NAVY OPERATES CRAFT TO AID 30TH ON RHINE RIVER

STORM BOATS SPEED FIRST WAVE ACROSS

By ROBERT EUNSON

With the United States 9th Army East of the Rhine, March 24 (AP)—Lieut. Gen William H. Simpson's victory-bound troops crossed the Rhine under fire in Navy landing craft manned by sailors today and established a bridgehead on the east bank.

Riflemen from the 30th one of the war's most famous divisions, which beat the Germans first in the Normandy hedgerows and later chewed its way through the Siegfried Line, made the thrust under an earsplitting bombardment.

The bombardment came from massed land artillery instead of from a ring of battleships and cruisers—otherwise the crossing was like a MacArthur landing in the Pacific.

25 Miles An Hour

The first wave tipped across the Rhine at 25 miles an hour in storm boats powered by 55-horsepower outboard motors. Two engineers handled each boat. The second wave came in assault boats that were used in the Roer River crossings a month ago. These were motor driven this time, not paddled as in the Roer crossings.

Alligators and water buffaloes—just like the ones that stormed ashore on Leyte, Luzon and Iwo Jima in the Pacific—followed next with their amphibian tracks churning up the Rhine.

Right after the alligators hit the beach, Navy-manned landing craft started barging in, loaded with men, tanks, jeeps and bridge supplies.

Trained With Soldiers

The navy task force, commanded by Lieut. Com. Willard R. Patrick, of Newark, N.J., had been training with soldiers in the rear areas.

Combat engineers strung a pontoon bridge across a 1,000-foot stretch of the river.

Patrick's task force came into the 9th Army picture four months ago, but forsook its blue jackets for olive drab while mingling with land troops on the Maas River in Holland.

Known as the "9th Army's Navy," the sailors practiced the assault landings with spearhead divisions, and trained the infantrymen for the Rhine D-day.

Unloaded At Antwerp

Landing craft were unloaded in December at Antwerp and moved up the Albert Canal to the training grounds, where they were pounded against banks of the peaceful Maas in many a mock landing.

Much reconnaissance was required to select the route to get the landing craft to the banks the landing craft now were on of the Rhine, but they were on the right spot at the right time, and they delivered the doughboys into the heart of Hitlerland.

Field Artillery Plays Heroic Role In Stopping Nazis' Belgian Drive

(After eight months of fighting on the western front, Master Sergt. Andrew B. Howe of Savannah reports to his home town. This is his story, as told to an army reporter.)

By M/SGT. ANDREW B. HOWE
Sergeant Major, 118th Field Artillery Battalion

The Old Hickory Division (Thirtieth) was on the line and the 118th Field Artillery Battalion was banging away at targets of opportunity when the news came through of the big German counter-offensive in Belgium.

Then the order came to move. Something was up, but more than that the average G. I., like "Joe" in the song, didn't "know nothin'".

What nobody knew was that in the next few days we would fire off more rounds of ammunition than we could ordinarily get off in a month of good fighting, helping stop a German SS panzer outfit that had nothing between it and the Atlantic ocean but service troops.

After the fast march from our old position, harassed by Jerry strafing and dive bombing all the way, we set up near the Belgian town of Stavelot, on the north side of the German salient.

The panzer column had skirted Malmedy and occupied part of Stavelot, about ten miles away. We got there in the nick of time and our 105 mm. howitzers started pounding the Krauts.

Each gun was firing a round a minute, a pretty good rate of fire. It wasn't good enough.

So we increased it to three rounds a minute. We forgot our housekeeping and put everybody to work on the big guns. Cooks left their pots and pans and started feeding ammo to the howitzers. The tubes got so hot we had a two-and-a-half-ton truck running up and down in front of the batteries with water to be poured down the muzzles of the guns.

In two days we fired about 20,000 rounds of ammunition—one-fifth as much as we had fired in all the fighting since June.

The Krauts were stopped dead. Stavelot was clear.

Fierce fighting in the area, however, didn't subside until Christmas night. From then until we started our present attack there was little movement—for the enemy.

In the middle of January the doughboys jumped off in the attack that is rapidly eliminating the Ardennes bulge in Belgium. On the third day of the attack one of our officers gave an example of the courage and coolness that makes the once all-Savannah outfit proud of its men and its record, no matter where they come from.

Second Lieut. Jack Motes of Sacramento, Cal., is a forward observer for the battalion. His job is to stay in the front, observe enemy movements and emplacements, and to call back their positions to battalion.

The 117th Infantry Regiment had fought its way into the town of Neuville and had gained a bridgehead across a river running through the town. Lieutenant Motes and First Lieutenant Henry N. Miller, of Brooklyn, N. Y., set up observation posts in two buildings on the newly won ground.

Lieutenant Motes set up his radio equipment in the attic of his building. He was on the ground floor when a guard at the door reported enemy tanks and infantry moving down the street. The Krauts were counterattacking.

The guard fired on the Germans. Their attention attracted to the house, a group of German soldiers moved in. Lieutenant Motes retired to the basement, where an infantry company command post had been established.

As the Germans were between him and his radio, he had no way of making direct contact with battalion. So Lieutenant Motes, using the infantry radio, called back to the infantry battalion, who in turn called Lieutenant Miller, who called an artillery liaison officer, who relayed the message to our battalion. All of this was thought through and accomplished while the Jerries were firing and throwing grenades down the stairs.

The message was for the entire battalion to fire on his own position. In a matter of seconds the battalion opened up, stopping the German thrust. Lieutenant Motes and Lieutenant Miller, who called an artillery liaison officer, who relayed the message to our battalion. All of this was thought through and accomplished while the Jerries were firing and throwing grenades down the stairs.

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When the Germans moved into the observation post a corporal went out the back door and lay in the snow to observe the action so he could report back to the battalion. He saw the Germans move in, heard the grenade explosions and assumed the worst. His report was that all the Americans had been wiped out.

As a matter of fact, what happened was that when the firing began the doughboys in the company CP charged up the stairs, shot the Krauts and cleared the building. They set up a bazooka at the front door and fired on a tank going down the street. The shell bounced off the thick hide of the tank and landed amidst a group of enemy foot soldiers, killing quite a number.

Lieutenant Motes says all he did was what he was supposed to do—and no doubt that's right. But doing what you are "supposed to do" under conditions like that is no mean feat.

Bravery under fire is nothing new to the 118th. That is demonstrated by the 144 decorations, not including Purple Hearts, the men have received since we landed, fighting nearly eight months ago. There include thirty-five Silver Stars and one Oak Leaf Cluster for the medal, eighty-two Bronze Stars with nine clusters, and four Air Medals, with twelve clusters.

The Air Medals went to our "grasshopper" pilots, the air observers who fly the little Piper Cubs and Taylorcraft, directing fire for the battalion.

Not many of the original gang of Savannah men are still with the battalion. Our commanding officer, however, Lt. Col. Richard H. Mayer, was born and raised there and fought with this same outfit as a sergeant in the last war. He has been with it ever since.

Colonel Mayer has been the commanding officer since 1939, when we were a Savannah National Guard outfit. He has been awarded the Bronze Star for his skillful leadership.

Silver Stars for bravery in action have gone to Capt. Marvin P. Heery, S-3, communications officer; Capt. Carl C. McLaughlin, liaison officer; and First Lt. Erwin E. Robertson, a forward observer. All are from Savannah. Captain Heery has been awarded the Bronze Star. Lieutenant Robertson is a former enlisted man who earned his commission on the battlefield.

Savannah men who have been awarded the Bronze Star are: Capt. Thomas H. Gerraty, a member of the unit for seventeen years; Master Sgt. George A. Pannal, another 17-year-old man; Second Lt. Richard T. Wallace, also winner of a battlefield commission; Tech. Sgt. Donald E. Helmly, S/Sgt. C. N. Wise, who has won the decoration twice; S/Sgt. James H. Johnson, a veteran of the sergeant; and Sgt. Charles Powell, who is taking leave at home after some hard fighting in which he never once let a turn going forward.

The acts of bravery that merited these decorations were in the tradition of the proud history of our outfit, which dates back before the American Revolution. Men of it have fought in it in 1812, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and in World War I.

In this second war against Germany we first saw action on June 16 in Normandy. We were in on the famous St. Lo breakthrough, helped close the Falaise gap and became part of the task force that chased the enemy clear across France into Belgium, Holland, then Germany itself.

Since we landed there have been but five days of rest.

Savannah can be proud to have fathered a unit like the 118th.

Other Savannah men have been with the unit since we were sworn in for active service on September 16, 1940, are:

First Sgt. Melvin R. Becker, a battery booby; Sgt. William N. Nance, the message center chief; Sgt. James McDonald, of the Medical Department; Sgt. Bennie Sisk, motor sergeant; Sgt. Ernest Sisk, motor sergeant; radio operator in the fire direction center; Sgt. Joseph Fulton, radio operator; Cpl. William Boyd, battalion mail clerk; Sgt. James Lewing, motor mechanic; Cpl. James L. Mock, a battery agent; Cpl. John A. Harvey, battery clerk.

S/Sgt. Cle Lynes battery chief of gun section, Sgt. Dennis Arrington, Col. Mayer's driver; Pvt. John Skipper, wire section man, Pfc. William J. Smith, driver in the communications section; S/Sgt. William L. Waller, battery mess sergeant; T/4 Robert Stafford, motor sergeant; First Sgt. Thomas F. Hogan, S/Sgt. Clifford J. Cox, mess sergeant; T/4 Lloyd B. Moore, cook; Sgt. George L. Johnson, ammunition sergeant, and Sgt. Earl G. Kirkley, a chief of section.

Not So Tough Sledding In No-Mans-Land

Doughboys of the 30th Division's 120th Inf. Reg. were crouched in positions dug in frozen ground in the outpost line surrounding Malmedy—waiting for the Nazis to strike again. The Germans were dug in on the other side of the ridge.

There was yelling and shrieking suddenly on the slope which was "no-man's-land" and Lt. John Bryant, of Columbus, Ga., said to the doughs around him: "Get set, men. Here they come!"

The Yanks relaxed and joined in the yelling when from the wooded road a bunch of Belgian kids popped, up pulling sleds. The kids spent the afternoon sliding in no-man's-land.

REICH HOMES DISPLAY FLAGS OF SURRENDER

By ERNEST LEISER
Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

GARZWEILER, Germany, Feb. 28 (Delayed)—The war in this sector is moving so fast that it has caught the German civilians flat-footed.

During the slow-moving, bitterly contested few days that followed the Roer River crossing, American troops would enter a town and find it deserted, wrecked, looted by civilians who had fled before the invading soldiers arrived. Few, if any buildings were left standing in the towns along the river's edge. Few, if any, Germans were left when the doughs pushed in.

Today, the situation is different. In this town, the last to be captured by the racing armored and dough units before the security backers went into defiant and blanketed subsequent gains in secrecy, most of the houses are still intact, except for broken windows. In the doorways of most of the houses, civilians are out worriedly, interested in every movement of the American soldiers, timid, eager to oblige, and subservient in manner.

Create Problem

Exactly reversed, too, is the situation which prevailed during the first days, when German civilians fleeing eastward blocked the German lines of supply—and retreat. Now, their refugees are all over the roads—presenting a serious traffic problem to the already overburdened MPs.

Probably the most German civilians to be found in any town since the Reich was entered were in a village a few kilometers from Garzweiler. Nearly the whole population of the village, more than 2,000 people—have been routed out of their houses by soldiers from the armored elements rumbling through and assembled under armed guard in the public square.

As the nonchalant troops sit in scout cars and Shermans the captives look around furtively, whisper among themselves, trying to butter up their captors with obliging, meek smiles. Some forced their way to the front of the crowd, buttonholed an interpreter and told him that they were Frenchmen, taken prisoner before the fall of France, and released here a year ago to build up the dwindling German labor supply.

Some Said Russians

In addition, there were a few who professed to be Russians.

Meanwhile, no one wanted to be saddled with the Jerry civilians as the drive pushed ahead. 1/Lt. George Sheets, of Paulsboro, N.J., who had been temporarily placed in charge of the mob, said: "All I want is for one guy to give these Krauts to somebody else. Then we can move out of here."

This is not the only sector in which the numbers of civilians has increased in the last 24 hours. The 30th Div. has reported overrunning 1,200 civilians in two towns, and the 29th was also passing them by the hundreds.

Almost without exception, the civilians seemed more excited than frightened, and more eager to win the favor of the invaders than to escape or to hinder the soldiers. White flags were hung in front of many of the houses—but on the stone fences along the road were painted slogans which called on the German soldiers and citizens alike—to fight and die for their fuhrer.

ANTI-AIRCRAFT PROTECTS 30TH IN ALL DRIVES

With the 30th Infantry Division in Germany — When the 30th "Old Hickory" Infantry Division landed in Normandy, attached to it was the 531st Anti-aircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion, which has earned a place among the top row of ackackers on the continent. The battalion is commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Rector T. Mace of Neosho, Missouri.

The Battalion wasted no time in getting experience as a protector of front line units. It was back in Isigny that the training which the officers of the battalion had driven home to their men became a reality. There the order came to use the automatic weapons to protect a vital spot on the First Army front, a bridge being built across the Vire et Taute Canal near Pont de St. Fromond. It was there that the battalion's Battery B played the part of both Infantry and Artillery and used its 40 mm and half-track outfits against the enemy ground forces, making it possible for troops and vehicles to cross over, while other troops were knocking down and harassing German planes in the Vire River sector. This was the breakthrough which paved the way for the battle of St. Lo near where the unit fought with the 30th Division and increased its total of enemy planes destroyed.

When the "Old Hickory" Division was assigned to hold the Germans at Mortain, the batteries of the battalion played a vital part in helping to beat back one of the toughest periods of counter-attacks in this war. The 30th held and pushed on, and the unit collected more kills to its credit.

On August 21, near Boissy sur Damville, France, while moving in column with a field artillery battalion, Battery C of the battalion encountered enemy artillery and infantry fire. 40 mm fire units immediately opened fire from the wheels while one-half track headed directly to the enemy's strongpoint to draw fire away from the exposed column. The combined fire power of the three units, together with the personnel of the field artillery battalion, destroyed the enemy positions, killing numerous enemy and destroying an anti-tank gun. Many prisoners were taken.

On another occasion the battalion's Battery D encountered an enemy strongpoint which resisted with heavy machine gun, 20 mm, grenade, and small arms fire. In the face of this fire the battery forced the Germans to surrender, blew up their ammunition dump, killed several and captured numerous prisoners. Considerable equipment was captured.

The unit, during its protecting missions through France, Belgium, Holland and Germany, has done considerably more craft. Not to down enemy aircraft, this battalion of AA-ers outably captured more prisoners, met more close-hand weapons fire, and generally filled the shoes of the Infantry more than any other anti-aircraft unit fighting the Germans in Europe.

The owner of the house admitted having beaten a wounded British flier to death with a club and stealing the equipment.

Near Newegerselen, a flier parachuting to the ground was shot with a 20 mm while in the air. Although seriously wounded when he hit the ground. A German civilian beat him until he was unconscious. Then the civilian turned the American over to soldiers.

Stood Naked in Cold

Another airman, downed in a small town near Brunswick last January, was brought before the Nazi burgomeister. This official made him strip before the townspeople and remain naked in the bitter cold outside the city hall. After being exposed for two hours, they allowed him to dress and then led him to a garage where he was beaten with a club.

Two German women, questioned about the killing of two American fliers, said they shot the men through the head because "they were so badly wounded".

Counter-intelligence men investigating these atrocities are trying to ascertain the names of the dead Allied airmen and attempting to find their graves.

SS Troops No Match For 119th's Doughs

WITH THE 30TH INFANTRY DIVISION, GERMANY — A determined lot of SS troopers and students from a nearby Officer's Candidate School made for mean fighting when men from Company "G" 119th Infantry attacked a road barrier along a range of hills during a night attack.

The Germans added punch to their stand by using tanks, anti-tank guns and Panzerfausts, according to the company commander, Capt. John L. Faris, of Rockhill, S.C.

It helped a lot when Pvt. Louis De Christopher, West Springfield, Mass., celebrated his return to the war from a furlough in the States by knocking out a German tank with a German bazooka.

The First Platoon, led by Lt. Thomas R. Giblin, of Carbondale, Penna., left 15 dead SS troopers around a roadblock that was defended stoutly with anti-tank guns, machine guns, and Panzerfausts.

About 100 prisoners were taken. In speaking to one of them S/Sgt Lawrence L. McCracken, Bloomsburg, Penna., said off-hand, "Go and get your brother and bring him along, too."

The prisoner did.

Yanks Hold Jewish Rites In Mr. Goebbels' Home

MUENCHEN GLADBACH, GERMANY—(AP)—The scene was Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels' home here—and the ceremony was the traditional passover festival.

About 300 American soldiers made the ancient Jewish holiday a doubly important occasion Friday by joining in the festival in the home of one of Naziland's most rabid Jewish persecutors.

They topped off the festival by cooking potato pancakes on Goebbels' front, porch—with a corporal from Brooklyn in charge of this detail.

"It is retribution come home," said Lt. Joseph Shubow of Boston, who gave the Passover service.

CITES GOEBBELS' DECREE

"On November 8, 1938, this little monkey Goebbels decreed the burning of all Jewish synagogues in Germany," Shubow continued. "We must destroy these Jewish fortresses," he said.

"Now we are eating potato pancakes in his dining room and celebrating our Passover in his home."

Earlier Friday Shubow conducted services with front line divisions—the Thirtieth, Seventy-ninth, Thirty-fifth and Eighth armored.

The outfit that picked Goebbels' home for its service was the Thirty-eighth signal construction battalion, just back from putting cable across the Rhine river during the Ninth army's assault crossing. This outfit holds the presidential citation for lining the "Red Ball highway" with telephone wires from St. Lo to Paris.

Among the non-Jewish friends who attended the services Friday were the Thirty-eighth's commander, Col. Harlin Moody of Fayetteville, Tenn., and its executive officer, Maj. Herbert E. Lockwood, of Chicago.

Shubow delivered his sermon standing in front of a long oaken speakers' table with its set of 14 highbacked leather chairs. At the opposite end of the room was a large oil painting of Hitler and beside it was a cardboard portrait bust of a dirty-faced American doughboy with the Twenty-ninth division shoulder patch. The Twenty-ninth took Muenchen Gladbach less than a month ago.

LIBERATION PREDICTED

"Thank God, even as our ancestors were liberated we can see all of Europe being liberated soon from Nazism," said Shubow, former head of the New England section of the American Jewish congress. He worked for 25 years against Nazism with Dr. Stephen Wise of New York, the organization's national president.

Cpl. Sidney Talmud, Brooklyn, N. Y., set up his camp stove on Goebbels' porch and made potato pancakes for three hours.

The menu was cooked from food the boys' parents sent them from America and included gefuelte fish, salmon and sardines.

743rd Tank Bn. Speeds Over Roer

WITH 30th INF. DIV.—Crossing the Roer River where it was a wide swamp with a six-mile-an-hour current, the 30th effected surprise and had two companies over the swirling water and pushing on to Hambach und Niederzier within two and a half hours after the Ninth Army Drive stepped off.

Twenty-one hours after H-hour, tanks of the 30th's attached 743rd Tank Bn. were rumbling over the Roadway bridge completed five hours ahead of schedule because of the effective use of "manufactured" fog. Immediately following them over the bridge was 823rd TD Bn. and the 30th Div. Artillery.

"We got across that water barrier without much enemy opposition," Lt. Col. Carroll H. Dunn, of Moline, Ill., Division Engineer and commander of the 105th Engr Combat Bn., said "because the Jerries didn't think anyone would be daring enough to attempt a crossing there. I'm sure it was the most impossible spot in Germany".

U. S. AIRMEN BEATEN, SLAIN BY GERMANS

By EARL MAZO
Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

WITH THE 30TH DIV., May 19—There is concrete evidence now substantiating atrocities committed during the last few years against American and British airmen by German civilians and officials.

Counter-intelligence men of this division alone have dug up numerous different types of atrocities that apparently have run to pattern throughout Germany. A member of the Gestapo captured in Magdeburg admits having flogged an American airman with a rubber hose. An American captured after parachuting to earth from a flaming plane was dragged through Magdeburg streets to a police station, where he was beaten almost to death by the Germans. After the beating, the airman was thrown into a cell. No one admits knowing what happened to him after that.

Beaten, Left to Die

Near Bareiben, several wounded American airmen were caught on the ground and beaten mercilessly. Their valuables were taken and they were left to die. A Polish girl, one of a group of slave laborers, reported this incident and pointed out the Nazi ringleader.

Around Julich, intelligence, moving into a German house to convert it into a command post, found a British parachute and flying gear.