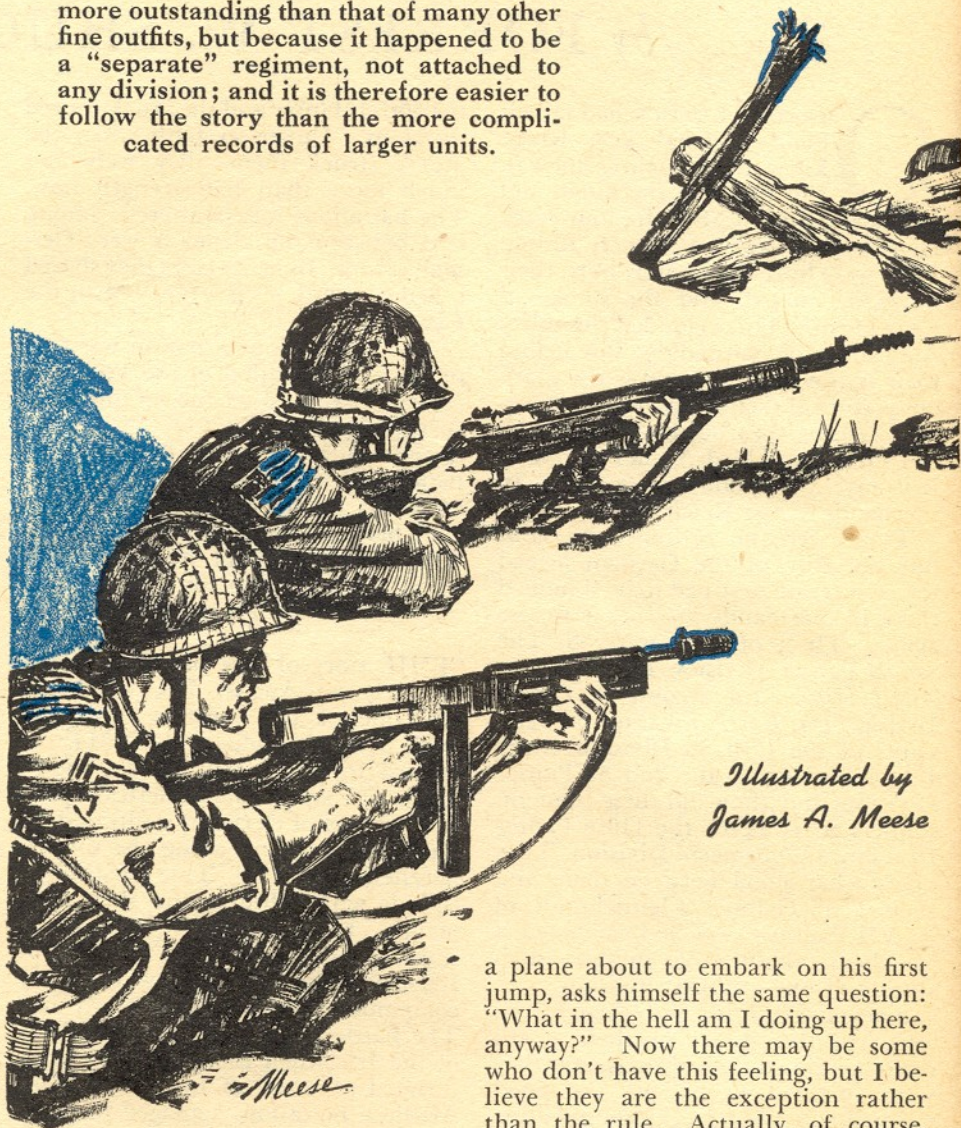
One of the outstanding performances of the whole show was put on by the 230th F.A. Battalion, whose accurate fire made possible the prolonged resistance. From their positions west of Mortain they threw a ring of protective fire around the position each night. They knocked German attacks back on their heels before they started, due to the direct observation furnished by their two forward observers on the hill, Lts. Weiss and Barts, ably abetted by the Cannon Company observer and the several company commanders who were only too eager to point out enemy concentrations.

THE morning of August 12, the rising sun revealed a beautiful sight—every road and lane leading away from Mortain in the direction of Domfront was filled with wagons, tanks, trucks and plodding Jerries all headed for Berlin. They never got there, for up the road at Barentan a task force of the 3rd Armored was pouring fire and brimstone on their bowed heads, while other armored columns circled wide to close the Falaise Gap. The cream was being skimmed.

Three hundred and seventy men came down from Hill 314 to go on and on into the homeland of the supermen and complete their share in crushing the 3rd Reich. The other three hundred were gone before—prisoners, casualties and heroic dead.

COMBAT

WE are printing herewith the story of the 517th Airborne Infantry, because it is a deeply interesting story. Not, however, because its record is any more outstanding than that of many other fine outfits, but because it happened to be a "separate" regiment, not attached to any division; and it is therefore easier to follow the story than the more complicated records of larger units.



Illustrated by
James A. Meese

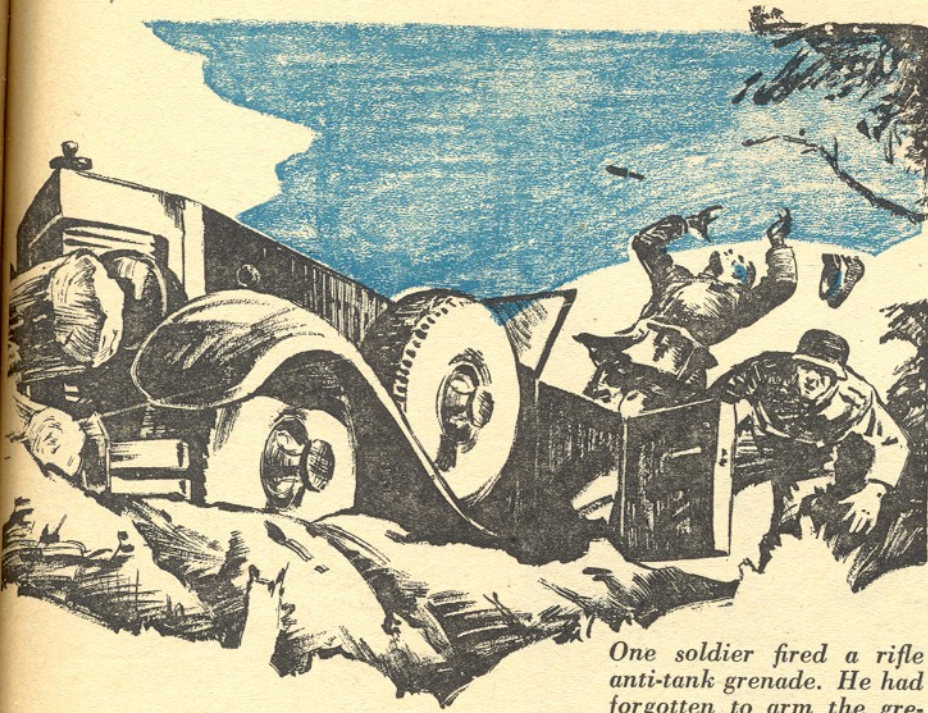
A PARATROOPER had to be in good physical condition. At the parachute school he had to be in good shape to take the jogs, the tumbling, the calisthenics, the landing trainer, the harness drills, the tower jumps and live jumps, and pack his own parachute. He not only had to be in shape, but he had to be a pretty determined character to fling himself out of the door of an airplane just when he was settling down to enjoy the ride. I believe almost every paratrooper, when he finds himself on

a plane about to embark on his first jump, asks himself the same question: "What in the hell am I doing up here, anyway?" Now there may be some who don't have this feeling, but I believe they are the exception rather than the rule. Actually, of course, everybody feels very fine as soon as the chute opens and he realizes suddenly that it is really a very simple operation, and nothing to worry very much about after all.

In this parachute regiment as well as in all regiments preparing for overseas, the work of the paratrooper did not end when he finished the school, but continued just as hard and in many cases much harder. For example, at Tocoa, Ga., where this unit first started training in the summer of 1943, there was a mountain called Curlihee. It was a common practice to jog the paratroopers over

TEAM

by
COLONEL RUPERT D. GRAVES



One soldier fired a rifle anti-tank grenade. He had forgotten to arm the grenade, however.

smitten female was a topic of conversation for many days afterward. The dashing young officer who fell madly in love with the adorable lieutenant only to be betrayed, certainly learned the value of a personal reconnaissance, and I hope has not suffered too harshly for the amount of amusement it afforded his comrades. Also to the many Wacs on board who fell in love with gay young officers, only to find later they had been merely posing as bachelors, I must offer my apologies and remind them that if they had asked me, I would have told them; but nobody asked me. Therefore it was assumed that they didn't want to know. . . .

The fighting in Italy at the time we arrived was centered about Rome, the capital. This city fell suddenly, however. Then started the German delaying action to the north of Rome. From our bivouac on the outskirts of Naples, in the crater of an old volcano, we were moved by LST to Civitavecchia, and thence by truck to the 36th Texas Division Area, to which division we were attached. We were terribly anxious to get into combat to prove that we could fight as well as anybody. At General Walker's headquarters near Grosseto, I had the opportunity to meet General Clark, the commander of the Fifth Army. He was very much interested in the combat team, and told us that this was a splendid time to get into the fight as ground troops and gain combat experience. General Crittenberger, the commander of the IV Corps was also there, and welcomed us to his command.

WE were assigned a sector of generally hilly terrain to the east of Grosseto for our first venture, and after issuing the plans for the next day and moving up to assembly positions, we almost unbelievably waited for the dawn of our first day in combat. To command a regiment in combat was an honor almost beyond my comprehension. Would we acquit ourselves well and be able to take our objective, or would we run into a stone wall in the face of the famous German army we had read and heard so much about? Perhaps somebody would call the attack off before we had a chance to get into battle and put us back in reserve somewhere. These were some of the thoughts that came into our heads as we moved up the dusty Italian roads that June after-

this mountain or march them over carrying full equipment. Perhaps there was too much emphasis on physical conditioning, but it did serve to weed out any who were not determined to stick along with their buddies and with their outfit. These characteristics helped a lot in later days of combat, where hardships were taken easily and in stride. Many times later on in combat, officers and men were heard talking about how rugged it had been back in training or on maneuvers, even though they were then being subjected to artillery or mortar fire, and perhaps to snow or a cold rain.

THE ones that lasted through this training till time to go overseas were about the finest bunch of men it was possible to assemble into any unit. They were tough, and determined, and there was not very much they couldn't stand up to in the way of hardship and long arduous combat. It was almost an impossibility to wear them down; and as a matter of fact, this characteristic was the headache of many a unit commander, when after a long day of drill or training, they would think nothing of hiking ten or fifteen miles to town to let-off some of the exuberance.

In spite of the countless hardships and privations in training, I believe

everybody was glad when the regiment, together with its supporting artillery battalion and engineer company was detached from the division to proceed overseas as a regimental combat team. Although the destination or purpose of this move was not known, the plans for the invasion of Southern France were already being made, and the troops who were to participate in the airborne phase of the invasion were being set up. Even after leaving Hampton Roads on the steamship *Santa Rosa*, and it was found we were headed for Italy, nobody was informed of the ultimate destination of the combat team. Anyway, with four hundred Wacs on board, and the former American Fruit Lines sailing peacefully over gentle seas and beneath azure skies, what difference did future events make?

Although schools were conducted on board ship and plans for use either as ground or airborne operations were being made, there was still time for many a boat-deck romance, and many a Wac's heart was captured in the fourteen-day voyage to the port of Naples. The irrepressible spirits of the troopers also found expression in talent shows and countless pranks played at the expense of brother officers and comrades. For example the cruel and heartless masquerade of a handsome lieutenant as a love-

noon of 1944 and sought a covered area beneath the olive trees in the gently rolling countryside. Once in a while some enemy shells would land in our vicinity, but in our advanced stage of ignorance we sort of welcomed them, as they gave us a chance to test ourselves and to become battle-scarred veterans all the more quickly.

To say that we kept busy that first day would be a masterpiece of understatement. Not knowing much about what was in front of us, it was decided to attack in column of battalions.

This was the approved solution of an exercise at the Infantry school that I remembered, but was not quite sure whether it fitted this situation or not. The First Battalion, with Lt. Col.

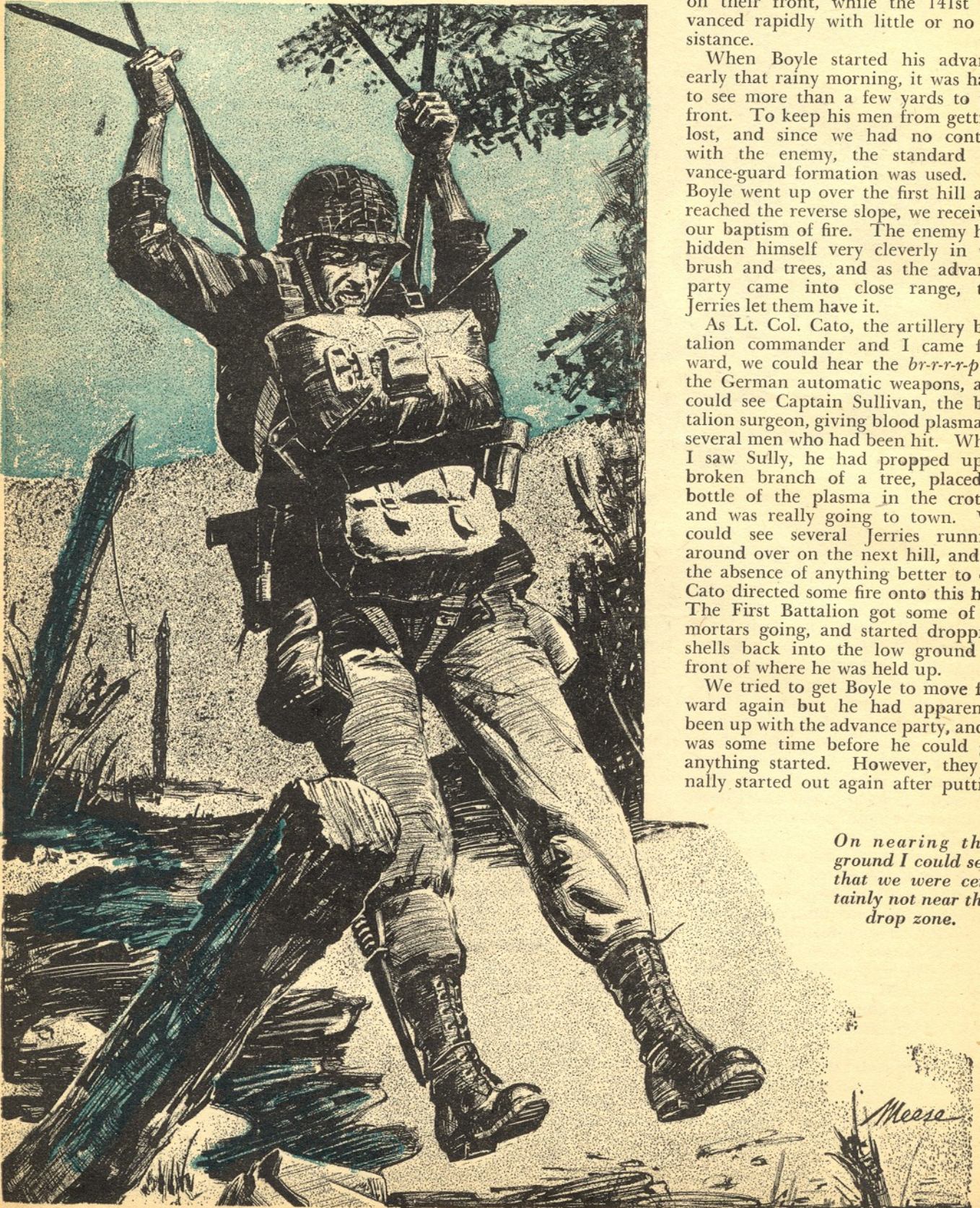
Boyle in command, was to lead the way. A company from the Third Battalion, the reserve battalion, was put out on the flank into the hills, and promptly went over into the sector of the 141st Infantry and ran into all kinds of trouble. I guess this company must have eased the way for the 141st, though, as all the Jerry artillery fire and mines seemed to be on their front, while the 141st advanced rapidly with little or no resistance.

When Boyle started his advance early that rainy morning, it was hard to see more than a few yards to the front. To keep his men from getting lost, and since we had no contact with the enemy, the standard advance-guard formation was used. As Boyle went up over the first hill and reached the reverse slope, we received our baptism of fire. The enemy had hidden himself very cleverly in the brush and trees, and as the advance party came into close range, the Jerries let them have it.

As Lt. Col. Cato, the artillery battalion commander and I came forward, we could hear the *br-r-r-r-p* of the German automatic weapons, and could see Captain Sullivan, the battalion surgeon, giving blood plasma to several men who had been hit. When I saw Sully, he had propped up a broken branch of a tree, placed a bottle of the plasma in the crotch, and was really going to town. We could see several Jerries running around over on the next hill, and in the absence of anything better to do, Cato directed some fire onto this hill. The First Battalion got some of its mortars going, and started dropping shells back into the low ground in front of where he was held up.

We tried to get Boyle to move forward again but he had apparently been up with the advance party, and it was some time before he could get anything started. However, they finally started out again after putting

On nearing the ground I could see that we were certainly not near the drop zone.



Meese

some 81-mm. mortar fire on a stone building that could be seen down in the next valley, and where one or two Germans had been seen. We found later that this very quiet-looking building was not only the CP, but housed the aid station, with about a dozen wounded Turcoman soldiers, and also was used as a place of detention for approximately fifty Italian civilians, mostly women, who had been rounded up in that area to prevent them from giving warning to the approaching Americans.

SEVERAL women, apparently murdered for some reason, were also lying in the wooded valley near the building. Perhaps they had decided to escape, or perhaps the Germans had killed them to teach the others a lesson. However, as we reached the building, the German surgeon, a major, was administering hypodermic injections to his wounded. Capt. Dearing, regt'l S-2, got the women started back toward Grosseto. They were a pretty scared bunch, and whether they figured they were in worse hands or better, I have never found out. The German surgeon objected very strenuously to the placing in the ambulance of some of the women who had been hurt, as he could not understand why a woman, particularly an Italian woman, should receive priority over a German soldier, even though he was only a Turcoman. However, the surgical instruments left at the aid station were of a very high quality, and deeply appreciated by our own surgeon.

As the attack moved on, we used the same building for a temporary CP and also used part of it to hold prisoners until they could be questioned and sent back to the rear. Some of the men must have got pretty well worked up over the way the Germans were fighting, and against these Asiatics that were being used as sacrifice troops. Generally these Turcomen would remain under cover until our troops got up pretty close; then they would fire all their ammunition before yelling "*Kamerad.*" This method of fighting was very economical of German troops, and yet served the purpose of delaying and inflicting casualties on the Americans.

We advanced about seventy-five miles farther north with the 36th Division. However, most of the fighting was similar to the first day except for minor variations. Our sectors of advance were generally through the Italian hills. We got so we liked the hills, because we did not catch so much artillery fire as down on the plains, which the Germans always had under good observation. The men had to carry most of their heavier weapons and ammunition as the trails were generally unsuited for vehicles; and al-

though this was very tiring work, I believe they preferred to be tired and alive rather than fresh and dead. The resistance was about the same most of the way until toward the last of it, when we ran into German SS troops. When these people decided to hold a place, there was only one way to get them out, and that was to kill them.

We used the Italian partisans continuously. Captain Dearing had rounded up parties of them, and they were a heterogeneous-looking bunch. They wore civilian clothes, of course, but with the Tommy-guns that we gave them, boxes of ammunition and grenades stuffing out their pockets and shirts, they looked quite fierce. They had suffered so much at the hands of the Germans, many of them having lost members of their immediate families, as a result of artillery fire or mines, that they hated the Germans with a deep and intense hatred.

Dearing used to take them on forays behind the enemy lines, where they would surprise groups of Germans working on the roads. We tried to use them once in a while as guides, but this didn't work very well, as they would get into long and animated conversations not only among themselves but with every Italian we came across.

During this time we got a good picture of the Italian countryside with its rolling hills covered with olive trees, terraced vineyards and medieval-looking stone and masonry, towns which were perched almost always on the top or side of a high hill. To see an Italian woman cook a meal with a few stray faggots in the little holes in the floor on each side of the big fireplace was a source of wonderment to me. If she had a lovely electric range at her disposal, I doubt if the meal could have been prepared any better or more quickly.

As one town after another fell, Batignano, Montesajo, Sticciano, Fellonica, we had a chance to see the friendly spirit of the Italian people. They didn't have very much else, but they did have wine and bread, and always celebrated the liberation of their town. I can easily remember driving up the winding road to Sticciano, with a man and his wife perched precariously on the hood of the jeep, each of them holding a bottle of wine and a loaf of bread, waving and yelling deliriously at everybody they passed, whether American or Italian.

General Clark had been exactly right: this was a splendid time to get combat experience and get shaken down. Our casualties had been extremely low, and in the fast-moving operation we learned many lessons that helped us later on. As the regiment had been sent overseas within less than a year of its activation, we knew we had a lot to learn, and this gave us the framework on which to

base our future training. We were all very tired after our two weeks excursion over the Italian hills, and were not at all reluctant about moving back to the vicinity of Cimpini airfield, about six miles south of the metropolis of Rome, on being relieved by the Japanese-American regiment, the 442nd. Why we had been pulled out so suddenly was a mystery to most of us at first, but we soon found that we were to get ready for the mission that had caused our detachment from the 17th Airborne Division and rushed us overseas in such a hurry. This mission was the invasion of southern occupied France.

OUR new bivouac area south of Rome was delightful. The nearest town was Frascati, apparently the home of the famous wines of the same name. In the fight for Rome this town had been pretty well bombed, and like other Italian towns, the people lived in a very primitive manner and of course were very poor. Instead of trying to house the men in the limited facilities of the town, and as it was a beautiful Italian midsummer, we had the men pitch their tents on the shaded slopes of the hills outside of Frascati. Anyway, we didn't want them to get too soft, for we knew we had work to do later. When I said beautiful Italian summer I meant just that, provided you forgot about the countless hordes of flies, held your nose against the general filth and lack of sanitation, and succeeded in escaping the GI's—a common name given to a form of dysentery which almost everybody seems to contract in Italy. But with passes to Rome, most of the evils could be forgotten in that wondrous city.

In Naples we admired the beauty of a city where from your hotel balcony or from a vine-covered patio you could look across the city to the bay reflecting a sky of the deepest blue. But there was without question a greater regard for Rome, with its beautiful churches like St. Paul's adorned with magnificent works of the old masters, its other historic monuments such as the Colosseum, the Catacombs, its ancient squares and parks such as the Borghese, its beautiful buildings like the Palazzo Venezia and ancient street fountains, its up-to-date hotels and restaurants, like the Excelsior and Broadway Bill's, that had been set aside for the use of enlisted men and officers; perhaps it was just because there were more women, for there actually were quite a few in Rome. . . . Now, I will admit they were hungry, and it was quite a common sight, so I have heard, that when a meal was brought to the table at Broadway Bill's, usually the winsome young Italian date would sweep about half of it into the ample purse brought along expressly for that purpose.

IN between the visits to Rome, everybody was very busy preparing for the 15th of August, the day we would enplane and fly away to another place still held by the enemy. This date was always in the back of our heads—sometimes very clearly, sometimes dimly but nevertheless always present. All our training, all our preparations, were based on being ready for that day. We hauled all our parachutes by truck from Naples; and Captain Freund, the parachute officer, set up a packing shed in Mussolini's Science building which had been constructed of purest marble to impress visitors to Mussolini's Worlds Fair. Where he was he didn't need it any more, and it served admirably to pack the some three thousand parachutes that we would need. General Frederick, the former Special Service Force Commander, was designated to be in command of the airborne task force under General Patch, the 7th Army commander. Plans, troops and equipment were gradually rounding into shape. In addition to our regimental combat team were the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion, which had flown from England to Africa the year before under Colonel Raft; the 551st Prcht. Inf. Bn. under Lt. Col. Juareg, later killed in the Battle of the Bulge; the 2nd British Parachute Brigade under General Pritchard, or I should say Brigadier Pritchard; the 550th Glider Inf. Bn. under Lt. Col. Sacks; the 406th Glider F.A. Bn.

In addition to these airborne troops, several units like the Anti-tank company of the 442nd, and a 4.2 chemical mortar company were trained as gliderists and attached to the airborne task force. Tactical exercises were drawn up and practiced similar to the missions required after reaching France; war rooms were set up at each regimental and battalion command post, where sand-tables and maps portrayed the various objectives and surrounding areas, and where units down to squads were briefed on what they would do after hitting the silk in Southern France.

As the days stretched into August, everybody worked a little more feverishly; some had forebodings of what was going to happen, but each was anxious and eager to get at least one combat parachute jump under his belt, or in case of the glider units, to get at least one combat glider landing. Finally under the warm Italian skies, near the ancient city of Rome, and to the lilting tune of "Lili Marlene," everything was set for the move to the departure airfields and the great adventure.

Generally the plan was fairly simple. The airborne task force was to land on the early morning of D-day, the 15th of August, just before the amphibious forces of the 7th Army struck

the heavily defended beaches. The airborne plan centered around the little town of Le Muy about fifteen miles inland from Frejus. The 509th was to come in first at 0415, land to the south and southwest of Le Muy and capture the high ground overlooking that town. We were to come in next about 0430, and seize the high ground a few miles to the west and north of Le Muy, and covering the main roads running east and west to Toulon and north-south to Draguignan, where the German Corps CP was located.

The British were to land about 0600, seize the hills to the east and northeast of Le Muy. The gliders were to come in about 1800 on D-day with their heavier weapons and equipment and reinforce the paratroopers already on the ground. The British were to capture the town of Le Muy, where about one battalion of Germans were supposed to be billeted. We had the job of capturing La Motte just to the north of Le Muy, and Les Arcs along the main road to the west. All units were to prevent reinforcements from reaching the enemy garrisons along the coast, and to prevent troops

from the coast from withdrawing along the main roads running north and south. The 36th, 45th and 3rd divisions, after forcing a landing, were to attack north through our sector and pass through us by at least D plus 4 days. The drop zone where we were supposed to land was about one mile to the northwest of Le Muy. We didn't know it at the time, but the Germans had prepared this field with anti-airborne poles about fifteen to twenty feet high and about the same distance apart. This didn't bother us much, however, as we didn't use the drop zone, anyway.

At our airfields, which were distributed to the north of Rome, the men were divided into plane-loads, bundles loaded and checked, escape kits issued and last-minute briefings conducted. Each battalion was at a separate field, including the artillery battalion. I went with the 2nd, which was under the command of Lt. Col. Seitz of Kansas City. Although we had two days at the airfield, it was none too long. Everybody thought of additional items he should take along or should discard. Camouflage paint was issued, and everybody painted his face to go with the camouflaged clothes. Extra ammunition was issued for men to carry in their already well-loaded field bags. Berlin Sally had been busy on the radio and had announced that it was unnecessary to get short haircuts for the jump into France, as the war would be over by then.

A P.X. ration was issued at the airfields, uselessly as I thought, for we already had three days K-rations, and I know many an overloaded field bag was torn loose later on the opening shock of the parachute. About midnight we loaded on the planes for the take-off at one-thirty A.M. We tried to get a little sleep on the floor of the plane, but it was pretty uncomfortable, and we were glad when the plane finally taxied around into position for the take-off.

OUR course lay across the Ligurian Sea with Corsica as a check point. The Navy had also spotted ships along the course which could serve as markers. The night was fairly clear at first, with about a half-moon visible in the sky as Major Kinser the artillery liaison officer, Major Patton, the regimental operations officer and the rest of us tried to get as comfortable as possible for the two-and-one-half-hour ride. We had intended to remove at least some of our equipment during the ride, but rather than go to the trouble of getting all that equipment back on again in a blacked-out ship, we left it all on and simply unfastened our leg-straps so that the webbing would not cut into our shoulders too much.

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The time seemed to pass quickly enough, or at least as I remember it. Maybe I was too numb to remember very much about it. My clearest recollections are from after 0400 on. We were supposed to hit the coast, and make a landfall, as the Air Corps called it, about 0420, thereby reaching our drop zone inland around 0430. As 0420 approached, we started watching for land, but all we could see was a big blanket of fluffy-looking haze beneath the ship. We could see the other ships in the formation clearly enough, but whether we were still over land or sea, we couldn't tell.

No parachutist in his right mind wants to land in water with over a hundred pounds of equipment on, so perhaps you can imagine our feelings. As we were straining our eyes to see some land, the lights that showed the equipment bundles were still on went out. We had the men standing up and hooked up at 0415. I started to ask the crew chief why in hell he had released the bundles so soon, but before getting any answer, the red light went on, and we had the men move up to the door. It was now 0425, and we still could not see whether we had reached land, not to speak of reaching France. After about two minutes the green light went on and we went out.

We were still hitting about 160 miles an hour, and the blast cracked the parachute open with an awful wallop. However, just before going out the door, we saw the peak of a high hill or mountain rising above the blanket of haze. To me it was as comforting as the crest of Mt. Ararat must have been to Noah after the big flood. We had expected a lot of flak on reaching the coast, but, because of the heavy fog over the land, I guess the Germans couldn't see us any better than we could see them; and if there was any flak, I didn't know about it.

Certainly the Germans knew we were coming, because everybody in Rome apparently knew what we were doing. In fact, some of the civilians seemed to know more about it than we did. This operation seemed to be one of the poorest-kept secrets of the war. However, how to keep a lot of airborne troops hustling around near a large city and not have the entire population guess that something was coming off would have been still more of a miracle.

It seemed like a matter of hours to reach the ground instead of less than a minute. The planes had flown higher than planned so as to keep above the fog, and we must have jumped at about two thousand feet. I saw other troopers jumping just before I left the plane; but going down through the haze, I lost sight of everybody. On nearing the ground I could see dark shapes that looked like trees,



and knew that we were certainly not near the drop zone, which was an open vineyard. I bent my knees slightly, and as I landed, my carbine, which I had tucked under my reserve, came up and smacked me in the face. The parachute descended almost vertically, and the next thing I knew, I was tangled up in a mass of silk and suspension lines.

I got out my pistol for protection in case there were any Germans about, and started to cut the webbing with my knife. The webbing was tough and soon I was dripping with perspiration, not only due to the exertion, but also because I had put on a heavy wool undershirt, which I now regretted. Finally I succeeded in getting clear and started to look for my pistol, which I had placed carefully on the ground while sawing away. After searching carefully in the dark for about ten minutes, I couldn't find the darn' thing anywhere and started to look for Kinzer and Paxton, who had jumped right behind me.

Several times I fell into deep rocky gullies and got mixed up in underbrush and fallen trees in the dark. I did succeed in picking up two men whom I heard also thrashing around, but they were from another stick. Where we were we had no idea, but we did know that we were probably somewhere in France near the top of a wooded and rocky hill. We decided to wait another hour till daylight and then get our bearings before starting toward the assembly area, wherever that might be.

As daylight approached we could hear firing toward the bottom of the hill. We began to pick up more men wandering around, and finally ran into Captain McKinley, the C.O. of F company. We could see a town down in the valley, and according to the pattern of roads, decided it must be

Le Muy. As F company was supposed to capture La Motte as rapidly as possible, we bypassed Le Muy, which was in the British sector and where a lot of firing was still going on. As we went along we kept running into small groups of Germans, but nothing particularly formidable.

One German, whom we couldn't see in the thick brush, kept yelling, "*Kamerad! Nicht schützen Sie!*" Somebody worked up close and started to throw a hand grenade when somebody else said: "Don't throw that darn' thing—I'm right in front of you." Nobody saw the German after that, so I guess he was simply covering somebody's rapid departure and had then drifted back through the woods himself.

I asked the lieutenant in charge of the advance party why he didn't put out any flank protection. He said that you couldn't do that in this type of country. Well, if you can find any better country to put out flankers, I would like to see it, as we were by this time down on the low ground near the town, and we came upon others who had been hiding from German patrols. One youngster we picked up asked us what kept us so darn' long. He apparently had been having a hard time all alone, dodging a German patrol that had spotted him when he landed close to Le Muy.

As we neared La Motte, we sent out a patrol to find out the situation. It returned quickly and reported Lt. Col. Seitz and the remainder of the 2nd Battalion had the town in their possession and were now moving to their objective along the road towards Draguignan. So we kept on through the town, Co. F to join up with the 2nd Battalion, and I to reach the Chateau St. Rosseline, which we had selected on the map as the regimental CP. Lemansky, my combined runner and bodyguard, also joined me near La Motte, and stuck pretty close after that. At St. Rosseline, which we reached about noon, we found Paxton had already taken charge of things and had started work on getting some of the anti-airborne traps removed so the 551st and the gliders could come in that afternoon.

I also found Capt. Fraser, who was in command of the regimental reserve of two companies. He had his own company from the 1st Battalion, but the company from the 3rd Battalion was not yet to be found. Major Vella, the regimental surgeon, was setting up his aid station and treating jump casualties as best he could. There were quite a few broken ankles from landing on the rough terrain. Among these were Capt. Peirce, the S-1, Lt. Col. Walton, regimental executive, Major Cross, exec. of the 2nd Battalion, and Capt. Armstrong, CO of the

Co. D, who had landed on a sharp stake where he sits down.

As the chateau was occupied by a Frenchman and his family, we simply set up in the carriage shed and appropriated only one or two rooms of the main building. Later in the afternoon we got a radio message from the 3rd Battalion that they had landed at Callian, about twenty-five miles away and were then en route to join the regiment. Lt. Col. Boyle, always in the thick of trouble, had got pinned down in a building in Les Arcs and was having a hot time keeping body and soul together. Major Bowlby, however, the battalion executive, had managed to work his way to the objective gathering up about half the battalion and was now holding his objective as planned.

Nobody as yet was on the 3rd Battalion objective, so we sent Capt. Fraser out there temporarily to occupy it with his lone company of the regimental reserve. Lt. Col. Cato had magnificent luck with his parachute artillery, and had been set up ready to fire since 1100 that morning with the bulk of his guns. All except one battalion had landed pretty close—that is, within a few miles of its objective. By the afternoon of D-day, all the regimental objectives had been occupied, and the artillery was in position and ready. Now all we had to do was to see how the situation developed, get Boyle out of Les Arcs and get the 3rd Battalion back into the fold so we would have at least a small reserve to play around with.

THAT afternoon of D-day we went down to watch the rest of the task force come in. It was a fine sight to see the hundreds of gliders being towed overhead, cut loose, and then come in trying to find a place to land. A lot of them crashed pretty badly, and soon our regimental aid station was going full blast with injured glider pilots and others who were hurt while landing. Major Vella placed them around the inside courtyard of St. Rosseline, and with Lieut. Dickerson, who had made his first jump into combat, made them as comfortable as possible. The 551st paratroopers also came in and went off immediately to relieve the 2nd Battalion on its objective as planned. The 2nd then went over to the 3rd Battalion objective, and we had our regimental reserve back again.

That night we started getting a little artillery fire from down the valley to the west, and the situation began to develop. The threat began to loom up. From the west in the valley we could see Germans running around apparently headed toward Le Muy. At first we were slow to fire on them, as at a distance they were indistinct and we thought there was a possibility

that it might be more of our troopers moving in toward their objectives. However we didn't feel too badly, as now the 4.2 company had joined us by glider and also the anti-tank company of Japanese-Americans.

On D plus 1, the 2d Battalion moved down and captured Les Arcs without too much trouble. Lt. Col. Zais and his 3d Battalion came staggering in very tired after their long march through the hills, and arrived about 1600. We put them in some woods in the valley so they would be in position to move against the enemy now obviously filtering eastward up the valley. In the maps and on the terrain models, we had figured that with battalions occupying objectives on both sides, they could see and fire on anything moving up the low ground.

This was true to a certain extent, and the 1st Battalion from its position was getting in some good mortar fire on located targets. Actually there was a lot of cover and concealment, and many gullies and ditches along which the enemy could move unobserved, and this was what they were trying to do. Where they came from I don't know, but believe they must have been Germans who finding they might be cut off from the combined airborne and seaborne attack, were trying to break a way back toward Draguignan, already mentioned as the enemy corps CP. After talking with Col. Ellis, the task force G-3, it was decided to let the 3d Battalion attack that same evening in spite of their fatigue, with a view to clearing the valley and joining up with the 2d Battalion at Les Arcs. Six o'clock was set as the time of attack, and as we heard the amphibious attack had been successful, we decided to use plenty of ammunition, about seven hundred rounds in the preliminary 4.2 concentration.

The 4.2's started in on their first target around the railroad track that crossed the valley, and as the 3d Battalion started forward, lifted to an area beyond the railroad. Quite a lot of white phosphorus was fired, and how any Germans could be left in the area was beyond me; but as they crossed the tracks, Lieut. Freeman of Co. H and his first sergeant were both hit by machine-gun fire. However, the attack went along smoothly otherwise. Shortly after dark the 3d Battalion, which had landed twenty-five miles away from its objective, had staged the attack which relieved the pressure against us from the west. There was no more trouble from this direction.

While my personal experiences on landing were rather tame, there were many others who had somewhat more startling adventures. A group from the 3d Battalion had to leave about ten injured and wounded men in Callian, a town held by the Germans. These

men were aided by the French Maquis, and about a week later were rescued. Several German trucks were encountered loaded with Germans and marked with the Red Cross insignia. These trucks were surprised and many Germans were killed or captured. Capt. McGiever, and a group from the 3d Battalion were strafed by P-38's on their way back to St. Rosseline. However, on lighting a yellow smoke-candle, they finally convinced the planes that they were not Germans and were not bothered after that. . . .

Sergeant Heckard, who was injured slightly on the jump, remained behind with an officer from the O.S.S. and arranged with the German commander of the fortress at Le Roch near Fayence for its surrender. Many convincing arguments had to be presented to the German commander before the surrender, but the fear instilled by the airborne invasion finally prevailed. Although some of the Germans filtered back from Le Roch, a sizable group of exactly one hundred and seventy-four were rounded up by Heckard and the O.S.S. captain.

A group from Company B, 1st Battalion landed near Draguignan. They captured two German trucks containing officers and men. They killed three officers and captured twenty-five prisoners on their way to their objective. A patrol was sent out near Draguignan which did not return. It was found later that the members of the patrol were captured by a German unit which in turn was surrounded by French F. F. I.'s. The Germans, rather than surrender to the French, surrendered to the patrol leader, Pfc. Gray, who turned them over to the French anyway. There were two hundred and fifty in this group.

The artillery landed fairly well together except one group gathered up by Major Franks, with about thirty men who had been dropped near the coast, adjacent to the town of St. Raphael; they had put together two 75's and were pushing them up the road to rejoin Cato near Le Muy. Some Frenchmen warned them of their location of a German artillery battery up the road a way. Frank had his guns set up, went forward himself with a few men and a radio to set up an observation post. After ranging in with smoke, Frank had them fire for effect. The Germans were completely surprised, suffered many casualties, and were thrown into confusion. What remained of the German battery pulled out in great haste.

ON D-day plus one, a soldier from the First Battalion drove up to the CP in a big black German car built rakishly low to the ground. It was a welcome present, as we had no transportation and we needed vehicles at headquarters in which to get around

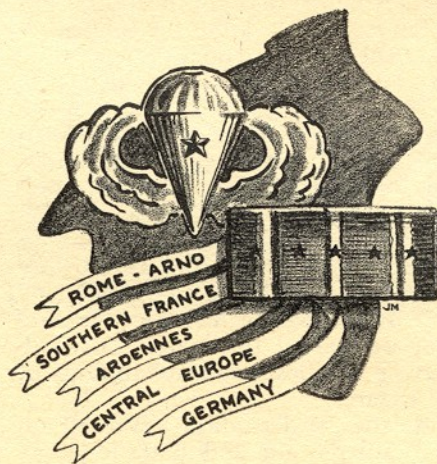
on visits, and get written reports back to Task Force headquarters. The back of the car was quite a mess, however, as it was about half full of blood, and what looked like brains were scattered around on the floor. When I remarked that the car was a little untidy, the soldier said, "Colonel, don't worry about that," and shot a hole through the floor which permitted the blood to drain out. This car, according to the soldier, had been captured by a platoon under Lt. Rearden, of the 1st Battalion. Rearden had set up a road block on the road running past the 1st Battalion objective into Le Muy. Shortly afterward the German car came along and very inconveniently stopped at the road block, and the officers in the back of the car gave the Hitler salute, thinking that these must be German soldiers. One soldier fired a rifle anti-tank grenade at the car, striking one of the officers in the head. The soldier had forgotten to arm the grenade, however, and the grenade did not explode. Nevertheless it proved quite effective, for it broke the German's skull wide open and he slumped over into the bottom of the car. The other Germans, realizing their mistake, tried to escape by jumping out of the car and making a dash for cover. They were also cut down by rifle-fire, and the car sent over to the regimental CP. The car belonged to Gestapo officers who were on their way from Marseilles to the interior of France. To find American soldiers fifteen miles into the heart of a heavily defended defensive zone, practically before the attack began, was simply beyond belief.

There were literally hundreds of stories passed around within a few days after the landing, and the above minor incidents are a fair sample of the others. Not much has been told or written about the southern France invasion, and I am not one to say that it was nearly as rough as landing in Normandy. However, I would like to say that the area was occupied in force and heavily defended. On viewing the seacoast defenses along the beaches later, I was surprised at the vast amount of work and preparation that had gone into them. In dozens of places where amphibious troops might pick to land particularly along good stretches of beach, there was a veritable honeycomb of thick pillboxes, blockhouses, and barbed wire entanglements. Many of the pillboxes and blockhouses were cleverly camouflaged to resemble bathhouses, restaurants and stores, including the appropriate signs clearly visible.

It is true that there were no large concentrations of German armor in this area, such as a panzer division. In addition, the Normandy operation had already been concluded and a segment of France was now in our pos-

session to include Paris. The Germans could not afford to strip the Normandy areas to fight in Southern France, and consequently, the occupation troops of Southern France were left to their own resources. At the same time, the American forces thrown against Southern France were comparatively small initially, and remained that way for some time.

I believe, however, that the French Maquis and F.F.I. in this area were of great assistance. The southern hills of France were a veritable stronghold of free Frenchmen. They had already been at work, but as soon as the invasion started, they were all over the



place. They greatly hampered the movement of German troops, as any Germans caught out in the fields or woods at night were usually pretty well taken care of. As a result, the enemy huddled into the towns and villages, and it was comparatively easy to locate and capture a company or a battalion at a time. Information from French sources also was of great abundance and usually accurate.

The people of southern France did not fear the Germans as did the people of northern France, and for a good reason. Southern France had not been overrun and destroyed as was northern France in World War I, and this must have been still vividly impressed into the minds of the inhabitants of such places as Rheims, Soissons, Arros, Lens, Château-Thierry and many others. . . .

On the fourth day, elements of the 36th and 45th divisions reached our area, and we were temporarily out of a job. However, this condition did not last very long, as we were next assigned the mission of relieving the 141st Infantry Regiment, which was then protecting the right flank of the Seventh Army. The special service came in and relieved the 2nd British Brigade, the job of pushing forward toward the Italian border reducing whatever resistance we found on the way. The S.S.F. was on the right with the 509th and 551st, and 517th was on the left, well inland and in

country that was hilly at first and mountainous later as we drew closer to the Italian border. In the meantime the bulk of the 7th Army was to drive straight up the Rhine Valley.

It was taking a little time to build up supplies on the beach, and at this time we were pretty limited in both vehicles and rations. We did use sometimes the jeeps of the anti-tank company who had brought them in by glider, but the six two-and-a-half-ton trucks allotted to the regiment were pretty small to take care of the long ration and ammunition haul, and precluded any ideas of transporting men by truck. Cato also had only a few trucks to haul his artillery, ammunition and rations and ended up working out a plan where he would rush his guns forward with skeleton crews and start the rest of the battalion marching up to the new gun position. Actually, I believe that if Cato didn't have any transportation at all, he would have figured out some way of keeping his guns in close support of the infantry.

I believe all the Infantry felt the same way about Col. Cato and the 460th, for with those 75-mm. pack howitzers in support, they attacked with absolute confidence that the artillery fire would be where they wanted it and not in their own lap. Later on I used to hear enlisted men talk of the best artillery in the U. S. Army. When they did this, they were referring to their own. Later on when we were supported by artillery from other units, and it would sometimes land among them inflicting casualties, they would wish that they had their own 460th supporting them again.

AFTER relieving the 141st on the right of the Seventh Army, our first mission was to capture Fayence. As the fortress of St. Roch overlooked the town, we thought at first that this might present some difficulties. As a preliminary, we shelled the town in the late afternoon and sent patrols to reconnoiter that night. During the afternoon, Capt. Bigler was trying to find a place to set up the CP and came across some likely-looking buildings fairly close to the town of Fayence. As they started to unload the radios, they suddenly came under the fire of a 20-mm. gun from the top of the hill in front of them. They beat a hasty retreat without too much damage, but a patrol had to go there that night to get the radios and medical equipment they had abandoned in haste. This was the second time within a few days that Bigler had come under accurate German fire, and his remark of, "You're gotta be nimble!" became a motto in the regiment.

However, the situation changed quickly the next morning, as by the first rays of sunlight we saw about two hundred Germans with their

hands in the air march down the hill from the town and give themselves up to the outposts of the 2nd Battalion. Unbeknown to us, the O.S.S. captain, accompanied by Sgt. Heckard, had been arranging the surrender of the town, and had completed the final arrangements shortly after dark of the day before. Our artillery fire had clinched the O.S.S. captain's arguments, as they conferred with the garrison commander at Fort St. Roch.

Callian was the next town to be liberated. It was the place where most of the 3rd Battalion had landed a few days before, and so this made the second time it had been liberated. The first time the 3rd Battalion had marched through its streets all the children had appeared with flags and cheers to welcome the Americans. It had been rather pathetic to march away to their assigned objective, leaving the town for the Germans to come back in. The French, particularly the children, could not understand why we had done this as they had been looking forward for years for their liberation. However, the second time the town was liberated it was for good. The people were not quite as warm as on the first liberation, but nevertheless were very hospitable. As we had been existing mostly on grapes picked up from the vineyards en route, the C-rations cooked up by the proprietress of the local hotel, and seasoned with onions and garlic, seemed very much like a royal feast.

TWELVE miles farther on was the town of St. Cesare, situated at the peak of a very formidable-looking hill overlooking a long, narrow valley. To approach the town over anything but a steep, precipitous slope would involve many miles of circuitous travel over roadless terrain. No enemy was encountered on the way to St. Cesare and from an observation post, it looked as if the town was deserted. One company of the 3rd Battalion was ordered to cross the ravine and attack the town frontally while another company cut around and hit the town from the other side. The attack was to start at seven P.M. During the afternoon, Cato ranged his artillery in, and as the advance on the town started we could see Germans rushing from the buildings to positions overlooking the ravine. It looked as though Co. I was going to have a tough time, scaling the steep and long approaches to the town, as already mortar fire was beginning to fall. However they kept on climbing and most of the mortar fire seemed to land in back of them. As they approached the top German machine-gun fire could be heard for a while and then suddenly died out. Darkness now had fallen and the advancing troops could no longer be

seen. Finally the message came back that the town had fallen. . . .

Early the next morning everything looked pretty rosy. Company I had scaled the cliffs in the face of enemy fire and killed the German gunners in their positions. Many of them were still lying around in the rocky field near the town. They were young Nazis from a reconnaissance battalion that had been sent to hold the town. Most of them looked to be about eighteen or nineteen years old. However, these were the best of the German army, rabid Nazis, and as ordered had held their positions until killed.

Our casualties fortunately were extremely light as most of the mortar fire fell in back of the attacking companies who had pushed on out of range. The darkness also had given our men protection as they reached the top of the steep incline. The people of the town who had all kept very much under cover during the attack now appeared and were bent on staging a big celebration. However we had to move on to the next town of St. Vallieres before the Germans had too much time to get set. It was with reluctance therefore that we started the march eastward, leaving the hospitable inhabitants of St. Cesare.

As the 1st Battalion advanced on St. Vallieres, the 2nd Battalion took another route via Grasse, and the 3rd Battalion remained in reserve at St. Cesare to rest up from their previous night's exertions. Except for the long marches everything for the next few days went rather easily. Except for a few mines to move, St. Vallieres gave no resistance. Grasse had been heavily fortified and apparently the Germans had intended to defend it strongly. Several vehicles including an .88 were found by our artillery observers and demolished. However the defense, apparently changed their minds for when the 2nd Battalion started into the town they encountered no opposition and we all pushed on to Bar Sur Loup.

As the Loup River was quite an obstacle we wanted to get the bridge near Bar Sur Loup intact in order to keep supplies moving up to the advancing troops. A strong patrol was sent on ahead of the column to try to capture the bridge. However as the patrol approached the bridge the Germans blew it up and placed machine-gun fire on the advancing patrol. As the river ran through a deep gorge with the surrounding hill rising steeply from the river's edge, we were forced to find other routes over which to get supplies. However the men with their equipment forded the Loup with some difficulty and started for the Var River, our next objective. While at Bar Sur Loup the regimental CP was set up at the house of a very charming French family named Gabriel. They con-

sisted of the father, mother, daughter aged sixteen, and son about twelve years old. They were so kind and solicitous it was hard to do much work because every time you withdrew to be alone for awhile, they would interrupt every few minutes wanting to know if you wanted some tea, or some wine, or a bath or something else. It was generally true that some of the French seemed to realize there were other towns to capture, still many German troops who had to be pushed back. They seemed content to settle down and enjoy life as soon as their particular town was free of Germans.

We were now leaving the hills of France and getting up into the higher and more massive Mountain Alps. Instead of the rich vineyards, farms, and gardens we now found only here and there a lonely goat herder with his herd of goats grazing on the side of a hill. Instead of the broad fields of jasmine cultivated for the perfume industry of Grasse we now found only wild and rocky hillsides with a few patches of scrubby grass and flowers.

IT was in these towns such as Bouillon, Coursegoules, Broc, and Puget Théniers that many members of the French Resistance forces had taken refuge. In spite of the poorness of the country they arranged a banquet at Bouillon, consisting of many courses, that would have done credit to one of the better hotels in New York City. Where all the supplies came from, I don't know, but apparently it had been hidden out from the Germans on their raids through the mountains. The town of Puget Théniers was the largest of the above towns and was veritably the center of French Resistance in the Maritime Alps. It was here that the American woman Isobel Pell had hidden out for months prior to the invasion, while broadcasting information to the outside world over a high-powered radio set. All this was done at no small cost to the French, as the German searching parties on at least several occasions made examples out of the ones they did catch by shooting them in the public square of Puget Thénier and in the presence of the remainder of the family. The cemetery on the outskirts of town bore many evidences of many of these massacres; however, it served only to increase the hatred of these mountain people against the Germans and make their resistance more fierce and determined. They had estimated that it would take the Americans three years to recapture France after its fall. We were over a year late now but had no reasonable excuse to offer them, and could only offer our apologies.

The story of the 517th Airborne will continue in our next issue.