the 4th ARMORED

from the beach to Bastogne-

THIS story is necessarily incomplete and covers only the highlights of the operations of the Fourth Armored Division to date. But even this short account cannot help but be a source of great pride to all members of the division. It goes without saying that I am proud to command such a division, although I am a comparatively new member, having assumed command on Dec. 3, 1944. We will always remember those officers and men no longer with us whose sacrifices contributed so much to the great achievements of this division. It is thought only fitting that this volume be dedicated to them. With the memories of these past deeds to inspire us, let us maintain our high standards and will to win. Let us push on until the final victory is won.

Hugh J. Gaffey

Major General, Commanding

Name .....

Date Enlisted .....

Assigned to 4th .....

Battle Actions .....

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Citations .....

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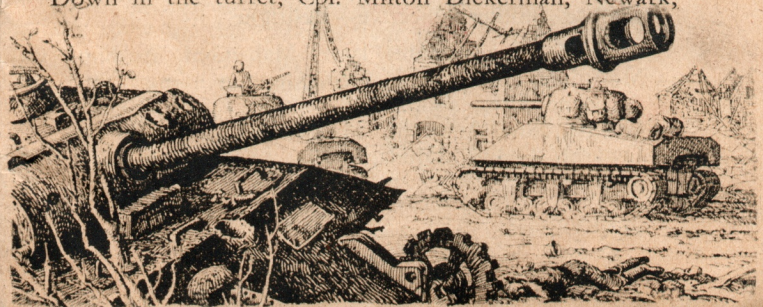
THE STORY OF THE 4th Armored DIVISION

THE outstanding celerity of your movement and the unremitting, vicious and skillful manner in which you pushed the attack, terminating at the end of four days and nights of incessant battle in the relief of Bastogne, constitute one of the finest chapters in the glorious history of the United States Army. You and the officers and men of your command are hereby commended for a superior performance.

—LT. GEN. GEORGE S. PATTON, JR., COMMANDER, THIRD U. S. ARMY, IN A LETTER TO MAJ. GEN. HUGH J. GAFFEY.

FOUR medium tanks roared up the tree-lined roadway. Machine guns sprayed the snow-crusted evergreens. Dark enemy forms ran and fell as red tracers played among them.

A concrete blockhouse ringed by pines loomed ahead of the onrushing tanks. First Lt. Charles Boggess, Jr., Greenville, Ill., commander of the lead tank, spotted the emplacement from the open hatch of his Sherman. Down in the turret, Cpl. Milton Dickerman, Newark,



N. J., traversed the sights of his 75 on the blockhouse, kicked the trigger. The tank bounced from the recoil as the shell crashed into the concrete.

The breech of the 75 slammed shut as Pvt. James G. Murphy, Bryan, Tex., the loader, slapped in another round. Pvt. Hubert Smith, Cartersville, Ga., driver of the tank *Cobra King*, tromped on the throttle, squinted through his dirt-splattered periscope as the medium rolled up to the smoking blockhouse. Bow Gunner Pvt. Harold Hafner, Arlington, Wash., kept the hot barrel of his machine gun trained on the woods.

In the open fields beyond the pines, Lt. Boggess saw red, yellow and blue supply parachutes sprinkle the snow like confetti. He halted his clattering mediums.

"Come here, come on out!" he shouted to khaki-clad figures in foxholes. "This is the 4th Armored!"

No answer. Helmeted heads peered suspiciously over carbine sights. The tanker bellowed again. A lone figure emerged.

"I'm Lt. Webster of the 326th Engineers, 101st Airborne," the paratrooper said. "Glad to see you."

At 1645, Dec. 26, 1944, the 4th Armd. Div. had reached another objective—Bastogne.

Twenty-five minutes later, Maj. Gen. Anthony G. McAuliffe (then Brig. Gen.), commanding the 101st Airborne Div., shook hands with Lt. Col. Creighton W. Abrams, Agawam, Mass., and Capt. William A. Dwight, Grand Rapids, Mich., to celebrate the relief of Bastogne.

Col. Abrams, 37th Tank Bn. commander, and Capt. Dwight of his staff were close behind Lt. Boggess in the tank rush that pierced the last German defenses south of the beleaguered town.

Tanks of the 37th, along with the 53rd Armd. Inf. Bn., were the point of the 4th's spearhead into Bastogne. Behind them rolled ambulances and supply trucks for 101st paratroopers and tankers of the 9th and 10th Armd. Divs. holding the town.

THE relief of Bastogne added another battle to the brilliant campaign record of 4th Armd. In six months of fighting, the division had spearheaded virtually every Third Army offensive. Territory wrested from the Wehrmacht stretched from Normandy's hedgerows to the Reich border at the Sarre.

Fourth Armd. swept south in the Normandy breakthrough, cut off the Brittany peninsula, wheeled east across the heart of France over the Moselle into Lorraine, fought across the Sarre and struggled north in mud through the Maginot line to the German border.

It then made a 120-mile "fire call" run to smash back von Rundstedt's divisions in the Ardennes.

The last stretch to Bastogne was tough, covering the hardest 16 miles the division ever made. From Dec. 22, 1944, until Jan. 9, 1945, the 4th battled elements of nine German divisions and two brigades.

Four days after the division started for Bastogne, its tanks were in the city. Behind hard-fighting tankers lay the wreckage of the 5th German Para Div. Deter-

mined Nazi paratroopers who rode the breakthrough panzers into Luxembourg and Belgium were to hold the south flank of the German wedge below Bastogne.

They were in the path of the 4th Armd. Most of the Para division was demolished. More than 2000 were killed or wounded, another 2000 captured.

THE PATH TO *Bloody* BASTOGNE

THE drive to encircled Bastogne began in a feathery snowfall at 0600, Dec. 22. Fourth Armd. tanks and half-tracks that had raced from French Lorraine to Arlon, Belgium, moved out in darkness.

With the 4th rode the attack of Third Army. III Corps was the first Third Army Corps to tear into the German flank from the south. In the van of the Corps was the 4th, on its right the 26th and 80th Inf. Divs.

The clatter of their tracks muffled in the deepening snow, Combat Commands A and B drove north astride the road from Arlon to Bastogne. Brig. Gen. Holmes E. Dager's CC B pushed 10 miles to Burnon by midnight.

On the right, CC A, commanded by Brig. Gen. Herbert Earnest, whipped four miles to Martelange.

CC A jumped off from Heinstert, CC B from Habay-la-Vieille. These little villages are difficult to find on a map, but the 4th will remember them and others—all the towns, hills and woods on the road to Bastogne.

Somewhere ahead on that road the enemy waited in snow and fog that cloaked his onrushing panzers. Next day he was found. Skies cleared, frost hardened the ground. Conditions were tailor-made for tanks and planes. Seven fighter-bomber groups, 11 medium-bomber groups and one division of 8th Air Force and elements of the Royal Air Force took to the air in support of Third Army.

Thunderbolts hurled bombs scant yards ahead of Shermans, then returned at antenna level with machine guns crackling. Enemy resistance was thickening. Road blocks, craters, blown bridges barred the way.

In an all-out effort, the 4th's Reserve Command under Col. Wendell Blanchard, Lowell, Mass., entered the fight on the east flank of CC A. That afternoon, Reserve Command's 37th Tank and 53rd Armd. Inf. Bns. attack Bigonville. In a battle raging until late next day, the Luxembourg village was taken.

Paratroopers of one German division held the village and surrounding woods. Armored infantrymen dug them out with bayonets as tankers wrecked and burned buildings. Three hundred and fifty 'chutists were killed, 300 taken prisoner. A Sherman tank, two 40mm anti-aircraft guns, four 81mm mortars, small arms and ammunition, all U.S. equipment used by Nazis, were destroyed.

The 8th Tank Bn., commanded by Lt. Col. Albin F. Irzyk, Salem, Mass., and the 10th Armd. Inf. Bn., under Maj. Harold Cohen, Spartanburg, S.C., smashed into Chaumont Dec. 23. The 35th Tank and 51st Armd. Inf. Bns. fought along the Martelange highway toward Bastogne. The 35th, commanded by Lt. Col. Delk Oden, Hugo, Okla., and the 51st, led by Lt. Col. Dan C. Alanis, Ennis, Tex., took Warnach.

Fourth Armd. slugged toe-to-toe against tank-supported troops next day. Despite heavy casualties, the enemy clung tenaciously. The hillside village of Chaumont, which was to change hands three times before the rubble heaps were taken, was counter-attacked by strong German tank and infantry forces.

More infantry was needed to pry Nazi machine gunners and bazooka teams from the timbered hills and thick-walled villages, so the 1st and 2nd Bns., 318th Regt., 80th Inf. Div., were brought from Luxembourg Dec. 24.

to support CC A and CC B. The 9th Armd. Div.'s CC A was attached to the 4th and moved up on the west.

At 0200 Christmas Day, Reserve Command pulled a quick shift. It marched 30 miles from Bigonville to the division's west flank. By 0700, Reserve Command was at Bercheaux, ready to launch a surprise attack.

P-47s filled the Christmas sky with bombs and bullets. Reserve Command took Vaux-les-Rosieres, Petite Rosieres, Nives and Remoiville. CC B retook Chaumont and drove north of Grandrue. Hallange fell to CC A. The 53rd crowded artillery barrages into Remoiville, flushed out houses with flame-throwers. Fifty Germans were killed, 42 wounded, 427 taken prisoner.

Christmas afternoon, light and medium tanks of the 35th outflanked the Melch woods on the Arlon-Bastogne road and wiped out a company of paratroopers. Hit by tank machine gun bursts, scores of enemy casualties crumpled in the snow.

Fourth Armd. MPs have maintained a perfect record in handling prisoners. None has ever escaped. The record almost was marred that night when a German plane swooped down over housetops as MPs were searching 220 prisoners. During the commotion, prisoners fled into barns and houses.

One German officer and several men charged Pfc Paul J. Carrafiello, Tuckahoe, N.Y. The MP blazed away with a machine gun, dropping the officer just short of the gun and spraying the others. All prisoners were flushed from their hiding places.

The drive gathered speed next day. Reserve Command

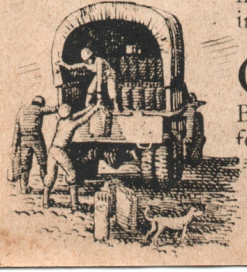
struck again. Infantry and tanks punched Remichampagne while supporting artillery plastered the village and nearby Bois de Cohet.

As armor rolled forward, Thunderbolts swooped into the scrap. P-47s blasted, raked the woods and town 200 yards in front of advancing half-tracks. German guns and crews were blasted before they could fire a shot. By noon, Remichampagne was cleared, and tankers surged northeast to seize high ground near Clochimont. Bastogne was three miles beyond.

As vehicles assembled on the slope south of Clochimont, hundreds of C-47 transports thundered low over tanks. Crammed with cargo they flew slowly, like flocks of fat geese, toward Bastogne. The sky erupted with flak. Anti-aircraft crackled, and white puffs burst overhead.

Tankers watched as transports dropped multi-colored supply 'chutes over the town. Col. Abrams and Lt. Col. George L. Jaques, Worcester, Mass., of the 53rd, conferred with their officers. Tanks had expended their high explosive 75mm shells, machine gun ammunition was low. But the men, who had seen how badly Bastogne needed supplies, were ready to push on.

"This is it," Col. Abrams said, a cold cigar clenched in the corner of his mouth, "We're going into Bastogne!"

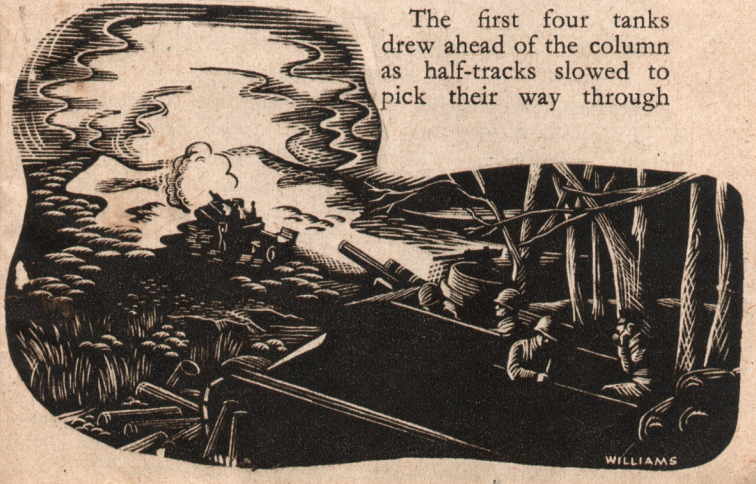


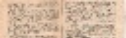
COMPANIES moved into position to assault Assenois, last village before Bastogne. Col. Abrams swept his arm forward as the advance signal, and the final assault jumped off at 1515 from a crossroads 500 yards south of Clochimont. Flanks secured, companies of the 37th and 53rd rushed Clochimont and approached Assenois. *Cobra King*, shell-scarred command tank of Co. C, led the column of mediums and half-tracks, pounding up the road with all guns firing.

Four American artillery battalions slammed barrages into Assenois and the edge of the woods beyond. The division's 94th, 22nd and 66th Armd. Arty. Bns. dropped in 105mm shells, and a supporting battalion lobbed 155mm howitzers.

Fourth Armd. men know the cheapest way to attack with artillery is to lean into barrages while the enemy keeps his head down. They drove into shell bursts as the ground pitched and houses spilled into the street. They took their casualties—a burned half-track, two killed, four wounded—and charged toward Bastogne.

The first four tanks drew ahead of the column as half-tracks slowed to pick their way through





smoke and debris. Co. C's four mediums rolled along with their machine guns sweeping the wooded ridge. They burst through to the 101st's outer defenses before Germans in the forest could act.

But the gap in the column gave Nazis their chance. Teller mines were hurled onto the road while German bazooka teams closed in. In the dusk, a half-track hit a mine. Capt. Dwight jumped from his turret to help doughs remove the mines. The column darted forward against bazookas, machine pistols, more mines. Four half-tracks exploded and burned. Crews fought on foot. With tank support, they battled all the way to the 101st.

Meanwhile, Co. B, 53rd Armd. Inf., mopped up flaming Assenois with the aid of light tanks from the 37th. Three hundred and eighty prisoners were taken, including battalion and regimental staff officers. More than 100 others were killed. Four 88mm A/T guns and crews were captured before they could fire a shot.

A battery of 105mm howitzers, one 40mm and two 37mm anti-tank guns, five half-tracks and two armored cars were captured or destroyed. This was the pay-off of the swift attack through the artillery fire.

But the fight was not over. Trucks and ambulances for the 101st could not move through the heavy enemy fire from woods lining the road.

First Lt. Frank Kutak, Astoria, N.Y., hobbling on a leg stiffened by a bullet graze, led Co. A, 53rd, into the woods at midnight. Patches of moonlight and bursts from machine pistols lighted the area where armored doughs fought for three hours. They attacked without artillery support because Germans were too close to the 101st. Heavy machine guns and 60mm mortars firing in battery provided the only cover.

Next morning, 30 German dead were found in their foxholes. Twelve of the troublesome heavy bazookas and two 75mm guns were captured.

NEW TO WAR, BUT *Battle-Wise* VETERANS

THE road was open. Of the nine roads and two railroads running into Bastogne, this path cracked by the 4th was the only link with the outside. The first of 200 trucks and ambulances poured into Bastogne at 0500, Dec. 27. Hundreds of wounded defenders of Bastogne were evacuated that day.

CC B, battling to the east of the roadway, cleared a swath to the north. The 10th Armd. Inf. also reached Bastogne's perimeter defenses. CC A, with the 35th Inf. Div. on its east flank, hammered against the heavy

resistance that blocked the Arlon-Bastogne highway until Dec. 29. Although Bastogne no longer was besieged, the battle had not ended.

German reaction was swift, furious. Fourth Armd. had made the Bastogne road hub an offensive center. Nazi divisions swarmed to the corridor like wasps to a broken hive.

Dec. 30, the east flank of the corridor rocked from the crushing attack of a panzer division supported by elements of two Volksgrenadier divisions and remnants of the Para division. The enemy drove to Lutrebois, 1200 yards from the main highway.

The weather was murky, but 1st Lt. Robert E. Pearson, Highland Park, Mich., was flying observation in his Cub for the 22nd Armd. FA. Below, tanks were skirting the edge of the woods at Lutrebois. Lt. Pearson swooped down to 75 feet. The tanks looked German. Machine gun and rifle fire flashing past his cockpit confirmed it.

The lieutenant hustled off to warn the 35th. He marked the panzer's position on a map, dropped it to tankers. First Lt. John Kingsley, Dunkirk, N.Y., placed his six mediums in ambush. As the Mark Vs poked into the open with their flanks toward the Shermans, gunners let them have it.

Panthers surged forward in twos and threes past their own burning tanks while Shermans socked them from turret defilade. Eleven German tanks strayed out. All were destroyed without a scratch to Co. B's six mediums.

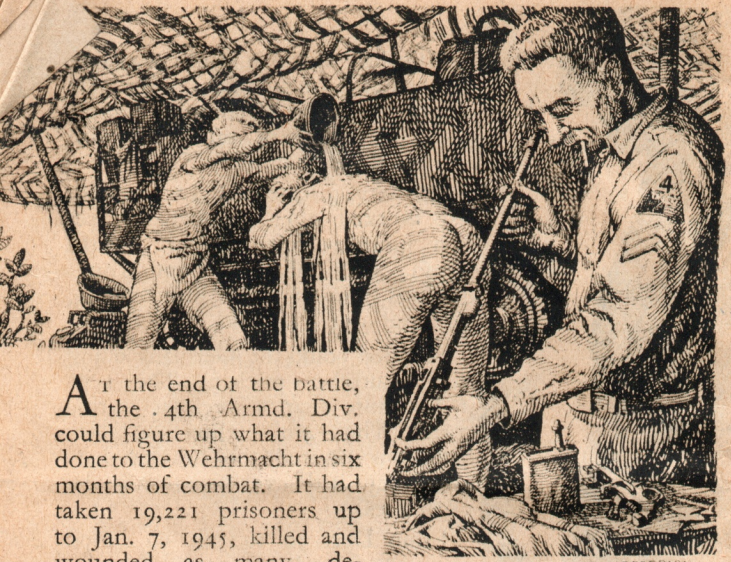
"If that German tank company commander isn't dead I wish they would make him a battalion commander," the lieutenant said. "I wish they were all that dumb."

Artillery, directed by Lt. Pearson, also worked over the panzers, set two more vehicles aflame. Fourth Armd., 35th Inf. Div., and Thunderbolts braving the low ceiling, knocked out 55 tanks that day.

Stopped cold, the Germans clung to the Lutrebois pocket. They kept it for more than a week at terrific cost. The 4th's three artillery battalions poured the heaviest barrage they had ever fired into the small area.

From Dec. 30 to Jan. 6, a total of 24,483 rounds of 105 mm howitzers cascaded into Lutrebois and the woods north and east. The New Year came in with a bang as armored artillerymen greeted it with 7000 shells on Dec. 31. The 66th FA alone fired 3046 rounds.

The corridor held. Impaled on Bastogne, the German offensive sputtered, then died. Von Rundstedt pulled back his 5th and 6th Panzer Armies and his infantry.



At the end of the battle, the 4th Armd. Div. could figure up what it had done to the Wehrmacht in six months of combat. It had taken 19,221 prisoners up to Jan. 7, 1945, killed and wounded as many, destroyed 414 tanks, 1618 vehicles and 225 artillery pieces. Twenty-six German planes had fallen to division's anti-aircraft guns.

Knocking out a Panther, killing or capturing a platoon or battalion had become routine. No one, for example took particular notice of prisoner No. 19,000. No one could say who he was or who captured him.

It was different with prisoner No. 1. Everybody knew about him. He was a tall, bedraggled SS conscript, who slogged through a Normandy marsh July 26, 1944, to surrender to Co. C, 24th Armd. Engr. Bn. He was received with curiosity by the men, with enthusiasm by intelligence officers.

War still was new to the division. The 4th had been in combat nine days and in France less than three weeks. Tough and confident after three and a half years training, it hit Utah Beach, July 11, 1944. LSTs and LCTs disgorged tanks, half-tracks and peeps off Varreville, near Ste. Mere Eglise.

By July 16, the outfit had assembled in the calvados and apple orchard country near Barneville-sur-Mer on the west side of the Cherbourg peninsula. Tankers, trained as a part of Gen. Patton's Third Army, learned with surprise they had been transferred to First Army.

Third Army was inoperative as well as top secret, so the division went to VIII Corps, First Army. From Corps, division received its first combat orders. By midnight July 17, the 4th was poised to take over the front held by the 4th Inf. Div. north of Raids, south of Carentan.

The 53rd Bn. was first into the line that warm summer night. In the first 30 hours, the battalion and division suffered its first casualties. An estimated 100 Nazi paratroopers and SS troops infiltrated the battalion's left flank. Six armored infantrymen and officers were killed, 25 wounded.

The 10th took over July 19 and pushed forward 100 yards in advance of the line held by the 4th Inf. Div. In battered Meautis, division headquarters got acquainted with 88s during a 15-minute shelling.

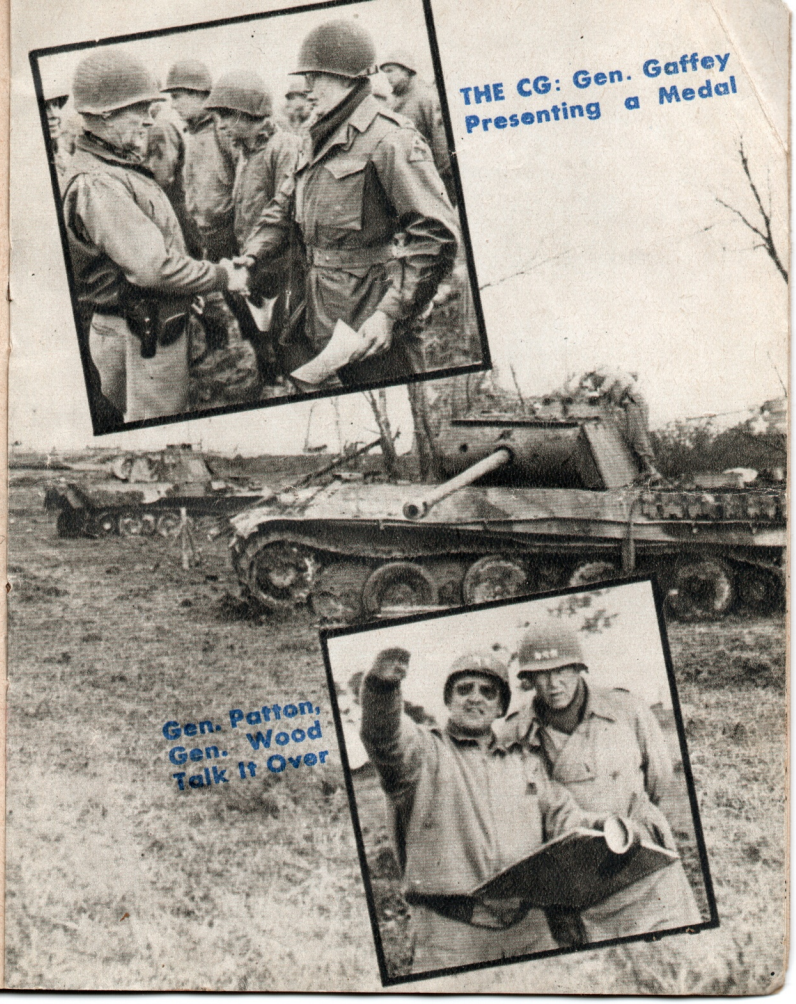
The narrow defensive front settled down to a mortar, machine gun and artillery exchange over swamps, hedgerows and dead cows. Tank and TDs sat back as artillery. The 25th Cav. Recon. Sqdn., Mech., commanded by Lt. Col. Leslie Goodall, Holyoke, Mass., dismounted to fight with armored infantry.

Allied forces crammed in the Normandy beachhead area got ready to hit the line July 26. The Air Corps struck first. Men of the 4th Armd. climbed from foxholes and tank turrets to watch the greatest display of air power ever witnessed up to that time. Bombs from 3000 planes rained down incessantly.

Fourth Armd. held the small sector between the 83rd Inf. Div. on the east and the 90th Inf. Div. to the west. The plan called for the doughs to pinch off the 4th's zone. Then, armor was to spring through.

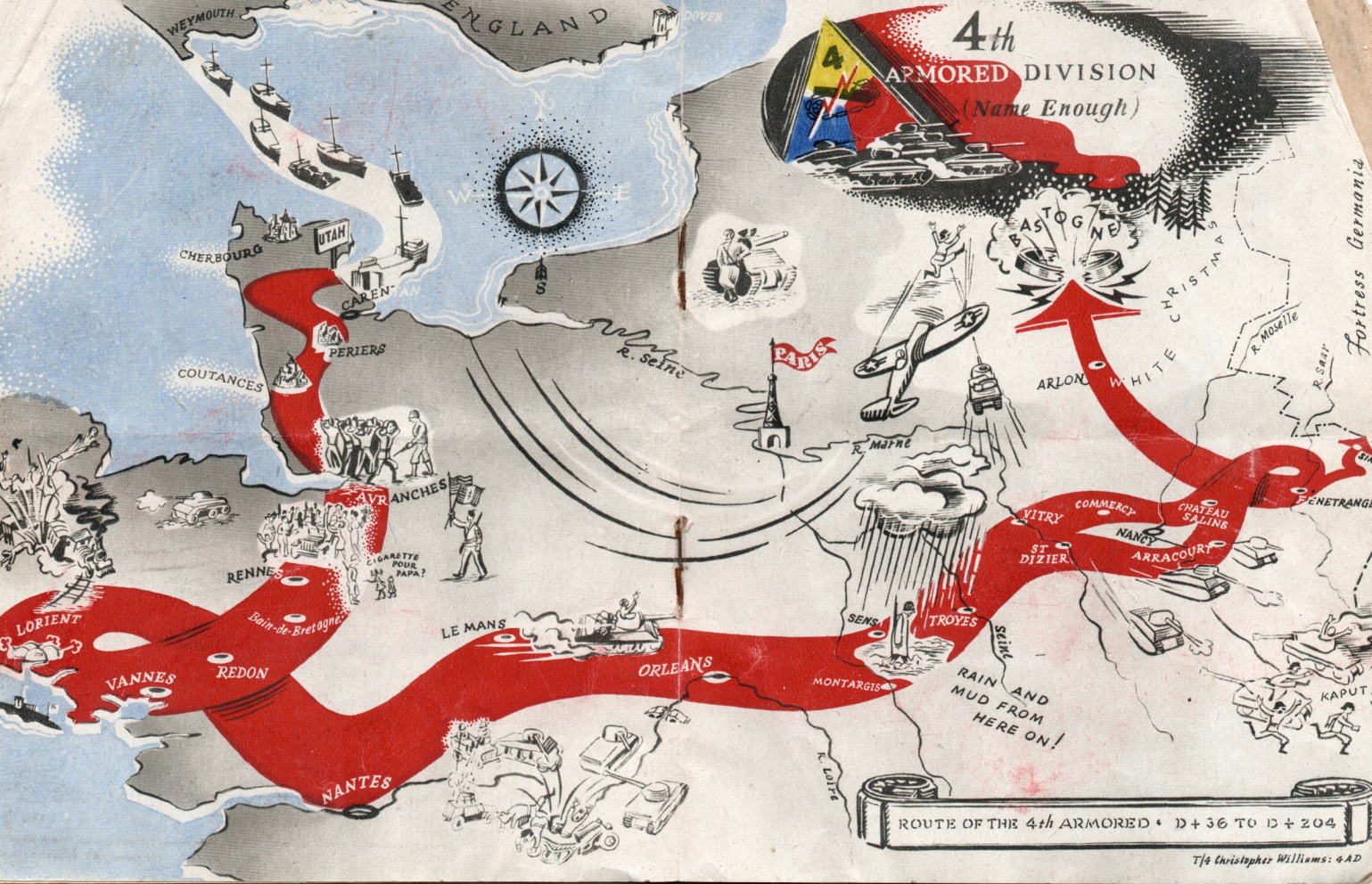
Eager to hit the road in the offensive, tankers clambered from foxholes into vehicles. Led by Maj. Gen. John S. Wood, the division moved out at 0500, July 28. CC B was the point for the combat command columns. Despite mines and road blocks, tanks lurched through the rubble of Periers and swarmed into Coutances, first city to fall to CC B and the division.

American armor was rolling everywhere. The 2nd and 3rd Armd. Divs. jabbed along on the left while 6th Armd. punched to the right. It was like old home week at Fort Knox.

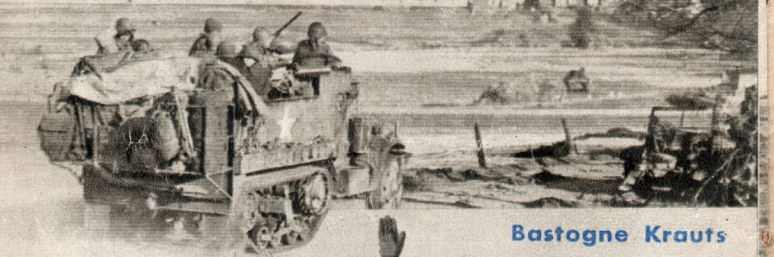


THE CG: Gen. Gaffey Presenting a Medal

Gen. Patton, Gen. Wood Talk It Over


4th
ARMORED DIVISION
(Name Enough)
ENGLAND
WEYMOUTH
DOVER
CHERBOURG
UTAH
CAEN
PERIERS
COUTANCES
AVRANCHES
RENNES
CIGARETTE POUR PAPA?
LORIENT
Bain-de-Bretagne
VANNES
REDON
NANTES
LE MANS
ORLEANS
MONTARGIS
SENS
TROYES
R. Seine
PARIS
R. Marne
R. Loire
RAIN AND MUD FROM HERE ON!
VITRY
COMMERCY
CHATEAU SALINS
NANCY
ST DIZIER
ARRACOURT
ARLON
WHITE CHRISTMAS
BASTOGNE
R. Moselle
R. Saar
Fortress Germania
KAPUT
ROUTE OF THE 4th ARMORED • D+36 TO D+204
T/4 Christopher Williams: 4AD

Bastogne Climate



Bastogne Krauts

"WHO ARE YOU?" "Georgie's Boys!"

FROM Coutances, the 4th swept southward in three columns, overrunning La Haye Pesnel and approaching Avranches. CC B's headquarters, bivouacked just north of Avranches and 200 yards from the main road, almost was run down during the night by a long German column withdrawing south.

As the enemy attempted to pull out, men like Pvt. William "Red" Whitson, Indianapolis, were waiting for them. A Co. B, 53rd, machine gunner, Whitson had his gun set up at a bend in the road.

A column pulled up to him before he fired. He knocked out 25 vehicles, left 50 Germans sprawling on the road in a tangle of plunging horses. Confused by the deadly fire, more than 500 Germans eventually surrendered to Co. B. The Distinguished Service Cross awarded to Whitson was the first to an enlisted man in the division.

Disorganized and terrified by the 4th's slashing advances, Nazis began wholesale flight. The "rat race" was on.

Racing armored columns littered roads with burning vehicles and German casualties. More than 2000 pris-

oners were taken at Avranches. Co. A, 46th Med. Bn. alone treated 123 German wounded there.

Parts of the Wehrmacht escaped the tankers, cavalry and armored infantry, headed south to surrender to following artillery battalions, or to medics—or anyone—just to get safely out of the way. Column after column of disarmed prisoners, led by their own non-coms, marched back without guards to PW enclosures.

By July 31, all dams and bridges across the Selune River to the southeast as far as Ducey were secured. The division's PW bag numbered more than 3000.

In five days, the 4th had smashed the German 77th, 91st and 243rd Inf. Divs., wiped out the 6th Para Regt. and dealt severe losses to the 5th Para Div. The last-named, rebuilt from scratch, was to confront the 4th again at Bastogne. Elements of the 2nd SS Panzer Div. also took a drubbing.

"WHO are you?" recon men of another armored division shouted as a company of the 4th's M-4s swept along in the swirling dust.

"Georgie's boys!" the tank commanders yelled back.

And they were. On Aug. 1, Gen. Patton's Third Army became operational. VIII Corps and 4th Armd. became part of Third Army as the division roared into Brittany.

With CC A leading, the division plunged 54 miles to Rennes, ancient Breton capitol. Smacking nests of emplaced anti-tank and aircraft guns north of the city, tanks wheeled wide to the west and south. CC A raced

through Bain de Bretagne while CC B struck Redon. Roads and communications from the Rennes nerve center were cut, the enemy thrown into panic. The field-grey hordes withdrew. A combat team including 8th Inf. Div. doughs occupied the city, Aug 3.

The next slash severed the Brittany peninsula. At 1400, Aug. 5, CC A moved from Bain de Bretagne. Seven hours and 70 miles later, the 4th had routed the enemy's 56th Security Regt. guarding Vannes and had taken the city and the airfield to the northeast.

From this port, tankers glimpsed the ocean. Brest peninsula was cut through. Brittany seethed with thousands of armor-stunned enemy. The division which had outraced infantry support was an armored island in a sea of enemies. Tanks and armored cars shepherded supply columns over long, empty stretches of road.

Remnants of a French paratrooper battalion, which had dropped in Brittany with peeps on D-Day, joined tankers. The FFI enthusiastically offered its support.

Then, both combat commands moved on the U-boat base of Lorient, 30 miles west. After a race for the bridges across the Blavet, tanks contained the big port, Aug. 7. On the way, they wiped out a horse cavalry outfit, the 281st Ost Cav. Bn.

German army and navy forces in the heavily fortified city outnumbered

tankers four to one; the 4th tried to bluff them into surrender. Although unsuccessful in this, the 4th did take 4653 prisoners in 12 days and nailed down the escape door. In March, 1945, nine months later, dwindling German troops still held on, hopelessly surrounded

A MARATHON AT *Sprint* SPEED

TANKS wheeled east. Nantes, on the Loire, was taken Aug. 10 by CC A after an 80-mile march from Lorient. Four days later, CC A had pushed 153 miles to St. Calais, refueled, and six hours later stood before Orleans. By dark, the combat command reached Ormes and captured the airport.

Next morning CC A cracked into Orleans, then turned it over to the 35th Inf. Div.

When 4th Armd. came under XII Corps Aug. 15,

Lorient was left to the 6th Armd. Div. CC B began its longest continuous march. The columns drove east 264 miles in 34 hours before halting at Prunay, south of Vendome.

A small task force, with the mission of destroying bridges, engaged in something like a naval battle along the gentle valley of the Loire River. The column, commanded by Maj. Edward Bautz, Dumont, N. J., was moving on the north bank near Amboise when it spied a German column on the opposite bank. The 4th opened fire with everything from tommyguns to 75s. Germans, trapped between high ground and the river, suffered heavy losses.

Assembled near Orleans, the division resumed its drive east Aug. 21. The same afternoon, CC A sped into the heart of Sens to secure a crossing of the Yonne River. Five railroad trains, 30 carloads of diesel oil and 300 tons of food were seized.

Fourth Armd., as south flank and spearhead of Third Army, now was far east and south of Paris. Tankers had outflanked the French capital and sealed off German forces south of the Loire.

Historic river barriers, moats of France, were falling quickly to armor. CC B captured Courtenay, then moved on Montargis from the east. Evacuation of the city was forced Aug. 23. Without pausing, the division secured a bridgehead across the Seine at Troyes three days later after a savage fight.

Armored vehicles, commanded by Lt. Col. Arthur L. West, Stillwater, Okla., spread in open desert formation

and charged down a three and a half mile slope under heavy fire. An SS brigade and supporting troops totaling 3000 Germans were routed and a Nazi general captured.

Three days later, CC A stormed across the Marne River to capture Vitry le Francois. Chalons-sur-Marne, St. Dizier and Ligny fell. Light tanks racing through torrential-rain led an attack into Commercy, captured the bridge across the Meuse and the high ground opposite the river. This country meant more trouble for engineers. The 24th Armd. Engr. Bn. fought, sweated to keep columns rolling.

Fourth Armd. finally stopped—not for blown bridges

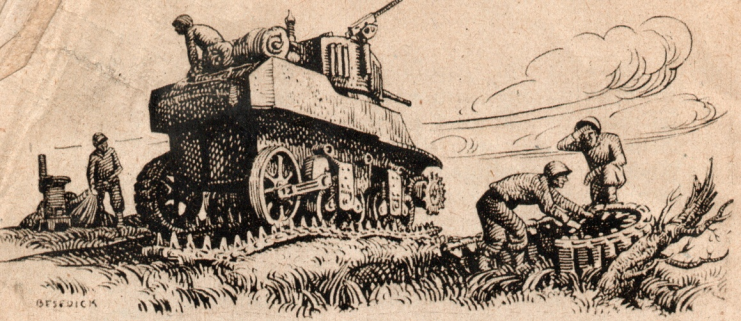
or 88s—but for gasoline. The division had been burning captured fuel and gasoline delivered by transport planes. Maps and shells also had been flown to the outfit. When the overall gasoline supply problem became critical, higher headquarters halted the drive. The division had run a marathon at sprint speed. In the seven weeks since Normandy, the 4th had thrown a 700-mile right hook across the heart of France.

...Germans are frightened by your superior equipment, frightened by your more skillful tactics, and above all frightened by your magnificent courage and will to win. Since the beginning of your historic drive through Orleans to the east, the Fourth Armored Division has met its assigned tasks with the greatest distinction. The manner in which it seized successfully the towns of Sens, Troyes, Vitry le Francois and Commercy and assisted in the capture of Montargis and Chalons-sur-Marne, was conspicuous evidence of its courage, its high state of combat efficiency, and the aggressive spirit of its leaders. In the establishing, defending and enlarging of our bridgehead across the Moselle, all members of the division have conducted themselves in a manner of which they may well be proud...

— MAJ. GEN. MANTON S. EDDY, COMMANDING XII CORPS, IN A LETTER TO MAJ. GEN. JOHN S. WOOD, THEN COMMANDING 4TH ARMD. DIV.

THERE was the cold, swift-running Moselle River with the Wehrmacht waiting in its "winter line" on the east bank. With two tremenduous blows, the 4th smashed across it in mid-September of 1944.

Mediums of the 8th Tank Bn. rumbled into the Mo-



selle Valley at Bayon, south of Nancy on Sept. 11. CC B was to make a crossing with the 35th Inf. Div.

The bridges were gone as well as the canal paralleling it on the west. First Lt. William C. Marshall, Newark, N.J., didn't wait for treadway spans. He wheeled his medium tank platoon to the canal's edge, fired 75s into the opposite bank to break it down, then threw logs into the mud and trickle. Gunning his tank, Lt. Marshall roared down the 20-foot canal and labored triumphantly through to the other bank. He towed others of his platoon when they bogged down.

Five tanks raced downstream until the river split into three fordable channels. Water surged to the turrets as tanks plunged across the river. Climbing the bank, tankers roared ahead to smash German infantry and guns pressing back the thin bridgehead.

Two days later, CC A passed through the 80th Inf. Div. and crossed the Moselle north of Nancy at Dieulouard. Troop D, 25th Cav. fought a bloody duel with anti-tank guns and infantry to lead the way.

Fourth Armd. was loose again. Two steel columns tore into Lorraine to form a pincers about Nancy. The city fell as Germans fled east.

CC A, then commanded by Col. Clarke, punched through and rampaged behind enemy lines to Aulnois, Lemoncourt, Fresnes, Arracourt and Einville. More than 100 German tanks were destroyed, 1903 prisoners taken, as many killed. Rear echelon of Panzer Grenadier division was caught at Arracourt and wiped out.

CC B, south jaw of the pincers, gouged northeast to Chateau Salins over streams and canals. The 24th Engrs., supported by the 995th Engr. Treadway Bridge Co., floated a 168-foot bridge over the Moselle at Bayon and a 180-foot bridge over the Meurthe at Mont.

Halted by command once more to permit infantry to catch up, the 4th stopped in the Arracourt area to protect the Nancy bridgehead.

In three weeks of furious combat after crossing the Moselle, fast-shooting tankers destroyed 281 German tanks. The mammoth German Mark V tanks were knocked off by the score. The division hurled back two Panzer Brigades and a panzer division all supported by grenadiers bent on ripping apart the bridgehead.

Germans attacked in fog and rain Sept. 19, and extremely bitter fighting occurred the next four days. The first morning, more than 40 German tanks attacked from the southeast toward Moyenvic. Stopped by the 37th, the panzers swung south in groups. They drove into

the right flank of CC A. Co. C's 1st and 2nd platoons of the 704th TD Bn. charged out to meet them.

A crew commanded by Sgt. Henry R. Hartman, Wallingford, Conn., knocked out six tanks with its 76mm gun. The two TD platoons destroyed 15 tanks while losing three TDs. Battered panzers withdrew, only to attack the next day from the south. A task force from the 37th and the 10th blasted them back. In four days, the 37th destroyed 55 Panthers, lost 14 tanks. Meanwhile, Reserve Command beat off an armored attack on Luneville.

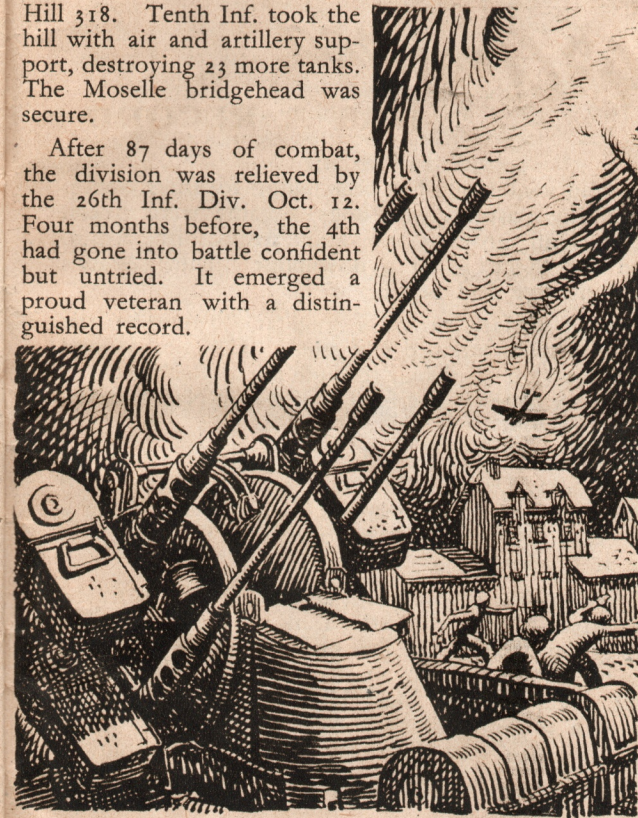
More Panthers crept under cover of fog to the 25th's bivouac near Juvelize Sept. 22. Although hopelessly outgunned, the squadron's light tank company fought the massive Mark Vs. Seven light tanks were hit, but TDs and Shermans smashed the enemy.

On the Xanrey-Moncel line, CC B threw back infantry and tank assaults supported by a heavy artillery preparation. Twenty-one German tanks were destroyed and 300 infantrymen killed as planes, tanks, artillery and armored infantry plastered the Germans.

Tank attacks dwindled, but the 4th continued bagging several Panthers daily. Fighting flared a week later at

Hill 318. Tenth Inf. took the hill with air and artillery support, destroying 23 more tanks. The Moselle bridgehead was secure.

After 87 days of combat, the division was relieved by the 26th Inf. Div. Oct. 12. Four months before, the 4th had gone into battle confident but untried. It emerged a proud veteran with a distinguished record.



4th Armored HAS A RECORD

THE cold winter rain had been falling for three weeks. Lorraine pastures were bogs, streams were rivers. With duckbill grousers on tank tracks, 4th Armd. moved out Nov. 9, in a downpour. Third Army's winter offensive had begun.

Armored warfare was on a "one-tank" front—on the road — as tanks strained and stuck. Columns ground northeast toward Morhange through the sodden wreckage of German villages. The fight now was in Nazi-annexed French Lorraine.

Massed artillery hammered at armor probing German defenses. At Destry, the 8th Tank outflanked and wiped out a nest of 21 anti-tank guns without losing a single tank. Morhange was overrun. Fighting was bitter at Guebling.

A sudden shift to the south and CC B pushed to the Sarre River where the 8th Tank seized Fenetrange Thanksgiving Day. The first crossing of the Sarre was made by Troop C, 25th. Cavalrymen commanded by 1st Lt. John Keenan, Mars Hill, Me., rushed Gosselming with all guns blazing, took the bridge. Although intact, the span was mined and wired for demolition.

Pushing across the Sarre into ever deepening mud,

the 4th contacted Seventh Army troops which had driven to Strasbourg. Germans hastily threw the 130th Panzer Lehr Div. against the 4th, but tankers hurled it back, then lumbered north.

Supported in a narrow zone by as many as 14 battalions of town-flattening artillery, the 4th slogged past Sarre Union to Domfessel and Vollerdingen. In savage tank fighting, the 37th plowed through the Maginot Line to Singling Dec. 8.

Although the division was relieved two days later by 12th Armd. Div., two 4th Armd. units remained in combat to roll over the German border.

S/Sgt. George Poulus, Gary, Ind., platoon sergeant, Troop D, 25th Cav., took a 15-man patrol up Hill 382 south of Utweiler, Germany, Dec. 16. The same afternoon, Shermans of Co. A, 37th, chased Nazi tanks back in the woods above Rimling.

Maj. Gen. Hugh J. Gaffey, Third Army Chief of Staff, succeeded Gen. Wood as commander of 4th Armd. Dec. 3. Gen. Wood, in command of the division since June 18, 1942, had brought it from Pine Camp, N.Y., to the Sarre Valley.

Gen. Gaffrey had commanded 2nd Armd. Div. in Africa and Sicily before becoming Gen. Patton's Chief of Staff. It was under him that the 4th answered what tankers always will remember as "the fire call."

The division was in Corps reserve Dec. 18. Tankers heard vague reports of a two-day old German offensive up in Belgium and Luxembourg, gave it little thought. But at 2030, orders were received to march north against

the breakthrough. The combat command jumped off shortly before midnight.

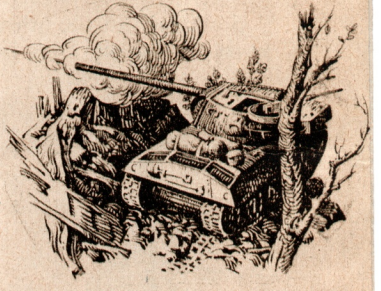
CC B raced northwest through Morhange, crossed the Moselle at Pont-a-Mousson, turned north to Briey and Longwy then into Belgium to Arlon before arriving at an assembly area at Vaux-les-Rosieres. The 151-mile march had been made in 19 hours. CC B came under control of the hard-pressed VIII Corps, First Army. Next day, the 4th assembled near Arlon under III Corps. CC B returned to division without being committed.

FOURTH Armd. spent more than three years getting ready for the battle of France. The division was tempered 39 months in California, in Texas heat, in the cold of the Canadian border, in English plains. It emerged a tough, confident team. Soldiers in tanks were backed by soldiers skilled in keeping tankmen rolling.

The 126th Armd. Ord. Bn., 144th Armd. Sig. Co., 46th Med. Bn.—all were trained to help tanks, infantry, cavalry and artillery at their job. The 704th TD Bn. virtually is a part of the division. The 489th AA Bn., in addition to its bag of 26 German planes, has killed 246 ground troops, destroyed four armored cars, 24 wagons, 15 trucks, two machine gun nests and captured 500 enemy. The 995th Treadway Bridge Co, 1st platoon of the 16th Field Hospital, 3804 QM Trk. Co., and the 444th QM Troop Transport Co., also were integral parts of the team.

Activated April 15, 1941, at Pine Camp, the 4th trained 16 months before reaching the Tennessee maneuvers in the Cumberland Mountains. Mid-November, 1942, the division moved to the vast California Desert Training Center where base camps were established near Freida and Needles.

After six months of rugged desert training, the 4th arrived at Camp Bowie, Tex., June 3, 1943, and maneuvered during a broiling summer until alerted Nov. 11 for overseas duty. Train after train left the Lone Star State from Dec. 11 to 18 to take armored troops into a frigid Massachusetts winter at Camp Myles Standish. The main body of troops sailed from Boston Dec. 29, 1943.



Eleven days later, the division disembarked in Wales and entrained for camps in Wiltshire, England. Soon the staid names of Chippenham, Trowbridge, Devizes and Bath were as familiar as Watertown, Palm Springs, Brownwood or Ft. Worth. In a final polishing, the 4th trained six months on the English downs and in the bitter winter frosts of the Salisbury and Avebury plains.

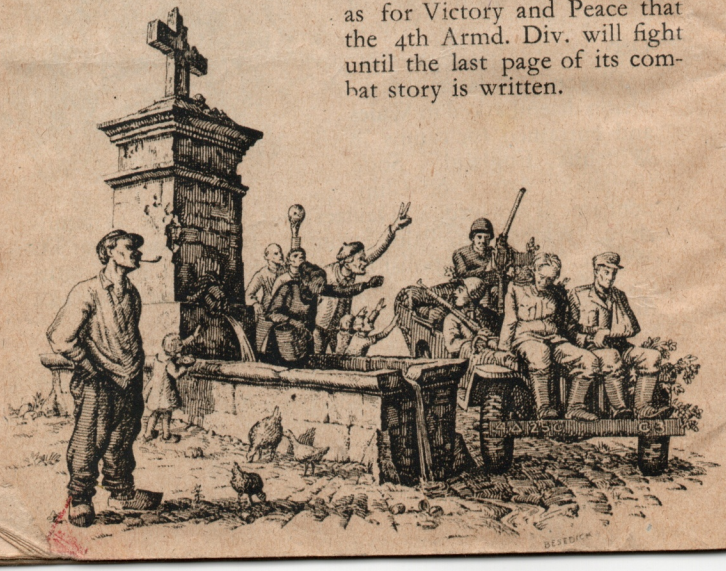
Officers and men have won one Congressional Medal of Honor, 13 Distinguished Service Crosses, 534 Silver Stars, 1955 Bronze Star Medals, 56 Air Medals and one Legion of Merit.

How well they fought is shown by the names given the 4th: "The Rolling 4th," "Flying 4th," "Phantom 4th," "Ghost Division," "Fire Alarm Division." In cool military appraisal, the Germans first called them the "American Elite Fourth Armored Division." Later, Nazi propagandists dubbed them "Roosevelt's Highest Paid Butchers."

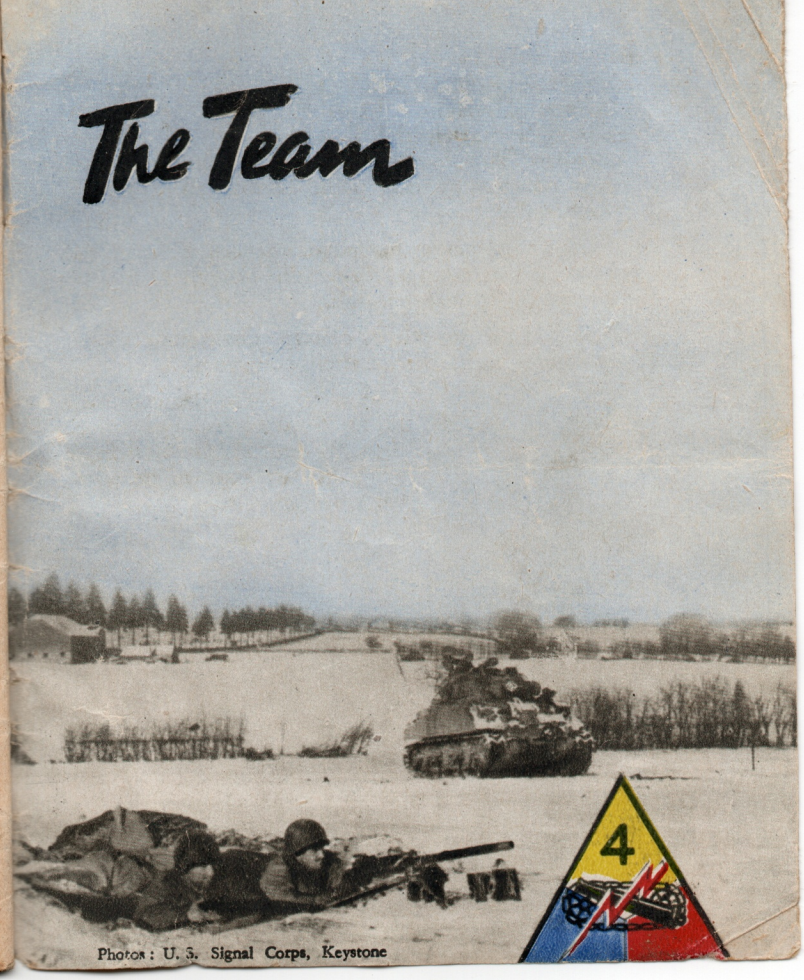
The division, however, has never adopted a nickname. The men of the armor feel that "The Fourth Armored" is name enough—praise enough.

Some men of the 4th whose courage made the division great no longer fight beside their comrades.

It is for these dead as well as for Victory and Peace that the 4th Armd. Div. will fight until the last page of its combat story is written.



The Team

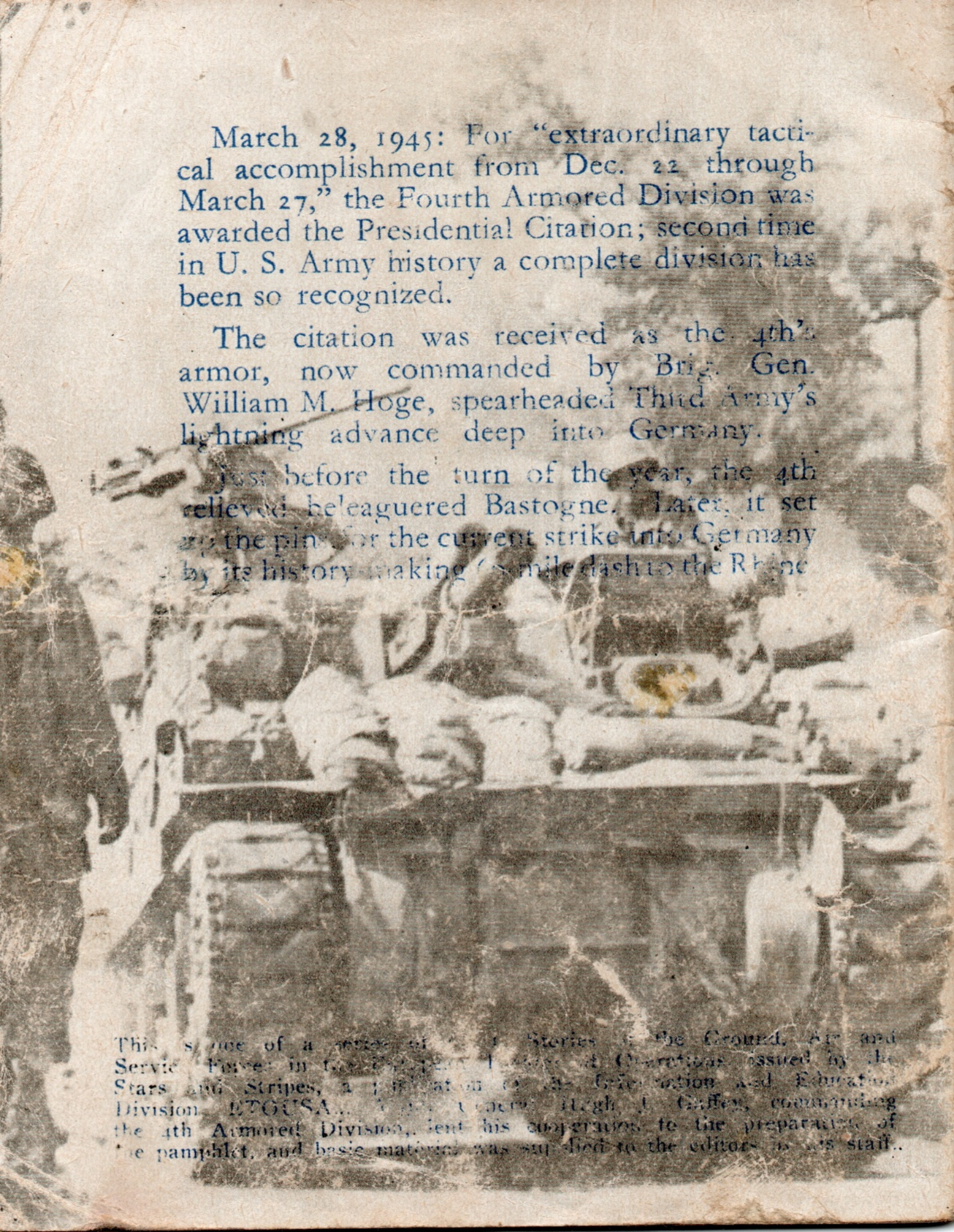


Photos: U. S. Signal Corps, Keystone

March 28, 1945: For "extraordinary tactical accomplishment from Dec. 22 through March 27," the Fourth Armored Division was awarded the Presidential Citation; second time in U. S. Army history a complete division has been so recognized.

The citation was received as the 4th's armor, now commanded by Brig. Gen. William M. Hoge, spearheaded Third Army's lightning advance deep into Germany.

Just before the turn of the year, the 4th relieved beleaguered Bastogne. Later, it set up the pins for the current strike into Germany by its history-making 60-mile dash to the Rhine.



This issue of a series of [illegible] Stories of the Ground, Air and Service Forces in [illegible] Operations issued by the Stars and Stripes, a publication of the Orientation and Education Division, ETOUSA. [illegible] Major Gen. Hugh J. Gaffey, commanding the 4th Armored Division, lent his cooperation to the preparation of the pamphlet, and basic material was supplied to the editors by his staff.