

SOUVENIR

1978 REUNION

897 ORDNANCE H.A.M. CO.

FAIRBORN, OHIO

JULY 3-4, 1978

BEN J. NOSTER

# 70 CONVENTION

## FAIRBORN REUNION RESERVATION

DATE: July 3rd and 4th  
MEMO: 897th ORD.  
HQTS: HOLIDAY INN, FAIRBORN, OHIO  
FROM: YOUR OHIO COMMITTEE  
VACATION OHIO - ALL WELCOME  
PROGRAM: BANQUET - Monday Evening, July 3rd  
TOURS: Air Force Museum, Armstrong Space Museum,  
Aviation Hall of Fame and many others.  
Tours will be organized based on interest,  
availability and day of arrival.  
CAMPING FACILITIES: 15-20 miles from Fairborn -  
further information on request.

### HOLIDAY INN RATES

1 person	-	double bed	\$19.00 plus tax
2 persons	-	double bed	\$25.00 " "
2 persons	-	2 double beds	\$25.00 " "

If arriving after 6 PM the 1st night's deposit  
is required.

Make reservations for lodging directly with  
the Holiday Inn

Banquet menu and prices will follow

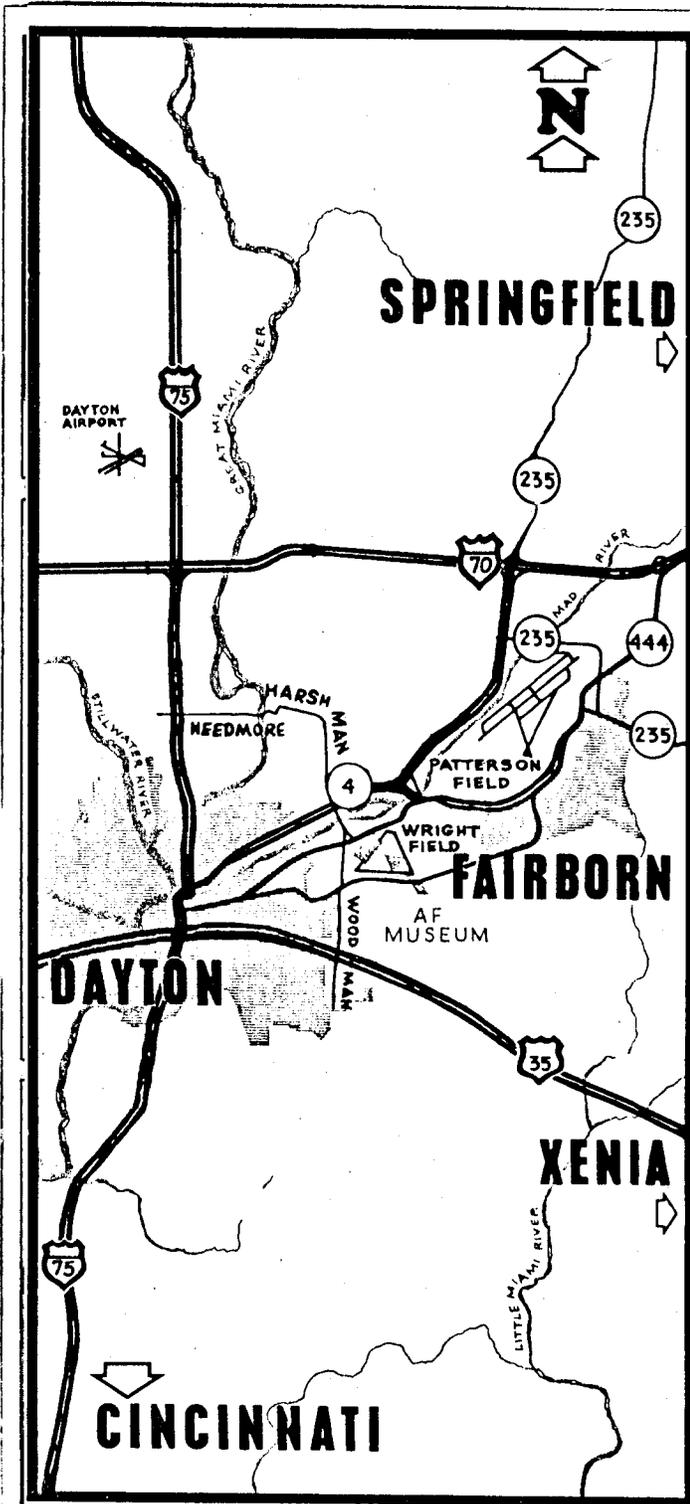
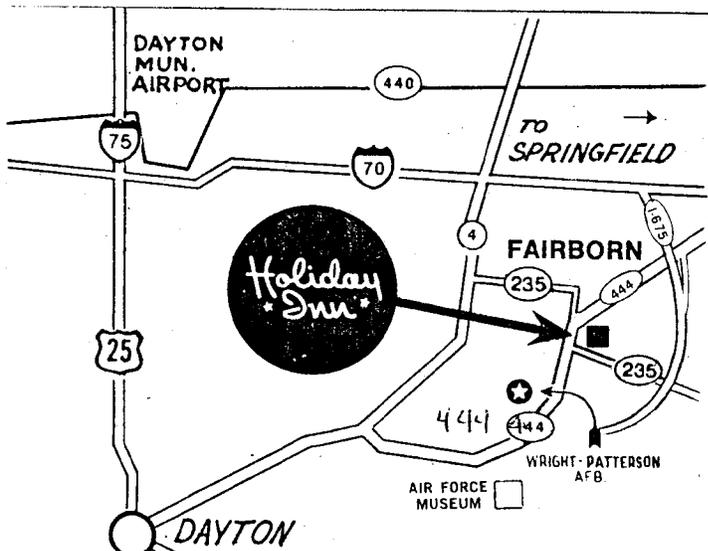
We will be looking forward to your visit to OHIO

REMIND OTHERS

*J. Seward*  
TINY THOMAS

*Ralph*

22 Feb. 1978



8:17<sup>th</sup> - Chd.

HOLIDAY INN

HOT BUFFET

\*\*\*\*\*

Relish Tray	Beef Salad	Tossed Green
Potato Salad	Bean Salad	Cole Slaw

ENTREE

Baked Ham  
Broiled Chicken  
Roast Beef

POTATO and VEGETABLE

Oven brown Potato  
Green Beans

DESSERT

Sherbert

COST PER PERSON - \$10.00 for meal and refreshments  
in Hospitality Room

Please mail to me by June 1, 1978

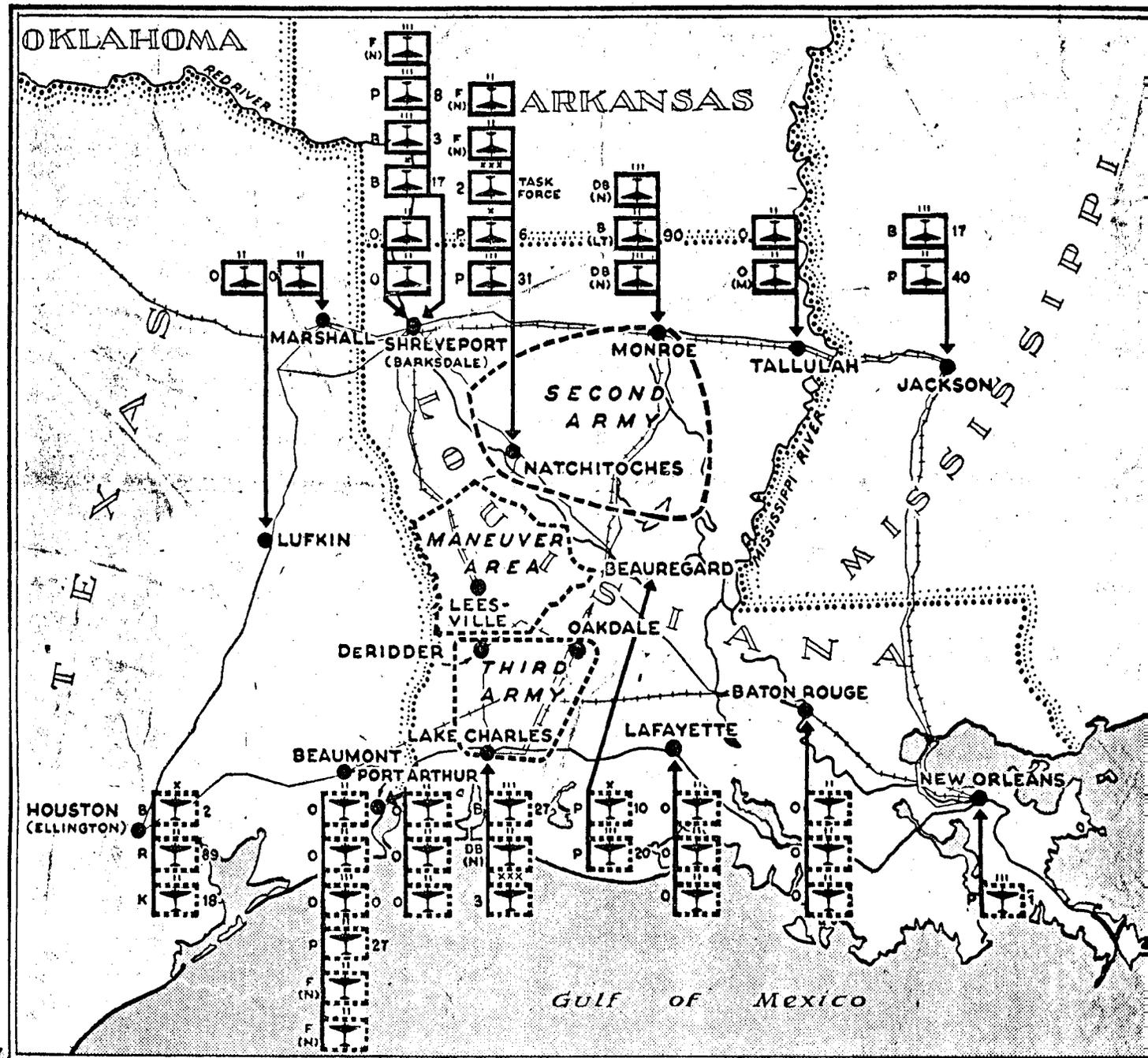
This menu includes all three meats so it will not be  
necessary to make a choice.

A definite count is needed for buffet meal by June 1.

Mail to -- Ralph E. Neer  
5824 E. Rt. 29  
Urbana, Ohio 43078

BUFFET - Monday Evening, July 3rd

TEST FOR THIRD TASK FORCE AT THE ARMY AIR MANOEUVRES IN LOUISIANA



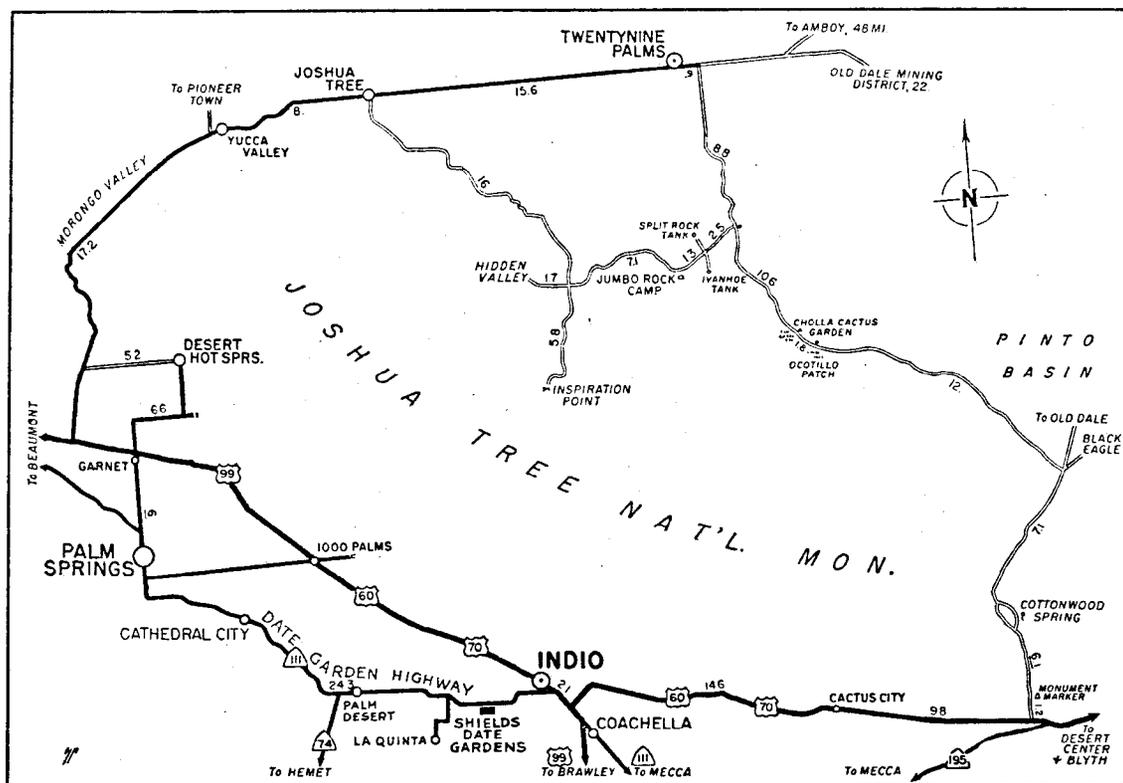
Map showing where fliers will be based along the coast, with headquarters at Lake Charles. X denotes wing, II denotes group (80 planes) and III denotes squadron (8 to 10 planes).



Desert Trail and Smoke Tree

# Coachella Valley Desert Trails

## The Salton Sea Saga



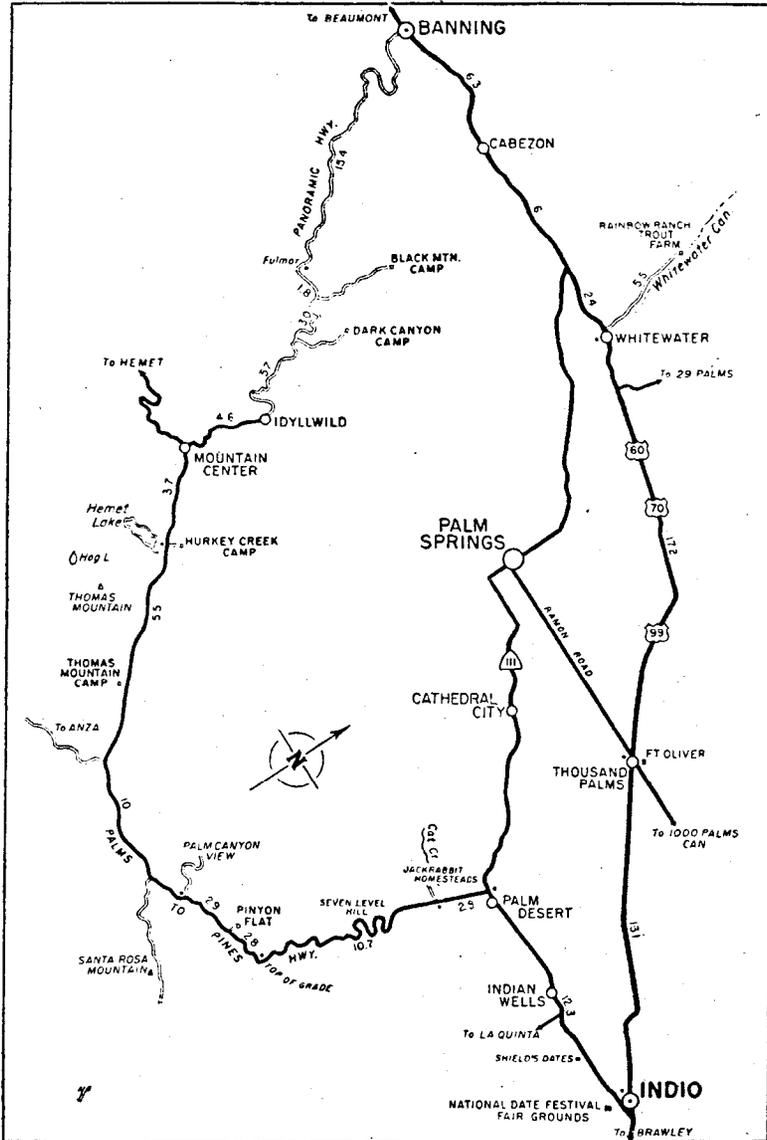
Joshua Tree National Monument Tour  
 . . . 200 miles — allow 8 hours

The Joshua Tree National Monument covers 549,000 acres in the Little San Bernardino Mountains. The park was created by an Act of Congress in 1937 to preserve this beautifully strange forest forever. It is an easy 11 mile drive over good dirt roads from 29 Palms.



# Palms To Pine Idyllwild Tour

... 130 miles — allow 5 hours



Courtesy Coachella Area Motor Tours

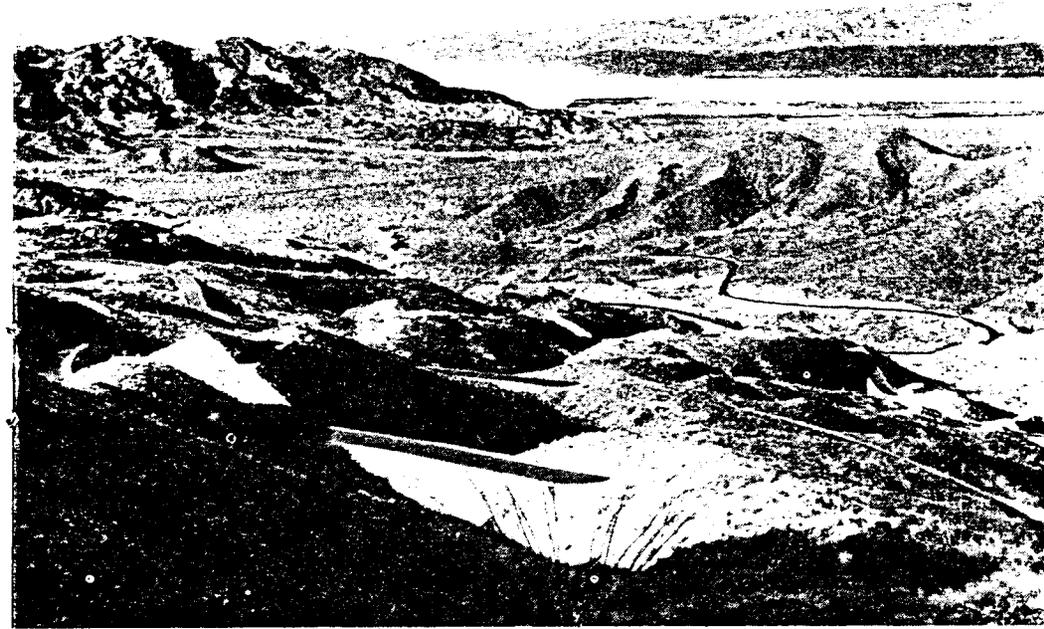


Photo by Frasher

Like a great snake the Palms to Pines Highway winds its way from desert sunshine to mountain snow.

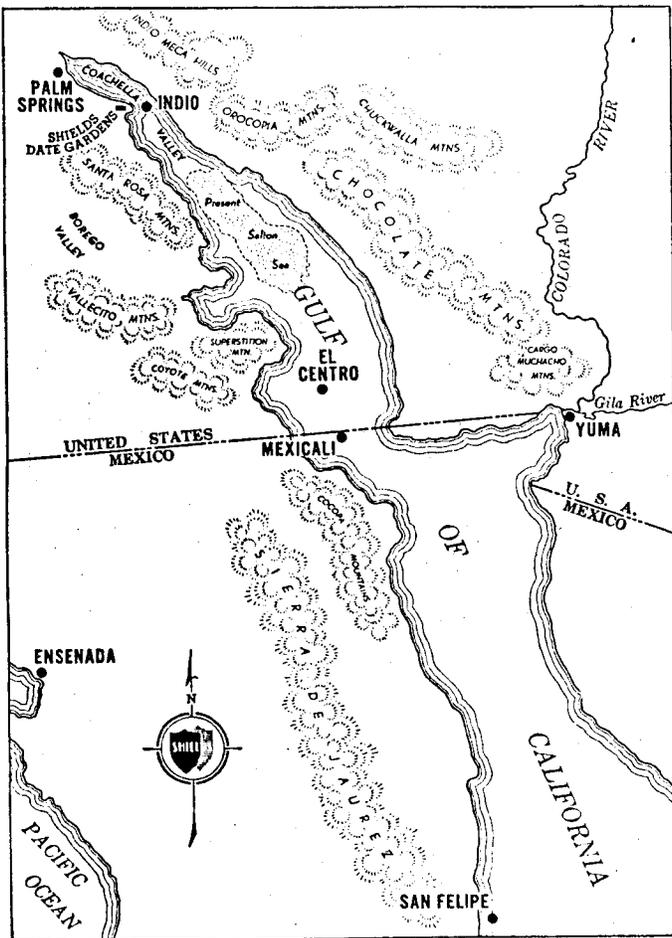
A typical Coachella Valley desert scene looking towards the Santa Rosa Mountains. Views such as this change like a state of mind in the early morning and again at sunset.

Photo by Frasher

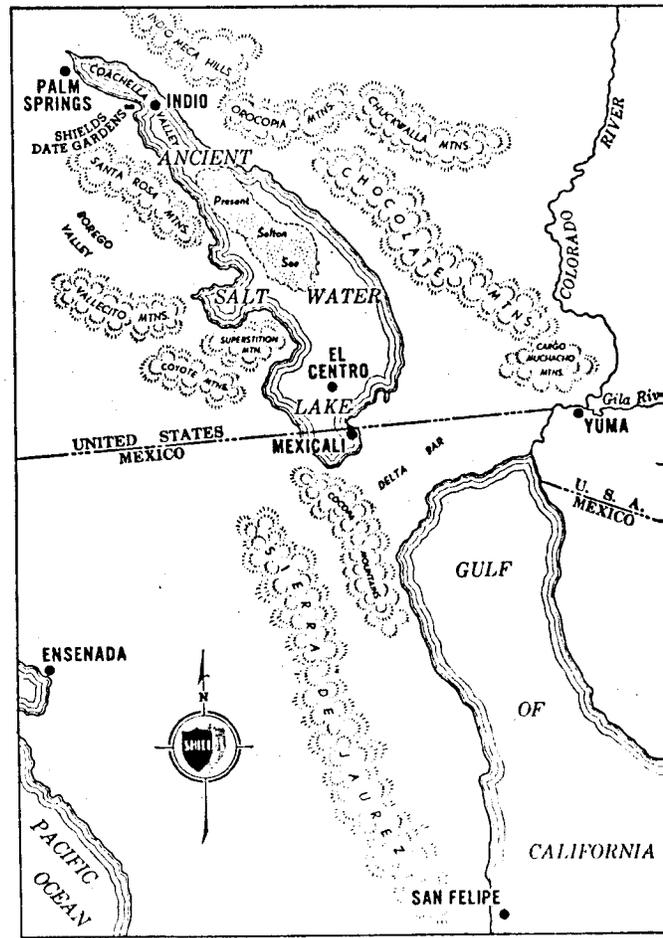


These Four Maps show the History of Salton Sea and Upper Gulf of California

22... COACHELLA VALLEY DESERT TRAILS

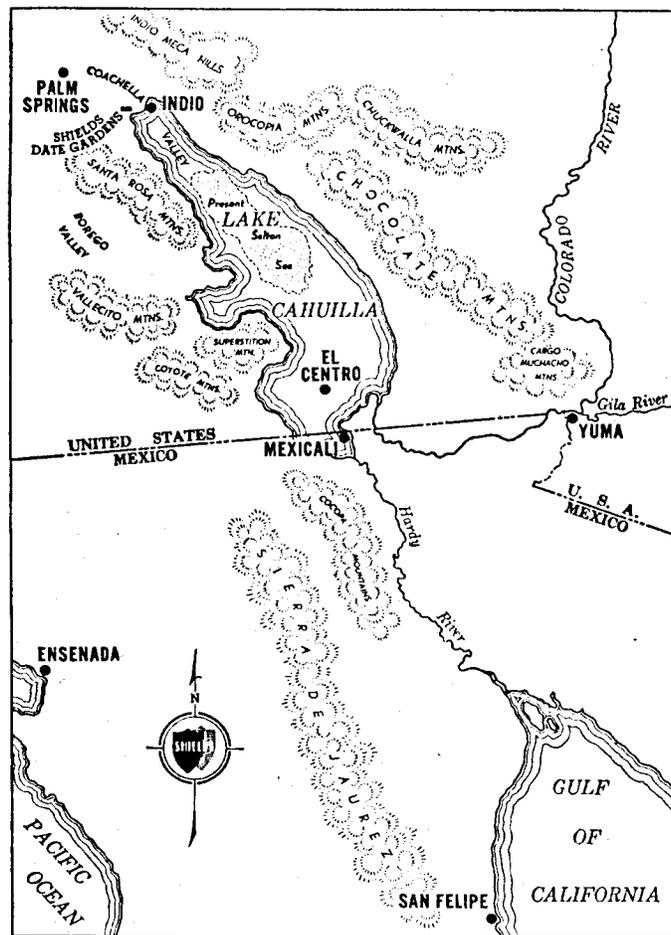


The Gulf of California extended beyond Palm Springs several million years ago.



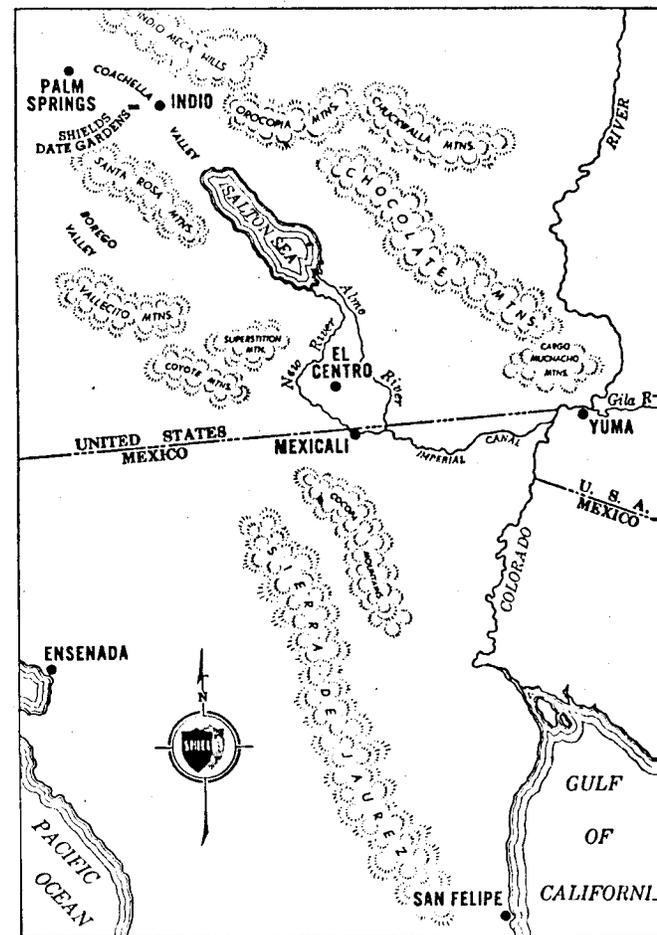
(Copyrighted Shields Date Gardens, 1957)

At a later prehistoric age the Colorado River built a delta creating a salt water lake which eventually evaporated.

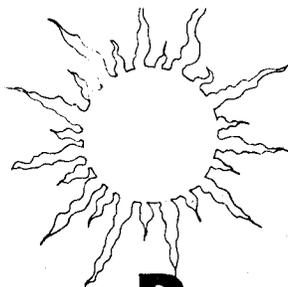


COACHELLA VALLEY DESERT TRAILS... 23

Lake Cahuilla was made by the flooding of the Colorado River centuries ago. This fresh water lake also eventually evaporated.



The Salton Sea as we know it today was formed by the flooding 1905-1907. The salt content approximates that of the ocean.



# With Patton on Desert Maneuvers

By WELDON F. HEALD

*Mr. Heald's work has appeared with frequency in this and other publications. His nature-travel articles have won for him a reputation as one of the West's most capable writers.*

**D**URING WORLD WAR II I had a fascinating job. I was one of a group of Army climate specialists in the Research and Development Branch of the Quartermaster Corps. Our business was to find out the exact year-round environment and weather conditions on all global fronts. Such detailed studies and field work were the basis for designing correct clothing and equipment to make our troops efficient fighting machines from the tropics to the poles. For us, this meant assignments in the jungle, on mountain tops, among arctic ice-floes, and even five days afloat on a rubber raft in the Caribbean.

But, to me, my most interesting tour of duty was on General George S. Patton's maneuvers in Southern California's Mojave and Colorado deserts during the summer of 1942. There I learned what extreme heat and dryness can do to a man. I also found out how to minimize the stresses and strains of one of the world's toughest summer climates, and how to adapt to them. In fact, it was General Patton's maneuvers that made a confirmed desert rat out of me. I decided then and there that I would rather live 12 months of the year in our arid Southwest than anywhere else on earth.

There were compelling reasons for these strenuous Army exercises under the broiling sun. In 1942 the Nazi's "Desert Fox," Field Marshal Rommel, and British General Montgomery were pushing each other around in North Africa. A plan, called "Operation Torch," was formulated to augment Allied strength there with American troops. General Patton was picked for the job. An ex-cavalryman turned tank expert, he was ordered to train and equip a North African task force to be ready for overseas duty in late October.

From a military point of view no better man could have been chosen. With characteristic vigor, the General immediately went into high gear. Camp Young rose like a magic city near barren Shaver Summit, 28 miles east of Indio. There he organized the 1st Armored Corps; and from there he gave his men the most rigorous training in desert warfare our army or any other army has ever known.

Although an outstanding strategist, General Patton was short on physiology. His method was to harden the men to desert heat and aridity in the shortest possible time—"toughen 'em up and damn the temperature!" But instead of hardening, an increasing number of the troops became casualties. Something was definitely wrong.

The Quartermaster General assigned Sir Hubert Wilkins and me to this grim human proving ground. Our orders were to check on the performance of clothing and

equipment, both issue and experimental, and to suggest improvements in the light of actual experience in the field. Implied also was a hint that we discover if the multiplying physiological crackups were in any way due to Quartermaster inadequacy. Our headquarters were Blythe Air Base, on the eastern edge of the maneuver area. There we worked in collaboration with the Air Corps Aero Medical Laboratory of Wright Field, and other Army test groups.

My co-worker, Sir Hubert Wilkins, was one of the finest men I ever knew. Australian-born Arctic and Antarctic explorer, he was an expert on desert, tropic and cold-weather clothing. From the beginning of World War II until his death in 1958, at the age of 70, he served as an invaluable consultant to the Defense Department on these subjects. Moreover, he was one of the toughest individuals who ever lived. Powerful, hardy, indomitable, and absolutely tireless was Sir Hubert.

The two of us used and tested each item the Quartermaster had dreamed up for desert warfare. This covered everything, from field stoves to handkerchiefs, and included footwear, clothing, sleeping bags, tents, and other necessities, as well as a few meager luxuries. We found the most comfortable desert summer clothing to be light khaki trousers and an open-necked, long-sleeved cotton shirt. The powerful effects of the sun were felt more in shorts than anything else, and we quickly discarded them. Rubber-soled shoes of any type were heat conductors and soon developed foot soreness. For headgear we preferred an experimental-type helmet built with a detachable frame, which raised it and permitted air to circulate around the top of the head. Although this helmet was surprisingly cool, and suitable for mild activities, it tended to wobble during heavy exercise. Then a regulation helmet is more desirable—pith, plastic, or other good insulating material.

We tested all the tents, too, night and day, and took comparative hourly temperatures. We learned that the addition of an outer canvas covering, 12 to 15 inches above the roof, reduced daytime temperatures 8 to 12 degrees Fahrenheit. The covering not only shades the tent roof, but the free air space between acts as insulation. This is true also with buildings, and many at Camp Young were provided with a second roof.

But the most interesting tests were made with human material. Day after day and night after night for weeks on end that summer thousands of men swarmed over the Southern California desert. Under unbelievably grueling conditions they manned tanks and other vehicles, covered

miles of sizzling hot country on foot, fired every kind of weapon, and engaged in all types of combat. General Patton's maneuvers were for real and they simulated actual battle procedure. The din was terrific and a visitor from Mars might have mistaken it for a maniacal carnival:

As mere observers we were proscribed from slowing down the action with our medico-scientific foolishness. However, Blythe Air Base G.I.'s were made available to the test groups, and with them we went through all the exercises of the maneuvers, minus tanks and heavy artillery. Temporary laboratories were established and Sir Hubert and I took temperatures, felt pulses, and weighed more human subjects oftener than a couple of nurses in a maternity ward. For background we kept a complete record of pertinent weather information while in the field.

The human being's reaction to desert heat and dryness was a relatively new study in the United States. Because water is always a scarce commodity on the desert, commanders were conserving it by trying to accustom the men to a quart, or even a pint, a day for all purposes. This did save water, but it expended men. Their bodies just wouldn't cooperate. On lively skirmishes in 120-degree temperature the perspiration oozed out of me like juice from a grilled chop. In fact, on several occasions I lost weight through sweating at the rate of two to four pounds an hour! Furthermore, the test groups found that men on maneuvers in the burning heat of the desert sun sweat as much as two and a half gallons in 24 hours. No wonder the men couldn't take it. Such mounting water deficits quickly made hospital cases, not hardened campaigners. If the troops were to be welded into healthy, efficient fighting units every gill of water lost during the day had to be made up.

At this point desert rats, prospectors and other old-timers will rise up and say, tain't so. They will recount prodigious camel-like feats accomplished by leather-skinned sons of our Southwestern deserts. In the main their stories will be true. Facts may be somewhat stretched in the retelling, but there are many well-authenticated cases of individuals who have gone without water in the desert for days and still lived. This is particularly true of seasoned, acclimatized men. Nevertheless, Army field data proved

conclusively that in the long run each 24-hour water loss had to be replaced if soldiers were to live to fight another day.

From the mass of figures assembled, we worked out a detailed scale of human water requirements. With it commanders in the field could estimate how much water was needed each day by knowing the approximate average temperature, planned combat activities (reduced to individual kilogram calories of energy), and the number of men involved. Other related factors, when known, such as humidity and wind velocity, could be included in the formula. It was as simple as that.

The test groups also compiled tables on the length of time men could survive without water at various temperatures; suggested methods of conserving body moisture when water is short or unavailable; and predicted the distance men could walk with given amounts of water. In this last investigation we learned that 20 to 25 miles is about the limit for walking in the desert, but whatever the individual limit was, each additional quart of water boosted a man's capability for walking about 5 miles. Thus, if a G.I. walked five miles and quit, the additional water would carry him another five.

But as soon as we disposed of one desert hot-weather problem, up popped another. After the men learned to drink copiously, even while on active maneuvers, some of them developed painful, spasmodic contractions of various muscles. Many people think that these symptoms are due to drinking while doing strenuous exercise. But they are not. They are heat cramps caused by lack of salt.

Sweat contains salt and perspiring

reduces the necessary amount. Unfortunately, man, unlike most animals seldom feels a craving for salt, so must consciously make up his losses. Salt tablets or salted water in the proportion of one ounce of salt per gallon is usually sufficient. But sweat rates vary from individual to individual, and the amount of salt required differs markedly. Inhabitants of hot countries wisely keep a salt balance by eating highly seasoned foods. Mexicans on the hottest days sit down to meals liberally sprinkled with chili and hot sauces. We who take a light salad and a malted milk when the temperature soars, might well give a thought to our salt balance.

Heat prostration, called heat exhaustion by physiologists, was the most common form of breakdown on the maneuvers. That is true everywhere and heat waves all over the world claim victims by the hundreds every year. It is really a protective mechanism for an embarrassed and overloaded heart laboring to maintain a proper heat balance. It occurs usually in a collapse resembling a prolonged faint, and the skin often becomes moist and clammy. This reduces the overload on the heart and gives it a chance to recover. We observed many cases of heat prostration. Rest in the shade is the only cure, but a dash of water in the face helps. People who die from heat prostration are usually those with weak hearts or general ill-health.

Heatstroke is our deadliest hot-weather enemy, but only two cases came to our immediate attention. It is particularly insidious because there is a popular misconception as to what causes the attack. Most people believe that heatstroke is brought on by



LEARNING HOW TO LIVE AND FIGHT IN THE OPEN DESERT. MECHANIZED TROOPS LEAVE A DUSTY TRAIL AND CONVERGE ON A CONCRETE HIGHWAY DURING 1942 DESERT MANEUVERS

# With Patton On Maneuvers

— continued

direct exposure to the sun, so it is almost universally known as sunstroke. But the fact is that it can occur in shade as well as in sunlight. For heatstroke is simply an indication that the body is unable to rid itself of its mounting heat load and is becoming dangerously hot. A crude analogy, although by no means an exact parallel, is water boiling over in an automobile radiator. But what makes heatstroke such a killer is that the heat-controlling center in the brain—nature's super-thermostat—may get out of order. Sweating then slows down or ceases entirely, internal temperatures shoot up as a result and, if treatment is not given immediately, the victim dies. Luckily most cases are mild, and complete rest in the coolest and shadiest place available usually brings about recovery. In aggravated attacks, it is best to get a doctor pronto—even if he has to be flown in by helicopter.

However, healthy people in good training and fully acclimatized, should have no difficulty avoiding heatstroke. Factors which make one vulnerable in hot weather are poor general health, insufficient food, lack of salt, want of sleep, excess of alcohol or a generally run-down condition. The Army investigated the cases of 198 soldiers who died from heatstroke while training in the United States. Surprisingly, the victims were overcome in temperatures ranging from 79 to 120 degrees. In practically all cases the men who died

were already tired out, not well, not fully acclimatized to heat, or they were overweight. It would seem from this and similar studies that a heavily-built person is a poor risk in hot climates.

The test groups also examined secondary effects, including sunburn and tan. Our findings ran completely counter to popular opinion. Americans make a fetish of sun-bathing, highly esteeming a tanned skin as a sign of health and a standard of beauty. It is also an economic badge of good living. However tests on Army maneuvers showed that tanned bodies are actually more susceptible to overheating than white ones fresh from New York's East Side. The reason is that dark skins absorb a large portion of the sun's radiation, while light skin reflects it. Of course, in time a well-tanned man or woman gains immunity from the dangerous effects of ultra violet rays. But until that point is reached the body is vulnerable, and our conclusion was that probably only hardy individuals should expose much of their skin to the direct rays of the sun—especially while performing violent physical exercise.

From this it would appear that the Arabs have the right idea in wearing loose enveloping white robes of thin material. Such garments protect the body from the sun and cool the skin by constantly swishing the adjacent air into motion. Probably the coolest and most comfortable garments our

girls could wear in desert heat would be long full skirts of thin white material. But if they gave up their present predilection for shorts, the scenery along Palm Springs' Palm Canyon Drive would sharply deteriorate.

After weeks of work the test groups covered most of the problems humans face on the desert in summer. We thought we had some of the answers, too. Of course our findings and suggestions weren't immediately made a part of actual desert battle procedure. But little by little most of them have been adopted in subsequent Army operations. In fact, reports soon reached us that the Big General finally surrendered to the realities of the water situation, and water rations were increased to meet actual needs. Furthermore, we heard that human breakdowns, both on maneuvers and in combat, had been greatly reduced. So we felt that we hadn't worked in vain.

After our stint on the Southern California desert, Sir Hubert Wilkins and I separated and went on to other assignments, while General Patton sailed with his well-trained North African Task Force on October 24. He was completely successful in Morocco and Tunisia. In fact, his brilliant campaigns there, and later in Europe, resulted in his earning a place in history as one of the leading American generals of World War II. But, being a blunt and forthright man, always fearless in expressing his opinions, he dared to criticize the High Command. For this he was relieved from active combat duty and given a desk job. Unfortunately, General Patton's career came to an abrupt end in an automobile accident at Heidelberg, Germany, on December 21, 1945. He was then 60 years of age.

I shall always be grateful to the General. For it was indirectly through him I first learned that desert heat has a benign quality. I never felt better in my life than on the maneuvers. The searing sun seemed to burn the impurities out of my system, leaving a fresh, eager aliveness that I never experienced in humid regions. Learned there, too, was how to meet desert heat halfway, and to adjust rather than fight it.

Today I live all year in southern Arizona. Sniffing the thin, sharp, aromatic air of a summer morning and looking up at the star-studded sky in the black-velvet of night, I thank the Lord for the privilege of having been on General Patton's maneuvers. They made me hopelessly and forever a lover of the desert.

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# TROOPS GETTING AFRICA PREVIEW IN CALIFORNIA

## Desert Wastes Provide Realities of War.

BY FRANK STURDY.

[Chicago Tribune Press Service.]

Desert Training Center, Cal., March 1.—Armored forces numbering many thousand men are maneuvering here in the desert wastes under conditions involving problems of terrain and supply closely akin to those under which similar American troops are battling the forces of Field Marshal Rommel in Tunisia.

The troops are allowed little deviation from war realities. They even lug ammunition boxes loaded with sand and gravel of the same weight as the ammunition they will use in war. They sleep on the sand, live on a daily ration of two gallons of water, eat rations cooked in field kitchens, or cook their own when cut off from unit bases.

Existing on two gallons of water a day under the broiling desert sun is a test of endurance. Shimmering heat bakes the skin. Suffocating clouds of desert dust as fine as powder billow up from the tank tracks and truck wheels, parching throats and covering the faces of the sweaty men like a paste. The water ration must cover the needs of each man for drinking, cooking, and washing. They use it in that order.

### Learn Realities of War.

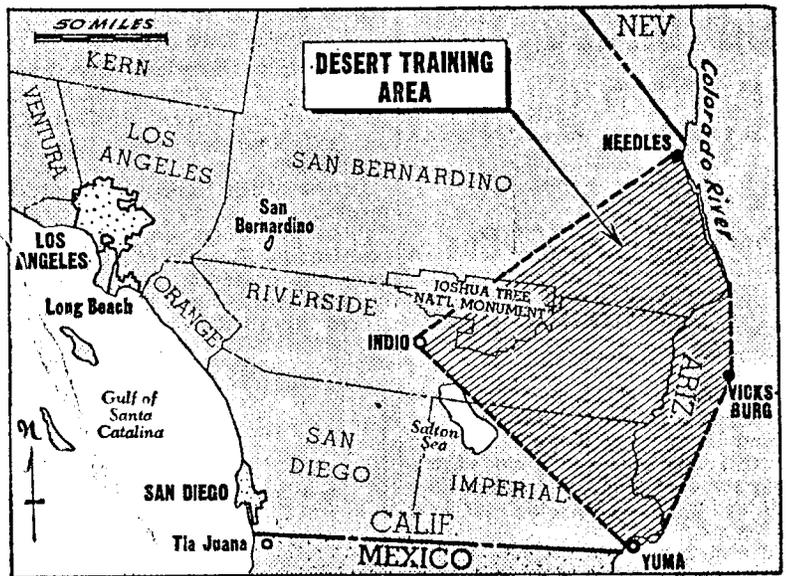
As far as everything except being under fire is concerned, the troops of the desert, when they reach combat theaters, will be acquainted with all the physical handicaps that hamper every army, including the difficulties of long supply lines typical of African operations.

For these maneuvers, San Bernardino was designated the theoretical port of debarkation for the attacking armored force. It is about 175 miles from the combat center. All the food, munitions, fuel, and other necessities of the combat troops in the desert are collected by the quartermaster troops and shipped by rail to dispersion points where trucks from the fighting forces pick them up.

Travel on roads is forbidden. Gasoline trucks and food trains move over the trackless, rock strewn desert without lights as in a war black-out.

## War Maneuvers Desert Style

(Story in adjoining column.)



Location of armored forces maneuvers in desert.

### 30,000 Square Mile Theater.

The field of operations is enormous, totaling about 30,000 square miles in an area, bounded roughly by Needles and Indio, Cal., on the north and west, Yuma and Vicksburg, Ariz., on the south and east. Troop supply convoys travel as much as 150 miles across the sands to get food, water, and fuel.

Maj. Gen. Walton Walker, commanding the desert center, devised the training system. Previously, the armored forces had trained from permanent bases. Now they are rarely at base camps, spending weeks at a time on the move in the desert.

These armored divisions are in the advanced stage of training. Before going overseas they will engage in the simulated last stage of a three week battle of tank forces. Considered the invaders, they will tackle defending armored and mechanized infantry holding carefully prepared positions.

### Battle in a Valley.

Today's battle problem was laid in a valley about 4 miles wide and 10 miles long. Treeless, desert mountains of barren rock confine the valley. Between the two ranges the defenders built a stout line, clearing a strip of sand 600 yards straight across the valley for the tanks to cross under direct fire from strong points. The defense was a mile and a half in depth, with lines of mine fields and tanks traps, thousands of yards of barbed wire.

The attacking tank forces had, assembled for days from points as far as 100 miles distant, under constant attack of raiding parties from the defenders by day and night.

A flight in a reconnaissance plane over the area prior to the battle showed commanding officers of both sides striving to instill in their men the primary rule of desert war: dispersion. Vehicles traveled considerable distances apart, dry brush concealed weapons and points of supply, the ground was pocked with the fox holes every soldier dug for protection against ground strafing.

### Wheel Tracks Are Giveway.

These things could be picked out from low altitudes—we flew for miles at less than 50 feet from the ground, but at 3,000 feet the concealment system proved effective except for the inevitable wheel tracks. There was little to indicate that many thousands of men and thousands of combat vehicles were in the valley.

# Rustling Thru

## .. Sports ..

With RUSS DAVIES

ELYRIA, OHIO  
CHRONICLE-TELEGRAM

(Pinch hitting for Russ Davies today is Sgt. George E. Moise, whose efforts used to appear on these pages some time back. There is some question of the wisdom of using a pinch hitter, as his batting average is pretty low at the moment and this turn at the plate is not likely to improve it.)

EVER SINCE I left the newspaper game for the Army, having decided to do something useful for a change, I have wanted to get back into the old business, for a little while, at least. Now Russ has been kind enough to give me his space today, and I don't know where to begin or about what I can write.

Certainly I am not familiar with the Elyria sports picture, or any sports in the generally accepted sense of the term. In the army, despite the numerous football teams that played the past season, the chief sport that one sees is on and shortly after payday, and it doesn't involve a great deal of physical effort. Besides, the sport is usually all over when one of the smart boys in the outfit corners everyone else's pay.

Seriously, the Army does have a comprehensive and well-planned sports schedule. Every post has, or should have, equipment and schedules for what would be called inter-mural sports in high school or college. I suppose that it could be called intra-post sport, but that's getting technical. The most that one sees of it is the teams, softball, touch football and so forth, practicing, because games frequently are played off the post.

At least they were at the last post where I was stationed, Camp Young, Calif. The best softball diamonds were at Indio or Palm Springs, Calif., 26 and 50 miles away respectively, and unless one was connected with a team, he seldom saw much play. It was, and is, quite the thing to do to be on a team, because the trips for games in the evening get the soldier away from the post and into the comparative civilization of the desert towns for a few hours. And there are very few soldiers who don't like to get to town every now and then, even if only for a softball game.

I suppose that some people, those who go for life in the great outdoors, for instance, might call maneuvers sport. Certainly you have first rate competition, and you also have all the discomforts of a hunting trip. You sleep on the ground, in a sleeping bag if you are lucky and in blankets that never stay over you for all the night if you aren't. And, particularly in the desert, it is more or less sport to chase out the rattlesnakes and scorpions. Of course no rattlesnake in his right mind will stay around a bivouac area any longer than necessary, as soldiers are not inclined to love the beasts.

Scorpions are another thing. They, like the rest of us, like to be warm at night, and they have the unfortunate habit of climbing right into the sleeping bag with you. They don't like to be awakened in the morning, however, and are likely to show their irritation with their stingers, which in some cases are not inconsiderable. That, of course, is the sport of the thing.

Another thing that might be called sport is the continual fight with the wind and the sand. As one boy put it in a letter home:

"As far as the eye can see the cactus and the sagebrush blends into the sand, and, not to be outdone, the sand rises up with the wind and blends with the sagebrush and cactus (to say nothing of eyes, ears, noses and dispositions.)"

The California desert (we were in the Mohave) compares favorably for bad climate with the Egyptian variety, we are told by those who have seen both. The only thing we don't have, of course, is Rommell, and most of the boys would just as soon have him over the next hill, to hear them talk. It would add spice to the game, to say the least.

At this time of the year the desert can be uncomfortably cool at night and in the early morning, and a good north wind, whipping down over the bare rock hills and sandy valleys can make life interesting, if not downright uncomfortable. It is not always like that, however, as in August the temperature has a way of sneaking up on you. I saw one thermometer placed in what we laughingly called the shade (under a truck) register 138 in August. We were afraid to put the darn thing in the sun. The glass wouldn't have held the mercury.

Camp Young is not what one would call a garden spot. Our outfit moved out on maneuvers from Fort Ord, which is on the Monterey peninsula and practically a vacation spot in itself, what with Del Monte and similar places only a few miles away. While on maneuvers everyone was counting the days until we returned to Ord, and occasionally we would drive past Young, a vast expanse of low grey buildings and tents, and someone would always say:

"Isn't it swell that we aren't stationed in a place like that!"

And everyone would agree.

Then the War Department, in its all-knowing way, decided that Camp Young was the place where we belonged. The weeping and wailing was wonderful to hear.

HEADQUARTERS  
EIGHTY SIXTH ORDNANCE BATTALION (HM) (Q) &  
PROVISIONAL ORDNANCE MAINTENANCE BATTALION (Q)  
DESERT TRAINING CENTER

Camp Young, California,  
1 Sept. 1942.

SPECIAL ORDERS)  
Number . . . 85)

1. UP of AR 615-5 and upon the recommendation of their company commander, the following promotions of non-commissioned officers of Co. "C" 57th Ordnance Regt., (HM) (Q), Camp Young, California are made effective this date:

To be TECHNICIAN 3RD GRADE (Temp)

Sgt. CHARLES L. GAULKE, 36013543  
Sgt. HANE P. SCHULTZ, 36013609  
Sgt. CARL A. FOLK, 36108929  
Techn 4th Gr. CHARLES (NMI) ATARAS, 36012589  
Techn 4th Gr. LOWELL (NMI) ELLIOTT, 36153978  
Techn 4th Gr. BETHMOICT J. NOSTER, 35011626  
Techn 4th Gr. HERBERT F. SCHULTZ, 35154045  
Techn 4th Gr. FELIX F. BALCETIK, 36105405  
Techn 4th Gr. JOHN A. DRENOICH, 36012943  
Techn 4th Gr. HAROLD J. ERWIN, 35030355  
Techn 4th Gr. WARREN W. GEISE, 35163660  
Techn 4th Gr. LOUIS L. FULLER, 36014057  
Techn 4th Gr. SOLON M. THOMAS, 35105593

By order of Major MATSON:

GERALD C. DUNBAR,  
Major, Ord.,  
Executive Officer.

OFFICIAL

*Paul E. Unger*  
PAUL E. UNGER,  
1st Lt., Ord.,  
Adjutant.

DISTRIBUTION

2 CG DTC  
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FILE

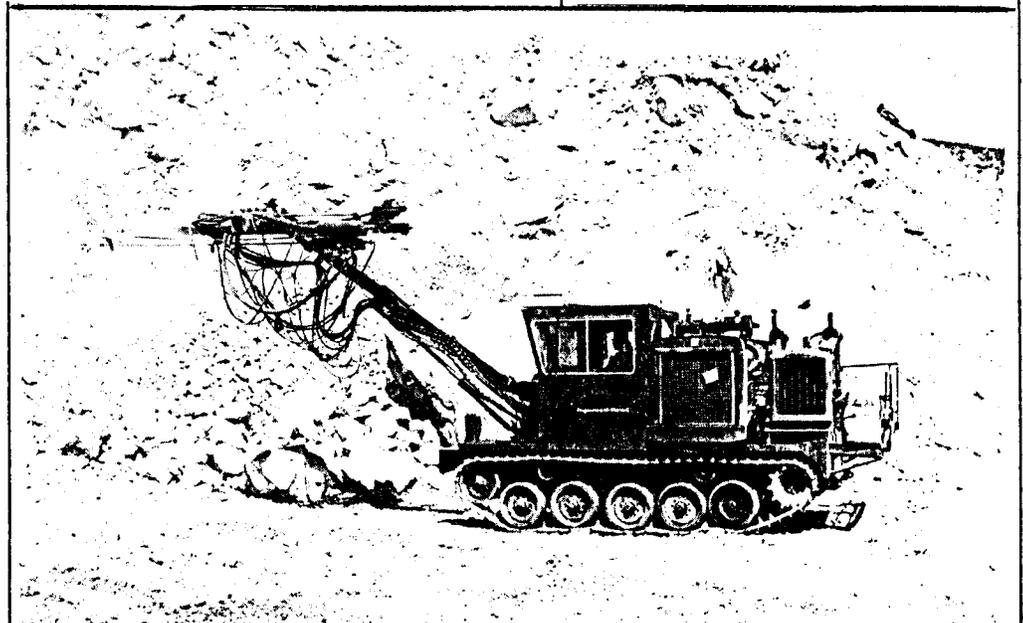
# QUARRYMEN EYE EAGLE MOUNTAIN

*Progressive mine tries new equipment;  
results intrigue efficiency-minded observers*

Eagle Mountain Iron Mine lies some 200 miles east of Los Angeles. Operated by Kaiser Steel Corporation, it is a mining industry pacesetter in a number of respects. It is California's largest mine and the fourth largest open-pit operation in the United States. It is known as a progressive mine with a solid record of new-equipment testing and use that draws the attention of efficiency-minded industry observers. Eagle Mountain, for example, is testing the first 350-ton-capacity haulage truck in the world.

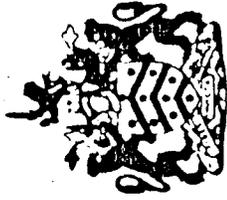
mainten-  
ance requirements are worth noting at Eagle Mountain because of the rough terrain and searing desert climate. It was this portion of southern California that was selected by General George C. Patton in 1942 for his artillery and armor Desert Training Command. He chose it both because of its inaccessibility and its unusually hot, harsh climate, so much like the Sahara through which he was destined to lead his tanks.

Kaiser is working three iron ore pits there, with 6 miles separating two of them. Both magnetite and hematite ores are mined, the former being low-sulfur material destined for Kaiser's open-hearth furnaces. The high-sulfur hematite ore is concentrated and pelletized for use in making tin-plated and galvanized products at Kaiser's Fontana, Calif., steel mill.

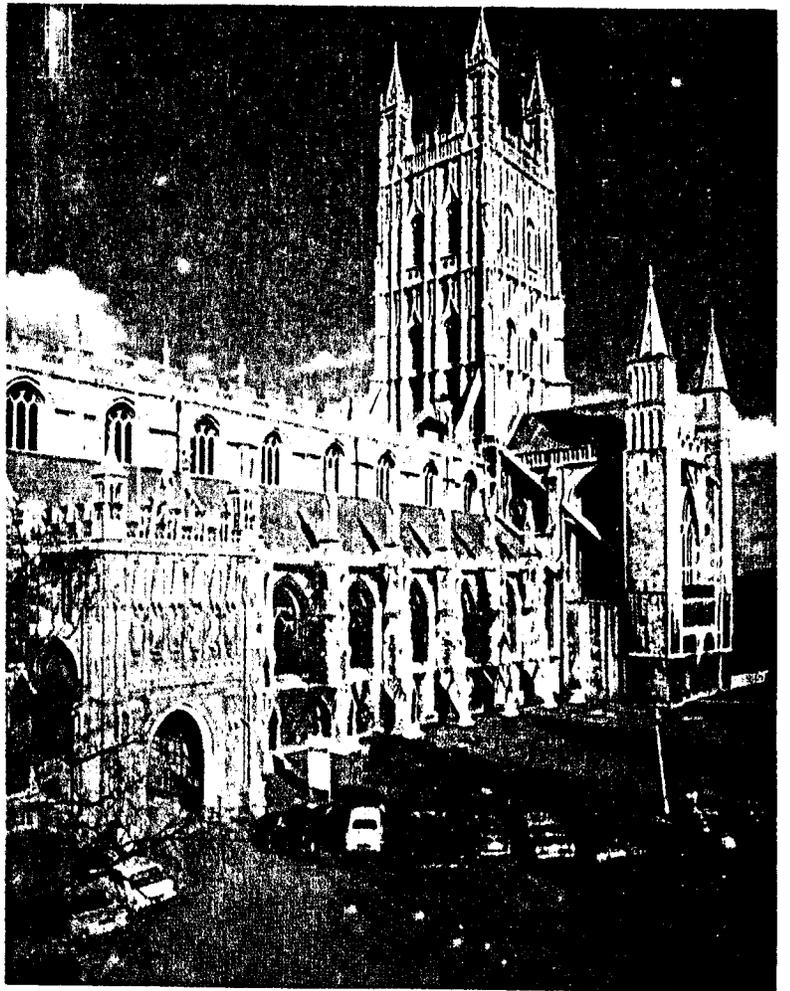


"Tank-Tracked Rock Drill,"

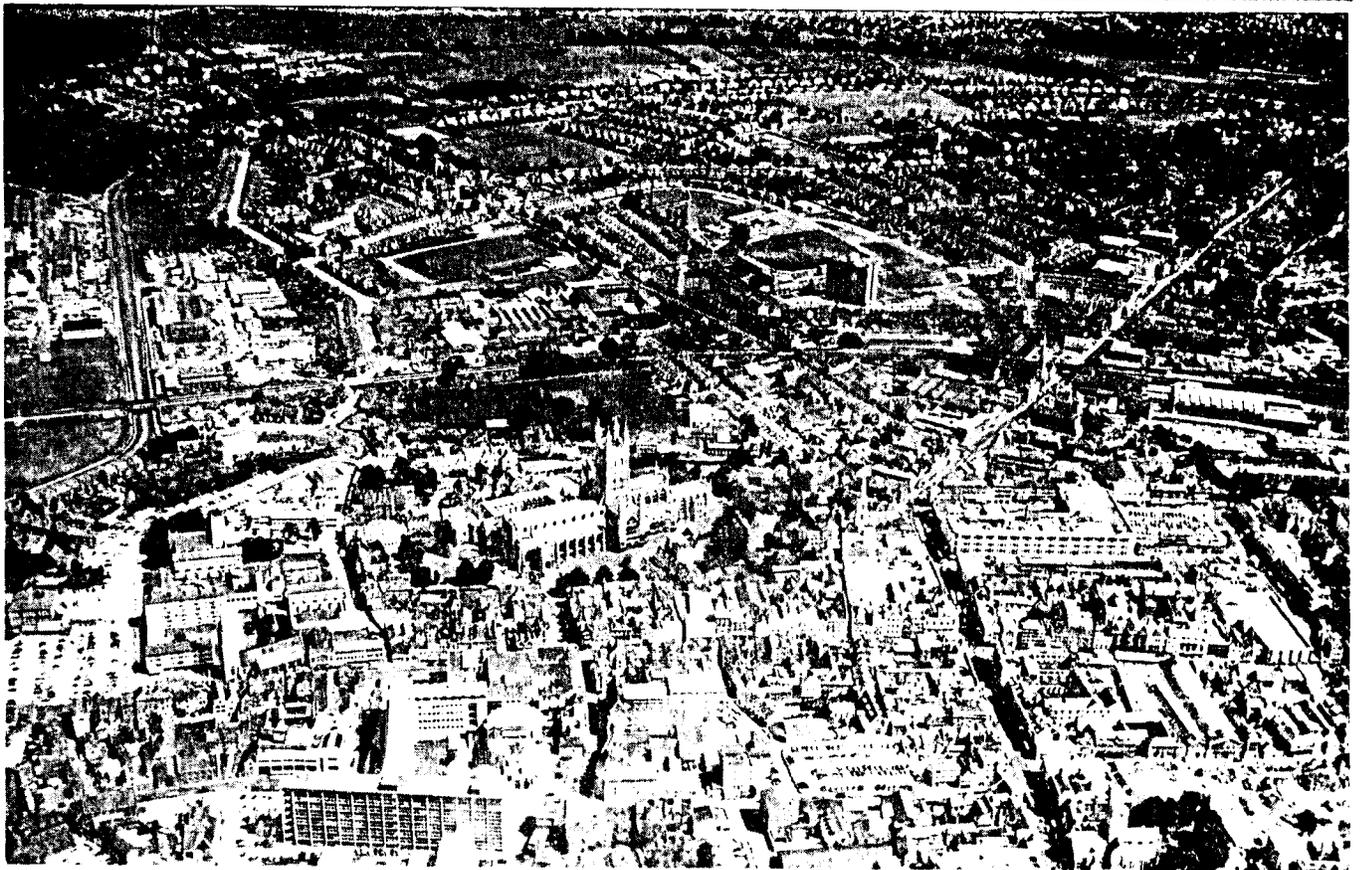
*Tank-like Ingersoll-Rand Pak-Trak unit reaches high and some 20 feet in front of drill for secondary blasting work at Kaiser Steel's Eagle Mountain mine. Drill boom-compressor package has tripled secondary holmaking productivity.*



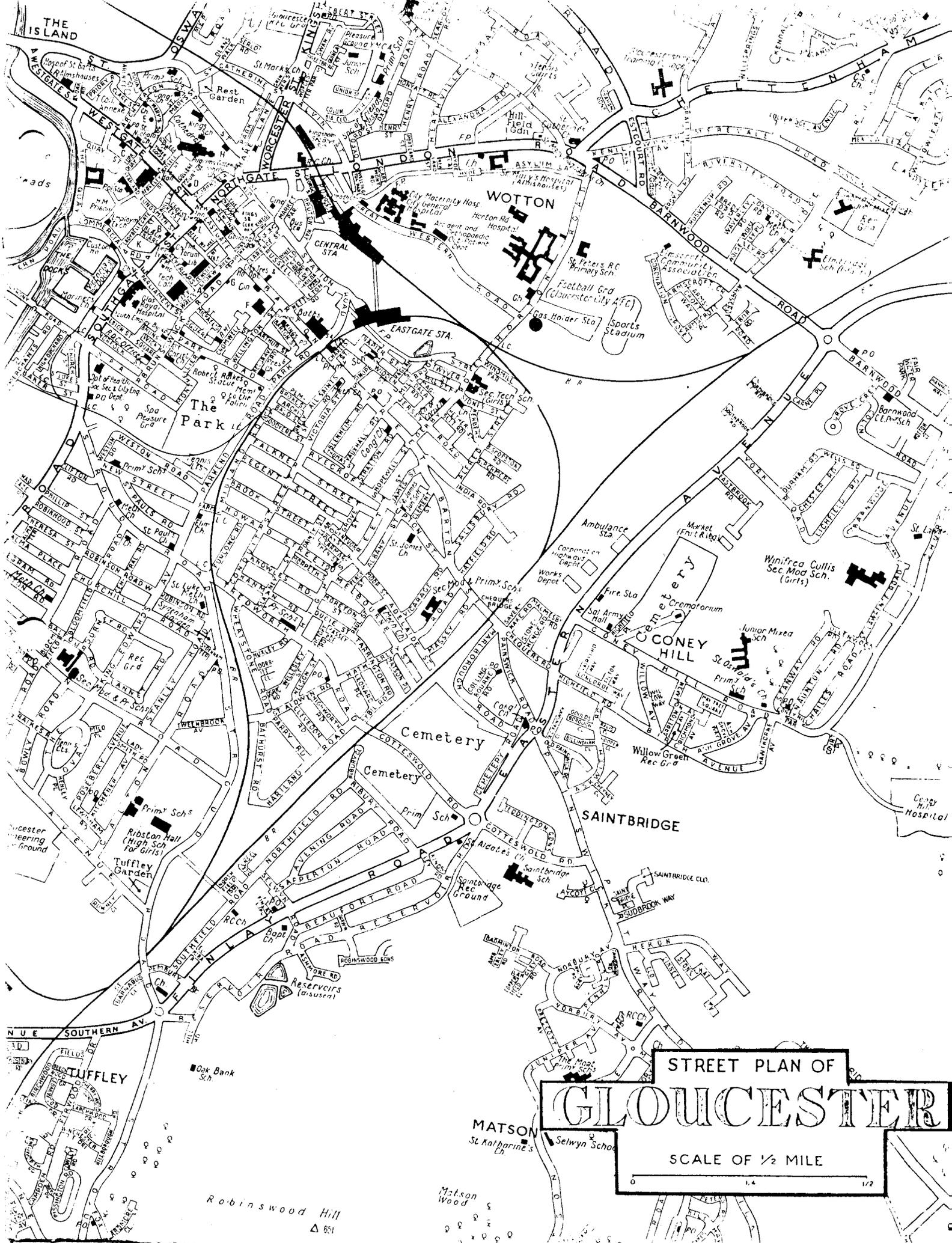
# CITY OF GLOUCESTER



Gloucester Cathedral is widely regarded as one of Europe's most beautiful buildings. The existing church was first consecrated in 1100 AD, although there had been a monastery on the site since 681 AD.



*An aerial view of the City centre looking towards the northern suburbs*

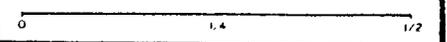


STREET PLAN OF  
**GLoucester**  
 SCALE OF 1/2 MILE

NUE SOUTHERN AV.  
**TUFFLEY**

**MATSON**  
 St Katharine's Sch  
 Selwyn School

Robinswood Hill  
 Δ 654

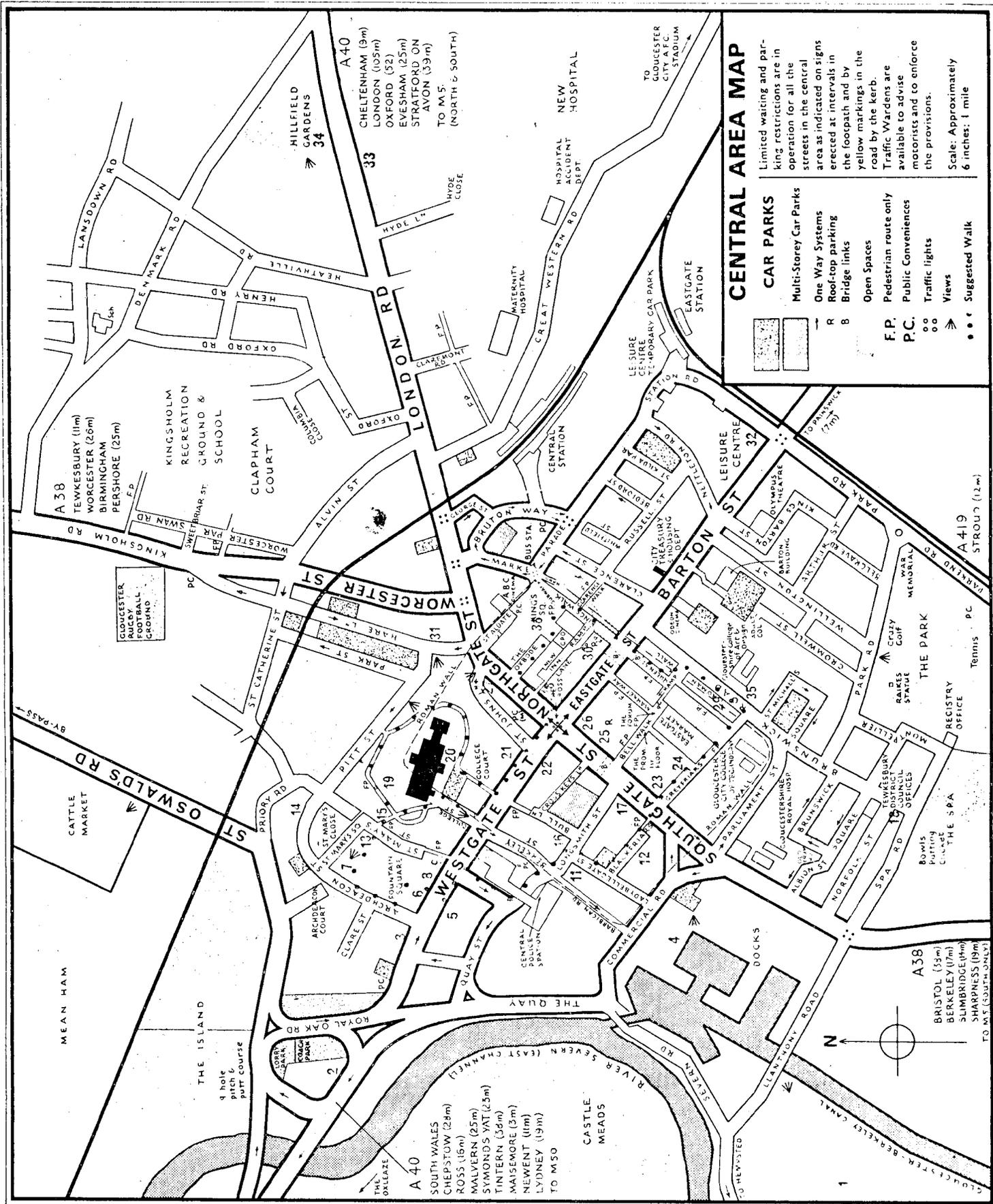


# General and statistical information

Population 91,000 (estimated),  
 Area 8,134 acres.  
 Climate Fresh, with prevailing South-westerly wind;  
 average annual rainfall, 26.73 inches. Average  
 annual sunshine 1,376 hours.

City of

# GLOUCESTER



Gloucester City Council, Gloucester, Glos. Printed by the Gloucester City Council, Gloucester, Glos.



GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

(A selection of books etc. is available from the Cathedral Bookstall)

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

OSRIC	681	Original Foundation
SERLO	1089	Commenced building Norman Church Choir dedicated 1100
GODEMON	1120 (c)	Chapter House. E. end 15c Domesday Book
FOLIOT	1242	Nave Vault dedicated
THOKEY	1318 1327	Rebuilt S. Aisle Edward II buried N. side of Choir
WYGMORE	1331 1331 1337	Tomb of Edward II S. Transept modernized First Perpendicular
STAUNTON & HORTON	1337) 1377) 1373	Modernizing of Choir and Presbytery, E. Window. (Battle of Crecy 1346) N. Transept modernized.
HORTON/ BOYFIELD/ FROUCESTER	1373/ 1412	Rebuilding of Great Cloister Earliest Fan Vaulting (mass production)
MORWENT	1412/ 1437	Two W. Bays of Nave and Aisles, W. Front, S. Porch.
SEABROKE	1450/ 1457	Tower commenced. Completed by Tully
HANLEY/ FAWLEY	1457/ 1499	The Lady Chapel
MALVERNE	1540 1541	Monastery dissolved 2nd Jan. Foundation of See of Gloucester Dean and Chapter responsible for Cathedral.

OTHER BUILDINGS AND ITEMS OF INTEREST IN CATHEDRAL

Organ case 1665  
Effigy of Robert of Normandy 13c On Chest 15c  
Col. Carne's Cross 20c

Church House, 12c and later  
Infirmary Arches 13c  
Dark Cloister 12 c  
Parliament Room 15c

Abbot's Cloister 12c  
Little Cloister 15c (Herb Garden)  
St. Mary's Gateway 13c  
Library, 14/15c.

## WHAT ELSE IS THERE TO SEE IN GLOUCESTER?

### ART GALLERY

Brunswick Road (same building as Museum) Open 10am-5.30pm Monday-Saturday. First floor, two galleries with displays that vary throughout the year.

### CLOCK WITH CARILLON

Bell Walk above the entrance into The Market. This was designed especially for Bell Walk as a reminder of the Bell Manufacturers whose premises were once situated in Bell Lane, as Bell Walk was then called. As the bells strike the hour the figures appear and disappear as the music stops.

### MURALS

One outside British Home Stores along the Eastgate Street wall and one outside Sainbury's along the wall in Hare Lane. This second mural has a descriptive plaque on the wall opposite giving details about it.

### MUSEUMS

The main one in Brunswick Road. Open 10am-5.30pm, Monday-Saturday. Archaeology, Geology, Natural History, Coins, Furniture, Silver, Bristol Glass, Staffordshire Pottery and Mercury Barometers.

Bishop Hooper's Lodgings, Westgate Street. Open 10am-5.30pm Monday-Saturday. Gloucestershire Folk Life, Regimental and Pin Museums.

### ROBINSWOOD HILL COUNTRY PARK

Robinswood Hill, Open every day. Picnic areas, Information Centre, Tel. 53029, open during daytime. Car Park, Toilets, Nature Trails, and Camping Site. Access mainly from Reservoir Road or Stroud Road.

### ROMAN WALL AND BASTION

Kings Walk. Open Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays 2pm-5pm, May to September. Adults 10p, children 5p. School parties 50p.

### SOUTHGATE CLOCK

5 Southgate Street, over Bakers the Jewellers. This clock dates from 1904 with figures representing England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, with "Father Time" in the centre who strikes the hours.

### WATCH SPORTING ACTIVITIES

Leisure Centre, Station Road. Open every daytime and evening. Wide variety of sporting activities to look at, if you don't wish to take part in them yourself. Spectator ticket price 6p.

Boating Lake, St. Oswalds Road. Open 10am-dusk. Paddle boats 20p per half-hour.

## NOTORING TRIPS

SPEND THE DAY AT -- Cheltenham: with superb Regency terraces, graceful public buildings and sophisticated shopping centre. Information Centre in the Municipal Offices, The Promenade.

Tewkesbury: where the Severn and the Avon meet. A great number of picturesque and ancient buildings and an Abbey. Information Centre, The Crescent.

3-DAY TRIPS: starting from Gloucester:

1. Tewkesbury, Malvern and the Malvern Hills, Bromyard with the Manor House at Lower Brockhampton, Martley, Shelsby Walsh, Tenbury Wells (see the tower clock folley at Great Witley and the ruins of Witley Court) on to Leominster, a farming town with splendid black and white buildings, passing Berrington Hall and Eye Manor on the way. From Leominster turn South towards Hereford, diverting on the way to look at Croft Castle, owned by the National Trust but with the Croft family still living there, and two fine black and white villages, Eardisland and Weobley. On to Hereford with Cathedral and famous chained library, Bulmers Railway Centre, the New Waterworks Museum and Churchill Gardens Museum. West to Hay on Wye, passing the Black Mountains to Kentchurch and Grosmount and past the fortified and moated 13th century farmhouse of Pembridge Castle, to Monmouth where Henry V was born. Due south down the Weir Gorge to Tintern past breakhtaking view from Piercefield Cliffs to Chepstow. North past another fine view at Wintorr's Leap to St. Briavels, through the Forest of Dean to Cinderford and Speech House built in Charles II's reign as the Court of Verderers and Freeminers. Goodrich with its castle and on to Ross-on-Wye. (Wyedean Tourist Board, 19 Gloucester Road, Ross-on-Wye) Divert to Newent and the Falconry Centre passing through countryside where daffodils bloom profusely in the spring, and return to Gloucester.
2. Painswick, quaint cotswold stone village with 99 yew trees planted in the Churchyard passing by Prinknash Abbey and Birdpark on the way. Stroud, centre of the old wool trade, turn west to the Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge and

on to Berkeley Castle, still occupied by the Berkeley family, where Edward II was murdered. South to Chipping Sodbury and on to Bath, famous for its Georgian houses and floral displays. North via Chippenham, visiting Lacock Abbey and Castle Combe on the way, to Malmesbury with its fine abbey and Tetbury. On to Cirencester where the Corinium Museum in Park Street displays splendid samples of Roman mosaics. Chedworth Roman Villa is nearby too, if you take the road to Stow on the Wold where the ancient stocks are still on view. Before reaching Stow divert to Bourton on the Water where the river Windrush flows right through the centre of the town, under a number of picturesque stone bridges. An alternative route to Stow is through Bibury, famous for Arlington Row and the Trout Farm. Stow on the Wold attracts many visitors to the Horse Fairs in May and October, and in the area surrounding this delightful town are many attractive cotswold stone villages e.g. Upper and Lower Slaughter & Upper and Lower Swell. Return Go Gloucester via Cheltenham

There are many other places to visit for, say, half a day, and a whole range of leaflets on these is available from the Information Centre at the Leisure Centre, Station Road.

#### COACH TRIPS

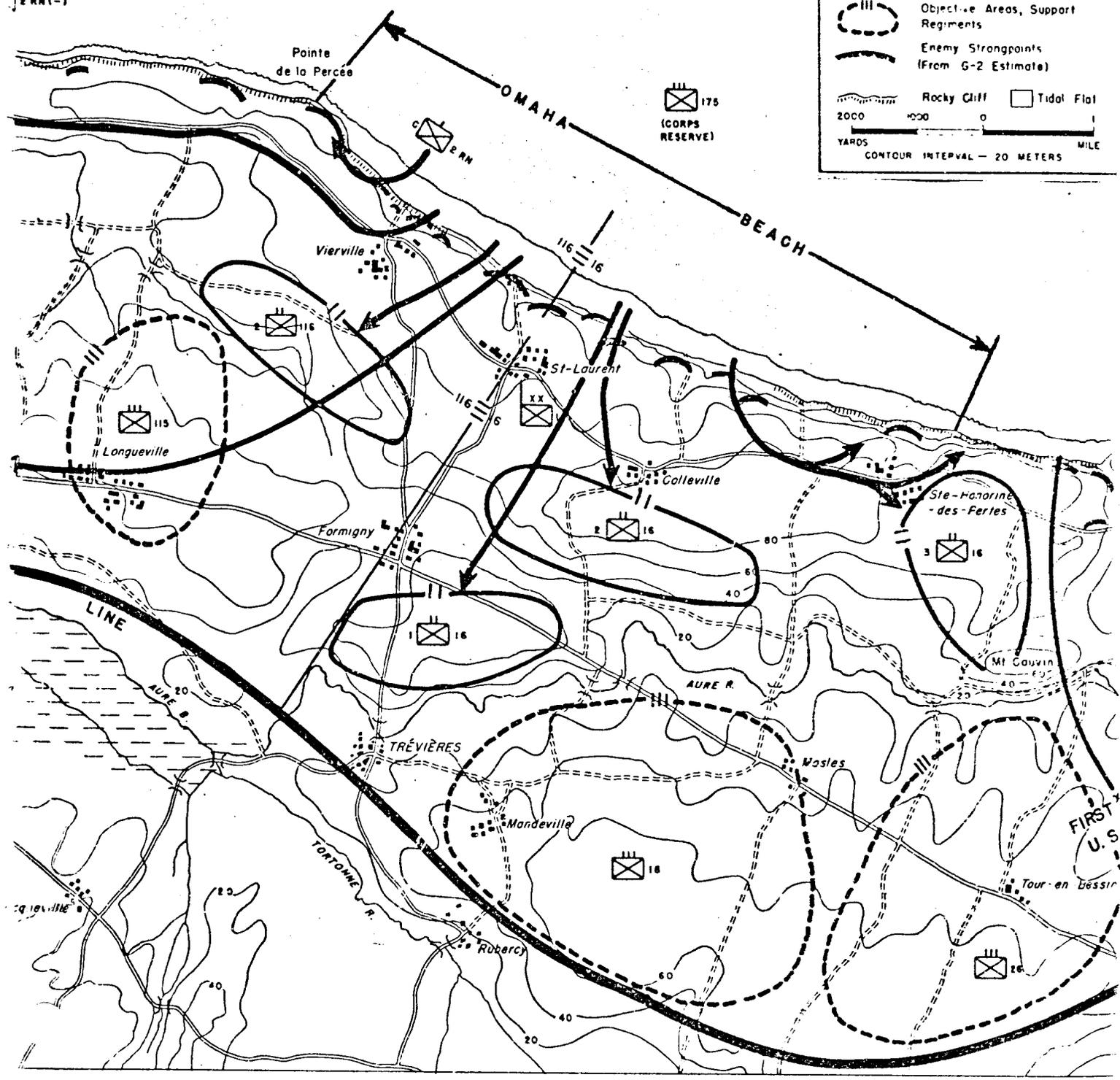
Black and White Motorways organise trips to a number of places of interest in and around the Cotswolds. A copy of their brochure is available for reference at the Information Centre, Gloucester Leisure Centre.

5RN (+)  
2RN (-)

### D-DAY OBJECTIVES V CORPS

	Objective Areas, Assault Battalions
	Objective Areas, Support Regiments
	Enemy Strongpoints (From G-2 Estimate)
	Rocky Cliff
	Tidal Flat

2000 1000 0 1  
YARDS MILE  
CONTOUR INTERVAL - 20 METERS





THE 897 ORDNANCE H.A.M. CO. @ STAVELOT, BELGIUM, AS RELATED  
TO THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN: THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE.

OR

"WHY THE SUDDEN EXODUS OF THE 897 ORDNANCE CO. FROM STAVELOT,  
BELGIUM ON SUNDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 17, 1944."

\* \* \* \* \*

The following is an excerpt from "UNITED STATES ARMY IN WORLD  
WAR II, The European Theater of Operations, THE ARDENNES: BATTLE  
OF THE BULGE" as published by the "OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF MILITARY  
HISTORY, UNITED STATES ARMY, WASHINGTON, D.C.

\* \* \* \* \*

The story deals with the crucial period of the campaign conducted  
in the Belgian Ardennes and specifically Stavelot and immediate vicin-  
ity. Although the German planning antedates the opening gun by sever-  
al weeks, the story of the combat operations begins on Sat., Dec. 16, "44

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

General Josef "Sepp" Dietrich's Sixth Panzer Army was selected to  
make the main effort in the Ardennes offensive which was to begin at  
0530 on Dec. 16, (Sat.). Because of its size, it was broken down into  
columns or march groups. One of these was commanded by Colonel Peiper  
and contained the bulk of the 1st Panzer Regiment and thus represented  
the spearhead of the division. On the morning of the 16, Peiper's in-  
fantry failed to make a gap in the American lines as assigned, and his  
column was further delayed by a blown bridge N.W. of Losheim, which he  
finally reached at 1930, where he received a radio message that the  
next railroad overpass was out. This caused him to detour to Lanze-  
rath which he reached by midnight, losing a number of tanks and other  
vehicles in the process, to mines and antitank fire. At 0400 on Sun.,  
Dec. 17, Peiper attacked Honsfeld which was taken with ease. By this  
time Peiper's group was running low on gasoline and he headed for Bull-  
ingen where he found an American gas dump as predicted, and, using  
American prisoners, he refueled his tanks after which he destroyed a  
number of artillery planes on a nearby field. American gunners shelled  
Bullingen and he moved on, suffering some casualties.

It was between noon and one o'clock on Sun., Dec 17, on the road  
between Modersheid and Ligneuville that the German advance guard ran  
into an American convoy moving south from Malmedy. This was the ill-  
fated Battery B of the 285 Field Artillery Observation Bn. The convoy  
was shot up and the advance guard rolled on, leaving the troops to the  
rear to deal with the Americans who had taken to the woods and ditches.  
About two hours later, the Americans who had been rounded up were mar-  
ched into a field where they were shot down with machine gun and pis-  
tol fire. A few escaped by feigning death but the wounded who moved  
or screamed were sought out and shot in the head. This was not the  
first killing of unarmed prisoners chargeable to Kampfgruppe Peiper"  
on Sun., Dec. 17. Irrefutable evidence shows that nineteen unarmed  
Americans were shot down in Honsfeld and fifty at Bullingen also.

The point of Peipers column reached Ligneuville sometime before 1300 Sun., Dec. 17 in time to eat the lunch which had been prepared for an American detachment stationed in the village. Here the road divided, the north fork going to Malmedy and the western going to Stavelot. Peipers path lay straight ahead, through Stavelot, Trois Ponts, Werbomont, Ouffet, Seny and Huy.

About 1400 the group resumed march, advancing along the south bank of the Ambleve River. The advance guard reached Stavelot, the point where the river must be crossed, at dusk on Sun., Dec. 17. Looking down on the town the Germans saw hundreds of trucks, while on the opposite bank, the road from Stavelot to Malmedy was jammed with vehicles. Although the Germans did not know it, many of these trucks were moving to help evacuate the great First Army gasoline dumps north of Stavelot and Malmedy. March serials of the 7th Armored Div. also were moving thru Stavelot enroute to Vielsalm.

The small town of Stavelot (population 5,000 ) lies in the Ambleve River valley surrounded by high, sparsely wooded bluffs. Most of the town is built on the north bank of the river or on the slopes above. There are a few scattered buildings on the south bank. Like most of the watercourses in this part of the Ardennes, the Ambleve was no particular obstacle to infantry but the deeply incised valley at this point offered hard going to tanks, while the river, by reason of the difficult approaches, was a tougher than usual tank barrier. Only one vehicular bridge spanned the river at Stavelot. The sole approach to this bridge was by the main highway; here the ground to the left fell away sharply and to the right a steep bank rose above the road.

Stavelot and its bridge were open for the taking. The only combat troops in town at this time were a squad from the 291 Engineer Combat Bn. which had been sent from Malmedy to construct a roadblock on the road leading to the bridge. For some reason Peipers advance guard halted on the south side of the river, one of those quirks in the conduct of military operations. Months after the event, Peiper told interrogators that his force had been checked by American antitank weapons covering the narrow approach to the bridge, that Stavelot was "heavily defended". But his detailed description of what happened when the Germans attacked to take the town and bridge shows he was confused in his chronology and he was thinking of events which transpired on Mon., Dec. 18. It is true that during the early evening of the 17, (Sun.) that three German tanks made a rush for the bridge, but when the leader hit a hasty mine field laid by American engineers the others turned back ---- nor were they seen for the rest of the night.

Perhaps the sight of the numerous American vehicles parked in the streets led Peiper to believe that the town was held in force and that a night attack held the only chance of taking the bridge intact. If so, the single effort made by the German point is out of keeping with Peipers usual ruthless drive and daring. What ever the reason --- Peipers Kampfgruppe came to a halt on Sun. night, Dec. 17 at the Stavelot bridge.

During the night of Dec. 17--18, First Army ordered a platoon of 3-inch towed tank destroyers from the 526 Armored Inf. Bn. to outpost Stavelot ; two platoons on the south bank of the river (with a section

of tank destroyers at the old roadblock) ; one platoon with three 57 MM antitank guns and the second section of tank destroyers in reserve around the town square north of the river. The troops began to move into position just before daybreak on Mon., Dec. 18, but before the riflemen could organize a defense the German infantry attacked, captured the tank destroyers and drove the two platoons back across the bridge. Taken by surprise, the Americans failed to destroy the bridge and a Panther made a dash about 0800 which carried it onto the north bank. More tanks followed. For some while the Germans were held in the houses next to the river; an anti aircraft artillery battery of the the 7 Armored Div. wandered into the fire fight and did considerable damage before it went on its way. A Co. from the 202 Eng. Combat Bn. joined in the fray. By the end of the morning however, the German firing line had built up to the point where the Americans could no longer hold inside the village proper, particularly since the hostile tanks were roving at will in the streets.

What remained of the detachment of tank destroyers and antitank guns retired to the top of the hill above Stavelot. In the confusion of disengagement however, the remaining antitank weapons and all but one rifle platoon fell back along the Malmedy road. With German tanks climbing the hill behind the lone platoon and without any means of antitank defense, the C.O. seized some of the gasoline from the Francorchamps dump, had his men pour it in a deep road cut where there was no turn-out and set it ablaze. The result was a perfect antitank barrier and the German tanks turned back to Stavelot. 124,000 gallons of gas were used for this operation--- it was the closest that Kampfgruppe Peiper came to the great stores of gas which might have taken the 1st SS Panzer Div. to the Meuse River.

Trois Ponts gains its name from three highway bridges ; two over the Salm and one over the Ambleve. The road from Stavelot passes under railroad tracks as it nears Trois Ponts then veers sharply to the south, crosses the Ambleve and finally enters the village.

While the battle in Stavelot was still in progress, Peiper turned some of his Mark IV tanks toward Trois Ponts by following a narrow side road on the near bank of the river. The road was almost impassable and when the group came under American fire this approach was abandoned. The main part of the Kampfgruppe swung thru Stavelot and advanced on Trois Ponts. by the highway which followed the north bank of the river.

At this time, Trois Ponts was occupied by Co. C, 51 Eng. Combat Bn. The Co. had been ordered out of the sawmills it had been operating and dispatched to Trois Ponts where it detrucked about midnight of Sun., Dec. 17. During the night the Co. was deployed at roadblocks covering the bridge across the Ambleve and at the highway underpass at the railroad tracks north of the river. On the morning of Mon., Dec. 18 part of an artillery column of the 7 Armored Div. passed through Trois Ponts after a detour to avoid the German armor south of Malmedy and with them was one 57 MM antitank gun and crew which became lost when the remnants of the 526 Armored Inf. Bn. withdrew to the top of the hill @ Stavelot. The gun and crew were placed on the Stavelot road to the east of the underpass where mines had been laid.

At 1145 the advance guard of Peipers column came rolling along the road. A shot from the 57MM gun stopped the foremost German tank

but after a brief skirmish the 57MM gun was knocked out, four of the crew were killed and the engineers were driven back. The hit on the lead tank checked the German column just long enough to give warning to the bridge guards who then blew the Ambleve bridge and then the Salm bridge. In the meantime one of the engineer platoons had discouraged the German tank company from further advance along the side road and it had turned back to Stavelot.

Frustrated, Peiper now turned northward toward La Gleize. Nearby, at the hamlet of Cheneux, Peiper found a bridge intact over the Ambleve but when the weather cleared American fighter-bombers knocked out three tanks and seven half-tracks, blocking the road for along time. When night came Peiper was three miles from Werbomont. During the evening a German detachment did cross a bridge and swung toward Werbomont. Near Chevron this force was ambushed by a Bn. of the 30th Div. and cut to pieces. Few Germans escaped. Since there was nothing left but to double back on his tracks, Peiper left a guard on the bridge at Cheneux and moved his advance guard through the dark toward Stoumont, situated on the Ambleve River road from which the abortive detour had been made during the afternoon of the same day, Mon., Dec. 16.

\* \* \* \* \*

At day break on Mon. Dec. 18, the 119 Infantry was alerted for movement to Stavelot but before trucks could arrive in Eupen, Stavelot fell to the enemy. Expecting the 3rd Parachute Div. to reinforce him soon, Peiper left only a small holding force in Stavelot. In the meantime the U.S. 117 Inf. made contact with the U.S. 526 Armored Inf. Bn. near Stavelot and launched a attack to retake the town. With the help of American fighter-bombers, half of the town was retaken.

The fight for Stavelot continued all night of the 18th with German tanks now free from the air threat, working through the streets as far as the town square. At daybreak the 1st Bn. and its tanks went to work and by noon had reclaimed all the town down to the Ambleve R. Twice during the afternoon, enemy led tank formations drove toward the town but both times American gunners dispersed the field gray infantry and the tanks decided not to chance the assault alone. It is not surprising that the German infantry gave over the field. The 118th cannoners fired 3500 shells into the assault waves, working their guns so fast that the tubes had to be cooled with water.

By Tues. night, Dec 19, the first Bn. had a firm grip on Stavelot. ---- but in the most telling stroke of all, its attached engineers had dynamited the Ambleve bridge across which Peipers force had rolled west on Mon. Dec. 18. Without the Ambleve bridge, and a free line of communication through Stavelot, there was no fuel for Peiper. Without Peiper the freeway to the Meuse which the 1st SS Panzer Div. was to open for the following divisions of the Sixth Panzer Army, remained nothing more than cul-de-sac.

-/--/--/--/--/--/  
\* \* \* \* \*

## STATISTICS ON STAVELOT AND THE ARDENNES

The climate of the Ardennes, being mountain country, has much rainfall, deep snows in late winter, and frequent and heavy mists. Meteorological predictions are difficult because the Ardennes lies directly on the boundry between the northwest and central European climatic regions and this is affected by the conjuncture of weather moving east from the British Isles and the Atlantic, with that moving westward out of Russia. At Stavelot, freezing weather averages 112 days a year. Snowfall often attains a depth of ten to twelve inches in a 24 hour period and lingers for a long time.

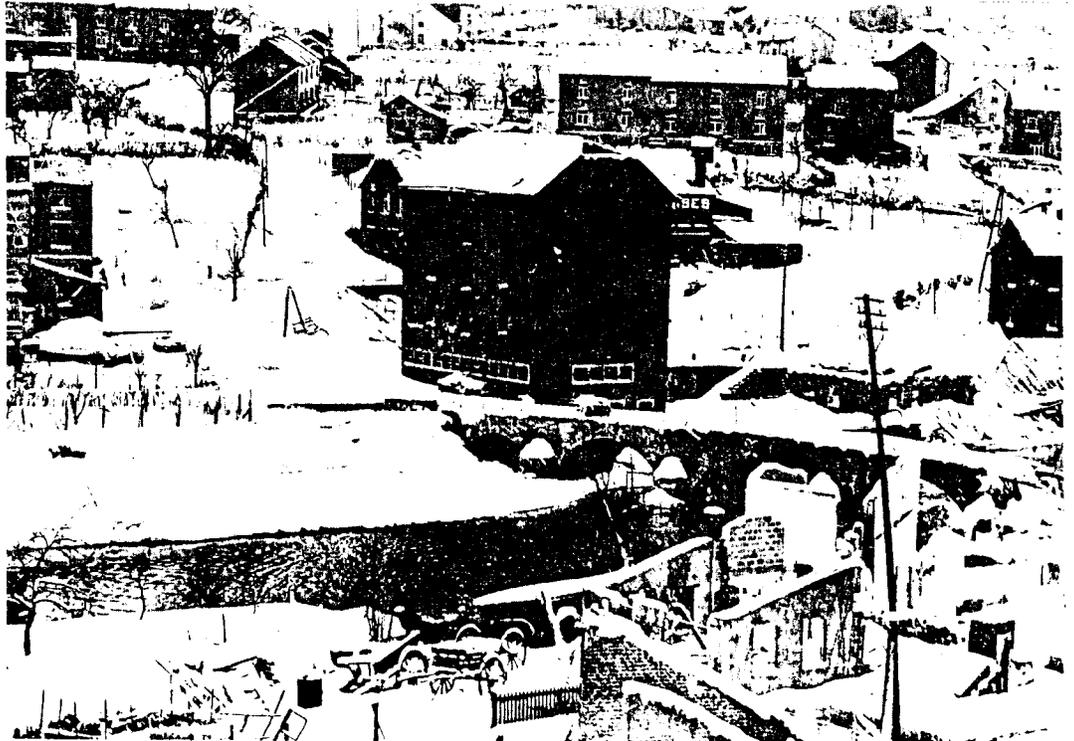
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A line on a map tracing the course of the Ambleve River and its initial tributaries will pass from N.E. To S.W. through three important bridgeheads ; Malmedy , Stavelot , and Trois Ponts. From Malmedy and Stavelot roads lead north to Spa, Verviers, and Liege. Although both Malmedy & Stavelot were administrative centers of importance, (Stavelot contained the First Army map depot with some 2,500,000 maps) the most important item hereabouts was over 2,000,000 gallons of gasoline stored just north of the two towns. The Ambleve is joined by the Salm at Trois Ponts, untill it meets the Curth and finally the Meuse at Liege.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Sepp" Dietrich and his cohorts were accused and convicted of killing some 900-odd American prisoners of war and Belgian civilians during the Battle of the Bulge. Most of the civilians were slaughtered mercilessly by the rampaging Peiper men after being trapped in the Ambleve River valley. In the three towns of Parfondruy, Ster, and Renardmont, between Stavelot and Trois Ponts, along the Ambleve River. the dead bodies of 117 men, women, and children were found, all killed by small arms fire. A platoon leader ordered his men to do away with all civilians who came in sight. So that we do not readily forget the sins of our enemies, I quote an eyewitness account of the scene as American troops moved into the towns ; "Ten or twelve completely burned bodies, charred black, were seen where a small shed had once stood --- in the adjacent house, there was the body of a middleaged woman who had been stabbed with a knife and then shot. Bodies of two boys between the ages of six and ten were seen with bullet holes in their foreheads --- One old woman had been killed by smash over the head, probably with a rifle butt. There was the body of a young man with his boots taken off ; he had been killed by being shot through the back of his head --- Near a foxhole were bodies of a thirteen year old boy and a fifteen year old girl who had been shot, apparently as they tried to escape."

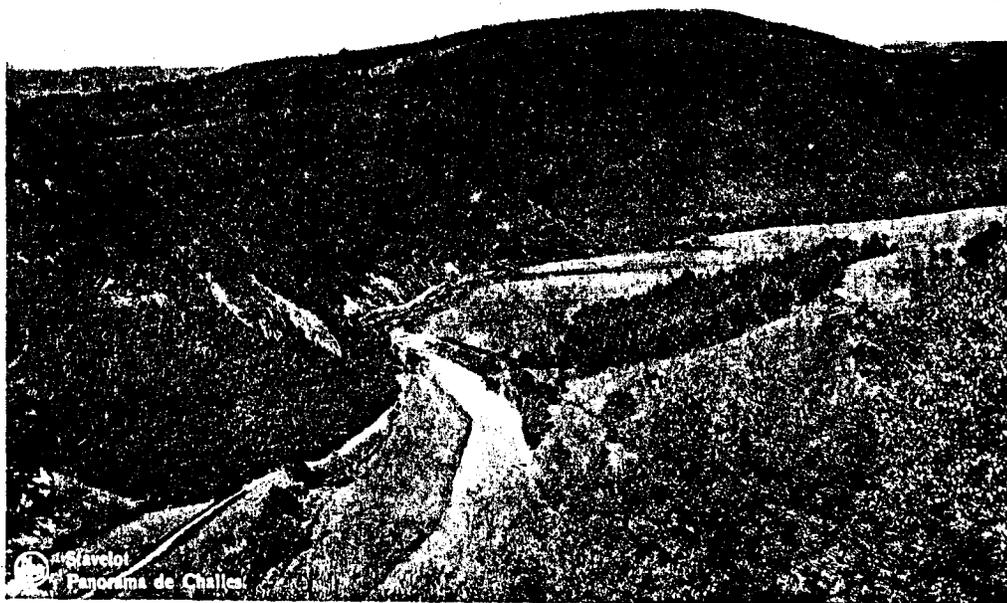
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AMBLÈVE RIVER BRIDGE AT STAVELOT  
( blown part is at the right of picture )



( NOTE THE MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN AROUND STAVELOT )

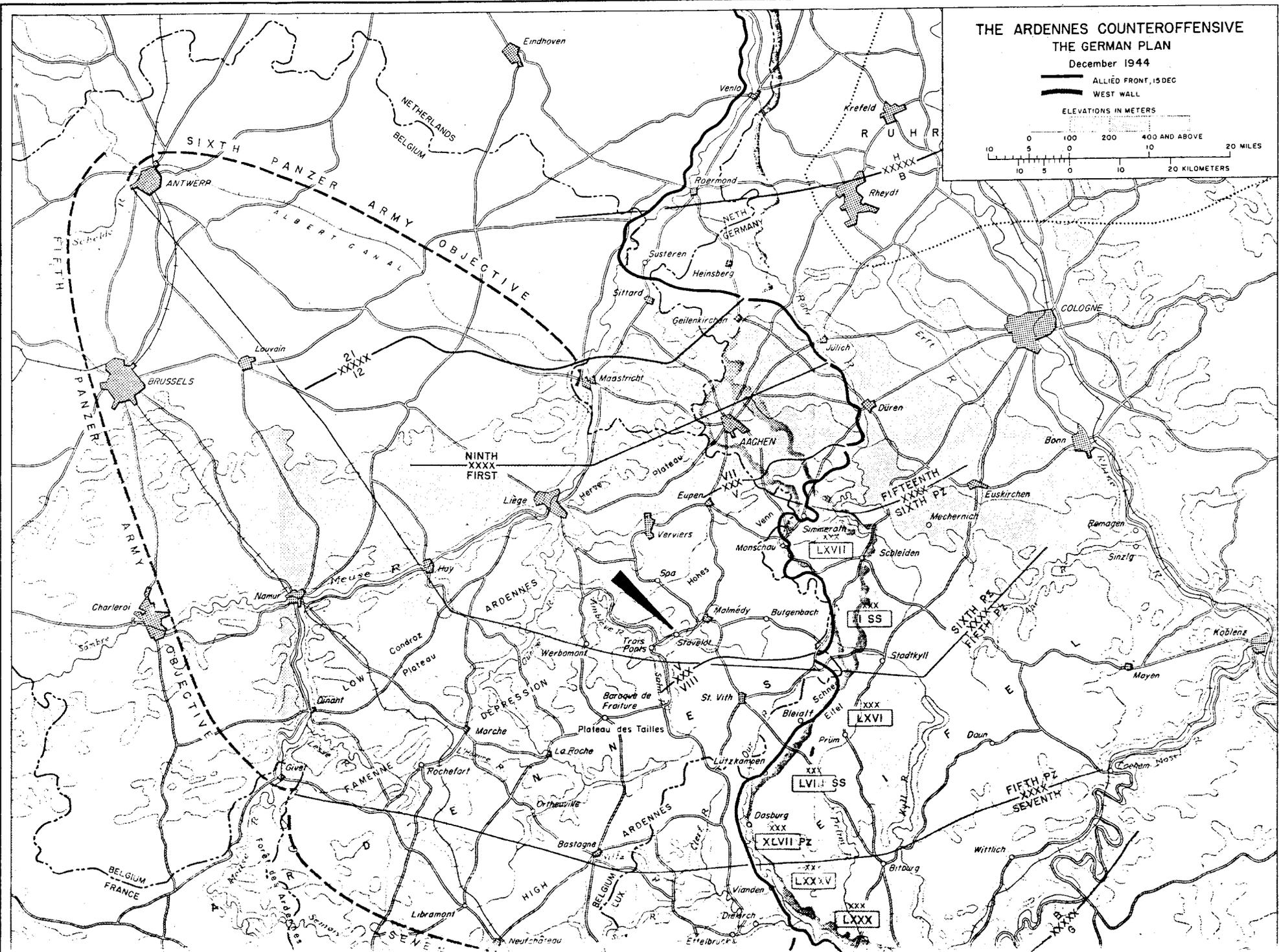
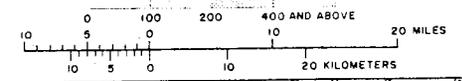


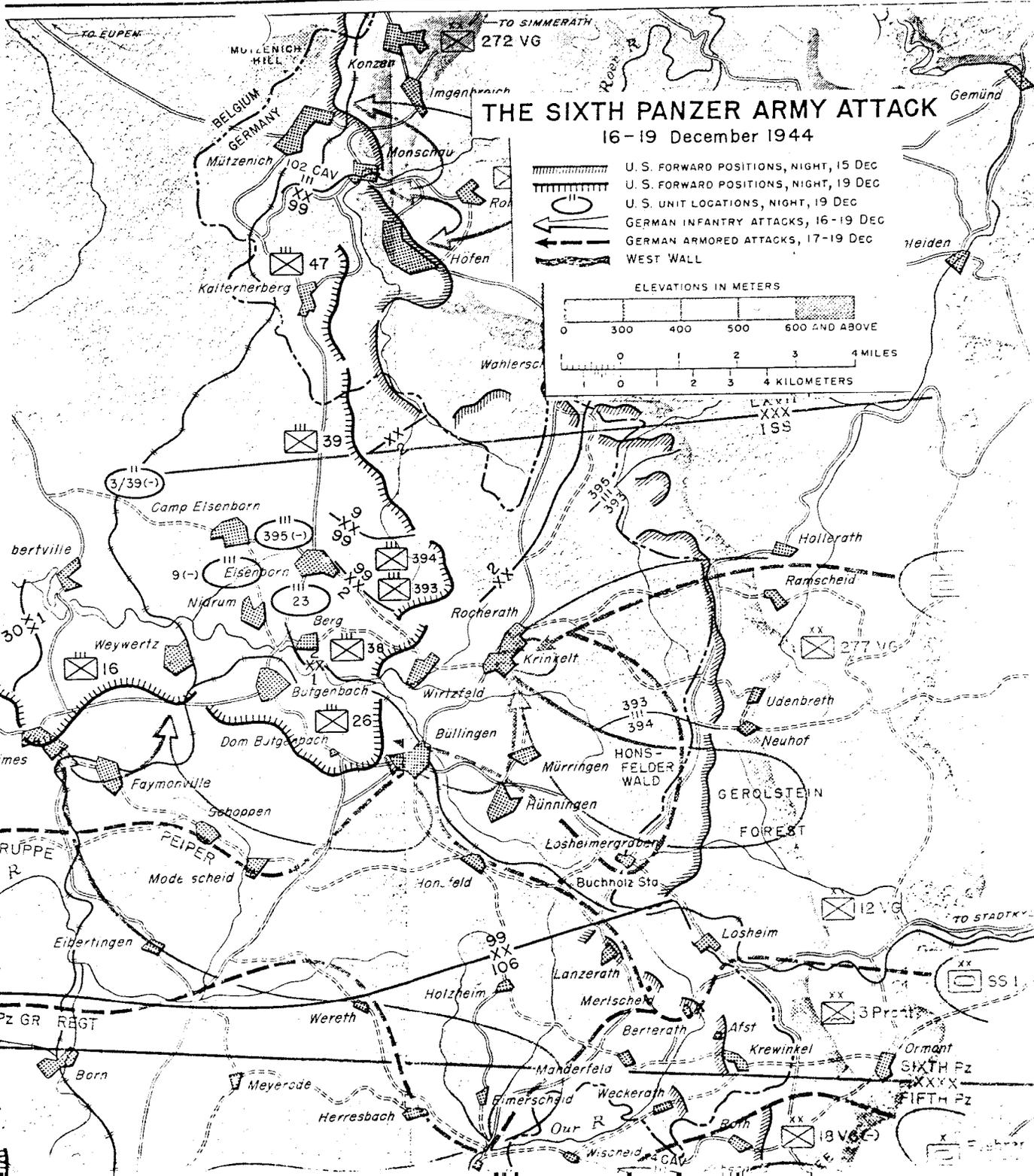
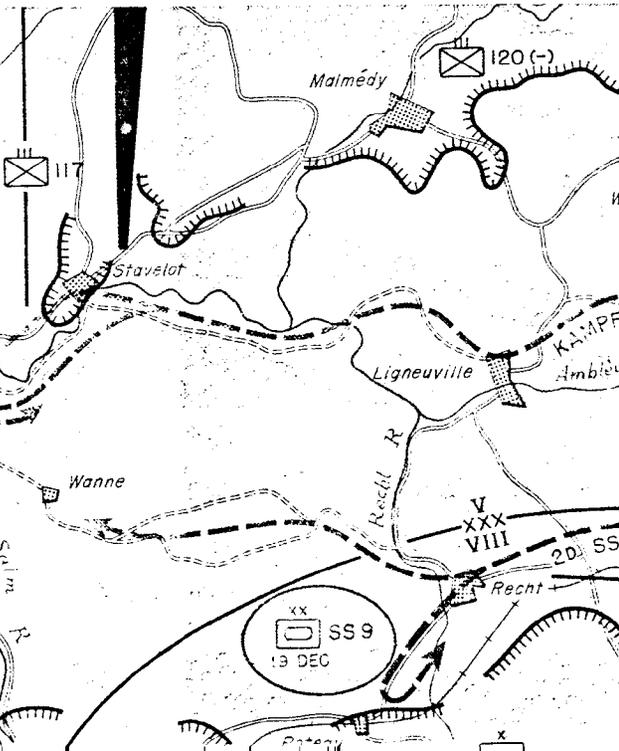
# THE ARDENNES COUNTEROFFENSIVE THE GERMAN PLAN

December 1944

— ALLIED FRONT, 15 DEC  
— WEST WALL

ELEVATIONS IN METERS

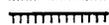
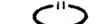
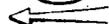




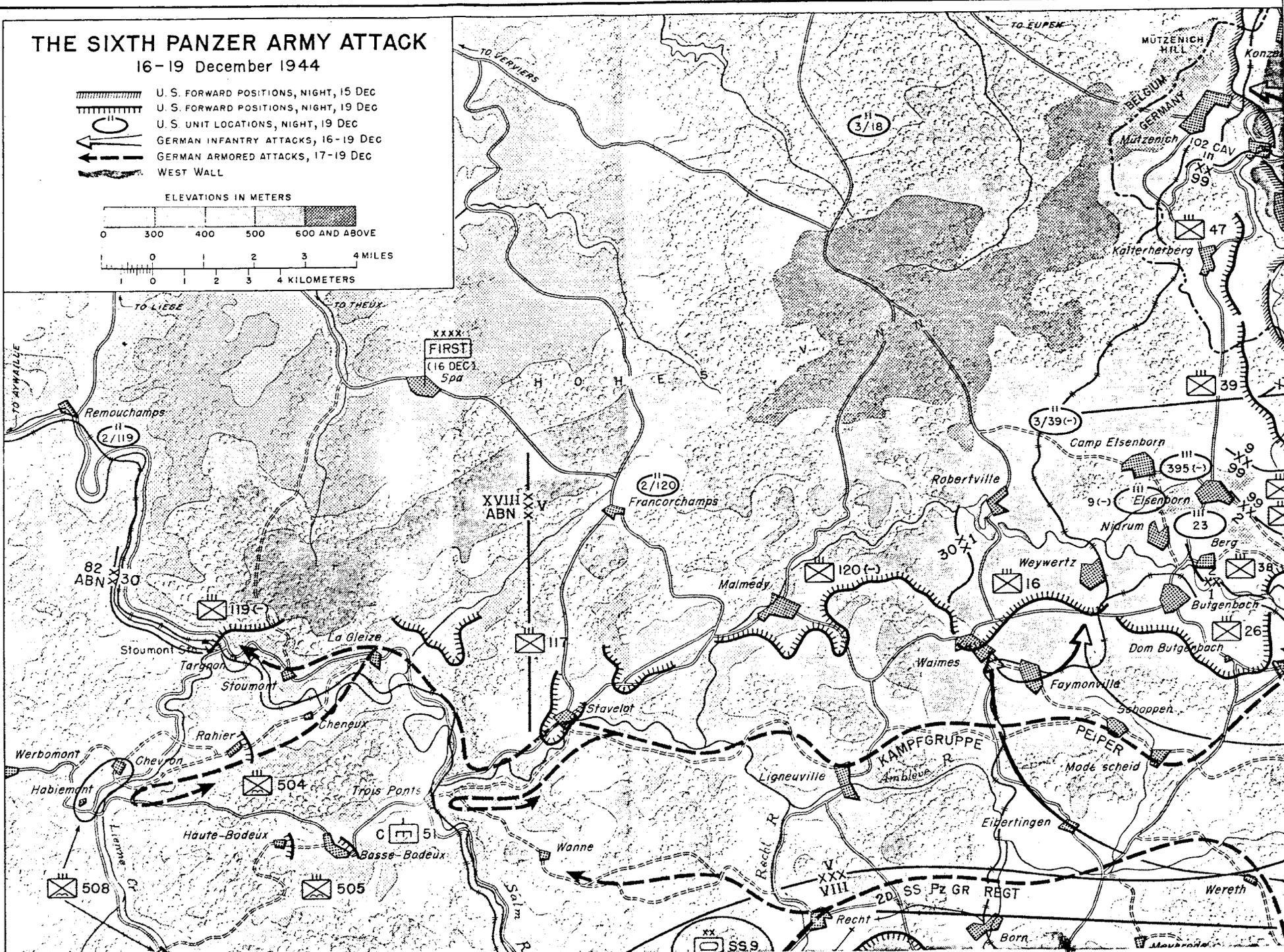
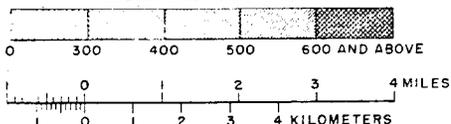
XV  
AE

# THE SIXTH PANZER ARMY ATTACK

16-19 December 1944

-  U. S. FORWARD POSITIONS, NIGHT, 15 DEC
-  U. S. FORWARD POSITIONS, NIGHT, 19 DEC
-  U. S. UNIT LOCATIONS, NIGHT, 19 DEC
-  GERMAN INFANTRY ATTACKS, 16-19 DEC
-  GERMAN ARMORED ATTACKS, 17-19 DEC
-  WEST WALL

ELEVATIONS IN METERS



HEADQUARTERS  
FIRST UNITED STATES ARMY  
APO 230

GENERAL ORDERS)

9 April 1945

NO. 55)

SECTION

Award of Meritorious Service Unit Plaque----- 1

1. AWARD OF MERITORIOUS SERVICE UNIT PLAQUE--Under the provisions of War Department Circular 345, 23 August 1944, the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque is awarded to the following unit for superior performance of duty in the accomplishment of exceptionally difficult tasks during the period indicated:

897th Ordnance Heavy Automotive Maintenance Company, United States Army,  
from 24 June 1944 to 23 August 1944.

BY COMMAND OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL HODGES:

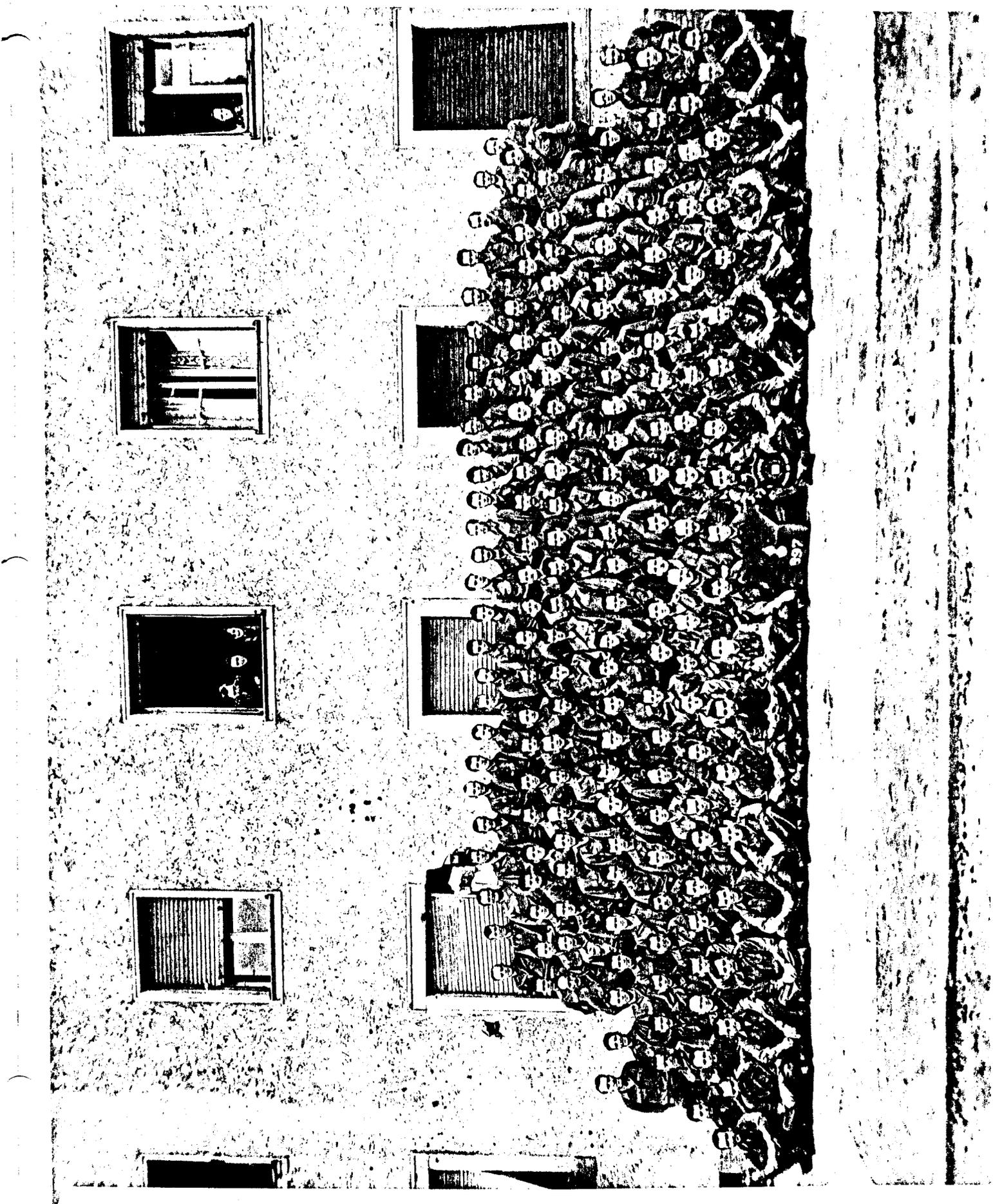
/t/ W. B. KEAN  
Major General G. S. C.  
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

S. E. SENIOR /s/  
S. E. SENIOR /t/  
Colonel, A. G. D.  
Asst. Adjutant General.

"I CERTIFY this to be a true copy,  
Extracted from G.O # 55 FUSA

*W. E. Snyder*  
W. E. SNYDER  
Capt., Ord. Dept.  
Commanding.



HEADQUARTERS  
 UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES SOUTH ATLANTIC  
 RECIFE, PERNAMBUCO, BRAZIL  
 APO 876, c/o Postmaster,  
 MIAMI, FLORIDA

Gentlemen:

Your service to your country in this war has been the safeguard of the Liberty that our forefathers fought and died for. By your devotion to duty you are helping to preserve it for generations yet to come. Now, as all effort is directed to the crushing defeat of Japan, I congratulate you upon your patriotism and the excellent job just completed.

While you are in the South Atlantic Theater, it will be a prime objective of all personnel under my command to provide you with every possible convenience and courtesy

The United States Army Forces South Atlantic are proud to serve you.

Happy Landings!

*Ralph H. Wooten*  
 RALPH H. WOOTEH  
 Major General, U.S.A.  
 Commanding

TO  
 PIGEONS, PILOTS, PASSENGERS, PIXIES  
 and all other habitants of the ozone



GREETINGS:

know' ye by these presents,  
 by all the winds that blow from the four quarters  
 of the earth whether from Grid North, Solid South,  
 Near East or Mae West, by the stratosphere, the  
 troposphere and the tropopause, the thunder,  
 lightning and the rainbow, that

has on this ..... day of ..... 19.....

at Longitude 50° West, and at  
 LATITUDE 0° 00' 00"

CROSSED THE EQUATOR, BY AIR  
 in view of which, bear ye:

I,  
**MERCURY,**  
 godlike gremlin of the Greeks,  
 Jupiter's flying flash,  
 most high and mighty winged heel,  
 DO HEREBY AWARD HIM

One bag of select, tropically-warmed, Amazonian  
 hot air, for use in describing his experiences on  
 return to the States, and initiate him into the

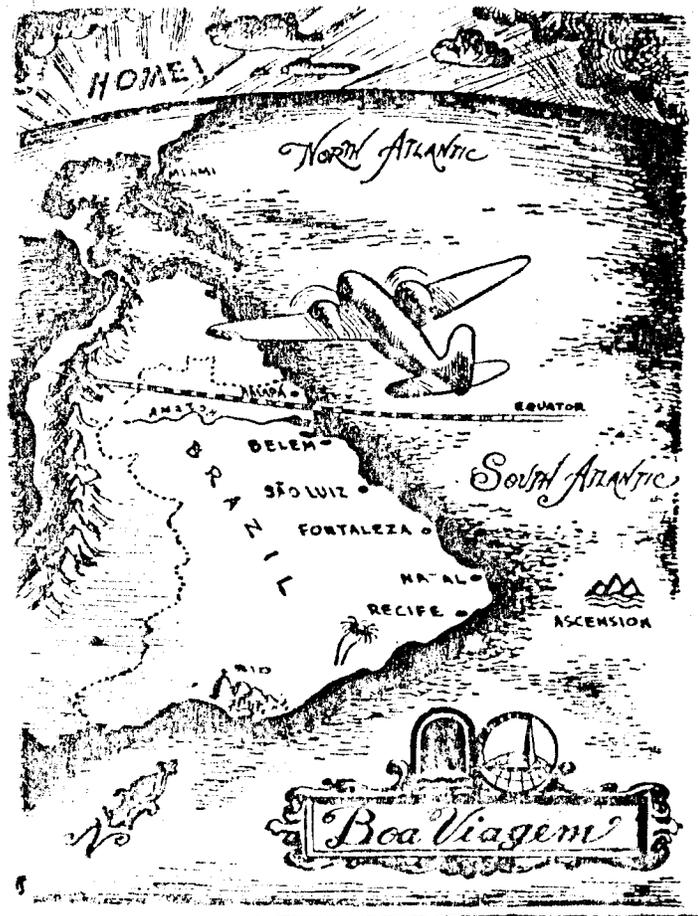
TRUSTY ORDER OF FEATHERBACKS,  
 Equatorial Chapter,  
 and to all rights and privileges therein.

Signed and sealed:  
 MERCURIUS NUNTIUS AERIALIS

Chief Featherback.

Asst. Chief Featherback and Pilot:

Air Transport Command



R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS  
NORTH AFRICAN SERVICE COMMAND

27 Aug 45

SUBJECT: Travel Orders for Green Project Personnel.

TO : See Distribution.

1. PAC Letter Hq AMET, file 370.5, subject: "Movement Orders, Shipment RM-1, dtd. 22 Aug 45 and Ltr TAG AG 200.4 (23 May 45) OB-S-E-M, 25 May 45, fol named EM, Shipment RM-1, having arrived at this under competent orders, will report to CO, Sv. Co, NASC, for transshipment to US (Green Project Traffic) aerial port of debarkation by first available air transportation reporting upon arrival to AIC Debar-kation Off for processing and further movement to proper staging area.

Grade	Name & Recp Sta.	ASN	Arm or Sv	MOS	ASRS	Home Address
Tec 3	William J Heilman Recp Sta #2	32035894	OD	965	93	RFD #1, Cherry Crbk, New York
Tec 3	Aloysius L Myszka Recp Sta #2	32035267	OD	050	93	35 Thomas St, Buffalo, N.Y.
Tec 3	Constantine C Painas Recp Sta #2	32108008	OD	821	93	295 S 2d St, Brooklyn, 11, N.Y.
Tec 3	Thomas H Gardner Recp Sta #3	20348913	OD	903	91	2116 Pleasant St, Richmond, Va.
Tec 3	Willie D Hankins Recp Sta #5	34131303	OD	201	89	Fulton, Miss.
Tec 3	Norman C Kron Recp Sta #6	35163265	OD	965	89	R. R. #7, Evansville, Ind.
Tec 3	Fred P Miller Recp Sta #6	35163150	OD	965	89	Rte #5, Kokomo, Ind.
Tec 3	Theron H Buffington Recp Sta #7	36013541	OD	144	93	601 Fairview St, Park Ridge, Ill.
Tec 3	Lowell Elliott Recp Sta #7	36153978	OD	337	92	63 Cutter Ave; Coldwater, Mich.
Tec 3	Floyd G Ensign Recp Sta #7	36108773	OD	965	92	1607 E Indian St, Midland, Mich
Tec 3	Victor L Fresl Recp Sta #7	36205446	OD	413	93	2108 S 61st St, Milwaukee, Wis.
Tec 3	Harold C Granger Recp Sta #7	36010770	OD	965	90	387 S Rosswood .vc, Kankakee, Ill.
Tec 3	Joseph A Kloc Recp Sta #7	36205461	OD	965	93	2536 So 5th Place, Milwaukee, Wis.
Tec 3	Waldo H Pietila Recp Sta #7	36108078	OD	912	93	Allouez, Mich.
Tec 3	Erony P Ermis Recp Sta #10	18011178	OD	502	91	1414 West Main St, Cameron, Texas.
Tec 3	Park B Bumgerner Recp Sta #21	36031668	OD	813	92	181 East Main St, St Clairsville, Ohio.
Tec 3	Harold J Erwin Recp Sta #21	35030355	OD	965	93	335 N. Franklin St, Richwood, Ohio
Tec 3	Benedict J Noster Recp Sta #21	35011626	OD	114	93	318 W 15 St, Elyria, Ohio.

R E S T R I C T E D

2. PCS w/TD enroute US airport staging area reception sta and separation center or redistribution sta. EDCMR is 21 Sep 45.
3. Shipment is under control CG ATC from time of departure until arrival in the US, except for such times as proper authorities may otherwise direct.
4. Travel by mil acft, rail, Govt MT, or other means of transportation is auth. Baggage will consist of two (2) pieces and will not exceed thirty-five (35) pounds while traveling by mil acft. Other auth and excess personal baggage will be packed addressed as prescribed in letter WDAGO AG 524 OE-S-SPMOT-M 29 Aug 44 and turned over to Tpn O, NASC, for shipment to US. Upon arrival at new sta or other address in US, EM will notify Off in Charge, Baggage Clearance Unit, Traffic Control Div, OCT, 25 Broad St, New York 4, NY of address to which baggage is to be forwarded.
5. No per diem alws is auth while traveling by mil acft directly between or stop-overs at US Army posts, stations or airbases in this Theater. Govt messing and billeting facilities will be utilized.
6. The following records will be assembled in the Records Jacket, WDAGO Form 201 (AR 345-15, 15 June 44) and returned with the above named EM. Those marked with an asterisk (\*) will be carried by the individual:  
WDAGO Form 163 (Adjusted Sv Rating Card) \*Form 8-117 (Immunization Register)  
Form 20 (Soldier's Qualification Card) Form 8-114 (When applicable)  
Form 24 (Soldier's Service Record) C & E Adjustment Form  
\*Form 28 (Soldier's Indiv Pay Record) Certificate of Health  
Certificate of Health and physical profile serial properly certified by US Army Med Off will be accomplished prior to embarkation.
7. In compliance with instructions contained in Par 5c, Cir 273, WD, 1943, above named EM are directed to notify correspondents and publishers without delay to discontinue mailing letters and publications to them until further advised of new address.
8. Pursuant to WD instructions dated 10 May 1944, above EM will not disclose information concerning WD, the Army, or activities within this theater, in connection therewith, to the public through newspapers, magazines, radio, lectures, or by any other means without clearance by the WD Bureau of Public Relations or by appropriate public relations officers of various Army installations.
9. IDN. 62-323 F 431-02 A 212/60425.

BY ORDER OF COLONEL SHUFFELT:

DISTRIBUTION:

EM conc	20	Hq AMET	2
Sv Co NASC	2	Pers	2
Unit conc	2	Rec	15
TAG (opns br)	2		
Ea Recp Sta	2		

*William P. Langsdorf, Jr.*  
WILLIAM P. LANGSDORF, JR.  
Captain, F. A.,  
Assistant Adjutant

HEADQUARTERS  
SOUTH ATLANTIC DIVISION, AIR TRANSPORT COMMAND  
c/o Postmaster, Miami, Florida

A  
PREVIEW  
OF YOUR NEXT  
AIR TRANSPORT COMMAND STOP

NATAL

After crossing 1888 miles of the Atlantic Ocean from Dakar, you will arrive at Parnamirim Field in Natal, Brazil. On arrival your plane will be sprayed by the Brazilian Medical Authorities. The necessity for this action was occasioned about a year and one-half ago when malaria bearing mosquitoes were found alive on planes arriving here from Africa. During this period of disinsectization (about five minutes) your temperature will be taken by our own Medical men and any requests for medical attention should be directed to this attendant. During this same period, the Priorities and Traffic Officer will pick up the Passenger Card that you will find attached to this sheet. Fill in these cards prior to your arrival so they will be ready for this officer.

From the aircraft you will be taken to the Passenger Terminal. Here you will be briefed on our Base customs, facilities and introduced to your respective Plane Group Leader. An escort will take your group to the barracks assigned you. This escort will provide all possible assistance by offering you directions or information. You will complete your own billeting card after you reach the barracks. Latrine and shower facilities are available here. After your Plane Group Leader has delivered the billeting cards to the ATC Passenger Billeting Section he will advise you as to the location of your mess where hot meals are served on a twenty-four hour basis.

Your Plane Group Leader will attend the formations to learn what time your group is scheduled to depart. You will remain in your barracks awaiting his return from each formation as you will quite possibly leave soon after your group has been alerted for departure.

FOR THOSE WHOSE TIME PERMITS

Day Rooms for Officers and Enlisted Men will be open at all hours. Pool tables, ping pong tables, darts, transient library and reading rooms, writing desks, Red Cross facilities and information desks will be available here.

An athletic area will provide: Volley ball, shuffle board, archery range, tennis, soft ball, horse shoes and hobby shops. There will be an athletic director to help you organize your teams and provide the equipment. We should warn you now not to expose yourself to this tropical sun for more than 20 minutes at any one time.

Our Post Exchange will have all the usual items together with many local products which you may care to take back as a memento of your visit to Brazil.

The Base Theatre will have two shows each evening. In addition movie shorts will be shown in Building #210 twenty-four hours a day with showings

to start every hour on the hour.

Due to very limited transportation facilities the city of Natal is off limits for all transient personnel.

You will be given no work details during your stay in Natal.

#### BAGGAGE

Access to your checked baggage will be granted only when unusual circumstances warrant and such permission will be granted only by the Passenger Service Officer.

#### CENSORSHIP

CABLEGRAMS: EFM (Fixed Text Messages) and straight messages may be sent from the Base Censor's Office. PACKAGES: It is recommended that all purchases at the PX be carried rather than mailed. LETTERS: Writing is not recommended as your plane will reach the States long before any letter you may mail here. If they are sent, they will contain only information of a personal nature. You may, however, mention you are in Brazil.

#### YOUR FLIGHT FROM NATAL

After your rest period, three types of aircraft will be assigned for the balance of your trip. There will be Douglas C-47s (Skytrains) carrying twenty passengers each, Curtiss C-46s (Commandos) carrying thirty passengers each, and a limited number of Douglas C-54s carrying forty passengers each.

#### SOME FACTS ABOUT THE NATAL BASE

Parnamirim Field was activated as a part of the South Atlantic Division, Air Transport Command in June 1942. Since that date and up until "V-E Day", 18,579 combat aircraft, 24,899,771 pounds of high priority cargo, 3,910,766 pounds of mail and 39,364 urgently needed personnel have been flown from this field to the men on the fighting fronts. The same flights return through Natal and have carried strategic materials, sick and wounded and thousands of personnel. Also 4,143,266 pounds of your mail has been flown back to the U.S. Twenty-four hours a day seven days a week have been spent by these men to see that the planes, men and materials have moved with the greatest possible speed.

We will be looking forward to seeing you in Natal and with the facilities available we will do everything possible to make your stay pleasant and comfortable.

*Thomas D. Ferguson*  
THOMAS D. FERGUSON  
Colonel, Air Corps  
Commanding

The distances that you have flown and will fly are as follows:

	MILES	HOURS	MIN.
Casablanca to Dakar	1640	8	15
Dakar to Natal	1888	10	15
Natal to Belem	964	5	45
Belem to Georgetown	898	5	15
Georgetown to Borinquen	1117	5	45
Borinquen to Miami	1090	5	30

At Georgetown you will pick up one hour. The U.S. will be 11½ hours away.

HOMeward BOUND  
CASABLANCA TO MIAMI, FLA.  
(Courtesy of Axel Swanson )

Flight #943 C-54 "Skyrocket" Ship #9084 1945

Left Casablanca, French Morrocco, Africa  
8-31-45 6:15 P.M.

Arrived Dakar, French West Africa  
9-1-45 2:30 A.M.

Left Dakar, French West Africa  
9-1-45 4:15 A.M.

Arrived Natal, Brazil, South America  
9-1-45 2:30 P.M.

Left Natal, Brazil (on C-47)  
9-2-45 4:00 A.M.

Arrived Belem, Brazil  
9-2-45 9-15 A.M.

Left Belem, Brazil  
9-2-45 10:45 A.M.

Arrived Georgetown, British, Guiana  
9-2-45 3:45 P.M.

Left Georgetown, British Guiana  
9-2-45 4:45 P.M.

Arrived Puerto Rico  
9-2-45 9:40 P.M.

Left Puerto Rico  
9-2-45 10:45 P.M.

Arrived Miami, Fla.  
9-3-45 3:25 A.M.

Camp Shanks to Casablanca

Loaded on British ship H.M.S. Andes at N.Y.C. P.O.E. NOV. 11, 1943  
 Left harbor on morning of Nov. 12, 1943  
 Arrived at Liverpool, England docks on Nov. 20, 1943  
 Arrived at Gloucester, England by train on Nov. 21, 1943  
 Left Gloucester, England on June 13, 1944  
 Arrived at Southampton, England marshalling area on June 13, 1944.

FRANCE

Omaha Beach \_\_\_\_\_ Jun.15,"44  
 Treviers \_\_\_\_\_ Jun.16,"44  
 Cerisy Forest \_\_\_\_\_ Jul.13,"44  
 St. Lo \_\_\_\_\_ Aug.4,"44  
 Vire \_\_\_\_\_ Aug.11,"44  
 Sees \_\_\_\_\_ Aug.22,"44  
 Seclay \_\_\_\_\_ Aug.30,"44  
 Senlis \_\_\_\_\_ Sep.2,"44  
 Laon \_\_\_\_\_ Sep.4,"44  
 Cliron \_\_\_\_\_ Sep.8,"44

BELGIUM

Sibret \_\_\_\_\_ Sep.17,"44  
 Bastogne \_\_\_\_\_ Sep.23,"44  
 Malmedy \_\_\_\_\_ Oct.3,"44  
 Stavelot \_\_\_\_\_ Oct.4,"44  
 Staumont \_\_\_\_\_ Dec.17,"44  
 Bomal \_\_\_\_\_ Dec.18,"44  
 Eghezee \_\_\_\_\_ Dec.19,"44  
 Herstal \_\_\_\_\_ Dec.24,"44  
 Verviers \_\_\_\_\_ Feb.6,"45  
 Dison \_\_\_\_\_ Feb.22,"45

GERMANY

Mechernich \_\_\_\_\_ Mar.17,"45  
 Weissentherm \_\_\_\_\_ Mar.28,"45  
 Geissen \_\_\_\_\_ Mar.31,"45  
 Neustadt \_\_\_\_\_ Apr.4,"45  
 Hann Munden \_\_\_\_\_ Apr.11,"45  
 Muhlhausen \_\_\_\_\_ Apr.24,"45  
 Coberg \_\_\_\_\_ May 5,"45  
 Weiden \_\_\_\_\_ May 7,"45

Czechoslovakia

Pilsen \_\_\_\_\_ May 13,"45

Germany

Erlangen \_\_\_\_\_ Jun.14,"45  
 Nurnberg \_\_\_\_\_ Jun.24,"45  
 Schwan dorf \_\_\_\_\_ Jul.9,"45

Austria

Garmisch Partenkirchen Jul.22,"44

Italy

Verona \_\_\_\_\_ Jul.23,"45  
 Pisa \_\_\_\_\_ Jul.24,"45  
 Grossetto \_\_\_\_\_ Jul.25,"45  
 Rome \_\_\_\_\_ Jul.26,"45  
 Caserta \_\_\_\_\_ Jul.27,"45  
 Naples \_\_\_\_\_ Jul.28,"45

French Morrocco

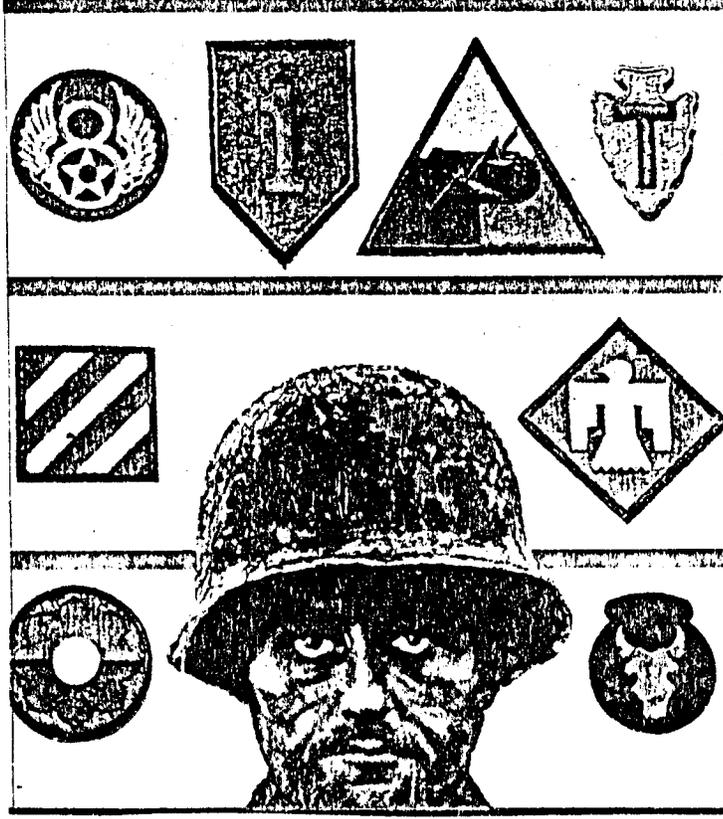
Casablanca \_\_\_\_\_ Aug.5,"45

POPULAR LIBRARY ★ SW 1114 ★ 75¢

The unforgettable, all-time bestseller—  
 Ernie Pyle's epic account of World War II  
 Now for the first time in paperback ★ ★

# BRAVE MEN

by ERNIE PYLE



### 31. ORDNANCE

ONE of the things the layman doesn't hear much about is the Ordnance Department. In fact, it is one of the branches that even the average soldier is little aware of, except in a vague way. And yet the war couldn't keep going without it. For Ordnance repairs all the vehicles of an army and furnishes all the ammunition for its guns. There were more vehicles in the American sector of our beachhead than in the average-sized American city. And our big guns on an average heavy day were shooting up more than \$10,000,000 worth of ammunition. So you see Ordnance had a man-sized job.

Ordnance personnel is usually about six or seven per cent of the total men of an army. That means we had many thousands of ordnancemen in Normandy. Their insigne is a flame coming out of a bomb—nicknamed in the Army the "Flaming Onion." Ordnance operated the ammunition dumps we had scattered about the beachhead. But much bigger than its ammunition mission was Ordnance's job of repair. Ordnance had millions of items in its catalogue of parts, and the catalogue itself covered a 20-foot shelf.

In a central headquarters there on the beachhead a modern filing system, housed in big tents, kept records on the number and condition of 500 major items in actual use on the beach-

head—from tanks to pistols. We had scores and scores of separate ordnance companies at work there—each of them a complete firm within itself, able to repair anything the Army used. Ordnance could lift a 30-ton tank as easily as it could a bicycle. It could repair a blown-up jeep or the intricate breech of a mammoth gun.

Some of the highly specialized repair companies were made up largely of men who were craftsmen in the same line in civil life. In those companies the average age was much above the Army average. There were craftsmen in their late forties, men—wearing sergeants' stripes—who used to make \$30,000 to \$40,000 a year back home in their own established businesses. Their IQ was far above the average for the Army. It had to be that way or the work could not have been done. I found great soberness and sincerity among them, plus the normal satisfaction that comes from making things whole again instead of destroying them. Out under a tree I saw machines at work that would have been housed in a \$50,000 shop back in America. Men worked sixteen hours a day, then slept on the ground—men who, because of their age, didn't have to be there at all.

Ordnance is one of the undramatic branches of the Army. These men are the mechanics and the craftsmen, the fixers and the suppliers. But their job is vital. Ordinarily they are not in a great deal of danger. There were times on newly won and congested beachheads when their casualty rate was high, but once the war settled down and there was room for movement and dispersal it was not necessary or desirable for them to do their basic work within gun range. Our ordnance branch in Normandy had had casualties. There were two small branches which continued to have casualties—disposal squads and retriever companies that went up to pull out crippled tanks under fire.

Ordnance is set up in a vast structure of organization the same as any other command. The farther back from the lines the bigger become the outfits and the more elaborately equipped and more capable of doing heavy, long-term work. Every infantry or armored division has an ordnance company with it all the time. This company does quick repair jobs. What it hasn't time or facilities for doing it hands on back to the next echelon in the rear.

The division ordnance companies hit the Normandy beach on D-day. The next echelon back began coming on D + 2. The heavy outfits arrived somewhat later. After seven weeks of war the wreckage was all in hand, and in one great depot after another it was worked out—repaired or rebuilt or sent back for salvage until everything possible was made available again to our men who did the fighting.

I visited what Ordnance calls a "mobile maintenance company." They repaired jeeps, light trucks, small arms and light artillery—no tanks, heavy trucks or big guns. The company was bivouacked around the hedgerows of a large grassy L-shaped pasture. There were no trees in the pasture, and nothing in the center except some grazing horses. No men or vehicles walked or drove across the pasture. Always they stuck to the tree-high hedgerows. It was hard to believe that there in a thin, invisible line around the edges of the empty pasture there was a great machine shop with nearly 200 men working with wrenches and welding torches, that six teams of auto mechanics were busy. Actually there was little need for such perfect camouflage, for this company was perhaps ten miles behind the lines and German planes never appeared in the daytime. But it was good policy to keep in practice on camouflage.

This was a proud company. It was the first one to land in France—first, that is, behind the companies actually attached to divisions. It landed on D + 2 and lost three men killed and seven wounded when a shell hit their ship as they were unloading. For several days it and one other were the only ordnance companies of their type ashore. Its small complement, whose job in theory was to back up only one division in medium repair work, carried all repair work for four divisions until help arrived. The

company had a proud record in the last war too, having been in nine major engagements. And it had a sentimental little coincidence in its history. In 1917 and in 1943 it left America for France on the same date, December 12.

In one corner of the pasture was the command post tent where two sergeants and two officers worked at folding tables and kept the records so necessary in Ordnance. A first lieutenant was in command of the company, assisted by five other lieutenants. Their stand-by was Warrant Officer Ernest Pike, of Savoy, Texas, who had been in the Army fifteen years, thirteen of them with this very company. What he didn't know about practical ordnance you could put in a dead German's eye.

In another corner of the pasture was a mess truck with its field kitchens under some trees. There the men of the company lined up for meals with mess kits, officers as well as men, and ate sitting on the grass. The officers lounged on the grass in a little group apart and when they finished eating they lit cigarettes and played awhile with some cute little French puppies they had found in German strong points, or traded soap and cigarettes for. The officers knew the men intimately and if they were in a hurry and had left their mess kits behind they just borrowed from soldiers who had finished eating.

A company of this kind was highly mobile. It could pack up and be under way in probably less than an hour. Yet Ordnance figured, as a basic policy, that its companies should not move oftener than every six days if they were to work successfully. They figure one day for moving, one for settling down and four days of full-time work, then forward again. If at any time the fighting ahead of them got rolling faster than this rate, the ordnance companies began leapfrogging each other, one working while another of the same type moved around it and set up.

Their equipment was moved in trucks and trailers. Some trucks were machine shops, others were supply stores. Some plain trucks were for hauling miscellaneous stuff. Once set up, the men slept on the ground in pup tents along the hedges, with foxholes dug deep and handy.

The more skilled men worked at their benches and instruments inside the shop trucks. The bulk of the work outside was done under dark-green canvas canopies stretched outward from the hedgerows and held taut on upright poles, their walls formed of camouflage nets. Nothing but a vague blur was visible from a couple of hundred yards away. A person would have had to make a long tour clear around the big pasture, nosing in under the hedge and camouflage nets, in order to realize that anything was going on at all. In the far distance was a faint rumble of big guns, and overhead all day our own planes roared comfortably. But outside those fringes of war it was as peaceful in that Normandy field as it would be in a pasture in Ohio. Even the three liberated horses grazed contentedly on the ankle-high grass, quite indifferent to the fact that the peaceful field was part of the great war machine that would destroy their recent masters.

Daily to the small-arms section of the company there came trucks with the picked-up, rusting rifles of men killed or wounded, and rifles broken in ordinary service. The outfit turned back around a hundred rifles a day to its division, all shiny and oiled and ready to shoot again. They operated on the simple salvage system of taking good parts off one gun and placing them on another. To do this they worked like a small assembly plant. The first few hours of the morning were devoted to taking broken rifles apart. They didn't try to keep the parts of each gun together. All parts were standard and transferable, hence they threw each type into a big steel pan full of similar parts. At the end of the job they had a dozen or so pans, each filled with the same kind of part. Then the whole gang shifted over and scrubbed the parts. They scrubbed in gasoline, using sandpaper for guns in bad condition after lying out in the rain and mud. When everything was clean they took the good parts and started putting them together and making guns out of them again. After all the pans were empty they had a stack of rifles—

good rifles, ready to be taken to the front. Of the parts left over some were thrown away, quite beyond repair. But others were repairable and went into the section's shop truck for working on with lathes and welding torches. Thus the division got a hundred reclaimed rifles a day, in addition to the brand-new ones issued to it.

And, believe me, during the first few days of our invasion men at the front needed those rifles desperately. Repairmen told me how our paratroopers and infantrymen would straggle back, dirty and hazy-eyed with fatigue, and plead like children for a new rifle immediately so they could get back to the front and "get at them sonsabitches." One paratrooper brought in a German horse he had captured and offered to trade it for a new rifle, he needed it so badly. During those days the men in our little repair shop worked all hours trying to fill the need.

I sat around on the grass and chatted with the rifle repairmen most of one forenoon. They weren't working so frenziedly then, for the urgency was not so dire, but they kept steadily at it as we talked. The head of the section was Sergeant Edward Welch, of Watts, Oklahoma. He used to work in the oilfields. Shortly after the invasion he had invented a gadget that cleaned rust out of a rifle barrel in a few seconds whereas it used to take a man about twenty minutes. Sergeant Welch did it merely by rigging up a swivel shaft on the end of an electric drill and attaching a cylindrical wire brush to the end. He just stuck the brush into the gun barrel and pressed the button on the drill; away she would whirl and in a few seconds all the rust was ground out. The idea was turned over to other ordnance companies.

The soldiers did a lot of kidding as they sat around taking rusted guns apart. Like soldiers everywhere they razzed each other constantly about their home states. A couple were from Arkansas, and of course they took a lot of hillbilly razzing about

not wearing shoes till they got in the Army, and so on. One of them was Corporal Herschel Grimsley, of Springdale, Arkansas. He jokingly asked if I'd put his name in my dispatch. So I took a chance and joked back. "Sure," I said, "except I didn't know anybody in Arkansas could read."

Everybody laughed loudly at this scintillating wit, most of all Corporal Grimsley, who can stand anything. Later he was talking about the paratroopers who used to come in and beg for another rifle. And he expressed the sincere feeling of the men throughout Ordnance, the balanced weighing of their own fairly safe job, when he said, "Them old boys at the front have sure got my sympathy. Least we can do is work our fingers off to give them the stuff."

In one small-arms repair section that I visited the only man who knew or cared anything about guns before the war was a professional gun collector. He was Sergeant Joseph Toth, of Mansfield, Ohio. He was stripped down to his undershirt as the day was warm for a change. He was washing the walnut stocks of damaged rifles in a tub of water with a sponge. Sergeant Toth used to work at the Westinghouse Electric plant in Mansfield and he spent all his extra money collecting guns. He belonged to the Ohio Gun Collectors Association. He said each one of the gun collectors back in Ohio had a different specialty. Some collected machine pistols. He had thirty-five in his collection, some of them very expensive ones. Ironically enough, he had not collected any guns at all in Normandy, even though he was in a world of machine pistols and many passed through his hands.

A stack of muddy, rusted rifles is a touching sight. As gun after gun came off the stack I looked to see what was the matter with it—rifle butt split by fragments; barrel dented by bullet; trigger knocked off; whole barrel splattered with shrapnel marks; guns gray from the slime of weeks in swamp mud; faint dark splotches of blood still showing. I wondered what had become of each owner. I pretty well knew.

Infantrymen, like soldiers everywhere, like to put names on their equipment. Just as a driver paints a name on his truck, so does a doughboy carve his name or initials on his rifle butt. I saw crude whittlings of initials in the hard walnut stocks and unbelievably craftsmanlike carvings of soldiers' names, and many names of girls. The boys said the most heartbreaking rifle they'd found was one belonging to a soldier who had carved a hole about silver-dollar size and put his wife or girl's picture in it, and sealed it over with a crystal of Plexiglas. They didn't know who he was or what had happened to him. They only knew the rifle was repaired and somebody else was carrying it, picture and all.

I moved next to an ordnance evacuation company. These men handled the gigantic trucks, the long, low trailers, and the heavy wreckers that went out to haul back crippled tanks and wrecked antitank guns from the battlefield. Ordnance's policy on these wrecking companies was that if they didn't have a casualty now and then, or collect a few shrapnel marks on their vehicles, they weren't doing their job efficiently. Tanks had to be retrieved just as quickly as possible after they had been shot up. In the first place, we didn't want the Germans to get them; second, we wanted to get them repaired and back in action for ourselves.

An ordnance tank repair company gets some freakish jobs indeed. One day a tank destroyer rolled in. There was nothing whatever wrong with it except that the end of the gun barrel was corked tight with two and a half feet of wood. The vehicle had been running along a hedgerow and, as the turret operator swung his gun in a forward arc, the end of the barrel ran smack into a big tree. You would think the tank destroyer must have been going a hundred miles an hour to plug the end of the barrel for 2 feet simply by running into a tree. But it wasn't going over twenty miles an hour. It took the ordnance boys four hours to dig the wood out with chisels and reamers. The inside of the barrel wasn't hurt a bit and it went right back into action.

A three-inch antitank gun was brought in with a hole in the barrel about six inches back from the muzzle. The hole came from the inside! What happened was this: A German bazooka gunner fired a rocket at the antitank gun and made one of those freakish hole-in-one hits—right smack into the muzzle of the big gun. About six inches inside it went off and burned its way through the barrel. Nobody got hurt but the barrel was beyond repair and was sent back to England for salvage.

A tank was brought in that had been hit twice on the same side within a few seconds. The entrance holes were about two feet apart. But on the opposite side of the tank, where the shells came out, there was only one hole. The angle of fire had been such that the second shell went right through the hole made by the first one.

In another case an 88 shell struck the thick steel apron that shields the breech of one of a tank's guns. The shell didn't go through. It hit at an angle and just scooped out a big chunk of steel about a foot long and six inches wide. It was very improbable that in the whole war that same shield would get hit again in the same place. Yet they couldn't afford to take that chance, so the weakened armor had to be made strong again. With acetylene torches they cut out a plug with slanting sides around the weakened part, the same as you'd plug a watermelon. Then they fashioned a steel plate the same size and shape as the hole, and welded it in. As a result, the plug fitted into the hole like a wedge and it would have been impossible for a shell to drive it in. It was really stronger than it had been before.

The job of an ordnance evacuation company is often frightening, although this company's casualties had been amazingly low. In fact they had had only four and it was still a mystery what had happened to them. The four left one day in a jeep, just on a routine trip. They didn't come back. No trace could be found. Three weeks later two of them came in—just discharged from a

hospital. On the same day a letter came from the third—from a hospital in England. Nothing had been heard from the fourth. And the strange part was that neither the two who returned nor the one who wrote from England could remember a thing about it. They were just riding along in their jeep and the next thing they woke up in a hospital. All three were wounded, but how they didn't know. Probably it was a shell hit.

A sergeant in charge of one section of the prime movers, known as M-19s, took me around to see some of his crewmen. They all went by the name of the "Diesel Boys." Their vehicle was simply a gigantic truck with a long skeletonized trailer. Like all our Army over there they were strung out along the hedgerows of the field under camouflage nets, with the middle grassy fields completely empty. My friend was Sergeant Milton Radcliff, of 111 North 13th Street, Newark, Ohio. He used to be a furnace operator for the Owen Corning Fiberglas Co. there. He and all the other former employees still got a letter every two weeks from the company, assuring them that their jobs would still be there when they returned. And Radcliff, for one, was going to take his when he got back.

Sergeant Vann Jones, of 1712 Princeton Avenue, Birmingham, Alabama, crawled out of his tent and sat Indian fashion on the ground with us. On the other side of our pasture lay the silver remains of a transport plane that had come to a mangled end on the morning of D-day. It was a peaceful and sunny evening, in contrast to most of our days, and we sat on the grass and watched the sun go down in the east, which we all agreed was a hell of a place for the sun to be setting. Either we were turned around or France is a funny country. The other boys told me later that Sergeant Jones used to be the company cook, but he wanted to see more action so he transferred to the big wreckers and was then in command of one. His driver was a smiling, tall young fellow, with clipped hair—Dallas Hudgens, from Stonewall, Georgia. He was feeling stuffed as a pig, for he'd just got a big ham from home and had been having at it with a vengeance.

There were long lulls when the retriever boys didn't have anything to do besides work on their vehicles. They hated those periods and got restless. Some of them spent their time fixing up their tents homelike, even though they might have to move the next day. One driver even had a feather bed he had picked up from a French family. The average soldier couldn't carry a feather bed around with him, but the driver of an M-19 could carry ten thousand feather beds and never know the difference.

The boys were all pretty proud of their company. They said they did such good work in the early days of the invasion that they were about to be put up for presidential citation. But one day, just for fun, they got into a bomb crater and started shooting captured German guns at the opposite bank. It was strictly against the rules, so the proposal was torn up. They just laughed about it—which was about all a fellow could do.

Corporal Grover Anderson, of Anniston, Alabama, was another one of the drivers. He swore by his colossal machine but cursed it too. The French roads are narrow for heavy two-way military traffic and an M-19 is big and awkward and slow. "You get so damn mad at it," Anderson said, "because convoys pile up behind you and can't get around and you know everybody's hating you and that makes you madder. They're aggravating, but if you let me leave the trailer off I can pull anything out of anywhere with it." Anderson had grown a red goatee which he was not going to shave off till the war was won. He used to be a taxi driver; that's another reason he found an M-19 so "aggravating."

"Because it hasn't got a meter on it?" I asked.

"Or maybe because you don't have any female passengers," another driver said.

To which Brother Anderson had a wholly satisfactory GI reply.

It was just beginning dusk when a soldier came running up the pasture and said there was an order for our ordnance evacuation company to pull out some crippled tanks. We jumped up and ran down the slope. Waiting at the gate stood an M-19 truck and behind it a big wrecker with a crane. The day had been warm but dusk was bringing a chill, as always. One of the soldiers lent me his mackinaw. Soldiers stood atop their big machine with a stance of impatience, like firemen waiting to start. We pulled out through the hedgerow gate onto the main macadam highway. It was about ten miles to the front lines. "We should make it before full darkness," one of the officers said.

We went through shattered Carentan and on beyond for a few miles. Then we turned off at an angle in the road. "This is Purple Heart Corner," the officer said. Beyond there the roadside soldiers thinned out. Traffic ceased altogether. With an increasing tempo, the big guns crashed around us. Hedges began to make weird shadows. We all peered closely at sentries in every open hedge gate, just out of nervous alertness. The smell of death washed past us in waves as we drove on. There is nothing worse in war than the foul odor of death. There is no last vestige of dignity in it.

We turned up a gravel lane, and drove slowly. The dusk was deepening. A gray stone farmhouse sat dimly off the road. A little yard and driveway semicircled in front of it. Against the front of the house stood five German soldiers, facing inward, their hands above their heads. An American doughboy stood in the driveway with a tommy gun pointed at them. We drove on for about fifty yards and stopped. The drivers shut off their diesel motors.

One officer went into an orchard to try to find where the tanks were. In wartime nobody ever knows where anything is. The rest of us waited along the road beside an old stone barn. Three jeeps were parked beside it. The dusk was deeper now. Out of the orchards around us roared and thundered our own artillery. An officer lit a cigarette. A sergeant with a rifle slung on his shoulder walked up and said, "You better put that out, sir. There's snipers all around and they'll shoot at a cigarette."

The officer crushed the cigarette in his fingers, not waiting to drop it to the ground, and said, "Thanks."

"It's for your own good," the sergeant said apologetically.

The only traffic was a slow stream of jeeps rigged up with a steel framework on top to carry two stretcher cases. Every few minutes a jeep would pass with wounded men, slowly as though it were feeling its way.

Somehow as darkness comes down in a land of great danger a man wants things hushed. People began to talk in low voices, and feet on jeep throttles trod less heavily. An early German plane droned overhead, passed, turned, dived—and his white tracers came slanting down out of the sky. We crouched behind a stone wall. He was half a mile away, but the night was big and bullets could go anywhere and we were nervous. An armored car drove around us, pulled into a ditch ahead and shut off its motor. They said it was there in case the German night patrols tried to filter through.

On ahead there were single rifle shots and the give-and-take of machine-gun rattles—one fast and one slow, one German and one American. I wondered after each blast if somebody who had been whole a moment before, some utter stranger, was then lying in sudden new anguish up there ahead in the illimitable darkness. A shell whined the old familiar wail and hit in the orchard ahead with a crash. I moved quickly around behind the barn.

"You don't like that?" inquired a soldier out of the dusk.

I said, "No, do you?"

And he replied as honestly, "I sure as hell don't."

A sergeant came up the road and said, "You can stay here if you want to, but they shell this barn every hour on the hour. They're zeroed in on it."

We looked at our watches. It was five minutes till midnight. Some of our soldiers stood boldly out in the middle of the road

talking. But some of us, who were less composed, began easing close to the stone wall, even close to the motherhood of the big silent trucks. Then an officer came out of the orchard. He had the directions. We all gathered around and listened. We had to back up, cross two pastures, turn down another lane and go forward from there.

We were to drag back two German tanks for fear the enemy might retrieve them during the night. We backed ponderously up the road, our powerful exhaust blowing up dust as we moved. As we passed the gray-stone farmhouse we could see five silhouettes, faintly through the now almost complete night—five Germans still facing the gray farmhouse. We drove slowly across the two pastures in the big M-19 retriever truck. The wrecker truck followed us. It was just after midnight. We came to a lane at the far side of the pasture. Nobody was there to direct us. The officers had gone on ahead. We asked a sentry if he knew where the German tanks were. He had never heard of them. We shut off the motors and waited.

I think everybody was a little on edge. We certainly had American troops ahead of us, but we didn't know how far. When things are tense like that a person gets impatient of monkeying around. We wanted to get the job done and get the hell out of there. We waited about ten minutes, and finally a sergeant came back and said for us to drive on up the road about half a mile. It was very dark and we could only make out vague shapes. We could see dark walls of hedges and between them lighter strips of gravel road. Finally a huge black shape took form at one side of the road. It was the first of the German tanks. Just before we got to it we could make out two dark stripes on either side of the road on the ground. They were the size and shape of dead men, but they were only forms and we couldn't tell for sure.

Being tense and anxious to get finished, I hoped our truck would take the first tank. But no. We passed by, of course, and went backing on up the road. When a man's nervous he feels even twelve inches closer to the front is too much. And the noise of our motor sounded like all the clanging of hell, directing the Germans to us. Finally the dark shape of the second tank loomed up. Our officers and some men were standing in the road beside it. We backed to within about five feet of it, and the driver shut off his motor and we climbed down.

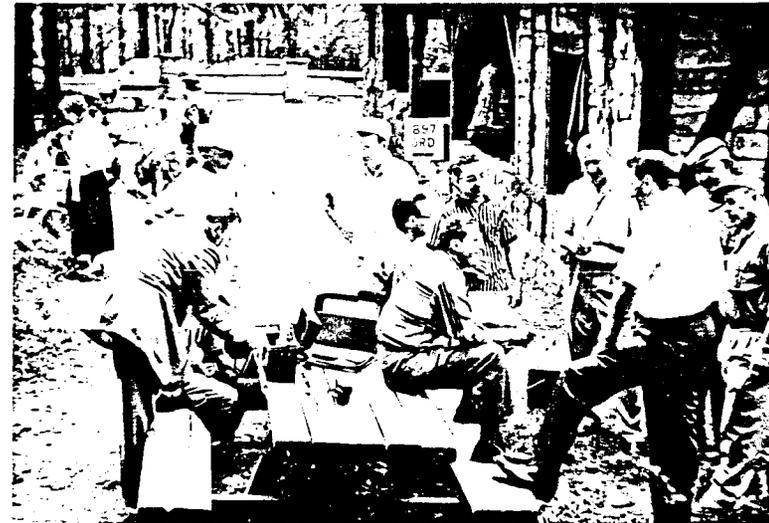
A layman would think all we had to do was hook a chain to the tank and pull it out of the ditch. But we were there half an hour. It seemed like all night to me. First it had to be gone over for booby traps. I couldn't help but admire our mechanics. They knew the foreign tanks as well as our own. One of them climbed down the hatch into the driver's seat and there in the dark, completely by feel, investigated the intricate gadgets of the cockpit and found just what shape it was in and told us the trouble. It seemed that on this tank two levers at the driver's seat had been left in gear and they were so bent there was not room to shift them into neutral. One man was sent back up the road to get a hacksaw from the wrecker truck so they could saw off the handles. After five minutes he came back and said there wasn't any hacksaw. Then they sent him back after a crowbar, and that finally did the trick.

During this time we stood in a group around the tank, about a dozen of us, just talking. Shells still roamed the dark sky, but they weren't coming as near as before. An officer asked if anybody had inspected the breech of the tank's 88 gun. Sometimes the Germans left a shell in the gun, rigged up to go off when the tank was towed. Another officer said the breech was empty. So we started. We'd planned to pull it a long way back. Actually we pulled it only about half a mile, then decided to put it in a field for the night. When we pulled into a likely pasture, the sentry at the hedgerow wanted to know what we were doing and we told him, "Leaving a German tank for the night."

And the sentry, in a horrified voice, said, "Good God, don't leave it here. They might come after it." But leave it there we did, and damn glad to get rid of it. I assure you. At last we came to our own hedgerow gate. As we drove in the sentry said, "Coffee's waiting at the mess tent." They feed twenty-four hours a day in outfits that work like firemen. #



"63



" 57

897th ORDNANCE H, A. M. CO. REUNIONS

- Nashville , Ind. - - - - - 1957
- Nashville , Ind. - - - - - 1960
- Nashville , Ind. - - - - - 1963
- Nashville., Ind. - - - - - 1966
- Tupelo , Miss. - - - - - 1969
- St. Petersburg , Fla.- - - - 1972
- Rochester , N.Y. - - - - - 1975
- Fairborn , Ohio - - - - - 1978



"75

By virtue of being the first to ask William Lake for a copy of the Co's. histories as presented at the 1978 reunion dinner/meeting, I was privileged to receive the copy he used for the presentation, with which to make my personal copy, and then return his.

I was fortunate in being able to have several copies made and thought that you too would enjoy a personal copy of your own.

I think you will find sufficient capacity in the back of the 1978 reunion souvenir booklet in case you want to insert the histories for safekeeping.

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On behalf of the Ohio reunion committee, thanks for attending !! It was a successful event because of those who attended and made it that way !! It was a pleasure to see you again .

Ben Noster

*See separate document.*