

January 4, 1943

'Better Than the Best'

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

OFFICERS' CANDIDATE SCHOOL, England, Jan. 3—This is the "West Point" of the European Theater of Operations, so called by Maj. Gen. John C. H. Lee, commanding officer of the ETO's Services of Supply.

The only American officers' candidate school operating outside the United States, this center has for its motto "Better Than The Best" and every potential second lieutenant is expected to be just that.

Three weeks ago 43 men were commissioned in the first graduating class. The second class, now undergoing its stiff three months' training, numbers 52 candidates, 13 of whom are Negroes, first of their race to enter this OCS. In a few weeks another class will be admitted.

Officers are needed in this theater, and it is the job of Col. Walter G Layman, Washington, D.C., OCS commandant, to turn them out "better than the best" as fast as he can.

SELECTED ON MERIT

How does a GI get to be an officers' candidate?

According to Col. Layman, the candidates for this particular school are selected by commanding officers of their base commands as the result of meritorious service, outstanding ability, experience and noteworthy qualifications. Education is desirable, but is not considered as important as the aforementioned qualifications.

For example, one of the present candidates was a plant pathologist who attended four colleges and universities in civilian life. Another was a school teacher for several years. Still another, a veteran of World War I, has 25 years of service. One of the men was a truck driver. That's a cross-section of these future officers, if they make the grade.

What does an OC's training consist of?

Basically, it is a course of an infantry officer, and in the words of one of the instructors, "while these men come from many branches of service and return to their particular branches, every one of them could qualify as a first-rate officer in the infantry."

The training program is divided into four sections: "Weapons," "Tactics," "General Subjects" and "Specialized Subjects."

Under "Weapons" the OC has to learn everything there is to know about the .03 and M1 rifles, B.A.R., Thompson sub-machine gun, light and heavy MGs, .50 MG, .37 anti-tank gun, .60 and .81mm mortars, and grenades, as well as various British weapons. Demonstration of this knowledge takes place on the range, where they fire all weapons.

STUDY AS COMMANDERS

"Tactics" includes the command of the individual soldier,

squad, platoon, company and battalion; and every man in the class gets an opportunity to serve as commander of these units. Aircraft identification and combat intelligence are also taken under "tactics" instruction.

Daily calisthenics, rugged travel over a 451-yard obstacle course eight times a week, hand-to-hand fighting, hikes from four to 23 miles, night problems for scouting and patrolling and overnight bivouacs are other means used to turn a GI into a commissioned officer.

Administration, mess management, methods of instruction all come under "General Subjects," most of which are taught in class rooms.

For "Specialized Subjects" the OC gets signal communication, engineering operations, map reading, field fortifications, laying and destruction of land mines and tank traps, motor transport, chemical warfare and quartermaster operations.

WORK UNTIL 9 PM

That takes care of a great part of the curricular activities of an OC. But that's not all they have to endure before earning their gold bars.

Before taking examinations in all subjects, they work under a demerit system which might cause dismissal if too many demerits are charged against them. They have study periods at night that keep them going until 9 PM.

This training program operates six days a week. Sundays are usually spent catching up on sleep.

What type of uniform does an OC wear?

These candidates wear an enlisted man's GI uniform, stripped of rank insignia. On the left shoulder is worn the letters "O.C.S.," while a name card is worn over the left breast pocket. Candidates are called "mister" by officers and EM alike.

What are officers' candidates like?

You'll find all kinds of men with various backgrounds in an OCS, just as you will in the Army ranks.

There's John Semple Clarke Jr., New York City, 43-year old World War I veteran, who was president of a motion picture company. He enlisted in the Canadian Army and came overseas in Feb. 1941. He transferred to the U.S. Coast Artillery last July.

Leonard D. Womack, Norfolk, Va., was a chief warrant officer before entering the OCS. During his eight years in the Army he served two years in the Philippines, two years in Panama and was stationed in San Francisco, El Paso, Tex., Portland, Me., and New London, Conn. He will lose \$85 a month ...*(continued on next page)*

January 4, 1943

‘Better Than the Best’

(continued)

from his salary by getting a second Lieutenant’s commission. Oldest candidate in the present class is 44-year-old William P. Murphy, Detroit, Mich., one of the 13 Negroes who passed an examining board presided over by Brig. Gen. Ben O. Davis, highest-ranking Negro officer in the U.S. Army. In the last war Murphy saw action at St. Mihiel and the Marne. He remained in service after the war and spent 23 years with the same infantry unit during which time he rose to the rank of M/Sgt.

TOUGH TO CLASSIFY

Aaron D. Baskin was a tough case for the classification department when he was inducted. He studied for eight years at New York University, Columbia, Cornell and Rutgers, worked for the Department of Agriculture and at the Agricultural Experiment Station at Rutgers as a plant

pathologist. They put him in the Medical Corps. Head man at the OCS is Col. Layman, whose military career began in 1917 when he served in France as an Infantry battalion commander, later as assistant to G-5 in the army of occupation in Germany. He is a graduate of Command and General Staff College, Air Corp. Tactical School and Army War College. He served with the 15th Infantry in China and later was an instructor in the Infantry School at Fort Benning.

January 6, 1943

Carole Landis Weds U.S. Pilot

Eighth Air Force Fliers At Eagle Veteran's Marriage

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

Carole Landis, film actress, and Capt. Thomas C. Wallace, Eighth Air Force Fighter Command, were married yesterday afternoon in the Church of Our Lady of the Assumption and St. Gregory, Warwick St., W.I., London.

The simple ceremony, lasting only 12 minutes, was performed by Rev. J.P. Waterkeyn and attended only by friends of the bride and groom and a handful of people who were in the church when the ceremony began.

Miss Landis was given away in marriage by Lt. Col. Rudolph Schullinger, New York City, chief surgeon at a U.S. Army station hospital in Britain, who attended the film star during her recent appendectomy.

MITZI MAYFAIR BRIDESMAID

Mitzi Mayfair, who co-starred with the bride, Kay Francis and Martha Raye, in the USA Camp Shows, Inc., that toured Army establishments in Britain for two months, was bridesmaid. Best man was Maj. Richard Ellis, San Francisco, Cal., a fellow pilot of the groom in Fighter Command. Capt. Wallace, whose home is in Pasadena, Cal, and Maj. Ellis were schoolboy chums.

The bride was attended by Miss Francis, and wore an ivory satin wedding gown in Grecian lines, tulle veil with orange blossoms and carried a bouquet of white carnations and orchids. Miss Mayfair wore an applique [sic.] organdie dress and carried a spray of carnations and orchids.

The few guests present included Bebe Daniels and Martha Raye, five nurses who attended Miss Landis while she was at the station hospital, several officers from the Eighth Air Force and Theatrical and Cinema Division, Special Service Section.

The plans of Miss Landis and Capt. Wallace include only a brief honeymoon before he resumes his work with Fighter Command and she her Hollywood career.

January 12, 1943

Screen Actor Trades Luxuries of Film-land for Life of GI

Bob Wilcox Now Serving in England with SOS Unit

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

From the embraces of leading ladies to the sometimes hard-to-take wisecracks of a topkick who was jilted in his youth; from \$500 a week to \$79.20 a month.

That's what happened to T-5 Bob Wilcox, once a juvenile star of Hollywood motion picture lots, who gave it all up to join the Army. And after a year of service, Wilcox isn't sorry he traded a custom-built wardrobe for khaki and canvas.

Wilcox is now working out of the Theatrical and Cinema Division, Special Service Section, devoting much of his time in supervising tours of British entertainers to Army camps in England, Scotland and Wales. But it wasn't always thus.

He's discovered the difference between Chanel No. 5 perfume on a glamorous blonde and the fragrance that surrounds a GI on latrine detail. Where he was once served hand and foot by a gentleman's gentleman he learned to sling hash and spuds across the mess table like any other K.P. He was a habitue of the Brown Derby and Cocomanut Grove, but found plenty of fun in a recreation hall and service club.

QUIETLY JOINED UP

His enlistment wasn't as widely heralded as that of some other stage and screen personalities because he did it quietly; decided to join up and did.

Wilcox was born in Rochester, was educated at Peddie Prep, New Jersey, and the University of Southern California. In 1933 he joined a stock company in Buffalo, N.Y., the following year moving into California with Universal Studios.

Wilcox broke with Universal because of salary difficulties, he says, and after freelancing for a time he signed with Columbia Pictures to make six films a year. And for the next three years made 15 pictures at every major studio but Warner Bros. In all but seven of the pictures, he received or shared top billing, appearing with Jane Withers, Frances Langford, Florence Rice, Eduardo Cianelli, Boris Karloff and others.

While making "Kid From Texas" Wilcox met Miss Rice, married her in 1937. They were divorced in 1940.

In the Spring of 1941, Bob went east to New York and the stage. He toured in several states and Eastern Canada.

ENLISTED AFTER TOUR

In Rochester for a rest around Christmas, 1941, Wilcox decided to enlist in the Army. He spent two weeks at Camp Upton, N.Y., thence to Fort Hancock, N.J., where he directed and produced several GI shows.

After volunteering for foreign service Wilcox was sent over with a Special Service unit last September. Stationed "somewhere in England," he had a reunion with Martha Raye while she was on tour with the USO Camp Shows, Inc. Bob and Martha knew each other from "way back when."

The Hollywood troupe needed men to supplement the show and Wilcox was pressed into service. Shortly afterwards he was transferred to his present job.

After the war Wilcox plans to go back to the stage and screen.

January 23, 1943

Policeman's Lot's a Happy One Family's In England and His Brother's a Bobby

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

If there's one soldier in the U.S. Army who never gets homesick, it's Pvt. Arthur Dunning.

He has his family with him.

Stationed in London with an MP detachment, Dunning only has to travel a mile or so to see Brother John, a bobby, doing traffic duty at Rotherhithe Tunnel.

His parents, who came over here for a visit to Mrs. Dunning's native land in 1939 and decided to stay when war broke out, are in Newbury, 40 miles away. Mr. Dunning operates a business connected with defense work, while his wife drives an ambulance for the Women's Voluntary Service.

Their residence in England isn't something that just happened to the Dunnings, because this is practically their second home.

Brother John a Bobby

John made periodic visits for 10 years until he made up his mind to stay in 1938, joined the police force and married a British girl.

Arthur came over in 1936 with a group of American and Canadian baseball players to teach and popularize the great American sport under the sponsorship of the National Baseball Association of America and several London newspapers.

They stayed for four years, playing against each other in the seven-team London Major League and instructing 250 amateur teams in Greater London and its suburbs, as well as British military teams.

Dunning pitched, played the infield and outfield for West Ham, pennant winner in 1936, 1937 and 1939, against teams representing Romford, White City, Harringay, Catford, Hackney Wick and Nunhead. Romford copped the flag in 1938.

The teams played 72-game schedules and it was not unusual for 10,000 or more people to turn out for the games.

\$200 to Get Home

After the outbreak of war, some of the players stayed to join British forces.

Dunning paid \$200 to get back home on a Dutch steamer out of Antwerp in March, 1940. He would have stayed but he had to get back in order to retain his citizenship.

Three months later he went to Montreal to join the Canadian Army and a month later, in July 1940, was back in Britain with a hospital unit. He went through the blitz on Birmingham and Coventry serving as an ambulance driver, guard and assistant in rescue work.

Dunning transferred to the U.S. Army in June 1942 and was immediately sent to London to join his present MP detachment.

There's going to be another Anglo-American alliance in the Dunning family in about two months, if everything goes well. Dunning says he is going to follow his brother's example and marry a British girl.

January 26, 1943

Veteran of Three Armies at 26

Ex-Foreign Legion Soldier Is Ready To Go Again

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

Veteran of the Foreign Legion and the armies of three nations; at 26 a record of nine years of campaigning on three continents still alive after he'd been listed killed in action; wounded three times; survivor of a merchantman torpedoed on the high seas.

That's the story of an MP private stationed in London who's besieging his boss with requests to "get where something's happening."

The MP is Pvt. Harry B. Wilson, Anaheim, Cal., and he doesn't tell the stories of where he's been and what he's done without a lot of priming. When he gets started, though, the thing reads like the hero's part in a combination Rover Boy-Frank Merriwell-Victor McLaglen thriller.

Wilson served three nations at war before he joined the U.S. Army last September. He has been decorated with the Croix de Guerre and Médaille Militaire de Colonies by France and with the Croix de Service and Palme de Heroism by Spain.

While with the Canadian Army's Princess Patricia Light Infantry he was reported killed in action. He has sailed with merchant marine convoys to Archangel, Iceland, Britain and America through sub-infested waters; he spent five days in an open lifeboat after his ship was torpedoed, was wounded twice in action and once during the Nazi blitz on Britain.

MERCHANT MARINER AT 17

Wilson started his adventurous career at 17 joining the merchant marine. One of his early voyages brought him to Algiers and with two other Americans and a Mexican he jumped ship and enlisted in the French Foreign Legion.

He was stationed at one time or another in the cities that have made history in the present war—Casablanca, Oran, Algiers.

"I know every inch of the territory down there, every sand pile from Casablanca to Cairo," Wilson says.

When the Spanish Civil War broke out Wilson and one of his buddies saw an opportunity for more adventure and extra money, so they obtained permission to join other Legionnaires on the side of the Republican Army.

"It wasn't because we were sympathetic to one side or the other," Wilson admitted. "We looked at it from the side of the bigger bonus, I guess."

Wilson's buddy, the "only one I ever had or want to have," was killed in action near the River Ebro, the "river that ran red" during the Spanish Revolution.

Shortly afterward he was attached to the "Lost Battalion" that was isolated for four months in the Pyrenees Mountains. He was suffering from a foot wound, but managed to survive on first aid treatment. He dug under snow for crops, eating berries and shooting small animals and sheep.

Later, gangrene set in in the wound. He escaped to France for medical treatment. Before he could get back to Spain the war was over.

His recovery was followed by a visit to London, and thence to Albuquerque, N.M., to see his father.

Back in Algiers with the Legion, he didn't have to wait long for the next chapter in his search for adventure. France was at war with Germany and Wilson accompanied a large number of Legionnaires who were embarked to the mother country.

"I fought all over the place in France; didn't have much of a chance to stay put in one place. We were always on the move in one direction—backwards," Wilson said.

He was wounded in the shoulder during one phase of action, and with the capitulation of France escaped to England, where he immediately joined the Canadians.

MARRIED ENGLISH GIRL

During the early days of the "Battle of Britain," Wilson met a British girl in an air raid shelter. He married her in November, 1941.

Three months after his marriage, he was caught in a raid in London, injured and hospitalized for four months. When he was dismissed from the hospital, he was sent to Canada for a medical discharge.

He found it pretty much of a tough proposition to get work but finally went back to the merchant marine for convoy duty on Panamanian ships.

One of his trips out of Norfolk, Va., bound for England, resulted in a disaster when the vessel was torpedoed.

"I'll never forget that one," Wilson says, "because I spent my first wedding anniversary in a lifeboat on an open sea. We were picked up after four days by the Ottawa, a Canadian ship, and brought to Halifax."

GETTING RESTLESS AGAIN

Wilson got back again to England. He tried to settle down as a civilian, but he got too restless working in defense plants. He went back to New York in a convoy, was reinstated as a citizen of the U.S., a right he had relinquished when he joined the Legion. He worked his way over to Liverpool in the merchant marine, jumped ship and joined the U.S. Army.

"Now I'm getting restless again," Wilson says, "and I wish they would send me to Africa where there's some action going on. I could be a big help down there, I'm sure."

"I read where American soldiers are paying 10 francs for an egg in Africa. Hell, I can remember the time I could buy dozens of 'em down there for one franc."

January 28, 1943

U.S. Bombers Blast German Naval Base; Attack in Daylight First American Blow on Germany Proper; Flying Fortresses Smash Wilhelmshaven, Surprise Nazi War-ships; Liberators Hit Targets in Northwest by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

American bombers in daylight yesterday struck their first blow of the war at Germany proper, dropping tons of high explosives on the Nazi naval base at Wilhelmshaven and other targets in Northwest Germany.

Flying Fortresses bombed Wilhelmshaven, 380 miles to the east of London on the northwestern coast of Germany in what headquarters, Eighth Air Force, termed a "large scale attack."

Liberators "bombed other targets," according to a communique.

The big USAAF bombers were unescorted and encountered enemy fighters "a number of which were destroyed," according to the official announcement.

Three bombers were reported missing.

Returning from Wilhelmshaven, one American formation discovered a large German fleet at sea off the naval base. Bomb racks emptied over Wilhelmshaven, the Fortresses were unable to attack the fleet, but reported back that they had sighted as many as 18 to 25 heavy ships. One observer said most of them were of "10,000 tons or better, and one appeared to be a pocket battleship."

'VERY SATISFACTORY'

Brig. Gen. Hayward S. Hansell Jr., who greeted the returning fliers headed by Col. Frank A. Armstrong, Asheville, N.C., congratulated them with "The first raid over Germany was very satisfactory."

Some bombardiers reported "good hits" on the target at Wilhelmshaven, but in general "results were difficult to observe," the Eighth Air Force communique reported.

Wilhelmshaven is perhaps Germany's most important naval base. It lies a short distance up the Jade, a channel three miles wide, from the North Sea. Dry docks, submarine pens and construction yards surrounded the basin into which have been launched most of Germany's larger ships, such as the Tirpitz and the pocket battleships. It was been bombed heavily by the RAF.

American crews returning to their bases in Britain reported encountering both light and heavy flak, over the target areas and along the coast. The northwestern German coast is sheltered by the Frisian Islands on which are based concentrations of ack-ack defenses.

NAZI FIGHTERS WERE NOVICES

Most of the fighter opposition over the targets was from FW190s and Me109s, the crews said, but reported that many of the Nazi fighter pilots were apparently novices.

"They were plenty green," a gunner said. "We caught 'em turning up their bellies and banking away at anywhere from 400 to 800 yards. They didn't get to make the same mistakes twice."

It seemed likely that the raid, coming in broad daylight a scant 12 hours after the joint declaration by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill that the enemy would be hit and hit hard this year, took the German defenses by surprise. The first American bomb was dropped on German soil at 11:10 A.M.

Two Fortresses each reported shooting down three enemy fighters, but there was no indication of the overall total downed by the Americans pending a thorough check by Bomber Command intelligence officers.

The American daylight attack, with bombs still blasting at U-boat production and repair, although hundreds of miles to the west of the French coast bases which had been their targets until yesterday, followed a night raid by the RAF Tuesday on the submarine pens at Lorient, in Nazi-held France.

RAF heavy bombers poured high explosives down on Lorient for one hour, beginning shortly after 8 PM. Incendiaries were dropped by the British bombers, as well as 4,000-pound blockbusters, and fires were reported in the dock area.

Two RAF bombers were reported missing.

Tuesday afternoon, Allied and USAAF fighters swept over Northern France and Belgium with American-built Venturas of RAF's Bomber Command, striking railway and other targets.

February 04, 1943

‘Don’t Underestimate Enemy,’

Gen. Hartle Warns OCS Class

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

OFFICERS’ CANDIDATE SCHOOL, England, Feb. 3— Fifty-five soldiers, up from the ranks of enlisted men, were commissioned second lieutenants in the United States Army and Air Force here today at graduation ceremonies of the second class of officers’ candidates trained in the European Theater of Operations.

Among the graduates were 14 Negroes, first of their race to be trained at this OCS.

Maj. Gen. Russell P. Hartle, Commanding General of American Forces in the ETO in the absence of Lt. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, presented the diplomas and delivered the principal address. Gen. Hartle counseled the graduates to give a maximum of effort to the training of men for combat.

“The stakes are too high for us to overlook a single phase of combat training,” he said. “Our enemy must not be underestimated. They are powerful and good fighters. Bear that in mind as you train your men and as you issue orders they must obey. Never forget, for a moment, that your men are looking to you for good example. As you govern them before combat so will they react to your leadership during combat.”

Gen. Hartle was introduced by Col. Walter G. Layman, commandant of the OCS and the American School Center on this post.

For 45-year-old William P. Murphy, of Detroit, Mich., today brought the realization of a 25-year-old ambition. The “daddy” of the class and one of the 14 Negroes commissioned, Murphy saw action at St. Mihiel, the Marne and the Meuse-Argonne in the last World War. He was a private then and during his 25 years in the Army rose to the rank of master sergeant.

“Never had so much attention in my life,” he chuckled as he was surrounded by correspondents and photographers. “Wish my wife were here.”

One of the first to congratulate Murphy was Lt. Kenneth Dahlstrom, of Minneapolis, Minn., 21-year-old “baby” of the graduating class.

While today was a happy occasion for the graduates it was one of disappointment to two candidates who were hospitalized with leg injuries.

They are 43-year-old John S. Clarke, Jr. and Chester N. Bruckner, both of New York. Clarke, another veteran of World War I, was president of a motion picture company before enlisting in the Canadian Army and coming overseas two years ago. He transferred to the U.S. Army Coast Artillery last July.

Before entering the OCS, members of the class held ranks from corporal to warrant officer. The lone W/O was Leonard D. Womack of Norfolk, Va., who will lose \$85 a month by getting a second lieutenant’s commission.

The invocation for the ceremonies was given by Chaplain James L. Blakeney, chief of chaplains in the ETO. The benediction was given by Chaplain L.C. Tiernan, chief of chaplains, Services of Supply.

Col. E.C. Betts, judge advocate, ETO, administered the oath of office.

March 01, 1943

Pittsburgh Gallagher Shares

His Experience With GI Boxers

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

--TH DIVISION BASE, Feb. 28—To a boxing enthusiast, Pittsburgh means something more than a city of smoke, of steel mills and the Golden Triangle. It has been, and still is, one of American's hot-beds of fistic activity; the home of pugilistic greats. Kids who peddled pop or sold programs at the ringsides grew up to become headliners in those same fight clubs.

Pittsburgh is proud of the boys it turned out, too, like Harry Greb, the five Zivic brothers and Billy Conn. Only recently two of its native sons wore the mantle of world champions at the same time—Fritzie Zivic and the will-o'-the-wisp that was Conn.

Pat Gallagher came out of Pittsburgh. But you don't know Pat. There isn't any reason why you should. Some of the fight bugs in Pittsburgh and Buffalo may recall him as a pretty fair featherweight in the late '20s who swapped leather with Johnny Dado, Ray Rafferty, Jackie Johnson, Jimmy Brown and Christie Hart—pretty fair scrappers in their day.

Gallagher is in the Army now, a corporal stationed at this post. He's 36, but looks years younger. While his picture will never adorn the lobby of Madison Square Garden, he's a pretty important guy down here.

MET CHALKY WRIGHT

In the division-wide tournament just concluded, Pat was instructor, judge, referee, second and everything else you can think of. He likes the work because it gives him a chance to pass along the knowledge he acquired as a fighter, handler and manager before Uncle Sam pointed his lean finger at him, knowledge he gained from working with Johnny Ray, Conn's manager, and from watching the Pittsburgh Kid, the Zivic boys and other "Smoky City" products during their respective climbs up the fistic ladder.

Gallagher has a special interest in one of his boys here. If, and when, any AEF championships are handed out, he believes Pvt. Charlie Schnappauf, out of Wilkes-Barre, Pa., is going to have something to say about lightweight honors.

You probably aren't familiar with Schnappauf, either. Still, his last fight before the Army called him gave Charlie a win over Slugger White, one of the current crop of lightweight contenders, in Baltimore.

Pat Gallagher's boy has had his reverses. Chalky Wright stopped him in five rounds when The Chalk was moving through the 135-pound ranks like wildfire.

In this division's boxing tournament, concluded last week, Schnappauf was forced to share the lightweight honors with Cpl. Georgie Spontak, another Pittsburgh product. They fought a draw in the final.

March 04, 1943

Larger Ranger Force Hinted to Invade Europe

Picked Groups Toughened Over Rugged Course Under Live Fire

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

A U.S. RANGER BATTALION, Scotland, Mar. 3—American Rangers, who have been nominated to help lead the Allied invasion of Europe, will be there by the thousands when the real shooting starts.

Existing forces of these highly-trained assault troops may be greatly expanded, Maj. Gen. Russell P. Hartle indicated here. “Sooner or later we will be doing something like this on our own,” he told correspondents.

Another Ranger battalion trained in the British Isles went to Africa. Now the Rangers are at it again, going through the toughest hardening routine a soldier could experience short of actual combat.

Side by side with the British counterparts, the Commandos, the Rangers are proving themselves Holy Terrors as fighting men in training for a duty which demands inexhaustibly energetic preparations.

HERE’S A MOCK ATTACK

Observe a mock attack on an “enemy” coastal battery, one phase of the Rangers’ training.

Crossing choppy water in assault boats, the attackers prepare to go into action. The first formation of three boats reaches land, emptying its occupants on a beach. Armed with rifles, Tommy guns, grenades, automatics, TNT and other weapons of destruction, they move silently over the sands to a clump of woods. The shore is quiet.

The second formation lands—and suddenly hell breaks loose. The “enemy” is contacted. Machine-guns spit a spray of searching fire that comes close enough to splinter the oars of the landing craft. Mines explode all over the beach with ear-splitting detonations.

The Rangers move ahead through blinding smoke and flying sand. In the woods, the advance party closes in on its objective. They crawl through mud, hurdle barbed wire obstacles, dart from tree stumps to niches in the side of a bluff. They encounter mines which go up close enough to throw the men to the ground. Machine-guns kick up the earth not ten feet away from them.

The Rangers bring up the mortars, lay down a barrage as the men up front move in from the left and right flanks. They near the objective, shattering targets up close with Tommy-guns. The “batter” is destroyed with grenades and sticks of TNT, and the withdrawal begins with the flanks dropping back under protective fire from the center. Back at the beach they take off under more mine explosions and machine-gun fire.

This is not fun. It’s grim business with live ammunition flying all over the area. “Enemy” machine-guns are Bren guns

manned by Commando officers who keep their fire within ten feet, or less, of the men at ranges of 100 and 200 yards. They haven’t slipped—yet!

PLENTY OF NERVE

“These Yanks have plenty of nerve,” observed one British officer. “They don’t scare easily. We are often asked if they measure up to the Commando standard. Believe me, they do.”

The Rangers are schooled by hard-bitten veterans of Dieppe, St. Nazaire, Lofoten Islands and other Commando sorties to Nazi-held territory.

Boss of this Ranger battalion is soft-spoken, lean, 36-year-old Maj. Randolph Millholland, former accountant from Cumberland, Md.

The requirements for a Ranger applicant place a great deal of stress on youth. He must have the physical characteristics of a 25-year-old if he is over that age. His vision must be 20-20, must be able to swim, must not be color blind and cannot have a removable bridge in his teeth.

Reveille at 7 AM is followed by calisthenics two hours later. Stripped to the waist in any type of weather, mostly bad, they toss a 200-pound log about the premises by way of loosening up.

There are streams to be crossed by sliding over 100 feet of water on ropes, or crawling over single strands on their bellies. A slip means a plunge of 40 feet and an icy bath in the swirling tide.

SLEEP IN RAIN

The night problems are anything but picnics. Given a piece of deer meat and a slice of bread, the Rangers take off for 36 hours in the field, sleeping in the open, rain or otherwise.

There are the “speed marches,” non-stop gallops of seven, 12 and 15 miles. Quick time at 140 steps a minute and double time are all that’s allowed. The Rangers are proud of their record—two hours and 20 minutes for a 12-miles speed march. It bettered the Commando mark by 40 minutes!

Important, too, is the unarmed combat training that teaches Rangers the knack of killing men with bare hands or knives.

“We don’t have ‘sick calls’ here,” explained Lt. William N. Heffner, Rangers’ 29-year-old medical officer from Northport, L.I. “And since we’ve been here there have been only four cases of bad colds and one accident. The colds were taken care of in quick order. The accident was caused by grenade shrapnel in a man’s leg. He’s OK now.”

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March 04, 1943

Larger Ranger Force Hinted to Invade Europe

(continued)

GAINED 12 POUNDS

“When the day’s work is done we just about have time to dry equipment, clean weapons and go to bed,” said Pfc Nick Albanese, of New Kensington, Pa. “You get pretty tired after going through this stuff. But I feel great. I’ve gained 12 pounds.”

Returning the Commandos’ compliment, the Rangers agree that “these British boys are hell on wheels. They’re all swell fellows and it’s good to train with ‘em.” This last statement from Sgt. Lynwood Belcher, of Martinsville, Va., who was in the Infantry for six years before joining the Rangers.

A veteran in this business in Pvt. Frank T. Lyons, of Philadelphia. He joined the Commandoes and after being with them for seven months was taken illl and hospitalized. Before he was released his outfit went to Africa so he moved in with this crop of Rangers.

The men here form a strange collection. Their civilian trades range from embalmers and lens makers to welders, bank tellers, salesmen and truck drivers.

The embalmer, Pfc Walter R. Hudlund, Jr., of Lowell, Mass., is anxious to embalm a flock of Jerries with his BAR.

Grim reminders that Rangers, as well as Commandos, cannot afford to make mistakes are the several graves with tombstones that tell passersby:

“This man forgot to examine his climbing rope.”

“This man took up a position on the skyline.”

“This officer put a bomb down a mortar the wrong way.”

AMAZED COMMANDO EXPERTS

Stories of the first group of Rangers trained here are eagerly told by instructors.

One concerns Pfc Sampson P. Oneskunk, a full-blooded Sioux Indian from Cherry Creek, S.D., who amazed Commando experts with his knowledge of woodmanship.

If his name is unusual, so was his appearance. He was six feet, two inches tall and weighed only 150 pounds. When the Rangers maneuvered through the heavily wooded area, Oneskunk really showed them something by traveling noiselessly through heavy underbrush.

Suddenly he disappeared. A whole force of officers and men strained their ears but couldn’t hear a thing for ten minutes or more. Then, Oneskunk revealed his position in a tree. To prove it wasn’t an accident, the Indian repeated his performance, creeping up and stealing soldiers’ rifles without being seen or heard.

March 04, 1943

Hello, Sucker, Want a Hand? Card Detective Tells How Gamblers Fix Crooked Games--Keep Eyes on Hand that Holds Cards, Is Advice

no byline

The prize sucker for a “mechanic,” gamblers’ name for a crooked dealer, is a soldier with his pay in his pocket, trust in his heart, time on his hands and an itch to speculate.

Laid end to end, the dough card sharks have swindled away from unwary guys in uniform would reach approximately from Piccadilly Circus to a point three and a half miles south of the town line of Billings, Mont.

Ex-card detective Lt. Thomas A. Dukeheart, of Baltimore, has been studying “mechanics” and their ways for years and what he can show about the way they do it is enough to cure any “sociable game” addict forever. There’s nothing he enjoys better than demonstrating why you can’t beat the card shark or the operator of a pair of phony dice.

If you aren’t familiar with a sharp’s methods, detection is virtually impossible but here are some of the tricks to look for, according to Dukeheart:

A card can be cut to the top or bottom so that even when you are looking for it you can’t see it but merely hear a quick “swish.”

A crook will give a player an opportunity to cut a deck. He may complete the cut himself, replacing the cards in their original positions, or going through with a legal cut, but marking the spot with his finger, and re-cutting them after he has diverted your attention from his hands.

A shark is a fast talker and is master of many tricks to divert attention from his hands.

He controls the deck by holding his thumb on one side and four fingers on the opposite side, the fleshy tips of his fingers are in a position to mark a cut in the cards.

He is a slight-of-hand artist, able to work too fast for your eyes to follow him.

A poker hand can be dealt to anyone in the game, to the crook or an ally. As he picks up discards from a previous hand he quickly arranges them, deals the ones he wants to work with and goes through with a shuffle and cut.

A high card can be kept on top by always dealing the second card. This sounds simple but he gets away with it.

In a blackjack game, a shark will pick up the discards and put them on the bottom of the deck after each player gets his cards. Knowing the strength or weakness of his own hand, he keeps a card that has been played on the bottom, cutting it to the top when he wants it. This trick can only be worked against a rank amateur who does not notice which cards have been played.

He can cut a deck with one hand or two, too fast for you to notice it. The one-handed cut is usually shielded by an arm as he reaches for an ash tray or any other object on the table.

These methods of detection sound simple, but a shark can avoid suspicion in a game with those who don’t know the answers. The unsuspecting player may be allowed to win an occasional hand, but when the big money is on the table he loses.

In giving demonstrations to cynical soldiers, Lt. Dukehart goes through the standard operations of a fair game, allowing the men to shuffle and cut the cards. Nevertheless, he can deal anybody in a game a royal flush, four of a kind, full house or whatever he wishes.

A man who feels he is being victimized in a crooked dice game can detect loaded cubes by dropping them in a tumbler of water. Crooked dice will always rest on the bottom with the same side up.

The safest bet would seem to be dominoes.

March 09, 1943

‘Desert Victory,’ A Soldier’s Film

Picture Describes War In Africa; Eighth Army’s Triumph

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

“Desert Victory,” a one-hour film produced by the British Army and Royal Air Force photographic and production units, is a soldier’s picture.

Currently playing in three London theaters, “Desert Victory” will be released generally next Monday, and is available to military units of the Allied nations.

It is a picture every soldier should see.

To get the footage that brings to the screen more than one lesson is mistakes of desert combat, as well as methods by which an enemy can be destroyed, cameramen paid with their lives.

“Desert Victory” is the story of the all-time comeback waged by the Eighth Army’s “Desert Rats” in Africa, and is one of the most vivid chapters of action, heroism, determination and power that is likely to be portrayed on the screen in this war.

60-MINUTE WAR DIARY

It is a 60-minute diary of a stumbling cunning retreat of 400 miles in blazing hot days and nights that were bitter cold. Hammered from the sky and battered on the ground, going back and back and back until it seemed there was no end.

At last, time to stop—and hold. Dig in and fight back. Months of preparation for the counter-attack, months of inexhaustible training.

Zero hour... and the push, a clash of mighty armies. A thrust southward, a stab in the center. An attack to the north. Finally, a breakthrough and a mad chase across the sands of Egypt, Libya and Tripolitania that lasted 80 days and covered 1,400 miles—a feat unparalleled in military history. The myth of an invincible enemy destroyed.

“Desert Victory” is real; actual scenes filmed during combat on the ground and in the air over Africa, scenes taken from German newsreels and others made in Britain. The recording of sound, especially during the Eighth Army’s initial attack against Rommel from the one-yard line that was El Alamein, could hardly be surpassed.

The story unfolds during the summer of last year when, with the fall of Tobruk, Gen. Auchinleck pulled the Eighth Army back 400 miles to Alamein, only 60 miles from Alexandria and perilously close to the vital Nile Delta.

ROMMEL STRIKES

Triumphant and flushed with victory, “The Fox,” greatest of Hitler’s commanders, throws his mighty forces against Auchinleck’s defenders. Something happens. The Eighth Army does not budge.

The camera catches Churchill’s momentous visit to the front, brining with him promises of reinforcements, guns,

tanks, planes, supplies. He also brings Generals Alexander and Montgomery, new commanders of the Middle East campaign, to relieve the war-weary Auchinleck.

Supplies start pouring in from the factories of Britain and America. President Roosevelt orders the first Sherman tanks to Egypt. Material comes by the hazardous 12,000 mile sea route around the Cape or by the newly developed air route across the jungles of Africa.

Reinforcements arrive from Australia, India, South Africa and the United Kingdom.

In October, with Rommel back from a visit to Berlin where he is acclaimed No. 1 Nazi hero and received a field marshal’s baton from Hitler, the Eighth Army is ready to go.

In General Headquarters, Cairo, Gen. Alexander, Admiral Harwood and Air Chief Marshal Tedder prepare the joint operation. In the desert, Gen. Montgomery and Air Vice-Marshal Coningham work out the final moves.

Alexander and Montgomery see to it that every man knows the plan of attack down to the most minute detail.

Oct. 23, an afternoon of electric anticipation. Normal desert life is resumed, men write letters, rest, those near the sea have a swim, a piper plays “Highland Laddie.”

EIGHTH ARMY POISED

Every piece of the Eighth Army’s armored power is poised. The Australians are ready on the northern front. Indians, South Africans, Scots, Welsh and British divisions string out along the line.

The Afrika Cops’ lines are strong in the north and south but purposely left weak in the center, where the Italian Bologna Division is used in an attempt to suck the Eighth Army into a trap that will close from the northern and southern sectors.

At 21:00 hours the Desert Rats send their sappers out to clear away mines, lay white tape along safe lanes through which the infantry passes in the attack.

At 21:30 hours, Oct. 23, the most terrific barrage the desert has seen or heard commences. In Alexandria, 60 miles distant, crockery tumbles from tables and windows rain shattered glass. Humbled, battered, lashed and beaten for 400 miles, from Tobruk to Alamein, the Desert Rats stage their comeback. The piper marches into battle, still playing “Highland Laddie.”

By the light of the morning of Oct. 24 all of the first objectives are taken. The Eighth Army consolidates and by the end of the day Australians have developed a big salient in the northern sector.

(continued on next page)

March 09, 1943

‘Desert Victory,’ A Soldier’s Film

(continued)

Rommel expected the main attack to move against his weak center. But The Fox is outsmarted here. Montgomery sends his men into battle in the south and center—but as a diversion. The main blow is up north, where the Aussies push out a thin wedge from the existing salient. Their direction is northward toward the sea.

They push out and out, gradually increasing the bulge, despite frantic attacks by the Luftwaffe’s dive-bombers and counter-attacks by the enemy.

American fighters and bombers join the RAF and other Allied air forces over the battlefield. They claw Axis aircraft from the sky and behind the lines they smash them on the ground.

On the fourth day, an armored division seizes Kidney Ridge, a key point. Four more days and positions in the northern sector are held and consolidated in the face of furious enemy blows.

WHISTLING IN THE DARK

Rommel is concerned. Berlin is whistling in the dark. The Australians are fighting a war of attrition, developing the wedge toward the sea and cutting off large numbers of German infantry on the way.

Rommel looks frantically about for help. He makes a decision—a disastrous one—and brings his protective Panzers up from the South to a point just below the top of the Eighth Army’s salient. It is what Montgomery has been waiting for.

November 1, and Montgomery gathers together his entire armor and launches a decisive battle along the entire front. The mortal blow is struck at the head of the bulge in the north, the Desert Rats break through and within two hours their light tanks are raiding far behind the Afrika Korps lines.

Montgomery directs his heavy armor against the Panzers at the other side of the gap and brings them to battle at El Acqaquir. By nightfall of Nov. 3 everything Alexander and Montgomery can pick up is hurled against the Axis’ weakening forces.

In London, Big Ben strikes. War workers turn the radio dial for the news.

“General Headquarters, Cairo, have just announced that Rommel is in full retreat to the west.”

Chased from the bloody desert battlefield, the Axis forces leave 500 tanks smashed; 1,400 guns are heaps of debris; 75,000 prisoners stream toward Egypt; the Luftwaffe’s wings lie clipped in desert airdromes.

IN FULL PURSUIT

On the coast, Allied aircraft overtake the fleeing columns and tear them apart. On the ground, the Army is in full pursuit. Day after day the advance continues despite booby traps, mines and broken roads. Rommel is running so fast he can’t stop to make a stand. Desert Rats die in the chase and their bodies are used by the Germans to conceal booby traps.

The race goes on... Mersa Mairub... Sidi Barrani... Haifava Pass... Sollum. In eight days the Axis have been swept out of Egypt.

November 13... Tobruk falls. On the 17th the Eighth Army pours through Derna toward Benghazi where it stops, to consolidate its supply lines. By Dec. 14, the last of Rommel’s rear guards have left El Agheila, the high tide of Gen. Wavell’s success in 1940.

December 17... the Eighth Army has penetrated 124 miles beyond El Agheila as the United Nations’ light and medium bombers carry on a shuttle service to blast enemy motor transports.

January 18... Montgomery opens a new offensive in Tripolitania, hurling tanks and men against German positions and advancing 40 miles along the line. Racing along with one flank hugging the coast, snapping at Rommel’s heels and another driving northward to the same goal., the Eighth Army nears Tripoli.

At 5 AM on Jan. 23, the Desert Rats climax their trek of 1,400 miles by marching into Tripoli, Mussolini’s last and greatest African colonial city.

“Desert Victory” ends at that point with Gen. Montgomery reviewing his heroic forces. Gen. Alexander, who at the outset of the campaign had received from Prime Minister Churchill a directive to rid the African desert of Axis forces, was able to reply that the biggest part of the mission was accomplished.

The pictorial record of the Eighth Army’s action is a tribute not only to the men whose courage made it possible but to those who filmed and produced it.

This is the soldier’s picture of this or any other year.

March 09, 1943

Father-Son Team Non-coms

In Same 8th Air Force Unit

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

EIGHTH AIR FORCE HQ, England, Mar. 7—Cpl. Charles E. Boerner Sr., 50-year-old veteran of World War I, is going to see the rest of this war with his 21-year-old son.

Overseas since last September, the Boerners, from Oklahoma City, Okla., were brought together in service with the same unit three weeks ago when junior, a T/5, transferred from a Bomber Command station. And it isn't likely they'll be separated.

More like buddies than father and son, the Boerners are almost inseparable. If "Pop" is in the local pub you can be sure to find junior with him. They go on pass together and spend their free time in camp in each other's company. Even while they were with separate units, they made arrangements to get their passes at the same time.

Since they both have the same rating, "Pop" can't even throw rank at his son. In France for 11 months in 1917-19, "Pop" served with the 36th Divisions's 111th Ammunition Train. Twenty years ago he set himself up in his own grocery business and did right well. When junior enlisted in the Air Force 19 days after Pearl Harbor, receiving training as a bomb demolition specialist at Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City, "Pop" became uneasy. He waited until last June and then enlisted himself.

The Boerner family's war efforts didn't stop with father and son in service.

Mrs. Boerner, who operated the grocery business for a time after Pop enlisted, is now a civil service file clerk at the Oklahoma City Air Depot. Sister Rosemary, 18, is a freshman nurse and will enlist in the Army Nursing Corps as soon as she is eligible. Glenn, 16-year-old baby of the family, plans to join the Navy when he reaches his 17th birthday in a few months.

This father and son story will have a post-war sequel because Pop and Junior have decided to remain in service and finish out the string together.

"I believe the Army is going to be a good employer after the war," says Pop.

Junior's reason for staying in the Army is that he wants to make a career of it.

"Mother knows of our plans in that direction and she's given us her blessing," says Pop. "I'm not optimistic enough to think I can pick up where I left off. Besides, I'm not getting any younger."

March 30, 1943

Ten-Day Job Became a Campaign

Lib Air Circus Found Africa Soft Touch After ETO

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

A U.S. BOMBER STATION, England, Mar. 29—Enemy fighters are tougher in the European Theater of Operations than they are in North Africa. The biggest menace to American bombers down there comes from flak and weather conditions; up here they fight flak, weather and the best fighters in the Luftwaffe.

Those are the opinions of “Ted’s Traveling Circus,” a USAAF bomb group of four-engined Liberators, back in Britain after one of the outstanding exploits by an air force unit in the war—a mission to Africa, scheduled to last ten days but turned into a campaign of three months. Lending air support to the British Eighth Army’s march across the desert. Bombing Tripoli, Gabes, Sfax, Sousse, Bizerta, Bone. Precision raids on Naples, Crotone, Palermo and Messina in Italy and Sicily.

Operating part of the time from a desert base with only a handful of maintenance men to keep the ship in the air. Using spare parts taken with them for the “ten-day mission.” Living in their planes, in small tents made for two but which had to accommodate three or four. No clothes, other than what they had on their backs.

The first heavy bombardment unit to span the Atlantic, the “Circus,” commanded by Col. Edward J. “Ted” Timberlake, of San Antonio, Tex., made its first raid from its base in Britain Oct. 9 on Lille. Early in December Col. Timberlake was given eight hours to get his men off to Africa. They expected to be back by Christmas, but the mission extended to weeks and then months.

AFRICA FLYING ‘A PICNIC’

The crews have many stories to tell about their experiences in the North African and Middle East theaters.

“The flying was a picnic compared to what it is up here,” said 1/Lt. Harold J. Mann, of Scranton, Pa., bombardier of the “Jack Frost,” more missions (29) than any man in the group. “Most of the enemy fighters down there are Me109s. Up here they throw everything they have at us—Me109Gs, 110s, 210, FW190s and Ju88s. The flak over Tripoli and Naples was heavier than anything we’ve seen up here. But then, we never had a running fight for an hour and 27 minutes down there like we had over Vegesack a couple of weeks ago.”

Lt. Mann was credited with 11 missions here, 12 in Africa and six more since he returned to this base.

1/Lts. Jesse C. Hall Jr., of Mebane, N.C., and Morton Macks, of Oakland, Cal., navigator and pilot of “El Lobo,” said if it were possible they’d rather fly in Africa and live here.

“The desert didn’t give us many comforts,” said Lt. Hall. “But it was fun flying down there. It’s tough business up here.”

That presence of yellow-nosed Goering Squadron fighters in Africa was a strange sight to Lt. Macks. He had seen them up here but didn’t expect to run into them down there. He also said the Italian fighter planes down there were a joke.

“Hell, they were afraid to take a shot at us,” he said. “As soon as they saw us they ran.”

Sgt. Paul “Boogie” Jenkins, “El Lobo” waist gunner and engineer who shot down an Me109 over Bizerta, would rather do his fighting up here.

“You can’t fight flak and weather with a gun, but you sure can take on the fighters,” he said.

1/Lt. Maurice A. Lofgren co-pilot from Biggs, Cal., had a close shave. The first time he flew in “El Lobo” the ship in which he previously flew was lost.

GROUND CREWS PRAISED

Col. Timberlake, whose bombers have dumped two and a quarter million pounds of explosives on the enemy in the ETO, Middle East and North Africa, had words of praise for the ground crews.

“We took only 96 men to handle maintenance, medical and administrative duties,” he said. “They deserve as much credit as anyone. They worked day and night, five men working on nine planes sometimes.”

S/Sgt. Ralph Kimel, of Winston-Salem, N.C., did everything but fly the ships.

“We had a job to do and just did it,” he said. “We loaded bombs, kept the guns in working order and when we weren’t busy we helped the mechanics. The only spare parts we had were those we took with us.

Sgt. Kimel also went on three raids as a gunner. He told of getting only one canteen of water per day with which to drink, wash and do laundry. Digging fox holes was dangerous because of booby traps, he said. Five of the men were digging one day when a trap exploded, seriously injuring two of them. A trap planted on an Italian soldier’s body also blew up when they started to bury him.

Cpl. Alois Komzak was one of the few lucky ones to get into Cairo and Alexandria. He had to borrow clothes for the trips inasmuch as he only had the coveralls he wore on the outward journey.

Col. Timberlake said the “Circus” made eight unescorted raids on Italy, flying as much as 900 miles to the targets and making the return trip by dark.

“The B17s were escorted by P38s quite a bit down there,” he said, “but we went unescorted every time. Sure would like to see some of this fighter protection I hear about.”

(continued on next page)

March 30, 1943

Ten-Day Job Became a Campaign

(continued)

The Circus crews had many other stories to tell. One of them was about 1/Lt. Llewelyn Brown, of Malvern, Ark., and the “Flying Cock,” during a raid over Tripoli. One of the engines was hit over the target, a trail of flame scorching the rear rudder. Four of the crew bailed out but Brown got the ship back to Benghazi, several hundred miles from its base. They patched up over a hundred bullet holes and repaired the plane with German parts to start her back to the base. Lt. Brown got the DFC for his work.

PLANE HAD 320 HOLES

1/Lt. James Gillespie, of Haw River, N.C., navigator of the “Big Dealer,” told about a raid on Bizerta during which the plane received 320 flak and bullet holes.

“It was a seven and a half hour round trip—1,500 miles,” he said. “Our electric, hydraulic and oxygen systems were knocked out and the tunnel gunner, Sgt. Rayond A. Clendenning, of Plover, Wis., got shot up so bad they picked flak out of him for a month. He found some more in his head the other day. He’s O.K. now, though.”

They told about the “Liberty Lad,” piloted by Capt. Bill Keefer, of Torrance, Cal., which has completed 25 raids in both theaters with only five minor holes in her body.

The “Liberty Lad” always flies in formation with two other “miracle ships,” the unscathed “Flying Lass” and the “Flying Limited.” The “Lass” survived 50 fighter attacks in one raid. The immunity record of the “Limited” was recently broken when her engine was shot up.

Flying in Africa was ideal because there wasn’t any red tape, according to 1/Lt. Robert E. Nelson, of Riverside, Cal., navigator of the “Liberty Lad.”

“No,” commented the “Liberty Lad’s” co-pilot, 1/Lt. Leland J. Rath, of Almond, Wis. “We had tons of red tape, but somehow the wind blew it away.”

When the Circus arrived back in Britain Mar. 2, the men found tons of mail and Christmas packages waiting for them. They hadn’t received a letter while they were away from “home.”

THANKED FOR FINE WORK

Messages of congratulations have been received by Col. Timberlake from high-ranking British and American officials.

“I express to Gen. Easter and Col. Timberlake and all members of the group my thanks and appreciation for the fine work done by the group in the Middle East,” said British Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur W. Tedder.

“I wish to add my appreciation for the good work. I am well aware of the difficulties,” said Lt. Gen. Frank M. Andrews, commanding general of American forces in the ETO.

Maj. Gen. Ira C. Eaker, commanding general, Eighth Air Force, also had words of praise for his men.

“I am greatly pleased to have the group back with our Bomber Command, and I feel certain its future activities will be as outstanding as its recent work,” he said.

Brig. Gen. Newton Longfellow, commanding general, Eighth Air Force Bomber Command, said, “A tribute the success to the superior leadership of Col. Timberlake, which is reflected throughout the entire organization.”

April 2, 1943

How to Stay Out of Trouble

Bad Booze, Frowzy Dames Spell Woe for GIs

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

The Provost Marshal says the small percentage of soldiers on leave who get into trouble in London usually do in in one or more of six ways:

1. Drunkenness.
2. Associating with females of questionable character.
3. Failing to observe rules of proper uniform.
4. Becoming involved in arguments with civilians or soldiers of other nations.
5. Flashing too much money, particularly in pubs.
6. Failure of officers to check-in with proper authorities when they arrive on leave.

Of course, these aren't the only ways a soldier gets into a jam, but they constitute the sources of most trouble.

The Provost Marshal, Lt. Col. Marvin Charlton, no copper at heart by a cowpuncher and oil man from Del Rio, Tex., doesn't figure the MPs are running a Sunday School; and this newspaper isn't holding up a platform or moral reform for guys just in from weeks of slogging in the mud, crawling in and out of tanks or risking their lives on raids over the Reich.

As a matter of fact, the PM wants to see soldiers on leave raise all the hell they have in them, yet steer clear of the MPs. So he passes along these tips on how to stay out of trouble.

In regard to the drinking situation, Co. Charlton says some of the stuff sold nowadays is positively dynamite and can bring a load of grief to the drinker.

"I've seen men who didn't remember what happened to them after a few drinks," he declares. "they were easy prey for pickpockets and victims of streetwalkers, and usually woke up in the detention barracks."

The high rate of venereal disease, up 70 per cent in Britain since the outbreak of war, is another potential stumbling block for the over-enthusiastic soldier on leave.

"A medical officer's warning, training films and lectures may not make an impression, but 70,000 new cases of V.D. a year among the British population should be sufficient warning to any soldier," Col. Charlton points out. "Men in hospitals or confinement aren't any good to the Army."

A reminder that rules pertaining to proper uniform must be observed is one of the PM's tips. Enforcement of these rules makes the MPs more unpopular than the man who redlines you on payday, says the Colonel.

"When an MP tells a man to button his coat, take his hands out of his pockets, or get rid of rainbow-colored mufflers, he is only reminding the soldier of something he learned during his first week in the Army. Yet some soldiers will tell you the MP is trying to throw his weight around and play 'cop,'" Col. Charlton said.

The PM frequently walks about town, stopping in at the Red Cross clubs to note the things soldiers do, the problems they have and what can be done to correct them.

"I've been through the mill in two wars," he says, "and I know what a leave is to a soldier. I'll go out of my way to see he has a good time, but he has to play ball with us. Men don't get into trouble because they are looking for it. It's carelessness, for the most part, that leads to serious difficulties. Then I have to get tough."

The PM is authorized to order a summary court martial in London 24 hours after a soldier is charged. It can mean 40 to 60 days in the jug, a stiff fine and a climb to the top of "the list" in his organization. The PM also has jurisdiction over sailors, Marines and American civilians in enforcing military law.

Another tip is to avoid arguments, especially in pubs.

Flashing too much money is dangerous. Col. Charlton says there have been cases of soldiers reporting incidents where they were slugged and relieved of everything they had. It may have started in a pub where a soldier begins to celebrate his furlough. The next day, clipped of furlough money, he returns to camp.

These tips apply to officers as well as enlisted men, the PM says.

Officers are reminded to avoid a "date" with the PM by checking in with proper authorities when they come to London. Regulations state that all officers and nurses on leave must report to No. 1, North Audley St., and register.

He advises them to report whether they are on business or leave. In the case of an accident, the report saves lengthy inquiry as to whether or not the accident occurred in line of duty.

Ever since the Army's first military police unit was organized, MPs have been something out of this world and only their best friends won't tell them, but Col. Charlton says they aren't as bad as all that. They are just good soldiers, that's all, with a cop's job to do.

May 19, 1943

The WAACs Take a Peek at London

Then Get in Gab Fests With British Gals At GI Dance

by Philip Bucknell, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

The WAAC said, "Try my lipstick." The member of the ARS said, "Ta!" and the two WAAFs moved over to make room in front of the mirror. The maidens in uniforms were holding an allied military conference in the ladies' powder room at Rainbow Corner.

Sgt. Claudia M. Couch had a lot to talk about. She had just finished her first sight-seeing tour of London. Her feet, she said, had been danced off the last two nights at club dances. She had been run around all over the place and she was tired. But with the gallantry one expects from a soldier of the United States, she was coming up for the third dance.

Yet it was not of social activities the girls were talking. "How I envy you," Claudia was saying. "Here we've been going around with out blouses on (blouses in the military meaning) and we've been noticing how you ATS are allowed to carry your blouses. We have to keep ours on the whole time."

The British girl soldier explained that they were allowed to go around blouseless (ATS call them "tunics") in the summer time as long as they had their sleeves rolled up.

To the WAAFs, the sergeant from Georgia explained that there was no separate women's outfit for the air force. WAACs, she explained, were attached to the Army Air Force in various capacities, but there was no separate command.

Earlier in the day he WAACs had met some of the WRENS, and they considered that the Wren officers looked "just like the WAVES."

When the girls set out on their tour there were certain definite things they wanted to see: Westminster Abbey, of course, and St. Paul's, the bomb ruins and Polish officers. It was understood that they only wanted to see Polish officers.

London, according to Sgt. Evelyn J. Tubbs, of Wyoming, Del., as far as the center of town is concerned, was "very much like Washington. The same kind of wide streets around Whitehall and Buckingham Palace. And there is the same air of bustle and the many kinds of uniforms."

CHATS TO POLICEMEN

Grouped photogenically around the grey wall of the Houses of Parliament, the girls said the usual kind things about "picturesque London" to a few London policemen who had wandered along to see if they were lost or something. They thanked, charmingly, an old, old lady who thanked them on behalf of the United Kingdom for "coming over to help us win the war."

Traveling by car down the Lambeth Walk, famous in song and bomb story, they tried to sing the four-year-old anthem of Cockneydom. They were not very good. Pfc. Joy E. Dunlop, of Detroit, thought it nice "the way the English women washed down the sidewalks in front of their houses."

The other Pfc of the party, Helen D. Rafferty, of Morristown, Pa., was pleased with the number of Irish names on shop fronts. "We certainly do get around," she said with typically modest Irish pride.

Londoners who were at first curious about their uniforms soon got the idea and they gave them plenty of welcoming waves. So did the GIs.

Even MPs softened up. When, it is said, a bull remarks to a soldier "We'll take you," that soldier is an unhappy soldier (no unhappy soldier is a good soldier!). But Pvt. Harry Parker, of Chicago, and Pvt. Adam Korvalski, of Detroit, said "We'll take you" when Sgt. Couch asked directions, and no particular unhappiness was noticed in any party.

KEEN IN DISCIPLINE

In return for the courtesies shown them, the WAACs showed a keen regard for military courtesy. "We are perhaps, even keener on discipline and regard for procedure than men soldiers," said Sgt. Violet Bachman, of Long Island, N.Y., primly.

It must be stated that Sgt. Bachman had difficulty in making that remark. An excess of returning greetings had resulted in almost a complete loss of voice.

But she was right. The girls take a keep pride in saluting. They walked down streets to a flurry of highballs. Obscure second looeys and dignified, grey-haired staff majors of the Allied forces were surprised and pleased at the precision of salutes from American's girl soldiers. Women officers of british women auxiliary forces commented on the smartness of the girls' turnout and returned the salutes. The girls were smart—from cap to shoes, taking in the brand new ETO ribbons on the way.

Two of them, Sgt. Couch and Pfc Joy Dunlop, even found energy after their tour to visit *The Stars and Stripes* office where they were told by Jimmy ____, foreman printer and an Englishman, that, "I wish I were dealing with you ladies and not the Americans here."

The gals said, "I wish you were."

As a natural result of the dances they had attended at the Liberty and ____ Crescent clubs, the girls had dates for the evening dance at the Rainbow Corner. They say they were never late on formation, but they were late for their dates.

MP Pvts. Elder C. Diels, of Milwaukee and Larry H. Ziemer, of Phillips, Wyo., were able to give Joy Dunlop her directions. They even escorted her to the Rainbow Corner. It was as well they did. Soldiers crowding the doors almost held up traffic.

MEETS SOLDIER FROM HOME TOWN

S/Sgt. Leslie Claville, of Atlanta, Ga., was there to meet Claudio Couch. He comes from her home town, but they had never met back home. "Got to come 3,000 miles to meet a gal like this," grumbled the sergeant, "but I guess it's nice this way. She talks just like the way they do back in Georgia."

"Yeah," agreed another soldier. "Them English girls are all right, but I don't like their accents." Now sight-seeing and social flings are over for a time. The WAACs came here to do important work. They are doing it as from now.

May 19, 1943

The Diary of an American Ranger

A GI Assembly Line Turns Out Experts In Destruction

In the desolate valley of a snow-covered mountain range in Scotland is a war industry. It develops ordinary soldiers into specialists in destruction of enemy lives and property; men who tumble off the assembly line fighting fit, tough as steel and superbly disciplined.

It is the training base of U.S. Rangers and their British counterpart, the Commandos. Those who are accepted for this training—and survive—go through what American and British military authorities agree is one of the toughest courses anywhere.

Charles Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer, went through part of the Ranger course. What follows is the first installment of his diary. It could be written by any Ranger on “Death Valley,” as he calls it, or “Bloody Hell,” if you listen to the Commando.

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

FIRST DAY. Three weeks ago we volunteered for the Ranges, were accepted and embarked on a preliminary training course that was to prepare us for the stiff test at the Commando depot. During that period there was plenty of time for each man to think out all the angles of the job he had asked for.

In our midst now are soldiers from the Infantry, Artillery, Engineers and Medical Corps, some who had soft jobs and others who had tough ones. They are privates corporals, sergeants, lieutenants and captains whose service records say that, in civilian life, they were farmers, clerks, students, lawyers, musicians, brokers, married men and single. They were aides to the commanding general and blokes who did a couple of hitches in the “glasshouse.” They came from the Regular Army, National Guard and Draft Board 13 in Falling Rock, W. Va. Some of them served as volunteers in the Canadian Army.

This is a cross-section of fighting men but they have one thing in common—they want something with more of a punch in it than their old jobs in the Army. The Rangers offer that punch.

The attraction in the Rangers, for some, may be the flashy paraboos or the red and black shoulder badges that tells everybody you are a Ranger. The majority, however, are drawn by adventure that surely comes to a Commando or Ranger.

You remember when you were interviewed as a prospective Ranger and qualified as being “under 30, able to swim and in good physical condition.”

These things go through your mind today when you arrive at the Commando depot, ready to start a training schedule that is said to be one of the most severe tests to a soldier’s endurance.

Nobody has to tell about the frigid weather that reigns practically all year round here. The bleak, rugged, snow-capped mountains that stand guard over this valley refrigerate your blood just to look at them. If there is a more isolated camp in the British Isles it hasn’t been reported.

NO NISSEN HUTS

Soon after our arrival the detachment is divided into companies and assigned to tent areas. The prospect of living in tents is a blow to those who expect the comforts of Nissen huts, at least. And, the tents look old enough to have been used in the Boer War, but each of

them is “home” for four men as long as they are here.

A kid from Vermont named Cox, who won £132 is a crap game on the train, isn’t at all impressed with his “home,” especially since the Commando trainees are billeted in huts.

“Whatinell do they think we are—Indians?” he asks.

“You got a lot of money now,” laughs the guy beside him. “See the boss of this resort and get yourself a penthouse.”

That isn’t all. Sgt. Maj. George Pickering, broad-shouldered Commando instructor attached to the Rangers, comes around with the glad tidings that there won’t be any cots or beds.

“You’ll have to sleep on the floor, lads, with six blankets,” he says. “These will be arranged for display every morning and boots will be shined bright enough to see your face in them. Any questions?”

Tempers get pretty short, because there is some of the regimental stuff the boys want to get away from in the “rough and ready” Rangers.

More good news from the Sgt. Major. He says before we leave here, men will wish they never heard of the Rangers when they are covered with mud and wet to the skin almost every day, when lungs are bursting on speed marches or when they are half way up the side of a wind-swept cliff in a cold sweat looking for a foothold, when they have to shower with ice water from a stream that’s fed by snow or when they’re cut and bruised on assault courses and instructors drive and drive and drive.

Somebody changes the subject and wants to know where the showers are.

“Don’t worry about that,” he is told. “You’ll only get one hot shower a week here. If you like cold water, though, you can take to the stream every day.”

YOU WANT OUT

Just about that time—although you actually haven’t started training—you want out.

This is a little rougher than some of the men looked for but they are sure to take it.

Back in the tent are S/Sgt. John “Little Caesar” Troncatti, of Philadelphia, Pa., and Sgt. Jim Sprouse, of Philadelphia, Pa. (only

May 19, 1943

The Diary of an American Ranger
(continued)

three at “home” here). Troncatti whistles “Ave Maria” by way of whistling in the dark.

Troncatti confesses to have been an altar boy and choir singer in his youth. He looks like he might have been a straw boss or bartender in the corner saloon on Market St. Sprouse doesn’t hum songs. He looks at the floor that’s as hard as a chorus girl’s heart and observes that it’s going to be his worst enemy.

After a couple of beers in the NAAFI, at night you remember you tried to sleep on the baggage rack in the train and turn in.

Nobody bothers to take their clothes off at night. It’s Spring, but they haven’t heard about it here. Before long you discover that the baggage rack was a feather bed compared to these quarters.

During the night it rains and water seeps through the tent, soaking the top blanket. Somebody wakes up in the tent, probably remembers the warm barracks he left and shouts, “I must be nuts.”

May 24, 1943

The Diary of an American Ranger

Speed Marches Make Even Tughest Falter

Herewith the second installment of the Diary of An American Ranger, by Charles Kiley, Stars and Stripes staff reporter, who went through part of the "GI assembly line" in a bleak Scotland valley where Commando instructors turn out experts in destruction.

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

SECOND DAY--This is supposed to be a light day; taking it easy at the start. Actually you do more running than you've done in the last six months. Everywhere you go it's "on the double." The four-mile speed march isn't a May Walk either. It would be your good fortune to get a guy like Sgt. Norman Orton, Commando, who holds the camp record for speed marches, to pace this particular four-miler. Clocked in at 38 minutes, few in the section know how they made it.

Up at 6:15 this morning for a tasty breakfast of porridge, sausage, bread and tea, followed by a "welcome address" by the Falstaffian commandant of Commando Depot.

Capt. Alex Cowieson, ruddy-faced, burly Scot who looks as if he were born here, also is introduced. With our own Capt. Lloyd Marr, of LaMesa, Tex., Capt Cowieson will be in direct command of the Rangers. This veteran of the Commando doesn't pull his punches.

"The only time a man goes on sick call here," he warns, "is if he is wounded or has a broken bone."

He looks as if he meant it, too.

Until the afternoon speed march, the day's work is light, according to the normal standards here. Stripped to the waist in freezing weather for physical training, a mile run to and from the boathouse where you become acquainted with the type of assault craft used in landing operations, a trip over the "death slide" and weapons training.

You don't stop on these speed marches--double time and 142-steps-a-minute quick time gets you around. You start out with a brisk walking pace. Those with short legs trot to keep up. Then it's double time, quick time, double time until your legs almost refuse to function. Your throat is sand dry. Wind is short and lungs are ready to give out. Eyes blear... someone falls. But he gets up and struggles on. Nobody wants to quit. Weat and exhausted at the finih, you wonder what the five, seven, nine, 12 and 15 mile marches are going to be like.

These soeed marches are equalizers of men. Officers fall on their faces and Pfc's pick them up and haul them along. Privates stumble, look loke they are going to give up, but officers drop back and help them along.

Like the Commando trainees, Rangers have "tea" at 6 p.m. instead of dinner. Lunch consists of potatoes, parsnips, mutton, cake and custard. At tea-time, you get bread and jam, a sausage or a slide of bacon, and tea. It's not enough to satisfy a working man's appetite, so you queue up in the NAAFI for tea and cakes.

It doesn't take the Yanks and Limeys long to know each other with the ice being usually broken by the Ranger and the Commando eager to listen.

A Welshman, ex-collier from Tonypandy, brings his tea over and sits down. A Yank says, "Hi, keed," and the Welshman grins.

"Have a rough day?" he asks. "Bloody awful up here, isn't it?"

A guy named Kotite, of Arabic descent, born in Oklahoma and raised in New York, joins the party. He was in the Royal Montreal Regiment of the Canadian Army before transferring to the U.S. Army and the Rangers.

"Taffy," the Welshman, enjoys listening to Kotite call himself "The Magnificent."

You'll be a helluva sight less than ,agnficent when you get out of here," Taffy tells him and laughs again.

Sgt. Bill Myers, ex-paratrooper from Washington, says paratroop training was never like this. He was in the Regular Army, volunteered for the paratroops and after receiving ankle injuries came back to the Infantry. Now he's a Ranger and you form a quick opinion--he's a damn good soldier.

You don't like to think of that hard floor, but it's been a busy day. The last think you hear is a bag-piper--far away. No bugler to blow "Taps," the the pipes sound good.

Sprouse gets up during the night, sticks his toe outside the tent and curses every square inch of the British Isles. Troccatti does the speed march all over again in his sleep, grunting and groaning all night.

May 25, 1943

The Diary of an American Ranger

Rangers Lend a Hand to Commandos in Slugfest

Herewith the third installment of the Diary of An American Ranger, by a Stars and Stripes staff reporter, who went through part of the "GI assembly line" which turns out experts in destruction.

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

THIRD DAY—The best news of the day is tht tomorrow is half-holiday. It takes some of the stiffness out of your muiscles—but not too much—when you get off the floor at 6:15 a.m. Gastello, the Spaniard from California, says he thought six men were sitting on his chest when he woke up.

Today's schedule calls for close-order drill, two hours of fieldcraft, map reading, weapons training, landings with assault craft, physical training and... No. 1 assault course. These courses are three in all, one tougher than the other.

No 1 course is a nightmare while it lasts. You "walk" around it first, while Commando instructors, officers and sergeants point out the route and obstacles. Then you run it, starting up hill at a 45-degree angle for about 50 yards, climb a dead tree, scale rocks and dash to a man-made barrier. From four steps up a log ladder, you jump feet-up to your hips in mud—to clear a barbed-wire apron. Up hill again, twisting and turning for 50 yards, and a 50-foot descent by rope into a gully. You slip on a bald rock and feel a bruise on your hip.

Chris Koskinas, ex-drummer who gave up a soft touch as a personal waiter to his commanding general to join the Rangers, staggers across a strip of swamp, sprawls headlong and searches for something new in profanity.

Near the finish the instructor snarls, "Keep moving... c'mon there, get cracking. Don't stop or you'll run it again." You feel Anglo-American relations are going to split wide open any minute.

That's just the first trip over the course. There's plenty more to come. They say a Ranger holds the record for it—six minutes! Average time today is about nine, but one of the boys, Heline, does it in six and a half.

"GAVE HIM UP FOR DEAD"

During the day you meet some of the Commandos who have been on a couple of raids. The lieutenant at the boat-house minus an eye lost on a sortie to Norway, jokes about breaking his glass eye. He has a picture taken when they brought him bsck, lying on a stretcher and given up for dead.

"I really don't remember much after I was shot," he says. "the bullet went through my eye and came out of my neck. I had a Tommy gun and kept firing. They told me afterwards I killed 11 Huns."

He got a DSO for the job; rare decoration for a subaltern.

A lance corporal in the mess hall wears his "Purple Heart" all over the left side of his face, badly burned at Dieppe. He'll be leaving soon for a plastic surgery operation, he says.

In the NAAFI, a 35-year-old Commando tranee, call him Ben, says he's been in the Army only three weeks.

He wasn't forced into the service but thought his experience as a poacher would be useful to the Commando. The training is harder on him than most of his mates, but he's sticking it out. His first speed march left his feet raw and bleeding and sick for two days. His wife, a script writer for a British film company, worked with Noel Coward on "In Which We Serve."

Reports come in on the first Ranger casualties. A broken ankle sustained on the assault course and a gash in the head of a man who tumbled into the rock-bedded stream.

Wrapped up in his blankes and sheltered half in the tent, Sprouse says he's writing "Amen" after each day on the schedule.

FOURTH DAY—Today is a holiday as far as we are concerned—care and cleaning of equipment until afrnoon and then the once-a-week trip to town. It is also the day for the weekly bath. No one, it appears, braved the icy stream except Red Sheehan, who won £4 on a bet that he wouldn't go in. The rest—well, even their best friends won't tell them.

"MIRACULOUS" WEATHER

The weather, unusually good during the last couple of days when the sun came out for more than 15 seconds at a time, is said by the oldest inhabitant to be miraculous.

The trip to town gave those who went a chance to meet their neighbors. And, it didn't take the neighbors long to discover the Rangers were around these parts again.

It all started when a Commando and Royal Marine boiled over in a pub. The Marines were in the majority and it occurred to the Rangers present that this wasn't cricket. After all, they said, the Rangers and Commandos must stick together. At the height of the excitement someone called the ommando Depot. The reported answer was, "If ther aren't enough Commandos and Rangers there to take care of themselves we'll send in some more."

Not everbody went to town. Cpl. Howard Rohner took advantage of the break in the weather and spent a busman's holiday hiking for five hours to one of the moutain tops.

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May 25, 1943

The Diary of an American Ranger

(continued)

FIFTH DAY—The results of yesterday's fisticuffs are noticeable when the battalion lines up for morning parade. The Commandant, during inspection, asks Charlie Herlihy, the pint-sized company clerk who toyed with guns in the Springfield Armory as a civvie, what happened to his eye.

"I forgot to duck, sir," is the embarrassed reply.

Training is resumed with rope climbing, running the bayonet assault course, landing operations, fieldcraft and weapons. This sounds like ordinary Army routine but when the tempo of it is accelerated to Ranger training it becomes extraordinary.

Fieldcraft, for example, not only includes instruction in cover and concealment by men who can advance 200 yards to a point 10 yards away and defy detection, but they make you apply the methods in crawling through mud, thorns and gorse until you can do it almost as well as they can.

The bayonet course isn't much different than ones you've seen in camp but you can't let up for a second here or you have a Limey sergeant, as tough as a 15 cent steak, climbing all over your frame. You find it's easier to work. These instructors are shot, hung and quartered a thousand times a day in the minds of the men but they are respected as much as any man can be.

This is the only place you have seen an enlisted man, in the person of a Commando instructor, bark at an officer and get away with it. Ranger officers are held on the same level as the enlisted men in training, with the exception that an order might carry, "Get off the skyline and take cover before somebody takes a shot at your butt... sir."

COMMANDANT GETS TOUGH

The Commandant got tough today. Boots haven't been shined as well as they could be, and some of the men look like they aren't putting blades in their razors, he says. Tomorrow he makes a personal inspection at parade. If he looks cockeyed at you, it's the "Black Mile." The "Black Mile," by the way, is not one but five miles on a speed march around camp. You get an hour to do it. All part of strict discipline.

Highlight of the day, or week, for that matter, is the appearance of fresh eggs at tea-time. You hadn't paid much attention to the food up to now... that is, except Tennessee Ratliffe.

Making his customary round of the mess hall at noon, a British officer asks the usual question, "Everything all right?"

"Suh," replied Tennessee, with a pained expression. "Ah'm so god-damned hungry Ah'm a-hurtin' all over. If I don't get some solid vittles pretty soon, Ah'll fall away to a shadder."

So, when the eggs showed up Tennessee let out a whoop that could be heard from Memphis to St. Joe.

May 26, 1943

The Diary of an American Ranger

More Speed Marches as First Phase of Training Ends

Herewith the last installment of the Diary of An American Ranger, by a Stars and Stripes staff reporter, who went through part of the "GI assembly line" which turns out experts in destruction.

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

SIXTH DAY—The "miraculous" weather is over, temporarily at least. Rain during the night soaks tents, occupants and equipment. But it stops long enough for the Commandant to make his inspection at parade. Result: six men run the "Black Mile" tonight for trying to get by without shaving or polishing boots.

Rope climbing, another phase of the training, is introduced with Sgt. Roy Ringer, Commando PT instructor and ex-wrestler, showing how it's done. Ropes are strung between five trees at a 25-foot height. All you have to do is pull yourself along on your stomach. There's nothing below to break a fall if you slip.

All week you have been listening to men from other sections tell of their experiences in mountain climbing. Now it's our turn, and from the base of the cliff it doesn't look difficult. But wait.

S/Sgt. Jerry Miller, Lt. Shelton Clemmer and Capt. Morris Ernst lead the way and appear to get up without much trouble. Then Tom Shelton, Oklahoma City boy, starts climbing. He doesn't get very far before he decides to postpone his ascent. He confesses his knees are shaking like a shimmy dancer's. On the way up you remember the instructor's advice not to use your knees and to stand well out from the rocks. He didn't say, however, that the footholds and handholds would be about a half-inch deep in some places.

AND IT STARTS TO RAIN

While you're stranded half way up, and stretched upright like a bear rug on a wall, it starts to rain. There's no point in backing down because chances are you'd topple 100 feet to the bottom if you did. Capt. Ernst sticks his head around the top and wants to know what the trouble is. You attempt a feeble grin, swallow hard and try it again. The dead root of a tree sticks through the rock and helps lift you to a point where you can struggle to the top. A cigarette never tastes as good as it does now.

Rain turns to hail as you double over to the bayonet assault course. After lunch it turns to rain again to make two hours of fieldcraft wet and uncomfortable.

However, these things are forgotten when the gang gathers in the NAAFI at night.

Bob Thompson, ex-paratrooper from Philadelphia, sums up the attitude of the men.

"More than once since I've been here I felt as though I wanted to chuck the whole thing," he says. "It's not easy

to take beating like you get here. Still, it isn't going to last forever. And we did ask for it. In the long run, if you stretch your guts a little here and there, it isn't so bad."

Thompson and Sgt. Bill Myers have been together for quite a while. They met in the Regular Army, transferred to the paratroopers, were forced out by injuries back to the same Infantry Division, and are now Rangers.

Tonight marks one of the few times that soldiers here get entertainment. An ENSA show gives them a chance to look at women again. Aside from a few girls in the NAAFI there are no females at Commando Depot.

SEVENTH DAY—Another gray day and the prospect of a six-mile speed march and a trip over the assault course doesn't throw any bright light on the picture.

Getting up this morning you find sore muscles and stiff backs are loosening up. At breakfast there's a lighter spirit among the men. They are accepting the hardships and rigid training without half as much complaint as they did a few days ago.

After parade, Lt. Kither, former OCTU instructor in the British Army, who admits he just about had enough in him to last through his Commando training, observes that the Rangers are starting to get that "lean, hungry look" that comes to soldiers who are fighting fit.

"Every man who lasts through this course is at an unsurpassed physical peak," he says. "It's impossible to maintain that peak when they leave, but their training with Ranger and Commando units is such that men are never far from that peak."

The six-mile speed march starts off well enough. The first two miles fly past. Your legs tire and your chest aches on the third. The fourth and fifth are murderous. One man drops out on the last leg but the rest struggle in. Time: 50 minutes.

CAN'T TAKE IT EASY

Fifteen minutes later you pound over the No. 1 assault course. You try to take it easy—thinking the speed march was enough for one day—but the instructor has other ideas.

"The first man who slows down runs this bloody course ten times," he says. "And if you think I'm joking, try it."

When the last man is over the course everybody gets ready to walk a half-mile to camp. The instructor also has ideas on this and shouts, "On the double!"

You wonder how much he charges to slit a baby's throat with a trench knife. You knew a guy like him once but somebody

May 25, 1943

The Diary of an American Ranger

(continued)

straightened him out with a “mickey.”

The afternoon calls for range work with the M1. It rains like hell but using live ammo for the first time here has its good points, and it's better than a speed march.

One of the range officers is a British lieutenant who did three speed marches in succession this morning and he looks ready to do three more. What's more, he claims he smokes over a pack of cigarettes a day.

“Just a matter of getting used to it,” he says. “Once your body is conditioned for this work it's no trouble at all.”

A dubious Ranger asks, “Are you kidding, sir?”

So ends one phase of Ranger training. There are a few casualties, not many. Capt. Marr notes those who may not be able to finish the course, but he'll give them all the time he can.

But on the whole these boys make good Rangers. Before they are finished they'll do speed marches of nine miles in an hour and 15 minutes, 12 in 1:50 and 15 in about 2:35.

They will be thoroughly schooled in every weapon they use—rifles, tommy guns, mortars, grenades. They will know all the answers in attacks on strong points and amphibious landings. There will be night problems, cross-country marches, 36-hour marches over snow and ice without shelter and with just enough food to keep them upright.

Everything will be done to discourage them. Officers and instructors will snap and snarl at them when the going is the toughest. They'll remember the soft nights on Mary's porch back home, the corner coke shop and the weekend at the lake, and will curse war and all that it brings with it.

But they'll come through.

Lt. Harvey Swisher, of Evanston, Ill., will probably laugh through it all. He's always laughing—when his men are so worn out and tired they want to cry. But they'll laugh with him.

Adolph Birgel, of Baltimore, Md., will tell his father, a private in the Engineers, what it feels like to be a Ranger. The medics—Art Caniglia, Max Washburn and Ray Holland—will be fighting pill-pushers instead of non-combatants.

When these Rangers are fully trained they will be ready to hit the enemy with their quick, paralyzing assaults that are perfectly geared to their hard-hitting spirit.

And that will be any day now.

June 1, 1943

U.S. Army Seem Ready For Invasion

Mock Battle Against Larger British Forces Proves Mettle

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

A force of hard-hitting and aggressive American soldiers, among those slated to form part of the invasion spearhead when the Allied blow on the Continent is struck, today bears the stamp of ably-trained troops, as fit for battle as any the United States ever sent into action, following recent large-scale maneuvers in which it operated against a larger force of British armor, infantry and provisional units.

Among the enthusiastic comments on the part played by these soldiers in their initial battle practice against Allied forces in Britain was that of Maj. Gen. Leonard T Gerow, one of the high-ranking American observers.

"I believe they are as well prepared for actual combat as any men we've ever sent into action," he said. He praised the spirit they displayed throughout the three-day theoretical battle.

'FOE' THREE TIMES THE SIZE

In the role of an Allied army, charged with destroying a German army in flight, the British armored force was three times as large as the defenders, played by American infantry and artillery supported by a regiment of British Lancers' reconnaissance gun carriers.

Without a tank corps of their own to make a stand and fight, the Americans were forced to use speed and deception, carefully camouflaged anti-tank and artillery positions in a delaying action. they operated so well they delayed the scheduled finish of the "battle" for almost 12 hours.

An example of the Americans' hard-hitting spirit was displayed by a detachment of Rangers, commanded by Maj. Randolph Milholland, of Cumberland, Md. The unit carried out a night raid and was credited with "annihilating" and electrical maintenance unit used as a workshop of the armored force, "destroying" all equipment and causing casualties among its personnel.

The Rangers, with blackened faces and using rubber-soled shoes, struck swiftly across a distance of 40 miles by truck and through cross-country to make the attack.

AIR-GROUND COOPERATION

The American artillery, under Maj. Al Gardner, of Baltimore, used reconnaissance planes for observation and frequently caught the advancing forces off guard.

Col. Philip Wood, of Bar Harbor, Me., commanding all American forces, played a major role in the action by skillfully placing anti-tank guns at cross-roads and junctions and holding up tank columns for hours at a time.

Infantrymen, armed with bazooka guns and hidden in positions off the road, were credited with knocking out a number of Bren carriers and disabling tanks.

Other infantrymen scattered anti-tank and personnel mines, as well as booby-traps wherever the British forces were expected. Smoke bombs were used as Molotov cocktails and grenades in crippling tanks.

Small blocks of TNT "destroyed" bridges at several main crossings, forcing British engineers to bridge the streams with pontoons and newly-devised equipment.

In the air RAF and USAAF fighters and fighter-bombers were used by both sides for ground-strafting troops and tanks, as well as blowing up bridges. Lt. Col. Charles Schott, of Providence, R.I., commanded air support for the American side.

PRAISE FROM THE BRITISH

British officers, present as observers, warmly praised the Americans' part in the maneuvers, crediting them with "showing great skill for men who have never been under fire," and with being "fighting fit."

A familiar sight during the maneuvers was high-ranking British and American officers discussing weapons and operational methods with soldiers in the field.

Pvt. Emmett Russell, of Baltimore, had as an audience a lieutenant general and two major generals in the British Army and a captain in the Royal Navy to whom he was telling what makes a bazooka gun bazook.

June 7, 1943

Clark Gable Is Just a Two-Bar Joe Doing a Job; He's Making a Film To Train More Air Gunners; No Publicity Seeker, So Herewith Our Last Report

by Andrew A. Rooney, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

Herewith a report on Capt. Clark Gable:

Last summer he quieted a rumor that he was going to accept a direct commission as a major by enlisting as a private in Los Angeles. On Oct. 28, after completing the air corps OCS at Miami, Fla., he was commissioned second lieutenant. He served at Tyndall Field, Fla., for a while, and later was shipped to a mid-West field. He came to England about seven weeks ago, has been on one raid, (Antwerp, May 4) and his job here is to make a training film for aerial gunners. He is 42 years old, six feet one inch tall, his hair is grey. He seems like an OK guy.

With the possible exception of the German Army, no one is having a tougher time trying to fight this war than Capt. Clark Gable.

THEY WANT TO KNOW

A few hundred thousand relatives of privates in the infantry who have been fighting in North Africa want to know why Clark Gable isn't a private in the infantry fighting in North Africa. Mothers of Marines on Guadalcanal want to know why he wasn't a Marine on Guadalcanal. The fathers and mothers, sisters and friends of the staff sergeants on combat crews of B17s and B24s want to know why he is a captain instead of a staff sergeant. And some of the boys wonder.

He is not a captain doing a staff sergeant's job. He is a captain doing a job that has been done by majors and better, and he went from a second lieutenant to a captain in less than six months, not because he had a direct pipe-line to the commanding general, but because he is an intelligent man doing a good job for the Air Force.

Last Saturday a couple of carloads of newspapermen, most of whom were women, were taken to an Eighth Air Force field to watch the public relations office take the wraps off their man Gable. They were prepared to write cynical articles of the movie star playing a phony part, but Gable fooled them. He was a very nice guy about it all and his performance at the press conference left nothing to be cynical about.

He didn't try to act any part. He was Clark Gable in the Air Force, a little tired, but resigned to being looked at and talked to—and he looked like a very decent guy with no angle to his being where he was.

The conference was held around a B17, and there were several combat men from Gable's station hanging around. The captain was dressed in pinks, a leather jacket, cap and solid English shoes. He looked like what America thinks the boys in the air corps look like.

His mustache has acquired a slightly RAF look, his hair is a little long, and the collar of his leather jacket is turned up with that casual nonchalance which makes life look easy. The cap he wore looked just a little more like an air corps cap than most, and he

pulled it just a little further over his right eye than the rest.

He is in England on the orders of Brig. Gen. Luther S. Smith, director of the Air Force training program. With him are 1/Lts. Andrew J. McIntyre, former MGM cameraman, and John Mahin, who wrote several of the script for Gable's pictures.

Together the three of them, with the help of several veteran gunners, are putting together a film they hope will be some help in the training program for aerial gunners. In the film, Gable interviews men, gets opinions and observations on equipment and combat problems. He appears in some of the scenes—does not appear in others.

His crew of six or eight men and two jeeps takes off every morning for the day's work. He talks to wounded men in the hospitals, and veteran crewmen who have finished their operations, in order to collect information on gunnery and the problems with which they are confronted at a high altitude.

He went on the Antwerp raid so that he could talk through something besides his hat about raids. One of the correspondents asked him if he was going on another.

"I'm going to do what I have to do to finish this job."

Another asked Gable if he had any pin-ups in his room on the station.

He didn't know what they were.

"You know, pictures of Jane Russell or Dorothy Lamour in bathing suits."

Gable said he has no pin-ups.

SOME NOISE

After Capt. Gable introduced T/Sgt. Kenneth Hulse and T/Sgt. Phil Hulse (not brothers) to the correspondents, and they told a brief story, it was decided that the newspapermen should hear what a cal. 50 machine-gun sounded like being fired by Capt. Gable. It sounded just like a cal. 50 being fired by anyone.

Phil Hulse, whose home is in Springfield, Mo., has worked with the captain quite a bit on the picture, and he is at the field with Gable.

"He is a regular man," Hulse says. "He gets an awful lot of unfair criticism. He used to go out to the town once in a while but the people won't let him alone, so he just doesn't go out any more."

Capt. Gable himself says that he has been to London once, and has been to some of the pubs in the small towns near his stations several times. He hasn't seen a movie since he's been here. (GWTW still plays at the Ritz, in Leicester Square.)

Herewith ends the report on Capt. Clark Gable. For our money he is an OK Joe fighting a war, and, until he bites a dog or figures in a legitimate news story, just like any other Joe, The Stars and Stripes will leave the guy alone, as he would like to be left, for the duration.

June 9, 1943

Adolphe Menjou Here to Stage Shows ‘as Long as Army Wants’ Veteran Film Star Ready To Begin Tour of ETO Camps

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

Adolphe Menjou, motion picture star, is in Britain to entertain troops as long as the U.S. Army's Special Service Section and USO Camp Shows, Inc., have work for him.

Menjou is here after touring camp areas in America for five and a half months. Master of several languages, he was used by the Office of War Information on broadcasts to foreign countries, and during the North African invasion spoke on radio programs to Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Turkey and occupied Poland. His work in Britain will be chiefly concerned with entertaining troops, he said last night, and any other activity will be up to the Army.

Labeled one of the world's best dressed men, Menjou was permitted to take only 55 pounds of luggage with him, but he figures it's enough to maintain his reputation. Asked how food rationing was affecting the American public, the veteran of 20 years in motion picture work said people in California were living on fowl and fish.

“There is practically no meat to be had,” he said. “Everybody is raising chickens and planting victory gardens. In Beverly Hills we name our chickens after screen stars. One of my chickens was called Hedy Lamar.”

He was asked how it felt to raise her.

“She is a good hen,” he answered.

In the last war, Menjou enlisted in the U.S. Army as a private and rose to the rank of captain. He served overseas in the fifth Division and saw action at St. Mihiel and in the Argonne-Meuse sector. During two and a half years of duty he also served with the French and Italian armies as an interpreter.

Menjou pointed out that most audiences in America are favoring comedy escapist pictures, mainly because of the flood of war pictures recently produced in Hollywood. He said they call its war films “Stetsons,” because when they come on the screen, people reach for their hats.

June 11, 1943

Kozak and Kingsland Heroes of Thursday's Ring Triumph

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

The boxing champions of the United States Armed Forces in the ETO defeated the British Army titleholders, six bouts to five, at Royal Albert Hall, London, last night before a howling crowd of 6,000.

The team honors were not decided until the final bout, when husky Pvt. Vince Kozak, unbeaten ETO heavyweight king, pounded out a close decision over Bdr. George Preston, British titleholder from the Commandos.

The judges were in hot water with the crowd all night. Decisions in at least four of the 11 bouts, including the deciding final, were disputed by the spectators.

The Tommies took a five to four lead before the light-heavyweights and heavies climbed into the ring but after Pfc Bill Kingsland, of Redondo Beach, Cal, squared the count in the 175 lb class, Kozak came through with a climacteric victory that had the crowd roaring from bell to bell...

The comparative handful of Americans among the crowd of 6,000 who saw the ETO boxing champions narrowly defeat the British Army titleholders Thursday night at ornate Albert Hall yesterday hailed broad-shouldered Bill Kingsland and husky Vince Kozak as heroes of the Yanks' comeback victory.

It was Kingsland, a tireless worker inside the ring and light heavy leader from Redondo Beach, Cal., who squared the team score at five-all in the next to last bout and thereby set the stage for Kozak's stirring finish in the finale in the which the Hazleton, Pa., heavyweight gained a close verdict over big George Preston, British entry from the Commandos.

Yesterday's repercussions following the international matches also concerned the dispute raised by the crowd about decisions rendered in at least three bouts. The disputed decisions, as well as those in favor with the audience, were rendered by American judges. They were judged according to American amateur rules, which possibly were unfamiliar to the British adherents present. Those are the facts. The British press yesterday morning found fault with only one decision, agreeing with the judges on all other bouts.

Nevertheless, everybody seemed to agree that the matches were the best staged in London since the outbreak of war. There wasn't a dull fight on the 11-bout program. From the time Vic Sheard, British flyweight, hammered out a clear verdict over game Eddie LaBorde until Kozak out-mauled Preston in the decisive heavyweight clash, there was hardly a moment of dull action.

July 8, 1943

P47s Return in Vain for Lost Chief

The Mess Is Keeping Vacant Place for Missing Pilot

no byline

A USAAF FIGHTER STATION, July 7—Returning from a sweep over enemy territory, pilots here immediately refueled their planes and with hardly a word spoken flew back over the ground they just covered in search of their commander, Col. Arman Peterson.

The “double sweep” in tribute to the 28-year-old squadron leader from Flagstaff, Ariz., was revealed yesterday when Eighth Air Force HQ announced that Peterson was missing in action.

Peterson was last seen after he had spotted enemy planes below and reported over the inter-com:

“There they are; here we go.”

Peterson’s fliers swooped in at 90 degrees and they think they saw him vanish into a cloud.

REFUEL TO LOOK FOR HIM

Not until they arrived back at their base did Peterson’s men realize he was missing. Without orders, they refueled their planes and took off.

They returned to the area over which they had fought, looking in vain for the missing pilot until gas ran low and they headed home from the first time without Peterson’s whimsical voice telling them to “scram!”

Fliers and ground personnel at Peterson’s station said he was more like “one of the boys” than a commanding officer. He named his P47 the “Flagari,” because he didn’t want people “to forget the old home town,” and always accompanied his men on sweeps after German fighters on missions to protect USAAF bombers.

Back from a recent mission on which he shot down an enemy fighter, Peterson minimized his work by saying, “He just floated along with his head under his arm and I shot him.” Someone pointed out a hole in the plane, made by a caliber 50 bullet from a Flying Fortress.

“Just slowed me down a little, that’s all,” he said. “If I got too close to the Fort it’s just part of the job to protect it and see that the bombs are delivered.”

When his fighters returned from the unavailing search for him, Peterson’s men were quiet. there was a vacancy at the head table for mess but they maintained there was always the chance he’d be back.

July 8, 1943

Monte Weaver Still Rooting for Nats

Former Hurler Here With Fighter Command

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

FIGHTER STATION, July 7—Ten years ago Monte Weaver was throwing curves and high, hard ones for the Washington Senators against the N.Y. Giants in the World Series. today, the lean North Carolinian who helped give Joe Cronin an American League flag in the “boy Wonder’s” first year as a major league manager, is in the Eighth Air Force Fighter Command lineup operating from this base.

Weaver, a second lieutenant whose desk work is part of Fighter Command’s team play, is finished with baseball but the 37-year-old veteran of 14 campaigns in the majors and minors still maintains a high interest in the pennant races. Just now he’s trying to root his old tam-mate Ossie Bluege and the Senators to their first league championship since the Giants whipped the Nats in five games back in ’33.

“I’d sure like to see Ossie come though,” Weaver said yesterday. “He has a team of hustlers in his lineup who will make trouble for the Yankees or any other squad in the league. He was a great player and, with his club in second place he’s proving to be a good manager.”

Weaver broke into baseball in 1928 with Durham in the Piedmont League. He was teaching mathematics at the University of Virginia and playing semi-pro ball when he was offered a contract. A diamond career didn’t appeal to him at the time and he signed only after he was coaxed to give it a try. In 1930 he moved up to the Baltimore Orioles in the International League and in the Fall of ’31 was bought by Washington.

The stylish right-hander won 22 games for Walter Johnson in ’32, his best year, and under Cronin in ’33 combined with Earl Whitehill and Al Crowder to pitch the Nats to their first pennant in nine years. Weaver realized the ambition of all hurlers when he started the fourth game of the Series that year against the Giants, but he dropped a 2—1 heartbreaker to Carl Hubbell.

After eight years in Washington, Monte moved up to Boston under Cronin again, but failed to last. He finished the season with Louisville in the American Association. Back with Baltimore in ’41 he worked in 53 games, more than in any previous campaign, winning seven and losing four for Tommy Thomas.

That was the end of baseball’s road for Weaver. He entered service last August and after the war doesn’t figure to be mixed up with the game in any capacity.

From a player’s viewpoint, Weaver believes baseball will survive the war. That is, in the major leagues.

“The minors are bound to suffer,” he said, “mainly because of the lack of player material. But there always will be enough good men around to keep the majors alive. Despite reports to the contrary, I don’t believe the club owners are losing money.”

Weaver pitched a few innings in one game at Fighter Command Headquarters recently, the first time he had thrown a ball in over a year and a half, and he doesn’t figure to do much playing in the future.

July 20, 1943

557 GI Janes Here for Duty With Air Force

Girls Will Release Soldiers from Clerical Jobs for Combat Duty

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

WAAC REPLACEMENT DEPOT, England, July 19—The First Separate Battalion of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps—557 strong—is in Britain to relieve men of the Eighth Air Force for combat duty.

The girls slipped quietly into this camp without publicity of fanfare save a rousing welcome by a small group of soldiers on duty and a GI band that played, "Let Me Call You Sweetheart."

The battalion will remain here about a week, easing sea legs and being processed, before going to Air Force units as stenographers, telephonists, plotters at operational stations and in other duties for which they are, or will be, trained.

REPRESENT ALL 48 STATES

The first complete WAAC unit to reach the ETO—it is the largest of two expeditionary forces serving overseas—represents all 48 States and the District of Columbia. The girls range in ages from 21 to 45—average 27—and are blonde, brunette and redhead.

Led by its commanding officer, Capt. Mary A. Halleren, of Lowell, Mass., the battalion was welcomed at the port of debarkation by the WAAC commander in the ETO, Capt. Anna Wilson of Studio City, Cal., who with several other officers and five enrolled members preceded the battalion to Britain during the last several months.

Asked if there were more WAACs headed for the ETO, Capt. Wilson said the War Department had allotted 5,000 members for overseas duty, and she hoped "to get my share of them."

Although the government bill, approved by Congress and the President, making the WAAC an integral part of the U.S. Army, does not go into effect until Sept. 30, the WAACs in this theater will receive 20 per cent overseas bonus and V-mail privileges. They will not be eligible for government insurance or Class "E" allotments until Sept. 30, however. Capt. Wilson also said the WAACs here would be sworn into the Army sometime before Sept. 1.

When they arrived by train at this station the WAACs demonstrated their military training and discipline by taking 12 minutes to adjust packs, clear the platform and start marching to their barracks.

The WAAC contingent included girls who only a few months ago were students, secretaries, models, telephone operators, chorus girls and the good-looking kid who served them "off the arm" in Max's Diner on U.S. Highway No 1.

They were women who gave up defense jobs like Jean Biship, 22-year-old spot welder in a bomber plant from Hillsdale, Mich., and Sina Thompson, shipyard welder from Siletz, Ore. They were married and single, mothers and grandmothers, like 43-year-old Pfc Margaret Conklin, of Susanville, Cal., ex-practical nurse with six children, a half-dozen grandchildren, a 20-year-old son in the Infantry and a son-in-law instructing Chinese air cadets in Arizona.

Some have husbands, sweethearts, and brothers in service, already buried on foreign battlegrounds or who are prisoners-of-war, like blonde Margie Simpkins, of Christiansburg, Va., who is waiting for a USAAF P38 fighter pilot sweating out the war in a German prison camp.

When the battalion is split up and dispatched to Air Force stations each unit will have its own administrative body, will have communal mess with enlisted men or mess separately, at the discretion of the station commander. In any case they will be eligible for KP, according to Capt. Wilson. A number of the WAACs will be sent to Signal Corps schools to study British operations and procedure.

August 7, 1943

Flying Tigers Come to the ETO

6 Vets of Chennault's AVG Work at P47 Base in England

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

A USAAF FIGHTER STATION, England, Aug. 6—It's a long way from Rangoon to Britain and a big difference between working on obsolescent P40s, not to mention the comparative pleasure of sitting down to Army chow instead of fish heads and rice.

That's what six men—a dentist and five members of ground personnel—attached to a fighter group at this station are thinking these days.

Not long ago they were making aviation history with the American Volunteer Group, the Flying Tigers of Claire Chennault, against the Japs in Burma and China.

A couple of months ago they came to Britain to live on velvet in comparison with the rugged life of the AVG, but they wouldn't trade their 15 months in the Far East for anything.

"There will never be another outfit like the Tigers," mused M/Sgt Charlie Kenner, of Baltimore, group inspector of of a P47 ground crew. "Sure it was hard work, rough living, air raids almost every day and night, malaria and dysentery, rain and stinking heat, bad booze and worse food. But it was an adventure that comes once in a lifetime. Lots of fun—and damn good pay."

The other ex-Tigers here with Kenner, doing practically the same work as they did with the AVG, are Capt. E.W. Bruce, Morristown, Tenn., the dentist who did work on Chiang-Kai-shek's molars; M/Sgt. Dan Keller, Pittsburgh, and Matid Hardestry, Camden, N.J., line chiefs; Clarence Riffer, Farren, Pa., armament chief, and T/Sgt. Jack Sommers, Middletown, Ohio, group operations.

Returning from the Far East when the AVG was disbanded a year ago July 4, the six rejoined the Air Force and were assigned to the same USAAF fighter group.

Their adventures with the Tigers began in the spring of 1941. They were among fliers, ground crews, medical and administrative personnel recruited from the USAAF and USNAF by Chennault, the retired USAAF captain who joined the Chinese Air Force as a colonel, rose to brigadier general and who now wears two stars as commander of the USAAF in China.

Discharged from the Army and Navy with the approval of the President, VG recruits signed one-year contracts with aircraft corporations such as Central Aircraft Manufacturing Co., operating for the Chinese government.

"There was good money for risking your neck on that job," says Kenner. "I got \$350 a month as a crew chief. Line chiefs got \$400, wing pilots \$600, flight leaders \$650 and squadron leadrs \$700. The fliers got damn good bonuses, too."

SPECIAL TRAINING

In Kunming, on the mountainous border between Burma and China, Chennault put his Tigers through extensive courses of special training. The "old man" didn't have the planes and equipment he needed but he knew Jap aerial methods and worked on their weaknesses.

"Our P40s were old models," Keller pointed out. "But they could take lots of punishment in comparison with a Zero. One burst in a Zero engine or through a wing was enough to knock it off. Our crates rode that easily."

Somers, who was on his back with malaria for four days before anybody knew what he had, said rank didn't mean a thing with the Tigers.

"We always called Chennault the 'old man,'" he said. "Hell, we could talk to him any time. That is, if you talked in his good ear. He's pretty deaf in one of them."

Recalling the fall of Rangoon in February, 1942, Sommers said it turned out to be a field day for the Tigers.

"Our primary job was to keep the Burma Road and Rangoon harbor open," he continued. "When they decided to evacuate Rangoon millions of dollars in vehicles, equipment, wine, whiskey, food, gas and oil were left on the docks.

"We needed a lot of that stuff and during the bombardment we walked off with a staff car for the old man, cases of wine and whiskey and all the plane parts, gas and oil we could carry. After all, it was legitimate loot."

In order to keep the old P40s in the air, the ground crews had to beg, borrow or steal everything that wasn't nailed down. They faked requisitions, did everything against the rules; but the old man looked the other way. He wasn't concerned with what his men did as long as they had the planes ready when he wanted them.

DISBANDED IN '42

When the USAAF moved into China in the Spring of '42 and the Tigers disbanded as a volunteer group the boys were ready to go home. But the Army wanted them to stay.

It was Chennault who told the Army it couldn't hold his men if they didn't want to stay.

Kenner had met a British nurse in Rangoon, courted her in Mandalay and married her in Calcutta and he wanted to go back to Baltimore. He did. Sommers topped off in Calcutta and Bombay before leaving, blowing \$1,100 of his savings during a two-week spree.

"It was worth every nickel of it," he said. "After smoking everything from Luckies, when you could get 'em, at \$4.50 a pack, to Chinese weeds, eating caribou, water buffalo, rhinoceros, fish heads and rice until I started to get slant-eyed—sure I needed a binge."

Back in the States, most of the 250 Tigers remained civilians just about long enough to get used to white women again, get rid of the quinine in their systems and fatten up lean frames before going into service.

Keller was in again after five weeks. Sommers took three months. Kenner pitched his home in Baltimore and became the father of a son the day he left for Britain.

Comes the end of the war and these six Flying Tigers are heading for Waterproof, La., for a reunion at "Old Man" Chennault's homestead with what is left of the old AVG.

August 27, 1943

Ack-Ack Gunners Trained Here

Air Force School Run By Major Who Was 'Too Old to Fight'

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

U.S. ANTI-AIRCRAFT SCHOOL, England, Aug. 26—A 58-year-old major who thumbed his way across the Atlantic with the Air Force, after the Field Artillery told him he was too old to fight, will probably go through his second war without firing a shot at the enemy.

But, he's doing the next best thing: teaching others how to shoot, and in the last nine months has trained thousands of soldiers to defend U.S. installations in the ETO against attacks by enemy aircraft.

The major—lean, leathery Walter S. Jones, of Milwaukee, Wis.—is boss of this anti-aircraft school, the only one of its kind operated by U.S. forces in this theater. He gets clerks, mechanics, riflemen, engineers, and artillerymen for courses and sends them back to their units equipped to drop pencils, tools, rifles and shovels and get behind ring-railed, water-cooled .50 caliber machine-guns—and use them.

Primarily an instruction center for Air Force personnel who have to defend their own USAAF stations, the school also trains men from every branch of service, the theory being that a bomb would just as leave come to rest in the Infantry's back yard as it would on an Air Force station.

Made up of three phases, the course includes aircraft recognition, mechanical function of a water-cooled .50 and practical range work against sleeve targets towed by RAF monoplanes. That's making a long story short because the schedule lists such detailed training as safety precautions, manipulation of gun and mount, gun pointing and tracking, individual tracer control, dispersion and hit expectancy, calculation of leads, assembly and disassembly, mounting and dismounting, stoppages and immediate repairs.

In other words, if you don't know all there is to know about a water-cooled .50 when you leave this school—you should.

"The course is a short one," Maj. Jones points out. "We can't keep men away from the units for very long, so we cram everything we can into a steady, operating routine. If a soldier has a mind to learn he can grasp everything that's taught him. If he's indifferent he doesn't belong here in the first place."

Born of necessity when it was determined that British personnel was too scarce to man A.A. guns at U.S. installations, the school was founded last November by the Eighth Air Force.

Looking around for a man to do the job, officials pinned it on Maj. Jones, who had a reputation of getting things done. The reputation resulted from an incident that took place while the major commanded an Air Force unit of ground personnel. A guard, who accidentally fired a round, caused Maj. Jones to conduct a one-man investigation of his unit's weapons' training. In less time that it takes for him to tell about it he had every man in his command on a British range for long hours of rifle firing.

TRAINED OWN INSTRUCTORS

When he was assigned to establish the A.A. school, Maj. Jones started from scratch, was granted a section of this British camp in southwest England, trained his own instructors, picked up whatever

equipment he could and sent out a call for students. In order to give trainees first-hand instruction he retained only those instructors who knew their stuff—first hand.

Head of the aircraft recognition department is a rotund sergeant whose chief interest for the last 14 years has been telling one plane from another and who has done nothing else during his 17 months in the army but teach aircraft recognition.

Jim Handy, the 35-year-old expert from Denver, Colo., was on the payroll of Lockheed Aircraft for 12 years as a camouflage instructor and for 14 years has made a hobby of aircraft recognition. If anybody can teach novices the difference between a FW190 and a P47 or a Me109E from a P51, it's Jim Handy. His identification course here covers 57 types of U.S., British and German aircraft—all that the Air Force permits him to cover in this theater.

INFANTRY AIDS ARTILLERY

No. 1 aide to artilleryman Maj. Jones at this Air Force school is an infantry officer, Capt. Leonard E. Pauley, of Lake Charles, La., which exemplifies cooperation between the branches of the service.

Capt. Pauley, who says he didn't get his second bar because he married his CO's daughter, supervises "dry run" training with a secretive device instituted by the British in their AA training, besides joining the staff for other instruction.

All the preliminary training leads up to the practical range work, covering a minimum of eight days, six hours a day.

"Can't learn how to do anything unless you get a lot of practical experience," is Maj. Jones' outlook. "And we give the boys all the firing we can."

No chairborne commander, the major is on the firing line every day with his men, barking fire orders and frequently getting behind a gun to show them how it's done.

The major is strong on British cooperation and cites a recent example of of unselfish Anglo-American cooperation when an RAF plane crashed into the sea after towing the sleeve target all morning for the Yanks' range work. The crash resulted from the sleeve cable getting tangled in the rudder. The two-man crew was killed but the RAF had another plane around next day running the gauntlet of .50 caliber tracers.

It isn't hard for the 58-year-old major to remember the comical look he had on his face and the feeling that somebody kicked him six inches below the belt when they passed on that "too old to fight" sentence. But he feels a little better about it now that he can tell his daughter, a captain in the WAC, and his two boys, both second looys, he's doing a helluva sight more in this war than he did in the last one as an OCS instructor back home.

September 9, 1943

Eisenhower Announces All Italian Armed Forces Give Up Unconditionally; Badoglio Orders People to Cease Hostilities; Merchant Navy Told to Proceed to Allied or Neutral Ports; Armistice Signed Sept. 3, Binds Italy to Abide by Terms

Italy surrendered unconditionally yesterday.

At 5:30 PM Gen. Eisenhower announced that a military armistice had been signed “by my representative and the representative of Marshal Badoglio and it becomes effective this instant. Hostilities between the armed forces of the United Nations and those of Italy terminate at once.”

Eisenhower’s statement asserted the terms of the armistice he had granted as Allied commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean had been approved by the governments of Britain, Russia and the U.S. An announcement at 10 Downing Street, however, said that they could not be announced at present.

The Allied blitz was kept up until the very end. British troops made new landings at the Gulf of Eufemia, while other Eighth Army forces chased Nazi rearguards up the Italian “boot.” And in the air Flying Fortresses blasted Foggia airdrome anew, while medium bombers hammered away at roads and bridges.

ALLIES BLAST ITALY RIGHT UP TO END

The full fury of the American and British air and land onslaught against the Axis in Italy kept up right to the end.

While Allied bombers were blasting the already sorely battered Foggia and points near Rome itself, British troops carried out new landings at Eufemia Gulf—40 miles north of the area where other Eighth Army forces were pursuing weak Nazi rearguards along the toe.

Foggia was the chief target for yesterday’s raid by Flying Fortresses which, escorted, had to fight through one of the strongest screens of fighters the Axis had yet put up over Italy. Enemy fighters attacked in scores as the bombers went to their targets. At least 11 enemy fighters fell to the guns of the Forts or their escort.

On the Calabrian peninsula British and Canadian forces were slowly advancing practically unopposed. A six-mile advance along the west coast from Palmi, and an advance 12 miles inland by another column, were reported by Algiers radio. No official announcement was made on the new British landings at Eufemia Gulf.

For the first time the Italians reported that an effort was being made by the Axis troops to slow down the Allied advance.

Contact with Axis troops was also reported by Algiers radio, which said that an enemy rearguard had been encountered by our troops advancing from Palmi, but opposition seems to have been only very slight.

The main body of the enemy was still well ahead of the last town occupied by Allied forces, and civilians reported that the Germans had moved out two or three days before the

Canadians arrived.

Almost everywhere the Allied troops are treated as liberators rather than as conquerors, and the welcome the British troops are getting becomes warmer the further they advance.

EISENHOWER ANNOUNCES UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER

Hostilities between Italy and the Allied Nations ended at 5:30 PM yesterday, when Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander-in-Chief in Africa, announced to the world that Marshal Badoglio had surrendered the Italian forces “unconditionally.”

A short time later Marshal Badoglio, in a message to the Italian people, instructed them to cease all hostilities against the Anglo-American forces and to oppose attacks of any other forces.

Details of the terms of the armistice have not been announced but Gen. Eisenhower said in his radio announcement from Allied Force Headquarters in North Africa that “the Italian government has bound itself to abide by these terms without reservation.”

The armistice was signed at Allied Headquarters in Sicily on Sept. 3.

President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill received the news in Washington, but there was no official statement from either of the U.S. or British government leaders. From 10 Downing St. it was announced, however, that the armistice is strictly a military instrument signed by military authorities, and that it does not include political, financial and economic terms which will be imposed later.

Badoglio, in his message, which was first broadcast over Algiers radio and later from Rome, said that the Italian government recognized the impossibility of continuing the unequal struggle against the Allied forces and that an armistice had been requested from Gen. Eisenhower in order to avoid further harm to the Italian nation.

“This request has been granted.”

HOW NEGOTIATIONS WERE MADE

The story of the negotiations leading up the surrender was revealed by Algiers radio.

Some weeks ago the Italian government approached the British and American governments with a view to concluding an armistice. At a meeting in neutral territory the Italian representatives were told that they must surrender unconditionally and on this understanding the Allied representatives were empowered to communicate to them the military conditions they would have to fulfill.

(continued on next page)

September 9, 1943

Eisenhower Announces All Italian Armed Forces Give Up Unconditionally

(continued)

One of the clauses binds Italy to comply with all political, economic and financial conditions the Allies impose.

Another meeting was arranged, this time in Sicily. Finally, on Sept. 3, the armistice agreement was signed at Allied HQ, Sicily.

In spite of the fact that the Italians had thus surrendered, the possibility of the Germans preventing the surrender from becoming known among the Italians had to be taken into consideration.

To meet this eventuality it was agreed that one of the senior Italian representatives remain in Sicily. Another precaution was to have Marshal Badoglio send a copy of the proclamation he would make to the Italian people to Sicily, in case the Germans prevented its being broadcast.

The Germans, however, did not prevent its being broadcast, for Rome radio tonight broadcast the proclamation which Italians heard in Badoglio's own voice.

Obviously the Germans will not leave whatever part of Italy they now virtually occupy without a fight if they feel this can be successfully staged.

Pointers to this were contained in the text of leaflets, announcing the surrender of the Italian armed forces, which are being distributed among the Italians. These contain instructions to various Italian classes for action to get the Germans out of Italy.

The leaflets call on the Italians to give all aid to the Allied troops and to do nothing to help the Germans in areas where the Germans are operating.

One of the clauses binds Italy to comply with all political, economic and financial conditions the Allies impose.

Another meeting was arranged, this time in Sicily. Finally, on Sept. 3, the armistice agreement was signed at Allied HQ, Sicily.

In spite of the fact that the Italians had thus surrendered, the possibility of the Germans preventing the surrender from becoming known among the Italians had to be taken into consideration.

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October 2, 1943

‘25-Mission’ Man

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

Twenty-five mission men are not rare in the Eighth Air Force, but without exception each one who has sweated out and completed 25 trips to and from enemy territory has a rare story. Some have been told in part. Some are more colorful than others. This is the story of Thomas Joseph McGrath, Flying Fortress waist gunner, who had more than an average share of thrills, flak and Focke-Wulfs from the morning he took off on his first mission to Romilly-sur-Seine until the afternoon eight months later when he came back from the Ruhr on his 25th. Although he has been decorated with the DSC, DFC, Purple Heart and Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, he doesn't consider himself a hero. But, then, most 25-mission men don't.

If you read the newspapers you remember the “Unmentionable Ten,” the Fortress that came back from Lorient on less than a wing and a prayer with two gunners severely wounded, three crewmen sharing two oxygen lines, an injured navigator on the floor charting a course home from landmarks called off by the bombardier and the ship riddled with more flak and 20mm fragments than Boeing thought a B17 could carry in her frame.

That was Tom McGrath's ship and his 23rd mission. The 23-year-old waist gunner had rough trips before—St. Nazaire's “flak city,” Brest, Bremen, Wilhelmshaven—but not like that one. He was bowled over twice by cannon fire and flak, and when they carried him off the ship flight surgeons weren't certain it wasn't his last trip anywhere except to wherever dead waist gunners gather for that last briefing.

They had Mac on the operating table for three hours, picking shrapnel from two ugly wounds in his right arm and in a gaping hole in his side. Despite the almost fatal injuries, he had twice crawled back to his gun and kept firing until the last Nazi fighter was out of sight.

They didn't know how he kept conscious through it all, let alone man his caliber .50.

Mac doesn't think he did so much and the blond, curly-haired Irishman doesn't talk about it. But the Air Force said he was largely responsible for the deflection of enemy attacks and for the subsequent safe return of the aircraft and crew. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, America's second highest decoration for valor.

A typical combat crewman, Mac doesn't regard his action as extraordinary because he remembers the men who lived with him in the same hut, those with whom he played cards and joked about the second thing they were going to do when they got home, the familiar faces he knew from the crowded briefing room.

He remembers the days when they didn't come back.

NO DSCs FOR THEM

Says he, “They probably crawled back to their guns too. Maybe they could have got out but waited to help another

guy with his ‘chute or decided to stick it out and get the ship back... too late.” No DSCs for them. Combat crews may not be filled with brotherly love but they do those things for one another.

Mac says that Lorient job scared him. A lot of others did too. “Fighters are bad enough but flak scares hell out of you. Can't fight flak. Can't run away from it either.”

“When I was a kid in Philadelphia,” Mac remembers, “I was so scared by the sight of a nun when I showed up for my first day at St. Hugh's school... I ran home. Had a terrible time getting me back, too. Don't know as I ever got over it ‘cause I finished up in a public school...”

Like most combat crewmen, Mac was cocky on his first mission. Hell, nothing could happen to him. He had a good pilot in “Big” Adams, didn't he, and a good crew? Besides, he could take care of himself. Had been for a long time now. FW190s and Me109s weren't so hot. What was all this about flak anyway?

Like most combat crewmen, Mac also learned the hard way—that German flak was all they said it was and Nazi fighters had good ships and knew how to fly them. After his first three missions to Romilly-sur-Seine, the heavily protected sub pens of Lorient and Brest and the Wilhelmshaven naval base, Thomas Joseph McGrath was a man separated from the boys.

DOWN TO EARTH

Says he, “I guess I was still a little cocky after the Romilly raid because it was a ‘milk run’ for us. But I came down to earth after Lorient-Brest. I saw all the flak I ever wanted to see there. We were shot up quite a bit but got back o.k. Then, when we went to Wilhelmshaven for the first all-American raid on Germany, I discovered what teamwork in a Fortress formation means. Our ship was tail-end Charlie, a sucker target for fighters, and you just have to rely on other ships to give you a hand in driving them off.

“I always wondered if it was true that you get crazy thoughts in combat. Some fellows said you think about things you never thought you'd remember. Like the first girl you dated...”

Mac was still in grammar school when he met Anna. “Don't recall her last name. But she was the first girl who made me blink. We used to sit on a park bench and make small talk like kids do. I think I took her to the movies once. Lost track of her after I quit school and got a job running telegrams for Western Union. I was only 16 then. About the age kids want to spread out, go places and do things.”

(continued on following page)

October 2, 1943

‘25-Mission’ Man

(continued)

It was on the way back from St. Nazaire that Mac first saw a Fortress queen die and to him she didn't look like she was dying proudly.

“It was one of the toughest missions we had,” he says. “Over the target the sky was pocked with flak as far as I could see. Fighters were all over the clock. Shortly after we headed home a ship from another group came down from above to fly on our right wing. It's No. 3 engine was burning and the wing wrapped in flames. It went along like that for five minutes before anybody jumped. Then one man bailed out. Two others followed him but they were too late. The wing came apart and their chutes were caught in the wreckage. They didn't have a chance. It was the first time I'd seen a ship crack up and I'll never forget it. My stomach turned over, made me sick.”

Mac never paid much attention to his parachute until then. Some gunners don't bother to keep them handy. They have to see somebody lose his life before they realize what it means, he says. Mac remembers the day he saw a man bail out and drop right through his harness because a buckle wasn't hooked. It wasn't a nice sight... someone frantically grasping at air to pull himself up. Another telegram to be sent by the Adjutant General. Maybe to the fellow's wife...

Mac has a wife. He met Dorothy Cook in Philadelphia before he enlisted but they weren't married until a year later in the chapel at a port of embarkation. Says he, “I'm still sweating out a honeymoon. I was alerted when I was married and couldn't leave the post. I didn't think I'd leave so soon but I was on my way two days after the wedding. I didn't feel so good about it.”

When you have done 25 missions it isn't easy to remember everything, but Mac hasn't forgotten the second time he went to Wilhelmshaven. After leaving the target a piece of flak cut the oxygen lines and electrical wires behind the pilot. The oxygen ignited and burst into flames. The navigator and bombardier bailed out, thinking the ship was doomed. Then the pilot started to pass out from lack of oxygen and the co-pilot, Lt. Henry McMurry, had to take over with the controls shot out. They used to kid McMurry about his piloting, but he brought the crippled Fort home.

Mac had another close call in a subsequent mission when somebody called fighters at 12 o'clock. He stuck his head through the waist window and a 20mm. shell exploded over his head, driving him to the apposite side of the plane. He got back to his gun just as a FW barrel-rolled through the formation and zipped past him. Another 20mm. hit his gun-mount, narrowly missing him.

FLAK OVER BREMEN

The first time the Forts hit Bremen on Apr. 17 they lost 16 but brought down 62 fighters. Mac saw one B17 group below him, and to the left, disregard a wall of flak and fly right through it to make their bomb run. Says he, “It's a wonder any of them got through. I'll bet there were a lot of gunners on those ship who wished they joined the Infantry...”

Mac didn't always want to be an aerial gunner. “When I was 17 and making a wanderlust tour of the country,” he remembers, “I thought of joining the cavalry in Texas but when they said I'd have to groom a horse's hind quarters for \$21 a month, I lost interest. I tried to enlist in the armored corps before I joined the Air Force but I wasn't accepted.” How Mac came to be a gunner is a secret between himself and a medical officer who okayed his eye test. Mac came overseas as a mechanic after being rejected for aerial gunnery but he was accepted here.

Mac was grounded for three months after he was shot up on his 23rd mission. But he had it in him to go on two of the toughest jobs in which the Eighth Air Force took part when he was back on combat status. They were the raids on the Nazi rubber factory at Hanover and the synthetic oil plants at Gelsenkirchen, Wesseling and Bonn in the Ruhr. The black tape on the briefing board stretched long to those targets.

Tom McGrath has come a long way since the day he was frightened by the sight of a nun at St. Hugh's. He's a 25-mission man and the Air Force says he's a hero.

Says Mac, “All I'm interesting in is my wife and the honeymoon that's waiting, together with a chance to get a job after the war.”

October 5, 1943

Raid Christens B17 *Stars and Stripes*

Staff Writer Along for Baptismal of Bullets, Flak

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

A HEAVY BOMBER STATION, Oct 4—Flak burst over the nose of 1/Lt. Clarence S. McIlveen's Fortress *The Stars and Stripes* to christen the ship today as Eighth Air Force bombers struck deep inside Germany.

One of the first ships over the target, the big B17, named for the U.S. forces' newspaper in the ETO, toted a load of high explosives—and someone to write the story.

Almost as uneventfully as delivering the soldiers' morning newspaper on time, the newly christened Fortress pegged straight to the target, dropped its bombs on a major link in the Reich's system of air defense, and then headed home through flak and fighter opposition.

Flying in the nose of the ship with 1/Lt. Bill Williams, bombardier from Barnsville, Ga., and Navigator 2/Lt. Eugene Shober, of Ottumwa, Ia. I waited for the flak with which Nazi ground defenses shake up invaders, and for the Luftwaffe fighters.

But there was no flak or fighter opposition to hinder the outward flight until shortly before we reached the target. Then a few fighters made passes at the Fortress fleet. The absence of fighters and flak gave us a break over the target, but Nazi ground defenses tore at formations behind us.

We made our bomb run, and shortly after starting the homeward flight our ship was hit in two places by flak. One fragment nicked the left wing near the nose and another fractured the oil line feeding No. 1 engine.

Then, all the way back to the coast, FW190s and Me109s hacked away at the formation in twos, threes and fours. Our gunners didn't claim any enemy fighter by way of celebrating the ship's "christening," but their fire kept the Nazis at long range.

NAZI FORCED TO BAIL OUT

S/Sgt. Eddie Barrett, our tail gunner from New York City, and at 28 the oldest member in the crew, had a crack at a Focke Wulfe which attempted to get through the suicide circle that is a Fortress formation, and watched a gunner from another B17 finish him off. The Nazi pilot bailed out when his plane went into a spin.

Nearing the Dutch coast, a swarm of FWs made the final attack, a formation of six coming in at 11 o'clock. Just as the others, they were driven off.

Another Fortress in the same group, the *Gremlin Buggy*, took Sgt. Andrew Rooney, of The Stars and Stripes, on the mission. Rooney's ship came through unscathed. A third writer, M/Sgt. Bud Hutton, also of this newspaper, started as a regular gunner in another plane, but the B17 was forced to return to base because of mechanical difficulties.

It was originally planned to drop a number of copies of the Stars and Stripes over the target as the first "continental edition" of this war and successor to the paper of the same name which circulated on the continent during World War I, but the idea was abandoned.

The Fortress *Stars and Stripes* bears a decoration painted especially by Sgt. Dick Wingert, staff artist of the newspaper.

November 4, 1943

Objective: Hitler's Western Wall -- Young expert on German tactics briefs U.S. Assault Troops for invasion in amphibious battle exercises

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

Along the continental European coast... behind what is probably the strongest and most deliberately fortified first line of defense against invasion in the world... the Wehrmacht is waiting.

For three years the heiling warriors of Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt have been digging themselves in behind walls of concrete and steel, hundreds of miles of wire, pillboxes, road blocks, mined beaches and fortifications... ever since Hitler called them back off the docks of France muttering in his beard something equivalent to "damn Spitfires."

The Allied High Command makes no secret of the fact that it will take an "unparalleled attack" to crack that western wall of Festung Europa, and it likewise makes no effort to conceal the fact that its plans are already blueprinted.

Here along a stretch of English coast, topographically similar to many points on the German-held shores of Europe, thousands of American assault troops are preparing for their part in springing the lock on Adolf's front door.

COMBINED OPERATIONS

The preparations are intense, and in most phases severe. Every type of weapon and vehicle necessary for a successful stroke is used in the most extensive amphibious exercises undertaken by U.S. forces in Britain, at least, and in all probability anywhere else. The maneuvers combine operations between Army, Navy and Air Force. Nothing is spared. Ammunition and equipment are expendable.

Hand-picked by the War Department for the job of briefing these troops—no specialized units but ordinary infantry and armored forces designed and trained for assault purposes—is a 37-year-old Nebraskan who knows more than most military masterminds what Pvt. Joe Blow is going to find when he scrambles into the surf from his LCVP and over the beaches where the Wehrmacht is waiting.

Young, able Col. Paul W. Thompson spent several months with units of the German army, as recently as 1939, during service as an assistant military attaché in Berlin. Author of numerous articles on German tactics, chemical engineer and expert on amphibious operations, Col. Thompson carefully planned his invasion technique before adopting it for the Assault Training Center.

He presided over a conference of Army, Navy, Marine and Air Force officials that lasted for 30 days, gathering information gleaned from invasions of North Africa, Sicily, Salerno and islands in the southwest Pacific. He studied air reconnaissance photos of German defenses, reports from secret service agents.

The West Point graduate surrounded himself with a staff

of capable and experienced officers from every branch of the Army, gathered commissioned instructors skilled in their work, many of whom were battle-trained in war zones. He reproduced enemy fortifications all over this maneuver area. Then Col. Thompson went to work.

The technique employed in assault landings is not for publication. At least not that which is to be employed in the liquidation of the Western Wall when the Allied High Command sets its watch on "H" hour. But the equipment used in the operation will be the best and most improved hurled against the enemy in the war.

The training center familiarizes soldiers and sailors with all phases of amphibious warfare—from embarkation on landing craft, navigation and debarkation on beaches to the establishment of bridgeheads, attacks on shore defenses and inland assaults on strong points.

Training in small units first, the men are taught to embark and debark with tanks, heavy artillery, A.A. guns, trucks, bulldozers and infantry weapons with split-second swiftness and accuracy. They learn to recognize and neutralize enemy mines and booby traps as well as put their own into effect. During the exercises live booby traps are planted over the ground covered by advancing troops, the theory being it's better to get shaken up now than blown up later.

During landing operations the Navy transports personnel and vehicles in 36-foot LCVPs (Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel) bearing one assault section and their weapons, LCMs (Landing Craft Mechanized) built to carry a medium tank as a maximum load and LCTs (Landing Craft Tanks), 105 feet in length and capable of carrying 180 tons. There are larger craft, like LSTs (Landing ship, tanks) which could be employed.

The first obstacles to overcome by invaders are pill boxes, coastal gun positions and bands of barbed wire. Enemy fire for these exercises is simulated by TNT explosions on the beach through which troops in the first wave must overcome to establish the initial bridgehead.

Supported by tanks, after consolidation of the bridgehead, troops move inland over and under more wire, invasion walls and steep hills to hit strong points beyond shore defenses.

It is during maneuvers against these German hedge-hog positions that assault troops here receive battle indoctrination that could only be more realistic in actual combat.

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November 4, 1943

Objective: Hitler's Western Wall

(continued)

AREA WELL FORTIFIED

The fortified area under attack consists of 11 concrete pillboxes, two of which are reinforced with steel, a number of open emplacements, slit trenches, observation posts and fox holes. Surrounded by bands of tactical double apron wire, ranging from two to six bands in depth, the area is planted with anti-tank and anti-personnel mines, tank traps and other obstacles.

Launching the hedgehog attack are medium bombers of the Air Force Ground Support Command which blast "enemy" positions with HE bombs. Batteries of 105mm howitzers fire over the heads of advancing troops, M4 tanks and M10 tank destroyers add their supporting fire. Mortars lay on objectives and provide smoke screens. Under cover of the screen, the assault companies, tanks, destroyers, and anti-tank units deploy for the attack.

At "H" hour the mass attack is sprung, covered by the massed fire of all supporting weapons. Spitfires whistle in to strafe as the attack inches forward. Booby traps are cleared, sections close in on pillboxes with flame throwers, bazookas and demolition. Once the first line of defenses is neutralized artillery fire is raised to the second objectives.

Nothing stops the drive until it is finished. Injured are treated or removed under fire.

The reaction of the troops to this invasion rehearsal, according to Col. Thompson, is that it is "tough and exacting," but they are enthusiastic. No chairborne leader, he gets into fox holes with the men, prods them with questions and gets first-hand reactions.

Col. Thompson, naturally, isn't the only one interested in the preparation of these troops. Lt. Gen. Jacob L. Devers, ETOUSA commander, and Maj. Gen. Leonard T. Gerow, chief of ground forces in this theater, have been visitors. Liaison between American and British amphibious chief is maintained.

The training of assault troops here will continue through the winter and beyond, Col. Thompson said. Billeted at present in "tent cities," troops will soon move to Nissen hut areas now under construction.

The Wehrmacht is waiting... how much longer it will have to wait is a question causing anxiety not only to the defenders of Festung Europa but to Pvt. Joe Blow who has to go in and dig them out.

November 17, 1943

Fort *Stars and Stripes* Finds 12B (Awright, 13) Lucky Trip

by Charles F. Kiley, *Stars and Stripes* Staff Writer

AN EIGHTH BOMBER STATION, Nov. 16—The *Stars and Stripes* thumbed its plexi-glass nose at superstition and winged its way over Axis territory for the 13th time today, joining in the second bombing of important military targets in Norway by Eighth Air Force heavy bombers.

If there was any hard luck riding on the Fortress it was in the form of heavy bombs which cascaded down on the unlucky objectives. Otherwise mission No. 13—or 12B, as the flying trade calls it—was just a long frigid trip for the B17 which 1/Lt. Clarence McIlveen, of Portland, Ore., and his crew named after the servicemen's newspaper in the ETO.

Aerial photos and reports from crews at this station, commanded by Lt. Col. Elliott Vandevanter, Jr., of Washington, indicated that the target bombed by this group was destroyed.

In a position to note the damage, 1/Lt. Earl Mazo, of Charlestown, S.C., who flew in the Raunchy Wolf, said the bomb loads from *The Stars and Stripes* and other Forts dropped straight across the target.

As on the Marienburg mission Oct, 9, this group led a bomb division on today's trip, with Col. Vandevanter in command.

The group reported no flak over the target. A few enemy fighters were reported over Norway on the outward flight and over the North Sea on the way back, but none was seen.

"It was a hell of a cold trip," observed S/Sgt. Dan Sullivan, 20-year-old *Stars and Stripes* waist gunner from New York, the only crew member doing his 13th mission with the ship. "but the scenery was nice. I would have hated to bail out over those snow-covered mountains in Norway."

Because another crew flew the ship on last week's raid on Bremen, most of the S and S fliers still have 12B ahead.

The Stars and Stripes, which started ops in the Lorient raid Sept. 23, has never turned back from a mission because of mechanical difficulties, thanks to the ground crew.

November 25, 1943

Tail Gone, Fort Escapes from Reich

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

AN EIGHTH BOMBER STATION, Nov. 25—An almost unbelievable story of a Fortress flying over enemy territory for 90 minutes with most of its tail assembly torn away, of a heroic crew fighting off enemy attacks until the B17 crashed into the icy North Sea, and of nine men tossing around rough seas in a half-submerged dinghy for seven hours, came to light here today when it was revealed that the pilot has been recommended for a posthumous award of the DSC and the co-pilot for the Silver Star.

Credited with the feat of keeping the “ship without a tail” airborne until it left enemy territory and with playing a major role in effecting the rescue of the crew were 1/Lt. Ben J. McCall, 24-year-old pilot of San Antonio, Tex., who died in the arms of his top-turret gunner before the crew was picked up by the RAF Air-Sea Rescue Service, and 2/Lt. C. L. “Pete” Ginn, co-pilot from Bonita, La.

It was during the last USAAF raid on Bremen. Just before the Forts reached the target, McCall’s ship lost its rudder, most of the horizontal and vertical stabilizers and the oxygen system on the port side. The plane lost 1,000 feet of altitude, but McCall and Ginn struggled to keep it in formation until they bombed the target.

On the homeward flight the crippled Fort had to try to make it alone. On two occasions Ginn gave the order to bail out when it appeared the ship was doomed. Each time, however McCall and Ginn regained control, using a combination of automatic and manual controls and with the help of Thunderbolts and Lightnings nursed the B17 through swarms of enemy fighters to the North Sea. During part of the trip the Fort flew “in formation” with a wounded Liberator and a crippled P38.

The plane crashed only 80 miles from the English coast, with only one five-man dinghy available for nine men. A Hudson from Air-Sea rescue Service dropped another hours later but it was too damaged to use.

Two Liberators meanwhile hovered overhead to mark the position of the ditched crew.

Injured in the crash landing, Lt. McCall remained conscious until two hours before the rescue. He was kept afloat in the dinghy by his top turret gunner, T/Sgt. Lawrence F. Charland, of Brooklyn. During the seven hours in the snow, hail and rain-swept sea the crew was submerged to their waists in water and only Lt. Ginn had sufficient strength to find a Very pistol and fire flares.

According to Ginn, every member of the crew was responsible for the safe return of those who got back.

S/Sgt. Edward Berthiaume, of Worcester, Mass., remained in the ball turret defending the ship all the way despite the lack of oxygen. He refused to share the pilot and co-pilot’s oxygen supply because they “needed it more than he did.”

While the crew was stacked in the radio room waiting for the crash landing, T/Sgt. Stanley W. Easterbrook, radio operator from Shippensburg, Pa., removed one shoe and stretched his legs to tap out an SOS with his toes.

December 9, 1943

Flying Nurses Get Set in ETO to Care for Invasion Casualties

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

American flight nurses, trained to evacuate wounded soldiers by air from battlefronts, are in England ready to move in with the Allied invasion of Europe from the west.

Stationed temporarily at U.S. bomber bases, the “glamour girls” of the Air Force are getting practical experience in the care of battle casualties by attending fliers cut up on raids over enemy territory.

The flying nurses are attached to Air Evacuation Squadrons and are part of the organization which sent girls to Africa, the southwest Pacific and Alaska to nurse litter cases over thousands of miles, from front lines to hospitals in the rear.

To most of the flight nurses, air travel isn't new. Many were commercial airline hostesses like 19-year-old 2/Lt. Lucille Chloupka, of Omaha, Neb., who had more than 7,000 hours in the air before she joined the ANC.

All, however, are graduates of a rigid six-week course in air evacuation at Bowman Field, Ky., through which all flight nurses pass before receiving assignments to combat zones.

They call them “glamour girls” for obvious reasons. Those in Britain, at least, are long on looks and figures. But the girls do not consider their work very glamorous. To them it's a job necessary to save the lives of wounded men who might otherwise be lost through lack of immediate treatment.

At Bowman Field the flight nurses learned methods of Arctic, jungle and ocean survival; climates and customs prevalent in various war theaters; administration of first aid, including blood transfusions at high altitude; how to steer clear of booby traps and to use a parachute, if necessary.

In order to earn their wings—miniature flight-surgeon wings with a block N in the center—flying nurses must weigh less than 135 pounds, be over five feet tall and pass the Form 64 medical examination given all flying personnel.

2/Lt. Dolores Dilger, 24, of Yankton, S.D., is one of 12 flight nurses in England on detached service with Bomber Command. She doesn't wear the nurse's conventional white, but takes care of wounded airmen while clad in blue worsted blouse and slacks, heavy wool socks and GI shoes. The boys, however, say she would “look good to us in overalls.”

The biggest job handled so far by a flight nurse in the ETO was the evacuation to America of the 12 prisoners of war who were repatriated from Germany last month. 2/Lt. Jean Bartholomew, former airline hostess from San Francisco, made the trip and has since returned to Britain.

Commanded by Maj. W.K. Jordan, flight surgeon from Macon, Ga., the Air Evacuation Squadron here is made up of six male officers, 25 flight nurses and 61 enlisted men. Twenty-four of the EMs are surgical technicians, each of whom teams up with a nurse to attend as many as 18 litter cases per plane.

For the most part the squadron uses C47s, converted into flying hospitals. The ship has no armament; the chief purpose of air evacuation is to keep men alive until they can be properly treated.

Flight nurses get flying pay, but not as much as combat fliers. At present they draw monthly bonuses of \$60 but there is a move under way to give them regular flight pay—an extra 50 per cent of their base salary.

December 13, 1943

Christmas Will Forge New Links With British; Yanks Planning Parties for Kids All Over U.K.--Infantry to Play Santa to 9,500; Tons of Gifts On Hand From U.S.

by Charles F. Kiley, Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

American soldiers sitting with families in chairs left empty by British sons gone to war...

Under-privileged English children, to whom Santa Clause and Father Christmas are almost forgotten memories, as guests of Yanks at Yuletide parties throughout the United Kingdom.

Thousands of America's fighting men grasping moments of holiday spirit during a few hours of relief from aerial combat, invasion preparations and other Army duties...

There is a broad picture of what Christmas, 1943, will be in Britain for the second AEF 3,000 miles and more from home.

SANTA TO REMEMBER ORPHANS

For the most part, the soldiers' Christmas spirit will be showered on kids too young to know why, but who have been orphaned and left wanting since war flooded the world more than four years ago.

In British homes, too, will be forged new links of Anglo-American friendship when average American soldiers sit down with average British people, each with something to give.

The children's parties will be conducted on a larger scale than last year, mainly because of the increase in U.S. personnel in the British Isles.

Appeals by soldiers to families in America, some of which were turned into newspaper campaigns, have brought tons of children's gifts in packages that would otherwise contain Christmas presents for the men. These gifts, to be distributed at parties, have been supplemented by thousands of toys manufactured by soldiers themselves in their spare time.

Special gifts of candy, gum, cookies, etc., will be supplied from rations pooled for months and from GI cooks with talents for stretching supplies.

REFUGEE KIDS TO BE FÊTED

Probably the biggest job of spreading Christmas cheer undertaken by a single unit is the series of 40 parties for more than 9,500 British, French and Belgian evacuated and refugee children.

They will be staged between Saturday and Jan. 5 by men of a U.S. infantry division and directly by Chaplains James R. McAllister, of Boydton, Va., and H. F. Donovan, of Baltimore, Md. Women from the American Red Cross and British welfare organizations are undertaking a vast baking program, soldiers are dusting off Santa Claus outfits, and candy rations are being collected. When the material gifts run out, cash presents will be made to the children from a \$2,000 fund voluntarily raised by the men.

Another of the bigger parties scheduled is one being arranged for Dec. 24 by officers and men of an Eighth Air Force Service Command station, who will entertain 1,000 evacuees and orphans at dinner and movies. Many of the gifts for this party came as the result of an appeal by 180 men of a signal company, commanded by Lt. Harry B. Raff. To provide gift stockings, the station parachute department salvaged discarded muslin and went to work.

In progress throughout units of Eastern Base Section is a "Christmas Friendship Plan," instituted by Col. Ewart G. Plank, EBS commander, and subscribed to by every unit capable of entertaining children in the dozens of towns in the EBS area.

WORKSHOPS TURN OUT TOYS

An engineer unit of EBS set up a workshop where 1/Lt. James J. Corral supervised the manufacture of model airplanes, ships, tanks and other toys from scraps of metal and wood. Blueprints for the toys were furnished.

Capt. Joseph G. Ryan, commander of a QM unit from Anderson, Ind., and M/Sgt Newton R. Calhoun, of Bridgeport, Conn., are others in charge of parties by EBS units.

Units of ETO headquarters are starting children's parties as early as Dec. 18, when a U.S. general depot entertains under-privileged kids from London's East End. The following afternoon part an engineer detachment's party will be recorded by BBC and later broadcast to America.

Four hundred children from Paddington will be guests of the Yanks Dec. 23 at Portchester Hill, London, thanks to a couple of master sergeants who conceived the idea of defraying expenses for the party by tossing pennies into a glass in pubs near Paddington. The sergeants are Clifford J. Moran, of Madison, Wis., and George A. Lawton Jr., of New York, who head an Anglo-American committee in charge of the party. They also rounded up 50 GI volunteers to wear white whiskers and red suits while distributing gifts. The Mayor of Paddington leads the civilian committee.

On the afternoon of Dec. 24 patients, officers and nurses of a station hospital are entertaining 25 orphans of British merchant seamen.

At an Eighth Air Force Ordnance Depot soldiers have been repairing broken toys collected from orphanages, hospitals and evacuees' homes in the depot area. Under 2/Lt. Joseph E. Ashker, special service officer from Niagara Falls, N.Y., the men set up a workshop called "Ye Oldee Hobbie Shoppee," and with funds donated by the battalion purchased lathes, drills and other tools with which to repair and repaint the toys. T/Sgt. Harry Norton, of Newburyport, Mass., is shop

December 13, 1943

Christmas Will Forge New Links With British

(continued)

foreman.

Christmas preparations and children's parties are not confined only to soldiers. The WACs at ETOUSA headquarters are entertaining 80 sons and daughters of Red Cross volunteer workers Dec. 22 at the WAC service club, 47 Charles St., London. Toys made by WACs in the Eighth Air Force will be distributed at the party.

The first war orphan sponsored by the WACs through The Stars and Stripes War Orphan Fund will be the guest of honor at the party. The orphan, seven-year-old Muriel, whose father was an RAF aerial gunner killed during an attack in April on Cape Bon, Africa, will be dressed in a WAC uniform made from salvaged clothing.

Under-privileged children also will be entertained at other WAC installations where the GI Janes are making holiday decorations from cans and photographers' used flash bulbs.

'OPEN NIGHT' AT WAC BILLETS

For their own Christmas the girls working out of ETOUSA headquarters will have "Open Night" for guests at their billets

on Christmas night.

Officers who do not receive holiday greeting cards from fellow officers need not think war has affected Christmas spirit. It will be because of an ETOUSA circular asking officers to conserve paper stocks in the U.K. by eliminating the customary "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, old boy."

For the entertainment of soldiers, the American Red Cross is arranging elaborate holiday programs for Christmas. British families have filed more invitations with Special Service Sections than there have been applications by soldiers.

This will be Christmas. In Berlin the people have been told they will not have Christmas trees because of a manpower shortage. In Britain the U.S. Quartermaster Corps will deliver a Christmas tree to every American unit by Dec. 25.