



MUZZLE BLAST



VOL. 1 — NO 2

KOBLENZ, GERMANY

JULY 11, 1945

ANCIENT FORT FORTRESS CITY

BILLETS Rcn. Co. Has Early Origin

Twenty-two doughs of a Third Army patrol took the historical old fort of Ehrenbreitstein, unsupported by artillery, in a surprise attack by night and caught a small handful of SS troops completely off guard.

The military history of the Fort, as the main defense of Koblenz, dates back to its construction as an old Roman fort in the days of Emperor Julian.

Always regarded as impregnable, its defenses have been continually strengthened and has always resisted capture even during the siege of 1688, when half of Koblenz was destroyed by the French.

When first taken in 1759 its captors were unable to hold it for more than three years and the years of 1795-6-7 saw it again undergoing siege until finally abandoned as useless.

However as the French Army had been in possession of Koblenz all these years and the fort was a continual menace to their safety, it was again blocked and finally in 1799 starved into surrender. At the peace of Luneville, two years later, it was evacuated but not before its main fortifications had been destroyed.

At the second Peace of Paris, France paid fifteen million francs for its restoration and 10 years work was required before its reconstruction was finally completed in 1826, under the guidance of General Von Astor.

In recent years it has been garrisoned by German troops until the American Army took possession in December, 1918 and has since been the headquarters of the 17th Field Artillery and the 7th Machine Gun Battalion.

During the present war the German Government used the fort as a warehouse to store away all their valuable possessions such as priceless books, manuscripts and paintings.

Among the paintings to be found there today are some that used to grace the walls of some of the biggest and finest homes and concert halls in Europe.

Living on the grounds today is the Countess of Looz, who is keeper of the Archives. Her husband, the Count of Looz, is a prisoner of war in Russia. Although the name of Looz is of Belgian Aristocracy, the

Count was born in Germany and has always considered himself a German. The Countess was born and reared in the city of Cologne.

Reconnaissance Company has the distinction of being the third American force to be billeted in this historical old fort.

GENERAL GEROW VISITS 654

Lt. General Leonard T. Gerow, 15th Army Commander, in an impromptu visit, surprised Rcn. Company at Fort Ehrenbreitstein. After Cpl. Danny O'Donnell inspected the general's papers he escorted him to the company C. P.

Accompanying the General was his niece, Barbara Gerow, who is a Red Cross worker with the 15th Army.

The General was met by Lt. Col. Minton, Capt. Zach and Lt. Smith, company commander of Rcn. He told Lt. Smith that he wished he might come back soon and take some snapshots of a soldier on guard, overlooking the Rhine Valley.

General Gerow recalled the fact that this Battalion was in the 5th Corps which he commanded in Normandy.

35th DEDICATES STADIUM

On Sunday July 1st, the Santa Fe Stadium was officially dedicated to the 35th Division.

The ceremony began at 1 PM as the 35th Band marched smartly on to the field, followed by the First Battalion of the 320th Inf. Regt. and the first Battalion of the 134th Inf. Regt.

General Gerow, 15th Army Commander, presented streamers and badges to the 1st Battalion of the 320th and the 1st Battalion of the 134th for heroic achievements at Mortain and Hill 122 respectively.

Keynoting the ceremony was an address by Brigadier General Theodore L. Futch, 35th Division Commander. Climaxing the review was a well played baseball game between the 35th Division Indians and the 106th Division Cubs, which was won by the 35th Division.

BATTALION REST CENTER

Probably the only Battalion in the E. T. O. that has an exclusive rest camp for its enlisted men is the 654th Tank Destroyer Battalion.

Located among the hills above Ehrenbreitstein and reached by a private driveway that leads to it, the house is an imposing structure which once housed a distinguished German family by the name of Poensgen. The house itself is more like a French Chateau surrounded by flower gardens and a large courtyard with a hedge that offsets it from rolling grassy hills which affords, the only clearing in the area. A large body of woods separates the camp from the nearest town and so makes it an exclusive place of Peace and quiet.

The interior of the house has old and modern furniture, rugs on the floors and many oil paintings on the walls. In the hall are plaques mounted with deer heads, boar heads and numerous stuffed animals that suggest that it might, at onetime, have been a hunting lodge. On the other hand, the long corridors with rooms on either side suggest that it might have been an exclusive hotel.

It is to such a place that four men per company are allowed a twenty four hour pass in which to relax; drink beer, eat the best food (served home style) sleep in a private room with a good bed that has clean linen and breathe the cool mountain air!

The men of the Battalion have named it "TALLEYS' INN" in honor of Staff Sergeant George B. Talley of C. Company who died of pneumonia in the battle of the Bulge.

A small coverage fee of five marks assures the men that there will always be plenty to drink.

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The earliest traditions of the Rhine indicate that on the spot where Koblenz now stands was originally an old Roman fort, established by Drusus about 9 B.C. The ruins of an old military road have been found on the Karthaus above the city, built in the year 270 A.D. during the reign of Aurelian.

With the Rhine on one side, and the Moselle on the other, a line of forts protected the open side that were still further strengthened in 1249.

After receiving a charter in 1018, the city was given by Emperor Henry the 2nd to the Archbishop of Trier who held it until the end of the 18th Century.

Among the oldest and most famous buildings is the Church of St. Castor, erected by Louis the Pious in 836, which was later beautified by a garden and fountain commemorating Napoleon's invasion of Russia. The Castle of the electors of Trier, built in 1280 is now the municipal picture gallery.

Prince Metternich was born in the castle of that name in 1773 and the Grand Palace was completed five years later. Overlooking the Rhine and the promenade Kaiserin Augusta its location is the most beautiful in Koblenz.

The Moselle Bridge with its fourteen arches was completed in 1344. In 1688 the town was besieged by the French and in the bombardment the Altstadt, or old section of the city, was laid in ruins.

In 1794 the city was captured by the Revolutionary Army under Marceau, who was killed during the siege, and after the Peace of Luneville in 1801 it became the chief town in the Moselle and Rhine department. Thirteen years later it was occupied by the Russians but later assigned to Prussia and in 1822 became the seat of Government of the Rhine Province.

At the present time Koblenz is a picturesque, prosperous city of sixty thousand people, especially favored by tourists before the war owing to its scenic attractions and even temperate climate.

The first view that greets a visitor to Koblenz is the mighty fortress of Ehrenbreitstein rising 450 feet of sheer rock from the river's edge and dominating the country for miles around.

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MUZZLE BLAST - STAFF 654th T. D. Bn.
JOHN H. MINTON, LT. COL.,
COMMANDING

ADVISOR Capt. G. A. Stevens
EDITOR IN CHIEF Sgt. L. L. Kostelnick
EDITOR T/5 H. A. Hatcher
SPORTS EDITOR T/5 H. F. Algarotti
REPORTERS: Cpl. H. O. McConaughay
Cpl. R. I. Smith
Cpl. S. Watson
S/Sgt. W. J. Gleason

Printed by and for the members of
654th T. D. Bn. in Koblenz, Germany.

BATTALION HONORS IT'S DEAD

Lamspring - May 20th;

In an impressive ceremony held Sunday, May 20th, the battalion honored its dead and decorated its living in a clearing on top of a high wooded hill.

Those receiving honors were marched before the reviewing stand where they were decorated by Lt. Col. Minton.

The ceremony in honor of the dead followed. The slow, well modulated voice of Col. Minton, as he spoke each name slowly and distinctly, expressed a reverence which the entire battalion felt deeply and sincerely as they saluted. Chaplain Carlton invoked a prayer.

If those men who have fallen in action could have been there and spoken for themselves, they probably would have paraphrased a quotation from Lincoln's Gettysburg Address: "It is rather for you, the living, to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before you

That from us, your honored dead, you may take increased devotion to that cause for which we gave our last full measure of devotion."

"MUZZLE BLAST" CHOSEN AS BEST NAME FOR BATTALION PAPER

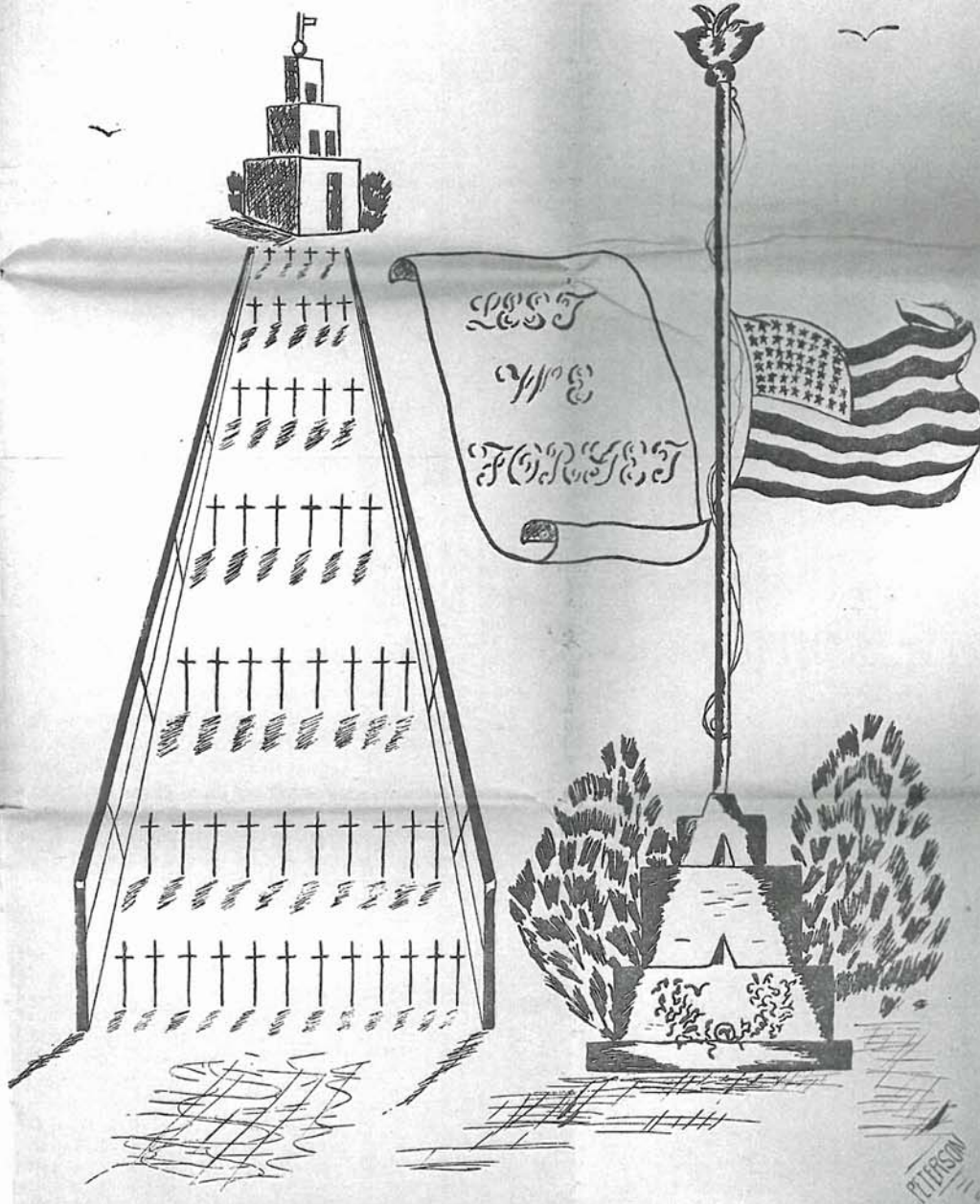
When we first started the battalion paper at Lamspring, a request was made for some suggestions for a name. Several names were submitted and after much debate the name "Muzzle Blast" was chosen. It was submitted by Cpl. Stewart Watson of Headquarters Company.

FORMER EDITOR IS TRANSFERRED TO 35TH

Pfc. Harry Einhorn, of Hq. Company, whose inspiration and efforts got the battalion paper off to a good start, is transferred to the 35th Division. This department lost a good man and his talents will be greatly missed. We wish him the best of luck.

NEED ONE

St Louis (CNS) — On one end of a department store counter is a basket of brassieres, and on the other, there's a batch of pads of cotton batting, suitable for filling out the bras when nature fails to do so. Saves the gals from bothering about whether their bras fit, and insures one and all of the classic form.



1st Lt. DAVID J. THELEN	T/5 JOHN S. LEUTY JR.
2nd Lt. JAMES A. MALONEY	T/5 JOSEPH P. MEE
2nd Lt. MAURICE P. ALGER JR.	T/5 HENRY THOMPSON
S/Sgt. WILLIAM L. LANDS	Pfc. SAM BYCHECK
S/Sgt. WALTER B. MOORE	Pfc. WILLIAM E. DAY
S/Sgt. E. L. SMITH	Pfc. JOHN W. FREEMAN
S/Sgt. GEORGE B. TALLEY	Pfc. MILBURN B. HALL
Sgt. TRAVIS L. BEALE	Pfc. DALE A. LENDER
Sgt. GUSSIE BOWDEN	Pfc. COMER C. MURR
Sgt. FREDERICK C. EASLEY	Pfc. WALTER C. NELSON
Sgt. EDWARD F. MIDDLETON	Pfc. OSCAR POLLARD
Sgt. EMMETT PEDIGO	Pfc. LYLE B. ROACH
Sgt. ALBERT C. WRIGHT	Pfc. MELVIN J. TIGNER
Sgt. OTTMAR M. ZAENGLIEN	Pvt. MILLARD C. ADAMS
Cpl. DOMINIC J. BARBER	Pvt. MC RAE DAVIS
Cpl. ALFRED C. CHAPOTON JR.	Pvt. ALTON ERWIN
Cpl. EDWARD L. BRANNON	Pvt. EUGENE C. FARRELL
Cpl. OKEY E. McDANIEL	Pvt. TOMMIE MCCOLLOUGH
Cpl. STANLEY RESIDLO	Pvt. RALPH R. OSBORNE
Cpl. PAUL THIGPEN	Pvt. JOHN C. PYLAND
T/5 RALPH BROTHERS	Pvt. ROBERT J. RIVOIRE
T/5 ANDREW R. FRALEY	Pvt. HANS SHWERT
T/5 BEN H. HUBBELL	Pvt. CHARLES SINCLAIR
	Pvt. ERNEST W. ZIMMERMAN

SO LONG, PAL

I shook your hand and
Though no words would come,
I think you knew
That way down deep inside,
I understood;
'Was glad that you had at last
Received the chance we'd all been
waiting for.

The chance for home; or loved ones -
Everything outside the war.
I think you knew also
The sadness that filled my heart;
That soon you would be gone,
For, to have a friend depart,
Is losing something real and fine
and good;

And Precious too:
For real, true friendship means a
lot to me,
More perhaps than you realize.
That day you left when nothing
much was said

We only shook each others hand
And thought a lot instead,
We'll meet again somewhere, some-
time,

The way friends always do;
'Till then, remember this, my friend,
My thoughts remain with you.
Pfc. Peterson, Rcn. Co.

YOU WRITE IT WE PRINT IT

Here it is, bigger and better than ever, the "Muzzle Blast", a real newspaper hot off the press! It is mainly through the efforts and professional advice of Cpl. Scott Copeland of the Santa Fe Express that you have a real print job.

It is possible now to print pictures. In future editions, we intend to print pin-ups and camera photos. If you have any such pictures that would be of interest to the men, send them in along with an accompanying note of explanation. Address all mail to "Muzzle Blast" and hand it to your mail or first sergeant.

Your editors need your co-operations, as this is an entirely new job to them. They are anxious to know what you want to see in your paper. Any suggestions will be appreciated. So far, the response has been excellent. Your company reporters have been enthusiastic about sending in their company news. Back them up and try to make your company show up good in the paper. The artists who did the drawings gave us their highest co-operation. You can see by their work what talent we have in the battalion. You, too, may have a talent that would add to the success of the paper. Don't hide it - let us know of it - We need you!

Just as it had taken our combined efforts to defeat the enemy all the way from St. Lo to the banks of the Elbe, just so it will take all our efforts to make this paper a real Morale Booster for the battalion. So pitch in, men of the 654th, and give us a hand!

COMPANY SHORTS

Lt. Smith, battalion Special Service Officer, reports that he is trying to have movies for every night in the week and in addition to that, he is doing his utmost to have the U. S. O. show, "Copacabana Review."

Captain Scott Cooper, company commander of "C" company, went to Paris last week, and to keep his vacation from becoming dull, went to school.

Private Provost is back from a pass to Luxembourg. His voice can be heard for a hundred yards even though he whispers.

Address your letters "Mr" to former Cpl. Ferguson of "C" company. He's a full fledge civilian now.

Pfc. John D. Owens, the only man in "A" company who is wearing six overseas stripes, is on a furlough to England to see his wife.

Staff Sergeant Carey received a letter from Staff Sergeant Palmano dated June 10th. The latter was one of the lucky ones to leave the ETO for demobilization. He was in Fort Dix and was expecting to be home in three of four days. Lucky Guy!

Ramey and Phillips of "A" company were the first two men to be transferred to the 35th Division. Mail can reach them at the following address: Hqs. Co. 35th Division APO 35.

In compliance with Battalion Headquarters request for "Musically Inclined Personnel", Sgt. Crabtree was chosen for "A" company's solist. All the Company is behind Sgt. Crabtree in wishing him success in his musical career.

The Medical Detachment has noted a sharp increase in Psychoneurotic cases, strangely enough around the time the critical score of 85 points was announced.

Women are the "cwayziest" peoples. They are always picking their nose into everything as usual. If they should miss an event of any kind they brood about it for months. Only the other day one of Rcn. Co. boys observed this incident near the river: A civilian (man) apparently was just coming out of the river after a cooling dip. He was obviously nude, and just as he was about to go to the bank for his clothes, he observed several women watching his progress. He moved to another position only to find himself outflanked. After several minutes of die-hard attempts to ward off the enemy, he gave up in disgust and went back into the river. Oh, these women!

654th Governs Koblenz

Usually when the Battalion moves into a new location, one of the first things to be done is to set up a Military Government office and to handle all the work that has to be done in a city or town.

After the battalion moved into the Coblenz area they were given a new task. In their work here, under the guidance of Captain Martinez and his able assistants, Sgt. Duller, T/5 Vexler, T/5 Rader, T/5 Krushinski, T/5 Mennegola, Pfc. George, Pfc. Anders and Pvt. Langhoffer, they have taken the duties of Provost Marshall which include Military Police, town major and public safety.

One of the main jobs is to work with C.I.C. in the handling of SS troops and Nazis criminals. One of the biggest problems facing MG. and the MP's are the Displaced Persons who offer the most trouble in getting mixed up with looting and black marketing.

Most of these persons, when caught, expect to be backed up by the MG. because they belong to an Allied country. The big job facing the MG. is the security threat.

They are responsible for the police of Coblenz and all the suburban towns and villages nearby. In addition, the Military Government operates an information bureau, a transient mess and billets and an emergency ambulance to the Coblenz hospital.

Pete's Dugout

One of the most popular beer "Parlor" on the post is over at B Co. Thanks to supply Sgt. Pete Lamontanaro, who did most of the work in getting the bar set up, it has now caught hold and as T-4 Doerr says, "It's a good place to discuss pints and points".

The bartender Sgt. Frank Bolger, professional "setter upper" would do well if he had a bar half as popular in his home town.

Helping Bolger to dish out the beer, wine and champagne is Sgt. Ellis. Incidentally Ellis has left for the U. K. where he intends to walk down the aisle.

Cartoonist deluxe Vic. Orante, has drawn some Varga girls on the walls which also add to the congenial atmosphere that prevails.

All in all, the dugout is a good place to relax evenings and discuss the point system, postwar plans and how to defeat the Japs.

Famous last words, "I can't let you have another drink as this belongs to the men that are not here right now." Ten minutes later he was carried to bed, with his teeth in his pocket.

I am good-looking and can do anything better than you. That's no pickle, it's his nose and then he brushed the hair out of his eyes.

SPORTS SHORTS

Captain Zach informs us that the battalion softball league will be starting soon. Each company will be represented and it is said that the officers are trying to find ten players to make up the sixth team.

Over in "B" company the craze at present is ping pong with Dom Alteri dominating. The softball team lost pitcher Kenny Bloomfield. The lucky guy is going home. With Jim Borgmann taking over the pitching chores, the team will still be a championship contender.

Staff Sergeant Gilbert Snyder, of "B" company, centerfielder on the battalion softball team, is playing with the 35th Division softball team.

Under the guidance of 1st Lt. White Rcn. Company has organized a ping pong team of five men. How about some challengers from some of the other companies?

35th Reopens Koblenz Stadium

Santa Fe Stadium, the scene of many athletic events, is once again in the hands of the U. S. army.

The history of the Stadium however, extends further into the past. It was built by American Army Engineers for the use of occupation troops in the last war.

The stadium was originally named "Island Of Carnival" because of its location on an island in the Rhine River.

The name of the stadium changed several times after American occupation troops went home. The French Army took over and for six years the football field was used for soccer by the French occupational troops.

In 1929 the occupation of Germany was finished and the arena reverted to German control.

Racing was the most popular German sport and the now Santa Fe Stadium was the scene for the triumphs of several famous German horses.

It was here that Hitler pleaded to the German people for election. Joseph Goebbels, propaganda minister, also made a speech here and lights were specially erected for the affair.

With the coming of World War 2, the German athletic program was abandoned and the field was converted to Nazi victory gardens.

The stadium was damaged by air raids but when the 35th Division moved into Coblenz the Engineers, with the help of a hundred prisoners of war, rebuilt the field.

Guilty

Cleveland (CNS) — Robert Harris was found guilty on a drunken driving count. "100 Dollars and costs," said the judge, "to be executed Monday." Harris promptly fainted. He thought he was going to die.

BN. SOFTBALL TEAM WINS

On Wednesday June 20th the Bn. Softball team journeyed down to division and shellacked the 2nd Bn. 137th Inf. 7-2 to win their first game in the 35th Div. Tournament.

In the 2nd inning of the first game the team pushed 4 runs across the plate to sew up the game.

Moyle singled and reached second when Borgmann grounded out. He took third on a wild throw and scored on Snyder's single to center. Successive singles by Foster, Schneckenburg scored the other three runs.

In the third running Cockfield tripled and scored on Fahls single to left. 2 more runs were scored in the fifth when Cockfield doubled, and scored when Fahl also doubled. Snyder singled to score Fahl.

The 137 threatened in there half of the 7th when they pushed two runs across. But Keith checked himself and put them out in order to end the game.

320th Beats 654th

The 320th Doughboys taking advantage of breaks knocked the 654th out of the Division Tournament by a score of 4-3. Keith pitched one hit ball but lost the game on errors in the fifth inning when the Doughboys pushed 3 runs across to clinch the game.

The Bn. took an early lead in the 2nd stanza. Borgmann singled to center. He went to third on Moore's single to left. Snyder singled to center scoring Borgmann and took second when Moore trying to score from first, was out at the plate. Foster's singled scored Snyder and he scored later on Keith's hit to short center.

The Doughs scored one run in the third, on an error, a walk, and a single by Stampic. In the Fifth the 320th scored 3 runs on walks to Morgan, Stampic and Witholder. Morgan scored on a pass ball, and an error let Stampic and Witholder score to Clinch the game.

In the seventh Jeff doubled with two out was left stranded there as Howard struck out to end the game.

35th Beats 106th

The 35th Division Baseball team served notice to the other teams in the 15th Army baseball league by defeating the 106th Division Cubs by a score of 5-2 Sunday July 1st.

Leonard Novak was the big gun for the 35th, getting 3 hits in 4 trips to the plate, two of them being home runs. Both his round trippers were clouts into the distant center-field stand some 350 feet from home plate.

Dixon, former St. Louis Card pitcher, held the Cubs to five hits. He was in trouble only once, in the sixth inning. He struck out 3 men on 10 pitched balls after the Cubs scored two runs.

654th Dumps 60th Eng.

The battalion softball team on Wednesday June 28th took into tow the 60th Engineer Battalion by a score of 8-2.

Keith pitching for the 654th was in good form and kept the Engineer's 9 hits well scattered and was touched for two runs in the sixth.

The battalion took a two run lead in the first inning and went on to score in each inning but the fifth. The game was highlighted with a home run by Fahl in the first inning.

U.S. BOUND

With the end of the war, V. E. day found the men, (and Officers as well) counting their points. Unfortunately for some, their total points did not reach the critical score. However, with two additional battle stars being awarded the Battalion, many of the men will reach 85 or more points, who otherwise would not have had enough.

To those men with less points than the critical score who are leaving the battalion and going to units of the 35th Division, we wish a "Bon Voyage".

To those new men coming into the battalion, we give a hearty Welcome. You'll find men here with whom you have fought side by side since St. Lo.

It is almost a certainty that you men leaving will reach the states and get that well earned furlough.

BRONZE STAR AWARDS

Ten officers and enlisted men of the battalion received the Bronze Star award for meritorious achievement at an informal ceremony Sunday July 1st.

Due to the inclement weather the ceremony was held in the battalion theater. Lt. Col. Minton presented the awards to Lts. Brooks, O'meara, La Fond, Staniorski and Barnousky.

The enlisted men who received awards were: 1st. Sgts. Patrick and Copeland; Sgts. Marbut and Crabtree and T/5 Poche.

Col. Minton also spoke to the group of men who left for the States Monday July 2. We all were sorry to see them leave but at the same time we were happy to see them going home and back into civilian life. Good Luck, fellows, may the rest of us be lucky enough to join you in the near future.

POETS CORNER

DRAFT DODGER

I'm writing a short letter
And every word is true.
Don't look away draft dodger
for it's addressed to you.

You feel at ease in glory
Being back in the old home town.
You cook up some pitiful stories
And the draft board turns you down.

You never think of the real men
Who leave there day by day.
You only think of their girl friends
To date while they'r away.

You sit and read a paper
You jump and say we'll win.
But where do you get that "We"
But where do you get that "We" stuff?
This war will be won by men.

I guess that's all Slacker
I suppose your face is red.
America is no place for you
I mean every word I say.

Just what do you think draft dodger
This nation of ours would do
If all our men were slackers
And afraid to die like you?

So in closing this letter
Just remember what I say.
Stay away from my girlfriend brother
For I'll be back some day.

Anoni Mous.



Alice Faye
"A" CO'S FAVORITE PIN UP

TOO BIG

Too big is Charlie Manning
For the bed he sleeps in.
Too big are his feet
For it overloads his belly;
Too big his bay-window.
Too big is Charlie Manning
For the Hatch he goes through.
By the time he's in
He looks like a Cork-screw.
Too big is his appetite
For it overloads his belly;
When he finishes chow
It's shaking like Jelly.
Too big is Charlie Manning
And I don't know why
But I think he's headed
For the C. B. I.

Sgt. William J. McDonald
B Co.

Rest Center Con'd. From Page 1

Since taking it over June 5th, the Battalion has strived to make it an enjoyable place for the enlisted men of all companies. The Officer in charge is Lt. Barnousky and the N. C. O. placed there as overseer is Sgt. Iversen of B. Company. Under Sgt. Iversen are six German girls, two of whom are cooks, two maids and two laundresses who do a swell

job of cooking and keeping the place spotlessly clean.

If you haven't been to the camp as yet, put your name on the next list and see if we have been shooting the "bull" about it.

Fortress City Con'to. From Page 1

Across the river on the Coblenz side at the junction of the Rhine and Moselle stands the huge equestrian statue of Kaiser Wilhelm the First, erected by the Rhine Provinces in 1897. Standing on a massive pedestal of granite the statue is 46 feet high and molded from embossed copper.

As many as twenty thousand spectators have witnessed the outdoor boxing carnivals held regularly through the summer month on the Clemens Platz or on the lawn of the ex-Kaiser's Palace.

Thousands of soldiers have taken advantage of the Rhine excursions on the fine steamers that afford a view of all the famous castles that line the river in both directions.

The Coblenzer Hof, the leading hotel of Coblenz, has been operated by the Army continually for the

benefit of officers, and distinguished Allied guests and Officials.

Many other public buildings have been taken over for Army purposes and all possible facilities have been installed for the convenience of the American soldier and the city has developed more and more into a real American city in the heart of the old world.

(From "Review of the American Forces in Germany," Cop. in 1921.)

Five Bases in Marianas Now used by B-29s

Guam (CNS) — B-29s attacking Japan now are operating from 5 bases in the Marianas. There is probably more complicated machinery crammed into this big bomber than in any equivalent space in the world, which accounts for the fact that the equal of one infantry division is required at each of these 5 airfields.

The bases were hacked out of jungle and coral, have asphalt strips nearly one and one-half miles long, and hundreds of hardstands for the dispersal and parking of the B-29s. Aviation engineers and seabees built the fields, and AAF mechanics maintain the planes in fighting trim.