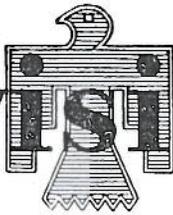


45th Division News

JULY 10, 1945

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Thunderbirds Came Out of Storm To Invade Sicily July 10, 1943

45th Helped Finish Hitler And Mussolini

Two long and eventful years have passed since the 45th Division, fresh from the training camps of the United States, blasted its way out of a storm to land on the southern beaches of the island of Sicily.

To many a Thunderbird, the date of this introduction into combat is as memorable as his own birthday. July 10, 1943.

Some infantrymen died before they crossed the narrow belt of sand. Others drowned without ever setting foot on a hostile shore, cut down by the Italian beach defenses. Others, only a few, trudged the whole weary way across the island, up the Italian boot from Salerno to Rome, up through the Vosges, and into Germany to Munich.

Today, the 45th is one of the most honored divisions of World War II. Five thousand 402 officers and men had been decorated by the American government by the latter part of June, and foreign decorations bring the

Croix de Guerre For Division Flag

Describing the 45th as "a magnificent major unit," Gen. Charles DeGaulle, President of the French provisional government, this week ordered the citation of this division.

The citation entitles the division to add the Croix de Guerre with Palms to the division flag.

number of individual decorations to more than 5,500. Many more will be decorated for their contributions to the 45th's fighting efficiency before the records are closed.

103,367 PW's Taken

A division's strength is something more than 15,000 men. In its campaigns in Europe, this division took 103,367 prisoners, most of them Germans. How many it killed or wounded, no one will ever know.

Field Marshal Kesselring of the German army, who vainly sought to push the 45th into the sea at Anzio to eliminate the famous beachhead, disclosed upon his capture that he considered the 45th one of the two finest in the American Army. The other was the Third, a division often found fighting on our right or left in the difficult campaigns.

Kesselring had many opportunities to estimate the worth of the Thunderbirds as they pushed his picked mountain troops and his SS men back, back and back in the Italian mountains.

He became reacquainted with Thunderbird aggressiveness and determination when he succeeded von Rundstedt in command of the defense of the Western Front.

2600 Thunderbirds Died

The cost of these campaigns may be read in the record. After establishing a record of 511 days of combat, the 45th counted its casualties at more than 27,000—second highest in the war so far for an American division.

Two hundred 13 officers and 3,437 enlisted men of the 45th were killed in action. Seven hundred 40 officers and 12,989 men were wounded. One hundred 56 officers and 3,459 men were at

some time listed as missing in action.

It's combat mission in Europe ended, the 45th halted in Munich, and there garrisoned one of the largest cities in Europe, and one of the two most im-

portant cities in Germany from the point of view of the Nazi party.

The Thunderbirds had had a major share in the taking of Munich, as they had in the taking of Nuremberg,

Aschaffenburg, Homburg, Epinal, Rome and Palermo.

But the names of little places will

(Continued on Page 4)



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An Introduction

Editorial

To the 9th, 103rd and 14th Armored Divisions:

By this time you have received many of the "older" men from the 45th Division. So that you'll know more about these guys and the outfit they fought with, the 45th Division News is distributing this special edition to you, as well as to the 45th itself.

In its two years of combat, the Thunderbirds piled up 511 days on the line—probably a record for any division in any war so far. They suffered the second highest number of casualties among all the divisions of the army in this war. They chased the enemy from the southern shores of Sicily, through Italy, out of Rome. They pursued him from the shores of Southern France to the Vosges. They cracked his Siegfried line, crossed his Rhine, and made one final, sustained dash that took Nuremberg and Munich.

Yet, through all the heavy fighting, and back in the rest areas, the 45th has remained a human division — as pleasant a division to belong to as there is in the army. Chickens were never rampant in the 45th. Men did their jobs, took pride in them, and generally were treated as intelligent people. It was a spit and polish outfit just before a parade; just well groomed in ordinary garrison life.

In its fighting, it never was a "glory" division. It fought its battles hard and won them as a team, outfoxing the enemy when it couldn't batter through his lines. But it was never given to grandstanding on the field.

This edition will give you more information on the exploits and the nature of the Thunderbirds. They're proud of the outfit they fought with, as you are proud of yours.

News Published First Allied Paper In Sicily

With this edition, the 45th Division News completes its second year of publication in Europe. During these two years, the News has accomplished many firsts, and had its share of some of the most picturesque publishing difficulties in the history of journalism.

Volume IV, Number 1 went out to the troops July 13, 1943 — just three days after the first Thunderbirds set foot on Sicily. The News was the first Allied newspaper to publish in Axis home territory.

The staff entered Vittoria, Sicily, soon after it was taken, found the local printers hiding in the hills nearby, and soon had them at work. Muttering "mama mia", the Sicilians struggled with the unfamiliar English composition, and promptly ran out of the letters "w", "k", and "y", which occur infrequently in Italian. The staff re-wrote its stories and headlines without these letters.

Two in Caltanissetta

Then the type was placed in an enormous press, and the press was turned by hand. There was no electricity. The bill for two day's work for three printers, and including materials, came to four dollars and 50 cents. Inflation hadn't yet set in.

While the paper was on the press, the division was charging ahead. The newspaper moved to Caltanissetta, in the middle of the three non-Italian letters.

Two quick editions there, and the paper again followed the 45th, this time moving into Palermo, where pictures were printed from engravings made of an old coffin liner in a shop set up in a chicken coop after the bombings of the city. The newspaper was printed in a shop still on fire from incendiary bombs.

The News was the first American newspaper to be published in Italy, too. Conditions at Salerno were worse than those in Sicily. Two shops had to be employed, because shells had demolished the type in one and the presses were kaputt in the other. It was hard to keep the printers at work, because the Krauts were shelling the waterfront. The print shops were on the waterfront.

Printers in the Clink

After Salerno, the News moved to Naples, again to find no electricity and the same letters missing. German time bombs exploded over the city as the first issue rolled off the press.

The News stayed in Naples a long time, the electricity came on, and a linotype was employed to lick the problem of the absent letters. But during one three week period the paper almost went out of business.

Week No. One, German bombers got a near miss on the engraving shop and put it out of business temporarily. Week No. Two, the CID picked up all our printers and put them in the clink on suspicion of counterfeiting bread ration tickets. Week No. Three, the bombers were back, and this time got

a direct hit on our print shop, filling the presses with plaster and scrambling the type.

The News didn't miss an issue.

Down Goes the Ship

These unique publishing troubles hadn't ended. Soon thereafter, while the division was at Anzio, the staff was riding an LST into Naples. The ship cracked up in a storm, and the News was delayed while the staff was marooned on an island.

Two editions were published in Rome, electricity was on, and conditions were almost ideal.

The division went to Salerno, the News moved back to Naples, and soon all traffic was bound for Southern France.

Someone forgot to book passage for the News staff, so they hitch-hiked to France on an LCI, then hitch-hiked to the division CP. Things were moving so fast, the staff decided to go ahead and let the division get its papers as it passed the print shop.

France and Germany

So, off they went to Grenoble, entering after the FFI had taken the town and before the Thunderbirds came in. The paper was set in a modern newspaper plant, while the FFI and the Vichy police staged a small arms fire fight in the street below the windows.

After that, Besancon, Nancy, Lauf, Munich. At Munich, the War Ends edition was the first issue published, and German printers composed the news of the surrender of Germany. They didn't even ask what all the fuss was about.

That's a brief history of the 45th Division News. It might be added that the paper won the cup presented by the army's Camp Newspaper Service in 1944 as the best letterpress paper published overseas by the services, and took honorable mention in 1945.

Unit Histories Are On the Way

Histories of all three regiments and Div. Arty will be available eventually in book form, officers have announced.

The elaborate regimental history and souvenir book of the 180th Inf. is on the presses, and will be mailed to members of the regiment upon completion.

Written, but not yet on the press, is a large book outlining the history of the 157th Inf., not only in this war, but in the first World War and the Spanish American war. Many illustrations and maps will be included.

Div. Arty's smaller booklet, containing about 70 pages, will be ready at any time.

The 179th's history is being written by Howard Munsell, who served as Red Cross representative with the unit, and will be published in the United States.

'Famous', 'Fighting', Are 45th's Press Words

When newspapers and magazines speak of the 45th Division, they often use one of three adjectives before its name. They call it "famous", "fighting", or "crack". The nation's press speaks of the 45th often.

Most recent general attention received by the 45th was that excited by the capture of Munich and Dachau. Columns of the American newspapers were devoted to the stories of these places and the 45th's part in taking them.

* * *

Here's the beginning of a typical story:

By HOWARD COWAN

DACHAU, Germany -- (AP) -- The U.S. 42nd and 45th divisions captured the infamous Dachau prison camp Monday and freed its 32,000 captives.

Two columns of infantry riding tanks, bulldozers and long tom rifles — anything with wheels — rolled down from the northwest and surprised the SS (elite corps) guards in the extermination camp shortly after the lunch hour.

Scores of SS men were taken prisoner and dozens slain.

* * *

The story goes on in the Bismarck, N. D., Tribune to fill the space below a headline half a page wide.

There was an error in this story, however, and it was an error many correspondents made. The 42nd Division troops did not arrive until Dachau had been taken. The Seventh Army Daily News Summary of May 1 reported:

The DACHAU concentration camp, taken solely by the Third Battalion of the 157th Infantry Regiment of the 45th Division.

* * *

Photographs of 45th Division men in Munich were printed throughout the United States after Signal Corps photos were speedily transmitted to the waiting syndicates by radio.

A typical story about the division's big memorial services was written by Sigrid Schultz. It begins:

(Chicago Tribune Press Service) Munich, Germany, May 30 — In Munich's Koenigsplatz where Hitler and Mussolini sealed their alliance in 1937 with a giant schutzstaffel (elite guard) parade, units of the United States 45th Infantry Division held memorial services today.

It was an unpretentious, moving ceremony. Maj. Gen. Robert T. Frederick addressed the men with whom he fought in the front lines to defeat the Axis forces.

The colors of the 157th, 179th and 180th infantry regiments floated in the sunshine while 2,000 men stood on the parade grounds...

* * *

Before Munich, the 45th was receiving the attention of the press for its work at Nuremberg. From a story by Richard J. H. Johnston in the New York Times:

WITH THE UNITED STATES SEVENTH ARMY IN BAVARIA, April 16 — Swinging down from the northeast late today, troops of the Forty-fifth Infantry Division of the United States Seventh Army smashed into Nuremberg, the second largest city in Bavaria and the high shrine of the Nazi party.

There were no immediate reports of what type of opposition the Forty-fifth was encountering, but there were indications that the enemy was still resisting strongly in sections of the city. The men of the Thunderbird division, which is commanded by Maj. Gen. Robert T. Frederick, entered the city on a drive down the north bank of the Pegnitz River...

Before it entered Nuremberg, the Forty-fifth cut the super highway

* * *

On April 18, A. I. Goldberg of the Associated Press sent out the word that: The Nuremberg chief of police was reported captured late in the day by

elements of the 157th regiment of the 45th Division. The Thunderbirds have advanced far beyond the stadium area in the southeast portion of the city...

The 45th Division has a well-connected battle line and has joined up with the Third division, which is coming in from the northeast and north.

* * *

The United Press reported on the same day that:

From Arla on the southeast and from a group of factories just to its west, files of Forty-fifth Division doughboys were fighting forward despite bitter small arms fire.

* * *

Two days later the fighting was ended, and The Des Moines Register printed the following item:

Nuremberg, Germany — (AP) — Doughboys of the U.S. 45th (Thunderbird) Division raised American flags in Luitpold Stadium, where Adolf Hitler used to shriek his defiance to the world. Today is Hitler's birthday and public relations officers had planned the stunt then, but 45th Division doughboys hadn't learned about it so marched into the stadium with flags.

* * *

Perhaps even more dramatic than the battles for Nuremberg and Munich was the suicidal stand of the city of Aschaffenburg early in April. One of the earliest stories hinting what was to come appeared April 2, when the following story swept over America.

WITH THE U. S. SEVENTH ARMY — (AP) — The American Seventh Army ordered the fanatical German garrison of Aschaffenburg annihilated and the heavily fortified city wiped off the map today as Lt. Gen. Patch's troops lunged eastward into Bavaria.

The grim task ordered by the Allied command as an example to all Germans was assigned to the Thunderbird infantry of the 45th Division and the Thunderbolt pilots of the First Tactical Air Force. Already the town, in which teen-age girls are fighting alongside German troops, is a heap of smoking rubble.

* * *

Time magazine, too, turned its attention to the 45th's struggle of Aschaffenburg. Here are excerpts from that publication's account:

Some divisions of the Seventh found sore spots of their own. At Aschaffenburg, cleaning up behind a U.S. Third Army thrust, the 45th Infantry suffered heavy casualties in a week-long battle.

Aschaffenburg had a fanatical Nazi commander, Major von Lambert. In the streets he had hanged officers who sought to surrender. He had organized and armed old men, women & children. Young girls hurled grenades from roofs. Wounded soldiers from five military hospitals joined the battle. The major's garrison had to be rooted out of practice pillboxes and bunkers which had been set up in an officer-training camp.

The 45th fought in the searing heat of the burning buildings. Finally, U.S. airmen went to work in earnest, bombed Aschaffenburg until there was nothing left to bomb or shell. Then Major von Lambert did what he had killed others for suggesting: he came out with a white flag.

* * *

Many other stories were printed about the 45th during these last weeks of the war. The capture of Mrs. Fritz Kuhu, wife of the leader of the German-American Bund, was credited to the 45th in an Associated Press story. But the capture of the 45th most enjoyed making was of a more obscure figure. The Wilkes Barre, Pa., Times-Leader told that story.

Doughboys of the 179th Infantry Regiment had the last laugh today when two of their members captured a German full colonel, who was responsible for surrounding one of their battalions in Wingen a couple of months ago.

One of the two was Pfc. Joseph C. Simoncavage of 194 Tioga street,

while the other was Pfc. Henry D. Winter, New York City...

At the 45th Division Headquarters, the colonel said that if he had three days more, he would have crossed the Rhine and organized another regiment to stage a battle against us that would have made Wingen look like child's play.

"As silly as it may seem and as insane as it may sound," the colonel said, "I still insist that Germany will win the war."

* * *

The 45th's public relations office, while the correspondents were covering the major news breaks, was sending out reams of stories to the home town papers of division men, telling of their Silver Stars, the things they did, the way they lived, and how they felt.

* * *

There was a story about Pfc. Robert R. Woods of QM, who became a sailor during the Anzio beachhead stand, shipping back and forth constantly to bring up supplies by LST.

Another told how the French of the village of Dondieres, presented the keys of their "city" to Capt. William J. Leary, and renamed their village Learyville.

* * *

In closing, here is an editorial from The Daily Oklahoman, Oklahoma City, where 45th Division Headquarters were located in peacetime:

As was to be expected, the last battle bulletins from the German scene mentioned the 45th division among those present and fighting. The battle picture would have been incomplete if that fighting outfit had not been in at the finish.

Not since the first cap of the European invasion was popped have the men of the 45th missed very much of the important fighting. Barring the African campaign, that veteran division has been fighting ever since the American battle flags went up east of the Atlantic.

In the North Carolina room of the "White House of the Confederacy" in Richmond is a placard which describes the Tar Heel troops as "First at Bethel, farthest at Gettysburg and last at Appomattox." That description with the proper reservations will apply to the boys of the 45th who have fought from Sicilian beaches to the mouth of the Brenner pass. By right a great number of historical names are inscribed on the division's banners. The civilian soldiers who fashioned so much of this division in the trying years of the pre-war period have abundant reason to be proud of their handiwork.

Ex-45th Generals Have Three Stars

Two former 45th Division generals now have three stars after serving as corps commanders, it was learned this week.

Gen. Troy H. Middleton, former division commander, commanded the VIII corps, and now is back in the States. He has announced he will retire from the army and return to his home at Baton Rouge, La.

Gen. Raymond S. McLain, former Thunderbird artillery commander, commanded the 90th Division and the XIX Corps after leaving the division, and is now at home in Oklahoma City.

A former division commander, Maj. Gen. William S. Key, became the American member of the Hungarian armistice commission.

45th Division News

Fifth Year of Publication

Sgt. Don Robinson Editor.
Sgt. George Tapscott and Pvt. Carl Salter, Photographers.

Cpls. Fred Sheehan, Bill Barrett, and Pfc. Les Schmidt, Reporters.
Pfc. John Quirolo, Sports Editor.

A Chronological History of the 45th Division in Combat

Sicily, Italy, France, Germany;

A Long Hard Road to Victory

Sicily

July 10, 1943—45th lands in Sicily at 0425 under supporting naval fire, moves inland quickly to take Vittoria, Santa Croce Camerina, Dunna Fugata.

July 11—Comiso airport taken. 180th Inf. runs head on into Herman Goering Division.

July 18—Caltanissetta falls to 45th. Division continues dash through mountains to north.

July 22—180th patrols reach outskirts of Palermo, contact Third Division, head east.

July 29—"Battle of Bloody Ridge" begins; the division's toughest Sicilian fight and the first real test for the 157th Inf.

July 31—45th is relieved at San Stefano. Goes into rest near Trabia after 22 days of sustained combat.

Aug. 15—157th embarks for end run around Kraut positions. Wary enemy pulls back and 157th lands behind Third Division lines.

Italy

Sept. 9, 1943—Special task force of 50 men from 3rd Bn., 157th Inf., help clear Isle of Ventotene in Gulf of Naples.

Sept. 10—179th and 157th land at Salerno, meet planned and determined German resistance. First and 3rd Bns., 179th Inf., suffer from machine gun ambush in Persano area. Div. Arty. reports 1896 rounds fired.

Sept. 13—Thunderbird artillery fires 3,650 rounds, KO's many at attacking German tanks.

Sept. 14—180th arrives in transport area. 45th howitzers pour out 6,687 shells.

Sept. 15—Division artillery keeps savage Jerries at bay with 5,358 rounds. Reports of low German morale reach headquarters as howitzers continue barrage.

Sept. 17—Krauts finally begin withdrawal from Salerno Beachhead.

Sept. 18—45th infantry infiltrates to new outpost line just south of Highway 19.

Sept. 19—45th enters Persano, Eboli, Campagna without opposition.

Sept. 24—Despite excellent defensive terrain and an abundance of enemy automatic weapons coupled with deadly mortar and artillery fire, 45th cracks bitter German defense of Oliveto and Quaglietta area.

Sept. 27—45th Recon. reaches Calore River. Enemy continues extensive use of mines and demolitions.

Oct. 3—Heavy rains hamper movement and 120th Engrs. kept busy clearing streets of Benevento and constructing bridge over Calore River. Division units strafed for first time by German planes with American markings.

Oct. 21—Division comes off line after 40 continuous days of combat, the longest period to date that an American division has been kept in the line without relief.

Nov. 2—Second Bn., 180th Inf., patrols cross Volturno River, remains in position.

Nov. 3—Co. G, 179th Inf., crosses Volturno meets strong opposition, is forced to fall back. Co. F, 180th Inf., crosses, hold positions near Sesto Campagno.

Nov. 4—179th Inf. takes Venafro, continues to high ground beyond the town to northwest.

Nov. 6—Pozzilli entered by 179th Inf.

Nov. 12—157th takes Hill 640 against strong small arms and mortar fire.

Nov. 13—180th Inf. and 4th Ranger Bn. breaks up strong German attack.

Nov. 30—45th looks back on one of its toughest months to date. From Nov. 8 to end of month there were only three days in which it did not rain. Four bridges over Volturno were washed

out, motor pools and bivouac areas become marshes with mud holes varying in depth from four to 14 inches. Hitler's Winter Line slows forward movement and month was devoted to active patrolling and artillery duels which PW's claimed had brought 50 per cent casualties to their units.

Dec. 15—After weeks of inching ahead, 179th Inf. fights way into Lagone.

CHRISTMAS—Units make small advances limited by terrain, mines and demolitions. Division howitzers pour out 2,055 shells on enemy positions.

Dec. 31—Division looks back over its combat record for 1943: 106 days spent in line of a total of 113 days in active theater.

Jan. 9, 1944—Division relieved after 70 continuous days of combat since Nov. 1, 1943. Total to date is 110 days on line out of 121.

Anzio

Jan. 22, 1944—179th Inf. lands on Anzio Beachhead.

Jan. 29—Entire division is committed at Anzio.

Feb. 16-19—Germans launch furious four-day assault to split beachhead forces along Anzio-Albano road with "Factory Area" as focal point. Elements of seven German divisions thrown against 45th with Luftwaffe support at its peak. Enemy artillery support is heaviest of Italian campaign, but Krauts manage to gain only three kilometers and the attack which was to liquidate the beachhead by Feb. 18 develops into military blunder. Casualties heavy on both sides, but tenacity of 45th Division saves Anzio Beachhead.

March 1-31—Chief activity for month is patrolling and artillery duels. Enemy concentrates on rear areas and supply dumps while Kraut bombers unload their cargo on harbor installations, usually at night.

April 7—Night bombers start turning their attention to beachhead air strip, troop concentrations and supply dumps using AP and frag bombs.

April 16—Division is relieved and moved to "The Pines" for rest and training. Artillery, TD's and chemical mortar attachments remain on line. For division as a whole, 79 consecutive combat days on Anzio are behind.

May 1—Relief of Third Division is completed as 45th goes back on line.

May 6—Co. B, 179th Inf., attacked by Kraut company with tank, mortar and artillery support. Platoons from Co's. B and C regain lost ground.

May 17-22—Corps artillery shoots works on known enemy installations to soften them for coming attack.

May 23—Division units jump off at 6:30 a. m. against stiff defense. Progress is rapid and by nightfall all outfits have achieved objectives after 3rd Bn., 157th Inf., breaks up enemy counter-attack.

May 26—After repelling German thrusts, 180th and 157th attack against stiff machine gun, artillery and tank fire. Anzio forces join with main Fifth Army forces between Anzio and Terracina.

June 4—Division races to south bank of Tiber River, outflanks Rome. Patrols cross famous river over a blown bridge.

June 5—45th reaches last Italian objective.

July 1-31—Thunderbirds undergo intensive amphibious training in Salerno area.

France

Aug. 15, 1944—45th Division invades shores of Southern France at St. Maxime under ideal conditions. Units sweep aside slight resistance, race inland.

Aug. 23—Grenoble falls to units of 36th Division, then turned over to 45th.

Sept. 1—179th Inf. battles for Meximieux and defends the city against fanatical attacks. KO'ing eight German tanks and inflicting heavy casualties.

Sept. 4—Bourg is cleared of snipers and the 45th loses contact with the enemy. Paddleleaf received one of their biggest welcomes here.

Sept. 5—Lons Le Sonier, Ornans and Vercel occupied without a fight.

Sept. 12—Battle for Baume le Dame begins. Troops cross Doubs River southwest of the town.

Sept. 9—Baume falls to the 45th after the town is cut off.

Sept. 12—Pont Sur L'Oignon falls after a bitter battle.

Sept. 18—The division is relieved and assembled for a new attack west of Vesoul after 33 days of combat in France.

Sept. 22—179th and 157th cross Moselle near Epinal.

Sept. 23—180th cross Moselle against murderous opposition.

Sept. 24—Epinal cleared.

Sept. 30—Rambervillers falls to 1st Bn., 157th Inf.

Oct. 2—After an all-day fight employing close tank and artillery support, the 179th Inf. clears Grandvillers. To the left, the 180th Inf. captures Fremontaine.

Oct. 21—Enemy strongpoint at Brouvelours attacked and overrun.

Oct. 23—Division crosses Mortagne River and gets toehold on the enemy's positions in the Vosges Mountains.

Nov. 9—With 352 combat days to its credit, the 45th is relieved by the 100th Division and moved to the vicinity of Bains-les-Bains. Again the artillery units are left behind, this time to support the 44th Division in the Luneville sector.

Nov. 23—Division goes back into combat moving northeast into Alsace.

Alsace

Nov. 25, 1944—179th cracks German resistance before Mutzig, one of the heaviest defended anchors of the Maginot.

Nov. 26—Division sets up defensive positions to stem an expected German counterattack designed to retake Strasbourg.

Dec. 3—Zinswiller, Engwiller, Miesenheim, Uttenhoffen and Gumbrechtshoffen cleared as the 45th pushes deeper into Alsace.

Dec. 9—Niederbronn falls to 157th Inf. after tough battle.

Dec. 13—Thunderbirds observe 365th day of combat.

Dec. 14—15th advances through Maginot Line and clears Lembach and Wingen.

Dec. 15—Elements of the division enter Germany.

Dec. 18—Four platoons cut off in Bundenthal in crossing of Lauter River.

Dec. 21—Attacking the famed Westwall, the 45th chalks up its 12th pillbox.

Dec. 23—74 members of the cut off platoons rescued after being encircled six days.

Jan. 2, 1945—Division begins preparations to withdraw from inside Germany to the Maginot Line due to the reshuffling of positions on the Seventh Army front where many troops have left for the Ardennes sector.

Jan. 6—45th goes on the defensive for the first time since Anzio.

Jan. 16—Enemy opens attack against 3rd Bn., 157th Inf. To relieve pressure on the endangered units, a provisional company is formed from personnel from Regt. Hq. and AT Co's and sent into an attack.

Jan. 17—Infiltrating SS troops cut cut off 3rd Bn., 157th.

Jan. 20—Cut-off battalion of 157th Inf. fails in attempt to fight out of trap. Split into small groups, the men attempt infiltration but only two men return.

Feb. 17—Division is relieved by 42nd Division after 86 days of combat in Alsace and Germany and moved to area in vicinity of Epinal-Baccarat-Luneville.

Germany

March 12-13—45th assembles in area south of Saarguemines.

March 15—Division jumps off through 44th Division between Neunkirch and Rimling. 180th Inf. effects crossing of Blies River.

March 16—45th reaches Siegfried Line.

March 20—Siegfried Line crumbles before Thunderbird assault. 179th smashes through to division objective—Homburg.

March 26—45th infantry crosses Rhine River between Worms and Hamm.

March 28—With three regiments abreast, four battalions cross Main River two kilometers south of Aschaffenburg. 157th and 179th fight savage resistance to their eight kilometer beachhead.

March 29—Bitter battle for Aschaffenburg begins with German civilians fighting our infantrymen.

March 31—45th looks back on one of its most spectacular months. Since the attack began on March 15, the division has traveled a straight-line distance of 181 kilometers over a route that involved the crossing of three major rivers. The Thunderbirds smashed through the Siegfried, captured 9,199 Germans, killed or wounded 3,380 more, and captured 3,258 square kilometers in a half month of combat.

April 2—179th and 180th take off, leaving 157th Inf. to mop up the fanatics defending Aschaffenburg.

April 3—Encircled by 157th Inf., Aschaffenburg surrenders to end the division's toughest fight inside Germany. The division killed about 1500 Krauts here, captured more than 3,000.

April 9—179th captures Gen. Maj. Franz, commanding general of a German infantry division that had opposed us in Alsace.

April 14—180th finishes mopping up Bamberg, an important industrial Bavarian city which looked for awhile like a second Aschaffenburg.

April 16—Battle for Nuremberg begins as 45th encircles the city.

April 17—Assault on Nuremberg begins with three regiments attacking abreast. PW count for the day is 4,869, a new division record high.

April 20—Nuremberg falls as "old city" defenses crumble.

April 27—45th Division crosses Danube. Thunderbird artillery fires its one-millionth shell since combat began on July 10, 1943.

April 29—Most vicious example of a war crime ever encountered by the 45th—Dachau prison camp—is freed by the 157th Inf.

April 30—Munich falls with surprisingly little resistance after 180th Inf. crushes the fanatic defense of SS defenders in its sector. The division today observed its 511th day of combat out of 691 days overseas.

May 1—45th begins garrisoning Munich.

May 9—ETO war ends.

Maj. Gen. Robert T. Frederick Sends Note to Old, New Men

TO THE HIGH POINT MEN OF THE 45TH DIVISION

It is difficult to leave an organization after living and working in it as long as you have. It is even more difficult for those of us who remain to express our emotions at your leaving.

Through your efforts and by your unselfish devotion to duty as members of the 45th Division, you have brought this division to the glorious culmination of the first stage of its mission—V-E Day. Now, it is the mission of this great battle-wise division to carry on in the war against the Japs. Your individual contribution has been recognized by our government and now you will be relieved of further combat duty.

The friendship, the loyalties and the deep sympathy which combat soldiers feel toward each other will not die with your departure. The 45th Division will always be the richer for having had you among its gallant men. I know I speak for every member of this command when I wish you good luck and extend to you a sincere salute from your division.

ROBERT T. FREDERICK
Major General, U.S. Army
Commanding

A SALUTE TO VETERAN SOLDIERS JOINING A VETERAN UNIT

WELCOME TO THE 45TH!

You have just been transferred from your old outfit to the 45th Infantry Division. Your old unit was a good one. Its successful accomplishment in combat made a material contribution to our joint objective, the complete destruction of the German Army.

It is not easy to leave a good unit. It is hard to leave behind you the men and officers whom you have come to know, who have been your comrades in combat.

You are a veteran soldier from a veteran division. As such, the 45th Division welcomes you. Ours is a record of which we are proud too. In Sicily, at Salerno, during the bitter Winter Line Campaign in Italy, at Anzio and the breakthrough to Rome, during the invasion of Southern France, in the Vosges and deep into Germany, men of the 45th Division built their splendid traditions. The Thunderbird insignia has become the proud symbol of a crack fighting division. As wearer of that insignia, we welcome you. Together we shall carry on and enhance the traditions of our unit and our Nation. We begin today to weld those strong friendship which will carry us with swiftness and certainty to complete victory over our remaining enemy—Japan.

ROBERT T. FREDERICK
Major General, U.S. Army

Sicily Felt 45th's Might 2 Years Ago

(Continued from Page 1)

live longest in the Thunderbirds' memories of combat. Such names as Fremifontaine, Bourg and Rambervillers in France. Such names as Venafro in Italy. These are places of which the world has seldom heard, but Thunderbirds always will remember them.

Men who fought the battles sometimes fail to realize what they have accomplished. The 45th's victories in Sicily, which cleared out the hornet's nests of Biscari and Comiso airfields, opened the Mediterranean to Allied shipping.

Few people realize that the battle of Sicily was as much a part of the Pacific war as of the European. Once the Mediterranean was opened, ships sailed this shorter route through Suez with supplies from America and Britain for troops fighting the Japanese.

Nor is the full extent of the conquest of the island on the European war fully realized. Supplies for Russia's great eastern front sailed through the Mediterranean after the Sicilian bases of the Axis were destroyed. Help came, too, for Jugoslavia, and even the Greek partisans.

It was just a little island, but it meant a great deal in a big war.

Help for the Russians

Again, the value of the Italian campaign has been computed at far above the land gained. The important thing was to engage German troops—as many of them as possible. German troops fighting in Italy couldn't help to stem the Russian advances. German troops trying to keep closed the backdoor to the fatherland, the Brenner Pass, couldn't keep an appointment in Normandy to meet the D-Day convoys of General Eisenhower.

The campaigns of Sicily and Italy also brought Italy away from the Axis, and even brought some Italian troops into the line to fight against the Germans.

The 45th's part in the campaign in France meant liberation for Frenchmen over thousands of square miles, who had been under the domination of Germany and the Vichy puppet government since early in the war. The gratitude of the French people was demonstrated in hysterical celebrations and a kind of country-wide open house. These people will never forget the yellow and red patch of the Thunderbirds.

The campaign in Germany meant the extermination of Nazism on its own home grounds. A fearful lesson was taught the herrenvolk when the 45th pounded to pieces the city of Aschaffenburg. The hateful doctrine of the master race was dealt a death blow when Thunderbirds paraded the American flag in the shrine city of Nuremberg and set up command posts in the famous Munich beer hall, Hitler's Munich apartment, and the Hitler House where the pact of Munich was signed.

Five Earned Medal of Honor

Every member of the 45th Division had a part in these historical events. Every man contributed to the eventual unconditional surrender of Germany, and the coming of peace in this part of the world.

In doing these jobs, five soldiers earned the highest honor the United States confers upon members of its armed forces, the Congressional Medal of Honor.

A table of other decorations awarded individuals of the 45th follows:

Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Service Cross	2
Distinguished Service Cross	75
Distinguished Service Medal	2
Oak Leaf Cluster to the Legion of Merit	2
Legion of Merit	79
Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star	51
Silver Star Medal	1,110
Distinguished Flying Cross	2
Soldier's Medal	35
Oak Leaf Cluster to the Bronze Star	111
Bronze Star Medal	2,836
Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal	58
Air Medal	34
Total	5,402

Five 45th Soldiers Won Highest Honor

In less than two years of combat, five men of the 45th have received the highest award of the nation, the Congressional Medal of Honor, for their gallantry on the battle fields of Europe.

These men are:

- Second Lt. Ernest Childers, Broken Arrow, Okla., 180th Inf.
- Pfc. William Johnston, Colchester, Conn., 180th Inf.
- Cpl. James D. Slaton, Gulfport, Miss., 157th Inf.
- First Lt. Jack Montgomery, Salisaw, Okla., 180th Inf.
- Second Lt. Van T. Barfoot, Carthage, Miss., 157th Inf.

For wiping out three machine gun nests and clearing the way for his squad in the tough fight for Olivetto, Italy, Childers became the first Thunderbird to win the Medal of Honor.

The lieutenant was suffering from a broken instep at the time, but he crawled out over open terrain, flanked two Jerry nests, wiped them out, then tossed a rock into the third. The Krauts thought the stone was a grenade, stood up and died. He wiped out several snipers and captured a mortar observer and cleared the way to the top of the ridge for his squad.

Johnston, "the man who came back from the dead," earned his award for his bravery in the German attack on Anzio.

It was Johnston who, with his machine gun, turned back the first wave of Kraut attackers. They had advanced to within grenade-throwing distance before the withering hail of lead from Co. G, 157th Inf., forced them back.

Johnston stayed at his gun without relief through the night and had a busy morning. He killed one German with a pistol, another with his M-1 when they crept in under his machine gun.

He stayed at his weapon to cover the two withdrawals of his platoon, and at the second position he was hit in the chest. He was left dying at his gun, but after the platoon had left the position they heard him open fire on the advancing Krauts.

Next day Johnston, despite his painful wounds, worked his way back to American lines. His first gasping words were of enemy positions he had observed on his way back.

Slaton received the Medal of Honor because of his bravery in wiping out three German machine gun nests and accounting for six Germans using bayonet, grenade and rifle.

While two platoons of his company remained pinned under heavy enemy fire, Slaton crept up on one German MG position and charged it with his bayonet. He killed one German with the bayonet, and when the blade stuck, he detached it from his rifle and killed the other Kraut with his M-1.

Another machine gun opened up on Slaton now, but he advanced over open ground until he was within grenade distance. His second toss killed both Krauts and eliminated their weapon. Then, at a distance of 100 yards, Slaton picked off the two Jerries manning the third gun holding up the advance.

For this action Slaton also received the Military Medal of the British Empire, and the Soviet government honored him with a high award.

* * *

The German attack on Anzio forces also set the scene for the action that netted Montgomery his award.

When the Krauts set up strong positions in three echelons in front of his platoon, Montgomery crawled up a ditch to within 25 yards of the first group consisting of ten men, four machine guns and a 50 mm. mortar. With an M-1 and several grenades, he killed eight and took the others prisoner.

Back at his platoon Montgomery called for artillery fire on a house around which the enemy was entrenched. While the barrage rained down on the Jerries Montgomery braved withering fire to attack the second Kraut position and eliminate both machine guns and capture seven enemy.

Then, after the American barrage on the house lifted, he charged through sniper fire on this third emplacement and rounded up 32 PW's. Later, when he volunteered to bring up ammo, he was wounded and evacuated.

* * *

Barfoot is the most recent winner of the high award, which he earned for his part in the Anzio jump-off.

An estimated 60 German riflemen supported by three heavy MG's stopped his platoon cold that morning of May 23, 1944. Armed with a Tommy gun and grenades he crawled to within 25 yards of the first machine gun and with his first toss he killed two Krauts, wounded three and left the weapon knocked out.

He stormed the second MG and with his Tommy gun killed two more and wounded three. Moving through a draw on his way to the third gun he fired his weapon into German dugouts forcing the surrender of 15 Krauts, including one officer. The gunners of the third MG promptly surrendered.

Around 3 p. m. that day his company was attacked by German tanks. Barfoot armed himself with a bazooka, crawled to within 75 yards of one of the attacking tanks, immobilized it with one round and set it up for the artillery which promptly destroyed it. He then destroyed a German AT gun and 75 rounds of ammo and later carried a wounded non com 600 yards to safety.

Presidential unit citations were awarded to: 2nd Bn., 157th Inf.; Co. I, 157th Inf.; Co. K, 180th Inf., and Co. G, 180th Inf.	France	16,350
	Germany	72,716

A table of casualties:		Killed	Wounded	Missing
SICILY				
Officers	15	35	5	
Men	278	682	162	
ITALY				
Officers	102	329	79	
Men	1706	5731	1848	
FRANCE				
Officers	66	263	71	
Men	1112	5006	800	
GERMANY				
Officers	30	113	1	
Men	332	1570	71	
Totals	3650	13,729	3615	

A table of PW's captured:	
Sicily	11,266
Italy	3,035



Barfoot

157th Lost Battalion Wrote Heroic Chapter In Division's Story

One of the bravest chapters in the history of the 45th was written last winter in the French province of Alsace when a battalion of Thunderbird infantrymen was lost - - the 3rd battalion of the 157th Inf.

A series of frontal attacks coupled with infiltrating tactics gained for the Germans positions to the rear of the battalion's rifle companies, and, by January 17, the Krauts had already set up emplacements covering the one route of withdrawal, — a strategic draw.

Co. I was virtually cut off from the rest of the regiment. Second Lt. Willis Talkington, Craig, Colo., Bn. Hq., undertook the tough job of fighting through to the surrounded company.

In a light tank he battered his way through to the men with the desperately needed supplies - - food, ammo, radio batteries, stretchers for the wounded.

Talkington spent the night with the men. Then, as dawn came over the snow-covered plains on the morning of January 18, he boarded the tank with his crew and attempted to fight his way out again. But this time luck was against him.

Tank Hit Twice

The tank was hit twice by bazooka fire, the lieutenant received facial wounds, and the driver was killed. He realized the one chance of the tank's occupants was a dash for safety. He told the men to make a run for it, but they declined.

The lieutenant got through the hail of fire to safety. Nothing further has ever been heard from the tankers.

The situation became worse January 18. All attempts to supply the companies failed, but radio contact still was maintained.

The regiment organized a provisional company of Co's B, F, Hq., and Anti-Tank and together with Co. G, 179th Inf., the men attacked in an attempt to relieve pressure on the besieged riflemen. The attack failed.

The really heavy shelling began on the morning of January 19. The enemy rained in artillery and mortars in prolonged concentrations, and one count put the number of projectiles at 2,000.

Another Rescue Attempt

Again attempts were made to rescue the battalion. Co's G of the 179th and B of the 157th attacked again. They were pinned down shortly after they left their holes and driven back. A plan to supply the trapped companies by plane was abandoned because of the very poor flying weather - sleet, rain, snow and wind.

January 20, another attempt was made to reach the men, this time by Lt. Col. Felix Sparks, CO of the 3rd battalion.

He boarded a medium tank and set out. On the way up he spotted wounded infantrymen huddling in a ditch. Despite the murderous fire he left the tank and helped the men to climb aboard. But meanwhile a barrage came down around the tank and one near-miss partly disabled the vehicle's gun.

Withdrawal Only Chance

There was no choice now except withdrawal, but before they pulled back the tankers and the colonel fired all their ammo at the near-by Germans — an estimated 5,000 rounds of 30 caliber and a great number of 76 mm. shells.

That evening the companies were told by radio to attack for the rear and try to fight their way back. At 4:30 a tragic reply came from the CP of Co. K: "Impossible."

Shortly before six that evening two men from Co. I reported in at the battalion CP with the only available eyewitness report.

Pfc. Benjamin Meltin, Wilson, N.C., told his story:

"The wounded were placed in holes with the guys who weren't hit. That way they managed to keep a little warmer, and they received proper treatment. They were bleeding badly, most of them. We made tourniquets of belts

which had to be loosened every 30 minutes.

"There was no medicine, no food, no heat to melt the snow for water. Someone found a box of K's, and we gave them all to the wounded. At 1530 we received an order to attack to the rear. Ammo was scarce but we were determined to make a break.

"The German artillery which was already zeroed in blew men to bits. I was lucky. I wasn't hit a though I was knocked to the ground several times by concussion.

End of the Fight

"We returned to our holes. Then I remembered reading of the machine gunning of American PW's in Malmedy, and I was damned if I was going to sit there and let them shoot me in cold blood!

"The order came down to lay down our arms. Those who could stuck white handkerchiefs to their guns and stuck them into the snow, muzzle down. The tanks with us tied white streamers to their guns.

"Together with Pvt. Walter Bruce and another guy, I took off. The third man was killed, but Bruce and I kept going. We kept about half way up the slope, away from paths and trails. For awhile we followed shoe pack tracks, and finally we spotted a covered dugout.

"A GI stuck his head out — don't you know I was happy!

"The barrages up there were the worst we'd ever seen. At least 75 percent of the men were wounded and some had two or three wounds."

Shortly thereafter the 157th Inf retired from the field leaving behind the brave men of the 3rd Bn. rifle companies, elements of Co. M and all of Co's C and G.

One Invasion 45th Managed Was a Flop!

Very little has been printed about one of the strangest campaigns in which any element of the 45th Division ever participated - - the taking of the Island of Ventetone in the Gulf of Naples before the 45th had even set foot upon the Italian mainland.

It started about 3:30 in the afternoon on September 9, 1943. Orders reached the troop ship carrying the 3rd Bn., 157th Inf., that a task force of 50 men was to be created to carry out a special mission. Shortly thereafter the special force was taken to the destroyer, USS Knight.

It consisted of a squad of riflemen, a squad of 81 mm mortars, a squad of heavy machine guns, a squad of chemical mortars and a detail of aid men.

At three minutes past 9 p. m. as darkness deepened over the blue waters of the Bay of Naples, the task force was put ashore on the Island of Ventetone to eliminate a Nazi garrison there.

The men found their job already done for them. A raiding party from the 82nd Airborne Division had already landed and taken the Germans prisoner. The PW's were loaded aboard the Knight together with the Thunderbirds and Ventetone was in American hands with troops of the 82nd garrisoning the island.

No, no one got a battle star for that one.