

Mortain Battle Earns Praise For 30th Div.

Once 'Training Outfit,' It Halted Major Counter-Drive

By Paul V. Connors
Stars and Stripes Staff Writer.

A year ago this month the 30th Infantry Division was going about the rather boring business of maneuvers in Tennessee wondering if it would ever get the chance to wear combat ribbons. The "sharps" said the division would never go overseas, that it was a training unit preparing men who would serve as replacements for other organizations. The "sharps" were wrong.

Last week the 30th Division received a special commendation given by Maj. Gen. Lawton J. Collins, Seventh Corps commander. The award was given for the magnificent job the 30th had done in holding off the last major attack of the German Seventh Army in the vicinity of Mortain early last month. Addressed to the Division's commanding general, it read, in part:—

"Your division, with the aid of the Third Armored Division and an infantry regiment of the Fourth Division, bore the brunt of the desperate attack of the German Seventh Army. With the assistance of the artillery of the Fourth Division and the Third Armored, the 30th Infantry Division checked this penetration and then destroyed the German force which made the advance."

120th Cited Specially

Gen. Collins paid special tribute to "the tenacity of the Second Battalion of the 120th Infantry which, when isolated on a hill east of Mortain, held out for five consecutive days against determined efforts of the Germans to annihilate it."

For five rugged days the "Old Hickory" Division slugged it out with the best of the Wehrmacht, five infantry-armor divisions, including the SS Adolf Hitler Panzers. The Germans were shooting for Avranches and the sea, attempting to split the American armies in Normandy and Brittany. They didn't quite make it.

The 30th didn't just "happen" to be holding the sector from Le Mesnil Tove through St. Barthelmy to Mortain when the Germans threw their last desperate punch before turning to run.

Lt. Gen. Omar Bradley, commanding the 12th Army group, had selected the division to hold the major part of the bottom of the "pocket," releasing other units to work the side of the bag in which thousands of Heinies were finally trapped.

Attack Came Quickly

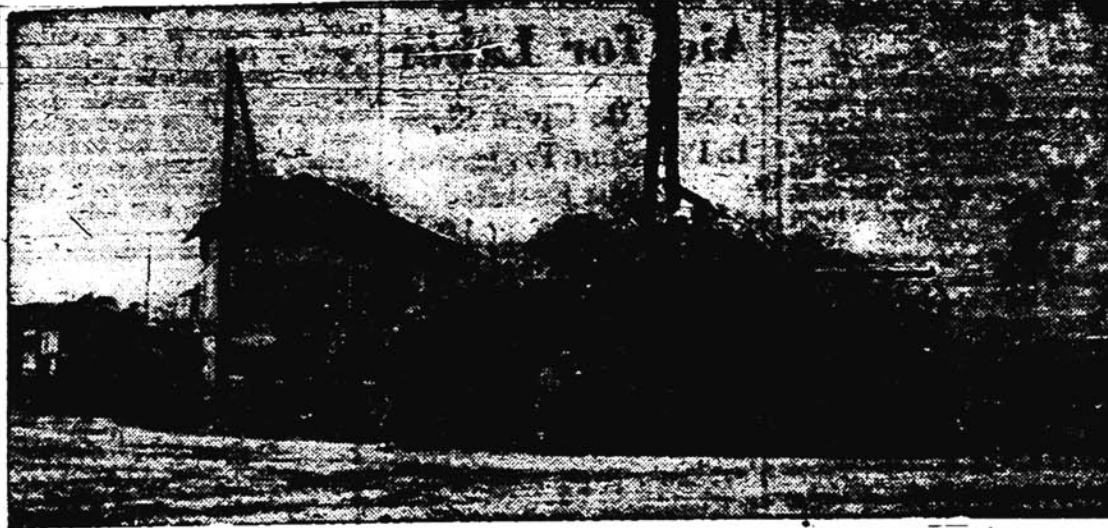
The Germans attacked shortly after the 30th took up its position. Taking advantage of good road networks, the enemy struck furiously in several sectors. The fury of the attack stunned the Yanks.

A battalion was overrun in the St. Barthelmy sector; the second battalion of the 120th was isolated, "lost" on a hill overlooking Mortain. An artillery battalion used direct fire, so close were German tanks. In several instances, engineers, artillerymen and cavalrymen fought as infantrymen. The bayonet was an overworked weapon—it was that kind of scrap.

The bazooka played the most prominent of roles, knocking out numbers of tanks, stalling others which were then duck soup for rocket firing Typhoons of the RAP which flew to support the foot troops on the afternoon of the first day of fighting.

And so it went with the fighting division which a year ago wondered if it ever would see combat. After three days of wild mixing the Germans were beaten off in most sectors, the supply line between the peninsula remained intact. It took five days to rescue the heroic "lost battalion." Though its casualties were high, the 30th Division had completed its assigned mission in a superb manner

Infantrymen and Tank Team Up



Yank heavy tank and infantrymen join forces to fire at Germans on the opposite side of the Marne River at Eschecourt in a battle for a bridge. Nazis succeeded in blowing up the bridge before they retreated.

Oft-Bombed Renault Works Bare Effects of U.S. Air Blows

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the target, and another attack on Sept. 15 had crippled the works again.

But only yesterday could Eighth officials get a real picture of their operations.

Jean Renault, youthful son of Renault's founder, and Marcel Guillemon, one of the managers, collaborated in the story of the raids.

RAF Damage Detailed

In the RAF raid in March, 1942, about 10 percent of the buildings were completely destroyed, 500 machines irreparably damaged, another 1,000 badly damaged. The management debated whether to rebuild, Renault said. To avoid having their 12,000 or more workers transported to Germany, they decided to repair the damage. "We took our time, worked very slowly and used many pretexts not to keep up the quotas set by the Germans," Guillemon explained.

When the first Eighth raiders came on April 4, 1943, Guillemon said, it was a Sunday and many people were in the streets and at a near-by race track. Because the Germans alone gave the alarm—and usually too late to permit Renault workers to rush to a vast underground shelter—the alert was not sounded until 2:15 p.m. The

Nazis Stiffen At the Border

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in the path of the advance. Two bridges spanning the Moselle at Pompey Custines, about five miles north of Nancy, were blasted.

American troops were reported to be fighting in the capital of Luxembourg after crossing the border at two points. However, 12th Army Group headquarters did not identify the points at which the crossings were made or resistance was met.

Along the Channel coast, Canadian First Army and Polish troops continued to mop up remaining enemy pockets of resistance. Canadian infantrymen entered Wisissant between Calais and Boulogne, while at Le Havre 50 Germans surrendered after a broadcast by British loudspeakers. They reported their comrades were anxious to give up but were afraid to run the risk of anti-personnel mines between them and the British.

House to house fighting reported in the outskirts of Brest, and the German communiqué yesterday stated that the town of Le Conquet at the tip of the Brest peninsula had been captured by American troops.

British Second Army headquarters announced that another German general had been killed on the Western Front. He was Maj. Gen. Heinriche, commander of the 89th German Infantry Division, who met his death trying to rush a road block north of Liege. It also was announced that the British Army had taken 52,162 prisoners since D-Day, including 8,000 captured in the 48 hours before 6PM Sunday.

first bomb dropped at 2:16. In four minutes the raid was over.

The Renault statistics of that raid were that only 20 percent of the plant was left undamaged. About 60 percent was damaged about half. It took three months to restore the plant.

On Sept. 3, 1943, 37 planes dropped 40 tons on Gaudron, an aircraft-building subsidiary of Renault. But the raid was but partially successful. On Sept. 15, 40 planes returned to knock the whole works out of action for a month Renault described the attack as "a good concentration of bombs. The plant burned for three days. Bombs also fell on the main plant on a perilous point."

After the Sept. 15 raid, the Germans moved part of the assembly plant to Belfort, 300 miles east. "Imagine the joke," said Guillemon. "We wanted to do everything in our power to slow up production, and the Germans agreed to move to a place where transportation facilities were very poor and where it would slow up for days the completion of the planes." Bombardment of railways made transportation to Belfort impossible and production there was stopped in April of this year.

The production graph on trucks illustrates the effect of the bombings. Before the war, Renault made 120 trucks and 300 passenger cars a day. When the RAF hit it in March, 1943, they produced 51 trucks a day. Exportation of many workers to Germany and the slowing-down process had resulted in a reduction to 40 trucks when the Eighth struck in April, 1943. When production resumed three months later, 30 trucks were produced.

The figure finally went down to five a day in March, 1944, when raids on the differential and axle plant at Le Mans were executed. Attacks on coal supplies cut it down to four trucks a day in May, and since July 1, nothing has been manufactured in the plant.

Visual evidence of the bomb damage is slight because of Renault's amazing capacity to rebuild. A part of Candron was left in its demolished state, and one building which had been leveled was not rebuilt. The production figures and the testimony of Renault and Guillemon tell the story graphically enough.

Slain Hero of Italian Battle Named for Highest Award

WASHINGTON, Sept. 10.—Capt. Arlo L. Olson, an infantry officer who for 13 days led his company through the Italian mountains fighting all the way, has been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor posthumously, the War Department announced Saturday.

The nation's highest award—fourth to be presented servicemen posthumously—will be given to the captain's widow, Mrs. Myra Olson, of Baton Rouge, La., in ceremonies at Camp Van Dorn, Miss.

Olson, who in the 13 days killed 18 of the enemy himself, started the trek with the night crossing of the

WACs' Gams Out for Airing

Those in Paris Take Off Leggings and Look Like Women Again

By Selma Chapman
Stars and Stripes Staff Writer.

WITH THE WACS, Paris, Sept. 10.—The WACs in Paris took off their leggings yesterday and donned Class A uniforms again—except for the hat. The WACs, like the soldiers, will wear helmets.

Walking down the street in field clothes among smartly-clad Parisians made a WAC feel like discovering at a party that the seam of her gown was ripped. So in record time the WACs found beauty shops and had "the works"—permanent waves, haircuts and facials.

A facial is hardly needed for a gal under 30, but two months of living in the field makes her feel like undergoing a major operation to get back to looking normal again.

Perfume shops have been haunted by any WAC who had time off. When the first group of WACs came to France, Cpl. Lee T. Marcoux, of Fall River, Mass., was one of the most popular girls in her company. She possessed a bottle of "Blue Grass" perfume. Now, in Paris, the WACs are laying away stores of exotically-named perfumes like "Shocking," "Amour, Amour," "Lul," "Indiscrete" and "L'Heure Bleue."

Collapse of Reich Seen Coming Piece by Piece

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surprised to see the collapse of Germany within its own borders get fully underway while the President and Prime Minister are in session at a place and time yet to be disclosed.

But in the absence of Premier Stalin, arrangements for European affairs can be laid out only tentatively. A final decision is expected, however, on the role of British forces in the closing stages of the war against Japan.

Under the circumstances, it seems likely that the British will have the assignment of reconquering Singapore and the Dutch Indies area.

House Control Anticipated by Both Parties

Martin Looks for GOP To Pick Up at Least 25 More Seats

WASHINGTON, Sept. 10.—Keeping the political pot boiling Sen. Claude Pepper (D-Fla.) last week said that the "future peace and prosperity" of America depended on the re-election of President Roosevelt, while House GOP leader Joseph Martin predicted that the Dewey-Bricker slate would triumph and the Republican party would win control of the House.

Martin said the Republicans would pick up a minimum of 25 seats in November, but House Democratic leader John W. McCormack, of Massachusetts, said the Republican Party was "whistling past the graveyard." "The House will remain safely Democratic after November," McCormack added.

The Senate also will remain Democratic, according to Sen. Joseph C. O'Mahoney, of Wyoming, chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Elections Committee. He pointed out that the Democrats needed to win only 14 of the 35 seats at stake and that seven of the 35 were in the solid South.

Republican congressional leaders predicted that Dewey would win the active support of GOP legislators who shunned Wendell Willkie in 1940.

Whereas Willkie made little or no effort to woo such legislators, Dewey has consulted with several state delegations and with Rep. Charles Halleck, of Indiana, chairman of the House Republican Elections Committee.

Halleck, who placed Willkie's name in nomination in 1940, but who later cooled toward his fellow Hoosier, said Dewey and his aides had a complete grasp of the problems facing GOP legislators up for re-election. He added that he and his colleagues were satisfied with the Dewey campaign strategy.

Radio Facilities Set

WASHINGTON, Sept. 10.—Each of the five political parties eligible to use Army shortwave radio facilities for rebroadcast of political speeches to troops overseas will be allotted two 30-minute and two 15-minute periods.

The Democrats will start the series Sept. 18, and the rotation arrangement will continue until Nov. 3. Each party may select the speeches it wants rebroadcast from transcriptions, but failure to meet Army deadlines will result in cancellation of time, it was announced.

Under the Selective Service law which provides equal shortwave time for all parties having a Presidential slate in six or more states, the following parties will broadcast: Democratic, Republican, Prohibitionist, Socialist and Socialist-Labor.

Planes Batter Reich, Havre

While RAF bombers mounted attacks on the Nazi garrison and fortified positions at beleaguered Le Havre, a force of possibly 1,000 American heavies, striking from Britain and Italy, yesterday raked aircraft plants, tank and truck factories and oil refineries in the Reich.

From Britain alone, more than 1,100 escorted Eighth Air Force Fortresses and Liberators flew to southern Germany, fanning out over a wide area to hit targets in the Stuttgart, Nuremberg and Ulm regions, while up to 500 15th Air Force heavies pounded oil refineries seven miles southwest of Vienna.

Saturday, despite bad weather, fighter-bombers of the Ninth Air Force's Ninth and 19th Tactical Air Commands bombed the German fortress at Brest. In the 15 days from Aug. 25 to Sept. 8, P-47s and P-51s of the 19th Tactical alone flew more than 2,200 sorties against the vital Brittany port, dropping more than 800 tons of high explosives and hundreds of rocket explosives.