Time on Target

945th Field Artillery Battalion in World War II

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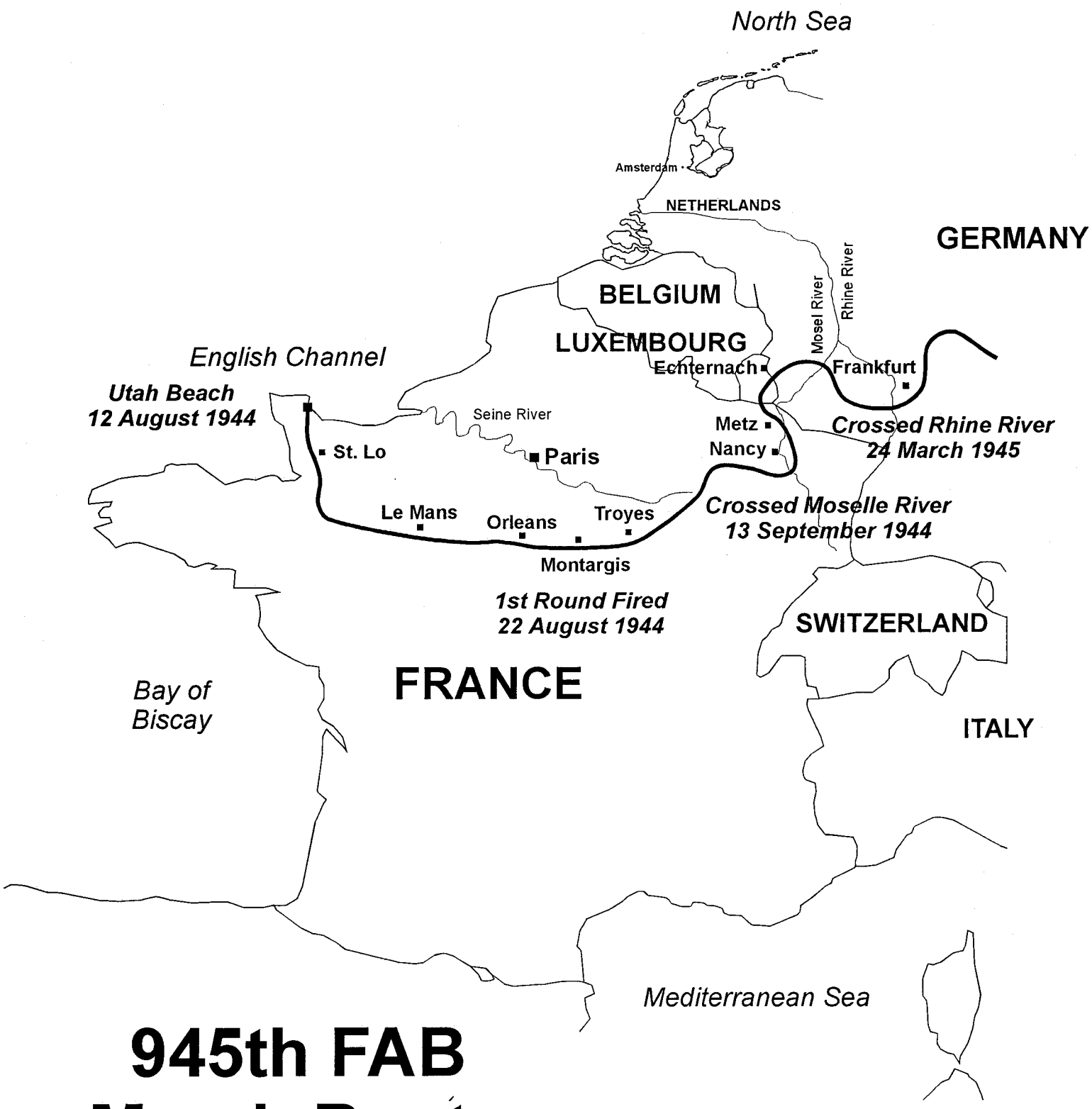
William M. Cosgrove III



945th FAB March Route Across Europe

Insignias of Supported Divisions


3rd Army Corps


12th Corps

INFANTRY DIVISIONS


4th Ivy Division


5th Red Diamond Division


26th Yankee Division


35th Sante Fe Division


76th Liberty Bell Division


79th Cross of Lorraine Division


80th Blue Ridge Division


87th Golden Acorn Division


89th

ARMORED DIVISIONS

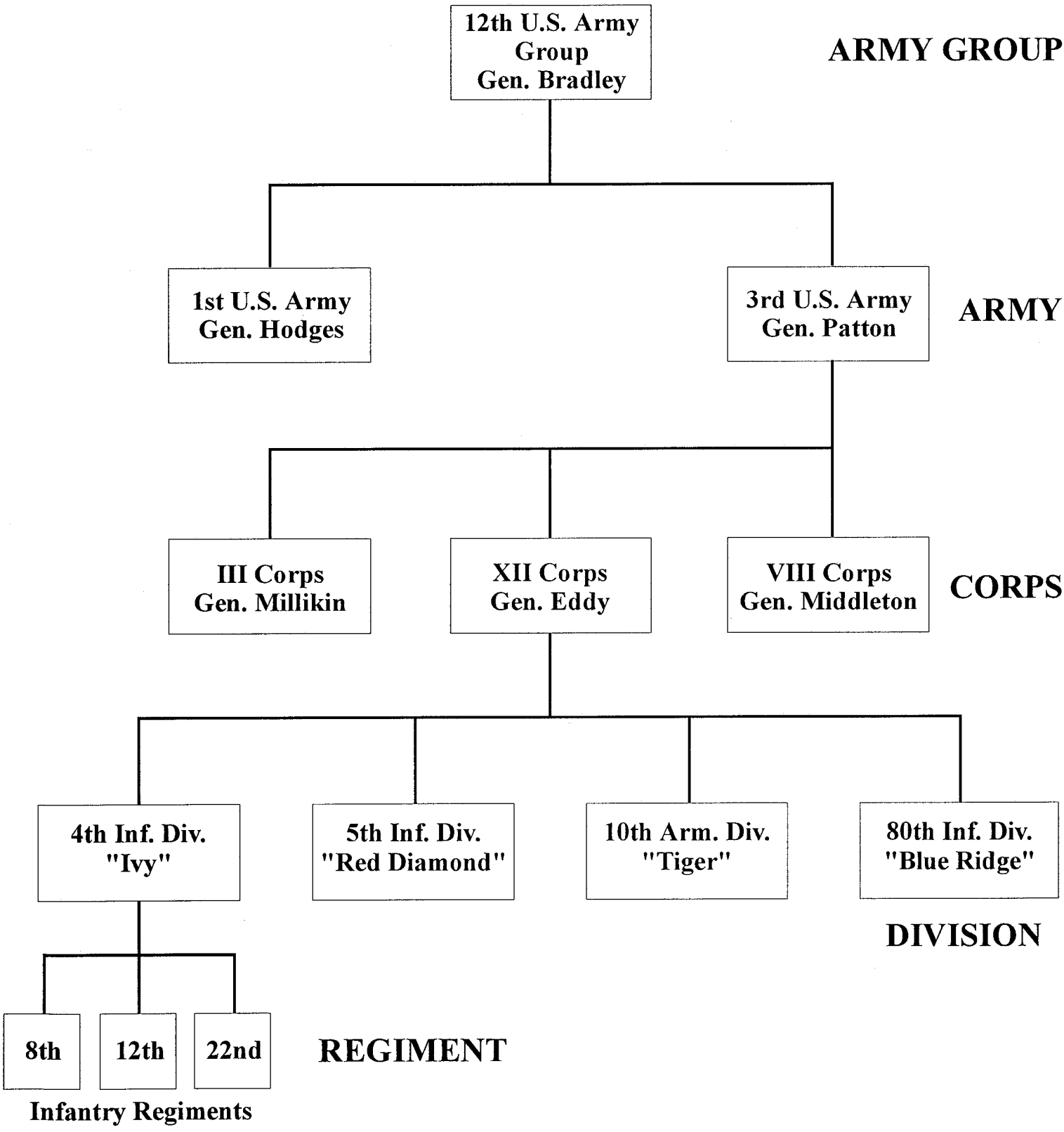
4th

6th Super Sixth Division

11th Thunderbolt Division

U.S. ARMY ORDER OF BATTLE

1 January 1945



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To Debbie, Katie, Cary, and Kimi for your patience and love

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PREFACE

This history of the 945th Field Artillery Battalion began as an idea at the battalion's 1992 reunion in Nashville, Tennessee. As the suggestion was discussed it became evident that many participants had stories and memories they wished to share. After three years over 60 veterans from the 945th had been interviewed. Original sources, such as the battalion's Daily Journal from the National Archives, and the War Diary from the Military History Institute at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania were used, as well as the excellent U.S. Army in World War II series.

The reminiscing the men have done over the last several years, much of which was painful as they remembered friends and comrades that were killed in action, will leave a meaningful and lasting record for their families and descendants. It is their story, the story of the greatest adventure of their lives, the story of the "King of Battle".

The field artillery had a critical role in World War II. General George S. Patton, Third Army commander, said in his biography that "We won the war, and it was largely won by the artillery" (War As I Knew It, General George S. Patton). The importance of the artillery is often overlooked in books and articles on World War II; however, every infantry soldier will attest to the importance of artillery support in battle. An American officer said that "We let the arty fight the war as much as possible". Even the Germans, who were critical of the American infantry, consistently praised the artillery.

General Patton once told a friend from the French Army that "the poorer the infantry the more artillery it needs, and the American infantry needs all it can get". This is not criticism of the infantry as much a compliment to the artillery. Most combat commanders agreed that the artillery was the outstanding combat branch of the American ground forces during World War II.

When the American infantry entered towns and villages the artillery often swept ahead of them, block by block reducing the town to rubble. In early November, with the 945th supporting the newly arrived 26th Infantry Division, a massive artillery bombardment was planned to initiate an attack in the Lorraine. American training and technology (such as the Fire Direction Center) allowed seventeen Corps artillery battalions and twenty Divisional battalions to coordinate their fire along the Third Army front, an impressive achievement with almost 600 howitzers and guns participating. This level of support resulted in the XII Corps artillery being described as the "hammer that drove the steel spikes of the XII Corps into the coffin of the Third Reich".

Over twenty men from the 945th Field Artillery Battalion gave the ultimate sacrifice during the war, and many others were terribly injured as a result of combat wounds. Young men were separated from their families for over three years, sometimes longer. Mothers, fathers, wives and children longed to see them return, and return they did in victory from the largest armed conflict that has ever raged across the face of our earth.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This history would not exist if it was not for the dedication of Lt. Col. (Ret.) George A. Buck, the 945th Field Artillery Battalion veteran who initiated the battalion reunions in the 1980s. His tireless efforts, along with his wife Eleanor, have reached almost 200 men from the original battalion. Over ten reunions have taken place all over the country, and countless families and friends have been touched by his dream. He not only was the inspiration for the battalion, he also provided tremendous insight into battalion operations, particularly those involving the "forward observers". His selfless commitment to the men and families of the 945th Field Artillery Battalion will leave a lasting legacy for generations to follow.

It is often said that one "bites off more than he can chew". This was the case in writing this history of the 945th Field Artillery Battalion. What started out as a project turned into a three-year work - and I have enjoyed every minute of it. Books, reference manuals, manuscripts, photographs, maps, documents from the National Archives, reports from the Center for Military History at Carlisle Barracks, the U.S. Army Center for Military History in Washington, D.C., and many other sources were consulted to accurately complete the history.

It has been an honor to record the experiences of the men who served our country during World War II. Discussions with them are always a learning experience. Over 60 participated in the preparation of the history through personal interviews. It should be noted that in the text I have referenced specific interviews using the following notation (I##), with ## being the interview number for the 945th veteran listed in Appendix I. The wives have also contributed greatly to the completion of this history; if fact, Chapter 7 on the "Homefront" was based on the contributions of 945th wives. That chapter serves as a tribute to the women who served our country so selflessly and courageously during the war years. Several children also took a great interest in the history including Laura Hale Bennowitz, Ron Mitchum, Judy McMahan Wright, James Summerour, Jr., and Lane Buck.

It would be impossible to thank everyone who contributed to this history, but several took particular interest in its completion. Dan Hale and Fred Mackey provided much encouragement and support. A special mention is due Lt. Col. (Ret.) Gooding Bean, a career field artillery officer, whose technical expertise and experience were critical to the development of the book. My brother, Robert D. Cosgrove provided me with the most comprehensive critical review that the history received, and the manuscript was vastly improved as a result of his comments. My neighbor and professional photographer Wingate Downs who generously made negatives and contact sheets of the over 400 photographs. Ken Roberts of Athens, Georgia who prepared the final book cover, the map on the inside cover, the U.S. Army organization chart, and the figure with the insignias of the supported Divisions. Most of all I would like to recognize my wife Debbie, who retired many evenings while I remained huddled over the computer with maps and records spread over the den. Debbie was always encouraging, and she also authored the Homefront chapter. My children Katie, Cary and Kimi were also very patient as Dad hammered away on the keyboard, and all three have attended reunions to remember their grandfather Maj. James (Jim) Price Clay.

One individual provided a special kind of support, and that was Wayne Cruser from Westport, Indiana. His interest and support were an inspiration during the times when I began to doubt the wisdom of this undertaking. From the beginning at the 1992 reunion in Nashville he was excited about the idea of writing the history. He caught me in the parking lot on Sunday morning, leaned

towards me, and said "You really need to write this history". When he was weakened by cancer I visited him at his home in Westport. He showed amazing determination as he stayed up with his wife Mildred and son Tim so we could review photographs and discuss his survey response. That night as I drove through the rain into Kentucky I knew it would be the last time I would see him, yet he has been present in spirit throughout this work. His resolve to complete the effort never waned, nor did his confidence that I would finish. Following his death in March 1994, I have kept a picture in my office of Mr. Cruser taken next to a foxhole in France - a constant reminder that the history was unfinished. I could almost hear his voice saying, "You really need to write this history". The promise that I made to him in Indiana to finish the history is now fulfilled.

SPECIAL NOTE

This history of the 945th Field Artillery Battalion is entitled "Time on Target" because this was a uniquely American means of delivering a devastating artillery barrage on the enemy during the war. Time on Target deliveries were made possible by the development and implementation of the "Fire Direction Center" (FDC) concept by the Americans. Using this approach a number of battalions could hit a specific target swiftly and with accuracy unsurpassed during World War II. Maj. Samuel Gray, Executive Officer for the 945th FAB describes the Time on Target concept in his diary:

> 9 December 1944 - "TOT" means "time on target". There were two similar procedures known as a "Hitler" or "Goering". A message naming one of them from higher headquarters would five map coordinates, time on target, and number of rounds; every Battalion which was not firing a priority mission for a supported unit would fire with the objective of having all the rounds land on the target at the same time. Coming from different directions with normal dispersion the target area should be saturated before the enemy could move or take cover. Speed and saturation were the objectives.

The U.S. Army's artillery combat arm perfected the use of the TOT attack during the war, thus enabling the ground forces to forge ahead, even in the face of stiff opposition from the Germans.

Chapter 1
History of the U.S. Army's Field Artillery

"We won the War, and it was largely won
by the Artillery" - General George S. Patton

INTRODUCTION

The field artillery - King of Battle - has played a prominent role in the armed forces of the United States, as well as many other nations since the 17th Century. Dr. Boyd L. Dastrop, Field Artillery Branch Historian - Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, completed the definitive work on the U.S. Army's Field Artillery in 1992. Dr. Dastrop's work, "King of Battle: A Branch History of the U.S. Army's Field Artillery" serves as a benchmark for all histories of the field artillery (1). His book is the primary source for the material in this chapter. Soldiers have relied on the field artillery for defensive protection, and later offensive firepower to support assaults on objectives ranging from log forts to Siegfried Line pillboxes. General George S. Patton said on May 30 1945, "We won the War and it was largely won by the artillery" (2).

Perhaps no arm of the service was initially more despised and hated, then later loved and appreciated as the field artillery. In 1779 General George Washington sent an army under Major General John Sullivan into the wilderness of Pennsylvania and New York to search out and destroy both Tories and their Iroquois Nation supporters under Joseph Brant. The march through the Wyoming Valley and up the Susquehana River was a trying affair, and the accompaniment of several three-pounder pieces created a great degree of discontent among the Colonial troops (3). Major Jeremiah Fogg's journal recounted the story: "After seven hours digging, with the assistance of a regiment with drag ropes, the artillery and packhorses ascended the bank". It was concluded that "By the close of the day everyone hated the artillery"!

However, at the end of the successful expedition into New York Fogg wrote that "The artillery, which at first seemed a clog and totally useless, served a noble purpose; the action being general, their total rout together with the thunder of the artillery impressed them with such a terrific idea of importance that a universal panic struck both the sachem and the warrior...".

During World War Two infantry troops seldom advanced without a substantial artillery barrage. American soldiers showed that discretion was the better part of valor, unlike the utterly wasteful Japanese Banzai or berserk Russian attacks. During the Battle of the Bulge a German Panzer Kampfgruppe lead by the brutal Joachim Peiper had penetrated far into the American lines. Kampfgruppe Peiper was finally stopped in the Belgian village of LaGleize, where it was pounded without mercy by several battalions of American field artillery, including medium 155mm. howitzers using the recently released proximity or "POZIT" fuse. The surviving SS troopers later called LaGleize "Der Kessel" - The Cauldron (4). This exemplifies the fully developed fury of the Field Artillery - The King of Battle.

EARLY HISTORY OF THE FIELD ARTILLERY (1300-1700)

Prior to the invention of gunpowder and cannons, ancient armies used slings, crossbows, and war engines or "ballista" that could shoot javelins, rocks, or groups of arrows. In fact, the design on arrows was improved for over 100 centuries before being rapidly outmoded during the 20th century. The rapid advances made between the 1800's and the advanced weapons systems of World War II are incredible when one considers the hundreds of years that crude weapons dominated the battlefield. Catapults were used to throw heavy objects to batter walls, but these were powered by twisted rope or weights. The Bible refers to the use of war engines by King Uzziah of Judah.

China, to whom many attribute the invention of gunpowder, may have also fashioned the first crude cannons as early as the twelfth century (5). Gunpowder is a mixture containing saltpeter (potassium nitrate), charcoal, and sulfur, which is now commonly called "black powder". The Europeans improved the chemistry of gunpowder during the 13th century, and sometime during the 14th century began to consider it for use as a propellant in addition to an explosive. Records in Europe indicate the use of crude cannons during 1313 in Belgium, and explosive projectiles were in use by the 16th century. The Turks used large cast-bronze guns in the siege of Constantinople in 1453 (5). Each weighed 19 tons and hurled a 600 pound stone seven times per day.

In the 1500's the French standardized calibers and invented the limber for improved mobility on the battlefield (5). Carriages were still cumbersome, and one heavy English cannon took 23 horses to move it over good ground! Louis XIV of France seems to have organized the first permanent artillery branch within an army in the late 1600's (5). He also formed the first artillery school in 1690 (1). King Frederick William I of Prussia organized his artillery arm into two battalions in 1726, and had ordnance ranging from 3 to 24 pounds (the weight of the shell) cast in Berlin for his armies (6). His son and successor Frederick the Great won a narrow victory in 1740 at Mollwitz as heavy artillery pieces along the line saved the battle with accurate fire (6). Guidance on the field artillery also developed with the publication of "New Principles of Gunnery" by Benjamin Robins in 1742. The late 1700's also realized the standard English authority on the field artillery entitled "Treatise on Artillery", authored by John Muller.

The first organized American field artillery appeared in 1745, serving with the British in the Northeast. At the beginning of the Revolutionary War the American armies had over a dozen calibers ranging from 3 to 24 pounders (5). However, major advances in rifling, breech loading, explosive charges, armor piercing rounds, advanced fuses and battlefield mobility were not realized until after the American civil war through World War II, when the field artillery established itself as a force to be reckoned with in every theater of operations.

EARLY AMERICAN ARTILLERY (1700-1775)

Although the vast forests of North America did not favor the use of artillery, the early colonists attempted to follow the example of their European counterparts. Additionally, the type of

fighting tactics employed by the native Americans made artillery less useful in many encounters. However, artillery was used to defend and attack forts, and as mentioned earlier was used in the field, although with great difficulty.

During the French and Indian War (1755-1763) the colonists developed a further appreciation of the advantages of artillery in holding or seizing forts (1). Limitations in equipment, training and ultimately use in battle hindered the development of field artillery tactics and organization, and left the colonists as an unequal military opponent of the British at the start of the American Revolution.

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION (1775-1781)

In June, 1775 the Massachusetts legislature organized an artillery regiment under the command of Colonel Richard Gridley (1). On the Dorchester Heights outside of Boston the Americans fortified Breed's Hill, but amazingly omitted platforms or embrasures (openings) for the artillery pieces. When the six artillery pieces arrived with Colonel Gridely they had to blast openings through the earthworks to meet the British advance! The British were finally able to take the American lines after three charges because they were able to maneuver their field artillery pieces into an enfilading position. The Americans lost five of their six field pieces following the retreat, and the British subsequently dismissed any colonial threat in Boston (1).

Following the defeat at Breeds Hill, Henry Knox, a Boston bookseller who had studied field artillery operations extensively and trained under the British in the 1760's, was appointed as the Chief of the Artillery for the Continental Army in November 1775. Meanwhile, the Continental Congress was procuring bronze smoothbore artillery from foundries in New York and Connecticut. These pieces, and others moved from Fort Ticonderoga by barge and through deep snow by Knox and his men, were used to drive General Gage from Boston on 17 March, 1776. The British retreat from Boston was solely the result of the bombardment that began on March 2. This was one of the first examples in American military history where the use of artillery destroyed the morale of an opposing army.

Henry Knox went on the provide significant leadership during the remainder of the American Revolution, constantly pushing for better equipment, additional artillery officers and men, and improved training. General Washington's famous crossing of the Delaware River (near Major Samuel Grays birthplace in Pennsylvania) and victory at Trenton, New Jersey on December 25-26, 1776 was largely secured by the fire superiority established by Knox's artillery commanders against the Hessian opponents (1). Knox proved that the artillery could keep pace with the infantry and provide accurate, devastating fire support - both offensive and counter-battery.

Defeats at Brandywine and Germantown, near Philadelphia in the fall of 1778 showed that the Continental Army still lacked the training needed to compete with the British regulars and artillery. To address these deficiencies a formal program of instruction was begun by Knox, now the Brigadier General of the Artillery for the Continental Army, at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania during the terrible winter of 1778-79. Knox drilled his cannoneers in their specific duties. each 6 pound artillery

piece had a 14 man crew, six of which manned the prolonge which maneuvered the piece into position (1). The result of the training was the performance of the colonists at the Battle of Monmouth Courthouse, New Jersey on 28 June 1778. The colonists proved that they could utilize European field artillery and infantry tactics to fight a conventional battle.

After 1778 the British turned their attention towards the southern colonies, and once again the field artillery performed with distinction at the battle of Guilford Court House, North Carolina on 16 March 1781. At Yorktown, Virginia General Cornwallis capitulated to American forces on 19 October 1781 following a terrific pounding at the hands of the 2nd and 4th Continental Artillery Regiments, as well as French artillery (1). In 1783 the British and colonists signed a peace treaty to end the war, yet the American Army still did not have the field artillery as a distinct branch within the Continental Army

THE WAR OF 1812

When the United States declared war on Britain in June of 1812 the Regular Army had four regiments of artillery scattered from coast to coast (1). Unfortunately the Congress did not designate a Chief of the Artillery, a position that Henry Knox had served with distinction during and following the Revolutionary War. The field artillery played an important role in several battles, most notably the Battle of Chippewa and the Battle of Lundy's Lane in Canada.

At Chippewa in July 1814 the Americans faced the British on the open battle field for the first time since Monmouth Court House in 1778 (1). American 12 pounder guns raked the British lines with canister, and even destroyed the ammunition carrier of one British piece with counter-battery fire. This battle demonstrated the effectiveness of the field artillery in supporting infantry operations. At Lundy's Lane the field artillery initially enjoyed success, but as the lines of infantry became entangled the guns had to be withdrawn. It is interesting to note that in this battle the British used Congrieve rockets against the American lines, a foreshadowing of the Nebelwerfers that the Germans would use so effectively on the Americans in World War II.

During the War of 1812 the field artillery continued to be significantly hampered by a lack of mobility and inadequate coordination between the artillery units and infantry. However, the War Department did recognize that the field artillery should be considered as a separate branch from the coast and siege artillery (1).

BETWEEN THE WARS (1815-1846): ORIGINS OF A FIELD ARTILLERY SYSTEM

As usually occurs following major conflicts, the size of the American army was drastically reduced, and in 1815 Congress passed an act to limit the army to 10,000 regulars exclusive of the Corps of Engineers (which had been formed in the early 1800s). Secretary of War William Crawford, who is buried east of Athens, Georgia in Oglethorpe Co., separated the Army into a Division of the North and a Division of the South. The main purpose of the Army was to protect the coasts and interior of the United States (1).

In 1818 the Chief of Ordnance Colonel Decius Wadsworth argued with then Secretary of War John C. Calhoun for standardization of the artillery calibers. Calhoun assigned a group of artillery and ordnance officers to study the proposal. Although Wadsworth's designs were not adopted, the board did encourage the development of a system based upon simplicity and uniformity (1). The US Army was further reduced in 1821 to 6,000 men with no provisions for rapid expansion if needed.

The poor state of the Army and particularly the field artillery persisted through the 1830s despite the efforts of several individuals to improve equipment. Bronze construction finally replaced iron in 1838-9, much to the despair of the iron ore and foundries in the United States. New ammunition and fuses were also developed including the Borman fuse that was widely used during the Civil War. The Borman fuse was developed by Captain Charles Borman of Belgium. The Borman fuse was designed to allow for a selected burn time prior to detonation of the shell, thus allowing for the possibility of air bursts which were much more effective against infantry. Friction primers were also developed in the 1840s that permitted the use of a lanyard for firing the artillery piece. The friction primer consisted of a copper tube with a serrated wire running through it which when pulled ignited friction compound and musket powder, this in turn ignited the powder which fired the shell (1).

The establishment of field artillery batteries by the War Department in 1841 was a significant step in organization of the field artillery. Additionally, Robert Anderson's translation of the French "Instruction for Field Artillery: Horse and Foot" was adopted in 1841 by the War Department as the standard reference and training guide for the US Army field artillery.

THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR (1846-1848)

During the Mexican-American War many officers were comrades who 15 years later opposed each other during the American Civil War. The American field artillery proved itself during this war, giving our troops a decided advantage over the larger number of Mexican soldiers (1). During the war a battery usually consisted of two or more 6-pounders and two 12-pounders that were pulled by four to six horses each. In contrast the Mexican Army had 14 different batteries which utilized extremely immobile gun carriages. Initially, the American Army had three batteries assigned to General Zachery Taylor's 1500 total strength.

Early battles at Palo Alto and Reseca de la Palma in Texas showed that the American field artillery could successfully move with and support the infantry, particularly when it came to using canister at to disrupt infantry operations (1). However, it was obvious that the performance on the treeless plain at Palo Alto was superior to the chaparral woods of Reseca de la Palma. Terrain remained an important factor in field artillery operations.

Major General Winfield Scott landed over 12,000 troops in Vera Cruz, and went about establishing artillery positions outside the Mexican's range. The Americans then proceeded to bombard the city, including the use of rockets designed by American William Hale (1). The rockets had stabilizing sticks and curved vanes to induce rotation and increase accuracy.

In Summary the Mexican-American War offered the first real opportunity for the infantry and field artillery to work together (1). However, other than good showings at Palo Alto and Beuna Vista, the mobility and firepower of the field artillery had still not achieved what was to be demonstrated in the next major conflict - this time with Americans fighting Americans.

BETWEEN THE WARS (1848-1861)

During the short peace the War Department reorganized the field artillery battery, adopted the 12-pounder Napoleon smoothbore (bronze), and experimented with rifled field pieces (1). The Russians, Prussians and Austrians had all adopted the 12-pounder Napoleon as a standard field piece, and now the War Department considered following suit. During the Civil War over half of the guns on each side were Napoleons (7,8). The bronze Napoleon weighed 500 pounds less than the current American 12-pounder, was as mobile as a 6-pounder, and had a trajectory between a gun (flat) and a howitzer (a higher trajectory). Secretary of War Jefferson Davis (1853-1857) announced in 1856 that the Napoleon would be adopted as the standard field piece. The first Napoleon was cast in 1857 in the United States.

Based on research first published in the 1740s by Benjamin Robins, many Europeans were experimenting with projectiles that were fired from rifled weapons (1). It was recognized that a spinning elongated projectile was more accurate than a spherical shell fired from a smoothbore weapon. However, most foundries did not have the ability to produce rifled guns in the 1800s. Also during the 1840s rifled infantry weapons were gaining the same range as the smoothbore guns, thus making them potentially deadly against shorter range artillery.

The only way to effectively load and fire a rifled guns was to design a breech, rather than muzzle loading piece. The problem was designing a breech that when closed could withstand the gas pressure exerted by the firing of the propellent in the gun. Joseph Whitworth, a machinist in England first designed and manufactured a wrought-iron rifled breech loader with a hexagonal bore by forcing iron cylinders over one another by hydraulic pressure (1).

In 1851 the famous German arms manufacturer Krupp produced the first steel breechloader. Krupp would later design and produce the feared 88 mm gun used in World War II. Although some early Krupp guns exploded when fired, their superior tensile strength and light weight made them extremely popular. Later refinements in the process by the English improved the strength of the guns and made iron breech loaders widely available.

After concluding in 1859 that the rifled piece was the future, the War Department called in half of the smooth bores in the field to have the barrels rifled. The process was developed by Charles James of Rhode Island, and these converted 6-pounder guns were subsequently called James 12-pounder rifles because the shell they could fire weighed twice as much as the original. Because of doubts among artillery officers about the strength of these guns, the War Department began development of the 3-inch Ordnance Rifle. About the same time Captain Robert Parrott, superintendent of the foundry at West Point, produced a cast-iron muzzle loading rifled gun with a

band around the breech for added strength (1). The 10-pound Parrott could fire a 10 pound shell over 3,200 yards or almost two miles, well over the observation range of artillery crews.

AMERICAN CIVIL WAR (1861-1865)

The US Army at the beginning of the war had four regiments with eight batteries (1). A captain commanded the battery and a sergeant served as the "Chief of the Piece". It took a crew of seven to service and fire the typical field artillery piece. The first Battle of Bull Run in 1861 showed that both sides used tactics practiced during the Mexican-American war. The size of the armies, new technology (rifled pieces and accurate muskets) and the terrain of northern Virginia was significantly different, and limited the influence of the field artillery. Both sides realized that massed batteries would be the only hope against the new rifled bullets with their increased range.

In 1861 Major General George B. McClellan selected Major William Barry and Chief of the Artillery and Major Henry J. Hunt to serve as Chief of the Artillery Reserve (he was later promoted to Chief of the Artillery). By March 1862 the Army of the Potomac had 92 fully equipped batteries of 520 guns and 12,500 men (1). Barry proposed limiting the field artillery batteries to using the 3-inch Ordnance gun, rifled Parrots and the 12-pounder Napoleon. Given the wooded terrain of North American, Barry wanted to exploit the short range support that the smoothbore Napoleons could provide rather than the long-range rifled pieces. This was a wise decision.

Following the weak showing of the Confederate at Seven Pines, General Robert E. Lee reformed the artillery under General William Pendleton. However, the massed guns of the Union Army at the Battle of Malvern Hill, Virginia demonstrated to the Confederates what folly it was to attack positions supported by the artillery. The Union troops had over 100 guns on the mile-wide summit of Malvern Hill (1). The Confederate attack was shattered by the artillery on Malvern Hill.

Changes in the organization of the artillery, and the appointment of colonels or lieutenant colonels to command the artillery battalions improved the performance of the Confederate artillery despite the limitations in supply. In September 1862 the Battle of Antietam again demonstrated the power of the artillery in several parts of the battlefield: Union counter-battery fire decimated General Stonewall Jackson's troops, Jackson's batteries in turn poured canister into General Hookers infantry, and ultimately Confederate Major General A.P. Hill's troops arrived from Harpers Ferry just in time to repulse a Union advance on the southern end of the battle with massed fire against Burnsides Union troops (1). Lee's ability to pool his artillery at critical times on the defense helped his army avoid a rout at Sharpsburg, but the counter-battery fire of the Confederates was admittedly ineffective.

On the defensive the artillery batteries would transition from solid shot and shell from available rifled pieces, followed by the smoothbores if the infantry advanced to within range. At four hundred yards the smoothbores opened up with canister, large shotgun type blasts of one to two inch cast iron balls that tore gaping holes in the infantry advances. Due to shortages in the south, the confederates used nails, pieces of wrought iron fence, and other materials in their canister rounds (9).

Counter-battery fire employed the rifled pieces at ranges of up to two miles, although this typically exceeded the observation range of the observers.

The Union field artillery organization, which attached batteries directly to divisions, hindered the massing of guns when needed. Hunt argued for a change in organization to allow more independence for the field artillery, but his requests were rejected by McClellan and his successors Burnside and Hooker. The Union defeat at Fredricksburg illustrated the problems with an inflexible organization, as Union guns stood idle because of Hunts limited authority. At the Battle of Stones River near Murfreesboro, Tennessee General Roscrans Union army repulsed four Confederate charges with canister as sufficient field pieces were located by chance in close proximity to one another (1).

Following the death of Stonewall Jackson, General Lee divided his two corps into three with James Longstreet, A.P. Hill and Richard Ewell as corps commanders. This insured that Lee's 272 rifled and muzzle loaded smoothbore pieces would not be held back in battle (1). Each corps had five artillery battalions of four batteries each under a corps artillery chief.

The Battle of Gettysburg in July, 1863 vindicated Hunt's reforms of 1863. Hunt moved batteries around as needed, and replaced batteries from the reserve when needed. The famous Massachusetts 9th Field Artillery Regiment was one unit that suffered terrible losses in repulsing Barksdale's 21st Mississippi near Trostle' Farm. As the 9th moved towards Trostle Farm they fired by prolong, or as the guns were being pulled back with ropes, the first time this was accomplished on the battlefield (10). The Union field artillery shredded Confederate advances at the Devils Den, the Peach Orchard and finally during Picketts Charge on day three.

The Battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Courthouse in northern Virginia showed the limitation of the field artillery in dense woods, and Lieutenant General Ulysses Grant stunned Hunt with the proposal to move many of the batteries away from the front. Hunt later prevailed following some requested organizational changes by Grant.

In the western theater of operations the Battle of Chickamauga was fought in very wooded terrain, and the artillery was effected accordingly. However, at Chattanooga the Union used the artillery effectively to seize Lookout Mountain. General Braxton Bragg's confederate guns on Missionary Ridge, a battle that saw General Douglas McArthur's grandfather earn the Medal of Honor, were not able to adequately depress their elevation to fire on the Union troops charging up the slope. Later in 1864, as the Union Army approached the City of Atlanta, the field artillery was successfully used at the Battle of Peachtree Creek to repulse several charges from Major General John Hood's Confederate troops. The defensive use of the artillery was obvious in the Battle of Atlanta, but the offensive use of the artillery was again limited by the steep and wooded terrain of Atlanta (1).

It is interesting to note that the breech loading Whitworths and Armstrong guns saw limited action during the war, and that the British almost abandoned the design because of jamming problems

at the breech. The "old-reliable" was still the 12-pounder smoothbore Napoleon which could fire shot, shell and canister when needed. The greatest contribution of the artillery in the war was definitely in the defensive when it was able to rake the enemy during infantry advances, a tactic that the Confederates never seemed to move away from despite enormous losses (11).

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODERN FIELD ARTILLERY

Following the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, the Europeans developed steel breechloaders, recoil systems, and smokeless powder (1). Early recoil systems were designed with gas loaded cylinders that would return the tube back into battery when the recoil stopped. Recoil mechanisms and fixed ammunition where the projectile and powder charge were one unit permitted firing rates of up to 10 rounds per minute. The French M1897 75 mm breechloader was the first modern gun, although the Krupps in Germany continued to advance the design of artillery pieces along with the French. The first dependable nitrogen based propellent was developed by chemist Paul Vielle of France in 1884 (1). This propellent burned slower than black powder which created less pressure on the breech while propelling the round over a greater distance down the tube, thus increasing muzzle velocity and range. The development of high explosive also originated with Vielle in France as picric acid, a highly explosive substance and nitrocellulose were combined in 1886. The material was patented as melinite and when used in shells created a shattering of the shell into thousands of pieces rather than six or seven as had been common with black powder.

A Russian, Karl G. Guk described the basic theory for indirect fire in 1882 which employed the use of the compass, aiming point and forward observer. The Germans, French and Russians all quickly adopted the system, the British were slower to follow - waiting until after the turn of the century. As late as 1887 the US Army was still equipped with smoothbores from the Civil War, with no suitably equipped field artillery batteries should an emergency arrive. The development of the 3.2-inch M1885 field gun, a breechloader, moved the US into the modern age of field artillery (1). A crew of two officers and five enlisted men generally comprised the gun crew, and its range was 6,600 yards. During the Indian Wars of the 1870s the light weight howitzers were subject to the accurate fire from Indians at a distance of up to 1,200 yards; and the Napoleons and 3-inch Ordnance Rifles were not heavy to maneuver. The War Department briefly opened the first Field Artillery School at Fort Riley, Kansas, but it soon was closed and the students transferred to the much needed cavalry.

SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR (1898)

When President McKinley decided to expel the Spanish from Cuba in 1898 the US Army field artillery had an opportunity to test its new weaponry and tactics (1). The field artillery had five regiments among the 25,000 men in the Army. Most of the guns were employed in a piecemeal fashion during the Battle of Santiago, and ranges of up to 2,500 yards were beyond the practical limit for direct fire. Although the command structure had improved significantly for the field artillery since the Civil War, massed firepower during this war was again not achieved, usually due to poor deployment of the guns.

The danger in lagging behind your enemies technology was demonstrated by the use of black powder by the US, which gave away the location of their batteries to the Spanish. The Spanish were quick to return counter-battery fire with their rapid-fire artillery pieces. The War Department actually had to convert some of the M1897 3.2-inch field guns back to black powder because of a lack of smokeless powder at the outbreak of the war. The use of smokeless powder and the development of indirect fire capability were essential to maintain effectiveness in a much more technologically advanced and dangerous battlefield.

MODERNIZATION (1898-1918)

Between 1898 and 1918 the US Army introduced new field pieces, adopted indirect fire, organized the School of Fire for Field Artillery, separated the coast artillery from the field artillery, grouped batteries into battalions and regiments, and integrated the field artillery into divisions (1). The Army realized that the M1897 gun would have to be replaced as it lacked a recoil system, which significantly slowed the rate of fire as the gun had to relaid after each shot. A 3-inch piece was developed with a recoil mechanism in 1900, but the gun still required to be relaid after each firing. The short recoil system, which limited the rate of fire to five per minute, and the inability of the gun to accept self-contained rounds in brass cases lead to further research and development by the Army.

In 1902 the M1902 3-inch field gun was developed based on the best features of several designs (1). The gun had a hydrospring recoil system and panoramic sights, fired fixed ammunition of shrapnel and high-explosive shell, used smokeless powder and had a range of 6,000 yards. The M1902 opened not only the age of rapid fire, but also indirect fire, and thus the field artillery had to begin developing systems and training for indirect fire. The following field artillery pieces were developed from 1902 to 1918:

M1902	3-inch	gun	fixed ammunition
M1904	4.7-inch	gun	fixed ammunition
M1905	3.8-inch	howitzer	separate loading ammunition
M1906	6-inch	howitzer	separate loading ammunition
M1907	4.7-inch	howitzer	separate loading ammunition

This combination of mobile guns and howitzers provided a balanced inventory for the field artillery.

The Battle of Sha-ho between the Japanese and Russians in September 1904 convinced the major powers that indirect fire techniques is where the future of the field artillery lay. The Japanese used indirect fire against the Russians skillfully, and within a few years all the European armies implemented indirect fire techniques, although the French and British lagged behind the Germans. The use of howitzers with their high trajectory was recognized as essential in the field artillery mix in the battlefield. The howitzers could fire over hills and remained concealed, also, the accuracy of the firing was improved with the use of the howitzers with their higher trajectory.

In 1905 the War Department standardized the "aiming point" method for indirect fire, and began to emphasize the importance of concealment for batteries on the battlefield (1). One change was that the gunner position in the battery began to only lay the gun for direction and range, and relinquished the job of opening the breech and inserting the charge. The advent of indirect fire also changed the independence that each gun previously had to fire at targets of opportunity with direct fire. Now the forward observer would essentially be aiming the guns, and the guns would provide coordinated fire. Generally the forward observer would be in sight of both the batteries and the target. The transition also took place from signal flags to the radio-telephone, although the signal flags were kept due to the high rate of wire damage during battle. This would change after World War I with the use of the field radio.

Although airplanes and balloons were used to spot enemy artillery, new techniques such as "sound ranging" was developed in 1914 where a series of microphones would detect the direction of enemy pieces as they fired. The range could then be estimated through calculations based on the microphone readings. "Flash ranging" was also used to plot enemy batteries. In this case the muzzle flash of enemy guns was observed through high-power telescopes, then the batteries were plotted on maps as indirect fire targets.

The field artillery soldier now had to use an array of equipment including sound and flash ranging devices, gunners quadrants for setting the elevation, panoramic telescopes, transits for surveying in the guns, plotting boards, rules, scales, compasses, tables of fire and electrical communication systems (1). All of these new techniques and equipment forced the War Department to re-think training requirements. In 1904 both Fort Riley, Kansas and Fort Sill, Oklahoma began to instruct students of field artillery. The training at Fort Riley still incorporated the use of artillery with calvary operations, and thus poorly prepared the students for indirect fire techniques.

Reluctantly, the War Department centralized all of the artillery training at Fort Sill in 1910 under the School of Fire for Field Artillery. The Field Artillery Association also began in 1910 and the Field Artillery Journal began publication in 1911 (note that the Journal of the United States Artillery was already established). The training of artillery officers took many years to accomplish on a large scale, and the US Army lagged far behind the Europeans in technical skill. Eventually a trained cadre of officers was developed that could teach others in the field, many of whom would eventually receive the training at Fort Sill.

WORLD WAR I (1916-1918)

At the brink of World War I the US Army had 21 field artillery regiments, and the field artillery brigade was enlarged from two to three regiments (1). One regiment would have 3.8-inch howitzers while the other two regiments would have 3-inch guns for a total of 72 pieces per division. Meanwhile, the Europeans were adapting their field artillery to trench warfare. The guns, as well as ammunition, caissons, horses and forward observers were either carefully concealed or moved well back of the batteries. The trench warfare of WWI favored the heavier field pieces with long exhausting bombardments.

In order to maintain indirect fire capability through the dust and haze, the French first developed "map firing" in 1916. The maps were created from aerial photography and the batteries located by sound and flash ranging. After plotting the location of the enemy batteries, meticulous calculations were completed that accounted for temperature, wind direction, air pressure and air density. The deflection and elevation of the guns was then determined and the batteries were fired. The British developed the "rolling barrage" that was designed to move ahead of attacking infantry, thus pinning down the heavy weapons of the enemy. This method did not require communications during the barrage, but often it moved too fast for the infantry to keep up with as they traversed barbed wire and shell holes.

Chlorine gas released from cylinders was first used by the Germans at Ypres in 1915; however, the French and British soon followed suit. The Germans subsequently developed gas filled artillery shells in 1916 to hit the French and British trenches (1). Counter battery fire by 1918 relied heavily on the use of gas filled shells rather than extensive bombardments.

The US joined the war in April 1917, expanding the field artillery to 234 regiments by the Armistice in 1918. The field artillery grew from 8,000 officers and men to over 460,000 by 1918 (including the Regular Army, National Guard and National Army). The Division was expanded to include 2 infantry brigades (four regiments), one field artillery brigade (one heavy regiment of twenty-four 6-inch howitzers and two light regiments of forty-eight 3-inch guns), a regiment of combat engineers, three machine gun battalions, and signal, medical and other supporting troops (1). The US was unable to fully equip the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) with 3-inch guns retooled to the standard French 75 mm as planned, they purchased guns from the French and British. The Americans also adopted the gas filled shell and gas warfare doctrine.

General Pershing organized the AEF in the Lorraine section of France in order to build an all US force independent of the French and British. While moving into position the Germans struck the British at the Somme on 21 March 1918, pushing the British Army back into a forty by sixty mile salient within one week. The AEF counterattacked and captured Catigny, then battled another German thrust into the Marne River area, eventually capturing Belleau Wood and Vaux (1). The AEF, using preparatory bombardments and rolling barrages ultimately helped erase the Marne salient through several weeks of hard fighting. The Corps artillery, which consisted of two regiments of 155 mm howitzers and a battalion of 240 mm trench mortars, often joined with the Divisional 155 mm howitzers to suppress enemy artillery during infantry advances. The lack of positions for forward observers, and communication difficulties often force the artillery into rigid plans that were not able to meet the changing needs on the battlefield. Although this type of support required less skill and control, the results were often poor. The ineffective bombardment of the German lines during the Aisne-Marne offensive allowed the Germans to come out of their fortifications and set up deadly machine gun posts.

In the final great battle of the war between the Meuse River and the Argonne Forest, the AEF attacked with over 1,250,000 men and 3,980 guns. Forward movement of the guns as the infantry advanced was very difficult, and the artillery battalions began to lag behind. Under heavy pressure

from the allied artillery and infantry the Germans fell back behind the Meuse River near Sedan, France and signed the armistice ending the war on 11 November 1918. One lasting impact on land warfare was the success of tracked vehicles (tanks) in moving over rough terrain. In December 1918 the War Department decided to study a change from horse drawn artillery to tracked vehicles.

THE INTERWAR YEARS: 1919-1939

Following World War I most Americans thought the end of the war ushered in an era of endless peace (1). The Hero Board, formed after the war and chaired by Brigadier General Andrew Hero, examined the future of the field artillery. The board encouraged the use of motor traction for the 155 mm howitzer; however, many officers were not totally ready to give up horses. The Westervelt board, named after Major General William Westervelt, evaluated the caliber mix of US Army guns as was thus known as the "Caliber Board" (1). The board recommended Corps artillery to include a 155 mm howitzer with an elevation of 65 degrees and a range of 16,000 yards. The importance of interdicting fire to disrupt communications, supply and troop staging areas was recognized; therefore, longer ranges became a priority.

Divisions would typically have the smaller caliber 75 mm guns and 105 mm howitzers; although many officers objected to the 155 mm being removed from the Divisional artillery. The split tail 75 mm gun (M1923E) was standardized by the War Department in 1926. By the 1930s an arsenal system was developed in the US that included the production of fire control instruments at Frankfort, Kentucky, carriages and recoil mechanisms at Rock Island, Illinois, and finished guns at Watervliet, New York (1). In 1918 the War Department reinstated the M1918 155 mm howitzer in the division.

In 1933, under Army Chief of Staff General Douglas MacArthur, the War Department accepted the towed artillery principle, although they still resisted self-propelled artillery (1). Because of elements within the field artillery that still promoted the use of horses, the Field Artillery School at Fort Sill continued teaching equine management as late as 1941 (1)! In the late 1930s each Field Artillery Battalion was commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel and had three firing batteries of four pieces each. The battery was commanded by a captain and had four officers and 104 enlisted men. The gun crew consisted of a section chief, a gunner who laid the piece, and twelve cannoneers who loaded and fired the weapon (1).

The mobility of the field artillery called for a change in Fire Direction techniques. Since the beginning of the 1900s the battery had been the firing unit with all calculations being made there rather than at Battalion HQ. This was to change with the development of the "Fire Direction Center" (FDC). Major Carlos Brewer developed a system in 1931 for fire direction using a "firing chart" on which the base point (target) was plotted, and then located the proper battery positions through survey (1). In 1931 it was demonstrated that mass battalion fire could be directed based on registering one battery without all the forward observers being able to see the target and without maps.

In 1932-34 the "Fire Direction Center" (FDC) was developed to centralize the firing data in the battalion. Forward observers were dispatched with radios, and calculations were quickly completed in order to mass fire and deliver a "hammer blow" when only one observer could see the target (1). All of this required accurate maps, such as the 945th FAB had during World War II. The Battalion directed the fire, and the battery commander conducted the fire, thus the battalion replaced the battery as the field artillery's firing unit. As General Marshall witnessed during a demonstration in 1941, the field artillery could now move mass fire around the battlefield in rapid fashion.

By 1940 the field artillery had a new organization, the concept of battalion fire control, improved fuses, and the development of the M2 105 mm howitzer and M1 155 mm howitzer all of which set the stage for World War II.

WORLD WAR II: 1939-1945

Major advances of World War II included motorized field pieces, the development and use of the fire direction center, radio equipped forward observers, and technological advances such as the variable time fuse (1). The Germans were the first to use radio equipped forward observers during the 1939 invasion of Poland, and those observers were with the leading elements of armor and infantry. The War Department began arming the Corps with the M1 155 mm gun, towed M1 8-inch howitzer, and the towed M1918A 240 mm howitzer (1). Light aircraft were also integrated into the artillery to provide observation of fire at long range. Some of the aircraft testing was completed at Camp Blanding, Florida in 1942. In June 1942 the War Department allocated two planes, two pilots and one mechanic to each field artillery battalion.

The field artillery grew rapidly from 100 batteries in 1937 to over 568 batteries (142 battalions) by 1942. The Field Artillery School at Ft. Sill produced over 1,000 officer graduates between 1935 and 1940, and the enlisted portion of the school over 1,100, most of which still took courses in Horsemanship! By 1941 Ft. Sill was turning out over 5,000 officers per year, and training was also on-going at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina and Camp Roberts, California. University ROTC programs were also helping fill out the officer corps. Examples in the 945th FAB included Tom Cope from Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama and Jim Clay from Georgia Tech in Atlanta.

North African Campaign (1942-1943)

Following the invasion of North Africa in November 1942 (Operation Torch) the field artillery had its first opportunity in combat. A decentralized command structure during early battles at Faid Pass and Kasserine Pass hindered mass fire that would have slowed the German advance. The operation of the fire direction center had still not been perfected. During the battle of El Guettar, the US field artillery officers were finally able to coordinate fire through their fire direction centers using the full benefit of forward observers. Up to 12 battalions massed fire at El Guettar with devastating effect. Lieutenant General Omar Bradley, Commanding General, II Corps, stated that the massed fire of the US field artillery was a major contributing factor..." at Gafsa and El Guettar (1). At this time Major General Manton Eddy was Commander of the 9th Infantry Division, later to be Commander

of the XII Corps. He recognized the importance of the fire direction center and forward observers, pointing out that a forward observer on the north end of the 9th Division sector called in fire from batteries on the southern flank.

At the conclusion of the North African campaign Bradley admitted that any forward observer in the Corps could adjust fire for any battery and fire all of the Corp's artillery (324 howitzers and guns) onto a single target (1). At the conclusion of the North African campaign the Corps artillery was reorganized to include only a headquarters battery permanently attached to the Corps HQ, accompanied by a number of self-sufficient field artillery battalions. This was the arrangement of the 945th FAB and the XII Corps in World War II.

In 1942 the major US field artillery pieces:

Caliber	Type	Range	Transport
M1 105 mm	Howitzer	12,150 yard range	Truck/Tractor
M1 105 mm	Howitzer	12,150 yard range	Motor/Carriage
M1 4.5 inch	Gun	20,500 yard range	Truck/Tractor
M1918A 155 mm	Howitzer	12,400 yard range	Truck/Tractor
M1 155 mm	Howitzer	16,350 yard range	Truck/Tractor
M2 155 mm	Gun	20,100 yard range	Truck/Tractor
M12 155 mm	Gun	18,750 yard range	Motor/Carriage
M1/M1A1 155 mm	Gun	25,715 yard range	Tractor
M1 8 inch	Howitzer	18,510 yard range	Tractor
M2 8 inch	Gun	35,000 yard range	Tractor
M1918A2 240 mm	Howitzer	16,390 yard range	Tractor

Italy (1943)

After defeating the Germans in Sicily, the US Army attacked the mainland of Italy in September 1943. Fighting in the Apennine Mountains found the US field pieces seeking cover during the day due to counter-battery fire, with relocations of the firing batteries at night to positions selected during the day. The firing batteries often became "interlaced", or a varying distances from the target, which made "Time on Target" (TOT) firing more difficult to accomplish. It was in Italy that Tank Destroyers were used as field artillery, with a battalion (36 TDs) attached to the division. In an attempt to take the famous monastery at Cassino, the field artillery added over 200,000 rounds over an eight hour period to the 1,000 tons of bombs dropped by the Army Air Corps (1). Over 740 field artillery pieces were involved in this bombardment. On May 11, 1944 the allies had assembled over 2,000 guns (including Tank Destroyers) on a 25 mile front at Cassino. The Germans finally retreated, in large part to the constant and effective field artillery barrages.

The Italian campaign demonstrated the utility of having the "field artillery group" within the Corps (the 945th FAB was in the 182nd Field Artillery Group). The Italian campaign also proved

how valuable the fire direction center was for bringing to bear mass fire from dispersed batteries. Air observation was also key to the accurate placement of artillery fire in areas of rough terrain.

Normandy Landings

After landing on D-Day, the 12th Infantry Division was saved from certain destruction by the 42nd FAB, the fire of which was directed by Captain Morrisett, B Battery, from atop a hedgerow (1). After the breakout at St. Lo called Operation Cobra, the US Army broke out of the hedgerow area (the "bocage") and started to move rapidly across France. Rolling barrages were used in the fighting around St. Lo, and during the breakout over 1,000 artillery pieces were used in support. At the point of attack this was the equivalent of one artillery piece per 20 feet if lined up wheel to wheel!

Northern France and Lorraine Campaigns

Following the breakout, the field artillery support rose to an average of 23 field pieces per 1,000 soldiers (1). The Field Artillery Group was recognized again for its versatility and flexibility, showing that the ability to move battalions from army to army or corps to corps was essential on the fluid battlefield of WW II. Early in September Patton opened his offensive with movement towards Nancy and Metz. The 35th Infantry Division and 4th Armored Division approached Nancy, and on 15 September 1944 Nancy was captured by the 35th Infantry Division. The capture of Metz to the north required two months longer and the support of over 700 field artillery pieces before the 5th and 95th Infantry Division moved into the city.

Battle of the Bulge

On December 16, 1944 the Germans attacked the allies along a weakly defended 80 mile front in Belgium and Luxembourg. Although the Americans were typically pushed back along the front, or in a few cases surrounded (106th Infantry Division), the field artillery allowed some thinly held areas to withstand the German assault. This was the case near Monschau, Germany where an area defended by mechanized cavalry did not permit a German penetration due in large measure to the support of 15 battalions of 105 mm howitzers, 155 mm howitzers, 4.5 inch guns, 155 mm guns, 240 mm howitzers, and even 8 inch howitzers. The field artillery used 4.5 inch rocket barrages effectively in several locations, including one attack that used 1,800 rockets in less than 20 minutes (1). The use of the proximity fuse on December 25, 1944 sealed the German's fate in the bulge with the devastating effect of air bursts. The proximity fuse was developed at Johns Hopkins University and worked by emitting a radio signal that triggered the detonation of the shell at a prescribed distance above the ground.

Conclusions

WW II showed that the combined effect of technology (howitzer design, VT fuzes), the fire direction center, air observation, organization of the field artillery group, and excellent training could swing the battle in favor of the forces with the most effective field artillery support. Thus after years

of emulating the Europeans, the American artillery reached and passed the level of sophistication that had so long alluded them. General Barker, commenting on the field artillery in the Pacific Theater said "One of the most gratifying results of the ... Campaign from the Artillerymen's viewpoint was the confidence and enthusiasm displayed by the Infantry for its Artillery".

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Chapter 2
Roots of the 945th Field Artillery Battalion

"The Gate City Guard"

INTRODUCTION

The 945th Field Artillery Battalion (FAB) and its predecessor organizations had a long and colorful history spanning the period following the Civil War through the end of World War II in Europe during World War Two (WW2). The oldest unit that became part of the 945th FAB was first organized in 1857 as the Atlanta Zouaves, a unit in the First Georgia Regiment. The unit later was known as the "Gate City Guard", and was organized under that name on March 28, 1859 (1,2). Other predecessors included units that originated in 1874 as the Atlanta Battalion of the Georgia Volunteers. Thus, the 945th FAB can trace its origin to Atlanta before the Civil War. It was not until July 1, 1939 that the battalion was designated as an artillery regiment, which set the stage for its eventual march across Europe with the XII Corps (3).

BACKGROUND OF THE 945th FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

Civil War to 1898

Colonel Thomas Alexander, Commanding Officer of the 179th Field Artillery Regiment in 1941 stated in a letter that the Georgia Volunteers dated back to 1857 (2). According to one source Company F of the 122nd dates back with the Gate City Guard to 1855 (1). The earliest unit, the "Gate City Guard", was at least officially organized on March 28, 1859. The unit was assigned to the First Georgia Volunteers, "Ramsey's Brigade", and reportedly saw service in Florida under General Braxton Bragg, and Virginia under General Robert E. Lee (2). The Zouaves wore distinctive uniforms of red bloomers and jackets which were patterned after Algerian fighters. According to the 179th History, a remnant of the volunteers formed an artillery unit which was present at the surrender at Appomattox. After the war the following units formed the Atlanta Battalion, Georgia Volunteers (July 24, 1874): Gate City Guards, Fulton Blues, Atlanta Grays, Atlanta Rifles, and the Atlanta Zouaves (4).

Spanish American War (1898-1899)

The Georgia National Guard was an active organization. Some men reported for service in the Spanish American war of 1898. After being moved from camp to camp, two of the discouraged and frustrated Georgia Regiments were mustered out without seeing action. A third regiment did reach Cuba under the command of James T. Wilson, but they only remained a month in Cuba (1).

Mexican Border Service (1916)

In 1905 the Georgia Volunteers were designated the 5th Regiment of Infantry, Georgia National Guard. During 1917 the famed outlaw and raider Francisco "Pancho" Villa was terrorizing residents along the Mexican-American border, culminating in a raid on Columbus, New Mexico in which 17 United States citizens were killed by Villas' troops (5). President Woodrow Wilson responded to this border incursion by mobilizing the U.S. Army and the National Guard. General John "Blackjack" Pershing was assigned to lead the US troops into Mexico, and his executive officer was George S. Patton (5).

The Georgia National Guard was mustered into Federal Service for Mexican Border Duty on July 31, 1916, although some individuals may have traveled to the border earlier (2, 1). The 5th Regiment was commanded by Colonel Orville H. Hall of Atlanta. The mobilization took place at Camp Harris in Macon, Georgia, with subsequent quartering at El Paso, Texas during their border duty. The Mexican Border Service was the "last hurrah" of the calvary, and it served to introduce the use of armored vehicles (5). The first use of aircraft by the United States also took place with aircraft flown in from San Antonio, Texas at night no less. The aircraft were used to search for Villas' troops, which proved to be a difficult task. Colonel Alexander served with another unit, the Second Regiment, South Carolina National Guard, from August 1916 to March 1917.

Ultimately the Army penetrated 410 miles into Mexico, which created a great deal of resentment on the part of the citizens of Mexico. Despite the best efforts of the US troops, Pancho Villa was never apprehended. The Mexican Border duty ended on October 23, 1916 and the units returned to Atlanta in preparation for mobilization to fight in the "World War" enveloping Europe.

World War 1 (1917)

Returning to Atlanta, the 5th Regiment of Infantry was re-designated on October 1, 1917 the 122nd Infantry Regiment and assigned to the 31st "Dixie" Division in France. Primarily the 31st Division was used in France as a replacement unit, thus the men from the 122nd saw action in several engagements. It should be noted that the Dixie Division has a beautiful monument at Camp Blanding with the well known opposing Ds design. Colonel Alexander served in World War One (WW1) with the 54th Infantry from July 1918 to June 1919. He was the commander of the 2nd Battalion which saw action in the Vosages Mountains and the Argonne Forest (2). Richard C. Endicott also served in WW1.

Between the Wars: The 122nd Infantry Regiment

In 1920 one battalion of the 122nd was reorganized in Atlanta (1). On March 5, 1924 the second battalion of the 122 Infantry Regiment was reorganized in Atlanta and expanded to a regiment less one battalion. The Third Battalion was reorganized in Elberton, Cedartown, Calhoun and Marietta, Georgia. On June 9, 1924 the predecessor of the 945th FAB was permanently designated the 2nd Battalion, 122nd Infantry. This was the last major organizational change between the wars.

The First and Second Battalions of the 122nd Infantry Regiment would provide the training for many of the men that served in World War II (6).

Some of the men and officers in the 122nd were graduates of Georgia Tech, including Sergeant (later Major) James P. Clay (1st Bn, Co B). Sergeant Clay's brother Gordon was also in Co. B. Many of the men were from the same Atlanta neighborhoods, and attended high school at either Boys High or Tech High at 10th and Boulevard Streets across from Piedmont Park. In fact, Gooding Bean, who later served in the HQ of the 945th FAB, began traveling with the 122nd to summer camp at age 13 in 1932 as Lt. Wyont Bean's orderly! Bean recalls servicing the targets on the range, taking refuge in a pit while the men fired their old Springfield .30 caliber bolt action rifles. Gooding Bean enlisted in 1935 while still attending Murphy Junior High School in Atlanta. Bean later graduated from Boys High (1938), two years after Jim Clay.

Other families had several men in the Regiment, including Gooding Bean (Sergeant, 2nd Bn, Co F) and his two older brothers Wyont (Lieutenant, 2nd Bn, Co F) and Albert (Corporal, 1st Bn, Co C). Corporal William J. Hodnett, who later was a key member of the 945th FAB, was also in 2nd Bn, Co F. Hodnett was killed in action near the end of the war. The future commander of the 945th FAB, Wilbur Von DeLoach, was a Private (1933) and later First Lieutenant in the 2nd Battalion, Company G (6).

In 1941, when Bean received his commission, Colonel Elbert P. Tuttle, an officer on the National Guard Board asked him, "Young man, do you know how old you are?", to which Bean replied "Yes sir, 21". Tuttle, knowing that Bean had enlisted at age 15, stated, "OK, I just wanted to make sure you knew"! Bean served as the 11th Field Artillery Battalion commander in Korea (24th Infantry Division) as a Major, and retired from the Army at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, one of several 945th men who made a career in the military. George Buck also retired from the US Army with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

In the late 1930s the 122nd headquarters was located in the top floor of the old Atlanta City Auditorium on Courtland Avenue. Every Monday evening the roll was called at formation, and the men drilled. The nucleus of the 945th FAB was formed during the late 1930's, with drill and march taking place underneath the city of Atlanta in what was later became known as "Underground Atlanta". Bean recalls that you could "hear feet tromping away" at quite a distance, and that the men always carefully wrapped their leggings prior to marching. The 945th always maintained a number of Georgia men, eventually the 945th was represented by men from around the United States.

The Beginning: World War II

The 122nd Infantry Regiment was redesignated in Atlanta on July 1, 1939 as the 179th Field Artillery Regiment and inducted into Federal service by order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt on February 24, 1941. Unfortunately, shortly before the reporting date to Camp Blanding, the City Auditorium caught fire and much of the new artillery equipment (aiming circles, sights, etc.) was lost. However, the newly issued 155 Schneider howitzers were recovered out of the basement of the

building before they were destroyed. The 179th FAR, along with its salvaged equipment moved to the almost completed new armory located off Confederate Avenue near the Confederate Soldiers Home. Despite this setback, the 179th FAR moved out of Atlanta from the Conley Depot at the present day Ft. Gillam. The next stop was Camp Blanding, Florida, located 20 miles south-southwest of Jacksonville and just east of Starke, Florida. The 179th FAR was assigned to the 74th Field Artillery Brigade, IV Corps, Third Army (2,7). The 74th was comprised of the 179th, commanded by Colonel Thomas Alexander, the 172nd Field Artillery, and the 35th Field Artillery Regiment (the regular US Army unit using a 155 mm gun). The Brigade commander was Brigadier General Ira T. Wyche, a 1911 graduate of the Military Academy at West Point. A surprised Gooding Bean saw General Wyche later in the war while serving as the 182nd Field Artillery Group Liaison Officer to the 79th Infantry Division (the 79th was in the VII Army). A surprised Wyche said to Bean "What are you doing here?", to which Bean responded "Same thing as you General"! General Wyche was later considered to replace the XII Corps Commander General Manton Eddy near the end of the war, but General Irwin was selected at the insistence of General Patton. If he had been selected he once again would have been in command of the 945th FAB, although much further up the command structure.

Today Camp Blanding exists as a National Guard training facility, but during WWII it served as a primary infantry replacement training center. On March 27, 1942 the 179th FAR was moved from Camp Blanding to Camp Shelby, Mississippi. The 945th FAB was formed from the 2nd Battalion of the 179th FAR on February 8, 1943 (8). The HQ of the 2nd Bn., 179th FAR became the HQ for the 945th FAB; Battery D, 179th became Battery A, 945th, etc.

The newly designated 945th FAB was moved by rail from Camp Shelby to Fort Sill, Oklahoma on April 12, 1943. The 945th FAB was moved from Ft. Sill via Camp Gruber, Oklahoma in June 1944 to Camp Myles Standish, Massachusetts to await oversees departure. The 945th FAB departed from Boston on July 2, 1944, three years after beginning training at Camp Blanding.

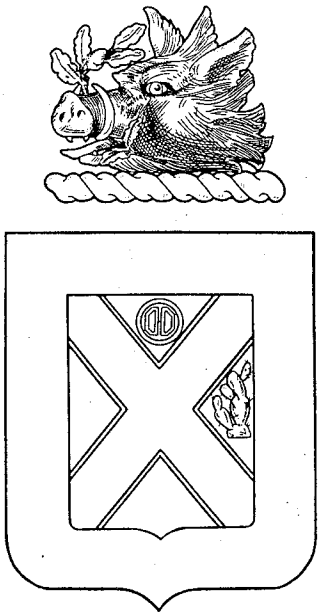
CREST AND BATTALION MOTTO

The approved crest for the 179th FAR includes a "saltine gray" to indicate service in the Confederacy (2,4). The crest approved November 1940 for the 179th FAR includes both blue, for prior infantry service, and red for the field artillery. The Dixie Division (31st Division) insignia is carried at the top of the crest to signify service during World War I. A cactus is included on the right side to denote service along the Mexican border in 1916. The distinctive, yet intimidating boars head adorns both the 179th and 945th crests. The 179th FAR motto was "In Bello Paceque Primus", or First in Peace and War. The motto of the 945th FAB was "Unity, Alertness and Valor". Its interesting to note that this was the fourth choice for the motto submitted by then Major Wilbur V. DeLoach after "Battalion is Ready", "Ready For All Things", and "As It Should Be" (4). However, the motto "Unity, Alertness and Valor" is a fitting statement for a battalion that would have such distinguished service during WWII. Much of the 1940 design for the 179th FAR was used for the crest of the 945th FAB (3). The 945th FAB crest is depicted in Figure 1.

EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS (ETO)

The 945th FAB went ashore on the European Continent via Utah Beach, France on August 12, 1944, 67 days following the allied assault in Normandy. The 945th FAB was considered medium artillery as it used the powerful 155 mm M1 howitzer, a massive piece of equipment that could fire a 95 lb shell over 10 miles. Assigned to the XII Corps, 182 Field Artillery Group, the 945th FAB participated in four major European Theater of Operations (ETO) campaigns: Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, and Central Europe (3). Battery A of the 945th FAB fired the first round at 1653 on August 22, 1944 near Montargis, France (9). The last round was fired by the 945th FAB on 5 May 1945. The 945th FAB remained in the Third Army, XII Corps through the European Campaign, finally being inactivated on July 19, 1946 at Camp Myles Standish, Massachusetts.

Figure 1
945th Field Artillery Battalion Crest



Chapter 2

1. Pictorial Review - National Guard of the State of Georgia 1939

2. "74th Field Artillery Brigade, US Army", Camp Blanding, FL, 1941.

3. Sawicki, James A., Field Artillery Battalions of World War II: Volume II, Centaur Publications, 1978.

4. Official Record, War Department: Office of the Quartermaster General/SPQRD 424.4, 10/30/43: Coat of Arms for the 945th FAB, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

5. KPBS-TV, "American Experience: The Hunt for Pancho Villa", produced by Hector Galan and Paul Espinosa, 1994.

6. The 122nd Infantry: Georgia National Guard, 1933.

7. Official Record, War Department: National Archives, Washington, D.C.

8. Official Record, War Department: General Order #1, 3/3/43, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

9. "War Diary of the 945th FAB in the ETO", 202 945FA 1945, US Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 1945.

Chapter 3
Sand and Sun: Camp Blanding, Florida

"The unusually friendly relations between
the New Hampshire and Georgia units proves
conclusively that sectionalism in this country
is dead and buried" - General Ira T. Wyche

They came from Georgia, Tennessee, Ohio, California, Pennsylvania, from all points on the compass, joined together as young men to sacrifice for the cause of freedom. Many had never traveled far from their own hometown, much less to Europe; yet they came because honor and duty outweighed personal wishes and apprehension. On the hot sands and under the pine stands of north Florida they would begin the long march towards war.

The 179th Field Artillery Regiment, having been inducted into service by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on February 24, 1941 (Figure 1), began the long march by way of the old railroad at the Conley Depot (now Fort Gillam) in southwest Atlanta (I5). The regiment loaded troops and equipment, including the Schneider "box trail" 155 mm howitzers that had been rescued from the fire at the City Auditorium on Courtland Street in Atlanta. The fire at the City Auditorium destroyed a lot of the 179th equipment, and probably delayed their induction from November 1940 to February 1941 (I5).

They arrived at Camp Blanding on March 3, 1941 and remained for one year. Dan Hale of Watkinsville, GA remembered that C Battery of the 179th FAR reported with little more than "Table of Organization and Equipment (TO&E)" (I1). For many it was the beginning of a great adventure, for others an interruption in life that they had not planned on, and certainly not desired. Yet each went, some not to see home until late 1945, four years later, some not to return at all.

Camp Blanding, Florida is located approximately 20 miles south-southwest of Jacksonville, Florida, and just east of Starke, a sleepy southern town with dirt streets and wooden sidewalks (I42). It was named for Brigadier General Albert Blanding who commanded the Dixie Division (31st Inf. Div.) During WW1. Camp Blanding stretched along the banks of Kingsley Lake, a large circular "sink hole" lake (Figure 2). The prominent feature that is remembered by most of the men, particularly those from the inland parts of the country is the endless Florida sand. Roy McMahan (SVC) of Murfreesboro, TN said of Camp Blanding that the "sand nearly killed me" (I26). The 74th Field Artillery Brigade (FABr) was located on the west side of the lake, with the 179th being the last unit along the western bank of the lake (see Figure 2). However, it was located close to "B" Gate and the bus depot for Jacksonville!

Camp Blanding was primarily an Infantry Training Replacement Center (IRTC) with the following divisions receiving training: 1st, 29th, 30th, 31st, 36th 43rd, 63rd, 66th, 79th, and the 508th Parachute Regiment (Figure 3). More than one million troops trained at Camp Blanding during WWII (2). Today a much smaller Camp Blanding is the Florida National Guard artillery training

center. A fine museum, and examples of American, German, Soviet artillery are displayed along with numerous beautiful monuments for most of the divisions that trained at Camp Blanding. The area around Camp Blanding appears to have changed little since 1941, and as you stand on the edge of Kingsley Lake you can almost picture the 945th FAB marching across the parade ground.

Table 1
179th FAR/945th FAB
Training Camp Locations

Location	Arrival	Departure
Camp Blanding, FL	3 MAR 1941	NOV 1941
South Carolina Maneuvers	NOV 1941	5 DEC 1941
Camp Blanding, FL	6 DEC 1941	9 MAR 1942
Camp Shelby, MS	27 MAR 1942	17 SEP 1942
Louisiana Maneuvers	18 SEP 1942	10 NOV 1942
Camp Shelby, MS	11 NOV 1942	19 APR 1943
Fort Sill, OK	20 APR 1943	13 JAN 1944
Carolina Maneuvers	OCT 1943	OCT 1943
Camp Gruber, OK	14 JAN 1944	22 JUN 1944
Camp Myles Standish, MA	25 JUN 1944	3 JUL 1944

The 179th was assigned to the 74th Field Artillery Brigade, IV Corps, Third Army (1). The 179th was joined by the 172nd Field Artillery Battalion (155 mm howitzer) from New Hampshire, which was also inducted into Federal service on February 24, 1941, and the regular army's 35th Field Artillery (155 mm gun). The 74th FABr began functioning as a brigade on May 9, 1941 with General Ira T. Wyche in command (3). Also training at Camp Blanding was the 26th Infantry Division, the "Yankee Division" from Massachusetts that the 945th FAB would support in France. They would cross paths again in France.

Some of the men that filled out the 179th FAR arrived from other locations, like Dick Bish (A), who left Pennsylvania to receive 10 weeks of basic training at Fort Bragg, North Carolina (I3). According to Bish, all of the men from up north had the same nickname - "Damn Yankee"! Others, like Bob Frey from Ohio, had a longer road to travel before reaching the 945th FAB (I6). Frey (B) was drafted from his hometown of Canton, Ohio, received basic training and radio school at Camp Crowder, Missouri, stayed nine months in the Army Specialized Training Program (which was

canceled by the government), was reassigned to the 97th Infantry Division at Fort Leonard, Missouri (more basic training), shipped to the west coast for amphibious training, shipped back to the east coast at Camp Shanks, New York, traveled by sea to Europe and finally joined the 945th FAB in France (I6).

DeWitt Scarborough (B) of Candor, North Carolina was called up during the first wartime draft, as was J.C. Howard (C) from Mooresville, North Carolina. Scarborough was inducted into the Army at Ft. Bragg on April 9, 1941, and took both basic training and training for the field artillery at Ft. Bragg. Following training, a Colonel at Ft. Bragg began calling off the names of the 600 or so men assembled. Scarborough was not called, and was transferred to the 179th FAR at Camp Blanding; however, many of the men that were called ended up in the Pacific and were captured at Corregidor in the Phillipines.

Fred Mackey (C) of Hartwell, GA decided after six months in a Civilian Conservation Corps Camp (CC) at Fort Benning, Georgia that he wanted out (I43). However, his brief stay at home did not prevent the U.S. Army from catching up with him! A glimmer of hope remained as the civil service told Mackey to go to the Rock Island Arsenal, but as fate would have it the 945th and Camp Blanding beckoned. Mackey reported to Camp Blanding and remained with the 945th FAB through the war. Others transferred later from the signal corps, antiaircraft battalions, and infantry units, both prior to embarkation for Europe and once the 945th FAB was on the continent.

Colonel Thomas. L. Alexander commanded the 179th when it arrived at Camp Blanding. Colonel Alexander was born in Wagner, Aiken Co., South Carolina in 1893, and graduated from the Citadel in 1915. He served in France with the 54th Infantry from 1918 to 1919, commanding the second battalion at the Vosges Mountains Sector and the Argonne Forest. Colonel Alexander graduated from the Advanced Course for Field Officers, Field Artillery School, Fort Sill, Oklahoma in the spring of 1941. Colonel Alexander, who taught Physics at Tech High School in Atlanta, had twin sons in the outfit (I1).

The commanding officer of the 74th FABr, General Ira T. Wyche, was Born in North Carolina in 1887. Wyche graduated from Laurinburg High School and the United States Military Academy in 1911 and was assigned to the 30th Infantry Division. He served in the Signal Corps before moving to the field artillery, serving with the 21st and 60th Field Artillery Brigades. Although General Wyche did not serve overseas during World War I, he stayed with the field artillery, joining the staff as an instructor at the Field Artillery Basic School at Camp Taylor, Kentucky. He later graduated from the Command and General Staff School, Army War College, and served at Fort Bragg, the Field Artillery School and Field Artillery Basic School. General Wyche took command of the 74th FABr on May 9, 1941. He would later command the 79th Infantry Division in the European Theater where General Patton held him in high regard. His message to the 74th Field Artillery Brigade is presented in Figure 4.

Camp Blanding was rapidly constructed, and most of the buildings were similar in appearance. Many of these original buildings are still standing today, and the Camp retains a feeling of the 1940's.

The 179th FAB Headquarters was a one story wood frame structure with two doors, identical in appearance to the 172nd FAB Headquarters (2). The sand was deep and the heat relentless. In fact the sand was so deep that Orie Bonnel remembers a man falling off a "6 by 6" (6 wheels with power to all six) truck, being run over by a another truck, and stumbling to his feet with little damage as he was pushed into the sand!

Each Battery had 120 men and four officers. The 945th had three firing batteries (A,B,C), a Service Battery, and the HQ Battery. Each firing battery had four howitzers. The training at Camp Blanding focused on the operation of the firing batteries. The men trained hard to become proficient at fire direction, communications, gun maintenance and a variety of other tasks required to support a mobile, self sufficient artillery battalion. All this occurred before the breakup of the 179th FAR at Camp Shelby into the two field artillery battalions. Many of the officers had the opportunity to attend the Field Artillery Battery Officer Course (BOC), and later the Advanced Artillery Officers Course (AOC) at Fort Sill, Oklahoma (I5). These courses were tough, and included instruction on surveying, techniques for battery firing, fire direction, use of the aiming circle, the laying of the batteries, preparation of use of firing charts (observed and unobserved fire), and countless other technical topics. Upon returning to Camp Blanding the officers were responsible for keeping the rigid training schedule.

Frequent testing of the officers and gun crews by IV Corps staff emphasized the importance of training. Gun crew training consisted of learning not only your role, but the role of other positions around the howitzer (Appendix H). The men marched frequently, and had a weekly parade on the grounds led by the regimental band. Other more mundane tasks included guard duty. The activities at Camp Blanding prepared the officers and men of the 179th FAR for the advanced training and maneuvers that would take place during 1942 and 1943.

Figure 1
Induction Notice to the 179th Field Artillery Regiment
31 January 1941

IMMEDIATE ACTION

War Department
The Adjutant General's Office
Washington

ESK:JW
January 31, 1941.

In reply refer to
AG 325 (1-27-41) M-C.

SUBJECT: Induction of certain National Guard Units, effective February 24, 1941.

TO: Commanding General, Fourth Corps Area,
Post Office Building, Atlanta, Georgia.

1. Pursuant to and in compliance with the provisions of Executive Order Number 8633, January 14, 1941, ordering certain units and members of the National Guard of the United States into the active Military service of the United States, effective on dates to be announced in War Department orders, February 24, 1941, is hereby announced as the effective date of induction for the following organizations:

UNIT	STATE
43 Division	Conn., Me., Vt., RI.
115th Cavalry	Wyo.
Headquarters Battery, 74th Field Artillery Brigade	Ga.
Headquarters Battery, 75th Field Artillery Brigade	Tenn.
168th Field Artillery	Colo.
172d Field Artillery	NH
179th Field Artillery	Ga.
181st Field Artillery	Tenn.
191st Field Artillery	Tenn.
210th Coast Artillery (Antiaircraft)	Mich.
103d Coast Artillery Battalion (Antiaircraft)	Ky.
118th Observation Squadron	Conn.

2. Separate instructions are being transmitted for the troop movements to be made following induction.

3. Governors and State Adjutants General of states concerned are being furnished copies of this letter.

By order of the Secretary of War:

(Sgd) R. G. Hersey
Adjutant General.

A true copy:

Charles B. Bottoms

CHARLES B. BOTTOMS,
Major, 179th F. A.,
Acting Adjutant.

Reproduced by 179th Field Artillery 7-11-42.

Figure 2
Aerial Photo of Camp Blanding - 1941

Figure 3
Diagram of Camp Blanding - 1941

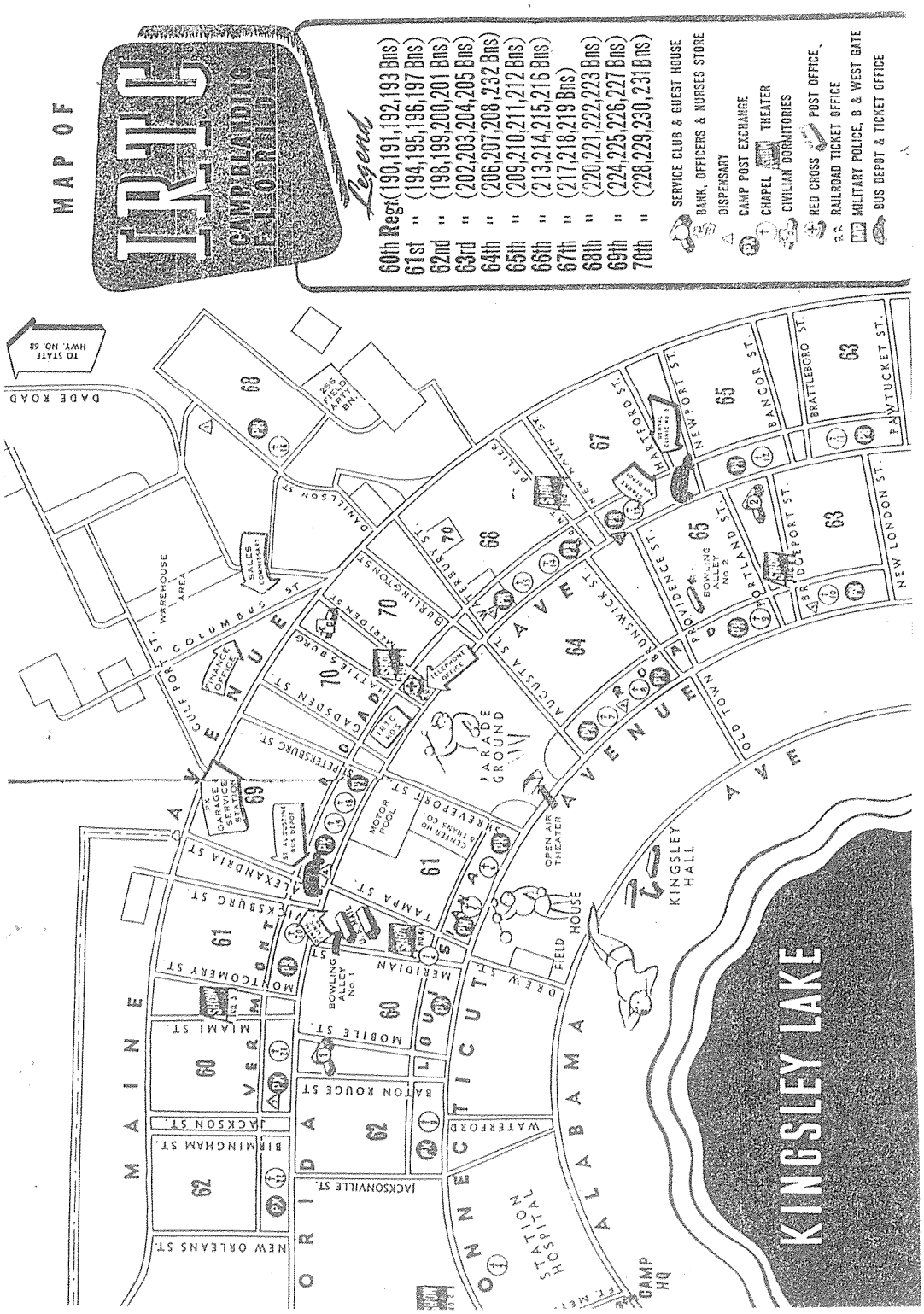
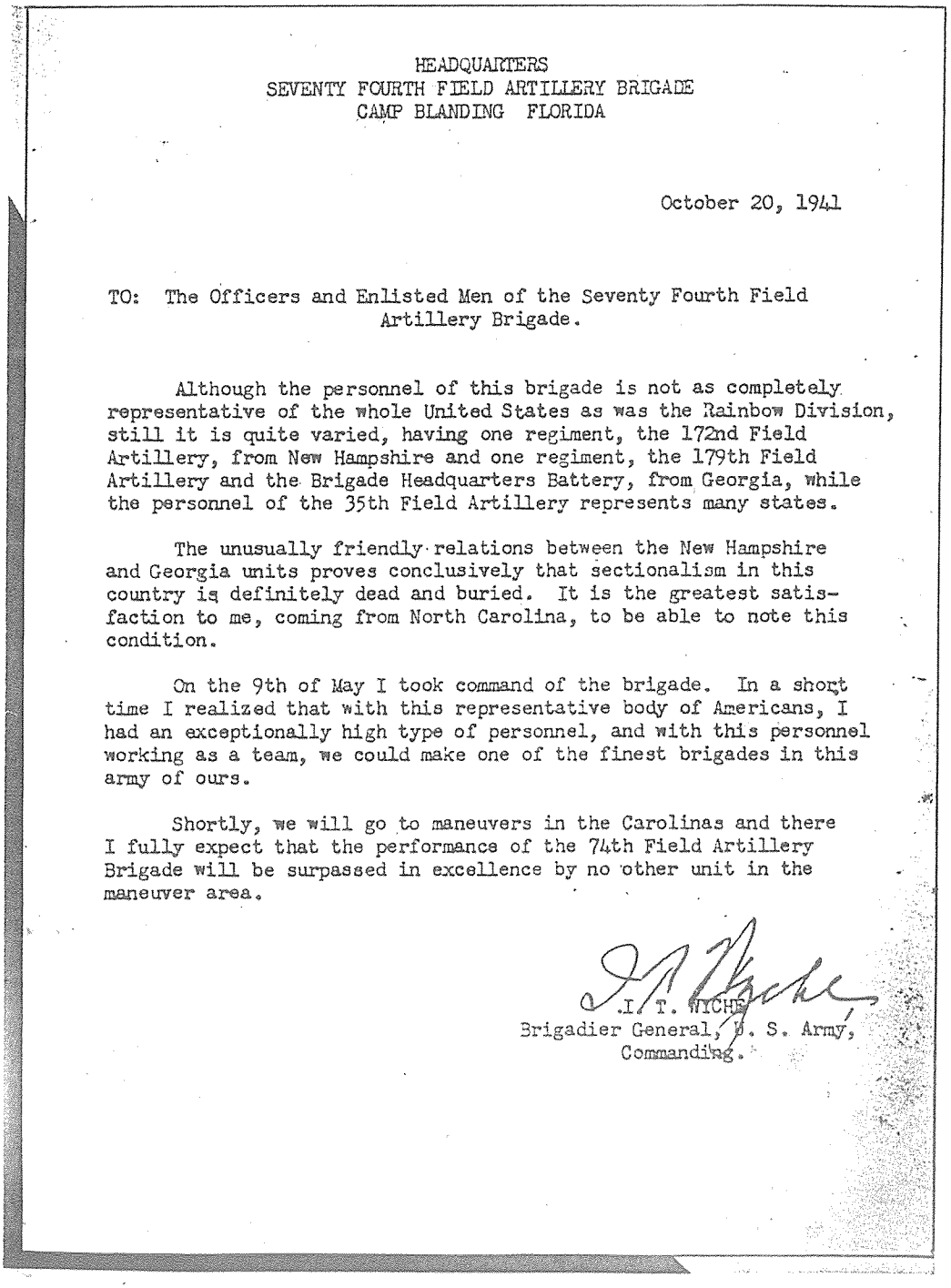


Figure 4
Message from General Ira Wyche to the 74th Field Artillery Brigade



HEADQUARTERS
SEVENTY FOURTH FIELD ARTILLERY BRIGADE
CAMP BLANDING FLORIDA

October 20, 1941

TO: The Officers and Enlisted Men of the Seventy Fourth Field Artillery Brigade.

Although the personnel of this brigade is not as completely representative of the whole United States as was the Rainbow Division, still it is quite varied, having one regiment, the 172nd Field Artillery, from New Hampshire and one regiment, the 179th Field Artillery and the Brigade Headquarters Battery, from Georgia, while the personnel of the 35th Field Artillery represents many states.

The unusually friendly relations between the New Hampshire and Georgia units proves conclusively that sectionalism in this country is definitely dead and buried. It is the greatest satisfaction to me, coming from North Carolina, to be able to note this condition.

On the 9th of May I took command of the brigade. In a short time I realized that with this representative body of Americans, I had an exceptionally high type of personnel, and with this personnel working as a team, we could make one of the finest brigades in this army of ours.

Shortly, we will go to maneuvers in the Carolinas and there I fully expect that the performance of the 74th Field Artillery Brigade will be surpassed in excellence by no other unit in the maneuver area.

I. T. WYCHE
Brigadier General, U. S. Army,
Commanding.

Chapter Three

1. Official Record: War Department, "History of the 179th & 74 Brigade", National Archives, Washington, D.C.

2. Camp Blanding Museum and Historical Associates, Inc., Rt 1, Box 465, Starke, Florida 32091-9703.

3. "74th Field Artillery Brigade, Camp Blanding, Florida, 1941"

Chapter 4
Preparing for War: Advanced Training

"That's where the fun began" - Pvt. Ed Hinkel

CAMP SHELBY, MISSISSIPPI

On March 9, 1942 the 179th Field Artillery Regiment departed Camp Blanding, Florida for Camp Shelby, Mississippi, by truck, arriving on March 27, 1942. The howitzers were transported by rail. Camp Shelby is located 10 miles south of Hattiesburg in the southern reaches of the Magnolia State. General Order No. 1, 945th FAB, Camp Shelby, Mississippi was issued by Major Wilbur DeLoach, Acting Executive Officer on March 3, 1943, redesignating the 179th Field Artillery Regiment and creating the 945th FAB (1). The Army made the redesignation effective on February 8, 1943 (Figure 1). The following designations were complete:

179th FAR Designation	945th FAB Designation
Hq. 2nd Battalion	Hq. 945th FAB
Hq. Btry. 2nd Bn.	Hq. Btry. 945th FAB
Serv. Btry. 2nd Bn.	Serv. Btry. 945th FAB
2nd Battalion Co. D	945th FAB A Battery
2nd Battalion Co. E	945th FAB B Battery
2nd Battalion Co. F	945th FAB C Battery

The 945th FAB began to fill out while at Camp Shelby, adding men such as Pvt. Carl Hotz (HQ) of Fremont, Ohio, Pvt. Willard Smith (HQ) of New Castle, Indiana, Pvt. Steve Giacovelli (SV) of San Francisco, California, Pvt. James Wright (HQ) of California, Pvt. Hugh Howenstine (HQ) of South Whitley, Indiana, Pvt. Gino Ricci (SV) of Jackson, California, Pvt. Donald Giovangnoli (SV) of Ohio, Pvt. Walter Kline (C) of Kent, Ohio, Sgt. DeWitt Scarborough (B) of Mt. Gilead, North Carolina, Pvt. Joseph Hallock (C) of Atwater, Ohio, Pvt. Robert Schneider (HQ) of Cleveland, Ohio, and Pvt. Dale Curfman (B) of Akron, Ohio - young men from all points of the compass, varied backgrounds, different viewpoints - thrown together for the first time with other young men with whom they might not have much in common, other than their future together in the war.

Larry Horning's (C) experience typifies what most post-basic training troops went through - the training was "tough and difficult" (I17). Mastering all of the gun positions, instruments, scout

and observer roles, and the many other important jobs in the battalion took many weeks of intensive training. Horning learned several military occupational specialties (MOS)- forward observer, scout and instrument man. Horning's "Separation Qualification Record" lists several MOSs including Basic Training Field Artillery (521), Gun Crewman Medium Artillery (864), Telephone Operator Field (650), Scout (761), and Survey & Instrument Man (228). His buddies in training included Ford Lounsbury, Walter Kline, Ed Hinkel, and Walter Adelman and many others. Some men like Raymond Gless trained with the 945th, only to be transferred out to the Air Corps before deployment overseas (I51). Gless recalls firing over 400 rounds at Ft. Sill in one day, then returning to camp to clean the howitzers before retreat.

Often, upon arriving at Camp Shelby the men started out in an unlikely role, such as Giacovelli's first duty of K.P., with "many others following" (I13). Robert Schneider of Cleveland, Ohio was greeted his first night at Camp Shelby with guard duty (I39). Hugh Howenstine came from Whitney, Indiana, a town of less than 1,200 people. Howenstines's social studies teacher in school, and a trip to Europe in 1939 provided early warnings of the impending war. He left two brothers and two sisters when he departed a cold Toledo, Ohio for basic training in 1942 (I18). Basic training was tedious, yet his Drill Sergeant became one of his best friends. Like many of the men, he would be married during the three year period of training to Orah Gordon at Fort Sill.

Gino Ricci's father immigrated from Italy and served with a US Army horse drawn field artillery battalion in World War I. Ricci remembered the strong emphasis on training over and over on the same procedures, and how that prepared you to carry out your duties without hesitation in battle (I20). He had two good friends that ended up in the 945th FAB: Roscoe Walker (C), a mess sergeant, and Enos Oliver (A), a forward observer. Leaving home had been anticipated for some time, so he and his parents were prepared as he left Jackson, California for war.

For Raymond Draxler (SV) and other farm boys in Wisconsin, the war loomed large on the horizon, and the farm deferments were not to last forever. The oldest of four children, two sisters went to the Notre Dame Convent, and his brother was 17 years younger (I41). Raymond didn't take advantage of the deferments, but instead enlisted as soon as the Selective Service system was established. He was inducted at Camp Grant, Illinois on March 11, 1941. While home on furlough in May of 1943, Ray requested a 10 day extension to help with the spring planting. It was during this furlough that he and Ida Beryl were married.

Fred Mackey (C) of Hartwell, Georgia was also married while at Camp Shelby to Hazel. Many of the men remembered that the married couples developed close relationships while sharing the many hardships of inadequate housing, being away from home and the uncertainty of the future (I43). Later, just before the battalion shipped out in Boston, Major Clay told the men that their records up to that point were available to send home. However, he cautioned the men that they "might want to remove a page or two" (evidently pages that a soldier would not want his parents or sweet heart to look at), looked towards Fred, and said "Mackey!". Of course, Mackey's service record that returned home was unblemished as the offending pages were removed!

Walter Kline (C) graduated from high school in 1938 in Kent, Ohio, and worked as a machinist at the C.L. Congler Machine Co. begining in 1940 (I33). He was inducted into service in 1942 at Kent, Ohio, the same year he married his fiance Leona Wilcox. Issued clothes and equipment at Camp Perry, Ohio, he waited in 4 degree weather for the train to take him to Camp Shelby. This was not the last time a member of the 945th FAB would experience bitter cold. Kline was selected to go to Radio School, but also received training with machine guns, mines and fire direction - he "didn't have much time for loafing"!

Wayne R. Cruser (C) of Westport, Indiana graduated from Westport High School in 1936. Cruser was already married to Mildred Martin (1940), working in a defense plant and had a son Stephen who was one year old when he was inducted (I36). Cruser remembers the day the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, that it was so incredible, yet it woke America out of the "stupor" that we seemed to be in concerning this emerging global conflict. Leaving home was not easy, he just "gutted it up and said goodbye to my wife and my boy and went down and caught a train to Fort Thomas, Kentucky". That may have been the toughest day of the entire war for Wayne Cruser.

Jack Carr (HQ) graduated in 1938 from East Point High School in the Atlanta, Georgia area. He was also in Co. B of the old 122nd Infantry (National Guard). When he was drafted in 1942 he ended up by providence in the 179th FAR! Carr had two boyhood friends who also ended up in the 179th FAB: Pat Kelly, who was killed in action in the European Theater of Operations (ETO), and Al Russell. Carr initially was in the HQ Wire Company, but later went to radio school and learned how to use the 284 radio. Bob Frey also attended this radio school. Dale Curfman was glad to arrive at Camp Shelby because the train ride was "so very cold".

Paul Remillard (C) originally entered the service in 1938 with the 172nd FAB, a New Hampshire National Guard Unit. At his induction into the US Army in 1941 Remillard believed that his obligation was for "one year", it turned out to be for almost four years. Having trained at Camp Blanding, he was assigned to the 945th FAB after finishing Officer Candidate School (OCS), serving as a forward observer for C Battery with Captain Griffin. Nicknamed "Petit", Remillard retired as a Lieutenant Colonel from the New Hampshire National Guard following the war (I47).

FORT SILL, OKLAHOMA

On April 15, 1943 the 945th FAB received the march order for Ft. Sill. The "Movement Order" from Brigadier General Keyser of the 74th FABr (Figure 2) was directed to the Commanding Officer, 945th FAB and ordered that "the 945th FAB will proceed by rail, at existing strength, to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, so as to arrive on April 21, 1943, reporting upon arrival there at to the Commandant, the Field Artillery School, Fort Sill, Oklahoma". Upon arrival the 945th FAB was relieved from assignment to the Third Army and was assigned to the Replacement and School Command as school troops. The 179th FAB accompanied the 945th FAB to Ft. Sill.

Ed Hinkel (HQ) of Akron, Ohio was drafted in November 1942 and arrived at Camp Shelby from Camp Perry, Ohio, where he had to double step to keep up with the taller men in the front of

the formation. He had two brothers in WW2 - one in the Pacific and one in Europe. Hinkel, known as "Red", was trained as a clerk and was on the HQ Survey Crew. He remembers that at Camp Shelby - "that's where the fun began" - 20 mile hikes and pushups. Hinkel moved from Battery C to HQ Battery's survey crew - where he found that he actually liked trigonometry a lot more than "manhandling a 155 gun". Like several other men he also started into a special training program, this one was at Oklahoma A&M which would result in his being an officer upon graduation. However, the 945th soon received orders to move out from Fort Sill, and it was either take a chance on a later re-assignment or leave school and go with the battalion - he chose the 945th FAB.

Fort Sill was known for excellent field artillery training, and most of the officers of the 945th had attended advanced training at Sill. George Buck was not assigned to the 945th until late in 1944; however, he was in the same training class at Ft. Sill, Battery Officers Class No. 98, with Sterling Dupree, a Georgia native and an Auburn University (then called Alabama Polytechnic Institute) football and track star. Dupree was in the old 122nd Infantry Regiment and a good friend of Major James Clay. Buck was very surprised to see Dupree in France, it just showed what a small world it was within the Army, particularly in the field artillery.

Joe Hallock (C) remembers meeting Dan Hale (C) of Watkinsville, Georgia, and sitting on his bunk at Fort Sill while Hale "told me what the world was about" (I37)! Other men recognized Hale's independent spirit and experience, which made him well suited for the responsibility that was later his with the ammunition section. Charles Price (HQ) joined the 945th after enlisting in March 1943 (passing up a deferment) and completing basic training at Fort Sill. Price had experience as an accountant with Pontiac Motor Company in Flint, Michigan, so he ended up preparing tax returns for many of the officers while at Fort Sill. Later he served as a clerk in the 945th HQ.

While at Fort Sill the 945th, which had now been training since 1941, began to serve as "school troops", helping train other officers and troops the art of field artillery (I33). Walter Kline remembers driving the umpires around during training sessions, and being able to deliver a fire mission after only six rounds. Wayne Cruser was at Fort Sill, but like George Buck was not with the 945th until later when Dan Hale selected him because of his high test scores and his experience working at the Allison plant in Indiana (I1). Hale was surprised when Cruser showed up that he was such a tall and solidly built man. Cruser remembered hiking five or six miles out on his second day at Fort Sill to observe an artillery exercise from a hillside near Signal Mountain. He initially began training as a driver/mechanic, and later became a driver for Captain Morris and Lt. Milton Worley of Lawton, Oklahoma. Cruser was with the 945th at the very end when the colors were struck at Camp Miles Standish in November 1945.

William Skinner (SV) of Sardis, Georgia was training with the 945th at Fort Sill when he had the opportunity to enter the aviation cadet program (I44). Tec 5 Skinner left service battery in January 1944 for Sheppard Field, Texas for air crew training (2,3). Cpl. Carl H. Riley (C) and Cpl. Jack E. Page from the 945th also joined Skinner. The program was canceled in March 1944 and a disappointed William Skinner was returned along with Carl Riley to the 945th at Camp Gruber (4). Special Order No. 72, Fort Sill HQ, 20 March 1944 returned the men with the following statement:

"The following named EM having reported this sta from Sheppard Field Tex IC par 8 SO 77, HQ Sheppard Field Tex dtd 17 Mar, for asgmt to 945th FA Bn, and orgn having changed sta WP without delay to Cp Gruber Okla their proper sta, reporting upon arrival there at to the CO for dy" (Figure 3). 1/Sgt Roy "Red" Elliot was very pleased to see his best friend return as he said in a letter to Skinner in February 1944 while he was at Sheppard Field "Boy I sure wish that you were here. We are badly in need of a Bty. Motor Sgt."!

Many close friendships developed during the years the 945th FAB was training. It was a hard life for young couples - little money, substandard housing, separation from their immediate family., and an uncertain future Good friends were made as everyone was coping together. Ida Draxler mentions that the men from the Motor Pool and their wives became quite close - James Looney, Paul Mattern, Gino Ricci, Orie Bonnell, Wilson Boss, and William Skinner "to mention some of them" (I31). Fred and Hazel Mackey became good friends with Henry Payton and his wife, who also were expecting their first child. Payton would be killed in action the day before his child was born in the states.

CAMP GRUBER, OKLAHOMA

Camp Gruber was the last stop before the final move began towards the European Theater. Camp Gruber was a recently constructed camp located in eastern Oklahoma near Muskogee. Another move made it rough on the men with families, and housing was at a premium (I14). Captain Chester Steckel was staying at the Hotel Muskogee and all four of his sons came down with measles, while the Grays were more fortunate to find a small apartment house complete with a gazebo and chicken yard (I14). Shortly after arriving at Gruber the now separate 179th FAB was sent to Ft. Knox for maneuvers with several armored divisions in Tennessee. Many of the men and families in the 179th asked, "why us and not the 945th?".

In the fall of 1943 Captain Dupree arrived in the 945th FAB command post with special orders called "POM", which upon reading they found out were "Principles of Overseas Movement". The POM outlined everything from inoculations to deployment of the battalion at night (I14), and listed certain physical requirements for the men. These included a 300 yard run. Sterling Dupree, who had been the third fastest man in the world while at Auburn, and Jim Clay, who played football at Tech, made it easily. Wayne Cruser also remembered an increased emphasis on close order drill, physical fitness and exercise while at Gruber (I36). Colonel DeLoach did not fare so well in the 300 yard run and had to retire from the event based on "medical advice" (I14). Dupree and George Buck were in the same Battery Officers Class at Ft. Sill in May 1943 (Figure 4).

Lawrence Literal, "Swede", was from the small town of Dayton, Washington, and as he said later, had never seen "a ship let alone the ocean". Joining the 945th at Camp Gruber, he was assigned to Battery B as a forward observer radio operator. Literal describes Oklahoma as a place where it could rain, and an hour later the rain would be blowing in your face. He also remembers that catfish could be brought in from the local lakes, and segregated sidewalks, something that was not even thought of in Dayton where Lawrence had never even seen a black person (I11).

It also seemed that the closer the battalion was to going oversees the more reluctant the army was to kick men out of the battalion. For instance, at a beer party in the mess hall at Gruber Private Seagraves hit a Sergeant Hodnett on the head with a pitcher of beer which caused quite a black eye. Although this would normally have resulted in a trip to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, there wasn't much made of it and the sergeant wore sunglasses the next day to hide his eye (I36)! While at Gruber some of the men received additional training, such as the "School for Bakers and Cooks" that T/4 Roy McMahan graduated from on the 14th of April, 1944. His Certificate of Proficiency states that he has passed the "requisite examination in cooking".

While at Camp Gruber the new M1 155 mm howitzers arrived. These howitzers had a split trail and were pulled by the M5 tractor, a significant upgrade over the old Schneider 155s. The officers and batteries were to be checked out on the new howitzers, and General Lentz of the 182nd Field Artillery Group allegedly designed very difficult field tests that many of the officers had difficulty with, particularly since the 155s arrived without manuals. Lt. Arthur Kelter of C Battery completed a manual for the battalion and did a fine job of it (I14).

Shortly before leaving Camp Gruber for camp Miles Standish, the approximately 50% excess officers above the number specified in the Table or Organization and Equipment (TO&E) were transferred to other organizations. At that time, Tom Cope was transferred from HQ Battery of the 179th FAB to Service Battery of the 945th FAB, making him the last officer to join the battalion before leaving the US. Cope may have been the first officer severely wounded in December 1944 near the German border.

The last memory for Gruber for Wayne Cruser was standing on the parade field with everything he owned in barracks bags ready for transfer to Camp Miles Standish and the oversees trip to England. Instead of an abstract problem on the firing range, the war was now getting very, very close.

Figure 1
General Order #1 - 3 March 1943 (945th created)

HEADQUARTERS
NINE HUNDRED FORTY FIFTH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION
CAMP SHELBY, MISSISSIPPI

3 March 1943

GENERAL ORDERS)
:
NUMBER 1)

1. PAC WD ltr AG 320.2 (2-5-43) OB-1-GN-M 8 February 1943, Sub: "Redesignation of Field Artillery Regiments", and Mtr, Hq. 3rd A, AG 320.2/ F.A. GNMCA-10, Sub. as above, 19 February 1943, the 945th Med. Det. is activated as of this date, and will be organized as per T/O 6-55. Maj. A. Sherwood Morrow, 0375324, MC, assuming command.

2. In accordance with Par. 4, G.O. No.3, Hq., 179th F.A., dtd 27 February 1943, the following redesignations of units in this Bn. are made effective this date:

OLD DESIGNATION	NEW DESIGNATION
Hq. 2nd Bn., 179th F.A.	Hq. 945th F.A. Bn.
Hq. Btry. 2nd Bn., 179th F.A.	Hq. Btry. 945th F.A. Bn.
Btry "D", 179th F.A.	Btry "A", 945th F.A. Bn.
Btry "E", 179th F.A.	Btry "B", 945th F.A. Bn.
Btry "F", 179th F.A.	Btry "C", 945th F.A. Bn.
Serv. Btry. 2nd Bn., 179th F.A.	Serv. Btry. 945th F.A. Bn.

By order of Lt. Col. NEWMAN:

WILBUR V. DeLOACH
Major, 945th F.A. Bn.
Acting Ex O.

OFFICIAL:

WILBUR V. DeLOACH
Major, 945th F.A. Bn.
S-3

Figure 2
Movement Order to Ft. Sill 15 April 1943

39 — 74th B

HEADQUARTERS,
74TH FIELD ARTILLERY BRIGADE,
CAMP SHELBY, MISS. WWF/fmc

300.4 Apr 15, 1943.

SUBJECT: Movement Orders.

TO: - Commanding Officer, 945th FA Bn, Camp Shelby, Miss.

1. PAC ltr, Hq Army Ground Forces, 370.5 /70 (FA) (R)-GNGCT (4-1-43) dated April 1, 1943, subject: "Transfer of Field Artillery Units to New Stations", 1st Ind, AG 370.5 FA (4-1-43) GNMCC-5, Hq Third Army, dated April 5, 1943, and 2d Ind, AG 370.5-GNMOC (4-1-43), Hq XV Corps, dated April 12, 1943, the 945th FA Battalion, Camp Shelby, Miss, will proceed by rail, at existing strength, to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, so as to arrive on April 21, 1943, reporting upon arrival thereat to the Commandant, The Field Artillery School, Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

2. This is a Permanent change of station.

3. T/BA equipment and clothing on hand will be taken except as modified below:

a. All general purpose vehicles on hand will be turned in to appropriate post supply officer, except trucks, 4-ton cargo, and trucks, 4-ton, wrecker, which will be moved to new station by rail. Replacement vehicles will be issued at destination.

4. Upon arrival at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, this unit is relieved from assignment to Third Army and is assigned to Replacement and School Command as school troops.

5. Personnel not required to accompany troops are authorized TPA.

6. The provisions of paragraphs 12 and 18, AR 345-800, Military Records, Reports of Change, July 1, 1942, as amended, will be complied with.

7. The CO 945th FA Bn will report to this Hq, through CO 179th FA Gp, the strength, date and hour of departure, mode of travel, and expected date and hour of arrival of all elements.

Figure 3
Special Order #72 for Aviation Cadets - 20 March 1944

RESTRICTED

SYMBOLS	
TO	The Transportation Officer will furnish the necessary transportation.
TDN	Travel directed is necessary in the military service.
IGF	It being impracticable for the Govt to furnish rations in kind.
POC	Travel of enlisted men by privately owned conveyance is authorized.
TPA	Travel by privately owned conveyance is authorized.

SYMBOLS	
PAC	Pursuant to auth contained in.
TD	Temporary Duty.
UP	Under the provisions of.
o/a	on or about.
WP	Will proceed to.
CI	In compliance with.

(All other abbreviations, refer to AR 850-150)

HEADQUARTERS
FORT SILL, OKLAHOMA

SPECIAL ORDERS)
No 72)

20 March, 1944

E X T R A C T

X X X

3. The following named EM:

Pvt ROBERT L PIERCE	39015754 (In Chg)	Pvt JESUS C SALCIDO	39862758
Pvt THOMAS H IVEY	38346659	Pvt GRIFFITH A JONES	32940913
Pvt LLOYD BALDOCK	37539758	Pvt LEO A HUTCHENS	37618354
Pvt GEORGE F BANNISTER	6825211	Pvt JOSEPH R MALLOW	36879818

having reported this sta IC Par 1 SO 59, Hq FARTC, Cp Roberts, Calif, dtd 10 Mar 1944 for asgmt to 241st FA Bn and orgn having changed sta WP without delay to Cp Howze, Tex, their proper sta reporting to the CO upon arrival thereat for dy. TO IGF in accordance w/AR 30-2215 C3 the TO is atzd to determing the number of meal tickets for the journey to be issued by the QMC. TDN FSA 1-5500 P 431-02 A 0425-24.

8. The following named EM having reported this sta from Sheppard Field Tex IC par 8 SO 77, Hq Sheppard Field Tex dtd 17 Mar, for asgmt to 945th FA Bn, and orgn having changed sta WP without delay to Cp Gruber Okla their proper sta, reporting upon arrival thereat to the CO for dy:

Cpl WILLIAM M SKINNER	34080211	(In Chg)
Cpl CARL H RILEY	14105242	
Cpl RALPH R SMITH	34190866	
Pvt ALLEN C EDGAR	39329590	

TO IGF in accordance w/AR 30-2215 C3 the TO is atzd to determine the number of meal tickets for the journey to be issued by the QMC. TDN FSA 1-5500 P 432-02 A 0425-24.

9. Pvt JOHN W KIRKLAND, 34201822, having reported this sta IC Par 20, SO 73, Hq Cp Hood Tex 13 Mar 44, is asgd to Enl Det 1864th Unit ASF S'SvC.

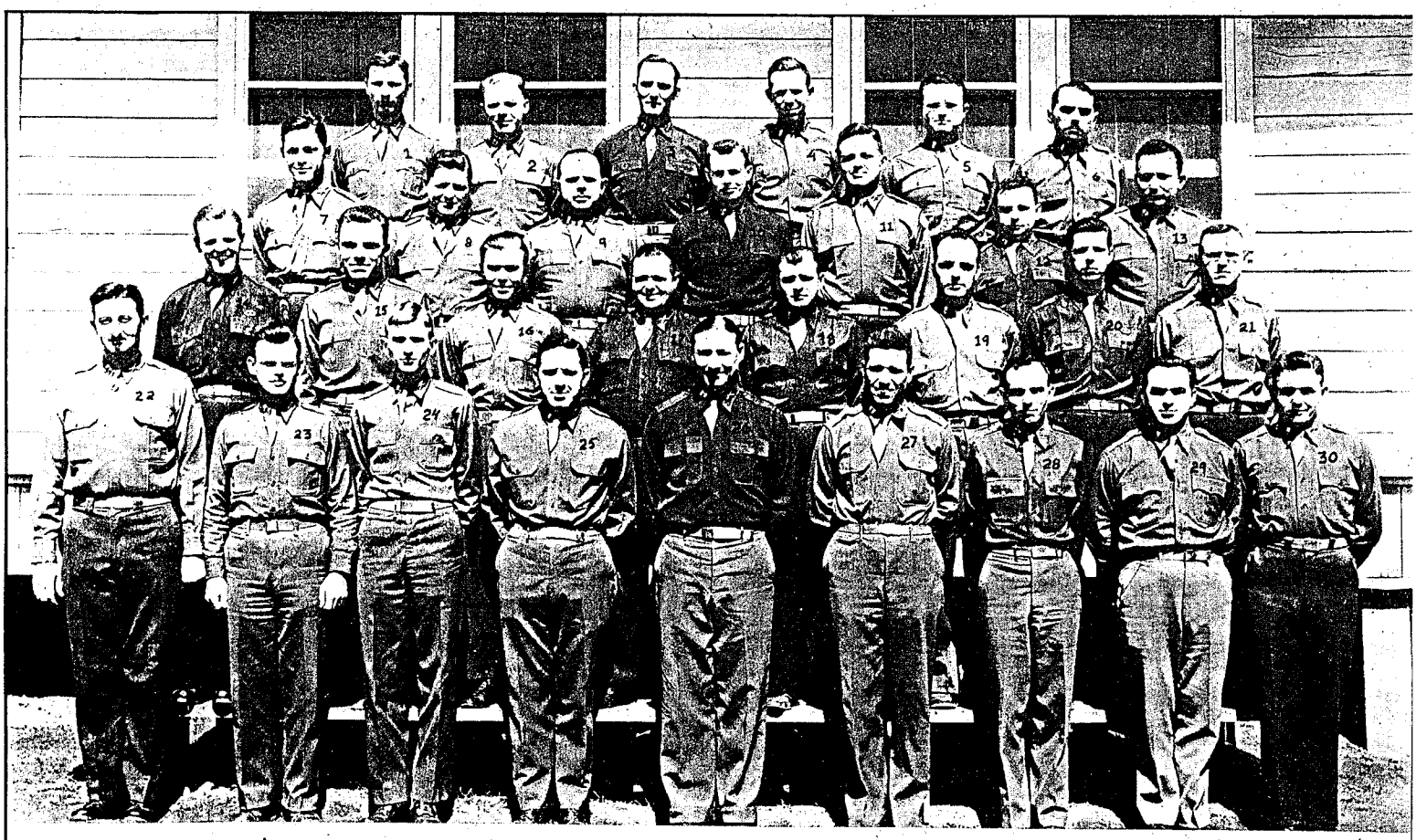
X X X

By order of Colonel PERKINS:

STROTHER J CLARKE
1ST LT AUS
ADJUTANT

OFFICIAL: Strother J Clarke
STROTHER J CLARKE
1ST LT AUS
ADJUTANT

Figure 4
George Buck & Sterling Dupree Photo - Class No. 98
May 1943



1.R.C.Harnly* 2.V.F.Carr‡ 3.B.G.Allen‡ 4.F.C.Archer 5.R.C.Becker 6.F.W.Beckert
7.W.L.Beckman 8.P.P.Bielic 9.H.H.Brigham 10.G.A.Buck 11.J.C.Butts 12.A.M.Camp
13.J.H.Carter 14.E.E.Christensen 15.A.W.Clark 16.J.C.Clark 17.R.E.Clay 18.J.E.Clifton
19.D.Colgate 20.A.B.Concannon 21.S.A.Craft 22.J.B.Crawford 23.F.S.Cushing 24.J.Dain
25.P.M.Danaher 26.C.M.Dinkle 27.S.A.Dupree 28.W.L.Engelhardt 29.P.R.Foltz 30.L.W.Ford

* In Charge ‡ 1st. Alternate ‡ 2d. Alternate

BATTERY OFFICERS' CLASS NO. 98.

Section "B"

Chapter Four

1. Official Record: War Department, "945th FAB, General Order No. 1, March 3, 1943", National Archives, Washington, D.C.

2. US Army, Special Order No. 3, HQ Oklahoma Recruiting and Induction District, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 4 January 1944.

3. US Army, Aviation Cadet Examining Board, 1817th Unit, 8th Service Command, Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, 24 November 1943.

4. US Army, HQ Ft Sill, Special Order No. 72, 20 March 1944.

Chapter 5
Good Byes: The 945th Goes Oversees

"The Green Hills of Scotland"

OVERVIEW OF D-DAY: JUNE 6, 1944

As the 945th finished its training, the greatest invasion in history was unfolding on the beaches of Normandy, known as Operation "Overlord" or "D-Day". It was June 6, 1944 and American troops were assaulting the coast of Normandy at beaches known as Utah and Omaha. The final decision for the invasion had been given by General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force, on June 5th, with the order, "OK, we'll go" (1). That simple order set in motion the greatest amphibious invasion of all time.

Three American infantry divisions were involved in the first waves of assault troops: the 1st Infantry Division, "Big Red One" that suffered the most on Omaha beach, quickly named "Bloody Omaha", the 29th Infantry Division that landed just west of the 1st Inf. Div. on Omaha, and the 4th Infantry Division, the "Ivy Division", that landed with less opposition at Utah Beach to the west. The assault on Omaha had faltered in the face of German automatic weapons and gun emplacements, but the efforts of individual and small units finally carried the first and second waves up and over the crest of the beach and then inland. General Omar Bradley, Commander of the U.S. First Army, commented off Omaha at that end of the day to General Montgomery, that "Someday I'll tell General Eisenhower just how close it was those first few hours" (1). The 945th would later support the 4th Infantry Division from their howitzer emplacements near Consdorf, Luxembourg.

Further down the beaches to the east the British, Canadians and other allied troops landed at Gold, Juno and Sword, striking inland towards Caen to seal the eastern approaches to the beaches. Their assault included glider troops which secured the Pegasus bridge over a prominent canal. Inland, the American 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions had landed by parachute and gliders to secure transportation routes to the beaches, thus alleviating the significant risk of German armor reaching the beaches. The 82nd landed in the area around St. Marie-Eglise near Utah Beach, a town near which the 945th would spend their first night on the continent after landing in August. These troops paved the way for the landing of thousands of men in July and August, including the men of the 945th FAB.

945th LEAVES OKLAHOMA

As the Normandy invasion unfolded, the 945th FAB was making final preparations for departure from the states. "D Plus 19" - or 25 June, 1944 is the date when the 945th finally left Camp Gruber, Oklahoma on the final leg of their journey towards war. Final goodbyes came for most of the men when the Third Army issued orders for the 945th to debark Camp Gruber for the east coast

of the US. This was a time of great anticipation, yet great apprehension on the part of men with families at Gruber or home.

Charles Price (HQ), was able to arrange a visit with his wife in St. Louis after receiving a three-day pass at the last minute. This more than made up for an earlier pass that was canceled after he had worked overtime to get it (I46). Most of the men seemed to greet the news to move with relief, maybe "we could at least get this job done and get home". Many men were like Charles Price who had brothers in all theaters: Walt, a B-25 pilot in India, Don, in an infantry unit in Panama, and Art, a scout in an infantry unit in the Philippines. For men like Price the war had scattered their families in all directions, and they were more than ready to get the job done. Everyone anticipated a tough fight, but the 945th was well trained and prepared for battle.

It should be noted that the advance party for the 945th FAB had already left for Europe in April to establish contacts with the existing Army elements in England and coordinate the arrival and placement of the 945th in England. The advance party consisted of Major Samuel Gray, the battalion Executive Officer, CWO Thomas F. Flanagan and T/5 Charles W. Schwarz, who later became the first battle casualty in the 945th. Captain Dick Elliot and two others from the 179th FAB accompanied the 945th detail (I14). Major Gray got his "last view of Bucks County" (Pennsylvania) on the train from Camp Gruber to Ft. Hamilton, New York. The group sailed from New York on the Queen Elizabeth II, landing in Greenoch, Scotland. The accommodations were much better than those the remainder of the battalion later experienced on the smaller USS Brazil.

Just prior to leaving Camp Gruber a 945th man was injured in a motorcycle accident and tried to transfer out of the battalion while they were on the parade ground waiting to move out for Standish. He arrived back twenty minutes later as no other unit would take him. His limp seemed to disappear as he went up the gangplank to the truck - too late to get out at this point (I36)!

The trip by train took over a week, with arrival at Camp Myles Standish on 3 July 1944 (2). On the way to Boston the men signed the Articles of War, which included provisions for prisoners of war (POWs) and being absent without leave (AWOL). In route the train stopped in Cleveland, Ohio, which was near the homes of several men, particularly Bob Schneider (I46). However, the men were not allowed to leave the train. The train was so crowded that many men slept on the floor or in the aisles. The coniferous trees reminded Lawrence Literal of his home in the mountains of the Pacific Northwest (I11). As Roy McMahan observed, "there was not much time for fun on these travels" (I26).

CAMP MYLES STANDISH, MASSACHUSETTS

Wallace Bolton (C) was born and raised in North Andover, just north of Boston and one of the few New Englanders in the battalion - yet he had never heard of Camp Myles Standish. In fact, when asked by another member of the 945th where the camp was located, Bolton thought it was one of the old forts in Boston Harbor (I16)! While at Standish the men were refused passes to visit family, and Bolton was turned down by his 1st Sergeant who said "no passes". Later on the Sergeant

found Bolton and said that he would cover for him if he "went over the fence", as long as he was back by 7 am the next morning. He visited family and his girl, then returned on the 5:30 am train from Boston to Standish early the next morning. Much to his surprise three officers from the 945th were also on the train, and although he "was recognized, no one said a word"!

Jack Carr (HQ) called his grandmother from Standish and when she asked where he was he said he couldn't say - but of course the operator told her the call came from Boston! The stay in Boston was so unremarkable to Larry Horning that he remembers getting off the train and going "directly to the ship ... carrying my duffel bag up the gangplank" (I17). Paul Remillard was one of the few New Englanders in the 945th FAB. He was able to meet his wife in Manchester, New Hampshire, the last visit for over 15 months.

USS BRAZIL

The USS Brazil was a converted cruise liner, and the sister ship to one which Hugh Howenstein (HQ) had taken to Europe in 1939 (I18). The ship was in port on the south side of Boston Harbor, and been used for some time transporting troops in England. The 945th boarded the USS Brazil on July 2, 1944 for departure the next day. She was a fast ship, such that Dan Hale remembers that they were out to sea an entire day before they joined ships in a protective convoy (I1). Wayne Cruser also commented on the speed of ship and the "100 ship convoy".

The seas were often rough with plates at dinner sliding all over the place, and many of the men were sick. Since the bunks were four high, Larry Horning stayed outside much of the time to avoid sea sickness (I17). Gino Ricci (SVC) recalls the men "turning green and taking off" (I20). Charles Price also spent a lot of time on deck and enjoyed the periodic boxing matches. Steve Giacovelli (SVC) remembered the ship as "crowded", whereas Price remembered it being "comfortable" - perhaps it depended on your location on the ship, or your opinion of sea travel in general.

Several men either worked in the kitchen (Hinkel, Litteral and Scarborough), or at least found where the Navy "kept their canned fruit". Ed Hinkel was on the "bread crew", and also snuck fruit up to the 945th guys when he had a chance. Arthur St. Germain said that fruit tasted "pretty good later on"! Litteral was assigned "cooks helper" on the USS Brazil, and he didn't get seasick even after breaking 30 dozen eggs. Scarborough also remembers the egg breaking, and the fact that several of the men had kitchen duty from the 945th. He also recalls that although over 6,500 men traveled on the USS Brazil to England, only 350 German POWs were allowed on board for the trip back to the US - "a great inequity" (I34).

Paul Remillard was nominated as the Sanitation Officer for the trip over. Nothing was thrown overboard during the daylight hours to prevent leaving any sign for German U-boat patrols. Remillard remembers the trip as being uneventful except for the dropping of a few depth charges. The convoy was large and had a few "baby flat tops" for protection. The officers mess provided a plentiful and varied menu, with waiters serving meals; but the sleeping quarters were cramped. Tom Cope remembers being in charge of a group of black soldiers assigned to throw the days accumulation

of garbage off the stern after dark. The roughness of the sea made most of them seasick and he would end up with only a few men to complete the job.

Other than one scare when a German U-boat was reportedly sighted, the ten day trip was uneventful. The green hills of Scotland were the first sight for the men of the 945th. The USS Brazil entered the Firth of Clyde and the Port of Glascow on July 12, the US staging area (I17). Arthur St. Germain remembers the landing area as being near Gourock, a little further up the Firth of Clyde. Dan Hale recalls that the men were met by a Scottish officer that said they had "also trouble with the English", not a very warm welcome but probably well deserved. Such was their welcome to the last stop on the way to war.

The 945th was to enjoy a brief respite in Scotland and England as equipment arrived and the final organization was put in place for joining the Allied troops in France. With the equipment in place and ready, and all the howitzers calibrated, the men were ready to complete the task they had been training for since 1941. With just a few days before the crossing of the English Channel, an anxious and expectant atmosphere became apparent among the men of the 945th FAB.

Chapter Five

1. Weigley, Russell F., Eisenhowers Lieutenants: The Campaign of France and Germany 1944-45, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana, 1981.

2. Official Record: War Department, 212-61.2, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Chapter 6
Utah Beach and the European Theater

"Utah Beach - 12 August 1944"

FINAL PREPARATIONS - ENGLAND

The 945th FAB did not stay in Scotland for long, heading by train from Glasgow to Nuneaton, England. The howitzers and equipment were shipped separately, and were picked up at Liverpool during the month that the 945th spent at Nuneaton (I20). Nuneaton was near Coventry, the English city that had a forty square block area destroyed by a Luftwaffe attack earlier in the war (I36). Although England had been devastated by German bombers during 1940, the major threat in 1944 was from the V-1 and later the V-2 rockets. The first entry in the War Diary of the 945th FAB in the European Theater of Operations (ETO) is from 1 to 4 August, 1944:

> "Battalion was located 1 mile W. of Nuneaton, Warwickshire, (vk 7909 British Cassini). Troops were quartered in Nissen huts in Arbury Park, estate of the Fitzroy-Newdigates. Equipment was being drawn and prepared for overseas movement which curtailed training activities drastically."

The howitzers were calibrated to ensure accuracy once the real action started (I36). The calibration took place in England where the howitzers fired downrange, but not up the maximum range of 10 miles. The advantage of the howitzer over the 155mm gun is its higher trajectory. This gave the howitzer better accuracy along the axis of the shot, therefore making it easier to insure that rounds would not fall short on friendly troops. The 155 mm gun with its flatter trajectory and higher velocity had a greater range, and was more accurate perpendicular to the axis of the shot ("left to right"). The 155 gun and the 155 mm howitzer both used a shell that weighed in at 96 lb. The Long Toms were much larger and less mobile - thus they were considered "heavy" artillery. The calibration identified which howitzers fired approximately the same distance, and those with similar characteristics were grouped together in each firing battery (I36).

There were 12 howitzers that for the three batteries. A medium artillery battalion (155 mm M1) in WWII had the following allocation (1):

12 - 155mm M1 howitzers
29 officers
500 enlisted men & 2 warrant officers
21 - .50 cal. machine guns
40 - 2.36 inch anti-tank rockets
16 - M5 tractors
17 - 1/4 ton trucks
19 - 3/4 ton weapons carriers
8 - 3/4 ton command and recon truck
1 - wrecker, heavy

By June 1944 the Army authorized over 530 tractor and 500 truck drawn medium artillery battalions (1). Other training took place, including a demonstration of how the German uniforms blended into the background foliage (I47). The cosmolene, a protective coating put onto the tractors, howitzers and everything else mechanical to resist corrosion, had to be removed by the men - a messy job.

While in England the men had a chance to visit and become acquainted with English customs. Ed Hinkel did not learn quite fast enough as he was slapped by an English girl for making an innocent comment that she was "nice" (I22). Unfortunately for Lawrence Literal, he discovered the "right" side of the road at little late to avoid disaster. Literal's First Sergeant had purchased a bicycle so he could "ride down the main street of Berlin", and Literal borrowed it one evening to go into town on a pass. Another fellow in the 945th had a bike, and they were "splitting the wind" - on the wrong side of the road! Nearing the bottom of a hill they met an Englishman on a bike. The Englishman, recognizing that the foolish Americans were on the wrong side of the road switched sides. Unfortunately so did Literal and they collided head-on. Literal sailed 10 feet through the air and broke his shoulder. A nurse who lived nearby revived him with a "slug of whiskey", and the MPs that arrived assumed he had been drinking. They finally convinced the MPs that he was not under the influence. While recuperating he was able to visit his brother who was an MP with the Army Air Corps. Literal rejoined the 945th in Luxembourg.

While at Nuneaton, some of the men were given evening passes to go into the small town where they sampled the ales and got briefly acquainted with some of the English girls. Tom Cope remembers that "All hell broke loose one weekend when black soldiers, who had previously been quarantined where we were, returned to find some of our men with their English girlfriends. We had to adjust to the long summer days which required everyone to return to camp and even go to bed before dark. We slept on straw mattresses and this was the last time most of us slept under a roof for several months". Majors Clay and Gray shared at room at the Temple House in Nuneaton. The oldest part of this house was built in the 15th Century by the Knight's Templars. It has been in the same family ever since. The 82nd Airborne Division was also in the area to rest and re-equip after they jumped into Normandy on D-Day. Walter Kline was also able to visit a brother who was near Birmingham with the 82nd Airborne Division.

The majority of the time in England consisted of equipment preparation and howitzer calibration. On 6 August the howitzers were calibrated and service practice was conducted to ensure that the batteries could remain in supply during active combat operations. The use of aircraft was also practiced to conduct fire missions. The pilots would proceed to France from a separate marshaling airfield. And of course, many administrative and organizational aspects of being ready to enter the war continued through 8 August.

On 9 August the battalion left bivouac at 0400 and arrived at the marshaling area near Piddlehinton. The trip was conducted at night to conceal movement, and the weather was drizzly and foggy. The cobblestone streets were very slick and one tractor slid into a building. No time to stop, they just backed out and kept going (I36). The batteries were divided up into teams for transport to

Utah Beach. Larry Horning said the equipment was backed onto the transport ships so they could roll right off upon landing at Utah Beach (I17). The years of training, anticipation, and planning finally came to an end on 11 August 1944 when the 945th FAB departed Portland Harbor for Utah Beach.

THE STRATEGIC SITUATION IN THE ETO

When the 945th arrived at Utah Beach on 12 August 1994 it was almost D+70 from the Normandy Invasion, and the fighting was well inland as the American, British and Canadian armies were beginning to close on the Argentan-Falaise gap (2). The US Third Army under General George Patton, which had been formed on August 1, was pushing hard within a week pursuing Germans following the Operation COBRA breakout at St. Lo. General Ira T. Wyche, former commander of the 74th Field Artillery Brigade at Camp Blanding, was now in charge of the 79th Infantry Division, a key division in the Third Army at Falaise (2).

The XII Corps was activated under the Third Army by mid-August, although the advance units for the Corps had arrived on 27 July, three days after the official end of the Normandy Campaign (thus no fifth battle star for the XII Corps). Major General Gilbert R. Cook was in command of the XII Corps and had been since they geared up at Fort Jackson near Columbia, South Carolina. He was replaced due to health reasons on 19 August by General Manton Eddy from the 9th Infantry Division.

The 945th FAB was assigned to the 182nd Field Artillery Group, a unit that originated as a Michigan National Guard regiment in the Detroit, Michigan area prior to World War II (3). The 182nd FAR trained initially at Fort Knox, then Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri. The 177th Field Artillery Group, which included the 177th FAB and the 943rd FAB, was the sister unit to the 182nd back in Michigan. The 945th FAB was under the control of both of these Field Artillery Groups during the war, but the 182nd Field Artillery Group was the permanently assigned organization (3). The XII Corps History - Spearhead of Patton's Army, mentions the 182nd as being one of the "combat charter members" of corps, with assignment taking place immediately after arrival on 12 August (4).

DEPARTURE FOR UTAH BEACH

Two LSTs (Landing Ship Tank) and two LCTs (Landing Craft Tanks) were used. They were LSTs B1220 and B1221, and LCTs B178 and B179. It should be noted that LSTs were large ships, 328 feet in length and displacing over 4,000 tons and capable of carrying 20 medium tanks on the tank deck (2). The LSTs and LCTs were boarded by the 945th late in the afternoon of 11 August, and the ships spent the night at anchorage near Portland Harbor. The following day the ships headed for Utah Beach.

When the XII Corps headquarters was in transit to Utah Beach on 24-26 July, two weeks before the 945th joined them, they saw the aircraft headed for the St. Lo area, the site of the

"Normandy Breakout" during Operation Cobra. Unfortunately, many of the aircraft dropped their bombs short of the targets near St. Lo, killing many Americans including General Lesley J. McNair, who was forward to observe the kick-off of Operation Cobra. His death was concealed for several weeks in an effort to confuse the Germans over where Patton was to be assigned (2).

On the way to Utah Beach Cruser observed a US destroyer firing in rapid succession at some inland target. That's when he "first began to get the distinct impression that things could get hot as hell around here pretty soon" (I36). The trip over was such that Roy McMahan was afraid that some of the equipment might be lost overboard (I26), although Gino Ricci remembered the seas being "like glass" (I20). The thought of landing on a potentially hostile beach was a concern, and Steve Giacovelli said that thinking about the landing was scary, as were most days of the war - a very understandable thought given the capability of the Germans to inflict casualties on Americans.

ARRIVAL: UTAH BEACH

"The biggest event was Utah Beach for the real thing, the rest is history" said Richard Bish (I3). The LSTs and LCTs disembarked the battalion between 2000 (eight pm) and 2300 (eleven pm). Clarence Mitchum (B) recalled the howitzers being stored in the hold of the LSTs (I21). The LSTs and LCTs were run right up onto the beach with anchors deployed behind the ships. There was less than one foot of water as the men and equipment unloaded (I36). Two white tapes had been laid down to indicate the area that had been cleared of mines (I4). When the men and equipment were unloaded the ships waited until high tide and then using the anchors they pulled themselves back out to the depth were t hey could maneuver and turn around for the trip back. The LST crews even shared some food, a bit of a drink with the men on Wallace Bolton's ship, a nice gesture from men that were in a much safer occupation (I17). DeWitt Scarborough remembered fondly the cherry pies that the crew of the LST shared with the 945th men (I34). They enjoyed the pies they provided during the entire trip over, a nice touch of home before entering the shooting war.

In late July when the XII Corps HQ reached Utah Beach they observed many barrage balloons that prevented strafing aircraft from attacking the beach, hulks of ships destroyed near the beach (possibly the USS Corry, the only American ship lost during the landings), and they heard the periodic rumble of distant artillery fire (4). The 945th men saw a similar scene two weeks later when they came across. The beach had blimps, planes, and search lights (I20). Dale Curfman remembered he buildings that were still burning near Utah Beach (I40). Fred Mackey said that the front when they landed was 150 miles from the beaches (it wasn't that far), and that was "just the right distance for me, if I could keep it like that" (I43)!

However, Utah Beach was much safer than the morning of 6 June when the 29th Infantry Division landed. Although not as heavily contested as Omaha Beach, the 29th suffered great losses as they pushed inland towards St. Mere Eglise where the 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions were opening routes of advance for the Americans and shutting off routes to the Germans (2).

The two L-4 Piper Cub planes flown across the English Channel by Lt. Grawburg and Lt. Greening had to find a place to land as near as practical to the battalion headquarters (I27). This was the procedure to be followed in the race across the continent. The pilots would take to the air without knowing where they would land. They had to find a landing site, usually a trip of pasture land or a little used road. They would land and radio headquarters the coordinates of their location and the maintenance crew would join them and establish camp. The planes were concealed from air surveillance when possible. The Americans called them "Maytag Messerschmidts" and the Germans called them "Wooden Eyes" (I14). The advantage they gave to the Americans in spotting and adjusting fire was well recognized by the Germans.

When Bob Frey (HQ) came ashore after a rough trip from England in early October. Frey was a replacement from the 97th Infantry Division he found a similar situation at Utah Beach, lots of mud and dysentery (I6). Frey was assigned to the 945th from the Replacement Depot near Utah even though he had no field artillery training, but as he said, "you don't ask questions". The battalion was east of Nancy when he joined them as a radio operator.

On 14 August General Patton offered a speech to his Third Army staff that after only two weeks in combat they had "advanced further and faster than any Army in the history of war" (2). Patton and his army were at their best when pursuing the Germans relentlessly, and Patton's style was perfectly matched to the pursuit of the German Army after the Normandy breakout. It was under Patton that the XII Corps would strike deep and hard against the Germans remaining in northern France. The race across France would not slow down until reduced fuel stocks, unusually wet fall weather, and increased German resistance near the border slowed the advance. The 945th was ready to lead the charge, providing the kind of high explosive pounding of the Germans that the foot soldier grew to love and appreciate.

Chapter 6

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Chapter 7
Homefront

"Shhh,.... the enemy is listening" - World War II 'Uncle Sam' Poster

At no time in our country's history had more concerted and unanimous support been given than that which was given in World War II. From war bonds to rationing, parades, and victory gardens, our country was 100 percent behind the war effort, and there was no one unaware of the needs (1). Unlike other wars, this war produced a very patriotic feeling because everyone was involved in making sacrifices.

The Lend-Lease Act, an Act which was made to support Great Britain by the lending of arms for military aid, had promoted support for the allies; however, Pearl Harbor put an end to any isolationists' views, and drew the country into a remarkable united effort to fight both Germany and Japan (1). Mary Mode, wife of Floyd Mode (C), said "The radio announcement was made in our college dining hall, December 7, 1941. I had a feeling of sadness, for I had two brothers who would be serving in the Armed Forces. Several of the girls boyfriends or brothers were on the ships that were bombed". Gwen St. Germain, wife of Arthur St. Germain (C), remembered "In junior high the next morning we were all taken into a large study hall where we heard President Roosevelt declaring war on Japan. I had two Japanese friends that were put into concentration camps at that time".

Propaganda for the promotion of the war cause was expressed in the form of buttons, posters, and consumer products (1). Senseless killings by the Axis were publicized, and people were encouraged to report disloyalty. Everyone was encouraged to volunteer for war work. Financing of the war came from taxes and the selling of war bonds and stamps. Many citizens, young and old, movie stars, and even Boy Scouts took part in supporting the sale of the bonds and stamps. Bond rallies were popular and booths were set up at local theaters. Eight war loan drives took place during the war. These drives were set to establish funding for the war by the selling of various bonds which would accrue interest in a ten year period. Viola Skinner, wife of William Skinner (Sv), recalled buying war bonds at the shipyard she worked at in Savannah, Georgia. William Skinner used the money he made off the war bonds to build his home in Sardis, Georgia, in which he still lives!

The OPA (Office of Price Administration) set up a rationing system, and hoarding was greatly frowned upon. Rubber was rationed because this valuable product came from the East Indies. Shipping was halted due to the occupation of waters by enemy subs, and no trade took place. The rubber shortage forced gasoline rationing and tires were retreaded when possible. Eleanor Buck, wife of George Buck (A), said "I had no car. I walked, rode the bus and train. During the war cars were a big problem unless you had a good excuse to have one". She spent many holidays with a family that had boarded her during college because she was not able to go home. Mary Mode's parents were unable to visit her in college except one time, her freshman year, for gas was not available. Ida Draxler, wife of Ray (Sv) from Wisconsin, recalls "I remember hitchhiking with friends as far as 40 to 50 miles away, and expecting to return the same day". Norma Cope, wife of Tom Cope (Sv),

hitchhiked home with friends many times from college. "Hitchhiking was safe in those days. The Dean never knew we only bought one bus ticket for home all year".

"Rationing was everyone's problem. Some of the things that were rationed were gas, tires, shoes, meat, butter, sugar, and coffee" said Ida Draxler. "Meats were no problem for us as Ray's father was a butcher for a grocery store. He was often able to get extra butter and sugar as well". Eleanor Buck even remembered that her apartment building stopped furnishing sheets and towels. "Getting a pair of white shoes for work was a trying experience. One time I waited six months". Leona Kline, wife of Walter Kline (C), said "If you saw a line you got in it because you knew it was something that you would need!" Norma Ray, sister of James Clay (HQ), recalled, "If anyone came to stay with us a while, they always had to submit their food stamps to cover their meals. We did have a few roomers then." Housing was scarce and Norma remembers some homes being taken over by the government and being leased for soldiers wives, etc. Military needs always came first. "Cigarettes and tobacco weren't rationed but were too often in short supply", recalled Ida Draxler. She was able to obtain some for her hospital patients from good contacts she had at small grocery stores. Elsie Giovangnoli, wife of Don (B), was always looking for cigarettes to send to her brother-in-law, who was in the service. William Skinner recalled that cigarettes in Paris were $20 for 10 packs, whereas, in the states you could buy two packs for a quarter. Ida Draxler recalled, "Silk stockings had become a rarity, nylons were non-existent then. What was available were service-weight, quite thick and heavy. Thin leg make-up became available, thick tan colored liquid put on with an applicator to color your legs to imitate stockings. You didn't want to get caught in the rain - the make-up would wash off in streaks." Boots Ross, sister of James Clay also remembered the leg make-up. She recalled dating a paratrooper who told her where the silk was going. Norma Cope even remembers painting the line down the back of the leg for the seam.

Everyone was encouraged to take part in salvaging materials. Housewives were encouraged to save their fat and take it to the butcher. Glycerine was extracted from the fat and used for ammunition and medical equipment. For example, enough glycerine could be extracted from one pound of fat to manufacture one-third pound of gunpowder. Recycling, which has become so popular in recent history, was extremely useful during this time. Metals were recycled and products started being packaged in glass or paper that had previously been packaged in cans. Norma Ray remembers, "People came by with hand pulled carts time to time asking for scrap metal". Tin foil from gum and cigarette packing were even recycled. The author's mother, Barbara Cosgrove, remembers her mother Lillian Glass setting aside bags to collect the wadded up foil. She also remembers her mother diligently saving fat for the butcher in Detroit, Michigan. Norma Ray remembered her mother taking bacon fat in mayonnaise jars to the butcher.

Automobile production ceased and dealerships went into the repair business. Cars were required to have stickers that designated their gas allotment. We complained about the 55 mile speed limit imposed upon us in the 1970s, but during the war the speed limit was 35 mph. Lois Price, wife of Chuck (Hq), remembers traveling from Pontiac, Michigan to Lawton, Oklahoma, "We went by bus as I had a friend who was going as far as St. Louis. It was an awfully long way to ride on a bus at 35 mph. Chuck met us in Oklahoma City, and we went on to Lawton where he found us a

temporary place to stay. My son Jeff was so tired he didn't sleep much the first night". Cars and tires were inspected regularly and everyone was encouraged to car pool. Sarah McMahan, wife of Roy, car pooled to her job at the shoe factory in Tennessee. Leona Kline remembers that their car was put up on cement blocks and left. Rubber was such a valuable product that even golf balls were salvaged for the rubber content (1). All of the transportation systems in the United States were affected by the war. The bus was a major form of transportation by civilians and long waiting lines were common.

Victory gardens became very popular during the war. At the peak there were 20 million home gardens! Ida Draxler said, "Many people with land available allowed others to use the land for gardens. The idea was to grow as much produce as possible for home-front use and not have to buy canned goods which were necessary for the war effort." Mildred Cruser, wife of Wayne (C), wrote often to her husband about canning. In August 1945 she wrote, "I didn't get a letter out this morning. I should have written it last night but I put it off until this morning and then the storekeeper downtown got a load of peaches in. Marjorie and I bought a bushel a piece. We also had a very big washing. We canned one bushel and have 18 quarts. Tim Baker went to the orchard after peaches this afternoon and brought Mom two bushels. So we have three bushels in the basement but they are rather green and it will take several days to ripen them. We also picked a basket of beans for your mother which Dad is going to deliver in the morning as he goes through Westport now. Mom and I dug the potatoes and Steve {her son} picked up two bushels". In another letter from September she writes again, "We spent yesterday morning digging potatoes, just a few more and we will be done, thank goodness. We are canning tomatoes this morning". With a shortage of farm workers, German soldiers and interned Japanese citizens, and senior citizens helped in this area. The slogan "Food Will Win the War and Write the Peace" became familiar to everyone.

It can't be emphasized enough how much everyone was behind the war effort. With recruiting offices everywhere, even men 45 to 65 applied for selective service or war related work. Frances Hallock, wife of Joseph (C), remembered that her father worked at Ravenna Arsenal. Companies refrained from giving their usual Christmas gifts to employees, and also stores displayed windows full of war propaganda.

The Office of Civilian Defense practiced air raid drills and blackouts. Norma Ray said "We often had mock air raid warnings. The schools had to comply with certain drills and she remembers the civil defense men, who wore white hard hats, checking to see if the lights were off. Nonnie Mitchum, wife of Clarence (B), clearly remembers the blackout in the coastal city of Charleston, South Carolina. Clarence came home on the weekends and she recalls that the blackout happened most often when he was there. The sirens would ring and everyone would turn out their lights for about thirty minutes.

Model making of airplanes became more than a hobby, but an actual means for training the military to recognize enemy aircraft. The models had to be very precise and detailed. School kids and Boy Scouts participated in model making. Hollis McAvoy, who now lives outside of Washington, Georgia, was living in Jacksonville, Florida during the war. His father was helping build the Naval Air Station and Hollis got to see planes fly over each day. In 1942, the Navy asked school

boys to carve silhouette models of enemy aircraft for use in training (2). "They supplied a block of wood and a piece of sandpaper", McAvoy recalls. He had a pocket knife from selling rabbits he had caught. Hollis is still a model maker and has his own backyard museum which the 945th FAB was privileged to tour during their 10th annual reunion in 1995.

Many volunteer groups helped in defense or tracking the enemy (1). The Civil Air Patrol (CAP) was one such organization. They reported 173 submarines and summoned aid for 91 ships in distress. After an unsuccessful attempt by German spies to enter our country and cause great destruction, the Coast Guard was beefed up. One of the most remarkable efforts by the country of voluntary censorship of news was the response to the Japanese balloon bombs which made it to the northwest part of our country (1). Because the balloon bombs were kept out of the news, the Japanese quit sending them as they thought the balloons were not getting to the United States. Had they kept coming, the threat of fire and other mishaps would surely have occurred. Airplane production was also camouflaged to look like residential housing.

As mentioned earlier, children played a very active role during the war. They took part in the war drive by picking up scrap and donating their own toys. In addition to selling about two million dollars worth of war bonds and stamps, the Boy Scouts helped in defense by serving as fire watchers and making models. The Girl Scouts also participated in community service.

Many corporations supported the war effort. Companies such as Coca-Cola even followed the men overseas. They were determined to not increase the prices for the military, with Coca-Cola still selling for a nickel.

Oil was vital to war production and an over-land pipeline was made from Longview, Texas to Norris City, Illinois (1). New plants were grown and tested to try and replace the rubber shortage. Henry Ford converted his automobile plant to war production and the government ordered distilleries to do the same. Henry J. Kaiser, who had success in contracting and cement production, became a non-traditional shipbuilder and was famous for his mass production. His ships held up against much criticism from the traditional ship builders (1).

Entertainment was not immune from the war. Professional sports teams were all effected. Many of the players had signed up for the military. Team shortages existed, but no seasons were lost. People like "The Babe" posed for war bonds. Entertainers such as bandleader Glenn Miller enlisted his whole band in the Army, and he later lost his life when his airplane disappeared over the English Channel. Norma Cope reminisces, "We had a radio for entertainment. The songs and the bands were great - songs like 'I'll Walk Alone', 'I'm Beginning to See the Light', and 'Saturday Night is the Loneliest Night of the Week'".

War films were used to a great extent to promote propaganda, but the public did not really want to see factual films instead enjoying the victory films which showed unrealistic outcomes. The films themselves were great propaganda tools which encouraged patriotism, hard work, and enlistments. One could also view newsreels which gave a first-hand report of what was happening

during the war. Gwen St.Germain said, "Someone saw my sister-in-law's brother in a newsreel, and that theater made extra money that week. Everyone that knew him went". Major Clay's sister Ann Cronk remembers showing films to in firmed soldiers at Lawton Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia.

Service organizations played an important role in keeping spirits up. The USO (United Service Organization) was started a year before the war began, and was a conglomeration of eighteen organizations including the YMCA, YWCO, and the Salvation Army. With combined resources the USO was able to raise funds and develop a program of service for our military. The government donated a large sum to establish USO clubs near military posts, but the public donated most of the money. Norma Cope said "We college co-eds did our part for the war effort, danced with the serviceman at the USO dances, invited them to church, and home with us for some of mother's cooking". V-mail (Victory Mail) was also important in keeping up the spirits on both sides of the sea. In one of William Skinner's letters he has drawn a picture of a 155mm shell with an inscription - "Here's Love with Charge 7 - Howdy. And it won't be long before I'll be on my way back to you!" (Figure 1). Elsie Giovagnoli wrote letters to six or seven guys and also sent cigarettes. Norma Cope recalls, "With my haired rolled in socks, I wrote to my soldier while sitting on my dorm bed. Had never seen Tom in civilian cloths until after we were engaged, after he returned from Europe".

The Red Cross had seven and a half million volunteers. They developed a blood-donor service and offered personnel for disaster relief. Eleanor Buck belonged to the Red Cross in Chicago and worked as a nurses aid in a small hospital near her apartment before Sunday morning service. This was in addition to her five and a half day job as a medical technician at Passavant Memorial Hospital and Northwestern Medical School.

Probably effected more than anyone else was the role women played. The War demonstrated that women could serve in many different occupations. The housewife, home maker, was encouraged to go to work for the first time and to volunteer for the war effort, something that had never occurred in our history before. Women replaced men in all areas of work and were trained in non-traditional roles such as welding. They joined groups such as the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service). They volunteered for fighting airbombs (Japanese air balloons loaded with explosives that never materialized in the numbers that were expected) and learned how to pilot airplanes. More than 5,000 women were in the Civil Air Patrol (CAP). The winged scouts encouraged women aviators. Women proved themselves worthy and capable of doing many roles. Over 350,000 women served in the military and many were decorated for bravery.

Florence Hallock said jobs were a dime-a-dozen. Her own experience during the war was working at Siberling Rubber Company in Barberton, Ohio during the summer of 1944. "We made pontoon boats that were sent overseas to the army". Elsie Giovangnoli recalled, "I graduated from high school and went to work for Goodyear Kraft, which was a huge place to work. No, I was not 'Rosie the Riveter', I worked for the production manager of Plant C. I was his secretary, and we made B-29 bombers. I couldn't imagine putting those together". Leona Kline had a variety of jobs during the war. As she followed her husband from post to post before he went overseas, she worked in a five and dime store, a poultry plant, as a receptionist at a dentist office, and at a cannery plant.

Finally, after Walter left to go overseas, she came back to Ohio. "I started working at Twin Coach Company, which made airplanes. I was up in the tail section 'buckling' rivets. I guess you would call me 'Rosie the Riveter'". That didn't last long because Leona started feeling dizzy and found herself pregnant with her first child. Lois Price, worked on the truck line at General Motors in Pontiac, Michigan. "For a while, my job was tightening the steering wheel. One fellow scared me by saying that I had better fasten them tight as I wouldn't want one to come off while my husband was driving it. Later, Chuck told me the first thing the Army did after receiving trucks was to take them apart and put them back together".

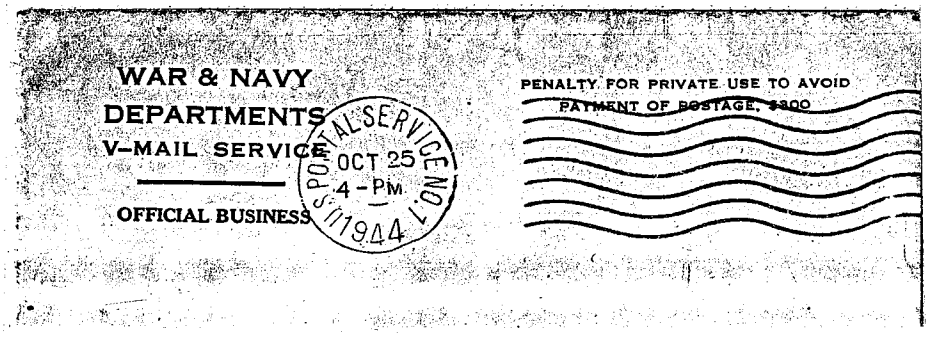
Mary Mode remembers, "In the summer of 1944 I worked in an ammunition plant in Charlotte, North Carolina, where shells for the guns were made. Most of the employees were women, for the boys and men were in the armed forces. I came back to begin my second year of teaching, 1944, but the terrible polio epidemic had struck. Schools were delayed for several weeks and I went back to Charlotte and worked until school re-opened".

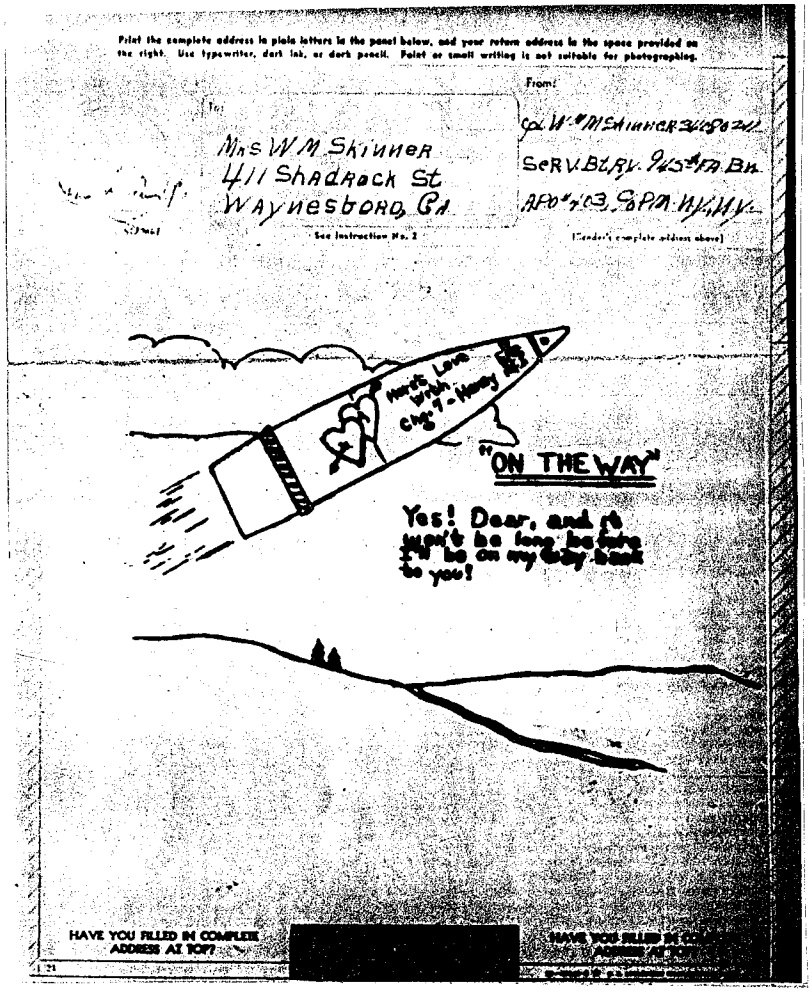
Within two months after the end of the war things changed dramatically for women (3). Around 800,000 women were fired from their jobs in the aircraft industry, and within two years two million women had lost their jobs. Women were glad to be back in the home again, relinquishing their jobs to the men. Mildred Cruser writes "In September 1945 Steve said to me yesterday, 'Mommy, Stevie knows Daddy'. Anyway, he thinks he does. Honey, it has been so long since I have seen you, I'm even sure I know you. Oh my darling, the days seem to go so slowly waiting for you, and I know it is the same with you". Most accepted the change and were just thankful to get their boyfriends, brothers and husbands back home.

The war actually accelerated the dating to marriage process. Francis Reed and her husband Wilbur of 54 years, met on New Years Eve 1941. "Wilbur and I were married on August 14, 1942, and of course we were already at war". Although Nonnie Mitchum and Clarence had known each other for a while, they had a short engagement. They were engaged on July 4 and married on the 26th of the same month. The funniest thing that Nonnie remembers was going to a doctor in Lawton, Oklahoma while Clarence was stationed at Ft. Sill. Twice the doctor told her that she had a "floating kidney". She still tells Ron, her son, he was the floating kidney!

SPAM was a mainstay for food supply during the war. Lois Price remembers eating a lot of SPAM, Treet, and Vienna sausages. "I learned to be creative - baking the Treet or SPAM with orange marmalade or mashed sweet potatoes, or slicing and frying it, or fixing it with Bar-B-Q sauce. Another familiarity of the war was graffiti like 'Kilroy was Here'. This just meant that a serviceman had been in the vicinity. This graffiti to Nonnie Mitchum because she was under the impression that it was a foreign serviceman. Leona Kline sums up the feeling of patriotism that people on the homefront felt, "We did what we were supposed to do". Finally, Mary Mode remembers "After the Japanese surrendered how happy my family and I were, and what a sense of relief!".

Figure 1
William Skinner's Letter Home to Georgia





Chapter Seven

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Chapter 8
Breakout and Pursuit
12 August - 3 September 1944

"All that is necessary now is to take chances" - Major General George S. Patton

THE FIGHT IN THE HEDGEROWS

The 945th FAB entered combat with the XII Corps on August 16 as fighting intensified along the newly activated Third Army front in southern Normandy. A review of operations from D-Day through August 1 will help set the stage for the entry of the Third Army, demonstrate some of the early problems with American combat units, and clearly show the need for artillery support as infantry and armor advanced.

Normandy Terrain

The fighting in the hedgerows was much more difficult than had been anticipated by the Allied command. In fact, the difficulty of the campaign in July exceeded the foreboding of the most pessimistic planners (1). On the Allied left was the gently rolling, open country of the Caen-Falaise plain, which was the responsibility of the British and Canadians (Figure 1). In the Allied center, between the Orne and Vire Rivers, an area of low ridges and narrow valleys. West of the Vire River was the Carentan, a marshy area crisscrossed by small streams. Finally, on the Allied right, between the marshland and the coast, was a cluster of hills which anchored the German left. This varied terrain gave the advantage to the Germans, and there was fear that the fighting would begin to resemble the dreaded pace of the allies during World War I, when the front lines were static for long periods.

Allied Organization

Since D-Day the Americans, British and Canadians had been under the direction of British General Bernard Montgomery's 21st Army Group. Lt. General Omar Bradley commanded the U.S. First Army which consisted of two Corps: the VIII under Major General Troy Middleton, and the VII under Major General Lawton Collins. The Third Army in July was still in England, mobilizing for transfer to France. On 6 July 1944 General Patton arrived in France, and the "News of his arrival spread like wildfire" (2). General Patton was well known from the inter-war period when he helped develop the American armored corps, and his exploits in North Africa and Sicily were practically legend. General Patton assembled his headquarters in France and began preparing for the arrival of the troops and equipment that would fill out his Army. While this was occurring, the VIII and VII Corps began the first concerted attack away from the beaches, and these early efforts would show that the Americans had much to learn about fighting techniques and the level of German resistance.

Campaign Summary

The operations in France and Luxembourg during 1944 are divided into several distinct phases in General Patton's book "War As I Knew It" (3):

July 4-19: VII, VIII & XIX Corps (US 1st Army) Attacks
July 20-31: Operation "Cobra" the Breakout from St. Lo
August 1 - September 24: Drive to the Moselle River
September 24 - November 7: Forcing the Line of the Moselle
November 8 - December 8: Saar Campaign
December 16 - January 19: The Battle of the Bulge

These dates are similar to the dates of the campaigns officially recognized by the US Army, although there is some overlap (4):

Official U.S. Army Campaigns:

Normandy: 6 June 1944 - 24 July 1944
Northern France: 25 July 1944 - 14 September 1944
Rhineland: 15 September 1944 - 21 March 1945
Ardennes-Alsace: 16 December 1944 - 25 January 1945
Central Europe: 22 March 1945 - 11 May 1945

A question asked by several 945th FAB veterans is, "Why did the battalion not receive credit for the Normandy Campaign?". The official U.S. Army dates show that the XII Corps, which was activated on August 12, participated in all but the Normandy campaign over the course of 281 days with the 3rd Army (4).

VIII & VII Corps Attack: 4-7 July

On 3 July, when the 945th FAB was one day out to sea from Boston, Middleton's VIII Corps launched an attack north of Periers with the 90th and 79th Infantry Divisions, and the 82nd Airborne Division. The 79th was commanded by General Ira Wyche, the commander of the 74th Field Artillery Brigade at Camp Blanding. The 90th attacked through rain and mud, with accurate German mortar and artillery fire hampering the advance (1). Middleton and Bradley were frustrated and disappointed by the cautious move forward by the 90th; after 5 days they had advanced only 4 miles and suffered 4,000 casualties. The experienced 82nd had better success with more limited objectives in the center of the attack.

The 79th under Wyche fared better as they attacked towards Montgarden Ridge, reaching the ridge on 7 July. The 79th showed flexibility and innovation in the attack, and General Wyche was

recognized for his flanking movements, encouraging small unit command and control in the hedgerows, and the consolidation of command between two regiments when the ridge was reached. Although they were still short of the attack objectives, the performance of the 79th was recognized and noted, as they would spearhead much of the early efforts by the Third Army in August. The 79th would later swing behind the XII Corps near Nancy to secure the right flank of the Third Army.

The VII Corps attack began on 4 July with Major General Raymond O. Barton's 4th Infantry Division and Major General Robert C. Macon's 83rd Infantry Division on line. The 4th had landed at Utah Beach on D-Day, and the 945th would later support them in December at Echternach, Luxembourg. Collins had been nicknamed "Lighting Joe" for the manner in which he lead the 25th Infantry Division on Guadalcanal and New Guinea in 1942-43.

The kick-off of the 83rd's attack was delayed for one day to 4 July after their artillery was used by the VIII Corps in their attack. This delay demonstrated the deficiency in the number of artillery battalions available to support an attack at this point in France, but it likewise illustrates the flexibility that the Corps had in allocating what support was available.

The attack was a disaster. The division suffered over 1,400 casualties the first day, and even limited objectives were not reached. In two days, the 83rd had "displayed almost all of the weaknesses and made all the mistakes of a unit new to combat" (5). One example involved the report during a ten minute artillery preparation that the division artillery was "slaughtering our 3rd Battalion". Later investigation showed that the battalion received only a few short rounds. Lax command and discipline resulted in a number of stragglers, battalion commanders did not coordinate their attached units, reconnaissance was not effective, and tank-infantry coordination was poor (5). Collins talked to General Macon that evening and asked, "What has been the trouble, you haven't moved an inch?". The trouble was the same - mud, narrow routes of advance, and strong resistance.

The 4th Infantry Division had better success, but still had 5,400 casualties during the three day attack, and only 5 rifle company commanders remained on-line after the attack. However bleak the progress of these initial attacks, the Germans were being slowly pushed back under the relentless onslaught of artillery and fighter-bomber attacks. More importantly, the men of the 4th and 83rd that had survived began to feel like veterans and act as such. Command control tightened, communications improved, and the divisions began to use their attached units with confidence (5).

It is apparent that the artillery quickly became the "sovereign American remedy for battle problems"; while promptly impressing "friend and foe alike as the outstanding combat branch of the American ground forces" (6). Russell Weigley writes, "To a point, reliance on the guns saves lives and was tactically sound. To capture ground and to capture or destroy enemy formations, the lavish application of heavy firepower was no adequate substitute for aggressive maneuver. While the enemy feared American guns, he feared aggressive infantry even more" (6).

In summary, the VIII and VII Corps attacks did go a long way in providing critical experience to the commanders and soldiers on the ground, and the attack prevented the Germans from employing

all of their armor in counter-attacks that they had planned for and desperately wanted to execute. The strength of their panzer divisions was thus dissipated across the entire Allied front.

XIX Corps Attack: 7-19 July

The XIX Corps, under the direction of Major General Charles Corlett, consisted of the 30th and 9th Infantry Divisions. It should be noted that the XX Corps, under Major General Walton Walker, was not yet in action; and the V Corps under Major General Leonard "Gee" Gerow, which was still recovering from D-Day and operations in late June, was protecting the US left flank with the 1st Infantry Division ("Big Red One"), 2nd Armored Division ("Hell on Wheels"), and 2nd Infantry Division ("Indianhead").

The 30th ("Old Hickory") Inf. Div. was an untested division commanded by Major General Leland Hobbs, a man intensely intolerant of inefficiency (4). The 9th had participated in the North Africa and Sicilian campaigns. It was lead by Major General Manton General Eddy, the able and well liked (especially by General Patton) man that would soon lead the XII Corps. General Eddy ran his divisional headquarters in a "fashion that resembled German practice". As the 30th attacked across the Vire River an elaborate fire support plan unfolded that included both fighter bombers and artillery. The artillery utilized Corps and Division artillery, and the howitzers from a nearby armored division - eight field artillery battalions in all.

Hobbs called for a "creeping barrage" that would be advanced 100 yards every 5 minutes. He told his regimental commanders to "hug the barrage,... it will carry us through" (4). Hobbs later canceled the order when he realized that the infantry was not keeping up with the barrage - a tremendous amount of ammunition was wasted in the process.

The combat engineers played a critical role in getting the attach started, constructing a footbridge at the cost of several casualties. Later they repaired the bridge at Airel under fire, completing the work in 13 minutes. The engineers would continue to provide the roads and bridges necessary to move a modern army, often under the observation and fire of the Germans.

The attack of the 30th Infantry Division was successful, particularly when compared to other operations in early July. The 9th Infantry Division successfully blunted a major German counter-attack by Panzer Lehr Division, famous from action on the Eastern front, on 11 July. The German attack was a "dismal and costly failure", and General Eisenhower recognized the leadership of General Eddy as being "tops".

BREAKOUT: OPERATION COBRA AND ST. LO

Operation Cobra, the breakout from the area around St. Lo, France, began on July 24 with a disastrous bombardment that killed over 110 Americans, including General Lesley McNair who was present to observe the kickoff. McNair had been in charge of all American artillery prior to WWII, and it was a tragedy that he was killed by errant bombing. During Operation Cobra over 1,000

American guns were used with great skill and effect. General Collins states that "If artillery ammunition had been unrestricted, all commanders would have fired considerably more and the initial advance would probably have been faster and our own casualties less". Aerial bombardment remained only a partial substitute for the more selective force of artillery (6).

The breakout was ultimately successful and it ended the stalemate along the Normandy coast. The timing of Operation Cobra could not have been better for the entry of the hard-charging Major General George S. Patton and his fabulous Third Army.

A classic example of the importance of artillery support is described in Glover S. Johns book "The Clay Pigeons of St. Lo" (7). Major Johns was in the 1st Battalion, 115th Infantry, 29th Infantry Division following the landings in Normandy. While fighting northeast of St. Lo. the battalion became aware of an imminent counter-attack by German forces. Unable to secure a phone line to their normal 105 mm howitzer battalions, they were desperate as the counter-attack began to form in a woodline opposite their position.

Major Johns was surprised, and relieved, when a battalion of 155 mm howitzers came through on the first set of phone lines that were repaired. A Captain Henderson "screeched with excitement" when he heard the news that 155s, so far not used by these infantry, were available. "One fifty-fives? Thank God! You can?", was Henderson's reply (7). The coordinates were provided (48.8-62.7) and they asked for "all you can give us". Johns writes:

> "In a very short time the 96 pound 155 mm shells roared overhead with a sound like a freight train passing through a tunnel in the night. The sound of their bursts rolled back like thunder. Barnes called in, excitement high. That was wonderful - wonderful! ... Move it across the river to this side. Most of 'em are over here. The correction was given over the phone. Right 300, repeat range. It seemed forever before the freight train went overhead again. The infantryman, accustomed to the rapid fire and adjustment of the smaller 105s, were jittery because the 155 mm howitzers took somewhat longer to load, lay and fire. ... That rocked 'em! Give 'em more a little closer in". The artillery fire direction control questioned the request for fire support inside the 'No fire Line'. "Please sir, just put it out there. The infantry battalion commander is standing next to me praying for more of it. That last volley was right there but the Germans are still coming" (7).

More fire came in after a brief wait, and the effects were devastating on the Germans. "That was marvelous!" yelled the 1st battalion command post. "Fire for effect, ... Man that big stuff is wonderful. Give me some more!" The counter-attack had been broken and the tension disappeared in the 1st battalion command post. Their luck was unbelievable, from repairing the wire to the

remarkably accurate and effective fire from the big, strange guns (7). This story illustrates the appreciation that the infantry had for the 155s that fired from battalions like the 945th.

Conclusions

One American was quoted as saying that "We won the battle of Normandy, but considering the high price in American lives, we lost". The terrain and weather, the wettest since 1900 in Normandy, had been against us, and the dreary landscape of the Norman battleground was a constant challenge. It was a hard fought series of battles leading up to the breakout at St. Lo; however, the American commanders and soldiers gained experience, and the Germans were definitely on the defensive. Allied pressure along a broad front was destroying the war making capability of the Germans. It would take the daring and resourceful General Patton to fully exploit the armor, air and artillery strength of the US Army.

GENERAL PATTON'S THIRD ARMY BECOMES OPERATIONAL

On 14 July 1944 General Eisenhower authorized Bradley to establish an American Army Group on the Continent as soon as possible (6). This would require the start-up of a second American Army, the Third Army, to supplement the already operational First US Army (6). During July, when the headquarters of the Third Army was moving from England to France, the XII Corps was responsible for the transfer of Third Army troops to the continent. General Cook, the XII Corps commander since 1943, was "doing a good job" according to General Patton, in fact General Patton thought very highly of General Cook. Since the XII Corps had the responsibility of getting the Third Army ashore, they did not become an operational combat until 12 August 1944. The headquarters for the XII Corps arrived on 26 July, landing at Utah Beach and spending their first night near St. Mere Eglise (5).

General Patton spent his first night in France since WW1 with General Bradley. He spent the night "in the midst of the most infernal artillery preparation I have ever heard. Bradleys' Headquarters was well in front of the Corps artillery and right amongst the batteries of the divisional units" (3). He later told his wife Beatrice that "Willie did not like it at all and went out of the tent several times to have a look. As a matter of fact, so did I" (2). Willie was his beloved dog that traveled with him through Europe. General Patton was desperate to get into the fight, and was afraid that the war would end before he could get the Third Army in operation.

Before the Third Army was operational General Patton was already contemplating a change from the "broad front" strategy that tended to result in stagnation because nowhere were you strong enough to attack, in favor of mobile warfare where exploitation of a break through was fully taken advantage of by the armor - a strategy that would prove wildly successful. As General Patton favored "a good plan violently executed now rather than a perfect plan next week" (2).

General Patton finally received word on 27 July 1944 that he was to take unofficial command of the VIII Corps with official activation of the Third Army set for 1 August at 1200. General Patton

said, "Felt much happier over the war. May get in it yet" (2). General Patton believed that he had fought on many battle fields in other lives, and he sure didn't want to miss out on this one. His dream for a soldier was to die a "glorious" death on the last day of the war with the last bullet expended. On 1 August General Hodges took command of the US First Army and General Patton took command on the US Third Army - all under the newly formed 12th Army Group commanded by General Bradley. British General Montgomery would retain command of the 21st Army Group. General Patton and Colonel Paul Harkins, Deputy Chief of Staff, celebrated quietly with a drink of brandy!

General Patton started on August 1st with the following Corps:

XII Corps - General Cook
VIII Corps - General Middleton
XV Corps - General Haislip
XX Corps - General Walker

The XII Corps had only the 80th Infantry Division, and the XX Corps only the 2nd French Armored Division. The VIII Corps had the 4th and 6th Armored Divisions as well as the 8th and 79th Infantry Divisions. The XV Corps had the 5th, 83rd and 90th Infantry Divisions (1,2,3).

General Patton began Third Army operations on August 2 by turning the VIII Corps from Avranches towards Brittany (westward), and the XV Corps eastward towards the Mayenne-Lavel line; all this in anticipation of the Third Army moving towards the Seine River to the east. The Seine was the first of three rivers that they would cross on the way to the Nancy-Metz line: the Seine, Meuse and finally the Moselle. It should be noted that General Wyche's 79th was reassigned to the XV Corps in exchange for the 83rd on this date.

As the 945th FAB prepared to leave Portland Harbor for France, the Allied forces were fighting the German counter-attack at Mortain (which was unsuccessful but caught everyone by surprise), and attempting to close the noose on the Germans in the Argentan-Falaise pocket. This effort failed due to the slow movement of the British and Canadians on the north side of the gap. As a result, the Germans were able to extract their battle hardened troops out, a mistake that would be paid for by the American Army as the end of 1944 approached.

XII CORPS ACTIVATED

On 12 August 1944 General Patton activated the XII Corps under General Cook. Coincidentally, this was the same day that the 945th came ashore at Utah Beach (2,8). The XII Corps had finished the administrative task of landing and assembling the Third Army units coming from England and dispatching them to the front. Originally the XII Corps was scheduled to take control of the 7th Armored Division and 80th Infantry Division; however, these units were already committed to other objectives. Thus the XII Corps started with the 35th Infantry Division ("Santa Fe") and 4th Armored Division. Cook was to move the Corps to the right (southeast) flank of the

XV Corps which was located near LeMans. This would position the Corps to move towards the Paris-Orleans gap, an area which extended from Paris south about 80 miles. General Patton told his Corps commanders to be prepared to "operate to the north, northeast or east". This must have been a surprise to Corps commanders that were used to operations that were planned weeks ahead of time.

Major General Gilbert R. Cook was a West Point graduate who had fought in France during World War I. He had been commanding the XII Corps since 1943, much of the time at Fort Jackson near Columbia, South Carolina. He had lead the XII Corps through all of the various training exercises, including the Carolina maneuvers that the 945th participated in during 1941.

General Cook established his HQ at LeMans on 13 August, and awaited the assembling of his far-flung units prior to striking out for Orleans. When General Patton told him to "get started as soon as possible", General Cook put together an armored-infantry column with troops from both divisions and sent them down the main road towards Orleans on 15 August. It was typical of the way General Patton and his Corps/Division commanders operated - strike swiftly with whatever you can put together, mixing units up from different commands in task forces to achieve surprise and keep the Germans off-balance. The combination of armor, armored infantry and mechanized artillery allowed for rapid exploitation of any break through in the German lines.

The first night the 945th spent on-shore in France was at Ravenoville, a small village just inland from one of the more northern exits from Utah Beach, and just 3 miles northeast of St. Mere Eglise (Figure 2). DeWitt Scarborough remembers that they camped about 500 yards inland, and that the first night was the "most miserable, you couldn't move, and that everyone was fearful" (I34). On 13 August the 945th was attached to the 182 Field Artillery Group and was shortly on the move towards LeMans where the XII Corps HQ had been established. The 945th departed the Negreville area the next morning at 0700 and traveled all day, arriving southeast of LeMans at 2000, "in a new bivouac area SE of LeMans (2 miles east of Challes..." (8). Dewitt Scarborough remembers the devastation around St. Lo, with trees debarked from the shrapnel of artillery rounds (I34). These scenes may have been similar to they saw in photographs from WW1 as boys.

The third night in France (15 August) was exciting as 7 German soldiers surrendered to the 945th. Initially the report was that 7,000 Germans were coming up the road (I14)! Several men, including Paul Remillard, Art St. Germain, and Wayne Cruser, recalled that the surrender followed a burst of 50 cal. machine gun fire in their direction. That apparently hastened their surrender!

Wayne Cruser recalled that Red Stancliff was manning a machine gun post after dark when he called back for Captain Morris, saying that he had seven Germans who wanted to surrender. As they were shaking down the prisoners someone to the left yelled "halt, halt", then several machine gun rounds were fired off to the left. Everyone, including the prisoners hit the dirt or ditch! At Captain Morris' order, Cruser fired a few rounds in the direction of the firing, thinking that it was more Germans. They even had the prisoners yell in German for anyone else out there to come on in. No one responded. Mackey remembers that the incident really shook everyone up, and that one officer was actually shaking from fear, excitement, or both. Later they heard the mournful mooing of a cow.

We "made hamburger" out of that cow said Gino Ricci (I20). Almost everyone remembered the demise of the poor old cow, a somewhat light moment that would soon be overshadowed by the death and destruction in France.

Remillard remembers that "the EM {enlisted men} had a field day in gathering souvenirs from the Germans". St. Germain recalls that the cow that was shot "didn't know the password" (I45)! Roy McMahan felt like the 945th became much better organized following this encounter with Germans, which was quite unexpected so far behind the front lines (I26). In fact, the 945th was many miles behind the front lines, which Fred Mackey said was "just fine for him", and they didn't see any more Germans for several weeks (I43). Red Hinkel felt like the machine guns were firing at "apples falling off tree", and Walter Kline commented that this action was the 945th's baptism of fire - even if the only casualty was a poor old Norman cow (I22,I33).

On 14 August General Patton told his troops that "in exactly two weeks the Third Army has advanced farther and faster than any Army in the history of war..." (2). General Patton met with Bradley and they decided to make several objective changes for the Corps, including directing the XII Corps towards Orleans rather than Chartes, an adjustment of about 40 miles to the south. General Patton said that it was a "great plan, wholly my own, and I made Bradley think he thought of it" (2). General Patton's egotism was often extreme, especially considering the character and experience of Omar Bradley. On 15 August General Patton wrote to his diary - "I wish I was the Supreme Commander".

Beginning on 16 August the 945th just tried to keep up with the pursuing American army. Cruser remembered the issuance of at least one, and maybe two march orders each day to keep up. Rudolof Amschler remembers that the howitzers could not get into position quickly enough to support the rapidly advancing armor and infantry columns, and that the "hardest battle was the black dust of the black top roads" (I31). Larry Horning remembers that it was "step by step and town by town" as they moved towards Orleans, and that the men were "muddy and dirty, we took baths out of our helmet and no clean socks for months it seemed like" (I17).

On about 18 August Major Clay was experimenting and devising a plan to facilitate the Fire Direction Center (FDC), operating on a 24 hour basis (I14). He trained teams, including radio operators, drivers and other headquarters personnel, to be able to standby and function during the night or slack period so the first team could get some sleep. In the headquarters the executive officer Major Gray had his driver Lemons from Tennessee, radio operator Sgt. Hall, also from Tennessee, and Sgt. Summerour the Sgt. Major from Georgia.

PURSUIT!

The XII Corps Advances Towards Orleans

On 16 August three pieces of good news reached General Patton: the first was the capture of Chateaudun (which the 945th entered on 18 August), Dreux, Chartes, and Orleans; General Patton

was promoted to Major General (effective 2 September 1943), and the third piece of good news was Eisenhower's public announcement that General Patton's Third Army was actively participating in the breakout, a fact that had been withheld from the public for the last two weeks (2).

The XII Corps had led the charge on Chateaudun and Orleans, but only after Cook had objected to General Patton's suggestions that the attack be limited to Chateaudun. The 4th Armored and 35th led the way, with the armor generally on the south and the 35th taking Chateaudun (Figure 3). The 945th War Diary also notes that on 19 August "Two pilots and observers operated with the 35th Inf Div". Blumenson writes in the US Army History Series that "The speed of the XII Corps advance to Orleans dashed German hopes of organizing a defense of the Paris Orleans gap" (1). General Patton was elated that he and the Third Army would now be recognized for their exploits.

On 17 August a "very sad thing happened", according to General Patton, he was forced to accept the resignation of the XII Corps commander, General Cook due to circulatory disorders (3). Actually, General Cook had remained at his post longer than he should have, but he just could not continue and his doctors ordered him to remove himself. General Patton wrote in his book "War As I Knew" It that "this was a great blow to both of us...", and that "He had hung onto command longer than a proper regard for his health justified". In Blumenson's "The General Patton Papers" he stated that "He is a fine man and very sorry about leaving, and I am sorry to have him go... ".

Cook had successfully lead the XII Corps to the Loire River valley, secured the southern flank of the 12th Army Group, and positioned the Corps for a run on the Seine River, the next Allied objective 75 miles to the east. He had performed brilliantly on his first and only mission (1). Cook was replaced by Major General Manton C. General Eddy, the commander of the 9th Infantry Division in Tunisia, Italy and France. The 945th war diary for 18 August reads as follows:

> 18 Aug
>
> At 0100 went into position ½ mile S of Chateaudun (23006040 9 H/1). Rapid advance of our troops drove Germans out of range.

General Manton S. "Matt" Eddy had been a regular Army officer since 1916 though he was not a West Point graduate. He was very well liked by his men, and Ernie Pyle, the famous WWII correspondent, wrote in his book Brave Men that General Eddy was "absolutely honest with us, because he was sort of old-shoe and easy to talk with". He was from Chicago and wore glasses that made him look very scholarly. His bravery was unquestioned as he earned the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC), the highest honor one could receive excepting the Medal of Honor. He would make daily trips to the front, visiting each battalion and regimental headquarters. Dyer tells a story in his Xii Corps history of a shell coming in so low that it seemed to "go right through the treetops" before exploding in an adjacent orchard. Even the full colonels hit the ground, but Eddy stayed on his feet commenting that "Why, that was one of our shells". He was typically optimistic and he emphasized mobility in his operations. No wonder the XII Corps was the "Spearhead of the Third Army". He was later recognized in the Saturday Evening Post (6 July 1946) as the country's "most brilliant

division commander". The XII Corps was still in good hands with the transition from General Cook to General Eddy.

This was just one day after the front was on a line from Chateaudun to Orleans. The XII Corps was halted at this line due to limited gasoline reserves, a foreshadowing of supply problems later in the fall (1). It should be note at this point that the Daily Log for the 945th, which provides a more complete account of the battalion's activities, was not provided to the National Archives following the war for the months of September through November.

General Patton notes in a letter to General George Marshall that he was troubled by problems on the march, with the officers not keeping the columns moving (2). Perhaps his experiences with units in August explains why he was so frustrated when Major Samuel Gray and the 945th encountered him during a hold-up in September.

The infantry was continuing to rely on the artillery to soften up objectives prior to attacks, and the big howitzers of the 945th were still playing catch up. At this time General Patton reminded a French General of a statement the Frenchman made during WWI: "The poorer the infantry, the more artillery it needs; and the American infantry needs all the artillery it can get". General Patton commented that the General "... was right then, and still is" (2).

On 21 August, the XII Corps attacked towards the Paris-Orleans gap, and the 945th advanced to within a few miles of Pithiviers, a town located about 40 miles south, southwest of Paris (Figure 3). The Allied objective was now the Seine River and the town of Troyes (1). The XII Corps was given the more limited objective of reaching Sens on the Yonne River. On this date General Patton felt that the opportunity to end the war quickly was at hand. General Wyche (79th) noted that the situation was too fluid to define an enemy front line, and they expected little resistance (1). Of course, now we know that as the supply of fuel diminished the advanced slowed, which provided time for the Germans to establish defensive positions on a line from Metz to Nancy, France. General Patton believed that "If they let me move on with three Corps, two up and one back, on the line of Metz-Nancy-Epinal, we can be in Germany in ten days" (2).

According to Rudolph Amschler (C), the chase for the Germans continued, he commented that the "run across France was more or less on the run to catch the Germans. Often we went into position and didn't have to fire a round because the enemy was out of our range" (I31). Cruser remembers the constant effort to keep up, "... we march ordered at least once a day and some days twice a day. We even got to the place where we were almost betting that they would surrender or quit or something before we ever got to fire a round" (I36).

On this same date of 21 August, XII Corps commander General Eddy asked General Patton "... how much he should worry about his right flank", which General Patton felt was immaterial as the advance would be in depth, that is one division following another (3). He also believed that any German with any sense would be in a headlong rush to reach the German border and not be planning

a flanking attack on the XII Corps and Third Army. This would not be the first time that General Patton had to contend with and encourage cautious Corps and Division commanders.

A dash by elements of the 4th Armored Division captured Sens on 22 August, and with the 35th Infantry Division crushed resistance in Montargis on 24 August. It was near Montargis that the 945th finally fired the first of over 58,000 - 96 lb. 155 mm shells (9). This was also the first battalion attached to the XII Corps to fire (4). The War Diary reads:

> 22 Aug
>
> Reinforcing fires of 161st FA Bn in support of CT 134 (134 Inf, 35th Inf. Div). Battalion displaced at 1105 to positions 5 miles west of Montargis (18.4-46.8 Montargis Sheet 10 H/4 Nord de Guerre Zone). 1653 first round fired by Btry "A" on registration through Capt. Griffin from a liaison plane of 161st FA Bn. 1815 first mission, road interdiction and infantry in woods assigned by Div Arty Exec Off. Total rounds - 56 HE.

The 1:100,000 map of Pithiviers-Orleans (Sheet 10H) was kept by Major Clay following the war and includes the battalion locations at both Pithiviers and west of Montargis. The battalion location was at coordinates 18.4 and 46.8 on Sheet 10H when it fired its first rounds. Dale Curfman was surprised at "how far we traveled to our first position, I figured firing the first rounds was why we came" (I40). Wayne Cruser recalls that following this day the 945th began to receive regular fire missions, but they were still moving rapidly trying to catch up with the enemy as they retreated. Back home in Georgia, Fred and Hazel Mackey's first child, daughter Margaret, was born the next day.

General Eddy and the XII Corps, advancing on the Seine continued to protect the right flank of the 12th Army Group, and everyone agreed that the armor and infantry were working together smoothly. Crossing their columns west of Montargis, the divisions had performed a difficult maneuver efficiently. As a result of the action by the XII Corps and XX Corps between 20 and 25 August, the Third Army had four bridgeheads across the upper Seine River south of Paris between Melun and Troyes (1). During this time period the 945th FAB was supporting the 35th Inf. Div., which was holding the right flank of the Third Army and thus all Allied forces in France. The uncertainty about leaving this flank "in the air" was overshadowed by the need, at least in General Patton's mind, to move quickly before the Germans could re-group.

DRIVE BEYOND THE SEINE

At the same time that the Third Army was poised to move beyond the Seine to the Moselle River, Allied planners were considering the optimum axis for the thrust into Germany. Two choices were presented to Eisenhower at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), the southern axis through Metz and up towards Frankfurt, which was the axis of the 12th Army Group (Third Army included), or the northern thrust by the 21st Army Group through Liege, Belgium

into the industrial heart of Germany via the Ruhr River. British General Montgomery, commander of the 21st Army Group, of course favored the northern thrust, and argued vehemently with Eisenhower to support his plans.

On 22 August Eisenhower decided that the northern thrust would be the primary effort due to the potential to strike the industrial heart of Germany. This decision was much to Pattons disgust and displeasure, but Eisenhower and Bradley (12th Army Group commander) did maintain the "subsidiary drive" to the south and allow General Patton to keep moving, even beyond the Moselle (1). As General Patton's gasoline supply dwindled, and the First US Army was re-assigned to Montgomery's 21st Army Group, the opportunities for an advance into Germany along a line towards Koblenz before the end of the year looked doubtful.

On 29 August, three days after the XII Corps had moved on Troyes and the Seine River, General Patton found out that 140,000 gallons of gasoline he was expecting had been diverted to General Montgomery. He wrote, "The twenty-ninth of August was, in my opinion, one of the critical days of the war,....I later found out that the delay was a change of plan by the High Command, implemented, in my opinion, by General Montgomery. It was my opinion then that this was the momentous error of the war" (3).

General Patton was still pushing the advance, and several days earlier (26 August) had commented that General Eddy was "still not used to our speed yet..." (2). General Eddy and the XII Corps were on the road between Sens and Troyes when General Patton assigned the 80th Infantry Division to the Corps to augment the 4th Armored Division and 35th Infantry. The Third Army's other Corps, the XX Corps, had the 90th Infantry Division added to bolster its strength. General Patton continued to implore the Corps to push forward, and not be concerned about "imaginary enemies". It was on the 26th of August that the 945th loaned the 35th several trucks to transport troops, and Cruser remembered the continuing "catch-up" as they passed south of Paris.

The M-5 tractor, manufactured by International Harvester, was the prime mover for the 945th FAB. Donald Beard from Eaton, OH was trained in the maintenance and operation of the M-5 at the International Harvester plant. Fred Mackey was an M-5 driver, and he recalled the difficulty you could have on icy pavement or muddy roads. Col. DeLoach expressed the opinion in an after action report that the tread width was too narrow for efficient operation in wet weather. However, the M-5 was a far cry from the horse-drawn artillery of the German army, which accounted for over 50 percent of the transport for their artillery pieces.

The War Diary shows that no fire missions occurred between 24 and 28 August. On the 29th the 945th displaced to a position less than two miles from Troyes and fired 211 HE (high explosive) rounds at enemy infantry. The 945th HQ was established in Troyes on the Seine River on 28 August 1944 (9). It would now be less than three weeks before they reached Nancy and the Moselle River on 17 September (Figure 4).

On 29 August, General Patton found out that General Eddy had halted near St. Dizier (on the Meuse River) due to gasoline shortages. General Patton told him to have the 4th Armored Division tanks continue "until the engines stopped, then get out and walk" (2). General Patton recorded in his diary how, during WW I, he drained the fuel out of three quarters of his tanks to keep the last quarter moving. He felt like the same should be done with General Eddy's XII Corps to keep the advance going (2,3). He believed it a "terrible mistake to halt, even at the Meuse".

Blumenson writes in the official US Army history, "Breakout and Pursuit" that, "The Third Army's eastward advance during the last week in August had been a spectacularly fast movement against disorganized opposition - pursuit warfare at its best, a headlong, pell-mell rush that swept the Allied troops irresistibly towards the German border. By its nature opportunistic and relatively uncontrolled, it was also exciting. Units sought the enemy for battles of maneuver and surprise, and reconnaissance detachments and advance points had occasional nasty engagements. It was a motorized advance, everybody riding on tanks, trailers, and jeeps. It was a frantic search for bridges or fords. The Americans had the exhilaration of striking toward distant objectives and maintaining an incredibly rapid movement to deny the enemy the ability to organize and defend natural terrain obstacles. It was an immense clearing operation that liberated thousands of square miles. It was also a time of hysterical happiness for liberated Frenchmen." General Patton commented that the men riding on the tanks and trucks was "not pretty", but "look at the Map!" (2).

Then, the gasoline shortage hit, and by 3 September the Third Army was "bone dry" (1). General Patton was poised to reach Metz and Nancy, only 100 miles from the Rhine (Figure 5), but the fuel to drive the armor forward was no where in site. General Patton wrote to his wife, "If only I could steal some gas I could win this war!" (2). General Eddy felt the same way, confiding to his diary, "that we should be sitting here ... I am convinced that if we could obtain the necessary fuel this war might be over in a few weeks" (2).

Both General Patton and General Eddy could have been wrong about moving into Germany before the end of the year, as events would prove during the Lorraine Campaign in the last three months of 1944. As the XII Corps approached Metz and Nancy they found the Germans in much better defensive positions. The Germans had brought a lot of good soldiers out of France, and with deteriorating weather and visibility, the fight would become more difficult. The Lorraine Campaign would show that the August pursuit was a "finite experience" (1). The battles in the Huertgen Forest to the north in November, and the Battle of the Bulge in December would show that the Germans still had a lot of fight left in them.

CONCLUSION

The pursuit to the Moselle River was a "gigantic and sometimes haphazard closing action of all available forces toward Germany in which a frantic search for a bridge still intact was often the most significant detail" (1). Reconnaissance units and cavalry units (mechanized units with limited fire power) swept far and wide, clearing great areas, particularly on the flanks, to free infantry and armor for advance along the main highways. The artillery was usually unable to displace fast enough

to get into action, and even the light artillery did comparatively little firing. Only in a few instances did the Germans try to make a stand, usually at river-crossing sites. Road marches punctuated by occasional skirmishes of short duration and involving a company or at most a battalion for only several hours characterized the action.

Although the enemy could do little to hinder progress, shortages of supplies markedly slowed the advance. The planners had intended to rely on the excellent French railways for long-distance hauling, but Allied air attacks and French sabotage had virtually demolished the railroad system. By 30 August two main railroads were open as far as the capital, but the mutilated rail yards of Paris and the destroyed Seine River bridges prohibited through traffic. Motor transport played a much larger role on the Continent than had been planned, and consequently theater facilities were neither well suited nor well prepared for extensive operations because of shortages of vehicles and properly trained drivers.

The "Red Ball Express", initially designed as an emergency means to support the Seine River crossings, became an institution that operated well into November east of the Seine. Two one-way roads were opened for the over 100 truck companies that operated the Red Ball Express; however, combat units were known to divert or even hijack supplies. As the empty trucks of the Red Ball express moved west on a three lane highway, an armored division was moving east in the center lane, and the 35th Inf. Div., with the 945th along, was also moving east in the third lane "radiator to muzzle" according to Sam Gray. The tractors could carry 33 five gallon containers of fuel, but most were modified by welders to carry more than that, along with baskets for camouflage nets, and poles to protect your neck from piano wire decapitation, etc. The Chief of Ordnance was far enough away in Washington, D.C. so as not to interfere with all of these non-approved changes to the vehicles. Along the route, when the traffic came to a halt, Gooding Bean saw a black man (blacks were not integrated into combat units until after WWII) that he had known as a child in Atlanta - what a small world!

On the north the Rhine River was less than 50 miles from General Hodges First Army along a line from St. Vith to Echternach, Luxembourg. Further south General Patton's Third Army was already becoming immersed in fighting west of Nancy and the Moselle River which would signal the beginning of the Lorraine Campaign. Back to the north, a probing of the West Wall defenses by the First Army was delayed so that additional artillery ammunition could be brought forward. This pause essentially ended the pursuit of the German Army.

The Allies now had landed more than two million men and half a million vehicles on the continent, the equivalent of over 49 divisions. Casualties included 40,000 killed and 164,000 wounded, less than half the estimated German casualties. At the beginning of September the Lorraine and the Ardennes lay ahead for the 945th FAB.

Figure 1
Normandy Front
2 July 1944
Breakout and Pursuit: Map I

Figure 2
945th FAB Map: Utah Beach Landing Site
August 1944

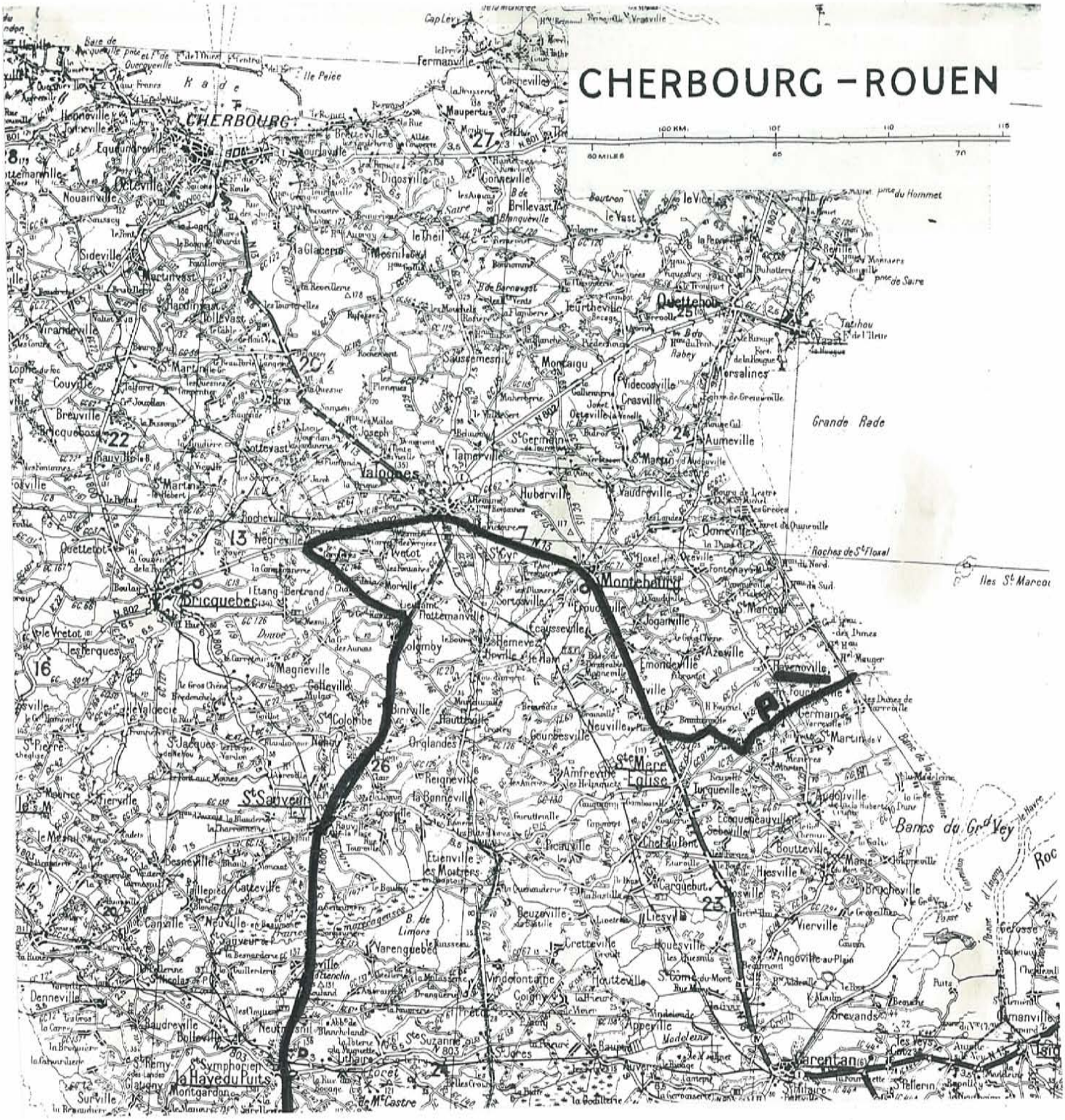


Figure 3
Drive to the Seine
16-25 August 1944
Breakout and Pursuit: Map XII

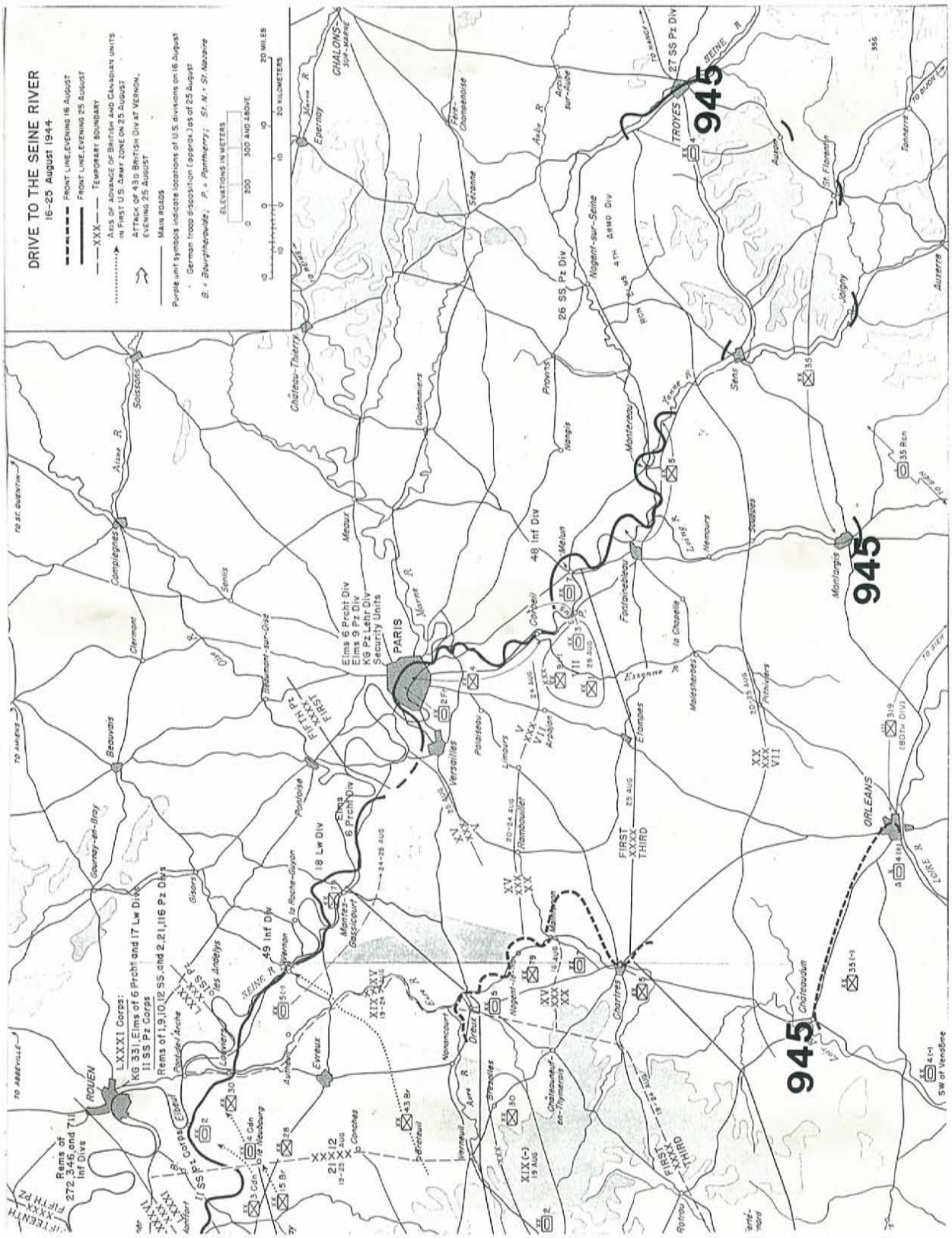
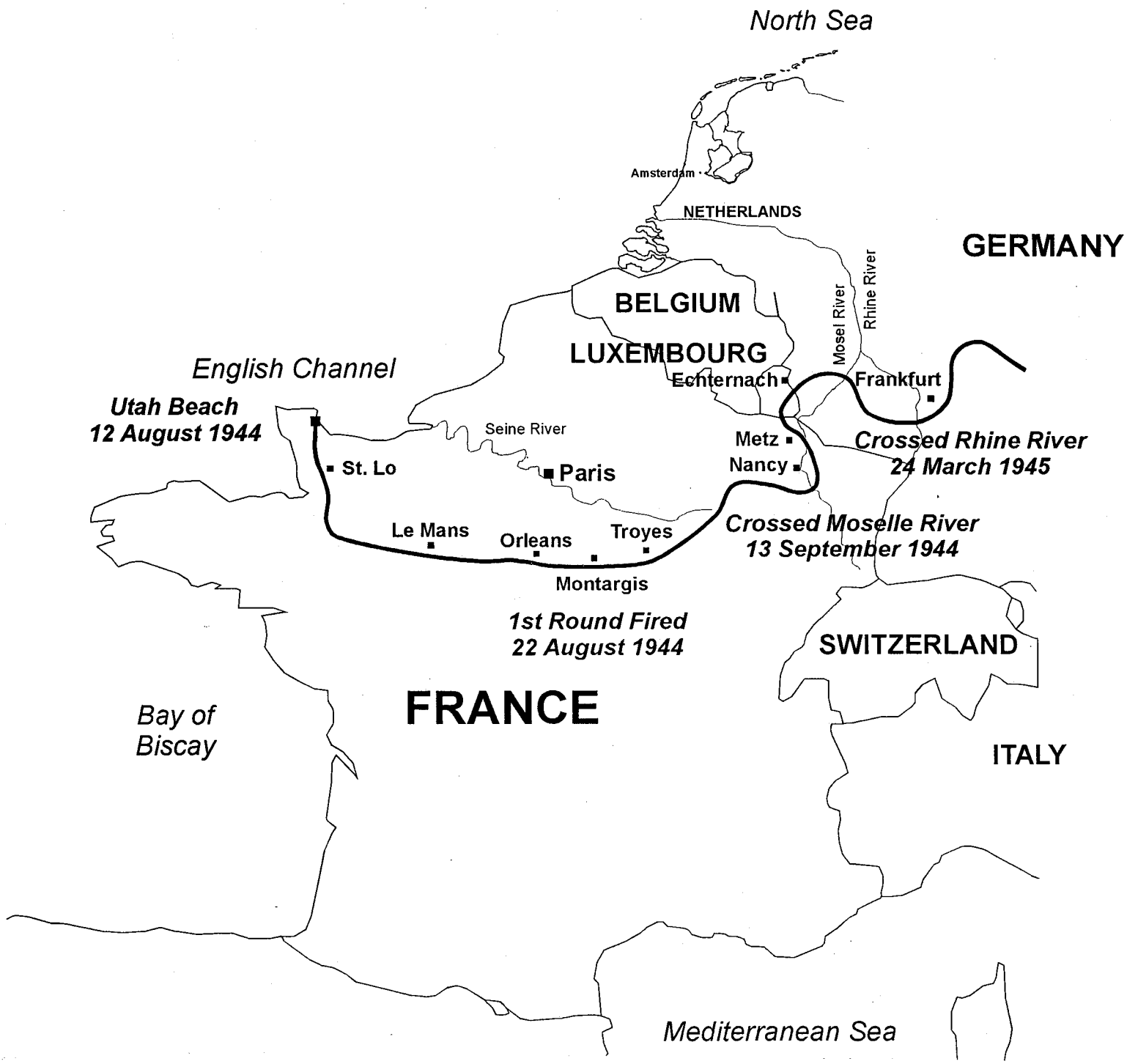


Figure 4
Pursuit to the German Border
26 August - 10 September 1944
Breakout and Pursuit: Map XV

Figure 5
945th FAB Route Through France



Chapter 8

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Chapter 9
The Lorraine Campaign: Part One
3 September to 30 October 1944

"All the eastern sky glowed and trembled with the flashes of guns" - General George S. Patton

THE HALT AT THE MEUSE

At the beginning of September 1944 the Allies were still confident that the final victory of World War II was at hand (1). The dreaded Argonne forest of World War I fame had been passed through without a fight, and on the last day of August Patton's tanks had captured the equally famous Verdun with "hardly a blow being struck". A confident General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander, arrived on the continent and assumed direct operational command of the Allied forces in northern France. The XII Corps commander Major General Manton S. Eddy was equally confident (Figure 1). A final drive through the Lorraine by the Third Army to the Rhine, in addition to the favored northern thrust by the U.S. First Army, was still an integral part of his "broad front strategy" (Figure 2). However, operations from September to November would be quite dismal compared to the rapid advance across France during August (2).

THE LORRAINE

The Lorraine area of eastern France was well known to General Patton from World War I, and he was keenly aware that this area could be the gateway to the Rhine (3). The plain of Lorraine, is an area of rolling hills marked by lakes, often forest covered, crossed by many streams, with numerous small villages and several larger towns like Metz, Nancy, and Sarre-Union (3). The headwaters of the Seine, Rhone and Rhine were all accessible from the Lorraine, and the area was much less difficult to travel across than the Ardennes to the north or Vosages to the south. Nancy, unlike Metz, had not been fortified in modern times, but the area directly to the west was an "inhospitable" area known as the "Foret de Haye", a rugged upland triangle cut by deep chasms. To the east of Nancy and the Moselle plateau the Lorraine opens up into a high area that commands the surrounding countryside (3).

General Patton had his own opinion of the Lorraine when he wrote to Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, "I hope that in the final settlement of the war, you insist that the Germans retain Lorraine, because I can imagine no greater burden than to the owner of this nasty country where it rains every day and where the whole worth of the people consists in assorted manure piles" (2). Perhaps Patton's viewpoint was shaped by his second war in 30 years, or the generally ambivalent, and sometimes hostile, disposition towards Americans by the people of the Lorraine.

Operations in the Lorraine were characterized by prepared assaults to gain river crossings, battles to break out of shallow bridgeheads, and limited objective attacks against well-organized positions (1). Fighting in October was usually hill to hill; in November this changed to village to

village. Also, the swampy ground, a limited road net, fogs rising from the river basins, and fewer hours of daylight all combined to slow the American advance in November. The fight for observation was a conspicuous feature in the early days of the battle for the Lorraine (10). This was due in part to the sharply etched nature of the Moselle plateau.

U.S. ARMY TROOP DISPOSITIONS

At the first of September the Allied forces were across the Seine and were moving rapidly northeast and east in pursuit of fleeing German forces. Twenty-three Infantry Divisions and fifteen Armored Divisions were on the continent and fighting. The Allied ground forces were backed-up by an overwhelming advantage in air support over the German Luftwaffe, the Third Army being supported by the XIX Air Command.

The Allied right was composed of two Corps under General Patton - the XX and XII. The Third Army front was over 90 miles wide on the east (facing Nancy and Metz), and even longer on the right flank stretching over 450 miles back along the Loire River and westward towards Orleans.

ALLIED STRATEGY

On 29 August General Eisenhower dispatched a letter to all his major commanders, outling his intentions for the conduct of future operations. He finished saying that it was his intention "to complete the destruction of the enemy forces in the West, and then - to strike directly into the heart of the enemy homeland" (1). On 2 September Patton met with Eisenhower, Bradley, Hodges and others at the 12th Army Group headquarters. Patton somewhat exaggerated when he said that he had patrols on the Moselle River near Metz and Nancy, and based at least partially on this, Eisenhower gave him permission to secure crossings over the Moselle and prepare to attack the Siegfried Line. This assault would initially involve the 80th Infantry Division north of Nancy, followed by the 35th Infantry Division, supported by the 945th FAB, south of Nancy (Figure 3).

On 4 September General Patton gave General Eddy, XII Corps Commander, permission to march the 317th Infantry (80th Inf. Div.) toward the Moselle River north of Nancy. The plan was to cross the Moselle north of Nancy, and with a bridgehead open send CCA of the 4th Arm. Div. in to envelop Nancy in a wide sweeping movement to the south. The remaining elements of the 80th (318 and 319th Infantry) and the 4th Arm. Div. would move into position to hit Nancy from the west. It was a good plan that had worked before, but the Germans were ready this time, dug in, and with the 317th under observation as it moved into position (Figure 4). In order to maintain "surprise", the attack on 5 September was preceded by fire from only one field artillery battalion (313th FAB). The attack across the Moselle River at Pont-a-Mousson went badly and was ultimately repulsed. Casualties were heavy and the badly shaken troops were forced in the evening to fall back to Blenod. General Patton wrote in his diary that the "XII Corps got a bloody nose at Pont-a-Mousson" (4). Reasons for the failure of the assault included insufficient time for reconnaissance, daylight attack, lack of co-ordination, an underestimation of enemy strength, and, the decision to dispense with an artillery preparation in order to gain tactical surprise (1).

The XII Corps regrouped and General Eddy stated that the for the next attack: "This time we will make sure it goes through". The 35th Inf. Div. was brought forward on 6-7 September for the new plan of attack (Figure 5). The new plan outlined on 7 September called for a wide sweeping movement of the 35th Inf. Div. and 4th Arm. Div. (CCB) south of Nancy along with a renewed attack north of Nancy by the 80th Inf. Div. This "double envelopment" would get the XII Corps firmly across the Moselle and take Nancy.

THE LORRAINE CAMPAIGN BEGINS FOR THE 945th

The 945th FAB was near the assembly area for the 35th Infantry Division well west of Nancy at Brienne-le-Chateau on 1 September, and remained in that area for almost a week during the initial attack of the 80th Inf. Div. (Figure 3). The 945th had "no activity" on the first, and on the 2 September the ominous "heavy rain throughout day" was noted as the battalion moved into position to cover the further assembly of the 35th Inf. Div. in the vicinity of Joinville. Donald Beard always kept a spare pair of dry socks to prevent "trench foot", a real problem for the American armies that were not prepared for the wet, cold fall in the Lorraine.

On 7 September trucks were provided by the 945th to the 35th Inf. Div. to help haul soldiers, an event which Wayne Cruser noted in his remembrances. Patton noted the poor weather on 8 September and he stated in a letter to his wife that "I have always said that in bad weather officers should be out" (5). He visited Toul, just west of Nancy on a bend in the Moselle River, and commented on why anyone would want to live in a town that had been destroyed every 50 years since the dawn of history.

After several days of inactivity the 945th was on the move on 9 September, moving twice in one day to a location south of Marthemont. On 9 September the XII Corps artillery moved into position to support the new plan of attack. The next day the battalion received their first shelling at the hands of the Germans. The shelling, which came in during the march and into the batteries once they were in position, was remembered by James Wright (I15). On the morning of 10 September the 35th moved forward and the 134th Infantry secured a bridgehead at Flavigny (seven miles south of Nancy - Figure 5). However, the bridgehead was not adequately supported by the tank destroyers, and German artillery fire brought down the bridge isolating the troops on the east side of the river. Those who could escape did so during the night. The 945th, which had displaced to Xeuilley on the Madon River (several miles east of the Moselle River), fired 23 HE rounds, but also received "sporadic enemy shell fire" for the first time.

The HQ was shelled on the 10th, and Maj. Gray noted very spirited digging of foxholes following the arrival of the German shells. On the topic of foxholes - Fred Moore said that during the war he "drove jeeps and dug foxholes". During another shelling at HQ Breitenstein dove into his foxhole and landed on Maj. Clay and at least two other men who had arrived first! In another instance, a 945th FO watched as his freshly dug foxhole filled with water, stating that he would never use it. During the first shelling, in he went, only to surface along with several other heads from beneath the water.

The attack continued on 11 September and went much better with the 137th Infantry (35th Inf. Div.) getting a toehold across the Moselle at Crevechamps, slightly upstream of the previous days crossing. This advance was supported by the heavier guns of the XII Corps, allowing for significant expansion of the bridgehead. The 945th really went into action this day with 243 HE and 6 White Phosphorus (WP) rounds fired. CCB of the 4th Arm. Div. began to exploit the bridgehead, and the momentum of the attack began to pick up.

To the north a rolling barrage was laid ahead of the renewed attack of the 317th Infantry at Pont-a-Mousson, and Colonel Bruce Clark's CCA drove the Germans back when they threatened to re-take the bridge. Elements of CCA crossed the Moselle at Dieulouard and penetrated deep into the German lines east of Nancy in a movement that General Eddy later compared to Confederate General Jeb Stuart's famous ride around General McClellans's Union Army in front of Richmond. Lt. Col. Creighton W. Abrams 37th Tank Battalion lead the way.

On 12 September, during the attack south of Nancy, the 945th suffered its first casualty when Pvt. Charles Schwarz was killed by an enemy shell. Charlie had been Major Gray's driver, and he had arrived with the early detail from the 945th that planned the move from the United States to England. He was the only child of an older couple that resided in the Philadelphia suburb of Upper Darby. Charlie's body was returned to the states and today is buried between his parents in the cemetery across from where he went to high school, one of over 350,000 Americans killed in action during World War Two. Sgt. Robert W. Hesson was wounded, and he spent the rest of the war in hospitals in the United States (I12).

THE 945TH CROSSES THE MOSELLE RIVER

On 13 September the 945th crossed the Moselle River on a pontoon bridge at Velle-Sur-Moselle (see Neuviller-Sur-Moselle on Figure 5), which was burning "just like a WWI movie" (I14). The battalion passed a check-point and took up positions 2 miles S.E. of Crevechamps. The 945th was close to the front, arriving in this area only one day after the CCB of the 4th Arm. Div. had pushed through (Figure 6). The pace of fire, as well as counter-battery fire, was beginning to pick up with 255 HE rounds fired and 4 wounded.

On 13 September two men were noted as missing, Cpl. Robert Mosely and Ira Ramsey. They were initially reported as MIA (missing in action), but later it was determined that they were POWs, apparently captured by the Germans while attempting to deliver a message to Group HQ. Maj. Gray notes that Cpl. Mosely's job was to carry messages to higher headquarters - the 182 FA Group. He would accompany the Battalion, and when the CP was established delivery that information to the Group HQ along with overlays of battery positions and wire installations. Before they left on the 13th, Maj. Gray told Mosely to "Be careful, I don't think we have it" (the exact location of Group HQ). On 29 July 1945, while visiting the 945th at Straubing, Germany, someone told Maj. Gray that they had received a postcard from Mosely, home in Georgia, saying "Tell Major Gray we didn't have it". Mosely and Ramsey were badly treated as POWs, first at Stalag 12 and later at M. Stamnaged

III-C in Poland. Ramsey returned to Benton Harbor, Michigan after the war; he lost 50 pounds during the first six months of captivity.

Shortly after crossing the Moselle River the battalion had their first encounter with General Patton, who was quite frustrated to find the 945th M-5 tractors stationary with the engines running. For Roy McMahan this first meeting with General Patton made quite an impression, as "he was mad because of a hold up". This first visit by General Patton also made an impression on Maj. Samuel Gray, the 945th FAB Executive Officer . Maj. Gray was a graduate of Yale and the Temple University Law School, and before being assigned to the 945th had been with the 28th Inf. Div. (Pennsylvania National Guard - Reserves) as an artilleryman. He wrote home to his wife that on 14 September, "old so and so caught Bean and myself in the middle of a burning village yesterday, but despite the traffic snarl his only complaint was that the Bn was burning gasoline and not moving. Actually the motors had just been started, but we didn't want to enlighten him" (I14). General Patton reportedly told Maj. Gray "Don't you think I have anything better to do than haul gasoline!". A number of 945th men remembered this incident, and it was noted that several officers ducked out of view when General Patton arrived on the scene. Maj. Gray, and possibly Maj. Clay crossed their arms and signaled the M-5 drivers to shut down their engines. Later Gino Ricci, whose father had served in a horse-drawn artillery unit in World War I, remembers that someone in the battalion almost ran over General Patton's jeep with an M-5!

General Patton stated in a letter to a friend on 14 September that "We have been having quite severe fighting, which is still going on, but we have finally completely crossed the Moselle River which, as you know, has throughout history been a great military barrier" (5). On this date Eddy's XII Corps took Nancy into Allied hands, but only after the XII Corps had determined that the Germans had abandoned the mysterious and largely un-investigated Foret de Haye to the west of Nancy. Nancy would become the headquarters for the Third Army and the bridgehead for all supplies moving into the Lorraine. The 945th HQ was briefly located 3 miles southeast of Nancy on 17 September, and the men took periodic leaves to visit the town in the weeks that followed.

At this point it looked like the XII Corps had a significant breakthrough in progress and Patton considered sending them the 7th Arm. Div. for a push to the Rhine. Patton observed that Eddy was "tense and nervous", but this did not stop him from suggesting that if the XII Corps breached the Siegfried Line General Eddy send some armor, backed by a mounted combat team straight on with the hope of securing a bridge over the Rhine at Worms (4). In fact, on 16 September, while Bradley and SCHAEF waited to see if the Third Army could capitalize on the Moselle crossings, Patton was planning to have the XII Corps spearhead the drive into Germany. The plan was to use the 4th Armored Division, which had already driven towards Arracourt, the expected 6th Armored Division, and a transferred 7th Armored Division (from XX Corps) to lead a strike at the West wall between Sarreguemines and Saarbruecken and an eventual breakthrough to the Rhine. With the industrial areas of the Saar on the south and the Ruhr on the north out of the war Germany would have to capitulate to the Allies.

The hope of exploiting the XII Corps advance began to diminish with the arrival of heavy rains on September 17. The 945th War Diary notes "heavy rains which started during the night of the 16th and continued all day". It was to be the wettest fall in the Lorraine during this century. Patton noted that "Eddy still thinks my attack is premature - I hope that the Germans agree with him..." (5). Patton knew that the advantage was always on his side if the Germans were not expecting one of his moves. He was convinced that the only Germans between him and the Rhine were the ones actively engaged in battle, and that the German Army had no depth. Patton also notes on the 18th that General Ira Wyche's 79th Inf. Div. was moving into position with the XV Corps near Joinville.

THE BATTLE FOR THE "FORET DE CHAMPENOUX"

After crossing the Moselle River the 945th moved to the north-northeast (Figure 5) to Bussoncourt, directly east of Nancy. This location was three miles south of the Foret de Champenoux (foret meaning forest) where the 137th infantry (35th Inf. Div.) was heavily engaged by troops of the 1120th Regiment of the 553 VG Division (Figure 5). These elite German units were defending the withdrawl of their division, and they had established a strong line of entrenchments within the forest. Their network of foxholes was supported by tanks and self-propelled 88mm guns (1). Heavy-caliber mortars were also zeroed in on the clearing north of the road from Champenoux to Nancy. Walter Kline commented on the close proximity of the 945th FAB to the front lines, and Wayne Cruser observed several engagements of German infantry and American armor while east of Nancy. Kline remembers that the fighting around Nancy was "quite hot most of the time" (I33). The 945th was definitely close to the very fluid front line during these engagements.

On 18 September, near the Foret de Champenoux, Battery A set up at a new position without checking the minimum elevation on one of their howitzers. A tree burst occurred, inflicting 2 casualties. Ironically, the two casualties were the same men who had "rolled" two dead Germans earlier in the day, taking pistols, pictures, and watches. This occurred when Lt. Tom Cope, in charge of Battery As graves registration unit, had taken them out to recover several German casualties.

The 945th also had to turn batteries around when it was reported that 30 German tanks were sighted west of Luneville. The spotting of these tanks by artillery observers (possibly from the 945th) is mentioned on Page 223-4 of The Lorraine Campaign. The tanks were from the second battalion of the 111th Panzer battalion preparing to attack the 4th Armored Division around Arracourt. The 945th FAB returned into position the next day. Despite the shellings and the movement 134 HE rounds were fired in support of the 137th Infantry Regiment. Steve Giacovelli remembers that the fighting around Nancy "was one of the worst experiences, for we had to straddle train tracks to get into a wooded area to bivouac. Our batteries fired point blank at the enemy for they were so close" (I13). This was extremely unusual for the 945th to have the actual batteries observing their own fire ("direct fire").

On 19 September, the day Patton hoped would signal the beginning of a new attack by the XII Corps, the 137th Infantry was still trying to enter the Foret de Champenoux and the 134th Infantry was "pushed off a hill" northeast of Nancy (4). This hill was Amance Hill, adjacent on the

west to the Foret de Champenoux. A gap between the 134th on Amance Hill and the 137th at the Foret de Campenoux, in addition to a German counter-attack at the village of Agincourt, made the American position east of Nancy tenuous for the period 18-22 September. According to Patton he told Eddy, who was very concerned at this point, what Lee had said at Chancellorsville, "I was too weak to defend, so I attacked".

The 945th War Diary notes that on the 20th they engaged "strong enemy positions", most likely those of the 553rd VG at the Foret de Campenoux, and possibly at Amance Hill. The 945th fired over 700 HE rounds on 20 September despite the rain, in a frantic effort to secure this area just east of Nancy. The US Army History notes that the artillery fire of six battalions had "literally blown to bits the German carrying parties as they moved through the woods and had pulverized the log-covered entrenchments" (1). Unfortunately, ammunition ran low and the Germans were still able to man their weapons in the forest.

About this time Wayne Cruser quit driving for the battery commander and began driving for the forward observers. He went with Lt.. Milton Worley to "knock out a roadblock near Chambray" (east of the Foret de Champenoux). Cruser relates the story from there: "We went to Chambray with a half platoon of mechanized cavalry. We scouted the town and tried to determine their strength. We took cover in the ruins of the old French Maginot Line. Observations confirmed a rather heavy concentration of enemy troops. They had a roadblock on the road into town. We didn't understand quite why, but some of these people started to set up a mortar at the edge of town, aimed in our direction. We tried to discourage their efforts with .50 caliber machine gun fire and 37mm cannon fire from the armored recon car in the party. They pulled back and left their mortar, so then we called in 945th fire on the roadblock and knocked it out". This story provides a good example of how the forward observers worked with the infantry and armored units to which they were assigned. The forward observers had a very dangerous job to say the least.

The 945th War Diary notes that on 22 September the battalion "fired in support of infantry and tank attack to seize high ground in vicinity of Amanee" (spelled incorrectly in the diary). This was undoubtedly in support of the efforts of the 134th Infantry. Finally, on 22 September, CCB of the 6th Armored Division exerted pressure on the rear of the Amance Hill - Foret de Campenoux area and the Germans gave way. The 137th cleared the forest as P-47 Thunderbolts strafed the retreating German column of infantry, horses, vehicles and guns. The liaison planes were sent up to observe enemy machine gun and anti-aircraft locations. When the Germans fired on the P-47s the 945th aerial observers would call in artillery fire on their positions. After nightfall the heavy field artillery picked up where the fighter-bombers left off, the "155mm guns and 240mm howitzers ... shelled the road all night" (1).

See pages 107-111 of U.S. Army in World War II History series title The Lorraine Campaign for a detailed description of the fighting in this area. In their first 10 days of real action, the 945th FAB contributed greatly to the securing of this critical area. The battlion showed that it could be mobile, operate under extreme pressure, and fire large numbers of 155 mm rounds with great accuracy, all while under the threat of counter-battery fire from the Germans.

On 23 September Patton was notified by General Bradley that, due to the supply situation, he was to go on the defensive. Patton wrote that it was "one of the bad days of my military career" (4). Wallace Bolton commented on the supply situation, saying that the battalion was "outside of Nancy when we ran out of gas and ammo"(I16). Although they were not totally out of ammunition, the supply to the Third Army was drastically decreased in order to support the major thrust of the First Army on the northern front.

On 25 September the Third Army Front shows that although they were across the Moselle River, the advance was slowing (Figure 7). Patton called the period from 25 September to 7 November 1944 the "most unproductive and uncompensatory" of the campaign in northern France. On the 27th Patton found out that the XV Corps would be reassigned, but he would receive the newly arrived 26th Infantry Division. The 26th was known as the "Yankee Division" as it was comprised largely of units from the Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine National Guards. The exploits of the Yankee Division in World War I were legend, and much was expected of General Willard S. Paul and his division. They would replace the 4th Arm. Div. following the attack of the LVIII Panzer Corps at Arracourt.

THE ATTACK OF THE LVIII PANZER CORPS

The 945th advanced on 26 September to a position just north of Moncel-Sur-Seille and were ordered to "dig in". The howitzers would have been emplaced, below grade if possible, and then surrounded with sandbags or logs to provide protection. The 6th Arm. Div. had recently been relieved of duty in Brittany and, slipping along the north side of the Loire River, had arrived on 17 September. They were immediately deployed near the 4th Arm. Div. The 4th Arm. Division had been under attack since the 19th by the LVIII Panzer Corps near Arracourt, 5 miles southeast of Moncel-Sur-Seille and 14 miles east of Nancy (see Figure 5 for the relative locations of Nancy, Arracourt and Moncel-Sur-Seille).

The combined effort of the tanks, fighter-bombers and artillery was called upon to finally blunt the largest tank battle in the Lorraine. In the end the 4th Arm. Div., although they had not driven towards the Rhine as was hoped, was very successful against the superior German tanks (in range and gun size). The 4th destroyed or damaged 285 tanks or other armored vehicles by the end of the month.

BATTLE FOR THE "FORET DE GREMECEY"

From 27 September to 1 October the 945th supported the attacks of the 6th Arm. Div. and 35th Inf. Div. at the Foret de Gremecey (Figure 8). The Foret de Gremecey was located less than two miles north of Moncel-Sur-Seille. The village of Pettoncourt, which was threatened by elements of the 106th Panzer Brigade on 27 September, was located just over a mile from Moncel-Sur-Seille. The 945th War Diary notes on 27 September that "Enemy surprise attack drove to the vicinity of Pettoncourt (02-21) temporarily cutting off a Hq Btry wire crew and threatening Sv Btry position". A forward observer with SV Battery called into the 945th fire direction control center and when Maj.

Clay plotted the position it was to the rear of the battalion! Maj. Gray relates that "Clay called for him to check coordinates, but the target was still to the rear. Fortunately, the infantry's counter-attack restored the front to its original line".

Wayne Cruser recalled that the enemy counter-attack hit a group of tanks about fifty yards from where we were sleeping. "They bayonetted two tankers who were on perimeter guard. The guys screamed loud enough that they awakened their buddies and the counter-attack was repulsed". Service Battery received enemy shelling and a German observation plane was observed over the battalion for the first time.

The fighting was heated and at close quarters in the Foret de Gremecey. General Order No. 4, dated 6 October 1944, awarded several Purple Hearts to men from the 945th FAB, including First Lieutenant Paul Remillard, and Cpl. Walter Kline, both from Battery C, for wounds received on 28 September. Kline also received the Bronze Star for his actions in the Foret de Gremecey. Paul Remillard "spent quite a few days as a forward observer with the infantry in the Foret de Gremecey, stating that they survived only with the help of tank destroyers that entered the forest (see The Lorraine Campaign - page 247). General Order No. 5, dated 18 October awarded the Purple Heart to Pfc. Walter A. Kehner, Battery C, for "wounds received as a result of enemy action on 30 September 1944 in France". Cruser witnessed the attack on seven German tanks on a cordoury road (elevated by means of logs) by a bazooka team, which proved to be unsuccessful as the rounds either were duds or ricocheted off into the woods. A BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle) rifleman stopped the first tank by firing into the turret, subsequently the other six tanks were blocked and had to surrender.

The fighting in the forest was at close quarters with German and American foxholes just 200 yards apart. Many heroic deeds were noted in the thick forest, one being the destruction of a machine gun nest by two mortally wounded soldiers of the 320th Infantry (Sgt. James Burzo and Pfc. Gerald Downing). The field artillery had isolated the approaches to the forest but could not fire accurately into the confused fight in the forest, thus it was left up to the men in the deep woods to prevail. The presence in the area around Champanioux of World War I military cemeteries, and the use of old World War I tenches by the men on both sides, cast a sad historical note on the fighting. Here was another generation of young men fighting and dying for the same quiet patch of French woods.

A conference on 30 September between Eddy, General Gaffey (Third Army Chief of Staff), General Baade (Commanding Officer for the 35th Inf. Div.), and all of the regimental commanders ended with the decision to withdraw from the woods. When informed of this decision, an angry Patton immediately flew to Nancy and gave instructions that the 35th would hold, and the 4th and 6th Arm. Divisions would attack the forest (he had given these instructions to Eddy the day before). Patton told Eddy, Grow (6th Arm. Div.) and Baade that "he was disgusted with them" (5). Patton noted in his diary that it was his responsibility to worry, and the Corps commanders responsibility to fight. After the 6th Arm. Div. restored the situation he stated that "I have again earned my pay" (5).

Fortunately, the Germans began a planned withdrawl and the forest was held. The 945th supported this effort on 1 October by firing 394 HE rounds, noting in the War Diary that the "attack was successful in seizing high ground desired". When the 3rd Battalion of the 137th Infantry left the Foret de Gremecey, they had only 485 men left from the 900 that entered the woods four days earlier. The Germans were dispersed to the north, followed by fighter-bombers past Chambrey. Following the action around the Foret de Gremecey, this sector lapsed into a "period of quiet" that is also noted in the early October entries into the 945th War Diary (1). This quiet period would last into early November, a much needed rest for the XII Corps which had been in continuous action for almost three months (1).

OCTOBER PAUSE IN OPERATIONS

The HQ for the 945th remained in the area around Moncel-Sur-Seille for the entire month of October (6). Although Patton complied with the plan to keep the Third Army in a defensive posture, he continued local attacks in order to keep his men and officers sharp and ready for the next phase of offensive operations. These included bringing the lines of the XV and XII Corps into a better alignment, the capture of the Foret de Parroy near Luneville, and the capture of the fortifications around Metz including Fort Driant. The XII Corps was to push slightly to the northeast of Moncel-Sur-Seille beyond Chateau-Salins. Following these actions the thirty-mile long front of the XII Corps fell quiet, which was also agreeable to the German who were concentrating their efforts near Aachen to the north.

The arrival of the 26th Inf. Div. at the beginning of October was lead by Maj. General Willard S. Paul, who entered the Army as a private in the Colorado National Guard (1). In order to prepare the 26th for what lay ahead, Eddy had them conduct a limited attack east of Moncourt with the 704th Tank Destroyer Battalion on 22 October. The troops fought surprisingly well and the Germans later referred to them as "American shock troops" in their reports. Patton took note of their performance.

During the October pause maintenance was performed, supply lines improved and the men were rotated out for R&R - rest and relaxation. Some went back to Nancy, or even Paris if you were an officer. New clothes, hot showers, good meals were available when you rotated out for a break. Marlene Dietrich's USO show (which toured for nine weeks) was even more popular than Bing Crosby's Third Army Tour had been in early September. DeWitt Scarborough spent time "in a dugout for 6 to 7 men lined with pine logs" (I34). Maj. Gray observed several log huts with mud and logs providing a dry place to sleep - it reminded him of General Washington's troops at Valley Forge. He also remembered that several men were transferred to the infantry during this time period, and that it was very difficult to see friends go to the infantry units with their high casualty rates. Bob Frey finally caught up with the 945th at Moncel-Sur-Seille where he served as a radio operator. He felt that it was a much better assignment than going to the infantry so he "was quite happy", although he never used his Morse Code skills as all communications with the 945th were by radio (I6).

Relief models and maps of the Westwall were studied by the officers, and planning and logistics went into high gear. Supplies continued to come to the front by truck. Paul Linz of

Baltimore, Maryland was driving a truck that supplied gasoline to the Third Army during the fall of 1944, later he would join the 945th FAB (Clarence Mitchum's battery B) in Germany - how that transpired is a mystery (I23). He stated that he "was scared as hell as he had never seen a gun that size in my life".

During the October lull, P-47s were called upon to destroy the dam at the Etang de Lindre reservoir, thus preventing its later use in flooding the Seille River valley as the XII Corps advanced beyond Dieuze. During this month the men were periodically given passes to Nancy, and even Paris for a lucky few (usually by lottery). Gino Ricci remembers Nancy's Stanislaus Square, and Hugh Howenstine had his "first bath in Nancy since the 945th left England" (I20 & I18). During this time period Capt. Gooding Bean was detailed to the 79th Inf. Div. as a liason as they were on the XII Corps and Third Army flank. He went with a 193 radio and command car which could send either morse or coded messages.

While with the 79th he ran into General Ira Wyche, the previous commander of the 74th Field Artillery Brigade at Camp Blanding who now had two stars. He recognized and greated Bean with surprise. While with the 79th Inf. Div., Bean witnessed the bombing ot the Foret de Parroy outside of Luneville by about 500 B-17s. General Eisenhower was also on hand to witness the event. Upon arriving back with the XII Corps Bean was soundly chewed out by Col. Bullock in the 182nd Field Artillery Group Headquarters for not sending messages back as ordered. Bean argued that he had done just that, and later the messages were discovered on the radio operators desk, received but never delivered to the HQ. Col. Bullock later apologized.

Tom Cope reports taking a load of soldiers into Nancy in a liberated Fiat convertible touring car. After shopping and enjoying the pleasures afforded by this rather large city, the group set out to return to the Battalion. At the Moselle River, which they had to cross on a long pontoon bridge, they were stopped by two MPs and their Fiat was confiscated on orders of General Patton to stop all non-military vehicles from using gasoline. The group had to hitch-hike back to their batteries.

When Aachen fell on 21 October to General Hodges First Army, General Bradley dispatched orders for the upcoming offensives. The Third Army would kick-off on 10 November, covering the offensive of the First and Ninth Armies on a line towards Frankfurt. Patton would be allowed to pursue a crossing of the Rhine between Mainz and Worms, situation permitting, otherwise the Third Army would clear the west bank of the Rhine to the confluence with the Moselle River in Germany. The 945th ended the month of October by firing one round of German Schneider 155mm ammo - possibly as a tribute to the old box trail Schneiders that they started with so long ago at Camp Blanding!

During the time the 945th spent near Moncel-Sur-Seille the battalion operated close to the enemy lines. Periodically the forward observers would be within a few hundred yards of the enemy, and the risk of capture was always present. That's exactly what happened the night of 31 October 1944. A battery had a group headed towards a forward observation post (OP) that the Germans had just surprised and taken over. The War Diary for 1 November records the incident stating that the

battalion was "Ordered to occupy an OP at night. A detail from "A" Btry was captured by a German patrol and suffered five casualties". Fred Lyons relates the story (I50):

> "We are on high ground overlooking Moncel-Sur-Seille, France. Moncel-Sur Seille was heavily occupied by German troops. We had directed fire on this town and the close by wooded area for two or more days. Changing OP personnel at midnight the night of 31 October 1944. We were approximately 4 or 5 miles from the OP, so we started out with a jeep. S/Sgt Fred Carruth was in charge, Cpl. Smith was driving. Sgt. Thompson on the radio, Pfc. Lazenby and I were also in the jeep. Cpt. Mitchel had just put me in for T4 rank. I was on the forward observation team, and also drove the command car. As we approached no-mans land our infantry had set up a post to let all passers know that was the front line. No vehicles beyond this point. We had stopped there the night before and left the jeep and went on by foot. But the night of Oct 31st a German patrol had killed our post personnel and taken over. One German wearing a GI helmet waved us down and the second we stopped the Germans came out of the ditch on both sides of the road. One put a gun barrel to the back of my head and said 'Hons de houf'. So I put them up. They could have killed us then but it was obvious they were after prisoners. We all loaded into the jeep and headed across no mans land. In a mile or so we ran into our infantry patrol and all hell broke loose. I heard a German yell 'shoot the prisoners'. Everyone was moving out of the jeep fast. Thompson was just in front of me. I saw one or two rounds hit him in the chest. Las was hit in the back and into his lungs. I was hit two or three rounds through my left arm. It felt like a hot sledge hammer and knocked me down hard. I saw Carruth dive for the ditch. He was taking rounds from a hand machine gun. He made the ditch but the German emptied what sounded like a full clip into him. I had an artery cut in my arm and the blood was shooting out. I rolled over and put my right thumb on the vein to slow it down but moving was a mistake. One of the Germans turned his hand machine gun loose on my right lower back to the knee. Twenty rounds, give or take. Three or four missed my body. Then he tried to shoot me in the back of the head. I had on a heavy coat and the rounds went through the coat collar on both sides of my neck. One was so close that it loosened the wax in my ear and I thought the hot wax running out was blood and that I had been shot through the ear. .... In the next two or three minutes the Germans were gone." The men finally convinced the infantry patrol that they were Americans. Lyons checked Thompson - he was dead, and Smith was gone (reportedly to get medics), and Carruth was wounded. Lyons later heard that Carruth made it "state

side". Lazenby finally crawled to the infantry patrol position to assure them that they were in fact Americans and that the Germans had fled. He was in the same boxcar with Lyons after they were treated at the field hospital in Nancy. Lyons and Lazenby were eventually evacuated to England where they stayed well into December. Lazenby went home, and Lyons returned to the 945th. Fred Lyons concludes that "As I recall the events of that night, it is like it was yesterday."

Due to delays to the scheduled attack to the north Bradley visited Patton on 2 November and inquired as to whether the Third Army could begin the offensive by itself. Patton answered that he could attack with a 24 hour notice, and the Third Army was on-line for 8 November. Patton would have 6 infantry divisions, 3 armored divisions, 38 field artillery battalions, 15 engineer combat battalions and many more unattached units for the attack - a quarter of a million men in all. What Patton and Bradley were not able to see was that November would bring over 7 inches of rain to the Lorraine, more than twice the average amount during this normally wet month.

Figure 1
Major General Manton S. Eddy
XII Corps Commander

Figure 2
Western Front
5 September 1944
The Lorraine Campaign: Map IV

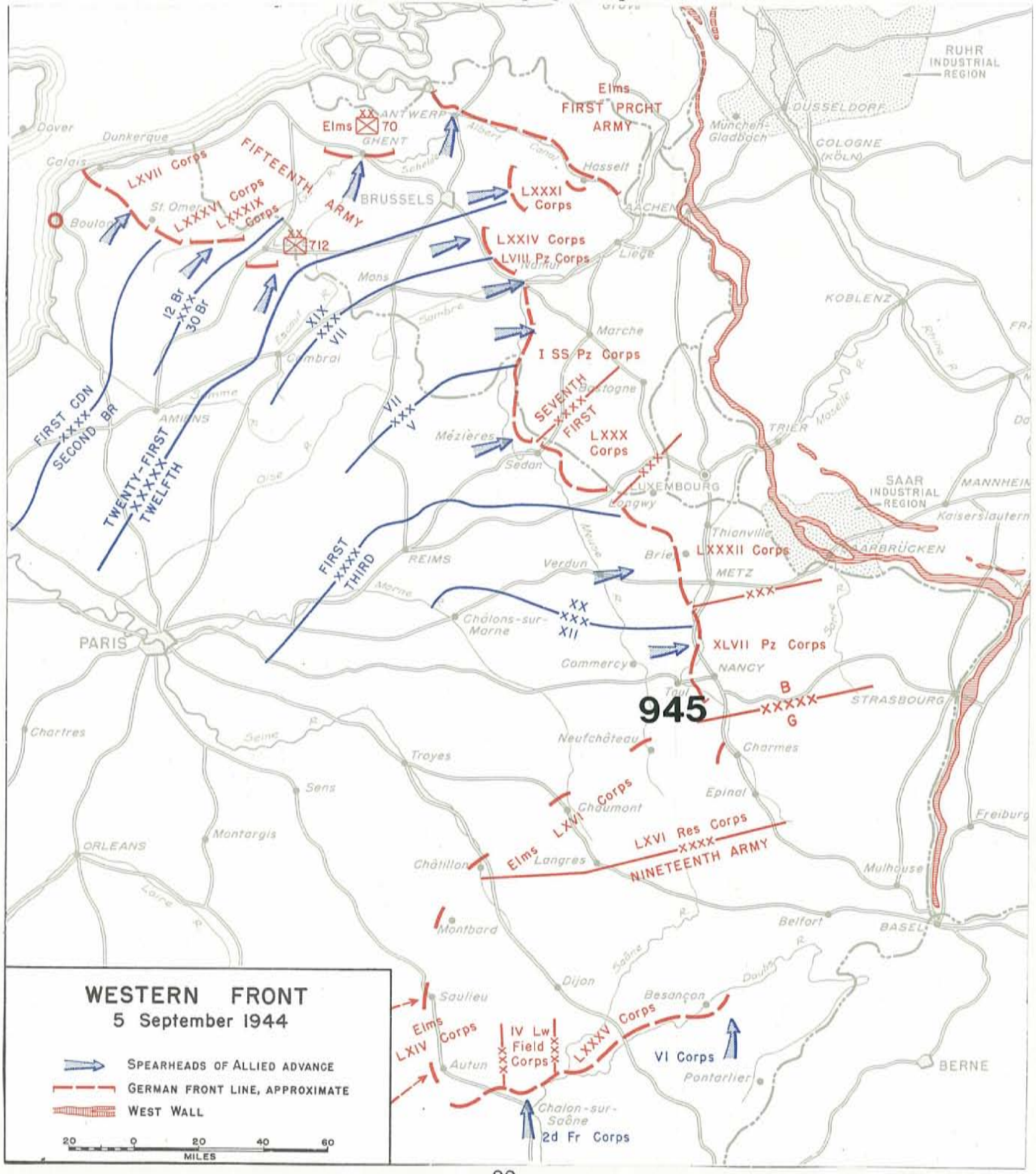

Figure 3
XII Plan of Attack
4 September 1944
The Lorraine Campaign: Map VII

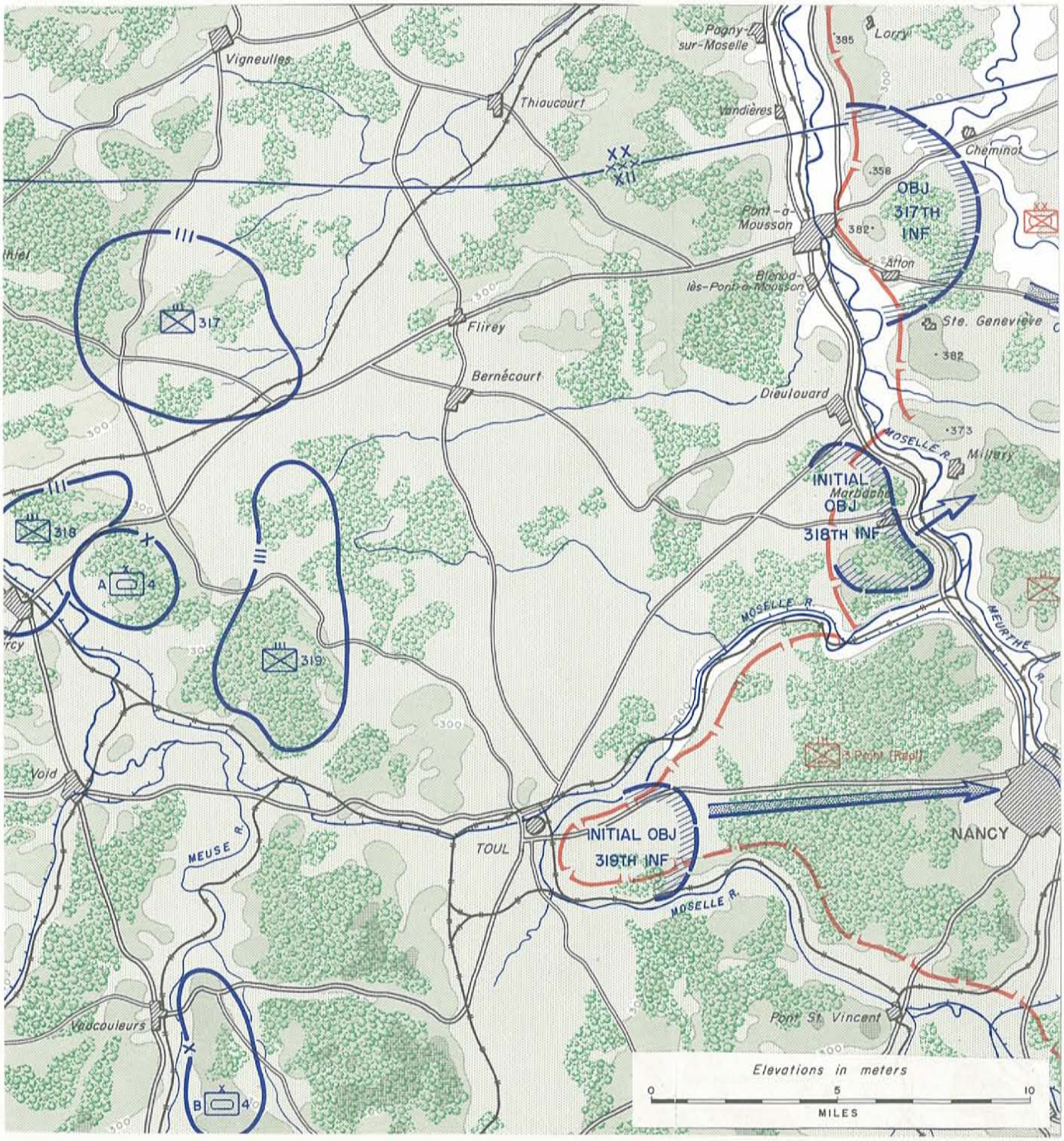

Figure 4
80th Division
5-10 September 1944
The Lorraine Campaign: Map 2

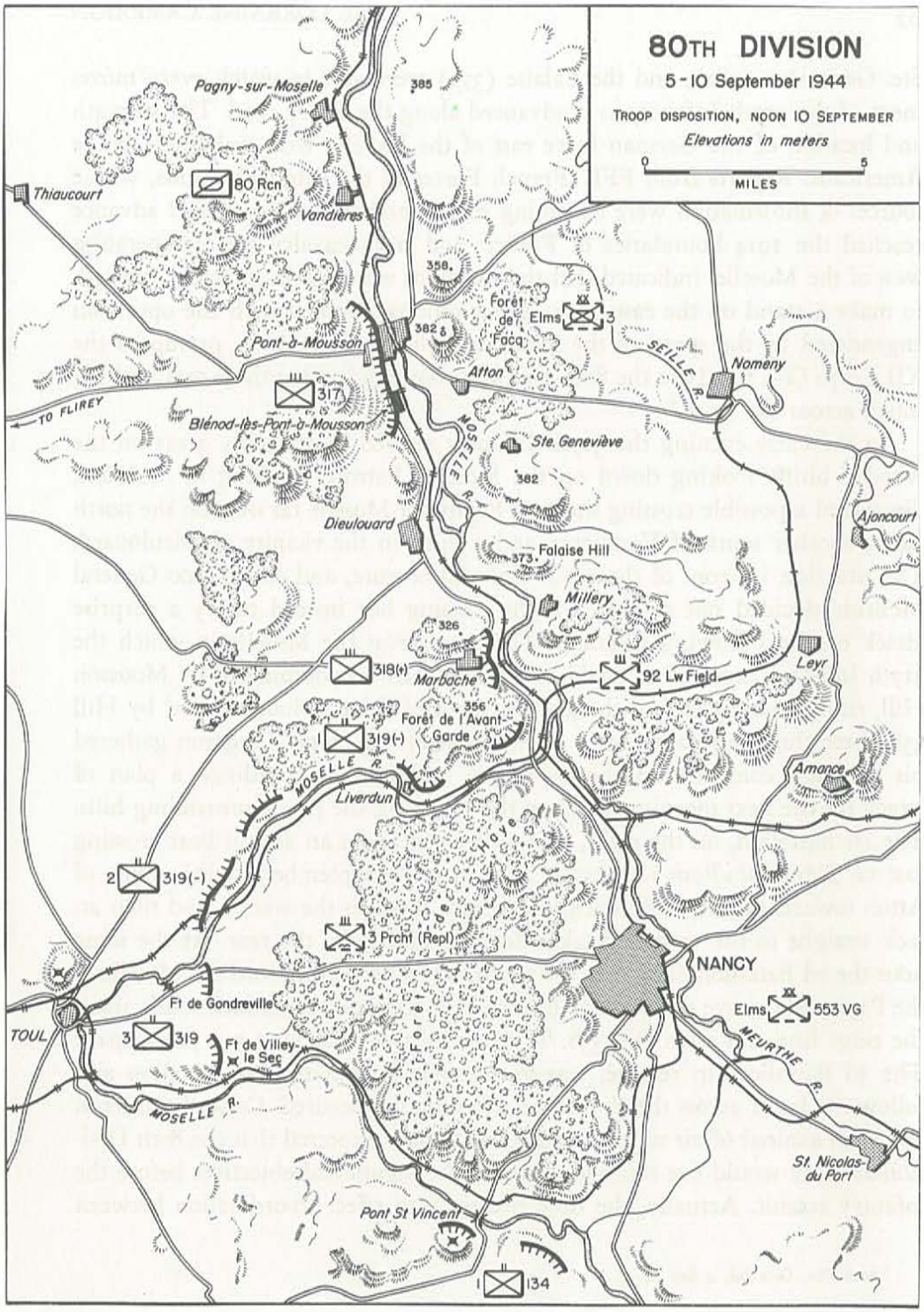

Figure 5
XII Corps Right Wing
10-21 September 1944
The Lorraine Campaign: Map VIII

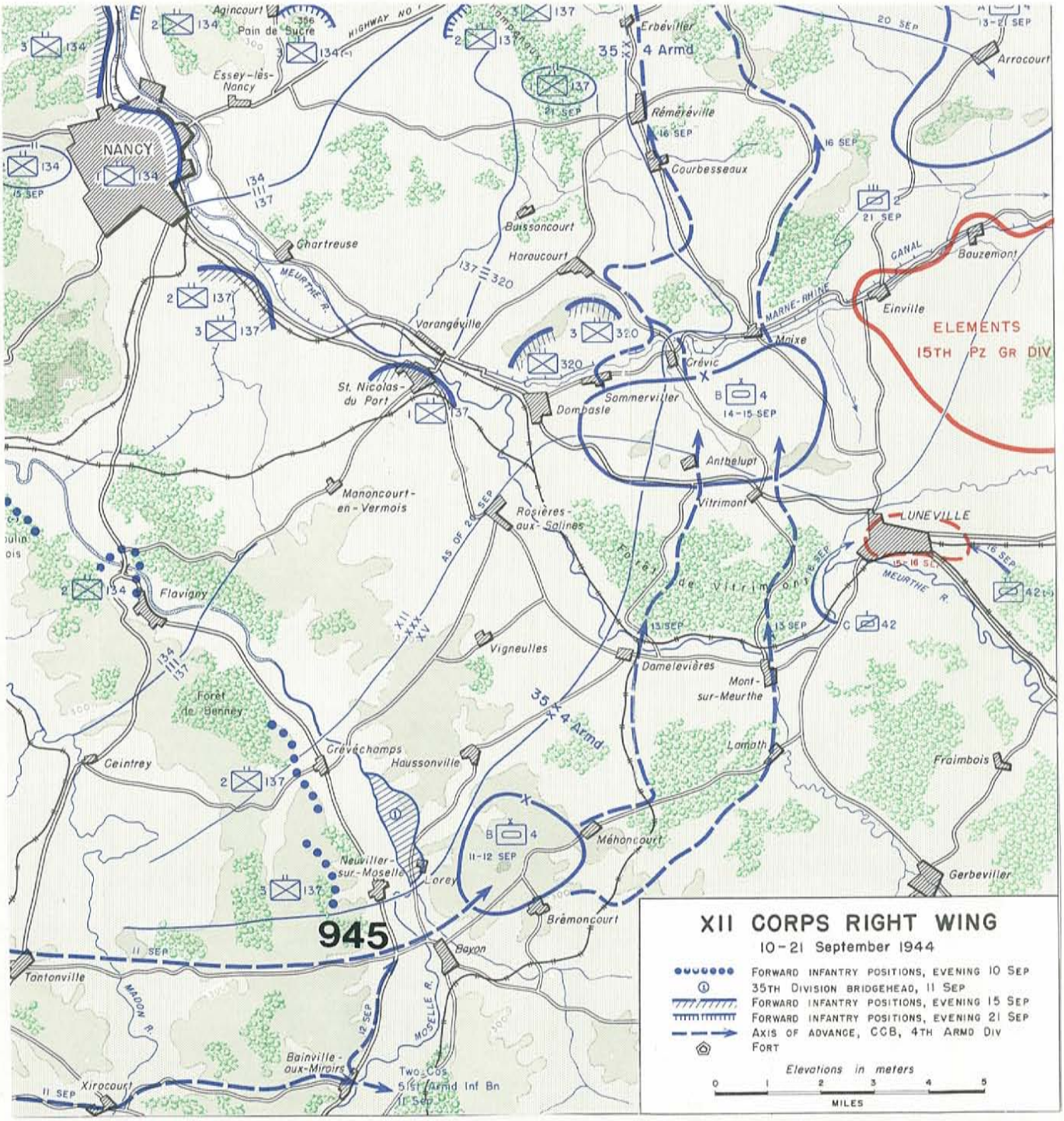

Figure 6
4th Armored Division
11-14 September 1944
The Lorraine Campaign: Map X

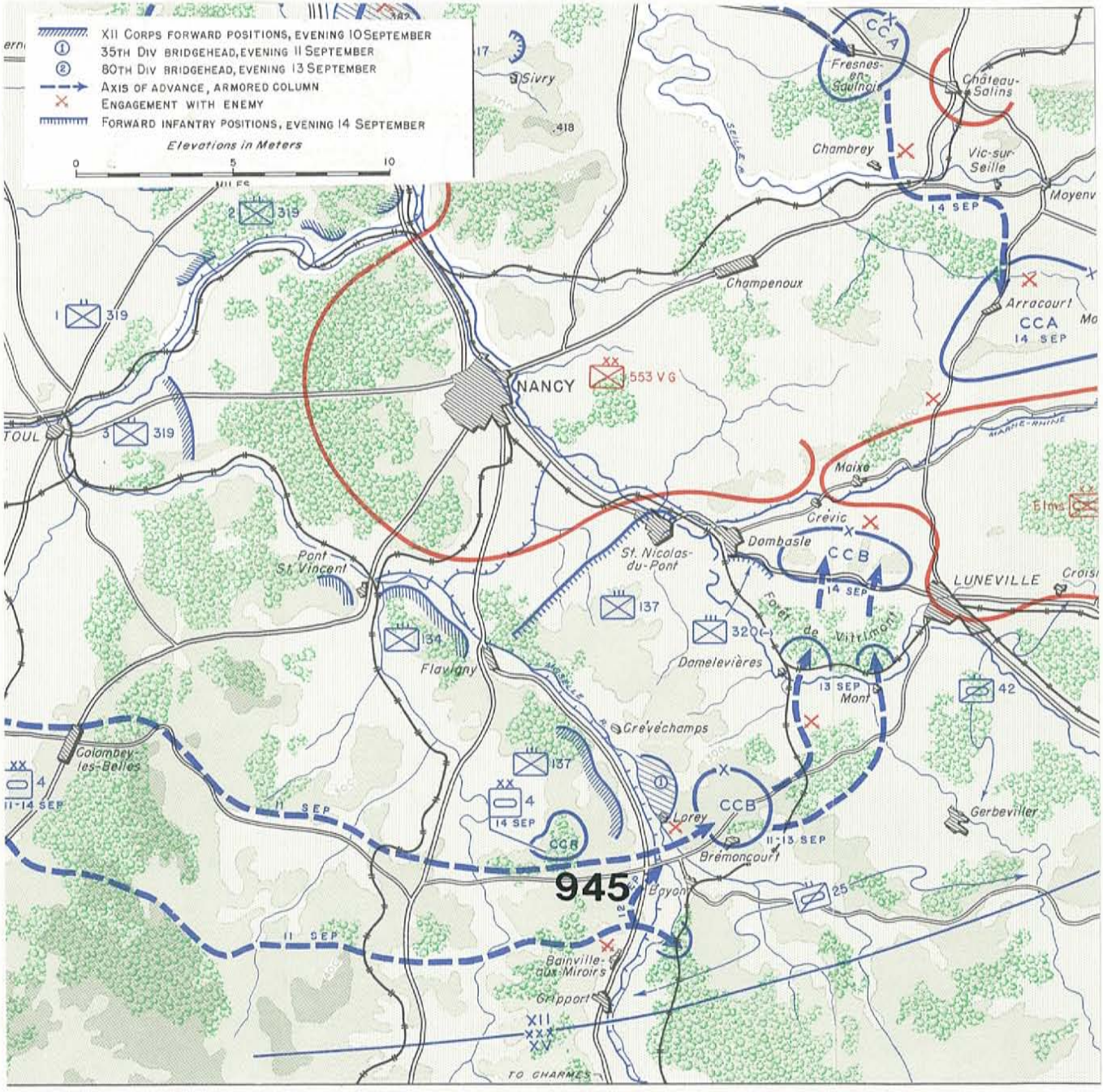

Figure 7
Third Army Front
25 September 1944
The Lorraine Campaign: Map XXII

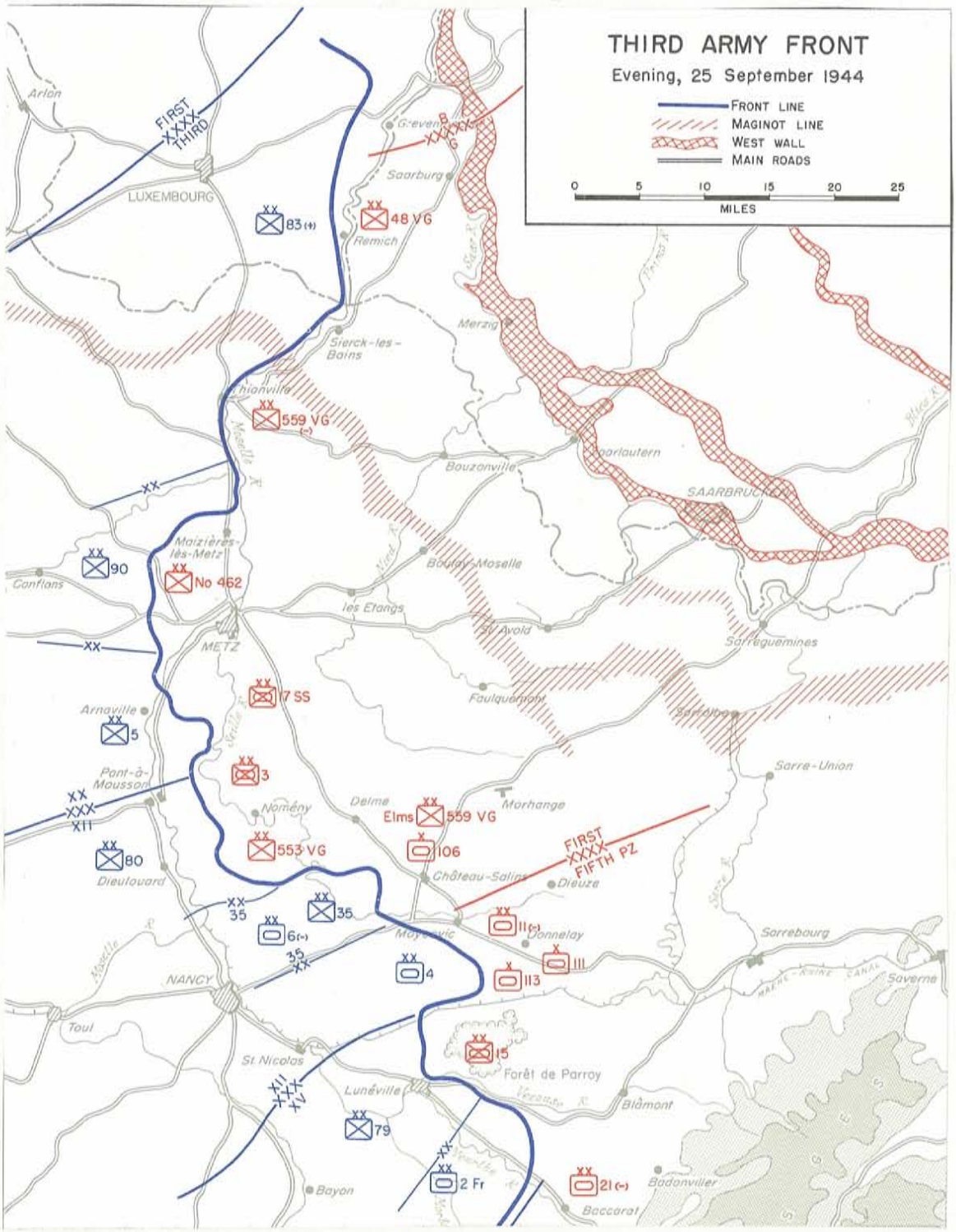

Figure 8
Foret de Gremecey
27-30 September 1944
The Lorraine Campaign: Map XXI