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By the men . . for the men in the service

SHUTTLE-BOMBING BETWEEN THE U.K. AND RUSSIA

—Pages 2, 3 and 4

When the Forts and the Mustangs went into the sky on a memorable morning in England recently, they proved that there was no place in Germany or German-occupied Europe that they couldn't go. And on this particular day, they started out on a mission that had as stopping places Russia, Italy and then back home again. It was a single mission with a single purpose, but besides the military aspect of the operation, it brought together the fighting people of the Allied nations as few other single ventures have done.

By Pvt. HOWARD KATZANDER
YANK Staff Correspondent

ENGLAND—There was something special about this day, this early morning call to the briefing room. It was different with a newness that was unlike the difference of hundreds of other early morning briefings, none of which is ever quite the same. It was different even from D-Day which was, after all, merely an intensification of an operation which for the Eighth Air Force had been going on for two years. Briefing was at 0330 hours and the eyes of the men were heavy with sleep. But there was little yawning and there was this awareness of something big, confirmed by a glance at the map of Europe with a strip of red tape stretching everlastingly into the distance into Germany and across Germany, with never a sign of the loop which ordinarily marked the terminus at the target point and the start back home. On across Germany and beyond Poland the tape stretched interminably ending in all the intriguing mystery of the unknown some 1500 miles to the southeast.

Major Walter V. A. Harrison, group intelligence officer, was on the platform. He didn't say much but his words came slowly with a heavy emphasis and were full of meat for his audience.

"Boys," he said, "today you are going to make history." He paused. "Yesterday, one of the important synthetic oil plants in Germany was the one at Magdeburg. But that isn't there any more. The important oil plant today is the one at Ruhland, 50 miles southeast of Berlin. Today, you're going to bomb the plant at Ruhland. Then you're going to fly your planes for the first time into Russia."

The rest was routine. It concerned the route, the altitude, where they might expect flak—"light flak from 12 or 14 guns around the target" were the words. The men laughed. They knew what a difference there was between "light flak" in the briefing room and the sight of the metal in the wings of the Flying Fortresses suddenly popping upwards in ragged edges high above enemy territory.

Then—just in case—they were shown photographs and silhouettes of Yaks, the Russian fighters which were to meet them at the border and escort them to their base. Then they went out into the first gray dawn, into a drizzle which raised the fear that the mission might be scrubbed, to prepare for the operation.

Nobody told the men in the ground crews. Nobody ever tells them, but they always know. They knew this time, and didn't need the sight of the pilots and other crew members carrying bags containing toilet articles and clothing to tell them that the group wasn't going to be coming back in four or six or even eight hours.

One boy, whose parents were born in Russia, approached 2nd Lt. Kenneth L. Snedeker, of New Brunswick, N. J., pilot of the *Worrybird* and said to him: "Sir, if you're going where I think you're going I wish you'd look up some relatives of mine."

It was a popular mission and everybody wanted to go. As the planes were loading there was some spirited bidding for "tickets" for the ride. There were plenty of buyers, but no sellers. It was strictly a bull market.

One by one the planes took off, starting at 0520 hours, climbing steadily through gray clouds, climbing endlessly until at last they broke out into a clear blue English morning with England nowhere below them to be seen. Then they started circling around, forming up for the flight to Russia.

SOME forty miles southward and three hours later, an almost identical scene was taking place at a fighter base. Col. Donald J. M. Blakeslee, who is 26 and looks ten years older as a result of the 1,000 or more hours he has spent in fighter planes in combat against the enemy, did the briefing as group commander.

"I want to land all our aircraft at this place," he said, pointing to the spot at the end of the red tape, identical with the one on the map at the Fortress base. "You're safe if you're not straggling. The Russians are sensitive to stragglers. You don't have to worry about Russian fighters. But if you see anything else, shoot it down.

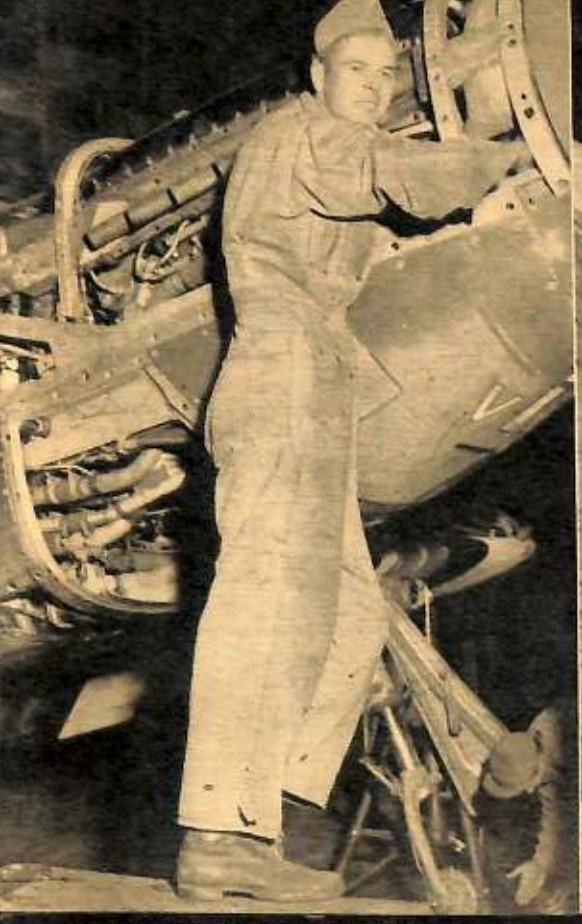
"Once we make rendezvous there will be no R/T conversation. If you see a man's wings on fire, be quiet. He'll find out about it.

"Let's make a pretty landing, a pansy landing. Make the thing look like a 7½-hour trip is nothing to us. No one will abort because of lack of oxygen. You'll be at 15,000 feet. You don't need it. You have no business in this group if you need oxygen at 15,000. If you get dizzy go down under the bombers for a while."

Blakeslee was used to flying at 15,000 without oxygen. He had been doing it since 1940 when he joined the RCAF—even before there was an Eagle Squadron. His men found they could do it, too, no matter what the books said. And they did.

Their greyhound-sleek Mustangs with the red noses were waiting for them with fuel tanks and

A GI mess sergeant and his Russian KPs waiting to serve what they called "Americanski Vodka"—cocoa to you. One gal's wearing the sarge's jacket.



M/Sgt. Gerhard F. H. Betz, Mustang crew chief, served as a Fort gunner.

Officers who led the Eighth Air Force shuttle mission to Russia, studying their route at a bomber base just before taking off on their three-legged hop to the USSR, Italy and back to England.

ONE MISSION ★ ★ FIVE TARGETS

ammunition drums full. They climbed aboard and warmed their motors and at 0800 the first of them took off, rising to rendezvous with the Fortresses approaching from the north.

Capt. Frank Jones, of Montclair, N. J., climbed into his cockpit and before taking off waved something brown and fuzzy over his head to the members of his ground crew. It was a toy teddy bear that he had carried with him on every mission from Iceland and England.

Capt. Howard (Deacon) Hively, a squadron leader, hitched about his waist a cowboy belt which he had fashioned himself out of rawhide in the days before he moved from Norman, Okla., to Ward, West Virginia, and which he always wore on missions.

Col. Blakeslee, who was to lead his group, carefully checked the plane he was to fly, and the standby plane he had ordered to be held in readiness in case trouble should develop after the take-off. He was taking no chances. This was the first time he had ever taken such a precaution in all his years of combat flying. He was determined not to miss this mission.

For most of the men in the Fortresses the journey into Germany was routine. So it was for the men in the Mustangs. The Fortress crews caught an occasional glimpse of the red-noses above them through the white clouds, and occasionally one of the planes would drop to make sure everything was O.K.

The flak came up at the proper places and an occasional, curious ME109 would stop by for an inspection, keeping at a respectful distance. The red-noses and the Fortresses ignored the MEs. They weren't looking for a fight. This was a different kind of mission.

West of Berlin, part of the Fortress formation broke off and headed toward the German capital. High above them a group of P-47s which had unobtrusively joined the cavalcade, drifted to the left toward Berlin. The main body of the task force kept on its way.

Over Ruhland, a flock of yellow-nosed ME109s and a sprinkling of FW190s rose to give battle. The Fortresses headed unswervingly to their target, dropped their bombs and watched the remains of what had been a synthetic oil plant heaving toward the clouds in a burst of sluggish black smoke and leaping flame.

But behind the bombardiers and the pilots a battle was going on. T/Sgt. J. A. Zafac, tail gunner on one of the planes, told about it this way:

"An FW190 came out of the clouds at 5 o'clock and went in toward 6 o'clock at 750 yards. I started firing at the same time and fired 200 rounds. Tracers appeared to be going into the enemy aircraft. It seemed to be hit in the engine. The right wing fell off and the remainder of the ship blew up. I saw no chute."

There were some strangers on the Fortresses that day. Several of the planes carried as waist gunners men who had never been waist gunners before. They were crew chiefs from the Mustang base being taken along in the Forts to supervise servicing of the fighters in Russia. One of these men was Gerhard Frederick Herman Betz, master sergeant from Los Angeles, who holds the Soldier's Medal for having pulled a pilot from his burning plane when it crashed on a take-off.

"This was all new to me," said Betz. "I thought I was going along as a passenger. But after the briefing I was told to get the right waist gun and set it up.

Two Russian pilots—yeah, one's a she.

"When the attack came over Ruhland one of the 109s came up under our right wing. I let him have a burst, just to let him know I was there and he swerved off. Believe me, it's quite a thrill to be up there as an aerial gunner and see the ships you'd just changed motors on flying all around protecting you. Those red-nosed babies are a real bunch, but I'd trade my six stripes right now for a permanent job as a gunner on a Fortress. That's for me."

One engine on one of the Fortresses got hit and fire started. Six or seven men bailed out but the extinguishers worked and the pilot stayed at the controls, bringing the ship safely in to its Russian base.

Somewhere near the Russian border, a handful of Yaks rose to meet the task force and escort it to the bases some miles beyond the front lines. The Fortresses landed mainly at one field, but some of them and all the fighters went on to different landing fields.

The field was manned by a conglomerate crew of Americans and Russians, including many Russian women. The Americans came from the 8th Air Force and the 15th Air Force based in Italy. They had been brought in, some as far back as March, to set up the base and to train necessary Russian personnel in servicing American aircraft. All were hungry for news from England and Italy, not to mention news from home. Their mail is flown into them by the Air Transport Command from Teheran and comes only when a plane load accumulates. Some of them sent messages to their buddies at the home bases, scratching the words in the soft aluminum engine cowling of the Mustangs and on the doors of the Fortresses.

The arrival of the task force was what the newly trained Russian mechanics had been waiting for. They rushed out to meet the planes, unlimbered the guns, chocked the wheels and generally buzzed about making themselves useful

"There was one Russian named Chernov," said 2nd Lt. Joseph A. Murphy, of Brooklyn, "who had been wounded three times at the front and had been assigned to the field for a rest. Imagine. Working at an air base for a rest. He worked on our plane."

The Americans stationed permanently at the base were picking up a few words of Russian, and the Russians were learning English by the painful process of identifying every object they came across by its

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English name. They were particularly careful to learn the nomenclature of plane parts.

Betz had a Russian mechanic whose name was Galbrecht. He spoke German and so did Betz, so they got along quite well. Galbrecht naturally became "Goldbrick" and was so known by all the Americans. Betz explained what it meant and the Russian laughed. He liked it.

"That's the thing about the Russians," said Betz. "They are more like Americans than any people I've met yet. They have a good sense of humor, they're talented with tools, quick to learn anything about machinery. 'Goldbrick' was an excellent mechanic.

"We would talk in German and then 'Goldbrick' would tell me the Russian name for something and I'd tell him the English name. That way we both learned a little.

"I'd offer him an American cigarette—we'd been told beforehand not to give them things or trade them, because they had so little and would be unhappy if they couldn't give us something just as nice in return—and he'd make me a Russian cigarette.

"They make them out of newspaper. He'd go over and tear off a piece of newspaper, trim it down to size and roll me a cigarette with that awful Russian tobacco. Then he'd hold it up for me to lick it and would seal it for me. And I'd have to smoke it because I didn't want to hurt his feelings.

"They are amazing people. They've got nothing, yet they can laugh. They enjoy everything. But their whole country is in ruins, really devastated. You begin to understand what scorched earth really is. Their girls are very nice. They have beautiful complexions and some of them are beautifully built. They are healthy and neat. I don't know how they manage to keep so clean."

Somebody asked him whether any of the boys made any headway with the girls. He answered thoughtfully.

"You don't monkey around with people like that. Somehow it just doesn't seem right."

All the men were impressed by the ruins of the Russian cities. This place is a sizeable city, yet hardly a building was standing. There was nothing to do, no place to go in the town. There was plenty of vodka, distilled at home out of potato peelings, and every place the Americans went they were offered a drink. The stuff went down easily enough, but it packed a wallop like white mule.

Col. Archie J. Old, who was task force commander, got into a very formal drinking bout with some of the Russian officers.

"They're pretty heavy on protocol," he said. "When you drink with them you down one after another with an appropriate toast for each drink. Luckily we were interrupted by some excitement outside before we'd been drinking long. That was all that saved me from ending up under the table."

Capt. Hively was drinking with another group of officers, and in a sudden burst of friendship whipped off the rawhide leather belt he'd made himself and presented it with a flourish to a Russian general.

"The General stood up and all his aides stood up," Capt. Hively said. "The General bowed from the waist and his aides bowed from the waist. Then the General whipped off his fine leather belt with a Red Star on the buckle, kissed the buckle and handed it to me with another bow."

Hively wore the Russian belt during the remainder of the trip.

Messing facilities were somewhat primitive. There was a long shed which served as a kitchen, presided over by an American mess sergeant with ten Russian girls as KPs. The men filled their mess kits, filing by a table outside the kitchen, and ate together—officers and enlisted men—on the ground outside.

Since March the women KPs had been playing a game with the mess sergeant. He would tell them to do something. They would stand in front of him shaking their heads that they didn't understand. So he would show them. He would go through all the motions, using a word here and there in explanation. The women would stand there grinning and shaking their heads and saying in Russian: "I don't understand."

Finally, in exasperation, the mess sergeant would let go with a torrent of words, and the women would burst with laughter and do the job. They had understood all the time, but they liked to see an American mess sergeant get mad.

Almost without exception the men were impressed by the Russians they met and worked with.

"They have a certain pride about themselves that you have to respect," said Lt. Elliott Rudenstein, of Orange, N. J. "They carry themselves like Americans do, with a lot of assurance. The language barrier was a difficulty but we managed to surmount it. They were speechless with admiration over our equipment."

A number of Russian journalists and newsreel cameramen interviewed and photographed the Americans and there were many other Russians about, both from the town and the armed forces. At the fighter base where the Mustangs landed there were a number of Russian women pilots.

"We ran into a kid who looked about 12," said Lt. Rex. McCarty, of Iola, Ill., co-pilot of one of the Forts. "They said he was 14 but he didn't look it. He had 21 Germans to his credit. He was a sniper with the guerrillas."

Lt. Donald Jackson, of Alton, Ill., said everyone was in uniform, "men, women and children. If our people back home took the war as seriously as the Russians do, it would be over in a hurry. The children are different from any we'd ever seen. They're like old men, prematurely aged by war, I guess. They don't run around asking for candy or gum or such things. When you offer them candy they pull out a handful of rubles and offer to pay for it."

This area, which was under German domination a few months ago, is already growing crops to feed the Russian people. Jackson saw great fields of wheat which reminded him of the Middle West, and as they flew in they saw many people working in the fields.

The field used by the Americans was one which the Germans had built and much of the equipment was of German make. Several old German planes stood about in the field. T/Sgt. Clarence E. Mills, of St. Anderson, Indiana, a radio operator, told of examining an ME110 on the field.

"Afterwards we found out it was full of booby traps. That was why the Jerries had left it sitting there. We were lucky not to have been blown to bits."

After the first couple of days during which the men wandered about more or less at will, they were restricted, Mills said.

"You know the old restrictions," he said. "You go halfway round the world and it's just like home. But there were no MPs."

When the task force left Russia, it set a course for Drohobycz, Poland, where the target was an oil refinery. The weather was CAVU and the target was well plastered with bombs. There was flak, moderate to intense, around the target but no enemy aircraft. The planes headed southwest then for a 15th Air Force base at Foggia.

Italy was hot and dusty, but there was real American beer—three cans to each man—white bread and raisin bread and ice cold lemonade at the Red Cross. They saw *This is The Army* celebrating its second anniversary in Italy. The men were hot in their heavy clothing. No one had suggested sun tans and the Ukraine was much warmer than England, and Italy was downright uncomfortable.

And there was a chance to go on two missions with the 15th, which seemed ridiculously easy to the boys who had been pushing through walls of flak in Northern France and Germany for so many months. The bombers went out to Arad, Rumania, where they laid down a very nice bomb pattern across a railroad marshalling yard, and the fighters then did the same for an oil refinery at Budapest, Hungary.

On one of these missions, Capt. Jones, with his teddy bear in the cockpit beside him, shot down two ME109s. And Capt. Hively, wearing his Russian general's belt with the Red Star on the buckle, got three others before a fourth knocked his canopy off, inflicting a nasty bruise that almost put out his right eye.

They tossed Hively into the hospital back at Foggia and Col. Blakeslee ordered him to stay put until his injury was healed. But Hively wasn't sitting back while the rest of his fighter group finished the mission. Two of his pals smuggled him out of the hospital the night before they were to leave Italy and kept him under cover until the departure the next day.

He was on the line in his Mustang when they took off and flew back with the task force, making out very well despite a patch over his right eye. The first time Col. Blakeslee knew anything about it was when he turned around at the bar of the officers' club the following day and saw Hively with the patch already gone from his eye, and the eye rapidly healing.

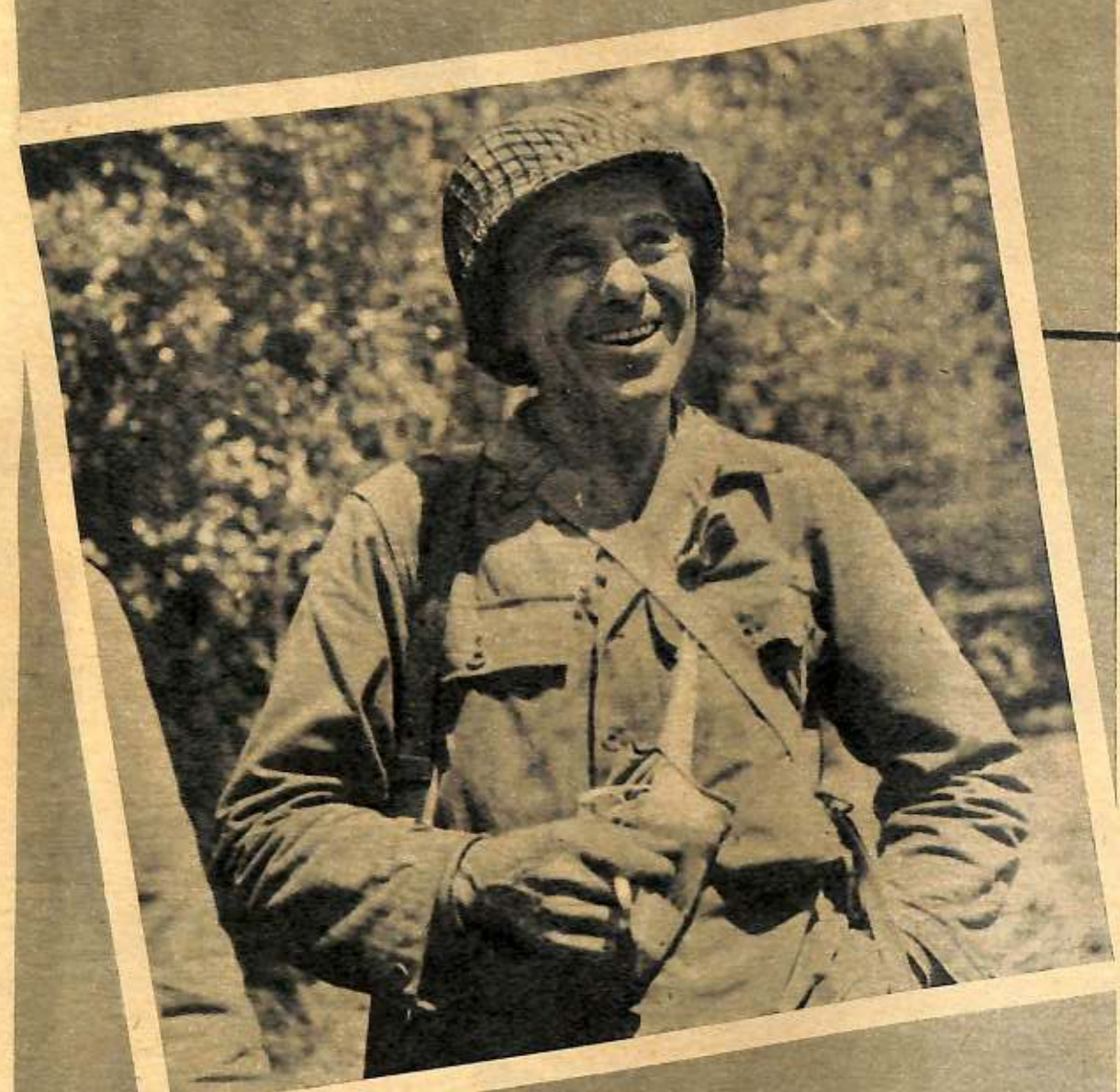
On the way back the Fortresses made a slight detour to drop a load of bombs on the marshalling yards at Bezier, in Southern France. There was no opposition, neither flak nor fighters. Some of the bombers made a dry run over the target weighing the advantages of this angle versus that. Then, after a careful choice of the best approach, dropped their load smack on the target.

It was the same all the way back from Bezier. No flak, no enemy planes. A real milk run home.

Back at his base Col. Old, who had led the task force, totted up the score. "We hit five targets every one smack on the nose. We lost one bomber on the way over and got maybe 10 or 12 enemy fighters. We've proved that there is no spot in Germany or German-occupied Europe that we can't hit and no place that our bombers can go that the Mustangs can't support them. We've done it once and we'll be doing it again."

Two GI Josefs and two GI Joes find common ground under the wing of a Flying Fortress where they look at a magazine together . . .

Here, some more of our GIs and theirs discover that the foxtrot is international language, at dance held for our airmen.



Sniper Exterminator

This is a story about T/Sgt. Kwiatek whose main interest in life is killing Germans. Three reasons are responsible for this: two brothers and an unreasoning hatred of Nazis. To date, Kwiatek has notched up 22 enemy snipers to his credit, but he still has a long way to go, he says.

By Sgt. WALTER PETERS
YANK Staff Correspondent

NORMANDY—"It's a beautiful country," said T/Sgt. Frank Kwiatek, of Philadelphia, heavy weapons platoon leader. "Only trouble is it's wonderful for snipers. From now on in we don't call anybody by rank—it's the first name, from the Old Man down. Snipers may be nearby, and they like to pick off the leaders."

We passed a reserve company where some of the men were taking baths with the aid of their helmets; others were writing letters or cleaning their weapons. We edged our way through a break in the hedges and walked through a field until another gap in the green rows appeared. "All those openings were made by machine gun fire," said Kwiatek.

As we moved along toward the front lines, Kwiatek kept shifting his eyes from trees to hedges and from hedges to trees, like a hunter in search of wild game.

"I got one right in that tree last week," he said. "I guess we have cleaned them all up right now but you can never tell. I'm not taking any chances with them."

We passed through more hedges. Up ahead were a number of men behind machine guns. Others, in foxholes, looked up as we neared the front. Kwiatek sat down, pulled out his knife and began cutting a notch in his rifle. "I might as well do this while I have time," he said.

There were 21 notches in the weapon, and he was making the 22nd.

"Three more to go and I'll have settled a promise I made when they killed my brother Ted. Then I'll kill twenty-five more for my brother Jerry. After that I'm going to kill as many Germans as I can because I hate the whole Nazi system."

Kwiatek was in Northern Ireland with his outfit when Ted, 21, gunner in a tank was killed in Sicily. Kwiatek swore before the men in his platoon that he'd get 25 Germans to avenge his brother's death. Several weeks later, the sergeant's 19-year-old brother Jerry was fatally wounded in Italy, and once more he made a pledge that he'd kill another 25 Nazis in retribution.

During his first four weeks in France Kwiatek erased 22 Germans, 20 with his Remington and two with hand grenades. The embattled sergeant has probably disposed of "another dozen" with a Tommygun, but he doesn't count them, explaining: "When I kill a German I like to look right into his eyes. I like to see them drop. When they drop I can almost see a picture of my brothers smiling at me. And I'm particularly happy to shoot snipers because they're so sneaky."

Of the 22 notches, 19 represent snipers.

Sergeant Kwiatek shot his first four Germans on June 10th when his outfit was prevented by snipers from proceeding over a crossroad near Cerisy La Foret. After a number of Americans were slain and injured, the CO asked for volunteers to eliminate the sniper. Kwiatek stepped forward. He prowled through the woods until he came to within 25 yards of one sniper's rear. The Nazi was in position behind a road marker. The platoon sergeant had the German in his gunsight, when he suddenly saw another sniper in a tree about fifty yards to his right. So he picked off the tree-sitter first and then "exterminated the one behind the marker."

THAT sniper in the tree taught Kwiatek one important lesson. "From then on I decided I was going to watch every tree, every bush, and every hedge," he said. A few minutes later the Americans passed the crossroad with Kwiatek trailing behind his platoon to give rear protection. "I saw the hedges moving slightly," Kwiatek said. "It was a little windy that day, but the wind was blowing from the other direction, so I became suspicious. I tiptoed toward the hedges and saw a German. 'Hey!' I yelled, and when the German faced me with rifle ready in his hands I let go. He keeled over backwards. He was gone, just another dead German. I later saw that he had been a captain in a German paratroop corps."

Still later that day, Kwiatek's outfit was marching through the streets of a town when bullets began splashing the center of the road. Kwiatek investigated while the rest of the men took cover. He spotted a German helmet sticking out of the chimney of a house. "Get me a bazooka," he told one of his men.

Kwiatek prides himself on being "a scientific sniper-hunter." To kill snipers, he said, you must use your head "but that doesn't mean that you can stick your head over the hedges where the squareheads can take Coney Island pot-shots at you." He said, "I always tell my men to keep their heads down. But sometimes the fellows forget and when they do—well, I can't tell them anything any more. It's too late."

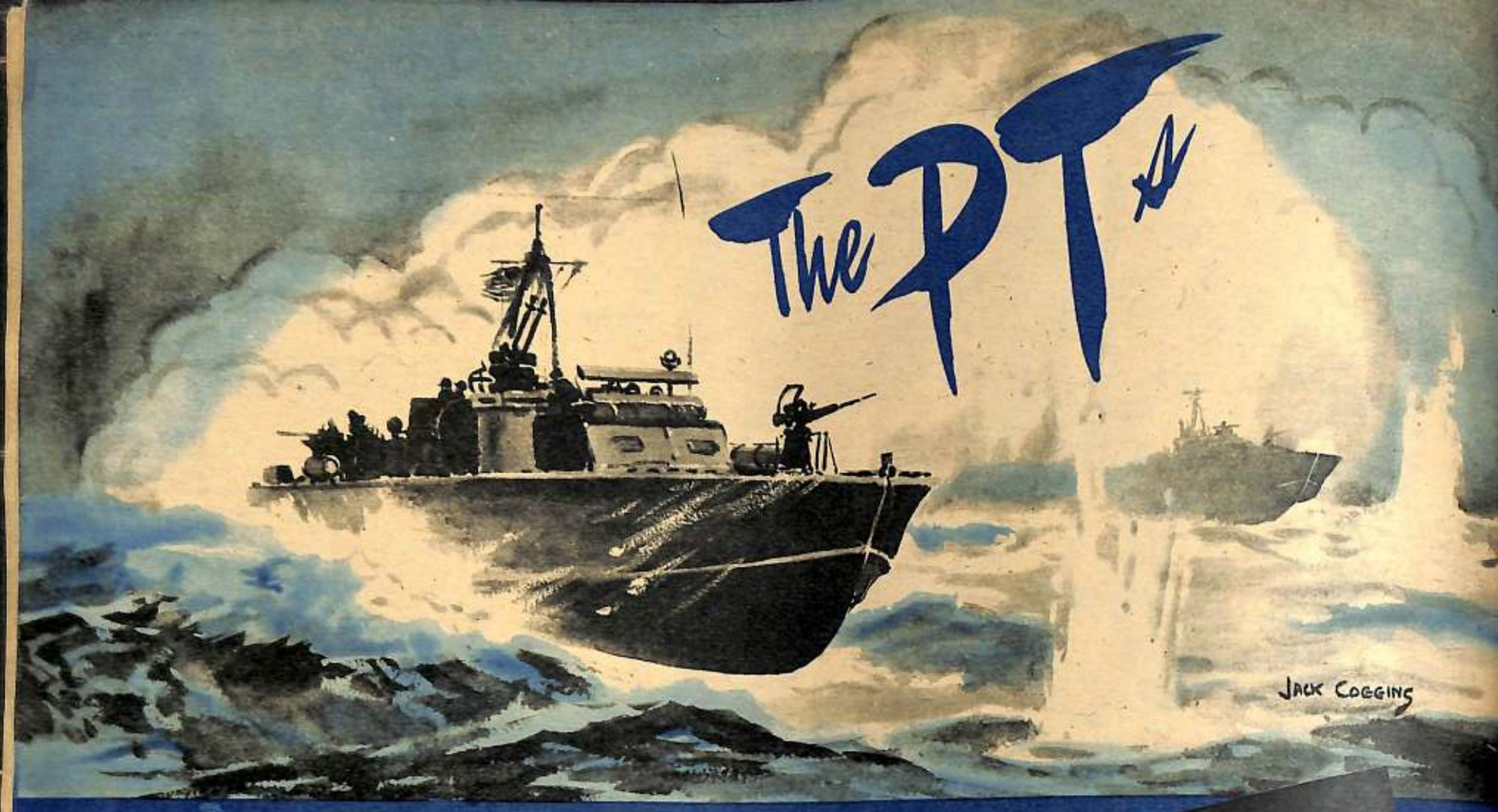
HE told me of the time a few days earlier when one of his men stuck his head above the hedges and took a shot. "The sniper got him square through the head, and his brains splattered all over my face," Kwiatek said. "I was never so sick in my life. Anyway, Rogers (Pfc. Floyd Rogers, from Rising Sun, Tex.) and myself decided we were going to get that sniper. I told Rogers to take the dead man's helmet and hold it up over the hedge, after I gave him the signal. Well, I walked away about forty yards and then motioned Rogers to lift the helmet. Then I watched. As soon as the helmet went up the squarehead began shooting and gave away his position. I signalled Rogers to raise the helmet again from another position. When he did, I saw the Hun's helmet come up from behind a tree, then his shoulders. I let him have it. All it took was one shot. Those bastards don't give you more than one shot. He's dead all right. I watched for two days and his body was still there. Then in the morning we found the body had been removed from the tree."

Kwiatek, at 46 the oldest enlisted man in his outfit, has been in the Army 27 years. He spent nineteen months as a machine gunner in France during the last war. He's been in the same platoon since 1924 and became leader in 1940. His daughter is a captain with the Army nurses in Italy. His men call him "Hardtack Murphy," a name he used while fighting as a welterweight in the Army during the early '30's.

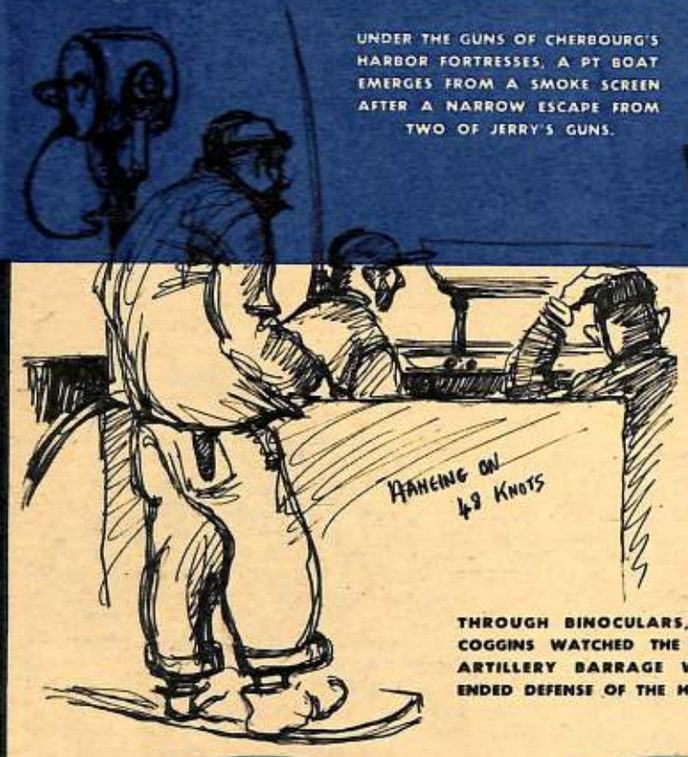
"He's a damn good platoon leader," said Pfc. James W. Justus, 19, of Key West, Fla. "The only trouble is he wants to finish off the war by himself. Every time I see him he's looking up into a tree. I think he's going to be a very sad man when the war's over and there's no more snipers to kill."

"THE WATER HOT?"
—Pvt. Tom Flannery

The PT



UNDER THE GUNS OF CHERBOURG'S HARBOR FORTRESSES, A PT BOAT EMERGES FROM A SMOKE SCREEN AFTER A NARROW ESCAPE FROM TWO OF JERRY'S GUNS.



THROUGH BINOCULARS, CPL. COGGINS WATCHED THE FINAL ARTILLERY BARRAGE WHICH ENDED DEFENSE OF THE HABOR.

THE Navy finds many uses for its speedy little PT boats. At Cherbourg, another role—that of bait—was found for a squadron of torpedo boats commanded by Lt. Comdr. John D. Bulkeley, who won fame in the defense of Bataan. The evening the fall of Cherbourg was announced, Cmdr. Bulkeley's little fleet, accompanied by a destroyer, was directed to approach the harbor entrance to determine whether the enemy guns of the harbor forts were still firing toward the sea. They found out.

The way to Cherbourg harbor led across some miles of mine fields, with danger ever present from floating mines. But without incident the little flotilla approached shore. Off shore, two of the PTs, one carrying Cmdr. Bulkeley and Cpl. Jack Coggins, YANK staff artist, pulled away from the rest and sped in toward the breakwater. What happened when the boats drew within range of the guns on shore is shown in the two large drawings on these pages.

BEFORE STARTING, THE PTs PULLED ALONGSIDE A DESTROYER TO DRAW RATIONS. A WAVE AND THE TIDE CAUGHT THE LIGHT CRAFT AND IT CRASHED INTO THE DESTROYER.

STERN DOWN IN THE WATER, A PT SHIPS A WAVE AS TWO SHELLS FROM GERMAN 88s BURST CLOSE BY. THE ENGINES WERE JARRED FROM THEIR MOORINGS BY THE BLAST.

About the RUSSIANS in NORMANDY

1 Under the watchful eyes of an American officer, a Russian Corporal sits in a French farmhouse penning a leaflet urging . . .

. . . . and they weren't much help to Adolf either. Here are two stories, one of which tells how Russians, captured and forced to fight for the enemy, turned the tables on Jerry; the other which tells what happened when the Americans liberated Russian prisoners from a concentration camp.

By Sgt. REG. KENNY
YANK Staff Correspondent

NORMANDY—Two American medics, the motor of their jeep opened wide as they approached the railroad crossing near Portbail—where everyone knew that the Jerries had already zeroed in their 88s—were startled to see two bedraggled figures in the unmistakable uniform of the German Army waving white flags at their approaching car. Despite the fact that they were unarmed, the medics stopped and ordered the prisoners to get aboard.

Thus started the following incident which might easily be taken from one of Hollywood's best.

Cpl. Sansjiar Waliulin, a sandy-haired, happy-go-lucky little guy born in Moscow, joined the Russian Army at the age of sixteen. Six months later, during the siege of Smolensk, he was captured by the Germans. Thrown in prison and fed just enough to keep alive, he found escape was impossible. All around him his fellow captives were ill and dying from lack of treatment. Then, when all seemed hopeless, their captors offered them a chance, knowing well that they were in no position to refuse. "We promise you good food and treatment," they said, "if you will join one of our voluntary organizations. Just sign here and you will be released. Otherwise, you will work anyway and your conditions will not improve."

Grasping at the slim chance of the possibility of escape, the Russian Corporal accepted the offer and together with his fellow captives was put to work digging gun emplacements and building barricades. A few months passed, and then one day he was put into a German uniform, given a rifle and told that he must fight for the "Fatherland." With the muzzles of his captors' guns constantly in his back, he could do little but obey. "If only I can escape!" was the thought that kept him going. Freedom was the only thing that he and his comrades talked about.

Two days after their arrival at the front, the little Corporal saw his chance. When none of the German officers or non-coms were around, he picked up his friend Ivan and started down the railroad tracks, which he knew led into the American lines. As they edged their way across the steel-ribboned "No Man's Land" towards our lines, their hearts pounded with fear as they waited for the crack of the German rifles or the bark of American infantrymen's guns. Then, where the tracks crossed the road, the American jeep picked them up and they were safe.

No sooner was Cpl. Waliulin safely in custody than he began to repeat over and over, through interpreters, that his countrymen were waiting to surrender, if only they knew how. They were afraid to cross into our lines for fear of being shot.

"I will write a note to them," he said suddenly, "and tell them that it will be safe for them to give themselves up."

Then, while the Intelligence Officer and his staff hurried about borrowing reams of paper and mimeograph equipment, the little Russian sat down and in large, clear letters wrote:

"Comrades and friends:

Come here! The American soldiers are friends. You will get enough to eat and to smoke. Don't be afraid. Tell your comrades and Russian non-coms to come. Wave this leaflet over your head. Don't be afraid! Shoot the Fascist pigs! Come during the day."

Following a fierce artillery barrage, copies of this leaflet were loaded into 105-mm. shells and fired at the spot where the enslaved Russian battalion was dug in. Soon after the noise of the shooting had stopped, two Russians, the leaflets clutched in their hands, crossed over to our lines. The rest were afraid to risk being shot by our men after they had left the Germans, and before they could make it clear to us who they were. Pvt. Dimitri Biakin, a swarthy, bushy-headed man of 43, holding on to his leaflet, spoke up: "I will go back through the German lines to my comrades and tell them that it will be safe to come out and surrender to you."

Now the question arose! Would it be a trap or would it be a safe gamble to allow the captive to return to his own lines? The decision was made by the CO of the Division. After talking with the prisoner for some time, he was convinced of the Russian's sincerity.

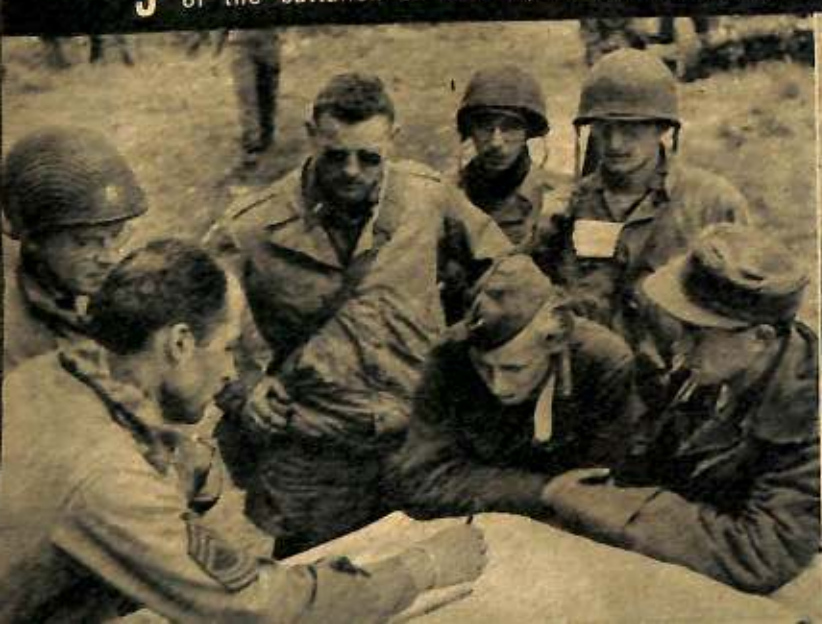
With three enlisted men, one of whom could speak a little Russian, a lieutenant in the Intelligence Corps brought the captive back to the spot where he had been picked up by our jeep. The scene that followed is best described in the words of S/Sgt. Walt Strauss, of Jamaica, L.I., who was one of the four Americans who volunteered for the job of bringing in the whole Russian battalion.

"We were all kind of uneasy as we released our prisoner and watched him disappear down the tracks. We had told him before he left that if he did not return in two hours, our artillery would open up and blast both himself and his countrymen out of hiding. We repeatedly told him that it would be perfectly safe for his return; that all of the American troops in the area had been warned of the plan and would not shoot at him.

"NONE of us said much after he was gone. We checked and rechecked our carbines, and kept wondering what the four of us would do if this was a trap. As the minutes dragged by—five, ten and twenty—we began to get worried. Maybe it was a trap after all. Maybe the Russian had lied to us. Maybe at any moment the German 88s would blast us to bits.

"Suddenly, far in the distance along the railroad tracks, we saw a score of tiny white dots, heading straight for us! I know that there was not one of us who did not have an awful feeling of uncertainty as we strained our eyes to see if they were Germans

5 and here they carefully point out the position of the battalion on the map to the Americans.



6 To convince the doubtful ones, Pvt. Biakin volunteers to return to his own lines.

7 Biakin is blindfolded so that he can't memorize the American situation.

2 a Nazi-conscripted Red battalion opposing the Yanks to cease their forced bloodshedding.

3 Some, like this soldier, were impressed and surrendered quickly.

4 Prisoners say that many more of their comrades also would like to accept the offer . . .

or the Russians. Then as they got closer, we could see that the white dots which we had first seen were white handkerchiefs tied round their owners' caps. In their upraised hands, the Russians carried the bolts from their rifles and machine guns, according to our instructions. Our long chance had paid off!"

For the rest of that day and the next morning, more and more of the Russians made their way safely to our lines, until their number swelled past the hundred mark. They were still coming in as I left the regiment that afternoon, and the last thing I heard was the laughter of the MPs who had been told by the last man to surrender how the German Commandant in charge of the Russians was doing the Nazi counterpart of "blowing his top" over the sudden death of his best non-coms and the disappearance of his entire battalion!

Hitler should reread the Fable about leading a horse to water. . . .

About Jerry's Russian Prisoners

By Sgt. BILL DAVIDSON

YANK Staff Correspondent

NORMANDY—The battalion CP was a tiny rectangular cubicle scooped out of a solid concrete wall which the Germans had erected as part of the western defenses of Cherbourg. The room was bare of all furniture except for a German officer's trunk—which served as a seat for everyone. Piled neatly in a corner was the usual collection of battle flotsam—German hand grenades, ammunition, letters, fatigue caps and underwear. There wasn't a single window or opening to the room except for a heavy iron door with a few slits near its top. The room had a slightly sickening, musty odor.

"What was this place?" I asked.

"This," said Lt. Col. W. A. Strickland, CO of the light ack-ack outfit that had fought its way in here, "was a solitary confinement cell." He spoke with a heavy Alabama accent. "It was a solitary confinement cell," he repeated, "in one of those nice little Master Race concentration camps you've been hearing about. They had 2,000 Russian prisoners of war penned up in here."

The Colonel's outfit had broken into these last defenses of Cherbourg with the infantry. When the doughboys and ack-ack men saw the barbed wire fences and pig-pen barracks of the concentration camp, they attacked with an unreasoning fury, smashing down the gates and storming inside. The half-starved, emaciated Russian prisoners came yelling out of their barracks and went to work with the doughboys on the German garrison. In about 30 minutes, there wasn't much left of the garrison.

One unidentified infantryman, according to Col. Strickland, burst into the office of the German colonel commanding the concentration camp. The colonel emptied his Luger at the doughboy, but every shot went wild. The infantryman didn't waste a cartridge on the German commander. He just grabbed the colonel, wrestled him to the floor, and with his trench knife, expertly slit the throat of the Nazi.

Outside, in the meantime, tremendous scenes of celebration were going on. The Russians embraced the GIs, kissed them, patted them on the back. They danced, and brought out accordions which somehow they had managed to hide from the Germans. After that, they showed the GIs where the Germans had kept their stocks of stolen French cognac, and everyone settled down to a big party. According to Col. Strickland, there were 2,000 Russian prisoners here originally, of whom approximately 800 had died of starvation. There were genuine prisoners of war mixed in with youthful labor conscripts carried away in sealed cars from their overrun native towns in Russia. In defiance of the Geneva Convention, all were forced to work fourteen hours a day on the tunnels and fortifications of the area. When the German prison garrison learned that the Americans were approaching the city, they selected 200 of the toughest and strongest prisoners—all those capable of heading up an insurrection—and shot them. The liberated Russians showed the GIs the bodies of their comrades lying where they had been shot two days before.

Later, when 400 German prisoners of the garrison of nearby Fort Querqueville were being marched down the road, the American guards had difficulty in preventing the Russians from falling on the Germans and tearing them to pieces.

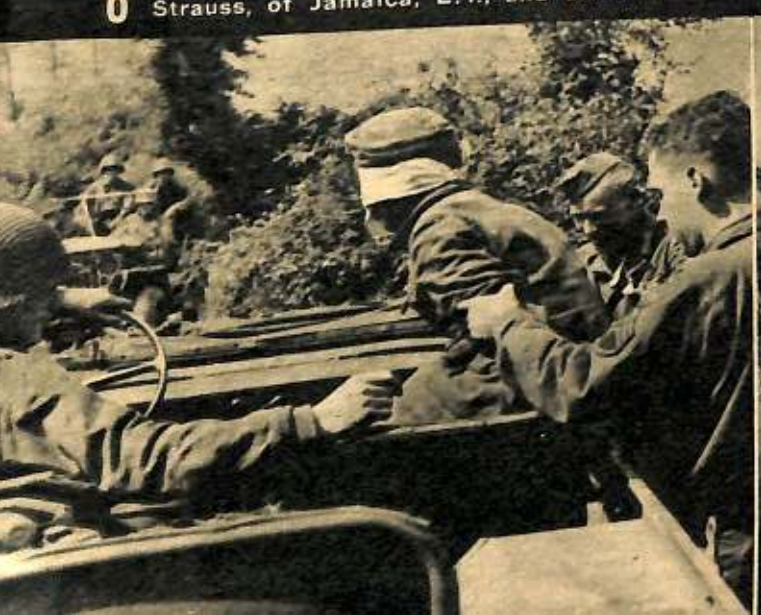
I met two of the liberated Russian ex-prisoners in Cherbourg two days later, just after I had left Col. Strickland's strange CP. I saw what appeared to be a young French civilian standing on a street corner and asked him how to get to a certain place. He offered to come along in our jeep to show us the way. A moment later, he pointed to himself and said, "I am a Russian."

His name was Vladimir Lorontiusz and he was a Caucasian who had worked in the oil refineries at Batum, near the Iranian border of Russia. He couldn't have been more than 23 or 24. He had been in the cavalry, like his father before him, and had been captured by the Germans and Rumanians in the fierce fighting around Odessa on 1941. The Germans had put him in a sealed boxcar with about 30 other prisoners and transported him across the continent of Europe. He had been working at hard labor ever since and had lost nearly fifty pounds since his arrival. His greatest concern was for his teeth, which had gone bad on the calcium-less diet the Germans had fed them.

He introduced me to a friend of his, a blond, red-cheeked youngster named Edward Skorospenko, who couldn't be mistaken for anything else but a Russian. Skorospenko was 18 years old. His father was a well-known journalist in Russia, who, at the time of the German capture of Smolensk, was bureau manager there for the Russian newspaper *Pravda*. Edward's father had escaped from the Nazis. Edward had not. He had been conscripted, brought to Cherbourg, and put to work on the fortifications of the Isle of Jersey.

THE two young Russians told me that they had been interviewed by "fine American comrade in your uniform who spoke Russian." They were awaiting shipment back to England, from where, they imagined, they would return to Russia. All the prisoners had held a meeting, however, in which they decided to request permission to form a separate battalion to remain on the Western Front and fight the Germans side by side with the Americans. "The Boche," they said, "is less far from here."

8 then helped into a jeep by S/Sgt. Walt Strauss, of Jamaica, L. I., and driven close



9 to the Nazi lines. After a nerve-wracking delay, he returns with his battalion.

10 YANK's Reg Kenny, lower right, wins four new readers for us; Hitler loses four more fighters.

Three Sundays

In the mails the other day, YANK received from Pvt. Michael Pinkosky a copy of a hastily scribbled diary which he had kept during his first three weeks in Normandy as a member of a cannon company of the Second Division. Called "Diary of a Soldier," it was especially concerned—in an honest, plain-spoken way—with the hold which religion exerts on many Yanks in battle. Herewith, we reprint Pvt. Pinkosky's impressions of his first three Sundays in France.

June 11.

We landed on the bitter shores of France. Scene of damaged boats, wrecked vehicles, crushed mighty enemy fortress. Sun was shining as we stepped in cool salt water before reaching sandy beach. Pitiful shambles, wreckage greeted us. On we climbed, up rambling dusty road, with all the equipment. Passed through village in ruins. Three children waved and shouted French tune. Two aged women chatted, little concerned about long line of soldiers, trucks, jeeps, ambulances who were streaming by. Plenty of dust—we sweated like hell and were covered with dust. Took time out to catch a breath, perched on pile of dirt, as they were clearing mine field. Explosions went on. Two officers came by and told us to get on our feet and keep moving. Reached field once occupied by artillery. No sooner we slung off the tons of equipment, an order came down to move again. Arrived at a larger field and found holes dug, once occupied by Nazis. Pulled guard the first night. Snipers were giving us the creeps, firing from hide-outs. Moon came out. Sound of jeeps and tanks went on.

June 18.

Another Sunday, and little time for day of rest. War goes on. As we walk hastily around the field with rifle, on alert for snipers, we come upon weary frightened pals. They keep on facing it, though, smiling. Voices sound out on the hill—"What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear; What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer." No matter what, Christian soldiers will march onward. Here they were gathered for a Sabbath worship on wartorn French soil.

June 25.

Today is Sunday. This hellish war in the fields of France has calmed down a bit. Sun is shining. Birds find time to sing. Cows that escaped death are feeding on the greenish hills. Calves mooing. Group of geese comes out of a pond and are fluttering wings, horses roam about, though the loud sound of gunfire makes them run. Colorful wild flowers have covered the fields. Grass has withered where bombs have fallen. The abandoned, aged, stone country houses stand in ruins. A group of men eat around a fire, while hamburgers sizzle in the frying pan. Some men are near the running stream, washing up.

On the hillside is an old torn shed where a first-aid station has been set up. A group of soldiers composed of two husky MPs, medics, part of the line company and an officer has gathered there for a religious service. An improvised altar on pile of blankets and a stretcher was constructed at the shed by a young chaplain from New York, known by the men as Father Mack. Tiny candle flickers in a small white glass on center part of the altar. Priest donned on white vestments with large gold cross and red border and Mass was said. Pvt. Joseph Rowe, of Pittsburg, assisted as an altar boy. He is with the medics and has performed such duties on many occasions. Planes roared overhead and artillery sounded forth. Chaplain had a brief sermon on Communion of Saints and their importance in our lives. Several men received holy communion.

After holy service, we strolled to an abandoned farmhouse. Broken gray slate was on the ground. Roof only partly covered the stone house. White shutters still clinging to glassless windows. Lace curtains blow out from the ransacked building. Wine and cider shed had huge barrels. The small barn stood empty. Beside the apple tree was two-wheeled wagon, and scattered about, crude farm instruments. Pvt. Arthur Latendress, of North Dakota, remarked, "I feel sorry for these poor French people. They were peace-loving people."

—By Pvt. MICHAEL PINKOSKY

Bailing Out Over France

A NINTH AIR FORCE TROOP CARRIER BASE, ENGLAND—When the emergency "bail out" bell sounded, I went down the aisle and out of the door, shortly after the last paratrooper. It seems strange to me now that at a time of stress, I should remember everything that had been told me in case I should have to jump. I remembered to get out of the slip stream of the plane before pulling the rip cord, and to take off my helmet so the jerk of the 'chute opening would not allow the chin strap to choke me. The 'chute did jerk me somewhat when it did open, but not very much. All the way down I saw streams of red and yellow fire from tracers criss-crossing below me. It didn't seem possible they could miss both me and my 'chute, since mine was the only white one coming down. Somehow I made it and hit with a pretty bad bump right in a field full of cows, which probably saved my life. My 'chute dragged me around the field before I could collapse it, but the cows made such an uproar no one could see me. I finally got out of my harness and away from the field after some of the cows had been killed by machinegun fire that I think was looking for me. I found a stream nearby and swam across in about the coldest water I ever felt. I came out in a field and lay down for a few minutes to rest. The tracer firing began again over my head, only this time they were trying to hit some of our paratroopers who were coming down all around me.

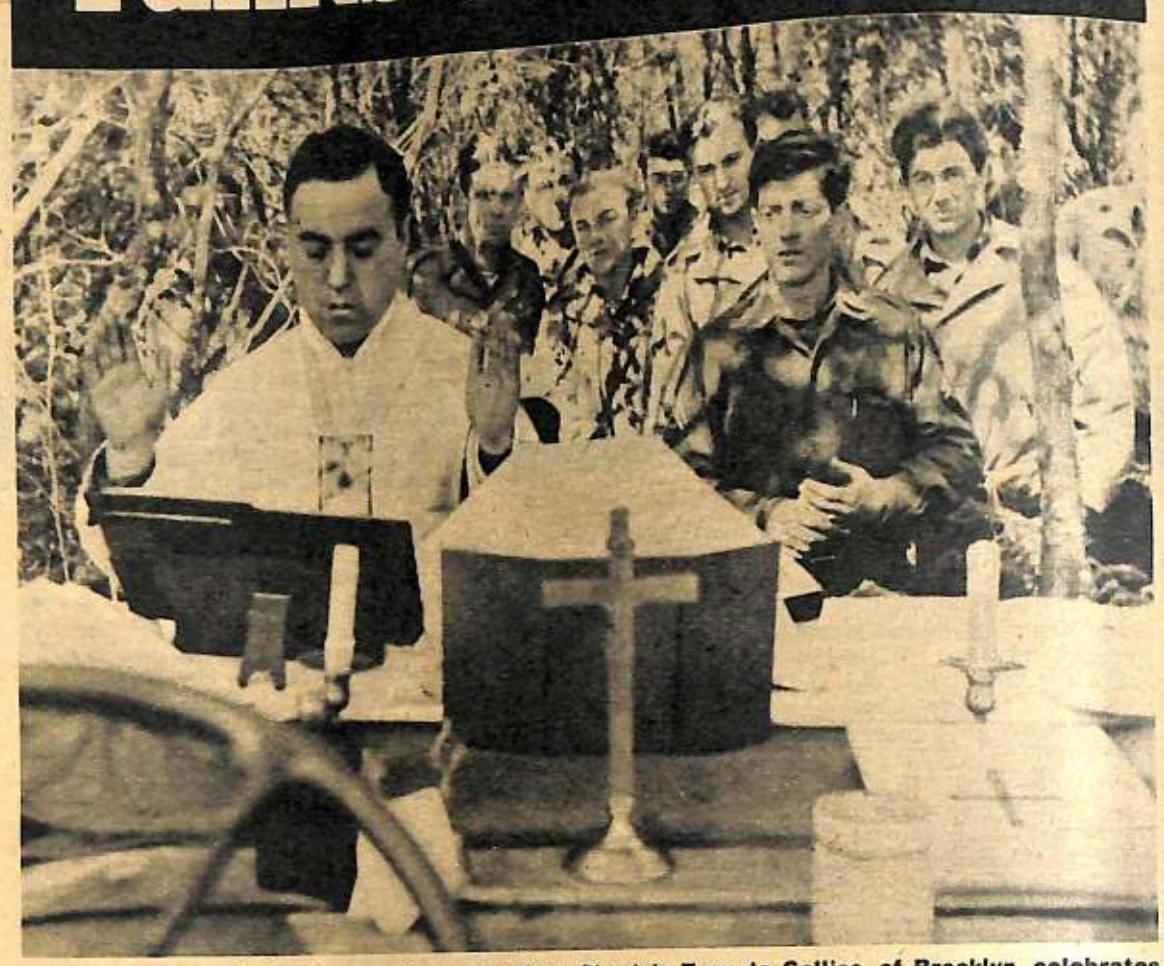
I saw a 'chute hit about ten yards from me and called out the password. An American voice called back the right answer, but then nothing happened, so I crawled a little closer and again called the password. This time the paratrooper said he was caught in the harness straps. I crawled to him and found he was lying on his back so weighted down with his pack, weapons and grenades that he couldn't get out of the 'chute. I cut his straps and we crawled toward some voices coming from a piece of brush near us. They gave us the right password and we found a group of about a dozen paratroopers, all of them cussing the machinegun nest, which seemed to be on a little high ground about 200 yards away. The paratroopers decided they could get the machinegun if some of them kept it busy in front while a few went in from either side with grenades. They thought I had better stay back, since my only weapon was my .45 calibre pistol, but I said I would just as soon go along and make a little noise with the bunch that was going to keep the gunners occupied from the front. I wasn't being a hero. It was a lot more comfortable being with those paratroopers than wandering around France by myself. Three of the boys loaded themselves with grenades and went crawling away and in a couple of minutes the rest of us started to walk ahead and the gun opened up on us right away, so we hit the grass and fired back as fast as we could. I let loose with my .45 and really enjoyed shooting in the general direction of the Germans at last. It was one hell of a racket between the machinegun and us, and then some of the paratroopers began to run forward in ones and twos, bending way over, while the rest of us kept shooting. But when it came our turn to run I found my knee was so stiff from smacking the ground with my 'chute that I couldn't keep up. So the little guy I had stuck with said I should stay low and keep shooting and they would come back for me. I used up all my clips in about three minutes and then there were a couple of sharp booms up ahead and finally silence.

I tried to get up then but my knee was pretty bad, so I sat back in the bushes and waited, but it was morning before any one came by and then it was two medics who showed me where an aid station had been set up in an old barn. I never did see the paratroop boys again but I guess they got the machinegun nest because it was quiet up there next morning. I got to the aid station all right and had my knee fixed up by a medic who had about a dozen wounded paratroopers there already.

WE were just breaking into our K-rations when we heard some yelling from the woods near our barn. In a few minutes a big party of Germans in gray uniforms came out of the woods in little groups of three and four and came over to the barn. They were mostly boys under 21 and looked in good shape. We weren't too sure what was going to happen to us, but a big German sergeant walked over by our cots and patted his machingun and said, *"Wasser?"* We handed him our canteens and he took a big swig and handed them around to the rest of his squad. It was too bad we had just broken out the rations because that was the next thing they saw and the food disappeared, too. But then the sergeant walked around and got one box back for each of us and smiled and said, "Chicago." It turned out he had once lived in Forest Park, near Chicago.

One of the Krauts was a little blond who could speak some English. He sat on a box near me and went through a box of rations in nothing flat. He said he was 15 but had had a year in the Army and that his was a crack regiment rushed from Italy. He seemed to have the Hitler bug bad. Just then all hell broke loose out in the yard behind the barn where most of the Germans were standing around eating our rations. Some Americans had caught them in a cross-fire from the woods. Several Germans fell in the farmyard and the rest moved into a patch of heavy woods the other side of the aid station.

Yanks in the ETO



With the front end of a jeep serving as an altar, Chaplain Tony de Gellise, of Brooklyn, celebrates Mass in a French forest, within range of enemy guns.

All of us that could move got up and looked through cracks in the stone walls and saw that the Germans were working a machinegun right behind our barn. I could hear the bullets whining off our walls. A kid next to me said he wished they would take this war a little further away, and in a short while the firing did let down. Soon American paratroopers began drifting in to us from the woods. It was strange the way, as soon as the shooting started and the Germans began to fall in the farmyard, the little blond kid took off his ammunition belt and threw his gun down, and so did about four others who had been sitting in the room eating. So I guess he wasn't as fond of fighting as he had been telling me because he didn't try to escape with his buddies and was taken in tow by the paratroopers who were bringing in some of their own wounded by that time.

The medics went right along working on whomever was brought in to them—Yank or Dutchman—and they certainly had guts because we were stuck in the middle of the battle, as far as I could see, with bands of paratroopers chasing Germans through the woods on both sides of the barn. We had one more visit from the Germans. This time they sent in two Americans with one of their officers who had been shot in the leg. The paratroopers jumped this bunch, too, and firing started up in the woods. The two Americans dumped the German officer in the barnyard and took off for the woods on the other side and made it. I went out with another fellow who wasn't hurt bad and carried in the German, who was a man about 25 and was really cussing in Dutch.

Next afternoon three of us took off for an assembly point we had heard about, but first we went back to a manure pile and dug out carbines and ammunition and some grenades which the boys had buried when they first came in. We started towards what we thought was the CP, but an 88 started to lay some fire down in that general direction. There was some other activity going on in the area so we dug in that night and made contact with the CP the next day. It was here that the Krauts had accurately placed a mortar shell in a farmhouse where our boys had marshalled a hundred or so prisoners. After the explosion there were far fewer prisoners.

At 0200 that morning we were told to assemble and march to the rear for reassembly and rest. A burning farmhouse held us up for some time but rain soon put out the fire and we continued our march back through the woods, trails and roads until we reached our rendezvous at 0700. We got a little sleep here and then continued on until we reached the DCP at 1100. I left the grand bunch of boys there and worked my way to the beach rather peacefully. I spent that night on an LCI and listened to the Jerries come over with a few eggs from 0400 to 0445. We didn't receive any hits—only a little rocking—but the boys on the top deck told me next morning we had lost two small craft.

Shortly after that I was transferred to an LCT and landed at an English port to make my way back to my base and Heaven.

—By S/Sgt. JOHN O'CONNOR
Radio Operator of a Troop Carrier C-47 Skytrain

Downing Doodlebugs

ENGLAND—One of the first gun crews of a Ninth Air Force Defense Command station to go into action when the "flying bombs" commenced their attack on England was an outfit headed by 1st Sgt. John Gregory, who played end on Columbia University's Rose Bowl team of 1934.

The crew is composed principally of New Jersey and New York men who have been together many months and now constitute one of the toughest sharpshooting crews in the unit, with claims to many of the "flying bombs" shot down. The entire gun crew was on continuous duty for 72 hours during the early part of the attack.

Two members of the crew, Pvts. Richard Sawicki and Bigio Dipalo, both of Nutley, N. J., were on pass at the time of the first attack. When they heard their crew go into action, they half-walked, half-ran 12 miles to rejoin their outfit.

Sgt. Gregory is proud of his crew. "We knew the strain would soon begin to tell on the boys, so I offered some of them 12-hour passes," he said a few days ago. "Hell, I thought they were going to start shooting at me. They wouldn't leave that gun for paycall. I still can't figure out when they sleep."

Pvt. Tom McFawl and Cpl. Henry Mackin, school mates from Gloucester, N. J., who have stuck together throughout their entire Army career, each insist that the other was chiefly instrumental in the destruction of the first flying bomb.

"Tom, our telephone operator, was the first to see it," said Cpl. Machin.

"He didn't get excited, just told Kane (Sgt. George Kane, of Roselle, Del.) that something new was coming over for us to bag." Pvt. McFawl added. "Boy, you should have seen Henry and the rest of the guys go to work. The pit got hot from the friction those guys caused when they moved."

Other crewmen are Pvt. Lloyd Hurley, of Pennsville, N. J., Pvt. Lyman Johnson, of Mt. Holly, N. J., Pvts. Tony Pennino and Kenneth R. Fischer, of Bridgeton, N. J., Pvt. Sherwin L. Steinberg, of the Bronx, N. Y., Pvt. Eugene De Forno, of Salina, Pa., Pvt. George J. Longo, of Bloomfield, N. J., Cpl. William T. Kinnebrew, of Miami, Fla., Pfc. John Barron, of Scranton, Pa., and Pvt. Thomas Caruso, of Newark, N. J.

S/Sgt. Nathan H. Glick, of Montgomery, Ala., staff artist of the Ninth Air Force, waited several hours in the gun's nest to sketch the actual killing of a "Doodlebug."

Activated by Lt.-Gen. Lewis H. Brereton, the 9th Air Defence Command will defend occupied territories behind the fighting fronts from air attack.

—By a YANK Field Correspondent

Some of the guys who gave up 12-hour passes so that they could stay on the job making passes at the "Doodlebugs." The sketch shows the crew in the process of making a kill.