American Jews
IN WORLD WAR II

The Story of 550,000 Fighters for Freedom

By I. KAUFMAN



IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME ONE

THE DIAL PRESS

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2023

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American Jews

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author gratefully acknowledges the aid, in assembling material for this volume, rendered by the wartime Public Relations Department of the National Jewish Welfare Board, and in particular Mr. Milton Weill and Mr. Arthur Weyne, and also the five groups cooperating in the National Jewish Welfare Board's wartime public relations program and making it possible, namely: the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the American Jewish Congress, the Jewish War Veterans of the United States, and the Jewish Labor Committee.

Also, the author's thanks go to Rabbi, formerly Chaplain, David I. Cedarbaum of Chicago for detailed material about Jewish men in the 20th Air Force, the outfit of the B-29s; and to many other Jewish Army chaplains in North Africa and Italy and elsewhere in Europe and in the Pacific Theater in the Philippines, Okinawa and Japan, through whom the author as a war correspondent in those areas, before this book was even thought of by him, learned about many of the Jewish soldier stories now included in it.

Also to the National Jewish Welfare Board's War Records Bureau and in particular its director, Dr. Samuel C. Kohs.

I. KAUFMAN

New York City,
Aug. 1, 1947.

DEDICATED

to my wife

LILY

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FOREWORD

This volume marks the completion of a most responsible task by the Bureau of War Records of the National Jewish Welfare Board. We were at war when this task was begun. America was putting forth every ounce of her energy to prevent defeat until she could mobilize her men and her resources so that she might win. There was no complacency then. There was no certainty of victory. The road ahead was difficult, uphill and uncertain. The National Jewish Welfare Board found its program of service to Jewish men and women in the armed forces increasing hourly. There had been few in the forces in 1940 but war had brought thousands of inductions. Eventually the number was to reach 550,000.

It was fortunate indeed that this great organization had the habit of successful achievement. The National Jewish Welfare Board had experienced more than thirty years in programs for the welfare of Jewish men and women. We who are ancient enough to have been in World War I remembered this organization in that war. We saw its work at home, we saw it in France. No less a personage than the President of the United States—who was a field artilleryman in the first World War and knows how important the welfare of our fighting men is—is most conscious of the contributions that have been made by this organization. I know that he shares the pride of all Americans in the

history of achievement that the Bureau of War Records has made available to us and to posterity.

In the days when the Bureau of War Records was preparing the groundwork for its great task the program of the parent organization was following the American forces in their global deployment.

In every branch of our armed forces and in every theater of our worldwide battlefields there were Jewish men and women meeting their responsibilities as American citizens. These men and women as they served, as they fought, as they bled, and as they died made the records that it has been the high privilege of this Bureau to record with such accuracy and thoroughness. These records are typical of America's participation in World War II. They offer a very large sample study for there is one from each group of twenty-five members of our armed forces. Some of these men fought above the clouds, others fought beneath the seas. Some waded ashore in Normandy in the Army Ground Forces, others as Marines fought for coral beaches on far away islands in the Pacific. In these lists are the names of doctors, dentists, scientists, and technicians. On these rolls is the name of a man who died leading the Division he commanded; above and below his name on the list are Privates First Class who gave their lives fighting for America. In these records are the names of many who served their country well and have returned to carry on the less glorious but no less necessary responsibilities of American citizenship. Among these names are others whose bodies must ever bear the scars of battle—battles waged that the most of us in America might be spared the terrifying experiences that have come to so many on this earth during the last decade.

In this list are those who gave their lives in the service of their country.

These contributions should never be forgotten by a grateful America. We are proud when we read the record of achievement of these men and women. We are proud that in her hour of trial our nation had young men and young women of the ability, fortitude, and loyalty that these records display. Our pride is not primarily in the fact that these men and women who played so well their part were Jewish. Our pride lies primarily in the fact that they were a typical cross-section of the men and women of America in a national emergency. Our pride is in the fact that in the days of war they played their part not as Jewish men and women but as Americans. The crisis which brought them into the Armed forces was a danger to America. They fought to save America for no particular kind of Americans but for all Americans. That was the spirit in war. That must be the spirit in peace.

So as we commemorate the contributions of the Jewish men and women in accepting their individual responsibilities and liabilities as American citizens in our armed forces during World War II, let us pledge ourselves to maintain the nation for whose safety they offered their lives. By strength they won the war and saved the nation. Without strength we shall not keep the peace they won.

The significance that must not be lost is that it was as American citizens that the Jewish men and women in these records served, fought and died that this nation might live.

MAJOR GENERAL LEWIS B. HERSHEY
Director, Selective Service System

CHAPTER ONE

THEY KNEW FROM THE BEGINNING

IT WAS ONE WAR, with many facets. It was a war against one enemy, tyranny, under many names, Fascism, Nazism, Japanese militarism, waged by many peoples, races, religions, social and economic classes of mankind. Britons and Poles and Czechs and Frenchmen and Russians and Filipinos fought the war — and Americans. And among the Americans, the American Jews played their full historic role.

The Jews of this country fought the war as Americans. They did all the things that others did, and (proportionally) in about the same numbers.

Just under 600,000 Jewish men and women, the records show, were in uniform, the equivalent of 40 Army divisions. They were in all the U. S. uniforms and they served in all the combatant services including the "most dangerous"—and top danger shifted from service to service as the war progressed, from Air Corps to Navy Seabees to Marines to Infantry. They were

on all the fighting fronts, from the frozen Aleutians to the African deserts and the sweating jungle islands of the Pacific.

Thirty-six thousand received awards and citations, from Medal of Honor down—and many of the awards were posthumous and many were Purple Hearts: awards to the killed in action and to the wounded.

The detailed statistics of the American Jews' participation in the war, as compiled by the Bureau of War Records of the National Jewish Welfare Board, appear elsewhere in this volume. These in themselves speak, perhaps loudest of all, of the heroism and devotion of the Jewish fighting man in the armed forces of the U. S.

What this volume purports to do in addition, is to tell individual stories of individual Jewish soldiers and sailors and marines, nurses and medics and chaplains, fliers and tankmen and engineers, merchant seamen and foot-slogging Infantry GIs. Only some of the stories are told—it would take too vast a series of volumes to tell all. But there is enough here to give a cross-section picture of the Jewish fighting man in World War II.

The picture is that of a fighting man who was in every campaign in which Americans fought and in every battle from the outbreak of the war at Pearl Harbor to the war's last engagement when atom bombs sounded the Axis death knell over Hiroshima and Nagasaki . . . of a fighting man who rose, again and again, to heights of heroism.

Here is a story in brief of one such hero. It is the war story of Technical Sergeant Abraham Todres, home town Brooklyn,

a boy who gave up a college career at 19—back in 1941—to go into the Army Air Forces. In four years he accumulated a total of 30 decorations, becoming the most decorated Jewish fighting man of the War.

It is appropriate that Sergeant Todres' story be set down here rather than in the chapters that follow, for he confined himself to no one campaign or war theater and does not conveniently fit into any one chapter. He fought in Alaska and in the South Pacific and Southwest Pacific and in Europe. He fought as a bombardier and a gunner and engineer and a paratrooper and a combat photographer. He fell among the Japs and got away, and was captured by the Germans and escaped.

Sergeant Todres was in a plane over the Philippines when Pearl Harbor was attacked. The plane landed on Leyte and proceeded from there to Clark Field, which had been wrecked by the Japs.

In the succeeding months, Todres fought at Dutch Harbor and Attu within the Arctic Circle; at Guadalcanal, on New Guinea and on New Britain. He was in the Battle of Midway. As bombardier he sank the Jap aircraft carrier Hajoha, while 80 Jap fighter planes were chasing his bomber. He was shot down that day and picked up at sea by a Navy destroyer. With the entire crew of his plane, he was up again the next day, sank a Jap cruiser in the Coral Sea—and was shot down again and rescued again. He bailed out once over Bougainville, coming down behind the Jap lines—but crawled through thick jungle past Jap positions back to the American lines.

He was several times wounded and was returned to the

States, but urgently pleaded for flying duty overseas once more. In 1944 they sent him to England as gunner and engineer on a bomber. He went on pre-D-Day bombing missions over Germany, Belgium and France. He dropped by parachute into Nazi-held France and hid out for a month with the French underground, disguised as a French peasant, or student, or businessman—taking notes and photographs of German positions, useful for later bombings.

A German Army patrol stopped him once while he was pushing a wheelbarrow along a French country road. They questioned him—but he played deaf and dumb, and the Nazis contemptuously let the not-very-bright peasant lad go. In his own way Sergeant Todres got back to England, with his photographs.

On D-Day he was in a bomber over Cologne. The plane was shot down and he bailed out.

Germans took him prisoner—and then he and a group of other prisoners overwhelmed their guards, leaped into a truck and got away.

His decorations: Distinguished Flying Cross and two Oakleaf Clusters, Silver Star for gallantry, Purple Heart and two Oakleaf Clusters, Croix de Guerre, Air Medal and 19 Oakleaf Clusters, Bronze Star, Presidential Unit citation.

When he was honorably discharged, in 1945, he was a boy of 23. And—who would deny it?—a hero.

There are confirmed anti-Semites, and to them no facts and no answers are adequate in the face of their own ingrown prejudice. One such was well answered by Quentin Reynolds,

author, lecturer and war correspondent, when he ran into him in a quiet London club in the war year 1943. Reynolds tells about it in his book, "The Curtain Rises" (Page 361). A self-important, self-sufficient English "gentleman" and club member had asked him where he lived and Reynolds replied that his home was in New York.

The conversation, as recorded in Reynolds' book, then continued as follows:

> "How awful!" he said, looking at me sympathetically. "All you see there are Jews."
>
> "I'm used to being with Jews," I told him. "Where I've been lately the place is full of them."
>
> "Where have you been?" he asked.
>
> "I have been with the First Division in Sicily," I said. "It's full of Jews. It will please you to know a hell of a lot of them were killed."
>
> He looked at me and blinked, not understanding, and I walked away. I was a little afraid I might get sick or slug him.

This is a book for those who, unlike the London clubman, could understand a Quentin Reynolds easily . . . It is the story of all the American Jews who fought—and died—with all the First Divisions driving against the Fascist enemy in all the fought-over Sicilies all the way around the world.

CHAPTER TWO

PEARL HARBOR TO GUADALCANAL

WAR BROKE suddenly over the U. S. A. Though many had seen it coming, at first slowly and then with increasing speed, it took the country as a whole by surprise. The day of Japanese infamy—December 7, 1941—was a shocker to the great mass of Americans. They were horrified by the brutal incidents of exploding war, but even more they were indignant. Their first immediate response was a sort of outraged cry of "They can't do that to us!"

To most Americans on that quiet December Sunday the news came through the voice of a radio announcer, himself shocked by what he had to tell. In city homes and country farmhouses, in the deep South and in New England and the West and the Middle West, the radio listeners knew well enough that what they heard was true, but they remained incredulous. This couldn't be!

A kind of hypnotic skepticism enveloped us, out of which we presently awoke into a consuming rage at the treacherous

Japanese enemy. In our anger some hardly noted, or noted only as a minor incident, that the falling bombs were still hot on Pearl Harbor when, half a world away, the chief Nazi rushed to declare that he too was at war with us. This wasn't only the men of Japan who for some inexplicable reason had chosen to attack the U. S.

The guns at last trained on us were the big guns of the worldwide Axis, sworn enemy of mankind.

The military developments of the succeeding weeks were confusing in detail but clear enough in their major meaning. The Japanese had simply broken out and were attacking all over the Pacific. Pearl Harbor was the first and, we suspected and later learned, the worst. There our proud naval ships had been caught, like sitting ducks, and smashed. Wake Island was under attack, with an inadequate force of Marines fighting back. Manila was bombed and the Philippines were invaded. Eventually came the heart-searing defense at Bataan and the surrender on Corregidor.

That was the year—1942—of the peak of Axis aggrandizement and the low point of the democratic nations' gloom. General MacArthur fled, in secret and under cover of night, from Bataan to Australia, there to announce that he would surely return. He began laying plans for the return at once.

But meanwhile the arrogant Japs drove on across the island stepping stones of the Pacific by sea and air and land. Here and there they were delayed. Here and there they were temporarily thrown back. But always they gobbled up more and more of the Pacific until, on New Guinea and in the Solomons, they were knocking at the very doors of Australia. To the West they

spilled over into Burma and the British fortress of Singapore. Along the Northern route they swallowed the Aleutians, threatening Alaska. Mainland U.S.A. was not, it seemed, beyond their possible reach.

Those were the dark days when the Jap world-aggressors and their Nazi partners in crime looked, indeed, like the triumphant wave of the future that could not be denied.

At home we girded our loins for the great counter-attack to come, sometimes wondering whether we had the strength—and the allowance of time—to stop the fascist enemy's drive. Sometimes arguing about methods. For instance, whether it were not better to concentrate all our forces on the Pacific rather than to the East, in Europe—as the President, who had planned better than we thought, willed it.

There was no wondering and no arguing among those caught in the direct line of the enemy's onsweep. They, wherever they were when the first blow was struck, fought back instantly. Soldiers and fliers at Pearl Harbor and Hickam Field, Marines on Wake Island, the wonder-working little band of Stateside troops and Philippine fighters under MacArthur and Wainwright at Manila—without exception they clawed at the enemy with whatever inadequate weapons were at hand, harassed him, delayed his progress, upset his time schedule, gained precious time for the people at home to mount the counter-offensive.

In the process many men were killed, more were wounded or, further fighting having become hopeless, were taken prisoners. Jewish boys in American uniforms did their full share in this first heart-breaking fighting—and dying—of World War II.

Pearl Harbor was struck early Sunday morning by Jap car-

rier bombers which also pounded Hickam Airfield. In a few hours both were a shambles. In the turmoil of that day and the days that followed many stories of incredible individual valor were acted out by hitherto quiet, undistinguished men transformed into heroes.... men who were Jews, as well as others.

There was a young Navy ensign, Stanley Caplan of Elmira, New York, only eight months in the Navy. On December 7 he was on duty on a destroyer anchored in Pearl Harbor. An ensign is the Navy's lowest commissioned rank, and Ensign Caplan had never before commanded a ship. When hell rained down on the harbor, and on the destroyer, her commander was killed. Ensign Caplan suddenly found himself the ranking officer on board.

He took command and, green as he was, turned the ship, with the sure instinct of a long-experienced fighting seaman, to the open sea.

Out on the calm Pacific—where only the Pacific was calm—these things then happened:

> Four Japanese planes headed for the destroyer. Lieutenant Caplan's men shot them out of the sky.
>
> The periscopes of first one enemy submarine, then another, cut a white wake as the subs bellied up to the surface. The destroyer dropped depth bombs that finished both.
>
> A torpedo dropped from a passing plane, breaking in two in the air. The still-live warhead landed on the deck. A lower-ranking ensign, Milton Moldafsky,

pounced on it and heaved it overboard, where it exploded on striking the water. Ensign Moldafsky did not see the explosion. He had already returned to his battle station, manning a deck gun.

For 36 hours the destroyer under its ensign-skipper patrolled the ocean outside Pearl Harbor, spitting shells and machine gun bullets at Jap ships and planes. Then she returned to the Harbor, undamaged. Said an official citation by Navy Secretary Knox:

"He responded in a most outstanding manner to the situation. He and the others met all emergencies and operated the ship like veterans."

There were others at Pearl Harbor. There was Private Joseph H. Guttman of Union City, New Jersey, who wrote home that day: "Tonight I go on guard duty from 12 to 4"—and on that round of duty he was shot and killed.

There was Ensign Ira Jeffrey of Minneapolis, the war's first casualty from that city. When the attack on the fleet was let loose, he turned himself into an ammunition carrier, kept the supply going steadily to the anti-aircraft guns of the Battleship California, himself carrying ammunition boxes for hours until he was killed. Says a Navy Department citation: "For distinguished devotion to duty and extraordinary courage and disregard of his own safety . . ."

There was Commander Solomon Isquith of Brooklyn, commanding the target ship Utah when she was struck down. He was decorated with the Navy Cross for skillfully saving 90 percent of his crew.

There was Lieutenant Stephen Salzman of Wilmington, Dela-

ware, awarded the Silver Star for bringing down a Zero at Schofield Barracks with a single rifle shot. And Private Louis Schleifer of Newark, New Jersey, killed while trying to save his grounded plane on Hickam Field. And Captain Robert Kushner, in civil life an Atlanta dentist, cited for distinguished service in treating wounded at Pearl Harbor. And many others.

Out of the fighting in the Philippines the name of Sergeant Meyer Levin, son of a Brooklyn Jewish tailor, was added to the list of the war's early heroes. He was one of those, his letters home later showed, who joined the fighting forces—back in 1938—not idly, not for a childish reason, but from thought-out conviction that the fascist aggressors would have to be fought and that he must be among the fighters.

He was a bombardier, crew member of the Flying Fortress piloted by a fellow New Yorker, Captain Colin Kelly. On the war's first day, it was reported, Kelly's plane sank the battleship Haruna, pride of Nippon's navy. And Bombardier Levin dropped the bombs which undoubtedly struck and damaged the Jap super-battlewagon, though it turned out she wasn't sunk. It was the first victory of any importance for our side and for a long time we cherished it, though eventually the Haruna returned to battle, in the Philippines Sea, where she was again damaged.

Colin Kelly was killed in that first Haruna action, while the crew members, with Levin, parachuted to safety. Levin's fame, however, did not rest with the Haruna bombing. Within a year he had taken part in more than 60 combat missions. He was bombardier on the Flying Fortress Chief Seattle in the Battle

of the Coral Sea, and sank a 15,000-ton Jap transport.

In January, 1943, he volunteered to go on a routine reconnaissance flight out of somewhere in New Guinea. The plane was, again, a Flying Fortress, but this time no combat was involved. The crew observed a Jap convoy, collected other information and turned back. There was no enemy interference, no trouble at all.

Then, on the return trip, a fierce tropic storm broke which battered the plane, wore it out, used up its fuel. With gas tanks almost empty, the ship lost altitude, barely skimmed the rough water. Levin and the others knew they were about to crash, almost any minute. Preparing for that, Sergeant Levin crawled painfully to the rear, groping for the lifebelt pulls. These he reached in time, freeing the rafts so they would float without delay when the plane ditched. He had, evidently, just started to retrace his zigzag way back when the plane struck a rising wave, bounced, struck water again, settled in the rough sea. The crew members, those who could, fought their way through inrushing water, out of the plane, onto the subsiding wings.

The rafts were already floating free, and the men scrambled aboard. All were eventually rescued—except Levin. Trapped in the plane in which he had stayed an instant too long, he went down with the sinking wreckage.

He was 25 when he died. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster and, posthumously, the Purple Heart.

Forty years before, there had been fighting in the Philippines,

during the Aguinaldo Rebellion that followed the Spanish-American War. U. S. troops fought under a General MacArthur then, and one of them was a Jewish soldier named Abraham Mark. Now there was fighting again over the same terrain, fiercer and more dangerous than the first. Again a General MacArthur was in command, son of the earlier general. Again an Aguinaldo was with the enemy, this time a Jap stooge. And again among the U. S. troops was a Jewish soldier named Mark —Lieutenant Henry Mark, son of Abraham.

"Having wonderful time," Lieutenant Mark wrote to his father in Los Angeles late in November, 1941. Then the Japs struck. As Douglas MacArthur maneuvered his troops out of bombed Manila, backed them toward the relative safety of Bataan, the lieutenant took command of a troop of Philippine Scouts who held on outside the city, who harassed the Japanese invaders, made life miserable for them.

Mark's men fought and ran and fought and fell back to Bataan. Late in the afternoon of December 24 they were called on to bring help to a cavalry troop that had been holding back the oncoming Japs but couldn't do it alone any more.

Outfought as they had been on foot, the Japanese were bringing up motorized units and tanks. Lieutenant Mark and his men took up a position near a small bridge, saw the Jap tanks pull to a few feet of the bridge and stop. The Jap strategy was obvious: To pick off the defenders, one by one, then try the bridge when it was safe.

Rifle and machine gun fire hardly budged the Japs, but Lieutenant Mark saw a chance, a slim one, of upsetting them. A handful of grenades tossed among the assembled tanks might

pile them up in a heap of wreckage which would turn the trick.

Mark armed himself with a supply of grenades. An open rice field, under constant Jap fire, lay directly ahead between him and the bridge. He took a deep breath and raced across the field, his eyes glued to the spot from which he could toss the grenades. He had barely started when a machine gunner hidden in a tree opened fire and cut him down.

His immediate superior, Captain John Wheeler, reported that Jap fire was "pouring on him" as he ran, that the hidden gun "got him before he was 20 yards away."

Posthumously Henry Mark was awarded the D.S.C.

There was a sergeant of Marines, Herbert Kielson of the little community of Laurelton in Queens. He enlisted as a boy of 18 back in 1938, and two years later, at the World's Fair in San Francisco, won the heavyweight boxing championship of the Marine Corps. Late in '41 he was gunnery instructor at San Diego, but when war burst he pleaded for a chance to exchange that for combat duty. On January 2, 1942, he telephoned home across country, in jubilant voice: "I'm shoving off!"

That was the last his family heard of him until the official word arrived that he died on March 23, on a U. S. cruiser, of wounds suffered in action somewhere in the Pacific. They brought his young, once-strong body back to Laurelton, perhaps the first to be returned to the U. S. for burial from the Pacific theater. More than 1,000 neighbors including young men in new uniforms attended the funeral services in Laurelton's Jewish Center. He lies in Mount Judah Cemetery, Cypress Hills.

There was Marine Major Max Clark of Galveston, Texas, wounded twice at Bataan and Corregidor, holder of the Silver Star and the Purple Heart, wearer—for he was listed a hero of the first World War as well—of the French Croix de Guerre and the Fourragere. Reported missing and then killed in action. Posthumously awarded the proud Navy Cross for distinguished service at Cavite Navy Yard and the Sangley Point Naval Air Station for "working day and night, to the limit of human endurance, salvaging war materials and explosives from the stricken and burning areas—" materials desperately needed for later use by MacArthur's men on Bataan.

There was George Berkowitz of Dallas, Texas, Air Force lieutenant, wounded at Clark Field and sent home with one leg amputated. And Sergeant Harry Fineman of Wilmington, Delaware, killed in that last heart-breaking action on Corregidor. "I am proud," said his mother when the news was brought to her, "that he died for the United States."

And so others.

When David Goodman was a boy of 17 in Brooklyn, he had a boy's idea. He wanted to be a sailor, to join the Navy. That was in 1937. At his age, he had to have his parents' consent or he couldn't join. Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Goodman listened to their boy's pleas, considered his enthusiasm for life on the bounding main, but said no. They had other plans for him. In later years Mrs. Goodman recalled that at last the boy blackmailed her into signing a parental consent by going on a determined hunger strike. It was better, she decided, to have a young boy eat, even if it was sailor's chow.

In March, 1942, when the boy was 21 and a toughened, trustworthy seaman, an order reached Bataan—from the White House itself—that the leader of Bataan's fighters must get to a base in the far rear, to prepare the comeback. On the night of March 16, therefore, a 70-foot torpedo boat zigzagged its way through the waters of the China Sea, past the grim rock of Corregidor, away to a secret rendezvous with a plane that would presently head for a new headquarters in the safety of Australia. A screen of five mosquito boats, moving silently, led the way as guardians and guides, with Lieutenant John Bulkeley frozen to the wheel of the leading craft.

Much depended on the success of this voyage of a fragile torpedo boat that carried, among others, General MacArthur and the President of the Philippines, Manuel Quezon. And manning a ticklish post on board was the boy who had once dreamed of adventure as a sailor, Radioman 2d Class David Goodman. For his part in that venture he was awarded the Silver Star.

Many have written about the four-months ordeal of Bataan and Corregidor. But no one has better summed up the anguish, the horror, the black despair and yet the sense of hope too of that gaunt tragedy than Irving Strobing, not a writer at all but a Jewish soldier from Brooklyn.

The tragedy had played itself out to the last Act, the final inevitable curtain. Sergeant Strobing, a Signal Corps man, was on radio duty that bitter day in May, 1942, when General Wainwright was forced to surrender his last remaining men to the Japs. Strobing had been on 14 hours' continuous duty, and

he stayed on beyond that, past the formal surrender order, tapping away at his keys, sending whatever tumultous phrase welled up in his mind, not knowing whether anywhere on the globe any friendly ear heard what he sent, yet hoping that some one did.

This, then, (for it was taken down by another Jewish soldier in Honolulu) is what Strobing sent:

"I know how a mouse feels, caught in a trap, waiting for guys to come along and finish it . . .

"They aren't near yet. We're waiting for God only knows what.

"How about a chocolate soda? . . .

"Not many. Not near yet. Lots of heavy fighting going on . . .

"We may have to give up at noon. We don't know yet . . .

"They are throwing men and shells at us and we may not be able to stand it. They've been shelling us faster than we can count . . .

"We've got about 55 minutes and I feel sick at my stomach. I am really low down. They are all around now, smashing rifles. They bring in the wounded every minute . . .

"We will be waiting for you guys to help. This is the only thing I guess that can be done. General Wainwright is a right guy and we are all willing to go on for him, but shells were dropping all night faster than hell. Enemy heavy cross-shelling and bombing. They have got us all around and from the skies . . .

"From here it looks like firing ceased on both sides. Men here are all feeling bad because of terrific nervous strain of the siege . . .

"Corregidor used to be a nice place, but it's haunted now.

Withstood a terrific pounding . . .

"The jig is up. Every one is bawling like a baby. They are piling dead and wounded in our tunnel. Arms weak from pounding keys long hours, no rest, short rations, tired."

He pleaded that his message be relayed to his mother, Mrs. Minnie Strobing, at her Brooklyn home, 605 Barbey Street. He sent love "to all my family and friends" and signed off:

"God bless 'em all. Hope they'll be there when I come home. Tell Joe (a brother in the Coast Guard), wherever he is, to give 'em hell for us. God bless you and keep you. Stand by . . ."

That was all. That was the last voice, for thereafter the great silence of Jap occupation descended on Corregidor.

As a war correspondent in Japan, this writer saw Strobing again in Yokohama, the day he got there by train from his last prison camp.

He was wonderful to see and to talk to. The presence of things American—soldiers, uniforms, jeeps—overwhelmed him. I think he was in a daze. We talked on a half-shattered Yokohama pier, but he recalled the interview later "in a wonderful big hotel." He was angry with nobody that day, not even the Jap prison guards who had starved him and rapped him on the knuckles when he reached out for a proffered cigarette.

He came home and the neighbors on Barbey Street and in the larger neighborhood of Brooklyn made an ado about him, as their special very own war hero. There were ceremonies, speeches, dinners, interviews and pictures in the papers. They named him borough president for a day. The Army promoted him to staff sergeant.

Young Strobing—he was now 25—took it all in stride. In the

midst of the celebrations, he told his mother that he liked the Army and would re-enlist. Which was right enough with a mother who wanted Son Irving to do only what he wanted to do.

The surrender at Bataan and Corregidor was like the opening of the sluice-gates that, up to then, had held back the Japanese flood. Now the rampaging invaders poured down by ship and by air, over the Philippine Islands, over the great and small East Indies, Borneo, Java, Sumatra, the Celebes and Timor Island, down to the New Guinea coast and the Solomons.

After each hop to each new island, they set up a new base and, after a pause, sent new bombers ahead to batter and "soften up" the next objective . . . At last it appeared as if they might be circling around, setting up a half-ring of bases from which to take over Australia.

But here the turn came—slowly at first, invisibly to the naked eye of the nation at home. It started as a tug-of-war in the jungle mountains behind Port Moresby, on New Guinea's finger-peninsula pointing East. It broke suddenly into the sea-and-air Battle of the Coral Sea. It hardened into the bitter struggle for Guadalcanal . . .

Nowhere was the fighting worse than in the steaming, malaria-sweating jungle swamps of New Guinea. At pin-point spots on the map with place names you never heard, men battled on and some died and some fell wounded. In the poisonous jungle even a slightly wounded man must get quick medical aid to live.

There was fighting like that at Sananda, on New Guinea, where a United States unit lay cut off in a jungle forest. A

relief force under Major Bert Zeeff moved out to bring help. Infiltrating Jap jungle fighters were everywhere and soon the relief troops were stopped in their tracks by deadly sniper and machine gun fire. Major Zeeff himself lay stretched out on the hot, dank ground, beside him a medical aide from Omaha, Hyman Epstein.

Bullets kept cutting through the green foliage, splintering tree trunks, landing with a sinister thud in the muddy ground. Ten feet ahead a man lay groaning, a machine gun bullet in his neck. The medic looked at the Major and the Major shook his head. Ten feet of flying death lay between them and the wounded soldier, and nothing would be gained by throwing away another man.

The medic, however—for that was the way of the medics in the war—started for the wounded man anyhow. Crawling slowly through the soggy mud, he reached his man at last, drew out his bandages and sulfa and the rest, bandaged the wound, inched his way through the rain of bullets back to his post.

The gloom of a tropical sunset spread swiftly. Now another man lay moaning, and calling for help, from the pain of a head wound.

Again Medic Epstein crawled and crept and inched his way toward him, bound up the wound and, in the same way, came back. All night machine gun bullets cut through the dark, like a knife of flying steel, and intermittently the snipers fired.

At dawn, their aim became more accurate. As still another man was hit, Epstein, with a sort of automatic response, went after him. As before, he crawled with head held low through

the mud and the underbrush and bound up the soldier's wounds. As before, a man came crawling back. But this time it wasn't the medic who returned but the wounded soldier. He was crying, the way fighting men cry when at last they let go, but not from pain or his own hardship. Between frank tears, he shouted: "Somebody go out there and help Epstein, he's bleeding to death. Somebody's gotta go out quick and get him!"

It was sure death to try. But more than that, it was too late to try. Medical Aide Hyman Epstein was already dead, killed in action as certainly as any man who ever aimed a carbine or pressed a trigger.

Major Zeeff said of him:

"In war I guess the best go first. That kid was the best. When they are handing honors around, you can give mine to little Hymie Epstein."

This is about another kind of medic, a doctor, a lieutenant commander in the Navy, Samuel Isquith of Brooklyn. It was early in the morning of August 7th in the critical year 1942 that the troop transport Vincennes, with other invasion craft, edged into Guadalcanal Harbor. At 2:30 came the order to man battle stations, and Commander Isquith remembered later running to his—the aft dressing station—in the blackout dark, carrying his lifebelt and flashlight, his .45 and gas mask, and in the gas mask cover two chocolate bars.

There was the long, nervous wait. Then at dawn the big guns of the invading fleet opened up with a barrage that kept up for hours. At 11 the ship's loudspeakers announced, "The

Marines have landed and have the situation well in hand." The boys cheered and cheered again.

The Japs had been caught flat-footed and so far had made no reply. But at noon heavy bombers cut in from the North, and the ships' antiaircraft guns barked at them, keeping them out of range. A heavier raid followed in the afternoon and still heavier the next day, Saturday, August 8th. The Vincennes had a near miss off the starboard quarter, and the first casualties began to come in.

Then, at 1:45 Sunday morning, all hell seemed to break loose all at once. Shells exploded in the air and in the water. In the "safe" location of the dressing station, Commander Isquith worked steadily on casualties, some of them serious now, with the ship's chaplain and two enlisted men acting as assistants. He felt the shuddering impact of a direct hit, but kept on working. The loudspeaker announced, "Our seaplane hangar has been hit" and a few moments later, "There has been a direct hit on the fire room." The doctor noted, in passing, that the deck under his feet was tilted to port.

Now the loudspeaker remained silent (the communications system, including telephones, had been shot away, but the little group in the dressing station weren't aware of that.) After all the wounds had been dressed, all the hemorrhages stopped, the doctor had time to notice that the deck was now at a 25-degree slant. He called to topside: Had the order been given to abandon ship? He repeated the question. There was no answer. The silence was weird and frightening.

The commander took his little detail of helpers and the wounded men up to the main deck. A fierce fire was raging

amidships. Flames enveloped the whole superstructure. The ship was turning over on her portside. The gun decks were awash. Except for the little group with him, there was not a soul on board.

The order to abandon ship had been given half an hour before but, with communications cut, it never reached the medic's battle station. Now the wounded were quickly got into life jackets and helped over the down-tilting port side. The others followed. Suddenly shells began to explode in the ship's ammunition boxes, and from somewhere a flaming beam tumbled across the deck, cutting off the commander's escape by the route his men had gone. He worked his way to the starboard railing, poised and dived, as far out as possible, to clear the hull and propeller.

He struck the water 20 feet below, just missing a propeller blade, and came to the surface tasting oil. Danger was pressing in on every side, seen and unseen. He swam away from the sinking Vincennes, so he would not be dragged along when she went down. He listened for depth bomb charges that might go off. Looking back over one shoulder, he saw for an instant the Vincennes' rudder and propeller shaft high in the air, like a kind of weird flag waving defiance, outlined against the flaming Astoria, the Vincennes' sister ship.

Then the Vincennes went down. Sickening underwater explosions followed and he felt "as though a rope had been yanked around my abdomen." He swam rapidly. He felt the weight of the waterlogged Jewish prayer book in the pocket of his shirt. The battle was still on. Large and small craft were maneuvering in the harbor. A light blinked on and off and

on again and off. He swam toward it and found three rafts lashed together, on which 100 men were crowded, a good many wounded, some seriously wounded. He circled the rafts three times, looking for a place to climb on, but there was none. Every inch of space was occupied. Other men were also swimming around, trying to get on.

After a while somebody threw him a short line attached to a raft. He tied the other end to one arm. Thus swimming and hanging on, he took command. He ordered the able-bodied men to help the wounded. Rain fell and the water grew rough. More and more swimming men attached themselves, in one way or another, to the rafts, until there were 200 in all. As the hours passed and the Astoria burned and flamed against the dark sky, quiet descended on the men on the rafts. The quiet of men conserving small energies. Some prayed.

At dawn, three United States destroyers approached, and from one of them a whaleboat pulled away and drew alongside the rafts, tied up to them and towed them slowly to the destroyer. There the men were taken on board. A young ship's officer hauled Commander Isquith on deck, dressed him in dry pajamas and socks. Wearing only these, he went down to the destroyer's dressing station and worked all morning and into the middle of the afternoon, treating the wounded two at a time —80 in all, including himself. A shrapnel splinter had lodged in one knee as he was diving from the doomed Vincennes, and that he now removed. It was a minor injury, not enough to interfere with a doctor's duties.

From the rescuing destroyer the survivors were transferred to a transport and there Commander Isquith, still in borrowed

pajamas and socks, reported at once to the operating room and again "went to work." The transport, after a while, headed back to Pearl Harbor . . .

A poor Jewish boy named Barnet David Rosofsky, born on New York's East Side, brought up on the teeming stockyard streets of Chicago, became in time Barney Ross, lightweight and welterweight boxing champion of the world. In the professional prize ring he fought—and won—many a tough fight, for which he was often paid a bigshot's purse. Tremendous crowds paid to watch Champion Barney Ross fight under the Kleig lights, and they made his fighting a big business.

In November 1942, the same Barney Ross, then a Private in the United States Marines, fought his biggest fight of all. No Kleig lights played on the ring, no audience looked on and cheered, no purse was paid. But, take it from Sergeant Barney Ross, just winning that fight as part of the larger fight of World War II was purse and payment enough.

The time was the afternoon of November 19th, the place Guadalcanal. In brush and tangled growth not far from the beach, the boys were taking it easy. There was a lull in the long fighting and anyhow tomorrow the Army was coming in to take over, and the Marines would be pulled out to a bivouac area, maybe off the island altogether. The boys were scattered over an irregular line of foxholes.

A Marine called Porky, 20 years old, a B.A.R. man, was at Ross's left, and another named "Heavy", also B.A.R. and also young, at his right. Half a dozen yards ahead was 19-year-old Whitey. Ross, being 32, was the oldest, pretty old for a Marine.

B.A.R. men carry a Browning Automatic Rifle, very useful in an emergency. At 4 p.m. Porky began suddenly firing his B.A.R., and when Ross asked why, he spit out the word "Japs" and kept on firing. There were slithering figures, when you looked, moving like shadows in the brush 20 yards ahead. The other men took up the cry, including Ross, and soon the word was passed down the line and the shooting became general.

Whitey was hit first, in the chest, and as he slumped down another bullet caught him in the back. Ross and 225-pound Heavy crawled out, while Porky kept on firing to keep them covered, to where Whitey lay. They brought him back and gave him some cover.

A navy Corpsman (medic) gave poor Whitey first aid. He kept pleading all the time, "I'm all right, fellows. Don't worry about me. I'm all right. Don't worry about me."

The shooting died down after a while, and Ross, Heavy and two Marines named Freeman and Monak got ready to carry Whitey to the rear. It was time for the Marines to get out anyhow, and this was the last group still in the line. The other three fixed up a litter out of a coat and started back, with Ross following. He was carrying Heavy's B.A.R. and he was facing back, covering like a rearguard point.

They had moved no more than two or three steps, when all the machine guns in the world opened up. Whitey was hit again and instantly killed. Heavy, Monak and Freeman were hit and dropped to the ground, crawling for cover. Ross leaped into a shell hole behind a log. He was the only one unhurt. Two soldiers, who materialized out of somewhere, also took shelter behind the log.

They stayed there all night, faces digging into the dirt, Japanese bullets bouncing against the log, swishing inches over the men's heads. Ross alone was in position to fire. He fired eighty rounds of his own rifle ammunition. The soldiers passed their Garands to him and he fired their ammunition, 200 rounds in all. Every time he fired he had to raise his head a little and more than 20 times Jap machine gun bullets bounced off his helmet. These helmets were made of good steel.

Now there was no more ammunition left—nothing but hand grenades. Painfully Heavy passed up his grenades to Ross, so did the others, giving him a total of 21. He tossed them at intervals, one by one, whenever it seemed necessary to keep the Japs away. At last only one grenade was left. Ross fixed all the men's bayonets and then his own. As they waited for the attack which they were certain would come any time, they prayed. Prize Fighter Ross murmured the words of a Hebrew prayer he remembered.

The dreadful mortar fire opened up now, mingling with the machine guns. A heavy rain came down, which seemed worst of all. The men were drenched to the skin. The shellhole in which they stood filled up with rain water. Mortar shells landed all around, showering fragments and wood splinters and chunks of dirt over them. A slug plunked into Ross's left foot and he cut away the shoe.

The guns flashed and flashed again, but the Jap attack never came.

Dawn broke at last and then arrived not the Japs attacking but Captain O. K. LeBlanc and Lieutenant John Murdock of Ross's own Marine Company, and a relief party.

It was "the greatest sight of my life," Ross later recalled. A great sight, also, were the heaps of dead the Japs had left behind along the line where Ross had fired and fired during the night. Ross began to shudder, in a strange way that was new to him—malaria. The Japs were still firing, but the Marines worked their way back to a safe bivouac area.

It was now November 20th. In the sick bay they gave him some brandy and hazily Private Ross heard his captain's words, "Ross, you are now Corporal Barney Ross."

On November 30th he sat up in a cot and they told him, "You were out of your head for ten days. Malaria."

In the fighting career of Champion Barney Ross, this was his greatest fight.

CHAPTER THREE

WE FIGHT IN NORTH AFRICA

IN THE eleventh month after America became a combatant, the eyes of Americans were glued to a far-off, tiny island of the Solomons. Here a long-drawn-out battle was slowly nearing a decision, in our favor. This might mark the war's turning point, but it was as yet too soon to tell.

High authorities talked, meanwhile, of the job ahead, the terrifying job of island-hopping the Pacific back to Manila and to Japan—retaking each small and large island with just such anguished fighting as this at Guadalcanal . . .

But the Atlantic still swarmed with Nazi submarines that sank our merchant ships and slaughtered our merchant seamen. And across the Atlantic Hitler still held all Europe as far East as Stalingrad, Africa as far South as the Sahara. We were becoming, sure enough, the active Arsenal of Democracy, sending weapons of war to all the Allies on all the fighting fronts. But on the far-spreading canvas of the war our fighting effort, at Guadalcanal, was a pin-prick. In actual fighting the enemy we

were doing, compared to our Allies, not much.

And at home the people, or some of them, raised querulous questions about such things as gasoline. Why, for instance, had the East Coast supply been suddenly cut off, so that a citizen with legitimate business to attend to could not get the necessary gas for his car? Was not this, the irked inquirers hinted, the work of a bureaucrat exercising his dictatorial whim?

Secretly, at this time, ships were gathering and loading, warships and ships carrying men and munitions, tanks and planes, and supplies including necessary gasoline. Soon the greatest armada the world had seen hovered off the North Africa shore, as if bound for the Mediterranean.

This was the time of much talk about a Second Front (in France) to re-enforce the land fighting of the Russians. The Nazis—too clever to be taken in by a feint—got set to repel an invasion of France. The invasion struck instead on the North African Coast.

Our green American troops swarmed ashore at Casablanca, at Oran, at a hundred sand and rockbound points. After fierce, brief fighting the Vichy French made their peace with us. The Germans fought on, a fighting retreat, both in the invasion areas and where Montgomery's Britons chased Rommel and his Afrika Korps out of Egypt and all the way across the top of the continent.

When Spring came, the Germans, caught between the jaws of a huge pincers, were crushed into the worst battlefield surrender in Germany's history.

It was the first extensive land campaign of the War in which we had a part, and the first time we met Hitler's armed Herren-

volk—and humiliated them. When the climax came at Bizerte, broken and disorganized groups of Nazis wandered over the North African sands, searching frantically for an American—or Briton—in uniform to whom to surrender. Here the pattern and the precedent was set for the Nazis' long series of surrenders that ultimately ended in the surrender of Germany itself.

In the invasion and in the long months of desert fighting the men of Jewish faith fought as foot-soldiers, as tankmen, as sailors on Navy combat ships and as merchant seamen, as fliers and medics and combat chaplains and all the rest....

There was Private Milton Gorobetz of Brooklyn, a graduate of Brooklyn College, a boy of 24. The Army gave him his basic training and, because of early experience as a pharmacist, assigned him to the Medical Corps. Four months after induction, they put him on a transport and sent him overseas.

Within sight of North Africa's sands, the shore blazed out with heavy gunfire from Vichy-French, the transport was shot from under his feet and sunk. Somehow Gorobetz floundered his way to shore. Others before and after him reached shore too, some wounded, some badly wounded. Bombs fell from Vichy planes, and Vichy-French machine guns strafed the inshore approaches.

Private Gorobetz wrote home later that he became "utterly frightened and confused." Despite that, and though he had lost a medic's usual equipment, he attended to the medic's business in the manner made traditional by the Medical Corps. Major General Johnathan W. Anderson personally decorated

him with the Silver Star for "calmness, bravery and valor under fire, disregarding air bombardment and strafing, and administering first aid to the men who were injured on the beach."

During the presentation of the award, Gorobetz wrote, he was "trembling with emotion and fear, not knowing whether I was sitting or standing."

In the quiet life he had lived as a civilian in Brooklyn, Corporal Bernard J. Kessel never so much as clamped his hand over a steering wheel. If he rode in an automobile, it was as a passenger, while others drove. His astonished mother—astonished by the story that came out of Oran—remembered that her boy was just naturally unhandy when it came to mechanics. Couldn't connect a floor-lamp if a fortune depended on it.

That was at home. In the Army they put him in the Tank Corps. And when North Africa was invaded and the drive against the seaport of Oran was on, they put him in the driver's seat of a General Grant tank and told him to drive on. The unhandy corporal did.

Somewhere along the line the main column and Kessel's tank parted company. But Corporal Kessel drove on, and presently he and the others of his four-man crew knew they were on the outskirts of Oran, for there was an airport ahead, but a roadblock barred the way. Kessel put on more power and smashed through and over it.

Suddenly a mobile 75-millimeter gun faced him, an ugly thing to look at from the muzzle end. There was no time for the tank crew to load and fire, and besides, by this time Corporal Kessel was in a hurry. He rammed the gun position at full

speed and went on. A line of military vehicles two blocks long lay ahead, "so we ran along the edge of the road and smashed the whole lot into the ditch."

Then, full of the spirit of adventure, Kessel drove his tank into Oran proper and the boys "opened fire in all directions." More armor and other forces entered the city before it surrendered but, said one news headline over the story: "ORPHAN TANK ALMOST TAKES ORAN BY ITSELF."

Lieutenant Henry Steiner of Richmond, Virginia, fought with the British under General Montgomery all the way from El Alamein to Tunis and Bizerte and then into Sicily, piloting a B-25. More than once death breathed hot on his neck—but he went through 55 combat missions without a scratch to himself or any member of his crew. For a distance of 100 miles outside Tunis, the day after it was captured, he watched the long lines of once arrogant Nazis who were now prisoners, and his closest brush with death in the air was outside Palermo over Sicily. There a dozen searchlights pinned him in the sky and he expected the worst. Other U. S. planes diverted the Germans' attention and he got away.

But roughest of all was the fighting in Africa—not only the Germans, but the water which wasn't there and the sand which always was. Flying sand which gets into your tent, your engine, your food, your hair. Always, he remembered, food was like grit between your teeth, and for one two-week period, you drank salt. The humane Germans having salted the only wells in the area before they skipped . . .

While Rommel was still the over-rated "Desert Fox" of North Africa, harassing the British lines and threatening the allied hold on Egypt, Sergeant Herman J. Hochman got his chance.

Sergeant Hochman, 22, came from the towns of Rosenberg and Houston, Texas. He got his chance only after overcoming a long series of obstacles. As a boy out of High School, he applied for flying cadet and was turned down—not enough scholastic credits. He went to work on his books, passed—and was turned down by Army medics on physical grounds: a sixth finger on one hand. He immediately corrected that too, by having the extra finger amputated. At last he was able to take the Air Corps examination, only to fail by a narrow margin. Still determined to fight from the air, he enlisted as a private in the Air Corps, where he finally received his wings as a bombardier.

He was at the bombardier's post when his plane was one of a squadron which, late in 1942, went raiding Rommel's supply lines. German and Italian fighters appeared to intercept, and Hochman's plane knocked four of them to earth. Then a Nazi supply ship appeared off-shore and Hochman's bomber veered to sea long enough to send her to the bottom. On the return flight, another enemy formation appeared overhead. Hochman and his fellow crew members shot three of them down. The bomber returned to her base undamaged, with a highly pleased cub bombardier on board.

There were two battles of the Kasserine Pass. In the first, the battle-smart Nazis outmaneuvered the still-green Americans,

trapped them and drove them pell-mell into a local defeat. It happened otherwise when, in February, we drove through the Pass going the other way.

It happened otherwise – and started the final push that knocked the Nazis out of North Africa—because of people like Lieutenant Joseph Fink of New York. He and his platoon were trucking it through the Pass when a strong German armored force turned up, shelled the Pass, knocked out the truck and set it on fire. The men and equipment were strewn over the landscape.

Undiscouraged, Fink stayed with the burning truck. With head held low and belly to the ground, he crawled about gathering up what usable equipment could be saved, assembled his scattered men, crawled with them back to a rally point, reorganized his platoon. There they stayed all night—a bad night. But in the morning, they moved up to a mountain position and set up an observation post from which to study the Germans' gun locations.

As each German gun was spotted, Fink walkie-talkied the location back to our artillery, which then picked the Nazis off, one by one. Direct artillery fire was turned on an enemy force advancing against important French positions and stopped it cold.

They gave him the Silver Star and the French Croix de Guerre with Gold Star.

Fondouk Gap is no great shakes as a place. Only an opening in a range of rocky North African mountains. On an ordinary map of Africa or of Tunisia you would not even find the name

marked. But Private Francis H. Sternberg of Richmond Hill, Long Island, who fought in six major battles of the North African campaign, will tell you that the greatest of these, which was also his last, was the battle for Fondouk Gap.

What the Gap looks like he doesn't know, for he never really got to the place. But a wide valley without a name lies between the Gap eight miles in one direction and El Arcuhen three miles to the West. And about this valley Sternberg, in two weeks that his tank platoon waited there in March of 1943, came to know much.

He came to know that by day the weather was hot as a sidewalk of New York on an August afternoon and at night it froze. That there was sand everywhere, out of which in some mysterious way, clumps of cactus grew, and the sand got in your clothes and your eyes and in the tank machinery and the gun barrels and in your food. And that the food at Fondouk Gap—a soggy British mess called beef and kidneys—was bad enough when heated and particularly bad when cold.

And also he learned, and the other boys learned with him, that Stuka bombers came raiding over the Valley Without a Name, regular as clockwork, always at meal time, upsetting the chow and giving even a man with a strong stomach a stomachache. So after the first day or so, without any formal christening ceremony, the boys gave the nameless valley a name—Stuka Valley.

In Stuka Valley, life was sternly regimented, not so much by military commands as by the raiding Stukas and by the Messerschmitts that flew in low and fast, and strafed (or machine-gunned) as they flew. In Sternberg's tank platoon, the watch

used to come around among the men just before dawn and shout "Stuka time, boys," meaning it was breakfast time. And Sternberg, like the others, would scramble out of his foxhole built right under his tank, and race full speed to the kitchen truck to get his iron rations (you had to be made of iron to digest them) warmed up. Then back across the open cactus fields, to sit on the side of his foxhole, munching the ration• sometimes hot, often cold, and watching for the Stukas and the Messerschmitts.

Except on the first day, when the tank guns knocked down four heavy raiders out of 12, the Stukas stayed carefully away from the tank area, doing their dirty work among the Infantry. But the Messerschmitts came in instead and as they whistled by Sternberg dropped fast to the bottom of his foxhole and waited them out, face to the ground.

And this happened regularly, without exception, three times a day. After the morning raid, the boys washed up, three men to a helmet of water, and in the afternoon, between raids, they used to play baseball on the Africa sands, only the game never went as long as nine innings, because of the heat. In the evening the boys sometimes played cards. And each man stayed always within easy distance of his own tank, knowing that any moment the order might come to move to the attack. Nights there was never much sleeping, both because of the cold and because the Germans came over, dropping flares first and then bombs, just to annoy us.

All this time there was Fondouk Gap, crawling with Nazis, and about 50 kilometers beyond lay the town of Karoun, a Nazi general headquarters and a base of supplies.

On April 8, at dawn, our side started shelling the Gap, and the Artillery kept it up all morning and until 2 in the afternoon. Then from the battalion commander came the tank corps order to move to the assault, and Sternberg climbed into his tank and buttoned up. The driver, named Sergeant John Lippert, started the motor and rolled the tank into formation, a line of 54 tanks, one following the other, keeping 100 yards apart. Beside Lippert sat Lieutenant Foster, keeping his eye on everything. Corporal Jesse Inman was the radio tender and Private First Class Wall had the 37 millimeter gun and Corporal Erickson was on the 75, the big gun. Sternberg, the man farthest back in the tank, was leader and assistant gunner for the 75.

The tanks rumbled through the Infantry and the Infantry fell in behind. And almost at once, there was machine gun fire and mortar fire, which nailed the Infantry to the ground, behind whatever cover the boys could get. But a tank in battle cannot stand still, it keeps on moving until it is blasted to a standstill or its objective is reached. So the tank plowed on over cactus bushes and sand and small vegetation, keeping away from the road to avoid mines . . .

After a while the column reached the base of the mountain approaching the Gap, the tanks formed in a sort of horseshoe, and then the Nazis, who had withheld their fire, opened up from every direction and with every kind of gun including the powerful 88's. A shell tore off one of the tractors and the wounded tank swerved crazily and stopped. Lippert gave her the gun and the motor howled but didn't move. Lieutenant Foster, over the intra-phone, checked off his crew by name.

"OK, there, Sternberg?"

"OK, sir."

"Open fire."

Sternberg rammed in a 75, and the 37 also went into action, and the stationary tank rolled and pitched under the recoils. Then a high velocity 22-20 German shell sliced through the wall of the tank and out through the other side, cutting Sternberg's right calf on the way. Almost instantly he heard the lieutenant's voice in his earphone:

"Sternberg! Sternberg?"

"In the leg," said Sternberg.

"Very bad?"

"Big enough for a cow to crawl through," Sternberg jested.

"Get the C O," the lieutenant ordered Inman. But the C O had other worries. The C O's voice came back over the intraphone: "Return fire."

Sternberg reached up for his first aid kit, and at that moment a third shell boomed into the immobilized tank, smashed through the tank wall, passed right through Erickson, the 75 gunner, buried itself in the motor. Erickson toppled slowly across the breach of his gun. Another shell dropped Lippert. Then an incendiary fell on the roof and in a moment or two the whole upper part of the tank was white hot. Sternberg's uniform, his hair, began to burn. The concentrated heat was intolerable. Wounded leg and all, Sternberg pushed through the turret hatch, pulled himself out while the hot metal burned into his hands, dived head first. As he hit the ground, clothes still blazing, so did Lieutenant Foster. Machine gun bullets ripped up the earth around them and one burst got Lieutenant Foster. He said only "Oh" and died.

Sternberg saw smoke rolling out of the wrecked tank and started crawling toward it, for the questionable cover it might provide. But one leg and both hands were useless. He dug his elbows into the ground, kicked with the one good leg and thus moved, inch by inch, into the cloud of smoke. Inman and Wall had got out of the tank and Wall, Sternberg found, was crawling with him. Shells were whizzing all around, bouncing off the tank, thudding into the ground, but somehow they weren't hit. Over the hell of noise, Wall shouted:

"Which way?" And again:

"Which way?"

Sternberg's jacket was still blazing across the shoulders, and he said: "The fire. Put it out."

Wall held up his hands. They were burned black. Sternberg tore at his jacket, which came off in flaming shreds. They started crawling toward the rear, probably two miles away, an interminable distance. Wall, badly burned and shocked, was impatient with Sternberg's slow progress and kept asking, "Which way?" Tanks were ablaze all around, and men were crawling, close to the ground, through blistering fire of shells and bullets.

They had gone only about 100 feet when Wall couldn't stand it any more. He leaped up and ran toward a clump of trees, machine gun bullets digging up the ground at his heels. Sternberg turned his eyes aside.

He kept on his slow crawl, elbow over elbow, helped by the one good leg, leaving a trail of blood on the sand. He kept his eyes on that clump of trees, concentrating on it, determined not to lose consciousness before he reached it. There in that clump of palms was safety, his one chance. Then he saw three puffs of

black smoke rise fast, one after another, from the clump, and he dropped back on the sand and lay very still.

That smoke was German mortar fire and in that clump of trees were Germans by-passed in our advance. Sternberg hugged the ground and crawled on, changing direction, edging around the dangerous trees. At last he got beyond them. He felt no pain. His body was numb, but his mind was alert. He knew he must get back, and before dark. He rested awhile, his face in the cool sand. He wanted to lie still and sleep. He was tired, sleepy and tired. How beautiful, he thought, it would be to sleep!

Suddenly, he jerked himself up on one elbow. He talked to himself, in an angry whisper. He asked himself, "Do you want to lie here and die, Sternberg?" He dug both elbows into the sand and thrust with his good leg and after that he kept on moving. He reached a road and crawled along its edge, keeping far enough away to escape mines. Now there was ringing in his head. It was twilight and the sound of shelling seemed far away.

Across the road he saw tanks coming—our tanks. He got up on one elbow and waved. He tried to shout but only a thin, squeaky sound emerged. He crawled across the road, risking the mines. He struggled up on one leg, waved, fell down, sat on the ground, helplessly waving his black hands overhead.

"They've got to see me," he said to himself. "They've got to see me!"

Suddenly the three tanks stopped, a head was poked out of the turret of the lead tank. A British tank sergeant came out, with a first aid kit, bandaged the leg. Sternberg told him about the Nazis in the clump of trees and the sergeant went away,

promising to return in a few minutes. All along the road, presently, tank fire blazed, and Nazis fired back. Sternberg sat on the ground in the dark, watching the tracers across the sky, the gun flashes. The earth shook around him.

An 88 shell landed about 30 feet away and a hot shrapnel splinter dug into his already wounded leg, just above the earlier wound. Sternberg felt no pain. But he saw the leg jump up as the shrapnel struck and come down across the other leg. He remained seated, cross-legged. "As though," he recalled later, "I were an interested but aloof onlooker." The sergeant returned and bandaged the second wound. Then he went away. He was in a hurry. He said the American lines were that way, 400 yards back. It might as well be 400 miles.

Sternberg started crawling, not to the rear but toward the sergeant's tank. He watched its gun, watched it firing—as long as the gun fired the tank would remain in place. He put on an extra burst of speed. His breath came in frantic gasps. His whole body was becoming numb. He was afraid he might lose consciousness before he got to the tank or that it would start moving.

In the dark the tank wall loomed up before him. With his burned hands, which had no feeling in them, he raised himself upright. Somehow he climbed over the iron edges of the tank and to the top. The tank's big gun fired once as he climbed, and then he lay face down, with one arm in the turret, his hand frantically hitting the top of a head. The British sergeant looked up, startled, at Sternberg's blackened face peering down . . .

The tank, on an order from the sergeant, turned back and

took Sternberg to a casualty collecting point. A truck carried him to a station for the wounded farther to the rear. It was out in the open, among a few scrubby desert trees. It was very dark.

"Water!" shouted Sternberg. Then, the very word bringing on a horrible thirst, "Water!" From somewhere in the dark another wounded man echoed the cry, and then another. In a moment, some one held a cup of water to Sternberg's lips. He gulped it down and then another and another. He said, "Thanks, pal."

The man with the cup asked, "May I say a prayer for you?" He was a chaplain and he began to pray. When he finished, Sternberg asked, "What was that, last rites?"

"Yes, my son," said the chaplain.

A kind of furious indignation overcame the soldier, as if he had been insulted. After all the fight he had put up to remain alive, nobody was going to take it for granted that he was on the verge of death.

"Look, chaplain," he said, "I decided not to die tonight. I'm going to die of old age in a soft bed."

The chaplain, Sternberg reported, turned out to be "a good egg." He remained all night with the wounded. He redressed Sternberg's wounds, applied sulfa drugs . . .

Later the word came that we had driven the Nazis out of Fondouk Gap. And Sternberg pulled through.

Private First Class Stanley I. Silverman was a printer in New York when he enlisted, back in 1940. In the Army, he made the change-over from handling printer's type to handling a bayonet. His bayonet work won him a Distinguished Service Cross "for

extraordinary heroism in action." Silverman was wounded in an action near Maknassy, Tunisia, in which, wrote his commanding officer, Captain John D. O'Rourke, "his exceptionally courageous actions in combat were an inspiration to other men of my company."

But it wasn't award or praise that especially impressed Silverman. As he lay in a North African field hospital, he went over in his mind details of the time when he was wounded—wounded in battle against an enemy which made race hatred its major, diabolic creed. In a letter home he wrote:

"We were attacking a German machine gun nest and charging with bayonets when I was hit with a hand grenade. While I was lying there, unable to move, Sullivan ran through enemy fire and dragged me a quarter of a mile to the medical officer, helped by another buddy, Tony Ferrera, himself suffering badly from shock.

"How do you like that? A Jew gets hit and an Irishman and an Italian save his life. . . . Is there racial prejudice in the Army? Not at the front there isn't!" . . .

Near Station de Sidi Nair, in Tunis, there was a tank battle. That was in April, 1943. In combat, tank fighting is nervous business. On the sands of Africa, the tanks maneuver for position, rushing ahead to be nearer the enemy or racing to avoid him when he outguns you. The tankmen breathe heat and sand and the smell of hot oil and the acrid smell of explosives. Shells whine and explode all around you and any one of them may strike your tank and tear it apart. That's what makes it nerve-wracking.

At Sidi Nair in April Private Harold A. Goldstein of the Bronx was in such a tank in such a battle. His own tank escaped the falling shells, but the next in line was crippled and set afire. Crew members spilled out on the sand. Goldstein jumped from the moving tank he was in and went to the rescue. In the words of an official citation, he "assisted his platoon commander in locating a missing crew member who was found five feet from his burning tank.

"Despite the intense heat, exploding shells in the tank and close, direct enemy machine gun fire, he assisted in carrying the wounded man to cover and in administering first aid . . ." He was awarded the Silver Star.

It was April, 1943, on a Spring night in Tunisia. At midnight the orders went to the men in the foxholes and the men on the sands: We attack at 4 a.m. Objective, Hill 350.

At 4 o'clock, the men started, over the flat sands and along an uphill slope. There were four Infantry platoons, their men strung out in a waving shadowy line, men carrying rifles with bayonets fixed, belts heavy with ammunition, grenades carefully stowed where they could be most quickly reached. They moved with careful, swift steps, like men in a hurry, shoulders bent forward and low, trying to keep close to the ground. Suddenly, the big guns opened, from behind, and the shells screamed overhead and fell with a thudding drumbeat on the slopes of Hill 350. That was to keep the Germans crouched down as long as possible in their holes. It is comforting to hear the heavy guns talk—when the guns are ours.

A little ahead of Platoon I, striding and running beside the

lieutenant in command, was Sergeant Louis Pinckney of the Bronx, New York. Star shells burst overhead and lighted up the ground and the men didn't stop or slow down. The blood of how many good men, thought Sergeant Pinckney, has been poured out in fighting for all the nameless, numbered hills of all the wars since war began! Hill 350 was a mound of sand and rock, worthless for any peacetime use, pock-marked now with holes for Germans to hide in, swarming with armed Germans.

The line reached the foot of Hill 350 and started up. Now the big guns were silent—the infantrymen were on their own.

Half way to the summit, in the dark, the Bronx sergeant stumbled as he walked, recovered his footing, saw a foxhole opening just ahead and the head and shoulders of a German rearing up. The German shouted as he rose but what he said the sergeant didn't hear. He thrust out with his bayonet, the German fell back and the sergeant, he recalled later, "ran forward." You do these things first and think—if at all—afterward. It happened in a matter of seconds.

He ran on. On all sides now Germans scrambled out of foxholes, ran into men of Platoon I going up. There was shouting, in German and in English. There were screams of surprised terror and of pain. There were sharp rifle shots. How many times Pinckney fired or slashed with his bayonet or knocked a Nazi unconscious, using his gun as a club, he doesn't know. He seemed to be going on alone, although to right and left he could hear, as he went, sounds of other fighting by other men.

At last the sergeant reached a point where there were no more Germans ahead of him—and no more hill. He had reached

the top of Hill 350. His clothes were soggy with blood but "none of it was mine." A kind of heady exhilaration came over him. He had fought his way through all the swarming Krauts and he was on the peak of Hill 350 and—the hill was ours!

He wasted no time in jubilation. We had taken the hill, but any moment it might be retaken by a counter-attack. He ripped out his flares and fired off two—one green, one red—a signal to the artillery observer that we had Hill 350. The observer would radio the artillery directions to begin shelling the next hill.

As the flares went up, Pinckney leaped into an abandoned German foxhole and waited. But nothing came. Minutes passed and still more minutes, but the guns were quiet. Then he knew that something had gone wrong. No doubt the observer had himself been knocked out, the artillerymen were without direction as to where to fire.

He thought: He had another way of sending his message. Two green flares was the direct signal to "commence firing," and the direction in which they were pointed indicated the target.

Sergeant Pinckney knew—with almost absolute certainty—that somewhere on the slope of the next hill a German machine gunner was at that moment waiting, gun pointed and ready, for some giveaway like that. The first flares, when they went off, had tattle-taled on his general position. The instant he set off the two greens, the waiting German would let go.

But the exhilaration was still on him and "in a cockeyed sort of way," he related later, "almost as if this were all happening to some other guy, this didn't seem important at the moment." The artillery must be notified. Hill 350 must be held.

He set off the two green flares. In that instant he heard the poisonous, mean whirr of a machine gun firing from a distance. Something cut, like a sharp-edged knife, into the flesh of his leg and he staggered—and listened. A moment of silence and now another burst of machine gun fire. Something tore at his back, knocked him to the ground. As he fell, his ears still strained for a different sound—and now he heard it: The heavy, booming roar of our artillery that shook the hill. The green flares had done their job!

He crawled to his feet. He started to move forward—anywhere. He was crying. Bursting shells, going both ways, lit up the sky. Something exploded nearby, and Pinckney was hit hard in the stomach, pitched ten feet through the air. When he landed there was the taste of blood in his mouth. He dragged himself a few feet farther forward, to the edge of a foxhole, and tumbled in. Then he fainted.

He came to for a moment, lost consciousness again, and again came to. Then he heard voices saying, "Take it easy." The cross-fire was still on but he was among his own men. A half dozen of them made a litter out of a folded pup tent, carried him through the line of fire, at extra risk to themselves, to an aid station.

Hill 350 remained ours.

It was the last day of fighting in North Africa. On a sand knoll East of Bizerte a group of American officers waited for the inevitable end—the Nazis' finish. U. S.-British-French artillery still boomed intermittently, sending shells screaming toward what was still enemy country. Soon, the German sur-

render delegation arrived, Nazi General Fritz Krause and his full staff. General Fritz wasn't his customary arrogant self—this was an unusual mission for a Nazi bigshot. Nervously he looked up, saluted the nearest of the Americans, a young Jewish boy from Waukegan, Illinois, Signal Corps Lieutenant Albert Klein, and asked: "What are the terms?"

There was a colonel among the Americans, whom the flustered Nazi general had missed. There were others with higher rank than Klein's. The lieutenant, without hesitating, answered, "The terms are unconditional surrender. And you have 20 minutes to make up your mind."

It took the Nazi bigshot 20 seconds to agree.

Lieutenant Klein was 23 the day he grimly accepted the Nazis' North African surrender. After a while, the guns grew quiet, and there was peace for the first time in years throughout Africa.

CHAPTER FOUR

WE STRIKE THROUGH ITALY

THE END of the North African campaign marked an end and a beginning in the war.

It marked the end of Hitler's ambitious dream of a Rommel drive through Egypt and across the Near East to a junction with the Japs in India. The Russians had already broken one arm of such a pincers scheme at Stalingrad. And when the not-so-supermen surrendered at Bizerte, the last lingering hope for a bloody handclasp between the Jap and the German partners in crime was also surrendered.

But the Nazi collapse in North Africa marked also the beginning of the next step toward Allied Victory—invasion of Europe itself by way of its "soft underbelly," Italy.

That proved to be not altogether soft. The tiny Mediterranean isle of Panatelleria, held by Italians, was quickly bombed into submission. "Impregnable" Sicily was invaded, with an armada bigger than that which brought the U. S. Army to North Africa, and quickly we swept across to Palermo and East to the toe of the Italian Boot. Soon Badoglio's Italy surrendered,

loud-mouthed Mussolini having fled for refuge with his German pal Hitler. Then we started the hike up the narrow peninsula.

Here we ran into some of the bitterest fighting of the war. The men who landed at Salerno were slowed up and stopped in the mountainous backbone that led to Cassino. We landed more men at Anzio, and they held on through a bitter winter before the Nazis broke and fled beyond Rome, beyond Florence, as far as Bologna. Again the Nazis held in the mountains, and it wasn't until Spring came in 1945 that they turned, at last, and raced across the Po, within the shadow of the Alps, before they surrendered. By that time the whole Nazi house of cards was falling.

It was this way in Italy: The Jerries sat on top of the hills, looking down on you. Wherever you were, when you looked up you were looking into the muzzle of a Jerry 88, or a machine gun pointing your way, or a mortar that had you covered, but mostly it was an 88. It was like that all the way from Naples to Cassino. The toughest fighting, a lot of people will tell you, you could find in two world wars. And it was that way, again, in the winter of '44-'45, between Florence and the Po in the hills before Bologna.

But even on the flat, before we got into the hills, the Jerries had a way of falling back and waiting for us to come on, and after a while, when we had gone far enough, there we were looking into the business end of their guns. It was in that kind of spot that Private First Class Gilbert B. Stein was introduced to his first action against the Nazis.

He was a green soldier then, a rifleman and a plain GI, but

no stranger to the meaning of the Nazi enemy. Born and brought up in Germany, he had fled from that country with his parents in 1937. He went into the Army from New York. He was in the first truck convoy to hit Naples and he was in a 30-man patrol sent to take over three small villages on the city's outskirts.

The first two were easy, for the Jerries had fled. The patrol moved into the third village, fairly confident that it would be easy too. The place was quiet, deserted, the houses still. In the center of the village, suddenly, fire broke out from every side. The Nazis who fired were also shouting words in German: "Americans, give up—you are surrounded!"

Stein, German-language expert of the patrol, told the lieutenant in command what they said, and the lieutenant, thinking fast, ordered: "Go up and tell them *they're* surrounded. Tell them we've got re-enforcements coming up!"

A soldier new to combat, Private First Class Stein took the order literally and leaped up to obey. All around him bullets were criss-crossing over the village square and, some ten feet ahead, he caught sight of two German snipers loading and firing—at him. They missed, and before they could try again Stein fired twice, wounding one of the Germans and killing the other. Then he dived for the ground, where it is usually safer.

He never got around to telling the Jerries about being surrounded, but his jumping up in the middle of a field of fire —and getting away with it—struck the rest of his patrol as the funniest comic relief since they came overseas. Laughing, they laced into the Jerries and cleaned them out . . .

Private First Class Stein was also at Anzio, landing with the second wave. For a long time our lines were thin at Anzio and we were outnumbered by the Nazis three to one. And so the men dug foxholes. Sometimes, as you moved a little, you dug three foxholes a day or four. And as you dug the Nazis watched you at work from high ground of the Alban Hills, and their shells came crashing down, and often their planes came over, strafing and dropping hand grenades among the newbuilt foxholes.

February 29th, 1944, was a bad day for our side at Anzio. The Germans were counter-attacking confidently, trying to push us back into the sea. Where Stein's company was stationed, Germans were to the right and left as well as ahead. Communications had been cut and the company was like a blind man. It is very important for a company in battle to know who its friends are on either flank and where and how far away. . . .

They sent Private First Class Stein, with another runner, to find out. Two platoons of enemy infantry had taken over the ground immediately on the left, equipped with plenty of rifles and automatic rifles. Somehow Stein got through and located our nearest unit. Then he started back, crawling over a 400-yard stretch of hell.

Somewhere he lost the second runner, and what happened to him he never learned. Painfully he crawled and at last got to where company headquarters had been—but it wasn't there any more. Where Stein stood was now behind enemy lines. Bullets hit the butt of his rifle and tore through the sleeve of his jackets—and then a shell exploded, and fragments ripped through both his legs.

Stein recalled that a telephone dugout was a short distance away, about 15 yards. Bleeding from leg wounds, he crawled painfully to the dugout, telephoned a company non-com—told him where our flanking unit was, what ground the Germans held, where to turn the artillery on the German-held gap. Then he sat back, pulled out his first-aid kit, administered such first aid to himself as he could. They found him 12 hours later, rushed him to a field hospital where doctors were working in three shifts on 18 operating tables in two long tents.

Private First Class Stein was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action, and the citation declared that Stein's information telephoned to the non-com "enabled friendly artillery and mortars to place an accurate concentration on the enemy, forcing him to withdraw with heavy casualties," and resulting in "the killing of at least 50 enemy soldiers and the capture of that many more."

He also received the Infantry Combat Medal, the Expert Infantry Badge and the Purple Heart. Stein himself will tell you that he was "just a plain GI" and "If what I did makes me a hero then every GI in action was a hero too."

There are those who say every GI in action was.

It is pleasant flying in a Piper Cub, the tin lizzie of the air. It flies low, at tree-top height, rising to pass an extra-tall tree. It flutters at slow speed, and a flier can almost reach out and touch the passing landscape. The men who flew Piper Cubs in Italy did so for reasons other than pleasure. These men were artillery observers, who, like Lieutenant Marvin J. Weinberg

of Kansas City, Missouri, hovered over the battle area—too low for antiaircraft to pick them off, too dangerously low for fighter planes to close with them—locating the enemy positions, observing and correcting the fire of our own guns. In 150 Piper Cub sorties, in ten months, Weinberg was credited with causing the destruction of 25 emplacements, the killing of at least 1,000 Germans.

Once, flying out of Anzio beachhead, the Weinberg plane motor went dead and Weinberg and his pilot landed in a clump of pines. They climbed out, found another plane, completed their observations for the day.

On the Nazio-Nettuno beachhead, 24-year-old Sergeant Bernard Shapiro of the Bronx led a couple of infantrymen armed only with infantry weapons against a German Mark IV (Tiger) tank—and the tough Tiger super-tank came out second best. There was a rain of small-arms fire between him and the tank, but Shapiro crept up to within 125 yards and let go with his bazooka. The tank stood its ground and Shapiro retreated—temporarily. In a little while he returned, crept to within 15 yards of the metal monster, tossed a couple of "Molotov cocktails" (home-made hand grenades) and watched it blow up. The following morning, having learned the trick, he sought out another Mark IV and, while its crew was momentarily resting in a nearby house, blew it up. They gave him a Silver Star.

From a letter of Chaplain Morris N. Kertzer of Iowa City written on the Anzio beachhead when Anzio was hot:

"We had a large crowd (at the chaplain's first Anzio service)

including eight truckloads of British soldiers. It was odd to see them come directly from the front lines, guns and all, for an hour's break to attend service. You have to have an iron constitution to see a young man at prayer services one day and at burial services the next and not get a little older . . .

"I have covered every inch of the beachhead, traveling over roads boycotted even by the veterans. For the past week I have gone through ammunition dumps while shells fell on both sides of the road. I have been here five weeks now but soon I hope to get away for a couple of days, which may slow down the graying of my hair."

Near Mount Lungo, Italy, the road was under heavy fire as a quarter-ton medical vehicle, loaded with wounded men, came rolling by. Taking a turn in the road, the machine became hopelessly wedged between a high bank of the road and a wrecked truck. It couldn't go on, and it couldn't be pulled free. Shells were dropping all around, but the driver, Private First Class Harold Krystal of Dorchester, Massachusetts, surveyed the situation, found another abandoned but undamaged truck a short distance away. He got out his wounded, transferred them to the truck and drove them safely to the ambulance point for which he had originally started.

Said a citation which the Army gave Krystal for courage and resourcefulness: "Later examination revealed the medical vehicle full of shell fragment holes, testifying to the fact that Private First Class Krystal's courage and bravery under fire . . . saved the lives of the wounded men."

Staff Sergeant Schiller Cohen of New York used to carry a mezuzzah attached to his dog tag, and he carried it on air raids with him and he would touch it just before going on a raid. He did so when he started, from a North African clearing, to bomb Palermo. It was May 9, 1943, and this was the start of the Sicily-Italy campaign.

The plane was named Stinky, a B-17, and Sergeant Cohen's position was tail gunner. His job was to fight off enemy fighter planes that tried to attack from behind. This time there was no friendly fighter escort, which meant that the gunners would have to do it all.

The bombers flew, in formation, climbing higher and higher, and the air grew freezing cold. Over the coast of Sicily, the sky was clear and beautiful, if you were looking for beauty. But Sergeant Cohen was looking for something else, which he hoped not to find—and suddenly there they were, 50 enemy fighter planes coming on fast, firing as they came.

At a time like that the gunners are very busy. Cohen and the others fired and fired, and the enemy planes came on, as near as possible without getting too far within the bomber's gun range, then one after another peeling off—that is, sweeping down and away, momentarily out of the action, only to climb and come back into the fight again.

Sometimes fighters misjudge and get too near, and Cohen remembered, in a swift instant, seeing one German fighter begin to smoke at the tail, but he was too busy to watch it go down.

All the way to Palermo the enemy fighters harassed them, like a swarm of vicious gnats, and almost over the target 30 more fighters came up so that Cohen recalled, "the air was thick

with them." On the bomb run—that's when the bombers level out and follow a straight course toward the target and the eyes of the bombardier are glued to a hairline cross while he waits, for the instant to release bombs.

On the bomb run the German fighters darted in repeatedly, made swift passes at the bombers from every direction, tried to divert them, scare them into letting the bombs go too soon, where they would do no harm. The guns fired without letup, but the bombs were dropped on the target as planned.

Then the return trip started. The bomber flying to the right of Stinky was called Yankee Doodle. Suddenly a stream of cannon fire coming up caught the Yankee Doodle, her tail was raked by heavy shells and left hanging, by not much more than a hair. Cohen called his pilot on the interphone to tell him about that, and as he talked he saw the Yankee Doodle's tail gunner bail out—saw him drop like a plummet, then slow up with a jerk as his parachute opened and caught the air . . .

Until only a week ago the Yankee Doodle was Cohen's plane, and the Yankee Doodle's tail gunner, Sergeant Raymond Lewis, was one of his best friends. You have a strange, terrible sense of helplessness as you watch one of the best guys you ever knew floating in the sky below, watch him drift out of range and out of sight, and there is nothing you can do to help him. He never saw Lewis again.

The Yankee Doodle was in bad shape but still flying. Then she was hit again and began to go down. The Stinky followed close behind, to protect her. Now the Nazi fighters, like so many vultures smelling easy prey, peeled away from the main bomber formation, followed the easier victims.

Four of them, Cohen saw, were coming in from the left rear. Over the interphone he warned the left waist gunner, Sergeant Frank Hayes: "Four fighters at eight o'clock!" There was no answer. Twice Cohen repeated the warning, but got no reply. He looked out of his window, saw the waist guns weren't firing. He became worried.

By firing without letup for several minutes, he got all the pursuing fighters to peel away. Then he started crawling to the bomber's waist, to see about Hayes. This isn't a simple job in the high altitudes where a man breathes oxygen from a tank, where he would freeze to death if it weren't for the artificial warmth of an electric suit.

Before starting, Cohen had to disconnect the suit and the tank. He took a portable oxygen bottle along, as well as his electric suit and the flak vest he wore, and the parachute. Thus loaded down he crawled on his stomach to Hayes' waist position and found Hayes lying on the floor unconscious, his face white and turning blue.

He wasn't wounded. But this is what had happened. Where the waist gunner sits the two windows are kept open, so a man can move his guns around, and the ice-cold wind cuts in from both sides. It is the coldest place in the plane, so cold that your breath freezes in the oxygen mask you wear, forms an ice film, and you have got to reach up every few seconds and break the congealing ice in order to breathe. When planes come fast at you, you fire with one hand and break ice with the other.

And when they come too fast—when both hands are too busy with the guns—before you know it, your breathing may be cut off. That's what had happened to Hayes.

Cohen pulled off the sergeant's mask, working fast for his fingers were getting numb with the cold. He replaced it with another mask nearby, connected that with the oxygen supply and turned on the oxygen full blast. Then he slapped Hayes' face. After a few minutes Hayes came to. He got to his feet, leaned against his guns, said he was okay. He started his guns firing again, and Cohen, worrying about what was happening at the tail, set out on the trip back.

But now something funny was happening. Hayes, watching the staff sergeant's retreating figure, thought Cohen was crawling like a wounded animal. His legs were twisted crazily under him. The cold had got to him and he was only half conscious. Somehow he staggered into the tail position, with one thought beating at his brain.

He wanted to be warm again. He wanted to feel the heat of the electric suit running through his body. He wanted to be warm. He looked at his arm—it had that lazy feeling, didn't want to move. He started moving it, deliberately, laboriously, toward the electric plug. As he did so he looked out of the window and saw—five enemy fighters coming straight toward the Stinky's tail, their guns roaring.

When death comes flying at you, somehow you forget lesser things. Cohen's head jerked upward. He forgot about the electric suit, about warmth. His fingers wouldn't move—but he dropped his gloved hands on the guns, let the weight of them fire his guns. Two of the enemy fighters peeled away at once. He pressed clumsily on the gun triggers and two more fighters swung away. But the fifth kept coming on. Cohen gave him a burst of fire, then a second and a third. But he didn't swerve.

Cohen wondered about that. Why did he keep on coming? In his blurred mind, he tried to think through to an answer. Fighter pilots don't do that. It was suicide—And then the answer. This was a Nazi suicide flier. He was going to crash the bomber, killing himself at the same time.

Staff Sergeant Cohen stood there watching the fighter coming on, thinking, "This time I am going to get it—this is it." The suicide pilot came closer still.

Seconds went by, but it seemed very long. Then, automatically, Staff Sergeant Cohen closed frozen fingers around his guns —and they began to spit. Now he could see the insane Nazi in the fighter's cockpit. A faceless robot, grinning at him. Cohen fired a hundred rounds point-blank at the oncoming Nazi, saw him slump forward in the cockpit. A stream of blood trickled out of the robot's twisted mouth.

As the robot fell, he must have struck the controls of his plane. For the fighter nosed down, burst into flames, shot off to the ground, missing the bomber by inches . . . Seconds later two other fighters came at him and Staff Sergeant Cohen began to fire again, and they peeled off again according to regular routine . . .

Both bombers got back, at long last, to their base, and though the Yankee Doodle crash-landed, not a man aboard was hurt. In his warm tent, Staff Sergeant Cohen pulled off his jacket and began to cry, like a child.

(Staff Sergeant Schiller Cohen won the following decorations: Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with ten Oak Leaf Clusters, Squadron citation, and a commendation. He was in the first U. S. Flying Fortresses to bomb occupied Europe, first to bomb

Africa and first in Italy.)

Strange, weird, unexpected things happen when an army rolls tumultuously forward over an enemy with shattered morale. It was that way in Sicily, where the Nazis still put up a bitter defense but the Italians collapsed. It was that way with Sergeant David Rosenkrantz, paratrooper, of Los Angeles. When Sergeant Rosenkrantz jumped in Sicily, something went wrong from the beginning.

As he floated out of the sky, he knew something was wrong. First of all, the objective he was aiming at was miles away —nowhere in sight. Second, he hit the ground feet first and one ankle gave way. When he tried to rise, the ankle was one sharp pain. The best he could do, with the help of Corporal Lee Black, a fellow paratrooper, was to limp on one foot.

It was night, and they hid out until sunrise. At dawn they began to walk, looking for food and for a medic. Sergeant Rosenkrantz hobbled along behind, painfully. After a while there was an order to halt—and the two tough paratroopers were in the midst of 200 enemy soldiers, Italians. You can't do much when you're one to 100 armed enemies. They were under arrest. They were prisoners of war.

But then—a little group of Italian officers held a little meeting, came to a decision, announced to the Americani that THEY, the 200, surrendered herewith to the American paratroopers. They turned over their guns to the victorious two, they called in a local chief of police, who wined and dined the victors and put them up in soft beds. The next day the 200 marched in a body to an already captured town and surrendered

all over again, as prisoners of Sergeant Rosenkrantz and Corporal Black.

Things like that happened in the drive through Sicily.

Also during the taking of Sicily, Lieutenant Pincus Taback of Newark, New Jersey, flew his fiftieth mission. This was the critical one for fighter pilots. After a man had gone into action 50 times, on 50 missions, they used to send him home for a month's rest or they would transfer him to ground duty, in the back areas. And so a flier who had finished 49 missions unharmed used to worry about the 50th.

For ordinarily a man went into action prepared for whatever might come to him, including injury or death. But to pass through the hell of 49 battles in the sky unscratched only to be knocked off in the last—that would be an ironic shame! The boys became superstitious about that 50th mission.

Maybe for that reason, maybe for none, Lieutenant Taback awoke with a snarling temper the day he was to raid Sicily's Gerbani Airdrome. A crack fighter pilot himself, he was also leader of his flight. He was still in a nasty mood when he called his men together for a pre-raid briefing. Objective: Gerbani, on the map here. Opposition expected: tough, 150 enemy fighters. Got to stick together, in formation. Can't break away, as Soandso did on previous flight, to go chasing after a single Nazi. Almost got the whole lot of us killed by pulling that amateur trick. If any one breaks formation again—

"You do that again," he roared at the young offender, "and I'll pin your ears back!"

In the silence that followed, the meeting broke up, the men

climbed into their planes. Soon they caught up with their bombers, fell into their protective formation. The outbound flight was peaceful. Not an enemy fighter showed up as the bombers moved over the target and our fighters rested high in the sky above. Not a sound or sign of flak.

Suddenly, the skies darkened, the black mists spread, and in the mist the bombers melted out of sight. The fighters circled the dark skies, searching for a break, searching for the lost B-17s without result. At last, the fighters gave up the search, struck out for home, hoping to pick up the bombers on the way. For a long time they flew, seeing nothing.

As a fighter flies, he has a mirror before him, to tell him what's behind. As Taback flew, he glanced into his glass—and there were the U. S. bombers he was looking for. And behind them, Nazi fighter planes by the dozens, by the scores.

Almost automatically, Taback banked and climbed. Then below him he saw a couple of Messerschmitts (M E's) and dived for them, his guns roaring. They rolled and got away. And as he leveled off, Taback saw, in his mirror, two other M. E.'s pursuing him. He put on full speed and dived. They dived after him. He peeled off to the right, they followed. He turned to the left. The Germans were still on his tail.

It was like a childhood nightmare, when you run and run from a terrible beast, and your chest is ready to burst and your legs to give way and you pick up still more speed and look back —and the Beast is still there. Only these were two Beasts and now they were ready for the kill. Then, just as his case seemed hopeless, something funny happened. The Germans suddenly rolled aside and fled, as fast as they could, out of the field of combat.

Taback looked back and saw the reason—the two reasons. The other two men of his flight were right behind him, and it was they who had driven the Nazis off his back. And all at once he realized why. He was the flight leader, and so they had followed him through all his complicated gyrations in the sky, turning when he turned, diving when he dived. They had simply carried out his stern orders—and saved his life.

He came late to the Rangers. After Dieppe, after the fighting in North Africa was over. But he came as soon as they would let him. Age kept him back. He was still only 20 when his 4th Ranger Battalion, and also the 1st and the 3d, were dissolved because out of 1500 men, 199 remained and of these 60 percent wore the Purple Heart.

He was born Heinz Albrecht Monash and brought up in Berlin, the son of well-to-do middle-class parents. He was a nice boy, went to the right schools, read the right books and thought the right thoughts. Then Hitler took over Germany and the nice-middle-class parents and their nice, middle-class son became refugees from the Nazi insanity. Like other Germans who were also Jews, they were lucky to find refuge in the U. S. Here the nice boy who now called himself Harold Monash got his parents' consent for voluntary induction while still under age, and he joined the Rangers.

He joined the 4th in North Africa and with it made the landing at Gela in Sicily. Now, the Rangers fought not as other soldiers do. Ordinary objectives were not for them—only the impossible objectives. Thus at Gela, the 4th Rangers, on foot,

fought the crack Hermann Goering Tank Corps—and wiped it out. They did it so:

They scrambled into trees and when the tanks came roaring along, the boys dropped grenades on the tanks and blew them up. And when the supply of grenades and small bombs gave out, they filled wine bottles with gasoline, lighted a home-made wick in each and knocked out more tanks with a Molotov Cocktail, Ranger Model. When Gela was over, the incredible had happened: a Battle of Men Against Tanks, which the men had won.

Gela was Corporal Monash's introduction to Ranger fighting. He went with them to other fields. The Rangers were first to land at Salerno, first in Venefro, first at Anzio. Once an action had started, the Rangers fought not in front of the enemy but behind, where it is more dangerous. Night patrols behind the German lines, Corporal Monash will tell you, were particularly "interesting."

There was the time when he and another scout came upon three heavily armed Germans in a ditch. This was good. For Heinz Albrecht Monash had attended the Hohenzollern Gymnasium in Berlin and he hadn't forgotten the accent-free German he picked up there.

"Wer geht da?" he called into the ditch. The Germans answered and he followed with the order, "Come out here!"

Something was going wrong, for the Germans didn't come out. Corporal Monash decided to shoot the works. In the high nasal tones, and with the impatient arrogance, of a Prussian officer, he demanded: "What is it? Cannot you recognize the command of a superior officer?" The trio came—and were

quickly stripped and taken prisoner.

The Nazis called them "the dirty-faced boys with the baggy pants" and built up a sort of superman reputation for them. "I don't think they liked us," reported Monash.

But all the Ranger encounters didn't have a happy ending. When all the missions are extra-dangerous, there is bound to be a break somewhere. After the Anzio battle at Cisterna, there were so few Rangers left that the battalions were dissolved, the survivors were given the choice of joining the Fifth Army or the U. S.-Canadian Commandos. It might have been an easier life in the Fifth, but almost to a man they joined the Commandos. That's the kind of men they were.

In the Appenines the land is rough, the mountain soil worn thin by the slow centuries of history. It is land almost worthless in peace. But in war the men who took it from the Nazis in the long Italian campaign got every foot only at a high price. In the fighting for Hill 349 at Pazzola, for instance, Company I (349th Regiment, 88th Division) paid for a short advance with many dead and wounded, including every commissioned officer knocked out.

When that happened, Staff Sergeant Jacob Seidenfeld of Tulsa, Oklahoma, quickly took command of the remaining men, reorganized them and, in the official language of a subsequent citation, "persuaded them to leave cover and to follow him in the attack."

They followed until machine gun and sniper fire pinned them down. As the men hugged the ground, German mortar shells began bursting among them. It was a hopeless position, but

Sergeant Seidenfeld "passed the word to the men to attack at his command."

Then, the citation relates, he stood up in full view of the German gunners, signaled the command to advance and, through a shower of grenade explosions, himself rushed the enemy emplacements. The men followed, took the hill and kept it.

He was awarded the Silver Star for "aggressive leadership and bold action."

Months after it happened, I ran into GIs on the Italian front who talked about a GI named Private First Class Herbert G. Goldman, "a kid from Brooklyn," and what he did in the fighting at Castel Del Rio. This, said one of the GI's, was "in my book the worst goddam action in the whole war."

The company was advancing, as so many times in the Appenine warfare, on a hill. They reached the hill, but that wasn't enough. For—again as so often in the Appenines—there the Germans were, 200 yards ahead, their gun muzzles looking down and spitting death. Somebody had to dislodge them. Goldman, a quiet, unassuming little fellow whom no one had ever thought of as a hero, volunteered to do it.

And he did. He crawled alone along a small ditch. He started clambering over a bank. There was a burst of angry machine gun bullets. He was wounded that time, the boys said, but he kept on. He crawled along the ditch again, dragging a submachine gun as he went. He stopped now and put it in firing position. He emptied his gun point blank into the house and then made a rush for it.

There was a machine gun still in the house and it kept on firing. Goldman reached the side of the house, groped for an opening, found one at last, then thrust his gun forward and emptied the magazine again. He was wounded again, this time mortally. But, says his citation, "rallying his waning strength, he crept to the window and threw several hand grenades, which killed three of the enemy." Seven remaining Germans came out with hands held high—and the hill was taken and held.

For that action, for the price that Private First Class Herbert Goldman paid to win that barren hill, the Army awarded him the Distinguished Service Cross—posthumously.

CHAPTER FIVE

BATTLE ON THE SEVEN SEAS

THE WAR BY SEA raged from the beginning, and without let-up. It was a long time after the Pearl Harbor attack before we could come to grips with the Nazi enemy, either in North Africa or on his home grounds in Europe or in Germany itself. It took almost as long for our amphibious troops—soldiers and sailors, Seebees and Marines—to mount an offensive against the Jap on the Pacific isles.

But the Battle of the Atlantic went on from the day of the sneak attack and it did not end until the war itself ended. The Battle not only of the Atlantic but of the Pacific and of all the Seven Seas... This was the wide-ranging battle of the submarines, the German U-boats and their Jap equivalent—the subs that hunted off the East Coast of the U. S. and in the Caribbean and the South Atlantic, in the Pacific and the Indian Oceans, in the North Atlantic, and in the Mediterranean, hunted singly and in submarine wolf packs to sink our roving merchant ships and strike at our transports.

It was a major battle of the war. For if enough merchant ships were sunk, keeping us from supplying our allies with needed arms and ammunition, or if enough transports were knocked off, keeping an American army from being mobilized on Hitler's doorstep or on Hirohito's—then the war might well go by default to the fascist enemy. We fought back with depth charges, with air patrols, with convoys, with a hundred complex new weapons, but mostly with the indomitable spirit of man which, in spite of the fascists' worst horrors, would not surrender.

In this Battle of the Seven Seas, the merchant seamen fought back—men who were torpedoed and rescued after long drifting on the high seas and returned to be torpedoed again and rescued again—and the Navy's men of the Armed Guard and the Navy itself and the patrolling fliers and the war-bound soldiers on the transports . . . In this far-flung battle men of the Jewish faith fought along with the rest.

Toughest of all the convoy seaways used to be the Northern route to Murmansk. While the Red armies were falling back before the Hitler legions, losing heavily as they moved but punishing the Nazis heavily too, while they slugged it out at close range before Leningrad and Moscow and Stalingrad, and when they turned and began the long Westward chase that ended in Berlin—through all that we kept the ships moving across the Atlantic to Russia's northernmost route, bringing her arms and ammunition, equipment and food. We thus helped keep the Russians fighting while we built up strength to hit the Nazis from the West.

Worst part of the Murmansk route was around the hump,

North of Norway. As the loaded ships crept along on the cold North Atlantic and made the turn around Nordkapp or North Cape, every sailor on board the merchantmen, every officer and every member of the Armed Guard, stood on an unending day-and-night alert. You were below decks for a few minutes, swallowing a quick cup of coffee, or you were topside at your disaster station, maybe standing by a six-inch gun, eyes straining over the cold, gray waters, watching . . . watching for the enemy.

And as you watched (it happened again and again) until your eyes wavered and blurred, suddenly off on the Southern horizon you saw specks in the sky. And in less than a minute, the specks were Nazi bombers roaring overhead, dive-bombing your ships and other ships. And on the sea surface, at the same moment, white trails appeared, the white trails of torpedoes moving to their marks. And here and there a conning tower cut the surface, where a Nazi submarine bellied up, and on the ships themselves guns roaring into the sky against the aircraft and depth charges exploding, earthquake-like, under water, and here and there a ship torn apart, and everywhere all hell breaking loose.

It was that kind of duty Paul Dellin was on. A Creighton College football star a few years before, he had a college reputation as a sharpshooter, with a .32. Now he was member and captain of an Armed Guard gun-crew, on board a Murmansk-bound freighter. There were 132 men in the ship's crew, and the cargo on board was—dynamite.

It was early Spring of 1943, when the freighter moved into the dangerous waters above Norway. A wolf-pack of Nazi submarines lurked thereabout, the men knew, lying in wait for just

such a convoy, a rich haul. All day the destroyers weaved nervously in and out among the freighters, eager to keep them—and themselves—from harm. Depth charges exploded, as a precaution, with a kind of numb thunder shaking the Arctic air. The short Arctic night darkened at last, with no sign of a submarine. Suddenly the shrill, warning cry of the lookout: "Torpedo wake on the starboard!"

So that was it. Paul Dellin leaped to his six-inch gun. This wasn't a sharpshooter's .32, but he knew the ways of a six-incher too. Three times before he had been in this kind of spot, and three times he came out alive. But this was worse. Now, as in those times before, he stood by the rail, hovering over his gun, watching the trail of an underwater torpedo speeding toward him. Now as then he knew that he had one shot and that it must be on the nose. Now as then the time he had in which to do it was a matter of seconds. What made it worse was that the cargo under his feet was measured in tons of dynamite, and when a torpedo goes off in the side of a dynamite ship nobody survives.

He ordered his gun-crew to "Stand by!" His men waited, staring into the dark water, watching the glimmer of the ten-foot torpedo as it raced along, now hidden for an instant, now for an instant vaguely visible . . . While Dellin aimed, aimed with a terrible care, and with terrible care and exactness fired . . . There was the gun's boom, and, a half second later, another blast as the torpedo exploded in harmless water, shooting water columns high in the air. The ship and the 132 men—and the dynamite—were saved.

John Jacob Gussak was a lawyer from New York and Brook-

lyn. He knew what it was to be in a fight—but the kind in which the weapons are words and the arena a quiet courtroom. In war he became, in time, an Army officer, in the Provost Marshal section, with the rank of captain, later a major. They sent him to India, on a non-combatant job. He went by Liberty ship that was half freighter and half troop transport, and it took seven weeks and a day of slow sailing to reach the Indian Ocean. On the 51st day, as the sun was setting in a riot of tropical colors, a torpedo hit the freighter's side and exploded in her belly.

There had been no warning. Captain Gussak and other officer-passengers were sitting on the boat deck, portside just under the bridge, a little bored and a little impatient—when it happened. In the long soft 50 days of ocean cruising, they had become lax in wartime discipline. No one was wearing his lifebelt. Gussak raced for his room, on starboard side. The ship was already listing sharply to starboard and he found himself running downhill, in water up to his ankles, to his knees.

He got his lifebelt and "abandon ship" kit. He got back on deck. He reached his lifeboat station. The lifeboats were already being lowered. The boat to which he was assigned was presently swinging free, flush with the deck. The ship's third mate shouted for a few men to get in, but there was a rush and in a moment the boat was full. The third mate got in and the boat was lowered.

Other boats had also been lowered. Gussak looked around, saw that he was the only remaining officer on deck, that the ship's list had almost straightened out, that there was no water on the deck.

Members of the Armed Guard cluttered around him, expect-

ing orders. He sent one man up to the bridge deck to look for the gunnery officer. Another went, at his own suggestion, to see about young Lee, officers' mess boy who was under ice packs in his bunk because of an appendicitis attack. Black smoke was bellowing up on the starboard side, where the boy's bunk was located, and the captain warned that it might be dangerous there. A third man was dispatched for the ship's captain.

There was talk about getting away in the raft, but the ship did not seem to be going down very fast. Some one said, "We ought to stand by the guns," but it turned out that the guns were jammed—and there was nothing to fire at anyway. It occurred to Gussak that he had no shirt or hat on, and that he might have to spend many days in a lifeboat and get badly sunburned. He ran back to his room, got a shirt and hat.

When he returned the gunnery officer was there. The man who had gone for Lee said the boy had got away. The ship's captain arrived. He studied the situation for a minute, gave the orders: "Cut away the raft! Abandon ship!" The raft dropped into the water and one after another the men and the officers climbed over the side and onto the raft. They cut away the painter and the raft drifted slowly away from the lopsided ship.

Soon they sighted an empty raft afloat, drew alongside, lashed the two rafts together, making one large one. A mile farther on, the No. 4 lifeboat showed up. They transferred the ship's captain to the boat, leaving 20 men in all on the raft. Driven by the equatorial current, the raft drifted rapidly.

Then the submarine surfaced. A mile or so away at the time was the stricken Liberty ship, a-tilt and wallowing in the warm sea, red flames shooting into the sky . . . It was a vague shape

when it broke through the surface. The Shape fired at the flaming ship, and then the men on the raft knew it was the enemy submarine. After a while the Shape drifted away. It merged, or seemed to merge, with another drifting Shape—the No. 4 lifeboat, some 200 yards away.

A scene of horror at what they saw spread, like a spreading fire, among the men on the raft. The submarine was ramming the defenseless No. 4 lifeboat! Impelled by the same thought, the 20 slipped over the edge of the raft into the water, held on by fingertips with only heads above the surface. Thus they hoped to hide from the sub, which might then go away, like a bad dream.

A single shot sounded, sharp and imperious, and somebody on the raft said, "They're not going to machine-gun us, are they, Captain?" Captain Gussak didn't know, but he said, "No, don't worry about it. They don't do things that way." "That's right, Captain," the man agreed. "They only tell us those things to make us hate these people, don't they?" The captain told him: "Sure, don't worry about it. It's propaganda."

They tried to believe it. They hung on, in water up to their chins. Then there was a burst of machine gun fire, and a frightened voice said, "My God! They're machine-gunning them." A sailor said, "No, you don't hear any one scream!" Quiet descended on the waters and the moon broke out from behind a cloud. After a while the submarine came toward the raft, and a boy hanging on to the edge asked what do you do, captain, if you're captured. Gussak said, "Give your name, rank and serial number," but the boy said, "I'm in the merchant marine and I have no rank and serial number."

The bow of the submarine loomed up, large and black, and every one thought "She's going to ram us." But the sub turned and came alongside, parallel with the raft. A voice called out in English, "You, there, what's your ship?" Nobody answered and the voice came back,"I know you are there, and if you do not answer we open fire." One voice answered, and then several others, giving the ship's name, and the Jap ordered—it was obvious now that it was a Jap submarine—all to climb back on the raft, with hands in the air.

They climbed—there was nothing else to do. Then the Japs ordered: Jump into the water and swim to the submarine. Captain Gussak jumped first and led the parade to the sub.

A rope was thrown from the sub and Gussak reached for it and began to climb over the rounded belly of the craft. As he put his hands on the rail, a Jap leaned down and reached for him. Gussak thought, "Say, maybe they're not such bad guys after all. Here they are actually helping me on board!"

But the Jap wasn't reaching for him—only for the watch on his wrist. He ripped it off. Another Jap snatched his silver dog-tag and another his ring. They went through his pockets, which contained little, and ripped off his lifebelt and threw it overboard. Somebody jerked back Gussak's arms, tied them behind his back. He looked around and saw the same treatment handed out to the other boys.

They were half led, half pushed to the submarine's forward deck. Other men with hands tied behind backs were already there—the boys of lifeboat No. 4. All were plunked down cross-legged on the floor, with heads bowed forward. When Gussak tried to look up, a Jap foot kicked him in the face. There were

40 cross-legged men seated, and more were brought up. Somebody whispered that the Japs had shot Lee, the mess-boy, and bayonetted Red, a merchant seaman. They thrust the bayonet in his stomach and as he doubled up with pain, his hands across the abdomen, another Jap struck him on the head and pushed him overboard.

A big-bodied Jap appeared and started questioning the men, one by one, in English. His was the voice that had hailed the raft. His queries were disconnected and jumpy. Gussak could hear only occasional snatches of questions and answers, could see little of what was going on around him. It wasn't easy to see anything, for whenever a man raised his head a Jap beat him on the skull with a steel rod a foot and a half long, thick as a man's thumb.

They sat there, huddled together and heads bowed. The submarine kept cruising around in circles, on the lookout for more prisoners to pick up. The sea washed over the deck and sometimes the wash was heavy and the men became uneasy and scared. As one surge rose and subsided, three of the men were swept into the sea. The rest—men with hands securely tied behind their backs—sat there, horrified, trying to glue themselves by sheer power of will to the deck, wondering who would be next.

Gussak noted that the sub changed direction and soon the burning ship came into view. Now the English-speaking Jap finished his questioning. Two rows of Japs in parallel stood by the rail, armed with bayonets and steel clubs. One after another they made the Americans run between the double row. Every

Jap would stab each one with his bayonet or strike him with the steel rod. Some were dead before reaching the end of the gauntlet. Dead or half dead, they were pitched over the rail.

This, then, thought Gussak, was the final horror, the end for him and all the others: to be clubbed to death by grinning Jap sadists and thrown to the Indian Ocean sharks! In a quick look, Gussak noted that the deck was clear now except for four or five men and, immediately behind him, a couple of jabbering Japs. Jabbering and laughing. He felt the point of a bayonet tickling the back of his neck—there was a thin white line there, where the dogtag chain had prevented full tanning.

He sat very still, head bowed. He heard a clang of metal against metal, and out of the corner of one eye saw the Jap officer drawing his sword. A murderous look was on the Jap's face, and Captain Gussak thought to himself, "My God, what a way to die!" Pictures he had seen of Chinese beheadings flashed through his mind, and he thought, "In a moment I who am here now will no longer be!"

He waited, and the tension of the passing moments made him numb. Like a drug, he thought. The Japs fired two shells into the hulk of the still-flaming ship, there was a terrific explosion and the Japs all collected on deck, cheering with wild enthusiasm. One of them shouted over and over again in English: "Beautiful sight! Beautiful sight!" In the midst of his agony, Gussak noted that the l-sound in "beautiful" was blurred or left out.

The submarine resumed her cruising. The Japs returned to their interrupted game of killing. Men were picked for running the gauntlet from behind Gussak and in front of him. Fear

gripped him, to the marrow. Suddenly three sharp whistles blew and all the Japs began scurrying from the deck, running for the conning tower. One Jap leading a man to the gauntlet let him go and ran too. Gussak realized the sub was about to submerge, leaving the manacled prisoners to be swept off into the sea. He stood up and shouted for all who could to untie their wrists. A man next to Gussak bent forward, tried to break Gussak's bonds with his teeth. Some one else said," Goodbye, Jack!"

In a moment he was in the water, going down, down, down, pulled by the suction of the submarine. The water was warm and he struggled and held his breath. At last the suction eased and he came to the surface. He found that his hands were tied with wire. The more he struggled to break loose, the deeper the wire cut into his wrists.

He trod water, carrying on the vain struggle, for about an hour. Then he heard voices and shouted for help. Some one came swimming up, one of the ship's men, cut the ropes and broke the wrist wire by bending it back and forth—which Gussak could not do for himself because he couldn't get the needed leverage. The man swam away, as if bent on business. Only later Gussak learned that he had worked his own hands loose, and that he carried a pocket knife hidden in the waistband of his pants. He swam around, wearing himself out, and cut the bonds of all who were still afloat. Of 30 men washed off the submarine when it submerged, 18 survived—and he was not one of them. Of the 95 taken on board the submarine all the others ran the Jap gauntlet and died.

It was about 11 at night. The sea was quiet. The water was

warm. Nearest land was hundreds of miles distant. The only thing visible was the ship burning, some two miles away. Gussak started to swim for it. A man might pick up some floating wreckage there, to use as kind of a raft, maybe to come back with it and help the others. They needed help badly—no one had so much as a lifebelt. Gussak wore only army trousers and shorts. He stripped these off too, as obstacles in swimming, dropped them in the sea and struck out for the ship.

He swam all night. Swam, and rested by floating on his back, and swam again. Though he did not know it, he was fighting a current which carried him away from the ship as fast as he swam toward it. He was still as far away as ever when the sun rose and when, at 8 a.m., the smouldering ship sank.

For hours after that he alternately swam and floated, aimlessly, with no purpose except to remain, for the moment, alive. A single plane appeared overhead, circled in the sky for about an hour, went away. Gussak became very tired. A sense of vast, terrible loneliness came over him. The sky was clear and very close, and Gussak wondered whether any One above was looking on him—a little floating something in the vast expanse of sea.

A couple of seaplanes came over, passing directly overhead. He knew he mustn't shout, for that would waste remaining strength. He floated stretched out full length, flat on his back so he would show white against the darker sea. He wanted, oh so badly, to be seen. He kicked with his legs and splashed with his hands. The seaplanes circled and circled for what seemed like hours, but they did not alight, they did not see him.

Black despondency pressed down on him, like a thing with physical weight. He began to break under the strain. He talked

out loud. He talked to God. He said, "Look, God, it is incredible that these planes up there shouldn't see me. Here I am, a nice white body out on the open sea—how can they miss seeing me? They simply must see me, they must! They can't go away and leave me now!"

It did not strike him that he was blasphemous or disrespectful to God. There was no one else to talk to and he was merely talking to God, arguing with Him: Was it fair to let him survive the sinking and the Jap gauntlet and the night on the open sea and then let him down in sight of help at hand?

"I put more heart and soul into that argument than I had ever done before any jury in court," he has since recalled. "I must have put up a convincing argument. For I'm alive."

He said no formal prayers, just talked on in a personal way, as if to a personal God within easy hearing. Maybe he became at times delirious. He had been afloat for 12 hours and the thought came to him that there was no one left in the world except himself—and God.

The seaplanes went away. Gussak stopped talking and arguing. Then he heard again the hum of approaching aircraft. They flew around and again they didn't seem to see him. He lay back in the water, eyes half closed, and waited. He half drowsed that way for about a half hour. Then he heard a shot.

He whirled around, wide awake, terrified that it was the Jap submarine once more. But there was nothing—only two planes overhead. One of them dropped a smoke flare, three or four hundred yards away. He summoned his last ounce of strength and started swimming toward it. There might be a life ring attached to it. He swam slowly and had gone 100 yards when

the second plane dropped another flare, behind him. That was closer than the first and Gussak changed direction to swim to that.

When he reached the spot he found only a smoke bottle. He looked around everywhere but there was nothing else. He ran his hands under the smoke bottle and around it, but there was nothing attached. Then he saw something floating 50 feet away and he swam, full of hope, toward that. It was a box. A man can get a lot of rest, thought Gussak, by just leaning on a floating wooden box. But when he tried to rest on this one, it gave way under his hand. It was a cardboard carton, marked "Assorted Cookies." He became frantic with the desperate need of something to rest on. It seemed impossible to hold out much longer...

He whirled around and, on the crest of a wave, saw a speck, and three vertical objects in it. It must be a raft—and men on it. He swam toward it. He swam about 50 feet, rested on his back to conserve strength, turned over again to swim. And now the raft was gone. He became panicky. But after a minute there was the speck again. Now he fixed its position, using cloud formations as a guide.

He drew nearer and nearer. It was a small rubber raft, moving slowly. He shouted, and the people on the raft heard him. He was swimming ten feet at a time now, floating between swims. At last the raft was near and his hands closed over a rope. He had no strength left, then, to climb aboard. Three men hauled him in and he lay there, panting, unable to talk. It was an hour before he mustered the strength to sit up. It was 1 in the afternoon when he got to the raft, and he had been swimming or floating, naked as Adam, for 15 hours.

The agony was not yet ended. The raft had been dropped by one of the Liberators. Three men were picked up by the raft after Gussak, making seven in all in a rubber raft meant for four: three armed guards and three merchant seamen, besides the captain. Among them they had six lifebelts, also dropped by the Liberators. It was a hot, burning afternoon in the raft. There was a package which had been attached to a Mae West. It contained two cans of water, eight ounces each, and a can of frankfurters. Gussak took charge of the package, to keep the men from drinking before sundown. Otherwise the hot sun would drain it out of them. After the sun went down, he passed the water around. It went around the circle twice, roughly two sips, or one ounce, to a man. No drink ever tasted so sweet to the tongue of man.

All seven men were badly sunburned. They were crowded in a space about four feet across. Fourteen legs criss-crossed and tangled in a space designed, at the most, for eight. When one man got muscle-sore and wanted to move an inch all had to move. Thus they half lay and half sat and sometimes talked—about the chances of being rescued and about what had happened in the last awful 24 hours. Two of the men in the boat were the last to run the gauntlet. The Japs let them go in the rush to the conning tower when the submarine crash-dived. One had a six-inch gash on his head, where a Jap bayonet cut him as he jumped over the side.

One had a deep cut over the right eye. He, too, had jumped as a Jap took a bayonet jab at his face. He had floated, with hands tied behind his back, for ten hours. Then came across another man who tried to untie him—got under water and tried to bite

his ropes free, but failed. They decided it couldn't be done, and the man said goodbye and swam away. But a short distance away he came across a tin can floating in the ocean. He broke it open with his bare hands, swam back and with the ragged edge of the tin can cut the sailor's bonds. Captain Gussak noted the man's name, to recommend him, when able to do so, for a decoration.

Nobody slept that night. At 3 in the morning a searchlight flickered on the horizon and a blue flare lit up the sky. The men crouched low, behind the raft's rubber rim, fearful that it was the Jap submarine come back. They waited that way a long time. After a while one man looked up. The Jap, if it was he, was gone. The seven tense, exhausted men relaxed, and Gussak then made a little speech. He felt, he said, that the time had come to say a prayer. The men agreed. But he didn't know any formal prayers. "I was one of those careless Jews," he later recalled in regretful retrospect, "who had never bothered to learn. But I knew I could talk to God in English and He would listen."

He said to the men, "You pray quietly, each a prayer in his own faith, and I will say a prayer aloud." Then in a loud voice, that had a strangely defiant ring, he spoke: "I thank You, God, for saving us from the Jap and from the perils of the sea. And we ask You, Oh Lord, to keep on protecting us at least until daylight. Amen."

They all felt better after that. It seemed right, to all of them, to ask for continued protection through the rest of the night only, for the chance that the Jap sub would show itself again by daylight was slim—and in a very serious sense they wanted to put no more burdens on God than was necessary.

When daylight came and a huge sun shot up on the horizon,

the men were in other trouble. The boat was slowly leaking air and they had no means of recharging it. It was an unfamiliar British type raft and they did not know how to manage it. Now the sea was getting choppy, further deflating it. Gussak handed the second can of water around and distributed a frankfurter to each man. That gave them strength enough to get out, bail out the boat and climb in again.

In mid-morning a plane came into sight—and there was smoke on the horizon. For a long time the ship's smoke remained far away, tantalizing them. At 11, the plane, a Liberator, came flying directly over them, tipped its wings—a signal that they had been seen. Some one leaned far out, waved and dropped smoke flares. Now they knew they would be rescued. Gussak pointed one finger at the plane and broke out in tears. Then he began to talk—to himself. He said:

"Look here, Gussak, we are going to be rescued in a little while and we are going aboard a United States Navy Ship. You are a captain in the United States Army, Gussak, and you can't go aboard crying like a baby."

It was midyear 1942. A convoy of loaded troop transports pushed across the Atlantic, carrying the first of the U. S. troops for North Ireland. Convoys in those days wasted no time on the high seas, for the U-boats lurking along the way might thus be given their chance to strike.

But on board one of the transports, Second Lieutenant Florence McBride, Ohio Army nurse, was taken down with acute appendicitis, and only an immediate operation could save her.

They called in a doctor, Lieutenant Commander Lionel S.

Auster, New York physician and Jewish community leader. The transport stopped. All the transports, all the destroyers and other escorting naval ships came to a halt. For half an hour the great convoy rested on the Atlantic while a Navy medic, working fast, carried out an operation which, even in the most modern hospitals on land, normally takes at least 15 minutes longer.

Then, the operation successfully completed, the transport—the entire convoy—moved on. Dr. Auster, a specialist in cancer and cancer surgery, had also established a record time for performing an appendectomy ashore: 11 minutes. . . .

There was another appendix operation, performed on a British seaman on board an American transport in mid-Atlantic. The sea was rough, huge waves washed over the decks, the transport reeled so that the doctor, Lieutenant Leo Levine of New York, was unable to take a steady stance. Once and twice his effort failed. Then—for there was no time to lose—he had himself strapped tight to the operating table and, no matter how much the ship rocked thereafter, it did not disturb his surgeon's hand. The doctor's job was done.

The menace of the U-boats, rattlesnakes of the sea, reached its peak early in 1943, and in the Spring of that year Morton Deitz's Liberty ship delivered a cargo in Iran, for U. S. troops in that part of the world. Then she headed, alone, for Capetown. At 4 in the morning of April 21, on the edge of the Indian Ocean, the lookout sighted the dread white wake of a torpedo. In a moment the gun crew's quarters were emptied as men tumbled out of cots and rushed to gun stations. In a moment the ship kicked and tossed crazily while the pilot drove her on a

wild zig-zag course to escape the torpedoes. It was a vain try, which lasted less than a minute, ended when a torpedo struck, amidships.

Morton Deitz was born in Trenton, New Jersey. He went through Trenton High School and then the University of Pennsylvania. He was 21 when, in June, '42, he enlisted in the merchant marine. Now, less than a year later, he was a Cadet Midshipman. He was poring over books and charts, in the Officers' Mess, when he heard the alarm, and was racing up to the bridge when the torpedo exploded. He was slammed against the side of a passageway.

There was a sharp pain in one ankle and he dragged his leg when he tried to go on. Live steam and torpedo fumes sifted into the passageway. The door to the deck was jammed shut. Deitz threw his shoulder against the door, hammered at it, was vaguely aware that the steam was growing hotter and the fumes thicker. Suddenly the door sprang open. As he gulped mouthfuls of air, he heard the whistle blowing, seven short blasts and one long: the call to "Abandon Ship."

Cadet Midshipman Deitz ran to the skipper's cabin, helped him assemble the ship's papers. Then he picked up blankets, clothes, emergency lights, brought them to the boat stations. The Liberty ship had four lifeboats, but the one equipped with a motor was gone now, blown to splinters by the torpedo explosion. The sea was rough and the water black.

Lifeboat No. 4 was lowered first, with 11 men on her. A wave struck as she touched water, tore her off her rope and turned her over. She floated away in the dark. Lifeboat No. 1 was lowered next with five men on board. A wave slammed her against the

ship's side, turned her over. You could hear one man's scream and then the sound of men thrashing around in the water.

No. 2 Lifeboat was the last to go down, with four men including Deitz. It reached the water and remained afloat. Men struggling in the water began to climb on until there were 24 in all. Up on the ship's deck, the skipper's voice was heard, shouting to some of his officers to head for the ship's other side where a life raft was kept. In a moment Deitz saw them getting off. The lifeboat was released and began wallowing in the waves.

Deitz saw a light flickering near the ship, heard voices calling for help. Those were the men from the overturned boat. The men in the lifeboat started rowing toward them, to pick them up. But the big waves worked against them. The more they pulled toward the flickering light, the fainter the light became. After a while the light went out, the voices died.

That morning planes flew by overhead but didn't sight the boat. The men broke out some biscuits, ate sparingly. On the second day planes flew by again, again without sighting the boat. On the morning of the third day, an RAF plane roared by low overhead. Its blinkers signaled: "Help coming soon! Thumbs up!" The men jumped to their feet, waved jubilantly. Said one of them, "This calls for a celebration. Let's break out some water."

It was an extravagance, for they had already had their morning's water rations. But what of it—help was coming, wasn't it? Solemnly the 24 drank a cautious toast in the form of a sip of water. That ceremony was hardly completed when the roll of the rough sea became rougher. Heavy waves lashed at the frail boat,

wind and waves sped her along an uncharted course. If this kept up, the promised help would not be able to find them.

The storm did keep up. On the fifth day two more unseeing planes passed by. On the sixth day another RAF plane saw them, once again promised by blinker signal, "Help coming soon!" The plane went away and after a while returned and dropped two packages wrapped in rubber life preservers. One of them floated directly toward the lifeboat and was picked up.

Across the packages were the penciled words: "Destroyer leaving Durbin 5 p.m." There were eight beer-size cans of water in the package, and as many cans of emergency rations: dextrose candy, chocolate, chewing gum. Also a first aid kit. The boys ate some of the rations and began to feel better. This time help was really coming.

But at 4 o'clock the seas turned rough again and at 5 the lifeboat was far from the point at which it had been sighted. At 10 the next morning the waves were running 50 feet high and one of them broke smack over the lifeboat and overturned her. The men were spilled into the raging sea. Deitz found himself struggling under water. He could hear the others thrashing around. As the wave settled, all the men caught hold of the upturned lifeboat.

There was a boy from New York among them, Deck Cadet Hyman Rosen, and Deitz remembered that he came up beside him, spit out a mouthful of salt water and demanded, "What do we do now?" "Now," said Deitz, "we try to turn this tub back over."

It was a job that took six hours. There was an elderly seaman among the crew, a man of about 60, tall and thin and wiry.

Suddenly he clambered up on the upturned lifeboat, looked around with fiercely gleaming eyes and in a chanting sing-song shouted:

"What have we done to deserve this?

"Why have we been given a fate like this?

"What have we done? What have we done?"

His voice rose to a high, shrill screech. His teeth chattered with fear. Deitz climbed up on the boat beside the man, and shouted in his ear: "Do you want to drive every one into a panic? Shut up or I'll knock your block off!" The man quieted down and climbed off.

It was a ticklish job righting the boat. The plan was to get hold of one end of the boat, rock her up and down, build up to a single big heave synchronized with the sweep of a heavy wave, and so turn her over.

They tried again and again, and each time failed. They repeated the tries patiently, desperately, despite waning strength and bleeding fingers. At last the boat turned over. The men climbed in, gasping for breath. For an hour more they bailed out water, using hats as scoops. There wasn't anything else to use. Clothes, papers, most of the food and water had been lost. Only a single damp match had been salvaged. The ration was now a tiny piece of chocolate per man per day. One beaker of water had to be thrown away, spoiled by salt water.

The days passed. The food ran out, and then the drinking water. The men chewed and ate wet cigarettes. Once or twice flying fish leaped into the boat and the men tore them up and ate them raw. Deitz knew that it was fatal to drink salt water,

but as the days passed and the gnawing thirst grew, that began to seem unimportant. He took to swallowing a mouthful of salt water each morning. Some of the men's minds began to teeter. It was on the 19th day that Boatswain John Waltinan got down on his hands and knees and started crawling around the boat. Ensign Thomas Kellegren of Brooklyn asked him, casually, "Where you going, Johnny?" He said, "Cold here. I'm going to the galley to get a cup of coffee."

The ensign explained, reasonably: "You can't get coffee—stove's not working. Lie down and I'll heat some up for you."

Poor Johnny lay down and three men lashed him to the floor. He struggled for a few minutes but then quieted down and closed his eyes. The next morning he was dead. They buried him at sea, with a fearful prayer. The next night a second man died, and the next two more. Deitz himself became delirious, talked to himself, repeated Hebrew prayers—any prayer he could remember. Each morning he woke up surprised that he was still alive. Each time he checked off to see who had died during the night.

"Our attitudes," he recalled later, "grew strange, distorted. There was one young officer we had loved and respected back on the ship, the favorite of all the men. On the 24th day he died suddenly and rolled off into the water. And all we could feel was anger that he had rolled over with his heavy lumber jacket—because we were freezing and wanted it."

More days passed. Once a three-masted Danish bark appeared on the horizon and the enfeebled men began to cry and try to row toward her. But the ship hadn't sighted them and pretty soon disappeared. Several times they saw land birds and twice

butterflies fluttered by. Land, it seemed, ought to be somewhere near, but they never saw it.

On the 30th night, nine men were left alive. On that night Deitz was awakened out of his nightmare-like sleep by the sound of a plane. The others had heard it too. They made whimpering sounds, which took less strength than talk. Deitz began to drag himself, on his stomach, toward the nose of the boat. There he knew was the one remaining flare. Three of the other men crawled along with him. They helped lift the flare into position. He moved it once, but nothing happened. He tried a second time and a third, but with no result. The automatic striker was too damp.

The motors of the plane hummed overhead and Midshipman Morton Deitz began to cry quietly. There was that one match left, rescued when the boat turned over.

Deitz brought it out.

His hands were trembling, with weakness and with terrible fear.

He scratched it once, and it didn't light.

He scratched it again and now a feeble little flame broke out.

He could see a half circle of eight drawn faces watching him.

What if the small flame should flutter and die?

What if the flare didn't catch fire?

He touched the match to the flare. There was a moment of breathless waiting, long as a century.

Then—the flare caught on.

Ten red glows shot into the air, floated suspended in the air and then came down.

By that time, the plane's hum could no longer be heard. The

men wondered, had their signal been seen?

At dawn another plane came by, signaled, "Ship will pick you up soon." And two hours later the ship came, the Greek freighter Rhodope. As she appeared over the horizon, Deitz saw her. He touched the man next to him and shouted:

"We're saved! Saved!"

The man didn't answer.

He was dead. . . .

Out of the 24 who found refuge in Lifeboat No. 2, the Rhodope found only five men alive.

CHAPTER SIX

STRATEGIC BOMBING OF EUROPE

BEFORE DAWN the bombers rose and struck out from England, across the Channel, across occupied France, across the Rhine. At sunrise they pounded Frankfort, ripping this Nazi shrine city apart in the manner the Nazis themselves had devised—but with improvements. Then the massed Fortresses turned home.

It was January 29, 1944. On the returning Fort "Blue Blazing Blizzard" 22-year-old Matthew Nathan was resting. He was the bombardier, and his job on the mission had already been well done. Then German fighter planes came pouring out of the sky, their shells exploded among the Forts. Fragments ripped through the "Blizzard," wounded William Rau, the navigator, wrecked the navigation instruments and the plane's oxygen system.

Came a burst of cannon fire from an enemy plane and left Nathan with broken ribs and severe cuts and burns of the arms. Before he enlisted, Nathan was a medical student at the Univer-

sity of Virginia. Now, applying everything he could remember from his student days, he battled, in the wobbling Fort high in the air, to save Rau's life. But the navigator knew he was dying. He set a compass course. With his last breath he gave Nathan directions for navigating the bomber the rest of the flight home.

Nathan saw Rau die before his eyes, and then took over the unfamiliar navigating job. He worked on the smashed radio equipment, established, as well as he could, the plane's position. He ignored his own wounds and the throbbing pains they gave him, and neglected to mention to any one that he had been hit. At last the "Blizzard," hobbling behind the other home-coming Forts, ditching everything possible on the way to keep the plane in the air, reached England and the home base. Only then did the pilot—Flight Officer Ernal W. Bridwell of Winter, Texas—and the other crew members learn how badly Nathan was hurt. They rushed him to a hospital, where he remained for more than three weeks.

That night, in the hospital, Lieutenant Nathan wrote home to his mother in Brooklyn, told her about the day's happenings. He wrote: "No one was injured, but the plane was hit bad. Brid and Johnny did a miraculous job of getting us home. We were all by ourselves from the target back. One engine out, holes all over and sweating blood. We got back all right but threw out everything, including guns, ammunition, ball turret, chairs, doors, clothes." Then, repeating a white lie he had already told, he concluded: "But as I said, no one was injured." The little lie did not stand up very long. For Mrs. Max Nathan wrote at once to Bridwell, expressing her thanks for saving her son's life, and "Brid" promptly replied:

"Johnny and I just saw our duty and did it, but Matty (Matthew Nathan) is the one who gets the praise. You can be very proud of him and tell everybody in the world about it because he did a smashing job. He was wounded and not once did he think about his wounds but instead worked on Bill Rau until Rau's end came. After Rau died Matty should have started to give himself some thought, but did he? He started navigating us back to England . . ."

They awarded him the Purple Heart and the Silver Star "for gallantry, skill and devotion to duty."

On fifteen missions of strategic bombing in Europe, Lieutenant Joshua Reznik of Brooklyn, bomber navigator, found that all targets are the same in this respect: "They all throw flak."

Flak is the stuff the ground guns throw up, bursting shells mostly, to discourage attacking bombing planes, keep them high up and far away from the target, cripple them or bring them down if they venture too close. Our bomber fliers used to talk about the flak they met in tones, almost, of friendly affection. The flak was so thick under them, they used to report, a man could get out and walk on it. And—almost—they missed it when it did not show up.

Reznik never missed it, for it always showed up. Flying with the 15th Army Air Forces based in Southern Italy, in '44, he bombed Nazi military targets in the Balkans, in South Germany, in Munich, in Vienna, and always the flak came up like a billowing cloud on the rise, and he was not always out of range.

On the 15th mission, in December, '44, the target was Moos-

berbaum, 20 miles West of Vienna, and the rising flak as the bombers turned off the target run appeared to be thicker than ever. At two in the afternoon the bomber, riddled and ripped apart, became unmanageable. Pilot and crew, including the navigator, took to the parachutes.

As they floated, the wind spread them apart. After a while the Austrian landscape came up with a rush and hit him. When young Reznik—he was 24—tumbled to earth, he was alone on the edge of a grove of trees. He tried to rise, but acute pain shot through his foot—he had fractured an ankle.

Despite the pain, he dragged the parachute among the trees, hid it under a brushpile. He lurked among the trees until nightfall, then started to walk. He walked all night, limping, resting now and then, going on again despite excruciating stabs of pain.

In the morning he came to the edge of a little town, opened a conversation, using remnants of High School German and home-grown Yiddish, with a German farmwoman. He explained that he was an American and she took him into the stone farmhouse, fed him a substantial breakfast.

It was an all-purpose house, home of not only its human occupants but the chickens and the pigs as well. In a nearby house, almost the exact duplicate of the first, Nazi soldiers were posted. Soon a group of them came over, took him in tow, hauled him away to the local military hoosegow.

An arrogant lieutenant colonel questioned him, saw the symbol H—for Hebrew—on his dogtag and next to Reznik's name on the paper before him he wrote "Jude"—Jew—in large capitals, so large they sprawled all the way across the sheet. Then, as if to make the notation doubly definite, he also drew a small

six-pointed star next to the name.

"Don't you know," the Nazi roared, "what we do to the Jews?"

Other Nazi guards repeated the question, like a slogan. They told him "Jews and Negroes—one is as bad as the other." But nothing in particular was done to him there that was not done to the other boys. He met them all, the whole crew of his bomber. They were packed ten prisoners to a single small hole of a room, slept on straw on the ground. For two days, their only food was a loaf of black bread and cheese.

Then they were transported by truck and train into Germany. The ankle was getting worse and at Meiningen they put Reznik in a hospital, where the treatment wasn't too bad. He got to Moosberg in early April, and liberation came on April 29th.

He knew the night before, by the sound of guns, that something was happening. All night he slept or tried to sleep through an ever-increasing artillery barrage. In the morning it was still going, and at noon, after it had stopped, he saw the American flag raised in town and then a thundering parade of Third Army tanks and trucks and jeeps. . . .

The fight for Europe went on at home, too. Here is a scene that was repeated, with only minor changes in detail, many times in many places. This one took place, in late summer of 1943, in a Cleveland war plant, called the Accurate Parts Manufacturing Company.

Working steadily at a punch press, one of a battery of presses, was Mrs. Edna Bloom, mother of a soldier. Somebody working at her side asked, was there any news about Arthur? That was

Sergeant Arthur Bloom, a boy of 23 and Mrs. Bloom's only son. He had been reported missing in action, in a bomb raid over occupied France two or three months before.

Mrs. Bloom nodded, yes, there was news, and brought out a telegram from the War Department. The telegram said, the War Department regrets to inform that Sergeant Arthur Bloom was killed in action during a raid over France. She folded the telegram, replaced it in her purse, resumed the routine, automatic work at her punch press.

Somebody urged, why don't you go home, Mrs. Bloom? A rest would do you good at a time like this. It would do you good, maybe, to be alone. She shook her head. A foreman came and said, why don't you take a few days off? It will be all right—we'll manage over here. She said, "Arthur wouldn't want me to go to pieces. Other boys will need these plates I'm working on. I'll stay."

At home, too, the fight went on, with its sorrow and suffering—and a courageous heart.

Mr. and Mrs. Michael Goldberg of Paterson, New Jersey, went to a local movie house one night in the Summer of '43. They watched through a long feature. They paid only superficial attention to a Donald Duck cartoon film. Then the newsreel started and they came to a wideawake alert when the silver screen flashed scenes from recent bomb raids on the Ploesti Oil Fields. For they had a son, Jerry, who was a Flying Fortress bombardier, and bomb raids had a powerful fascination for them.

The screen showed the planes in flight, the oil fields, the bomb explosions. Then a close-up view of a bomber alighting

at a home base, and of General Brereton meeting the crew, congratulating one man after another as he stepped out of the plane.

Suddenly the high, shrill voice of Mrs. Goldberg broke into the quiet of the Paterson movie theater: "Look, Michael! It's he—it's Jerry!"

It was, indeed, Bombardier Jerry Goldberg receiving the congratulations of a general. Michael said, "Sh!" but he didn't really mean it. And the sedate movie audience, quickly taking in the scene, didn't mind the disturbance.

"You feel like a feather flying through the air. It was the queerest sensation. Strangest of all, after the deafening noise of engines and shots and explosions, it was suddenly so quiet you could have heard a pin drop. Except that we were dropping much faster than any pin. You don't realize that for the first 1200 feet. It's only when you get down to a couple of hundred feet that the ground suddenly rushes at you, and you get frightened—personally, I landed in a tree."

Thus Lieutenant Murray Septoff of Brooklyn, Flying Fortress pilot, described later his first jump, dragging a parachute behind him, in combat. It was in the Summer of 1944. It was a forced jump. He had been in a large-scale bombing raid over the Reich. The target of the day was left leveled and burning—results were eminently "satisfactory."

Then back the bomber formation started for its base in Italy, but on the way, somewhere over Austria, came the Messerschmitts, the German fighters. They came pouring in from the East and from the West. They crowded the air. They shot down the lead bomber of the formation. Then they got Septoff's.

The men knew their plane had been mortally hit, but she had some minutes of flying in her yet. The Yugoslav border was 45 miles ahead, a long distance to cover in a plane that's breaking up. But they decided to race for it. Using every trick in the flier's book and improvising a few more, the pilot forced his now rattling bomber toward Yugoslavia.

The fuel tanks leaked, the engines coughed, the wings were getting ready to drop off. But the pilot, tight-lipped, called on her for one last burst of speed—just enough to get off Nazi territory. If she would only hold together for just a little longer—.

When, at last, it seemed that the plane would hold no longer, the men jumped, one after another. In the tree in which Septoff came to rest, he had time to wonder: Had he really landed in Yugoslavia? And if he had, was he in an area held by the Nazis? Would the forced drive over the border turn out to have been in vain?

He did not have to wait long for an answer. Soon a small crowd gathered around the tree—natives, men in ragged clothing and one or two in gray uniforms that might be German. On the uniform cap of one of these Septoff noted the red star of Tito's Partisans, and then he knew he was among friends.

They hid his parachute—for the occupying Nazis were all around and the Partisans were boldly operating in their midst. They hurried him to a Partisan hospital. In a few days, all the rest of his crew were also assembled. They were taken to a secret airfield and there, a few days later, Allied planes picked them up and flew them back to Italy. Septoff recalled:

"Young girls, old men, even children risked their lives every day to hide us, to get us food. I asked them once why they did it.

It was an old woman I asked. She had a round peasant face and her hands were hard. I remember she said, 'We do it because we think that in the fight against the Fascists one of you men can do more than ten of us'."

That's the way it was during the war.

It was June 11, 1943, when Lieutenant Aaron Siegel, a New York boy—Public School 47, De Witt Clinton High School, New York University—went out on his 32nd bombing mission. The target was the Piraeus, port city of Athens. Siegel was the navigator. Somewhere high over the Greek islands, something hit the bomber and it broke in pieces that went fluttering down to earth. So did the crew of 15 men.

Siegel was knocked unconscious by the explosion. When he came to he was falling through the air, and had already fallen ten thousand feet. His parachute was still closed. From far back in his mind came the urgent reminder that he must do something. He pulled the rip cord.

The entire population of a Greek mountain village picked him up. They carried him to the only house in the village that had a bed. They fed him the best of everything they had—stewed grass and goat's milk. They found the rest of his crew, one man alive and seven dead. They brought him together with 14 other U. S. airmen whom the Greek underground had picked up and collected. They buried the seven dead in their parachutes, as in a shroud of honor, and they set a group of peasant girls to care for their common grave in the mountains of Greece.

For two months, traveling on foot and by mule back, traveling at night and hiding by day, Siegel and his group of 15

dodged the Nazis. The underground passed them from hideout to hideout, from one underground headquarters to another. They learned to live like fugitives—like the Greeks of the underground, always on the move, rarely sleeping in the same place twice, changing headquarters every other week.

Once, Siegel had to stay put in one place for three weeks. But pneumonia did that—not the Nazis—and a temperature that hung obstinately around 105. The 15 other Americans wanted to stay with him but (he was the ranking officer) he ordered them to keep moving.

"It's easier for the Jerries to locate 16 Americans than one," he pointed out and they agreed.

Greeks of the underground nursed him back to health, lovingly but under difficulties. Twelve persons crowded, day and night, into the little stone house where he fought his way through the illness, watched over their American avion.

Eventually, he joined the others. And after 87 days in the mountains of Greece, he was able to slip out of the country and find his way back to U. S. lines and to the U. S. . . .

This sort of thing happened again and again during the long grand assault by air that preceded invasion of Europe from the West. It happened this time, in the Spring of '44, to Lieutenant Stanley J. Fisher of Baltimore, 23-year-old bomber pilot, holder of the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with four Oakleaf Clusters. Flak came up, in the bombing area, pounded at his Flying Fortress, put two of the Fort's four motors out of commission. The plane slowed down, lost altitude, dropped out of formation.

Nazi fighter planes lolling in the clouds on the lookout for just such an easy mark swooped down on her, grimly ready for the kill. Limping, far from help by either friendly fighters or other bombers that might come to her rescue, the Fisher Flying Fortress seemed like easy prey for Hitler's flying jackals.

They zoomed in from every angle. They poured their destructive fire into her sides. The ship rocked with the attackers' blows. Several crewmen were wounded, but kept on firing. Young Fisher, pilot and commander, drove ahead despite the Nazis' fiercest tries to knock him out, urged his gunners to keep their guns chattering, promised that the Fort would outlast their pursuers.

He kept that promise. Soon the harassed crew saw the gleaming waters of the English Channel—and the German fighters decided to turn back . . . Fisher, graduate of Baltimore City College, was in show business before he enlisted as an air cadet. He had never put on as good a show as this.

Harold L. Stralser of Detroit, a navigator and an Air Corps captain at 23, in 25 missions to soften up Hitler's Europe, had six Flying Fortresses battered and almost destroyed by German fighters and flak. His crew knocked down at least 11 planes and Stralser himself, trying his hand with an aerial gun, personally accounted for one Nazi craft. "I just took a shot at it and it exploded," he reported, somewhat incredulously.

After one raid on St. Nazaire, France, his Fortress came home pock-marked with 476 holes. But worst of all was mission No. 26, a bombing of the industrial Ruhr.

A navigator's job is to study maps, to calculate compass posi-

tions and so to keep a plane on the right course. Actual flying is done by others. But during the Ruhr attack, both pilot and co-pilot of Captain Stralser's plane were badly wounded. As the controls dropped from their nerveless hands, the plane went into a steep, crazy dive. The wounded pilot shouted to the navigator to take over in his place. Stralser climbed into the pilot's seat but, he related later, he "didn't know what to do." If he didn't, he learned fast. He brought the plane out of her dive, made the bombing run, and the bombardier dropped his bombs smack on the target.

Then he turned home, finally reached the home field in England, and there the real trouble started. Stralser had never landed a Fortress in his life. He made a try. He snuggled up to the runway sideways, saw that it wouldn't do and climbed out of danger. On the ground, "ambulances were chasing us all over the field," getting set for what looked like a first rate crash. Before he made a second try at an improvised landing, the wounded co-pilot regained consciousness and managed an orthodox landing without mishap. Captain Stralser was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

The Flying Fortress Lieutenant Louis H. Glickman of Springfield, Massachusetts, guided over enemy-held France—this was in September, 1943—did all right until it ran into rockets. It was Glickman's 19th bombing mission. He was the Fort's navigator-bombardier, and when a flock of German fighter planes came along and kept up a harassing running battle, he did not worry too much.

It was the gunners' business to shoot the fighters out of the

sky or at least keep them a safe distance away, and they were doing that job all right. Two Messerschmitts that ventured within range were sent crashing to the ground and the rest, after ten minutes, turned away.

Then six new enemy fighters appeared, from the rear. They were still 1,000 yards away—well beyond effective range of the Fort's guns—when they let go, not with ordinary gunfire, but with rockets. (A rocket does not have to make a direct hit on the target. It has to get only within the general vicinity, where it explodes, sending flying fragments in all directions.)

Two of the Fort's engines were hit and set on fire. More rocket planes arrived and another rocket knocked out the No. 3 engine and set it afire. Any moment the whole ship might explode, and the pilot pulled her out of the formation and gave the order to bail out.

Glickman jumped with the others and his parachute had barely opened when he saw the Fort, a few seconds after the last man got out, break into small bits in a spectacular explosion in mid-air.

The bomber was lost over Nantes, France, on Sept. 15, 1943, but whether that was a victory—or the reverse—for the Nazis was a question not settled until several months later. Lieutenant Glickman, for one, when he landed on French soil, was spirited away by the French underground and eventually found his way back to England—carrying with him a large consignment of information which helped materially in the D-Day invasion when that came.

Before he went out on his 22d mission, 2nd Lieutenant Ray-

mond Friedlander of New York wrote in his diary:

"No matter how much easier and more pleasant it would be to be elsewhere at this moment, I still want to be here. This is the summit of human achievement—carrying the fight for all I've learned to love and all that's good in the world, carrying the fight with all its dangers to the enemy I hate.

"No matter what the battle may hold for me in cost of pain or death, I could not think of a better way to pass the time of my life . . . We shall train our sights on Berlin, Tokyo and Rome, and we shall not stop fighting until the annihilation of the forces of totalitarianism."

A bombardier on a Fortress that went roaring over South Germany and Austria, he was killed January 27, 1944, when his plane crashed in an action over Northern Italy and only the pilot escaped alive. Just before that engagement he had written home to his young wife (Friedlander was only 24 when he died):

"What barbarians those Germans are! I used to feel sorry for the people who happened to get hit and killed by our bombs, but I'm changing my feelings rapidly. I sure hope there are plenty of those damn Nazis on or around the military targets we hit . . ."

When all of France was still in German hands, a U. S. airman who bailed out over French soil found himself, when he landed, in enemy country—but not always in enemy hands. Thus it happened to Sergeant Joseph Gross of Philadelphia. On his fourth softening-up mission, flak shattered his plane and the crew parachuted to the ground. As Gross floated down, he caught sight of men scurrying around, men with the funny French

berets on their heads.

They were F.F.I.—the French underground. Soon the Germans came, too, and they asked the French villagers had they seen an Allied flier, and the villagers said politely, Ah, mais non, M. Boche, there had been nobody at all. They had hidden Gross in an obscure farm building, deep in the countryside, and there he waited, to be spirited down the secret underground highway followed by many an Allied aviator back to England.

While he waited, a B-17 was shot down in the area. A gunner bailed out—and fell into the friendly hands of the F.F.I. The pilot had died when the plane crashed, and the Germans buried him unceremoniously in a wayside grave. To the French this Nazi burial of their friend and ally, the American pilot, was an intolerable insult.

During the night, F.F.I. men unearthed the slain pilot, placed his body in a flower-bedecked casket. Then they sent out leaflets to neighboring towns and villages, inviting the people to come to a funeral, to do honor to a friend. Sergeant Gross went too, and he related:

"There were thousands at the grave. The few dozen Germans assigned to the town didn't care to interrupt the goings-on. One look at the grim faces of the people streaming to the cemetery was enough to make them look the other way.

"But this was the most moving scene of all. The American gunner who had bailed out the day before—and disappeared —suddenly stepped out from among the crowd. He wore his U. S. Army uniform, with flying regalia. In his arms he carried a huge floral wreath. This he placed reverently on the casket of the pilot. Then he came to a straight salute. The German

guards were there, but they didn't move—just stared as if they were seeing a ghost, the ghost of their own crimes. Soon the funeral ended, the American gunner merged again in the crowd and disappeared."

It took Sergeant Gross seven months of wandering over the French landscape, dodging the Nazis and hiding out with the French, before he was able to make his way back to England . . .

It was a crisp, clear Fall day in '43, October 9, and partly that was why Captain Sidney Hantman of Newtown Square, Pennsylvania, went out on what proved to be his last mission. It was, as it happened, Yom Kippur, and Captain Hantman, flight operations officer of his 8th Air Force Squadron, had promised to come down to London and visit a Jewish family there. But he qualified his promise. "If you see a lot of planes overhead, don't expect me," he had said.

It turned out good bombing weather and there were lots of planes overhead that morning, passing East across the Channel and headed for the Rhineland City of Aachen. In one of them Hantman sat—as a gunner. As the formation was getting ready to take off from its English airfield, somebody failed to answer the rollcall, leaving a vacancy. Hantman had no one else for the job of handling the rear gun of the lead plane—and assigned himself.

All the way to Aachen and then back, Captain Hantman, a pilot and a flight operations officer, sat behind his gun, but he never fired it. That came about because the M-E 110s, the German fighter planes, came out in great clouds that covered the sky the minute the bombers got over the French coast. Hantman

was checking his gun when he saw them, and at the same time he saw two ships of his squadron, one on each wing, go down flaming.

In the same instant a shell came whirring through the tail of Hantman's ship and tore off his right arm. What does a man do when he is 28 and his arm is ripped off? Hantman, using his remaining left arm, lunged for the charger, trying to release the left gun.

But he was losing blood in great quantities and there wasn't much strength in him. He tried to call the pilot on the interphone, but the wires had been shot out and the phone was dead. He waited, growing rapidly weaker. The right leg had been hit, too, and the racking pain of the right thigh was intolerable.

Up in the middle of the bomber, the waist gunner noticed something funny . . . The German fighters were all around, and all guns on the bomber were going full blast—except the rear gun. He worked his way to Hantman's position, found a barely conscious captain and took over his post. After a while, Aachen was reached and bombed, and the remnant of the squadron turned back. Hantman was unconscious now.

They took him to a hospital, administered four quarts of plasma—and he survived. They awarded him the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism and courage while bombing an enemy target.

The award mentions that "he stayed at his post and continued to act as lookout though his arm had been blown off and he was in terrible pain, helping to complete the mission successfully."

It is a lovely thing, when you are riding a bomber into action, to see the friendly fighters in the sky. They lurk behind the clouds, in the lower stratosphere, like so many anxious chicks watching over the mother hen, to protect her . . . And when danger comes, in the form of hostile fighter planes, they swoop with guns screaming and knock the intruders out or chase them away.

When Lieutenant David Besbris of Taunton, Massachusetts, was engaged in his first bombing to soften up Europe, fighters had not yet learned to fly the full distances that bombers fly. In those days the only fighter planes an American airman was likely to see over German soil were German . . .

Tall, thin, eager, Besbris did not wait for Pearl Harbor before getting into the business of fighting Nazis. When the meager U. S. armed forces were still technically neutral, he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force, transferred to the Army Air Force after six months, eventually got to England and became a bomber navigator. Then he began to learn about fighters. His education was rapid.

On his second mission into Germany, his Flying Fortress formation ran into flak thick as a hail storm coming up, and when the flak died down, the German fighters came in like swarms of angry bees. The fighter pilots of that time were the best the Germans had, trained and efficient veterans, not the green Hitler-Youth fanatics of the war's last months. They rolled into battle and fired and rolled again, and the gunners of Besbris' B-17 slugged it out with them all the way to the Channel.

Over her home field at last, the bomber, already a flying

wreck, came down in a crash landing. As the flight crew stepped out—all were miraculously unhurt—the ground crew hauled the wreckage away to the junkpile.

There followed, in short order, a mission to the Ruhr, in which "a lot of nice guys paid with their lives" for the success achieved, and after that the heavy raid on the ball-bearing plants at Schweinfurt. All the way in to the target—as if the Nazis had known in advance what was coming—the Forts were raked with flak from the ground and harassed by enemy fighters. The Besbris plane was peppered with more holes than a Swiss cheese.

Besbris saw (he later related) "the beautiful Fortresses shot down like ducks on a pond. I could see them spiral down in flames or disappear in one searing burst of fire." The fighter pilots over Schweinfurt were the Nazis' big leaguers, and all of them that the Nazis could assemble were there.

After one smashing attack, Besbris' fellow crewmen found the bomber's hydraulic system shot out, the oxygen gone. The B-17 lost its place in formation and dropped from high squadron to low. As it fell, Besbris saw Fortresses and parts of Fortresses come sailing by, and men in parachutes—and men without.

Now the hobbling Fort ran into another flak barrage, and a shell splinter cut through the navigator's leg, carried away a large chunk of flesh from the calf. The home airfield "looked like Heaven that day . . ."

There were two or three weeks in the hospital, and the Purple Heart and then a new mission, to Strassbourg, on the Rhine. This time 18 of the bombers, including that in which

Besbris sat as navigator, became separated from the main formation.

"We were jumped by 50 fighters," who swarmed about our bombers, dashed in and out among them, letting go with machine guns and cannon from every side. In a crisis like that, the art of navigation becomes a luxury which a harassed bomber crew cannot afford. Navigator Besbris left his charts and his instruments and took to a gun.

He was no gunner by training, but when the ball turret gunner shrieked into the interphone, "I got one," it seemed to Besbris that now it was his turn to do the same. He looked up and at one o'clock—from forward and slightly to the right—a Focke-Wulf 190 came rolling in, his guns spitting death. The navigator-gunner aimed as well as he could and fired. A second or two went by and nothing happened.

So many times a shot from a bomber's side is swallowed in the ocean of air, and nothing happens. For a moment the Focke-Wulf kept coming on. Then, as Besbris looked, it turned into a silent puff of black smoke and drifted away in the wind . . .

"I got one too," Besbris shouted, with surprise, into the interphone.

The bomber, however, was badly damaged. Over the channel, 50 miles from the nearest English coast, the last engine coughed and came to a halt. The order went out to jettison everything not tied down. The pilot struggled to keep her gliding, but the ship lost altitude, 1,000 feet every minute. The men loosed their shirts, ripped off neckties and heavy boots. The radio man

closed his key to send out continuous signals of the plane's location.

The bomber floated down and down. The words sounded ominous over the interphone: "Prepare to ditch!" The men braced themselves. The bomber hit water, tail first. Besbris felt a shock. That's all he remembered until he awoke, only half conscious that he was being pushed into a dinghy.

Actually, when the plane struck water, Besbris was sent sailing through the radio room, into the bomb bay. He hit the side of the plane head first and was knocked out. The co-pilot found him there, dragged him through a hatch to the wing and from there into the little dinghy already crowded with nine men.

All that had to be done fast. The plane sank in less than a minute. Besbris' head ached and his back was in bad shape. He was the only one injured. It was noon, and the prospect of a rescue seemed good. Except that the French coast was only five miles away, and its German-manned batteries were in clear sight. The Channel waves were running strong.

A group of Spitfires came over, circled about and about the men in the dinghy and after a while went away. A big Lockheed-Hudson came over and dropped a motor launch in the waters nearby. A veritable life saver this would be for the men, but it was caught in the drift of a Channel current. The men in the dinghy paddled and pushed with their hands, and the dinghy bobbed along trailing the launch but never caught up with it. Steadily the dinghy filled with water until, as night closed in, the water was up to a man's knees. Now the hope of a rescue faded and almost vanished.

There is perhaps no more terrible feeling than that of men thus bobbing along on rough seas in the black night. Little flickers of light appeared here and there on the coast. The cold water and the cold winds chilled the men to the bone. The dinghy wobbled up and down and sidewise over the waves, and any moment a man might be dumped suddenly from his precarious perch into the sea. The men sat and shivered, with legs interlocked. It helped to keep them from falling out.

The terrible hours passed, slowly. Midnight. And one o'clock. A faint outline came crawling along in the dark. It might be a ship or a submarine. And, most ticklish of all, it might be a friend—or enemy. There were more shadows, dark shapes that seemed to be closing in. At any moment a hail of fire might crackle out in the dark . . .

The waiting became intolerable. At last one of the men fired a Very light pistol. The flare arched, with a frightening clarity, like a scimitar cutting into the black sky. The Shapes moved nearer and across the black waters came a voice, shouting—in German.

What he said no one understood. But the pilot answered, in English: "We don't care who you are but get us out of here!" The men had been afloat 13 hours, and unless they were rescued now it seemed certain they would be dead men, dead of exposure, before dawn.

The Shapes came alongside—and they were French corvettes. That was a Free French sailor who had shouted in German. A precaution, to make sure this was no trap. Had any one answered in German the Frenchmen would have given their reply—with machine guns. Now the corvettes took the men aboard, landed

them in England. Lieutenant Besbris spent two months in an English hospital this time before he set out again, on another mission to plaster Germany.

Sooner or later the pounding we were giving Hitler's Europe from the air had to end, to be followed by that ultimate test: invasion and battle by the men on foot and in the tanks. As that day drew nearer, we pulled in our strategic-bomb sights, closer to the intended invasion line. And the bombers began to pay their respects to specific invasion obstacles, road crossings and railroads and bridges and—military schools.

Especially schools for fliers, for now the Nazis were visibly suffering from a shortage of trained pilots, and every nest of such pilots-in-training we could wipe out would mean that many more Germans we would not have to fight in the air.

That is how it happened that Staff Sergeant Manfred Stein of Glendale, Long Island, early in '44, along with many other Air Force men in many B-24's, "attended the graduation exercises of a class of Luftwaffe pilots" at an advanced flying school in Biarritz.

They were not, as it happened, invited guests, and they got only as far as directly above the school, but their arrival was a sensation. The bombers came in at 11 a.m., when the Nazi pilots-to-be, as our intelligence had learned, were preparing to receive their wings in full Nazi style. When the uninvited guests left to go, the place was a mass of roaring flames, with smoke clouds reaching 2,000 feet into the air. Staff Sergeant Stein, who was later wounded and returned home, recalled that "it was beautifull"

In April, just before the misadventure which sent him to a hospital, Stein was in a formation which did another kind of eleventh-hour strategic bombing. D-Day was only a few weeks off, but the fliers didn't know that. They knew they had been sent on a bombing mission, they found a ski-like building and construction going on around it—and bombed it to smithereens. Only after getting back to their base did they learn they had knocked out a launching platform for buzz bombs.

"It didn't look kosher to us," Stein explained, "so we gave it a pasting."

Lieutenant Morton A. Dubelier, born and brought up in the Bronx, enlisted in '42 and flew bombers over Europe throughout the long months of our strategic wearing down of Hitler's continent from the air. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with ten Oak Leaf Clusters, which means lots of combat flying. Often the flak and the enemy fighter planes kept coming on. And once it looked as if the ship wouldn't make it back home from the target. She did, but when the crew got out in England they counted 150 holes in her side.

Then D-Day came and again Dubelier and his crew went out in a bomber winging South. But now they did not head for some distant arms factory deep in Germany or a roller-bearing plant in Austria. Instead there were tactical objectives in Normandy, close to the men on the ground, designed to make the going for the ground troops easier. Lieutenant Dubelier expressed the difference, as a flier sees it, so:

"It was a magnificently thrilling sight to see all those ships

in the Channel, our ships, where there had never been anything but water before—and sometimes Jerries.

"And flying over the Germans' Europe was different, too, completely different, knowing that there were Yanks down there. You didn't give a damn about whether your mission was tough or not, when you knew that. All you thought of was giving those guys on the ground a break."

CHAPTER SEVEN

D-DAY IN NORMANDY

IT WAS THE TIME of the big gamble, June, 1944.

Now was the time, if ever, to strike across the English Channel for the Europe Hitler had turned into an armed camp. Napoleon over a century ago dreamed of doing this, in reverse: leading an invasion army across the few miles of channel water, to conquer England. He got no nearer than a distant view of the white cliffs of Dover on a clear day. Hitler planned the same after France fell, but lost his nerve.

It was our turn now. We had planned for it two years or more. We had piled up massive strength on the green isle of England, vast armies of men and mountains of modern arms. We had tried out both, on a sampling scale, to see how they worked. At Dieppe, where the objective we sought was gained but our losses were terrific. And some said it proved we could invade Europe, and some that maybe we could invade and take ground but could we hold it? And could we afford the cost?

We tested our armadas in invasion exercises on the Channel.

We assembled troops in channel ports and disassembled them and brought them together again. We slapped down a security silence on all the English Isles. Hitler's henchmen knew that soon, now, D-Day would come—invasion day.

They even set dates for D-Day, and when the dates passed and no invasion, their radio jibed at us, needling the Russians who wanted a second front. When, they asked, with fake hilarity, would the Anglo-Americans dare to try their Second Front? But after a while imminent invasion ceased to be good material for the Nazis' heavy-handed humor. Instead, they sought to turn it to propaganda account. Oh, yes, the Allies would invade, they agreed, but that was exactly what the Fuehrer wanted. For then they would be stopped and hurled back by the Atlantic Wall, and if the Atlantic Wall didn't hold, so much the better. For then the German Army would meet the invaders on land in France and hurl them back into the sea.

U. S. prisoners, after the war ended and they were freed, related how on D-Day Japanese guards jubilantly told them invasion in France was on—believing the Nazi propaganda that it meant the beginning of Nazi victory in Europe.

The Nazis knew invasion was coming soon, but not exactly when, nor where. They fished for information, and the Supreme Allied Command under Eisenhower threw out bait, helped along their confusion by hinting at this and that invasion point. When invasion came, the Nazis were stretched out thin along the long French coast, and there they remained. They believed too long that the invasion in Normandy was a feint, and waited too long for the real thing to follow, farther North or farther South. In the end, they outsmarted themselves.

But for a while the whole war hung in the balance. D-Day struck on June 6, and for days thereafter bitter battles were fought for narrow strips of sand on the beaches of Normandy, for a foothold and a landing place. In the succeeding weeks the strips expanded, and the trucks and the tanks rolled on, and overhead our air power kept the air clear of German planes, until after a while all Normandy was ours and we were ready to move deeper into France.

Bernard Barshay grew up on the waterfront of Perth Amboy, New Jersey. He didn't grow much. At 19, he was a fresh-skinned, baby-face boy, height 4 ft. 10. That's less than the minimum for enlistment in the Navy, but the Navy was what Barshay wanted most of all. A year before, at 18, he had tried to enlist but the Navy said no: too short.

He went to his draft board and he was accepted. At the induction center, he used to tell later, they had his papers all signed and sealed—for the Army. But he slipped into the Navy line instead, and a harassed petty officer who didn't examine the papers too closely passed him along. Before they discovered the error, he was sworn in.

He was Pharmacist's Mate 3d class Bernard Barshay, shortest sailor in the United States Navy, inevitably nicknamed "Shorty," in April of '44 when they sent him out on maneuvers in the Channel on one of eight LST's. It was a misty night. LST's are slow, lumbering craft that do 12 miles an hour tops.

In the gray mist four German E boats appeared. They carry torpedoes and make 75 miles an hour.

When the shooting started, the LST next to Barshay's blew

up, "Shorty" was hurled out of bed and all night long the uneven race was on . . . The LST's had only the dark and the mist to aid them. And four of the eight got back at dawn. Barshay earned his first campaign ribbon then.

He was on LST 496, loaded with 29th Infantry men and tanks, on the morning of June 6. This was the first LST to hit the Normandy coast. At 6 a.m. on D-Day it drew up through the surf off Omaha Beach. The Nazis had been on anti-invasion maneuvers there, and it did not take them long to convert to the real thing. As the boat picked its way among the floating mines, the Nazis' shore batteries opened up, sending a rain of bursting shells on all sides.

Nevertheless LST 496 landed and unloaded her men and her tanks. For three days, until the evening of D-Day plus 2, the boat remained there, and during that time Barshay's job was to pick up and bandage the wounded, bring them to his boat. With a full load of wounded she started back, in convoy, across the Channel. Dive bombers swooped down and scattered the convoy. E-boats chased it and sank some ships. But LST 496 arrived. Then, loaded with more men and tanks, started again for Normandy.

On D-Day plus 6 (June 12) she was within 200 yards of the beach when a mine exploded, blowing away all of the port side. The captain in command and 20 other officers were instantly killed. So were many men of the 4th Armored Division, already in their tanks, set to go. The ship sank in less than ten minutes, tanks and men with her. At the moment of the explosion Barshay was hurled against a ceiling from which he bounced back, like a rubber ball. That much he remembered,

but nothing more.

When he came to, it was four days later and he was in a hospital in England. He learned that Joseph A. Quattrochi, his closest pal since their boot camp days together at Sampson, rescued him. Quattrochi was himself badly banged up. His face was smashed and bleeding. But he crawled from the tank deck of the sinking ship down below, found the unconscious Shorty, mumbled "let's get the hell out of here"—and somehow got them both out. How, he himself doesn't know. They awarded Barshay the Purple Heart and a new battle star.

The battle for a Normandy beachhead surged across the water, over the beach sands. This was the showdown. This was the big drive, at last, into Hitler's Festung Europa. This was It.

And in the middle of it, young Freddy Kaufman sat on a rock shadow-boxing with a ghost—a ghost tank. He was Private First Class Freddy Kaufman of Norwich, New York.

It wasn't his idea of how to fight the Nazis, whom he wanted very badly to fight, about whom he had some personal knowledge. He was a boy of 15 when, in 1938, he had fled with his parents from Germany to the U. S. He was 21 now, with three years as American soldier behind him—and at H-Hour that morning, among a lot of other American boys bound on the same mission he had stepped out of his landing craft into knee-deep water to storm the beach.

Things happened immediately, and very fast. A Nazi bullet caught him in the leg, under water, and he slipped and fell. He rose, fell again, rose slowly, swallowing salt water. More bullets whizzed by, shells were whining overhead, a passing

GI yanked him up by one arm, shoved him up on the rock. "You can stand a rest, Buddy," the GI recommended, and went on, for this was no time to worry about casualties. The leg wound was bleeding profusely.

There was just about room enough on the narrow rock for Freddy to stretch out and wait. He could hear, where he lay and waited, the snarl of machine guns, the rattle of tanks hitting the sand, the dull boom of "heavy stuff" coming in from our naval ships, the moan of our fighters overhead, sometimes (he thought) the sound of human voices. All the myriad weird noises that go into an amphibious operation.

He lay very still, saving his strength, for he must not bleed to death. Then a wounded tank came charging down on the rock, swirled around once, stopped dead a short distance away. Its crewmen hopped out and left it behind. The tank burst into flames and burned—and burned. Half that day and far into the night its ammunition exploded, shooting fragments of metal at the boy on the rock. Sometimes they missed him by a yard, sometimes by a hair's breadth.

Young Kaufman forgot the battle still raging on the beach, forgot his own bleeding wound, his growing hunger. The Thing standing off there, shooting pieces of hot metal at him, fascinated him. He watched it out of the corner of one eye, looking over one shoulder, the way you watch a flesh-and-blood enemy who is on your trail. He listened with strained ears to its rattle and rumble and roar, which shut out all other sounds, between explosions. And at every explosion he ducked his head violently out of the way. It was a futile gesture, for he could move at most a few inches either way.

When night came, he could see The Thing only now and then, against the faint light of tracers in the sky, and only in shadowy outline. Sometimes The Thing was far away, in the black darkness. Sometimes it moved, suddenly, very near.

Private First Class Fred Kaufman, scout rifleman, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, First Division, talked to The Thing.

He talked to It gently at first, in a soothing voice, using words intended to persuade and not anger.

He said, "Why don't you go away, Thing? There's nothing for you here. Why don't you go away, maybe up there on the beach? It's much better over there. Drier, and solid sand under your tractors."

Then he laughed at what he was saying, for he didn't really believe The Thing could hear him. After a while he spoke again, more sternly. He warned The Thing to stop its unearthly racket. He said:

"Better stop it, or you'll explode. Not just another one of these ammo explosions, but a big one that'll rip you apart. Stop it! Hear me? STOP IT!"

He talked like that. And presently, when his talk had no effect, he sat up painfully and looked squarely at The Thing and got more and more angry that it was there, a kind of symbol of everything that had happened to keep him from his share in the biggest battle in the world against the Nazis.

He shook his clenched fist at The Thing. He swore at it. The Thing shot toward him and then fled back into the dark as a light briefly glowed and died, and he shouted, "Don't you come near me. Don't do it or—"

He dozed off, despite the noise, and then awoke and sat up

suddenly, startled into wideawake alarm. The Thing was moving toward him, nearer, nearer than it had ever come before. In the shadows it looked no longer like a ghostly tank but something else. Kaufman wondered, uneasily, could it be that his mind was beginning to slip? But he looked again and—no, it was true: The Thing had taken on the form of a man. And it was coming directly at him.

"Keep—away—from—me—you—Whatever-you-are!" Kaufman warned, and then, as the approaching figure was almost on him, he struck out with both fists, hard as he could.

That wasn't very hard, and the Navy medical officer had no difficulty in subduing him.

"Easy there, boy," he counseled. "We've come to get you off this stinking rock—why do you want me to keep away?"

"I—I beg pardon, sir," the soldier explained. "I mistook you for a—ghost."

On the morning of June 6, Private Edward Frindel, a New York boy, stood in a line of paratroopers, inside a transport plane circling over a blacked-out France. Like the others, he was loaded down with his parachute, with rifle and clips of ammunition, with all the manifold paraphernalia that paratroopers wear and carry when going into action.

He was first in line. He tested his belt. He adjusted his shoulder-straps. He glanced at the luminous-dial watch on his wrist—it was 2:25 a.m.—and he jumped. He wondered briefly as he floated down through the cold sky what was waiting for him below, but only briefly, for the men who jump into battle cannot afford the luxury of a lively imagination. He hit the

soil of France four miles Northwest of a town called Pouchiville, well within the German lines.

Seconds later he was a motionless figure merged in the night landscape, but with rifle in hand ready to fire. On all sides were neat rectangular fields, marked off by French hedgerows. He freed himself of the parachute, hid it in the brush. The other boys were fluttering down from the sky or were already down. It took cautious maneuvering, but by sunrise he had come together with nine of them, and they established a sort of beachhead among the hedgerows.

It became a kind of roving beachhead. By day the boys lay in hiding and at night they roamed the countryside, dodging the Germans, doing whatever damage they could, eating off the country. They ate raw new potatoes, dug out of the ground, and onions. And milk. There was a farm boy from the Middle West among the ten, an expert milker, and cattle were running around loose. He milked them into the boys' helmets. It was a nourishing diet, though dull.

On the fourth day, the paratroopers were hiding out behind a hedgerow, when a platoon of 30 armed, uniformed Germans came up the road. The Nazis seemed unaware that the hedgerow was tenanted. Cautiously the Americans crawled into position, ten men deployed at even intervals, like men on the firing line at target practice. At a given signal, all ten fired—and fired again and again. They left 30 dead Nazis, who would never harm an American again. The ten Americans were unhurt. They headed East, hoping to join the American lines.

From here on, the going got tougher. The Germans were bound to know they were there, to get on their trail.

Sometimes French villagers helped them with food out of their meager supplies. One Frenchman whose son, a boy of 17, had just been killed by a U. S. bomb, brought out wine and cheese for the Americans and, in the presence of his boy's body, said, "Perhaps it was worth it."

On the seventh day, they reached a deserted village. There was food and wine and, for the first time since before D-Day, beds to sleep in. The boys made the mistake of going to bed. At midnight the Germans, who had tracked them down to the village, opened fire on the village from all sides with tommy guns, machine guns, even artillery. The boys scattered, each one prepared to fight on his own as long as he could.

Soon Private Frindel was fighting by himself, cornered in an alley between two houses. A bullet caught him in the lower spine and he slumped to the ground. Two Germans came up, one with rifle pointed and ready to fire. Frindel shouted, in German, that he was wounded, and the rifleman held his fire. A German medic looked him over and found that the American was not only wounded but paralyzed. Frindel couldn't move. The infantryman cleaned out his pockets, found a Jewish prayer book among his possessions. He glanced at it and threw it away. Frindel was removed to a Nazi field hospital.

The paralysis left after a few days, but a painful wound remained. From the hospital Frindel was removed to a prison camp at Voulognes, and every day our airmen came over, bombing and strafing. It was good to know the Germans were getting hell from our Air Force, but it was hell also for the U. S. men in their prison camps. As the Nazis were pushed back and back, the camps were repeatedly moved. At last Frindel and the

others found themselves in Fort Homt in Cherbourg, last spot on the Cherbourg Peninsula to surrender.

About a week before the surrender, the Germans at the Fort seemed to know that the end was in sight. They destroyed everything that wasn't absolutely needed for their continued survival. They threw heavy ammunition and equipment into the sea. Every night they got drunk on French champagne. They became friendlier with the prisoners, and some of them talked.

The more fanatical of the younger Nazis weren't yet ready, as they became later, to curse Hitler and to explain that they weren't Nazis at all and never had been. But to Frindel, who talked with them in German, some already expressed doubts. The Nazi leaders had promised that the Allies would be pushed into the sea, but it was the Germans who were now being pushed into the sea. And some were bitter that the invincible Luftwaffe hadn't appeared, nor the invincible German tanks . . . Once Frindel got to the Germans' administration office, explained that he was an American lieutenant and wished to talk to the commanding officer. He got the ear of the adjutant, a major, and with a straight face explained it would be better to surrender—he happened to know the Yanks planned to raze the Fort with 15-ton bombs if it did not fall by June 24.

The adjutant listened, took the matter up with his C.O., and brought back the answer: No. Lieutenant Frindel, being himself a soldier, would understand how it was. They were under orders to hold out. Orders or no, the German soldiers at the Fort gave up on June 26, while their C.O. was making speeches about German honor.

Private Frindel still had his spine injury, and they gave him

a choice: Go back to England right away, or return to his outfit, which was scheduled to be evacuated by the middle of July. The paratrooper argued that he could walk and fight even though he couldn't sit down. And he chose the outfit. A few days later Frindel found himself up a disputed hill near Lehague du P. There was a boy named Jim, who had been with Frindel since the D-Day jump and before—they had gone on a three-day A.W.O.L. spree in England together—they were trapped together in the little French village and they were taken prisoners together and freed together. Suddenly a machine gun burst caught Jim, a half dozen paces away. Eight Nazi bullets pierced his body and he fell dead.

A sudden terrible rage came over Frindel, a sort of violent physical thing that reached into his throat and almost choked him. His eyes stared at the spot from which the machine gun fired. He leaped to his feet, forgetting or ignoring that it isn't healthy to stand up in the midst of a fire fight. He emptied a clip, then another, then a third, into the machine gun nest. Every German in the nest was knocked out, the machine gun was silent. But Frindel kept on firing. He was changing to his fourth clip when something hit him, hard. He fell to the ground.

The fighting still raged all around. But a medic reached him right away, bandaged the new wound, gave him other first aid. "They're wonderful guys, the medics," Frindel recalled. "This one was wounded himself, got two bullets in his right arm. He just bandaged it up and took care of me with his left hand. I don't know how he did it."

Frindel lay in the field for 12 hours. At last the medic, white as a sheet from the loss of blood, brought up a litter. They took

Frindel to a hospital and after four days to England. Two weeks later he was flown back to the U. S.

He summed it up:

"Seven weeks of action altogether. It feels like a life time."

There were 18 men in the 16th Infantry Regimental Band. There were six saxophone players among them and four trombones and a bass fiddle and a guitar and a piano player. Most of the time the men in the band have it easy compared with the men who lug rifles. When the regiment is in the rear areas, during training and re-training periods, they are permitted to pass up the more deadly of the routine drills. And when distinguished visitors have to be honored, there the band is, strutting its stuff, the cynosure of all eyes.

On the sweaty sands of the North African desert and amid battle-scarred ruins of Sicily, the 16th Infantry's band played before Bob Hope and Adolph Menjou and Larry Adler, before Generals Patton and Bradley and Eisenhower. But it wasn't always parade and show.

In combat, the boys discarded their saxophones and trombones, and went out on patrols, scouting for information—and drawing enemy fire. Or they manned 50-caliber antiaircraft guns, stationary or mounted on jeeps. Or, in a landing operation, they were among the first to hit the beach, carrying radios and wires and other essential communications equipment... And after the battle, their job was to bury the dead. They had a large percentage of casualties.

Thus it was that on D-Day Private First Class Sandford Rosen of New York, regular sax player in the 16th Infantry band,

had other duties than those connected with swing music. Son of a veteran of the First World War, Rosen had enlisted in January, 1941, and had had an active part in every campaign from North Africa on. On D-Day, he became a casualty—and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, second highest award that can be given a soldier. The War Department tells why, in the following citation:

> "For extraordinary heroism in action against the enemy 6 June 1944 in France. Private First Class Rosen disembarked from his landing craft amidst bursts of artillery fire and, with another man, started for the shore carrying a heavy drum of wire. At the first move his comrade was hit and instantly killed.
>
> "With complete disregard for his own safety, he rescued the heavy drum of wire from the surf and struggled with it under heavy enemy fire through the shoulder-deep water to the beach. Seconds later another burst of artillery fire shot away his left arm at the elbow. Unable to lift the drum with his one good arm, he valiantly dragged it the remaining distance, bleeding profusely but never hesitating despite his terrible wound and the intense enemy fire. This drum of wire so gallantly brought ashore was one of the very first initially landed, and was urgently needed.
>
> "In so distinguishing himself through his display of personal courage, dauntlessness and devotion to duty, Private First Class Rosen reflects great credit on himself and the armed forces . . ."

Thus the formalized, stilted language of the War Department

citation. But it is hardly necessary to rewrite it. The essential words are clear enough: "... Shot away his left arm at the elbow.... Dragged it the remaining distance, bleeding profusely but never hesitating despite his terrible wound and the intense enemy fire..."

Men like that, with actions like that, won for us the war against the Nazis.

Invasion of France had crept down to the base of the Normandy Peninsula and around it, overflowed into the peninsular triangles of Cherbourg and Brittany. Suddenly the Germans struck North, aiming to thrust a wedge between the two. Here it was that First Lieutenant Samuel Spitzer of Las Cruces, New Mexico, leading a group of antiaircraft gunners, found himself confronted with the problem of fighting not only planes in the air but advancing Nazis on foot.

On the first night of the attack, the Nazi airmen came over in force, bombing and strafing, and Spitzer's platoon of ack-ack men shot down more than one of the Nazi planes and chased the others into the substratosphere, where they couldn't do much harm. Eventually the Germans' drive by land failed and they started to withdraw.

Spitzer decided this wouldn't do, and soon his platoon moved down the road in pursuit of the enemy. Near a village half a dozen miles away a battalion of horse-drawn artillery appeared. The boys loaded their guns—guns made to pick airplanes out of the sky—with "anti-personnel" charges and let go. U. S. fliers at the same time dropped their own souvenirs among the

trapped Germans. Soon the invincible supermen—those who were still alive—left their caissons and their horses and their guns and ran like scared Herrenvolk into the village.

Lieutenant Spitzer threw away his helmet, laid down his .44 and, bareheaded and unarmed, walked into the deserted village. He strode up and down the empty village streets (the brave supermen were hiding in cellars, in houses and barns), shouted an invitation to the Nazis to come out and surrender. He shouted it so:

"M'vet euch nit schiessen. Kommt 'eraus!" (We won't shoot you. Come on out.) This was bad German, though pretty good Yiddish. The Germans, however, weren't particular that day. They came out in droves, with hands held high overhead, and none of them criticized the Jewish lieutenant's pronunciation. Lieutenant Spitzer's platoon marched the whole battalion—or what was left of it—to the nearest prisoner stockade.

First Lieutenant Frances Y. Slanger of Roxbury, Massachusetts, waded ashore on a Normandy beachhead on D-Day plus four. She and three other nurses who were her tent mates set up a field hospital at St. Mare Eglise. There was heavy fighting all around and they were tending wounded, in still wet uniforms, within two hours after landing. It was four days before their barracks bags showed up, with a change of clothing. They slept, when they got the chance to sleep, on the ground. They stayed with the same platoon for five weeks and in that time cared for 3,000 men.

From Normandy Lieutenant Slanger went on, with the advancing troops, deeper into France and then Belgium. She had

been for more than four months on frontline duty when a shell struck her tent. Captain Isidore R. Schwartz of Far Rockaway, New York, found her there, still conscious but dying, and rushed her to a field hospital. She died half an hour later.

She was the first American nurse of World War II to die under the Nazi guns. That was on October 21st. Seventeen days later, the GI newspaper "Stars and Stripes," not yet knowing she had been killed, printed a letter to the editor which Nurse Slanger had written and mailed an hour or so before the German barrage in which she met her death.

She wrote it by the light of a flashlight, in a dark waterlogged tent during a driving rainstorm. The letter, which many a soldier clipped from his "Stars and Stripes" and long carried among his treasured possessions, was a fine, sensitive tribute to the American soldier, to the wounded who "do not cry." Unintentionally, too, it was a tribute to the good-humored and devoted nurse who wrote it—to the best in the wartime spirit of the Army Nurse Corps.

This is what Nurse Slanger wrote:

> "It is 0200 and I have been lying awake for an hour, listening to the steady, even breathing of the other three nurses in the tent, thinking about some of the things we had discussed during the day. The rain is beating down on the tent with torrential force. The wind is on a mad rampage and its main objective seems to be to lift the tent off its pole and fling it about our heads.
>
> "The fire is burning low and just a few live coals are on the bottom. With the slow feeding of wood

and finally coal, a roaring fire is started. I couldn't help thinking how similar to a human being a fire is: If it is allowed to run down too low, and if there is a spark of life left in it, it can be nursed back. So can a human being. It is slow; it is gradual, it is done all the time in these field hospitals and other hospitals in the ETO.

"We had read several articles in different magazines and papers sent in by a grateful GI praising the work of the nurses around the combat zones. Praising us—for what? I climbed back into my cot. Lieutenant (Margaret M.) Bowler was the only one I had awakened. I whispered to her. Lieutenant (Christine) Cox and Lieutenant (Elizabeth F.) Powers slept on. Fine nurses and great girls to live with. Of course, like in all families, an occasional quarrel, but these were quickly forgotten.

"I'm writing this by flashlight. In this light it looks something like a 'dive.' In the center of the tent are two poles, one part-chimney, the other a plain tentpole. Kindling wood lies in disorderly confusion on the damp ground. A French wine pitcher filled with water stands by. The GIs say we rough it. We in our little tent can't see it. True, we are set up in tents, sleep on cots and are subject to the temperament of the weather.

"We wade ankle deep in mud—you have to lie in it. We are restricted to our immediate area, a cow pasture or a hayfield, but then who is not restricted? We have a stove and coal. We even have a laundry line in the

tent. Our GI drawers are at this moment doing the dance of the pants what with the wind howling, the tent waving precariously, the rain beating down, the guns firing, and me with a flashlight, writing. It all adds up to a feeling of unrealness.

"Sure we rough it, but in comparison to the way you men are taking it we can't complain, nor do we feel that bouquets are due us. But you, the men behind the guns, the men driving our tanks, flying our planes, sailing our ships, building bridges, and to the men who pave the way and to the men who are left behind —it is to you we doff our helmets. To every GI wearing the American uniform, for you we have the greatest admiration and respect.

"Yes, this time we are handing out the bouquets— but after taking care of some of your buddies, comforting them when they are brought in bloody, dirty with the earth, mud and grime, and most of them so tired. Somebody's brothers, somebody's fathers, somebody's sons, seeing them gradually brought back to life, to consciousness, and to see their lips separate into a grin when they first welcome you. Usually they kid, hurt as they are. It doesn't amaze us to hear one of them say, 'Hiya, babe,' or 'Holy mackerel, an American woman!' or more indiscreetly, 'How about a kiss?'

"These soldiers stay with us but a short time, from ten days to possibly two weeks. We have learned a great deal about our American soldier and the stuff he is made of. The wounded do not cry. Their buddies

come first.

"The patience and determination they show, the courage and fortitude they have is sometimes awesome to behold. It is we who are proud to be here. Rough it? No, it is a privilege to be able to receive you and a great distinction to see you open your eyes and, with that swell American grin, say, 'Hiya, babe!' "

That's what she wrote. They buried Lieutenant Slanger in a military cemetery on the Western Front, with a Star of David to mark her grave.

This is the story of two minutes out of the life of Coast Guard Lieutenant Milton Ratner, a boy from the Bronx who was educated in New York City schools and colleges, who got to be a teacher of biology before war broke out, who enlisted in the Coast Guard in '42 and who hounded his superiors to give him overseas service—until they did.

He was on a Liberty ship in a convoy bound for Africa in September, 1943, when the Germans broadcast an "authentic" report that practically the whole convoy had been sunk by the invincible U-boats—the convoy lost neither ship nor man on the voyage—and from then on he knew, as everybody else in the convoy then knew, that the Nazi enemy was a fraud as well as a poisonous menace to the world.

The two minutes came later, after Oran and Tunis and the Mediterranean and England. It came in June, '44, when Ratner was executive officer of a landing craft, LCI-90, in a flotilla which left the English Coast on the early morning of D-Day and arrived off Omaha Beach (Normandy) ahead of schedule.

The paratroopers were just going in when the Coast of France was sighted and the LCI-90 circled around and around, "like covered wagons when the Indians used to attack," so as not to be an easy target for German guns. Then at H-Hour plus 50 she went in at a part of the beach that was "hottest", that day, of any in Normandy or in the world.

The Germans had beach barriers erected—part of their "Atlantic Wall"—made up of rows of railroad ties and logs sticking up, and many of the logs were mined so that when a ship touched it the mine exploded. When his ship dropped anchor, Ratner was standing at the bow and saw a telemine in the water five feet below—that's how near she came to being blown apart.

The troops aboard were Infantrymen and Navy demolition squads and medics and doctors, and they had to go in over side ladders. The LCI-90 had taken a bad beating from the weather and the Germans were firing from Omaha Beach with everything they had. Ratner's ship had so many holes in her that they stopped counting and the rubber lifeboat on board was a bullet-riddled sieve. Sister ships LCI-91 and LCI-92, which had gone in just ahead, were burning on the beach. But the LCI-90 made it and disembarked her men and also made it back and came in with a second boatload, this time of headquarters troops including a couple of generals.

By now German .88 guns had found the range and their shells came flying fast and furious—and close. One of them hit so close that the vibration shook the ship and Executive Officer Ratner shook, physically, all over. A moment later came a second explosion and again the vibration went through

Ratner's body, and suddenly a queer feeling, dizzy and numb, came over him. Then he found himself seated on the deck, with blood gushing out of one leg, and he knew he had been hit.

At once his head cleared. He telephoned the captain. He ordered the coxswain to replace him on the ramps. He ordered the pharmacist who came to his aid to give him no morphine. "If the ship gets hit I don't want to be doped. I want to be able to swim if she sinks."

Those were the two moments—when the two explosions came. The ship didn't sink and an hour later, on a hospital ship which was taking him to England, they operated on Ratner's leg for the first time.

There followed other operations in England and at the U. S. naval hospitals in Washington and at St. Albans. It was an obstinate wound, which took a long time in healing, but until the war ended he kept hoping that he would be "fixed up" soon so he could go back into service—into active combat. Not because he liked the things that make up war, but because he hated the Fascist enemy that forced war on the world.

Private First Class Meyer Menzer of the Bronx went to France as a code clerk, but he left again two days later without once making use of his clerical talents. In the intervening 48 hours, he came up against enough of the raw brutalities of war as waged by the Nazis to last him a lifetime . . .

It was 4:30 on D-Day morning when, somewhere in the English Channel, Menzer transferred from a troop transport to a landing craft. He was attached to a headquarters company and many battalion officers were in the same craft. At 6 the

boat struck a mine and blew up.

When a boat blows up under you, it is as if the world is suddenly ripped apart and the pieces are hurled in every direction. When Menzer came to, he was in deep water, swimming. Beside him was a colonel, also swimming. Both, inexplicably, were unhurt. They struck out toward shore and presently reached the beach.

Menzer's education in warfare, Nazi style, was just beginning. Soon he was advancing slowly, with other members of his outfit, as Infantry soldiers against snipers. They took some prisoners. A three-man patrol went out ahead, and after a while one of the three came crawling back, white-faced and shaken. The other two, he said, were killed and he saw the Nazis wire their bodies with booby traps so that whoever tried to move them would also be killed. He himself escaped only by playing dead.

That night the outfit was bivouacked on a hill. In the dark, in a battle area over which flares flicker and go out, it is easy to imagine all sorts of things moving. A company officer thus thought he saw a bush move suspiciously and sent Menzer and another soldier to investigate. The two soldiers crawled up to the bush, examined it, found nothing wrong.

They sat down on a knoll to rest, and then something did move. The grass, right next to where Menzer was sitting, was slowly moving—up. The two soldiers looked at each other and agreed on what to do. In one hand each held a grenade. With the other they seized a handful of the grass. Then, on the count of two, they pulled, and a square of turf came up easily. At the same moment they dropped the grenades underneath and ran.

This was a camouflaged sniper's hole, and the Nazi sniper in it never fired at an American again.

"The Nazis had plenty of these sniper's holes throughout the bivouac area," Menzer recalled months later. "They let us come right in and waited until we were asleep before they pushed their snouts up!"

The next night the Germans counter-attacked and a bursting shell knocked Menzer out, with one splinter in the back and another in the leg. He tried to get up but his legs wouldn't move—they felt paralyzed. He got out his medical kit, gave himself a shot of morphine to dull the pain, and waited for the medics. It looked like the end. The medics didn't come right away, but German soldiers did, four of them. Lying on the ground, paralyzed, as he thought, for life and probably mortally wounded, Menzer remembered with a surge of anger the two boys who were killed and booby-trapped, the sniper hiding under the turf.

Cautiously he raised himself on one elbow. His arms were all right—and his grenades. Swiftly he tossed two grenades, one after another, among the Nazis, killing all four at once. He realized ruefully then that if one Nazi had survived out of the four, it would have been the end for him.

A couple of Rangers came by as he lay there. They saw the German dead and said, "Thanks, buddy". They gave him a bottle of cognac and promised to send help. Just before dawn four soldiers showed up, placed him on an improvised stretcher and started carrying him down the road to the beach, a five-mile stretch.

Enemy artillery fire pursued them all the way, and every

now and then, as a shell came whining close, the stretcher bearers dived for cover in the ditch, dropping stretcher and wounded each time as they jumped. There was an all-day wait, after that, on the hot, horrible beach, strewn with wreckage and with bodies, before they shipped him back to England and then flew him home.

CHAPTER EIGHT

WE BATTLE FOR FRANCE

AT THE BASE of the Normandy peninsula, the Allied advance jammed up. For weeks the Americans inched their way through hedgerow country, advanced a little and lost a little, squirmed and struggled, trying to break loose (it seemed) in the direction East but being pushed Southward. To the North, meanwhile, the British stood, aiming (it seemed) East, but getting nowhere at all.

It looked as if the Allies, spearheaded by British divisions, were planning a push to Paris—and as if the Nazis were effectively holding them off. The jam-up became tightest around the village of St. Lo. We took St. Lo and lost it, took it again and lost it again.

At last we swarmed through and over St. Lo, and before the Nazis knew what had happened, as they stood guard on the road to Paris, our armor broke through to the South—and suddenly wheeled East and Northeast. When the dust cleared, Patton's Third Army tanks were off on a rampaging advance

that presently enveloped most of Northern France. Paris fell, almost without a shot except the shots fired by the organized French underground. A second invasion meanwhile started in the South and moved up swiftly.

In that Summer of 1944 we thus fought and won the Battle for France, which you might say began with the St. Lo breakthrough and ended with the Battle of the Bulge—when the Nazis challenged for the France they had just lost, only to lose it again.

It sounds easy now. It didn't happen either easily, or automatically. Men on the ground and men in the air, men on foot and in tanks fought with bitter determination and high courage to bring about the final result. Americans of every color and every creed and class, of high rank and low, did the fighting—and bleeding and dying. Those who were Jews took it with the rest, sometimes—because they were Jews and because the enemy was Nazi—a little more than the rest.

These are the kind of men who fought and won the Battle of France . . .

Men like Alfred B. Weiner. He was an Infantryman, the slogging foot soldier of this war and of all others. He came from New York. He was 32 when he was killed in action in France, and his rank was private first class. They gave him a Purple Heart for wounds received, and a Presidential citation, and—posthumously—the Distinguished Service Cross. He was a machine gunner.

He earned his D.S.C.—and much more—when his company found itself halted, its advance stopped dead, by spitting machine gun fire at one flank of the company front. Weiner was

at the other end, but he volunteered to make a one-man try to clear out the obstacle. While the men lay sprawled out on the ground, close as possible to mother earth for the protection she afforded, Weiner dragged his machine gun across the entire company front.

He was in full view of the enemy when he put his machine gun in position, and a steady, angry shower of bullets spattered around him but somehow missed. He turned his own concentrated fire on the Nazi position, knocked out their gun, killed four Nazi gunners. Two others came out walking, hands held high in the air . . . the one proper position for Nazi hands.

From where he stood, Weiner saw that now another enemy machine gun nest was preparing for action at the far end of the front, which he had just left. Back he carried his weapon and ammunition along the exposed front and again he knocked out the Nazi gun.

Now the advance was resumed, and presently two armed Nazis were bearing down on him—and his machine gun jammed. With split-second, almost automatic speed, he snatched up a carbine, fired two shots, killing two Nazis. Later that day he fell, mortally wounded in a rain of enemy fire. . . .

Or, men like Lieutenant Albert L. Alop of Chicago. He was 26 when the Battle of France was at its height. He was near a place called Mantes Gassicourt. A report came through that an enemy plane had been knocked down at a forward gun position and Alop started on foot to investigate.

He got there, passing over an area heavily sprayed by machine gun bullets. He found heavy enemy fire concentrated on the gun and he noticed Nazi troops busily at work preparing an

anti-tank position for a bazooka. U. S. tanks even then moving up would be ambushed, unless warned in time.

Alop started back on the run, caught up with the tank commander, told him what the Nazis were planting for his tanks, mapped out an alternate route by which the tankmen would trap the Nazis from the flank. As the tanks moved off on their new course, Alop returned to the forward gun and, armed only with a carbine, picked off the Nazi bazooka men as they appeared one by one.

After a while our tanks appeared, took up a position on the Nazi flank. From somewhere, Nazi Infantrymen had worked their way forward. A citation says that "with utter disregard for his own safety," Lieutenant Alop walked toward them, ordered them to surrender.

This threw the Herrenvolk into "a highly disorganized condition," and, leaping up from their ground protection they turned and ran. The tanks opened fire and mowed them down. . . . When the tank fire stopped, only dead Nazis remained above ground, although some had found protection in foxholes. The irrepressible Alop went from foxhole to foxhole, calling on the inmates to surrender—and filling the foxhole with lead if they didn't.

"This action resulted in the capture of two machine guns, fifteen bazookas and other similar weapons, and in addition accounted for more than 100 of the enemy killed or wounded and the capture of 30 prisoners."

So said the citation with the award of the Distinguished Service Cross to Lieutenant Alop for "daring, courage, aggressive leadership and utter disregard for his own personal safety."

Or fighting men like Sergeant Robert Solow of Dallas, Texas. Maybe Bob Solow's story can best be told, briefly and pointedly, in the words of a famed correspondent in a radio broadcast:

"Bob Solow—age twenty—was killed on the Western Front last month. He had had two years at Massachusetts Tech. When only 18, he became a foreman in an aircraft plant. His superiors begged him to stay there. No, said Bob Solow, I've got to fight.

"He failed his first eye test for the Air Corps. He took treatment from an eye specialist, and passed. Then, despite his unusual technical education, the Army broke its promise and put Bob Solow in the Infantry, as a private.

"After that, Bob was one of a small group to be recommended for West Point. No, thanks, said Bob Solow, I wouldn't feel right being in West Point while others were fighting. So he stuck with the Infantry. His division was thrown into the Battle of the Bulge—without any previous combat experience—in mid-December.

"Sergeant Bob Solow fought steadily for the next six weeks, until the day he was killed in action. He didn't have to be there. He could have been in an airplane factory in Dallas, or in West Point.

"Sergeant Bob Solow was an American, an American of Jewish religion. I tell you about Bob Solow, I emphasize the fact that he was a Jew, because his very death is an unanswerable rebuke to all those who are spreading anti-Semitism in the United States today . . ."

Or men like Sergeant Stanley C. Fishman of New Haven, Connecticut, who was a boy of 19 when he was killed by Nazi guns in France.

In the Fall of 1944, U. S. troops took the town of Rodalbe. But to take a town and then to hold it indefinitely are not the same. After a while, a heavy artillery barrage came down on Rodalbe, and a shell landed on the building used as our Command Post—a direct hit. Commanding was a Captain O'Neill, who was badly wounded.

About that time Sergeant Fishman, on duty with the captain, heard the sound of tanks approaching. Friendly tanks, but it didn't help. The barrage grew heavier, enemy infantry were also closing in. It was smarter to withdraw now, return to Rodalbe that night or tomorrow or later. All the troops pulled out except the wounded captain, who couldn't move—and Fishman. His self-imposed job was to carry Captain O'Neill to safety.

Fishman was struggling to lift the wounded officer to his shoulders when a Nazi trooper passing the house pointed his automatic rifle into the very room Fishman and O'Neill alone occupied, sprayed it with bullets. It happened they missed both men. Somehow, Fishman, half dragging, half carrying his wounded captain, got outdoors. Machine gun fire was heavy on all sides. He located an American tank and started toward it. It was a slow, crawling job, in which the bleeding captain could not help. At the end of 400 torture-filled yards, they got to the safety of the American tank.

They awarded Sergeant Fishman a Silver Star and the citation spoke of his "remarkable display of courage, his initiative and his strong devotion to duty . . ." He was killed in another action a month later.

In the old days before the war, in many a Pullman smoker back in the U.S.A., it used to happen again and again that some one would turn to Alexander J. Balter and ask "What's your line?"

And he used to answer "furniture."

Balter—Sergeant Balter—remembered that now, remembered also that he was a crack furniture salesman who used to travel out of Pittsburgh all over the East. Curiously, this troubled him because a good salesman is a practical fellow and no dreamer, but now there was a distinctly dreamlike quality about what he said and did.

As if in a dream, it seemed to him, he was repeating—detail by detail—an experience he had gone through once before. Exactly as on that earlier occasion, he was talking—talking—fast—as a good salesman sometimes must, trying desperately to break through a customer's sales resistance, resorting to every trick in the salesman's book to clinch a sale. Thinking fast—one jump ahead of the prospect, three jumps ahead of himself.

He talked on, then stopped for a moment, watching the effect of what he had said. Then threw out an ultimatum to frighten the prospect into signing. Then talked on again in a tumultuous stream of words, hiding the desperate inner urgency that was on him to get the customer's signature on the dotted line. Then stopped and waited for a reply.

In Columbus once—or was it East Liverpool, or Elizabeth?—he couldn't put his finger on it—exactly this thing happened to him. Yet he knew in the next instant that it wasn't exactly the same.

The surroundings weren't the same. Instead of the desk in

an office and the man behind the desk, there was the dreary French sky overhead, the pock-marked road by which his jeep had brought him, the grim stone wall ahead. And beside a break in the wall, his customers—three arrogant Nazi officers facing him, shaking Nazi-helmeted heads, laughing in his face. It didn't look, for the moment, as if he'd make the sale.

The place was the small French town of Lannilis, 12 miles North of Brest. The year 1944, after the start of the Normandy invasion, while our men were pushing their way into and across Nazi-occupied France.

Sergeant Balter was attached to an armored column of the U. S. forces besieging Brest. On one flank, and slightly ahead, a small Nazi force had dug in in a tough defense position—a strong point of Hitler's Atlantic Wall—which must be eliminated, without diverting strength from the main force.

Maybe because he could speak German, maybe because he had already shown a salesman's imperturbable disregard of the conventional way of doing things, Sergeant Balter got the assignment. Alone. They gave him a jeep. They gave him a white flag and a letter signed by a general, addressed "To the Commander of the Surrounded German Forces." They told him to go ahead.

He remembered thinking as he pushed up the main road to Lannilis, that—hell—this was like many a road trip he'd taken back home when all he had to think about was how big an order he would bring back.

A sniper's bullet, and then another, pinged across the road ahead of the jeep. But both missed, and Balter never stopped. At last he drew up before the largest of three Nazi forts. He got out of the jeep. He took the white flag and the general's letter

in hand. He faced three armed Nazis.

In Pittsburgh, when making a sale, you had to talk price, quality, value. You had to know your stuff. Balter, selling Nazi surrender, read from the general's letter—"your position is hopeless"—and explained that U. S. artillery was prepared to open in—exactly—30 minutes. What about it?

The Nazis weren't impressed, or seemed not to be. Balter searched his mind for something to impress them with. The air force also, he talked on, would open up, in great strength—the American air force. So far as the sergeant knew, that wasn't true, but the arrogant Nazis didn't know. They became less arrogant. Now was the time to put on the pressure.

Time was running out—fast—while the three Nazis stood around, sneering uncertainly. The air power story wasn't true, but the artillery was really prepared to open up. Seventeen minutes to go—and Balter could feel the cold sweat under his helmet. He kept on talking. He said Brest was captured. He said Paris was surrounded. He poured out stories, most of them invented.

In Pittsburgh you didn't sell that way. But somehow it seemed all right here.

Now there were seven minutes left. The trio came out from behind their stone wall, but explained they needed time. Balter thought fast and said "Okay. You have got five minutes before the shooting starts."

It was a gamble, but it worked. Balter recalled:

"That did it. The Germans surrendered. A few minutes later, their captain brought out a batch of 128 prisoners—the whole garrison."

Along with the German prisoners, Salesman Balter obtained for the Army the Germans' supplies: bread, chocolate, cigars, some fine liquor, 40 horses, 200 breeding rabbits—and some excellent concrete-and-steel gun positions, which the Nazis would never be able to use against our boys again.

From the two lesser Nazi-held strongholds, which also gave up, more prisoners were delivered, by the scores and the hundreds. The day's "take": 350 Nazi prisoners, 37 Italians, 80 refugees.

It was his best day's selling, Civilian Balter now recalls. Not only had he disposed of a nice surrender article, but the price (in war you usually have to pay a price for any surrender you "sell" the enemy) was reasonable:

Not a man was hurt, not a shot was fired.

The time was summer of 1944 and the place France, where the hedgerows grow thick. Moving cautiously between the hedgerows, Sergeant George Cowan and the men of his patrol heard the sound of footsteps, the swish-swishing sound of a man's shoulder brushing against low-branching shrubbery.

Cowan and his men stopped dead in their tracks, their carbines raised with safeties off, ready to fire. In those days, when our troops were chasing Nazis at a gallop over the French landscape, you could never be too careful patrolling hedgerow country. Behind every bush and tree you might run into an ambush.

Then a figure appeared—but it was all right. It was a frightened Frenchman. He was white-faced and he wore faded blue denims—a civilian. "M'sieurs! M'sieurs!" he began, in an

agitated whisper in his own language. Then, as if suddenly conscious that the American soldiers could not be expected to understand French, he continued in accented English: "In my garden there is a German. Could you come there and capture him?"

Sure, sure! The patrol could do that. The house was half a mile away and Cowan and his boys followed the civilian, along a road winding between the hedgerows. Bullets were rammed into the chambers of every weapon, and safety catches were released, for anything could happen in this hedgerow land, and every eye and every ear were on the alert.

As they moved ahead slowly, a few cautious paces at a time, something troubled Cowan's mind—that Frenchman's accent. He had heard it, exactly that slight mispronunciation of the English language, but where? He tried to recall the broken English of other Frenchmen he had heard since he got to France, but none of them was like this. Then it came to him. There was a movie he had seen, "Grand Illusion," and a German actor in it, Eric Von Stroheim, who talked like that. That was it. But—a *German* actor! Was this a trap into which the "civilian Frenchman," probably neither French nor civilian, was leading them?

Cowan had barely time to pass on the word—watch out for a trap—when here they were at the house. Three men of the patrol searched the garden. Two escorted the "civilian" into the house by the side door. Opening it cautiously, with their guide in the lead, they entered the house. Cowan remained on guard at the steps outside.

Then—many things happened, all in one instant. Shots rang

out in the house, and screams. The thought raced through Cowan's mind: "Yes, it's a trap." There was a rush of footsteps inside the house, to the still-open door. From a low roof overhanging the steps a figure leaped at Cowan, missing him by inches. And then on the ground, Sergeant Cowan saw a Nazi facing him, with a Luger pistol in hand, ready to fire.

Cowan remembered later that he screamed, with the idea of diverting the Nazi's aim, and that his carbine kicked as he fired, and then the crash of the Nazi's body to the ground, at his feet, and the sickening crack of the Nazi skull against a stone.

It was all over in a minute. By that time there were four Germans dead, including the one who had masqueraded as a Frenchman and a civilian.

The Army "Air Express" found itself in France, especially at Bastogne during the most critical week of the Battle of the Bulge. It came fully into its own only with the driving last four weeks of war against Germany, when our troops were racing toward the grand climax of Nazi surrender. But it was born in England, long before D-Day.

In England, when the high command sat down to plan the complex job of invading Hitler-held Europe, a tall, iron-gray-haired lieutenant colonel from New York was one of those who sat in with the planners. The staff work was appalling in its massive total, terrifying in the multitudinous details that had to be foreseen.

One of the details was this: All right, we have landed troops and material in force and we have secured the beaches and

we move on, one way or another, into the interior. The Nazis will counter-attack, and in the fluid front we propose to force on them, we will presently have occasional units who will be cut off from our main lines, who will be out of reach of the normal supply routes. What then? How do we get them emergency supplies?

For such emergencies, certain to arise, there must be an express service by air. That was the idea. And the man named to turn the idea into reality and to make it work was Harry D. Henshel of New York, then a major, subsequently lieutenant colonel.

It was a small idea and a small service, at the start. But Henshel seized upon it and made it grow. He assembled fliers and C-47 transport planes—especially C-47's. From every division and corps and army he could reach he wheedled C-47's, borrowed and forgot to return them, scrounged them in one way or another. He ate, slept and dreamed Air Express. To every commanding general he met or he could get to know, he talked Air Express, talking each of them out of more planes.

The first "emergency" which the Air Express was called on to meet was D-Day itself. Even before the ships landed on Normandy's Utah Beach, Colonel Henshel's planes were there, landing supplies. As the offensive moved on, at a creeping pace at first and then at race-horse speed, more emergencies arose and were met.

When men were stranded and cut off, when intervening bridges and roads were knocked out, the C-47's, Henshel's truck horses of the air, delivered the goods. They carried food, fuel and ammunition in calculated amounts, pre-packed so that they

could be landed where there was an airfield, or dropped or parachuted to the ground where there wasn't.

But at Bastogne came the big trial. At Bastogne, the 101st Airborne Division became an island in a sea of counter-attacking Nazis, a small island, 7½ miles across. For a week the men of Bastogne held out, without relief and without direct help, completely encircled. Trucks couldn't get through, nor jeeps. There were no roads and no air strips.

The Air Express, nonetheless, went into action. Henshel's C-47's dropped badly needed food, fuel and ammunition among the paratroopers. The men needed more—and got it. By glider and parachute, the Air Express flew in medical supplies and —medical and surgical teams with full equipment, ready to go to work at once. For the haggard, harassed men of the 101st, this might well have made the difference between holding out and—not. It is a matter of history that they held out.

Not only the C-47's did their job, but also the gliders and the LC-5's, the little planes that flew at grasstop height and landed their passengers where no big guns could reach them.

After Bastogne the Air Express no longer had to prove itself. More and more commanding officers called upon it for aid in an ever increasing number of emergencies. Eventually came the crossing of the Remagen Bridge and soon U. S. troops were speeding swiftly, East of the Rhine, to a juncture with the Russian allies coming the other way—and to the final German collapse.

In April, 1945, and the first week of May—the last five weeks of war against Germany—Colonel Henshel's Air Express demonstrated what it could really do. It did many things, including

some that in its early stages Henshel himself had not expected of it.

As our advance troops swept over Germany, in the final torrential campaign of the war in Europe, it carried supplies up to advance units that could not otherwise be supplied. Having delivered the supplies, the Air Express planes then picked up Allied prisoners out of the Nazis' smelly, vermin-infested camps, carried them back to friendly, civilized life again in England and France. There were times, in April and May, when Colonel Henshel's outfit brought back as many as 25,000 men a day.

Lieutenant Colonel Henshel was 55 when, the war ended and his job as head and directing spirit of the Air Express done, he resumed his place in civilian life. He returned to his prewar post as vice president of the Bulova Watch Company, taking on at least one added major duty. For he now became head of the Bulova Rehabilitation Program, which includes a School of Watchmaking for Disabled Veterans.

The war is barely a year away (at this writing) but already it seems unreal and in some ways incredible, and the things that men did in wartime to save us from a Fascist fate begin to seem incredible too. Consider for instance, you who sit conning these words by muted lamplight in your safe living-room —consider these two briefed-down stories of a boy from Brooklyn and a boy from Philadelphia, consider and say whether you now believe you could do the things they did.

Louis Kaplan was the boy from Brooklyn, a sergeant, age 26. The fighting was near Faubogmey, France, and there was a small hill just ahead on which the Germans sat and sprayed

our lines with withering machine gun fire, rifle and pistol fire, and laughed when we tried to move. Sergeant Kaplan's platoon lay hopelessly "pinned down", hugging the earth behind every hillock and in every shallow foxhole. It was murder to try to budge.

Breaking away from the platoon, Kaplan moved, by short zig-zag rushes up the hillside—you race five or six yards, swift as if death raced after you, which indeed it does. Then you dive and melt into the ground where you are not so good a target for a Nazi gun. Then you crawl a few feet this way or that. Then up again for another spurt. And repeat, perhaps until the flying bullets stop you. Each time Kaplan rose and ran the machine guns sent their showers of bullets in his direction, but they didn't stop him.

He came, after a while, within a few yards of a foxhole from which a couple of Germans armed with Lugers had been methodically taking shots at him—and missing. Now the sergeant returned the fire, but with his M-1 rifle, and killed both. He dashed and crawled and dashed again to within 40 yards of a German machine gun. Between him and the gun was a supporting rifle position, with four German riflemen on guard against any attempt to get close to the machine gun and knock it out. As they fired at him—and missed—Kaplan tossed two hand grenades in their midst. All four were knocked out of action.

Now Kaplan took on the job of waging a one-man duel with the machine gun. All through the night he kept the machine gunners busy returning his fire, thus neutralizing theirs. His ammunition gave out, and the men of his platoon tossed him more cartridges and he kept going.

Four enemy riflemen crawled up on him from the side, but he killed all four.

Once he was hit in the hip, and the men called to him from the rear to get back where a medic could treat him. But he remained where he was until dawn . . .

Sergeant Kaplan was killed in a later action. They awarded him, posthumously, the Distinguished Service Cross, as well as the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

Or consider Lieutenant Joseph Glider, a Philadelphian, age 27. Somewhere in France, he climbed into an armored car, with a driver and another officer, bound on a reconnaissance errand. Out ahead of the troops the enemy had an anti-tank gun which barked and barked and held up the advance. And somewhere out front a pair of Nazi machine guns fired steadily from close cover.

Glider's mission: To find out where the guns were. He found out, right away. The car had driven only a few hundred yards when a murderous cross-fire caught it and set it ablaze. The driver was killed instantly, the accompanying officer was badly wounded. Glider got three shots in the chest. Despite his injuries and the continuing fire, he carried the wounded officer and the driver's body out of the flaming car, left them in a protected spot and went ahead on foot to get the exact location of the enemy guns.

He found the locations. He went back, still bleeding and still on foot, to a mortar observation post. There he directed mortar fire and machine gun fire on the enemy positions, until their gun crews were killed and their guns knocked out. Then—his mission completed—Lieutenant Glider collapsed, unconscious,

to the ground . . . Him, too, they awarded the D.S.C.

Or consider Lieutenant Zussman's story.

Modern war is fought with equipment, with machinery, with planes and tanks and rocket guns and their multitudinous mechanical gadgets, and because of that it would seem as if there were no room left in it for the flaming spirit of man. Yet the spirit and valor of men have a way of rising above all the man-made war machines. It was like that with Raymond Zussman of Detroit, a boy of 27, a tank corps lieutenant.

During the drive up the Rhone Valley, in central France, his tank became stranded in an open field. Almost contemptuously, he hopped off the immobilized tank, picked up a carbine, sprinted forward to the tank ahead, took charge of directing its fire. The official citation recounts that at this point he did these things: Personally killed 17 Nazis, captured thirty two, captured two antitank guns, a flak (antiaircraft) gun, two machine guns, two trucks.

Then he noted a road-block ahead, carefully wired with booby traps. He sent his tank crashing through it and followed fast, leading half a dozen riflemen with him. Mounting the tank again, like a free-riding cowboy, he pointed out an enemy machine gun nest to the tank gunner. A couple of rounds silenced it and three Germans were killed. Eight came out with hands up.

A German jeep was lurking in the half distance. Zussman directed the tank's fire on that, added a few shots from his carbine—and three more Germans were dead and seven surrendered.

Now the lieutenant's carbine was empty and he threw it aside, snatched up a tommygun and raced ahead of the tank, which was being held up again. There was a peasant's house up there, which the Germans had made into a strong point, and concentrated fire from the house drove him back.

He took shelter behind the tank, directed its fire from there and—the Germans being thoroughly terrified by this time—20 more prisoners came out. Infantrymen took charge of the captives, and Zussman started toward the fortified house. Hand grenades were tossed at him as he went but he dodged them. Then he let go with his tommygun, spraying the house, and eleven Germans came out, eager to surrender.

Zussman wasn't finished yet. There was a lane leading from the house to a road-crossing still in Nazi hands. He started down the lane, tommygun blazing, and was waiting with 15 more prisoners when the tank caught up. From there the tank, with Zussman astride, went down the main street of the little French town of Noroy le Bourg, throwing machine gun fire after Nazi soldiers trying to get away. At least 11, who were killed, didn't get away.

Again Zussman left his tank behind, went ahead on foot to survey a street intersection where, he feared, there might be a trap. After a while he called for the tank and when it turned the corner, he was waiting for it with 30 prisoners, two anti-tank guns, a big German truck. He added another truck and its driver whom he found across a narrow field. His day's total thus was: 17 Nazis killed, 92 captured, all of Noroy le Bourg liberated.

Three days later he was killed. They awarded him, post-

humously, the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest decoration for its fighting men. Raymond Zussman's father, Nathan, an aged man who fought in the Czar's army in the Russo-Japanese war, said only: "I am proud of him! He was a wonderful boy."

It was a nice December Sunday in France and things were going normally well. All that Summer the boys had been racing over France and Belgium, and though the Nazis slowed them up along the German borders, that was no doubt only a temporary interruption. The Nazis were still on the run and our boys were still taking towns away from them. The outfit of Lieutenant Phillip Beck had just taken a town in the Saar and he was comfortably ensconced in a bombed-out house, writing letters to the folks back in New York. It was after lunch. It looked like a dull Sunday.

All at once the news came down—the incredible news—of a Nazi breakthrough. Von Rundstedt's goose-steppers were pouring through the break, in what looked like an irresistible flood. Beck reported to battalion command post. They gave him a patrol of 60 men and an objective, a recently deserted large town a few miles away. They gave him his orders: Occupy the deserted city and hold it until . . .

They got into the town all right and right into the center of it. Then—all hell broke loose. The Nazis were everywhere—they had been waiting there for just such a move. It was a trap. Germans swarmed out from every direction, and the 60, heavily outnumbered, fought them at close range, sometimes at five or ten feet, sometimes hand-to-hand. "I got plenty of Jerries myself that day," Beck later wrote home.

The Americans were pushed back into a railroad yard. Booby traps were all around and now and then some of them exploded. Our losses were heavy. "Inside of me I knew," Beck later wrote, "that my number was up, that we'd never get home alive."

It was 4:30 in the afternoon when Beck stepped on a land mine and the explosion got him in the hand and arm. He was bleeding badly. There was a medic in the same desperate corner with him, and he bandaged the wounds, gave him some sulpha. They made their way into a house, hid there until dark. Then, with a small group of men—as many as Beck could find still alive —he started back, toward our lines. He had lost great quantities of blood. He was without carbine or pistol or any other weapon. He crept and crawled, in the dark, toward what he hoped were the American lines. The others crawled with him.

And as they crawled, the Germans, with a pretty good idea of what was happening, and where, followed them at long-range with their mortars and artillery. While the wounded Beck was thus painfully moving along in the dark, a mortar shell came lobbing over, dropped a few feet away. A splinter hit him in the leg . . .

He awoke after a long while, thinking it was too cold to lie there. He tried to drag himself forward but didn't get far. Then some one came along and picked him up. He blacked out again, and when he came to once more, it was next morning and a couple of medics were placing him on the operating table in an evacuation hospital in Luxembourg . . .

This is how Private First Class David Steckler of Brooklyn got that curious-looking right thumb, twisted and shapeless, as

if it had been mangled in a lathe or crushed under a stamping machine. No machine did it, and it was not the result of a battle wound received in action. It was the mark left by the heel of a Nazi boot, symbol of the Nazis' sadistic treatment of war prisoners.

Steckler was in Luxembourg when, in December of 1944, Von Rundstedt tried his desperate gamble of a counter-offensive through Ardennes. In the first rush, the gamble succeeded, or seemed on the way to success. The Nazis took prisoners, including, among many, the Jewish soldier named Steckler. For four days the captive Americans were forced to march on foot to the German rear. Then they were piled into cattle-cars, 68 men to a car—and no food. For seven days the cars with their human freight crawled East and farther East, halted at sidings, shuttled back and forth on over-crowded tracks.

At last a P.W. camp. Then men, weakened by hunger and cold, stumbled out, lined up as ordered and were given form questionnaires to fill out. The thorough Nazis asked all sorts of detailed questions including the question of religion. Some of the Jewish soldiers, suspecting that the Nazis had special treatment in store for Jews, wrote "Protestant" after that one or left the space blank. Steckler wrote "Jewish."

Soon an order came down—all Jewish prisoners must report to the camp commandant. An American non-com who was in charge of the prisoner barracks protested—all American soldiers were equally soldiers and Americans, regardless of religion. That was the Red Cross rule, too.

He was given a Red Cross protest form and he filled it out, addressed to the International Red Cross in Geneva. The Nazi

guards accepted the written protest—and the next day came another and a sterner order. Any Jews found in the barracks after a period of 24 hours would be shot. Any one else found harboring or protecting a Jewish prisoner would be shot.

So the Jewish soldiers reported rather than get others in addition to themselves into Nazi trouble. They were segregated in separate barracks. And presently came still another order—life under the Nazis was one long series of orders, each worse than the one before. Now the Jewish prisoners were ordered to prepare to move, to a "newer and better" camp.

This was a barefaced lie, easy to detect. Steckler noted that among the 350 GIs taken for shipment to the "newer and better" camp were not only Jews but certain others—and these were invariably GIs who had caused their Nazi guards "trouble." It took five days to get to the new camp, Berga Elster, on the River Elster. The stockade was infested with lice and foul to the smell. The men arrived at one in the afternoon, and half of them were sent out at once on a work detail. The Nazis said it was a matter of a few hours—they would be back at six.

They returned at 11. They came stumbling in, doubled up with pain, white as ghosts. They looked like living dead men. The color was from white rock dust, in which they had worked all that long afternoon and on to near-midnight. Their job was to hew an underground chamber out of the rock, for a synthetic-rubber factory out of reach of Allied bombs.

The men worked at their rock-digging in stalls of 12 men each. German civilians stood by as overseers to see that no one loafed. When a hungry and exhausted GI paused for a minute's rest, the nearest German slashed at him with his pick or flung a

rock at his head. Now and then a soldier was thus knocked unconscious.

In addition to the civilian worker-overseers, there were the military foremen, one to every four stalls. These were armed with rubber hose, with which they slashed viciously at the prisoner GIs, at slight provocation or none. That was their speedup system.

The Nazi speedup caught up, after a while, with Steckler. He had been shoveling heavy gravel for hours and paused for a moment—because he couldn't go on any longer. One of the German civilians spurred him on by driving the point of his pickax through Steckler's hand. There were no medical supplies for prisoners, and Steckler "bandaged" some paper around the wound and kept on working. Two days later, he paused in his work to adjust the insecure and now foul "bandage"—when another of the overseers caught him at this crime, struck him over the head with his shovel, knocked him unconscious.

An unconscious prisoner—so runs the Nazi mind—is a useless prisoner, doing no work while unconscious for the Nazis. So this Nazi overseer took immediate steps to bring Steckler to again. He did it by stamping his boot on the soldier's wounded hand, helpless on the floor, grinding his heel into the already injured thumb. The excruciating pain—so the Nazi calculated—would be enough to arouse him . . .

Between Feb. 28, 1945, and April 18, when the Berga Elster prisoners were liberated, 70 GI prisoners died of the effects of slave labor and of starvation.

CHAPTER NINE

INSIDE GERMANY

AFTER THE attrition fighting along the German borders and after Von Rundstedt's vain try at a counter-offensive which came to be called the Battle of the Bulge, there was a lull on the Western Front. That was the time of preparation and the Germans knew we were preparing, jointly with the Russian armies coming from the East, for the kill.

They nevertheless waited under a kind of hypnotic spell, like a man half asleep at the moment of his greatest crisis, caught flat-footed and unable to make the simplest obvious move to avoid disaster.

When it came time for crossing of the Rhine, which might have been made a difficult job for us by an alert enemy, it happened that a platoon of the Third Armored Division rolled down to the river's edge at Remagen Bridge, and didn't stop there but went on across. The drunken Germans on guard awoke to the crisis too late. We had the bridge then at both ends, and it could not be exploded or retaken—it was ours.

Over the bridge at Remagen the tanks and the troops went rolling and over other bridges which we presently built or took,

and by air, and by every conceivable means. And so we flowed into Nazi Germany from the West, tolling as we went the death knell of Nazi Germany.

Here began the great sweep across the Reich which did not end until the last of the armed Herrenvolk had surrendered.

There was a commander of the Third Armored Division, Major General Maurice G. Rose of Denver, Colorado, son of an aged rabbi, soldier built on the slashing lines of the late George S. Patton. He led his division through the block-by-block fighting in Metz, into Cologne, slap-up against the Siegfried Line and at last into the Valley of the Ruhr. Thus he locked the door on 100,000 Nazi troops, cut off the rest of the tottering Reich from the Ruhr Valley iron and coal and the industries that feed on iron and coal.

In March of 1945, on March 30, General Rose was killed. It happened while he was on a reconnaissance patrol near Paderhorn, Germany. Suddenly the recon car in which he rode with two other men found itself surrounded by Germans, and grim machine-gun muzzles were looking down on the patrol from a German tank. A loose-fingered German gunner thought he saw the general make a move toward the pistol he carried in his belt, and he let go with a spurt of machine gun fire. The general collapsed, dead.

Don't ask me what a general was doing roaming about the country on a patrol, in territory still held by the enemy. There is no answer except that that is the kind of general Maurice Rose was.

They used to tell about General Rose that he once drove his tank over a bridge and back to see if it was mined before he ordered his troops across. They told how he shot it out with a German patrol up in the lines, three men against twenty . . . and it was the 20 Germans who broke and ran.

It was on a patrol like that he met his death. And it may well be true, as the Germans reported, that though hopelessly surrounded and a prisoner, he was reaching for his pistol, intending to shoot his way out.

Maurice Rose was born the son of immigrant parents, Rabbi Samuel Rose and Katy Rose, in Middletown, Connecticut. They took him to Denver when he was a child of 3. As a little boy he sang in the choir of Beth Midrash Hagadol Synagogue in Denver. In 1916, when there was trouble with Mexico, he dropped his schooling at Colorado University and enlisted as a Private in the First Colorado Cavalry for the Mexican campaign.

In World War I he went over with the 89th Division and, becoming a second lieutenant, soon got a reputation as "the shavetail who fights like hell." Back from France in 1919, he took a few months out as a civilian and then went back into uniform, in the Regular Army. Already then he knew that the army of the United States was to be his life.

Between the world wars, he became convinced that it must be from now on an army of machines and more machines. When war again spilled over the nation, he was one of two or three top-flight experts—George S. Patton was another—on tanks. He was a colonel when, in 1942, he went over for the North Africa invasion.

He was chief of staff of the First Armored, and a chief of staff's place is at a desk. But the tankman's temperament is allergic to desks. It is a temperament geared to sweeping attack, non-stop offensive. While he organized and trained the Second Armored, which later swept over Sicily and took Palermo, he found his way somehow into forward combat areas—where the fighting takes place.

He was thus at the front, as an observer, near Maknassy in Tunisia, in the Spring of 1943, and observed American troops pinned down by fire of enemy big guns, disorganized, discouraged. He went rampaging among them, reorganized them, led them back to the attack. "This was all the more noteworthy," said the citation with the Silver Star he then won, "as Colonel Rose was not on the field of battle for this purpose."

There was some discussion, at the time of General Rose's death, as to the manner of his dying. First reports were that he was already a prisoner of war and defenseless when the Germans shot him down. But that was not the view of Colonel John A. Smith Jr., the general's chief of staff. In New York in September, six months after the general's death, the colonel said:

"General Rose often told me the Germans would never take him alive. The general carried his pistol at his belt, and I am convinced because I know so well the steel in the general's character, that he saw a chance to escape and tried to get to his gun. Two other men were in the car with the general, and there was a good chance to dash past the tank in the gathering darkness to safety, as one American car did. In my opinion General Rose took the chance . . ."

The colonel was in New York on a special mission, not merely

to make statements about his late commanding general. He was there with a check for $30,000, a contribution to the $1,000,000 General Rose Memorial Hospital to be erected in his home city of Denver. The $30,000 had been contributed, in small amounts, by 10,000 men of his division . . .

That's the kind of general he was.

The Silver Star citation told a story of a medic's gallantry in action in Germany. The name, Harold Katz of the Bronx, technician fifth grade (corporal). The date, March 30, 1945. The action, an attack on the German town of Attweilmann, when Katz's platoon was halted by concentrated enemy fire, artillery and other, which "caused many casualties." Said the citation:

"Leaving the comparative safety of his position, Technician Katz exposed himself to the enemy fire to reach the side of a wounded comrade. He administered first aid to him and placed him in a deep fox-hole for protection against further injury. Although being fired at constantly, he moved to the side of another wounded soldier to whom he also administered first aid.

"Attempting to evacuate him, he was seriously wounded by enemy fire. Despite his wounds and the fact that he was unable to move his legs, Technician Katz succeeded in pushing the wounded comrade into a shallow hole which afforded him protection from flat trajectory fire . . ."

That's how the citation read, and it said that Katz's actions "reflect the highest credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States . . ." But some time later, Corporal Katz was killed in action, and on his person they found a paper, which explained why this boy from the Bronx—he was 18 when he

entered the army—moved about the field of action, careless, it seemed, of what happened to him. For this boy knew why he was fighting the Nazis and why, though he gambled with his life, he must stay in the fight.

The document, a letter addressed simply to "Dear Mom," said:

> "I realize that this is a war and that men will be killed winning it, and since I am included in these, I know there is a possibility of my not coming back.
>
> "If you receive this letter it will be because that possibility has come true. I am writing this letter now, while I have the chance, in the hope that it will ease the weight of the sad news, in that it will make you better understand my viewpoint on the matter.
>
> "Mom, I want you to know that I asked for a combat assignment. I did so for several reasons. One is that I had certain ideals within my own mind, for which I had often argued verbally. I didn't feel right to sit safe, far behind the lines, while men were risking their lives for principles which I would fight for only with my lips. I felt that I also must be willing to risk my life in the fight for the freedom of speech and thought I was using and hoped to use in the future.
>
> "Another reason . . . is the fact that I am Jewish. I felt, again, it wasn't right for me to be safe behind the lines, while others were risking their lives, with one of their goals the principles of no race prejudice. I knew this meant fighting for me and my family because if Hitler won, my family—you, Rolly and Pop—would

certainly suffer more than the families of other soldiers who died in the fight.

"I felt that I must risk my life, on that point, so that I could earn the right for my family to live in peace and free from race prejudice. I didn't think it right to stand by and let others fight for things which would benefit me. I asked for combat for the above reasons. Those are the feelings I had inside me, Mom, and I could not push them aside. I felt if I did not face them, I was not a man of true good character.

"I hope you realize exactly what I am trying to tell you, Mom. I want you very much to be more proud than sorry. I don't want you to think of it as losing a son for no good reason, but rather as sacrificing a son so that all of mankind could live in a peaceful and free world."

It's a funny thing (thought Private First Class Murray Lafkowitz of Brooklyn) but here we are in Germany, marching along on German soil, with Nazis liable to break out any time, and the things that keep going through my mind aren't the things at all you would expect an American soldier to be thinking on his first day in the Reich.

There is no thought in my head of fear nor, on the other hand, of heroism and courage and fighting. But only (thought Lafkowitz) little odds and ends of things like the Maginot Line which we have just come through and which was unable to stop us going East just as it did not stop the Germans five years ago driving West. And also about West Point, for which Private

First Class Lafkowitz had applied some time before, but who ever heard of a West Pointer named Lafkowitz, and his application was no doubt resting somewhere under a layer of pigeonhole dust.

Splinters of irrelevant thoughts like that drifted through his head, and then he had to leave the company column to adjust a piece of his equipment, and there was some delay because the section gun sight needed special adjustment, and when he was ready again the column was far ahead, in the woods. And because a mortar gun is not much use in combat without its sight, no matter how well that is adjusted, Lafkowitz broke into a lope and then a trot, to catch up with the column.

Then the sun went down, and pretty soon Lafkowitz was groping his way through the woods in the dark, when the stocky form of a Nazi soldier suddenly came at him out of the night. Lafkowitz felt the muzzle of a German Mauser rifle pressed hard against his chest.

In a situation like that (thought Private First Class Murray Lafkowitz) you do not fool around, because you cannot fool around with cold lead more than once. He was the Nazi soldier's prisoner of war and the Nazi motioned with his rifle which way to go (in the direction of the German lines) and Lafkowitz went, the Nazi following close behind.

Soon they picked up a Nazi non-com and three more Nazi Privates, and the whole group moved on uncertainly through the woods. Even now Lafkowitz was troubled by the drift of vagrant, irrelevant thoughts through his head, not related to the dangerous situation in which he found himself. Thoughts about his application to West Point and how it looked when stuffed

deep in a pigeonhole, and what the Brooklyn Bridge probably looked like under a blackout on a dark night, and the funny route the Germans were taking him toward their own lines, going first in one direction and then another.

And all at once the thought came forcibly to Prisoner Lafkowitz that his captors did not know which way they were going because they were lost!

They wandered on in the night-black woods and pretty soon the thoughts that floated through Lafkowitz's head were about his platoon, with which he had not yet caught up, and also about his platoon sergeant and he thought—it is a funny thing, Private First Class Lafkowitz said to himself, about these thoughts in my head—he thought he distinctly heard the voice of his platoon sergeant chatting and laughing, and then (he thought) there was the sound of a jeep approaching, like his platoon sergeant's jeep.

But when the group of Nazis came to a halt and listened, straining their ears in the direction from which the platoon sergeant's voice and the sound of his jeep seemed to come—then Private First Class Lafkowitz had another kind of thought and he acted on it swiftly.

Leaping under the gun of the nearest Nazi, he butted him in the stomach, throwing him into the midst of his Nazi comrades and at the same time Lafkowitz hallooed at the top of his voice, "JERRIES!" and dived for the ground.

The platoon sergeant and the men in his jeep—for they were there in the flesh and not merely a Lafkowitz thought—dived too, with their rifles ready and pointing. And though one of the Germans slipped away in the dark, the other three remained,

their hands held high in token of their being the prisoners of Private First Class Lafkowitz instead of his captors.

The rest of that night Lafkowitz spent sleeping, peacefully, in a convenient foxhole, and when he awoke a corporal whom he had never seen before came up with orders for Private First Class Lafkowitz to report to his commanding officer right away.

It is a funny thing, thought Private First Class Lafkowitz, about the thoughts that go through a man's head, for as he faced the commanding officer in the C.O.'s quarters, it seemed to him that the C.O. was saying, "Private First Class Murray Lafkowitz, your application to enter the U. S. Military Academy at West Point has been approved."

And Private First Class Murray Lafkowitz said "Yes, sir" and came to a quick salute as he realized that this, too, was a fact and not merely a thought in his head.

Sergeant Abe M. Kuzminsky of Washington, D. C., was 20 when he moved into Germany, and still 20 when he was killed in action and was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

The way it happened was this. The sergeant was leading a squad to the attack in Germany. He was badly wounded by machine gun fire from a well hidden enemy.

The problem that faced the American attackers was a simple one. If the machine gunners could be located, they could be wiped out—but where were they? There was a simple way of arriving at the answer—and Sergeant Kuzminsky took it. He ordered his men to get back under cover. Then, despite his wounds, he moved ahead, toward the enemy, where the hidden

machine gunners could not but see him.

They did. The machine guns opened up with a rat-tat-tat chorus directed at the reckless sergeant. His body crumpled to earth. The Germans no doubt chortled over the fate of the foolish American who made himself a target for their gunners—but not for long. The fire they directed at the foolish American gave away their location to other Americans who were waiting for just such information. Hardly had their chatter died down, when the American guns opened up.

"Although he lost his life as a result of his gallant action," said the citation with the D.S.C., "his men were able to neutralize the enemy emplacement—" that is, the Nazis were wiped out.

He had fought in North Africa and was wounded. He fought in Sicily and was wounded again. Patched up in England, he was back in the fighting on the beaches of Normandy and he kept on through the sweep over France. They gave him a Silver Star for wiping out a machine gun nest, setting up an observation post and directing artillery fire during the Battle of the Bulge.

Then came Germany, and in the Battle of the Hurtgen Forest, Sergeant George Rosen of Brooklyn again saw action. There, as if to round out the wounded record, it came about this way. Machine guns from a German pillbox fired steadily, so that Sergeant Rosen and his men were effectively pinned down. They crouched behind slight cover or sprawled out with none, unable to move except at the price or the danger of death.

There was one soldier who did move and he was wounded

and disabled. He was too badly hurt to get out of the line of fire and to remain where he was meant certain death. Sergeant Rosen leaped from behind his own protective cover and into the open, where the pillbox fire was heaviest, carried the wounded man back to safety.

Rosen's decorations: Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Heart with two Oakleaf Clusters.

Somewhere in Germany, Captain Walter I. Berlin's company of Armored Infantry was halted and pinned down. Some distance ahead, a U. S. tank maneuvered cautiously but was unable to locate the enemy pillbox. Captain Berlin, who had found out something, cut across the exposed area through a devastating storm of fire from the pillbox machine guns, reached the tank 150 yards away and climbed on.

At his direction, the tank was moved into a new position overlooking the German pillbox. From here the tank gunners blasted the pillbox into a heap of rubble.

Berlin, a boy of 27 then from Baltimore, Maryland, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for that day's work, in addition to the Bronze Star with Oakleaf Cluster and Purple Heart with Oakleaf Cluster he had already won in Belgium and France. His D.S.C. citation declared in part:

"Though he was constantly subjected to heavy fire, he remained in his exposed position and directed effective tank fire until all enemy emplacements were knocked out, thus permitting his company to advance and seize its objective."

In the bitter push through the Hurtgen Forest, Private First

Class Isador M. Harnoff of Albany, New York, was struck by flying shrapnel. The metal cut his uniform at the breast pocket, dug its way for a distance of two or three inches toward his heart. But in his breast pocket at the time Harnoff had a National Jewish Welfare Board calendar and Prayer Book. The calendar was pierced from cover to cover, and the shrapnel splinter continued on into the Prayer Book, where it came to a stop. The soldier himself was unscratched, and he was certain, Chaplain Samson Shain reported, that the religious books he carried with him into battle had saved his life . . .

Again, there was Lieutenant Albert Simon of Newark, New Jersey, flier and Flying Fortress navigator. He was on a bombing mission over Euskirchen, Germany, and the flak came up thick from the guns below. A two-inch fragment hurtled through the aircraft's nose and dug into Simon's abdomen. He was shaken up but stayed at his post until the plane returned to its base in England. There an examination showed that the flak had cut through his flak suit, his heavy flying clothes and his electric suit, but the only injury inflicted was a skin bruise.

Medical officers who examined him said, however, a main artery would have been cut and his life endangered if it had not been for "a small book" they found the lieutenant carried. The "small book" was a Siddur, or book of prayer . . .

Or there was the experience of Private First Class Bernard Erstein of Brooklyn, medical aid man, who fought through the African and Sicilian campaigns and was wounded at St. Lo. He had been working over a wounded man on the battlefield, paying little attention to shells bursting in the area. But when he tried to get to his feet, he collapsed, blood spurting from his

chest. They moved him to an evacuation hospital and he was operated on that night, in the midst of a night air raid. The surgeons removed numerous small pieces of paper from the wound before getting out the two-inch piece of 88 millimeter shell. The fragment, they found, had cut all the way through Erstein's well-thumbed Siddur, which he had carried with him continuously since he became a soldier. He, at least, was certain that but for the prayer book in his pocket, he would have been listed not among the wounded but the dead . . .

Incidents like these were reported again and again, from almost every battlefield of every theater of war, by the Jewish chaplains and by the men themselves. These things may be explained away by the far-reaching hand of coincidence. To the men whose lives were saved, it was more like the hand of God.

When you are in a crippled bomber over enemy country, you do not feel so good, because a crippled bomber moves at slowed-down speed and can become easy prey for the first enemy fighters to show up. In a situation like that, an escort of friendly fighter planes or even one friendly fighter is comforting in the extreme.

That is the way it was with Captain Jerome Yakel of Baltimore, piloting his B-17 for a raking-over of Wilhelmshaven.

Supercharger trouble developed on the way and the plane dropped out of formation, turned back toward England. Lumbering along like a cripple of the air, with two of her four engines dead, the B-17 made slow time and Captain Yakel and his men had a worried, uncomfortable time of it.

Out of the clouds, however, came a fighter—an American

fighter plane, as any one could tell by the characteristic markings and also by the fact that the fighter dropped alongside the Yakel bomber and flew on a line parallel with it for several miles. The bomber crewmen sighed with grateful relief, for a friendly fighter in a situation like theirs was a friend indeed.

Hardly had they settled down to their new-gained sense of security, however, when the fighter turned and came zooming toward the Fortress, all guns blazing! And in a moment, having passed under the bomber, the fighter cut back and crossed overhead, still firing as it went. Bullets ripped into the Flying Fortress, cut into her gasoline tanks or ricocheted off the engine and the metal machinery with a sinister zzzzzing.

Now for the first time the men noted that the plane was no friendly American fighter but a German ME-109 with U. S. markings on it and the wing tips blacked out to help the fraud along. Instead of the nice, comfortable, protected trip home, the boys were in for a running air battle at a heartbreaking disadvantage.

There was a cloudbank ahead, and Captain Yakel drove for it, but when he came out on the other side, so did the disguised Nazi, ready to go after the bomber again. Captain Yakel swerved his heavy plane, rose, dropped, tried all the "evasive tactics" fliers know and some he thought up on the spur of the emergency. But the Nazi fighter wouldn't be shaken off.

At last Yakel plowed into a cluster of clouds that might give him a breathing spell. What would happen when he ran out of their protection he didn't know. Soon that question would be answered. As the bomber came out in clear sky, the crewmen looked around for their pursuer—but he wasn't there, and never

showed up. Some time during the maneuvering in the clouds the Nazi fighter had lost his target.

"Whew!" commented Captain Yakel. The unequal battle, it turned out had lasted only ten minutes—the longest ten minutes in the young captain's life.

(Captain Yakel's decorations include: the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with three Oakleaf Clusters, a presidential unit citation. On 33 missions—including bombing of Berlin, Munich, Leipzig—he came back 30 times with damaged bombers, though no member of his crews was ever injured or killed.)

There was a young man aged 20, a fighter pilot named Sidney Stern, Flight Officer, who entered Nazi Germany in the Spring of 1945 by the short route, the shortest there was. Flight Officer Stern, whose home is in Brooklyn, was flying a P-41 Mustang over Germany when the plane was shot up and he made a forced landing on German soil. That is how he got into Germany.

He had barely stepped out on the ground when there was a terrific explosion and the P-41 went up in a cloud of flames and smoke. Unhurt himself, Stern struck out for the nearest woods, but his burning plane had not escaped unnoticed and for four hours that Spring afternoon the American flier dodged among trees while Nazis in uniform combed the woods for him, finally setting bloodhounds on his trail. He had hoped to outwit his pursuers at least until after dark, but an hour before sunset a couple of Nazi airmen ran him down. They hauled him into a prisoner of war interrogation center and there the Nazi inter-

rogator asked him—it was almost his first question—"Are you Jewish?"

"Why do you ask?" Stern wondered.

"Because," said the interrogator, "it goes very hard with Jews in Germany."

Stern said he was Jewish and they put him in solitary confinement for four days, then transferred him to another prison where he was kept in solitary for five days. The Reich that was built by Hitler to last a thousand years was rapidly falling to pieces then and nothing remained stable. The Russians were moving in from one direction and the Americans and British from the other, and prisons and prisoners had to be moved frequently to keep them out of the oncoming Allies' way.

Once again Stern was transferred, this time to Moesberg Camp in Munich, a considerable distance, and a couple of Nazi guards were assigned to escort him on the journey—on foot.

As the weird trio approached the birthplace of Nazism, the RAF was bombing the city with vigorous enthusiasm and marvelous effect, and Flight Officer Stern noted that his guards seemed less interested than you would expect loyal Nazis to be in their assigned duty of keeping watch over an American prisoner.

At the Munich outskirts, one of them announced that he was going away. His departure was carried out legally and correctly, for first the guard wrote out his own discharge from the German Army on a proper discharge form that he had been carrying along with him, then he signed it with what was no doubt the technically proper signature and finished the whole thing off with the official rubber stamp for discharge documents, which

he had also carried in his pack. Only then did he say his more or less polite farewells and disappear.

This left Stern with but a single very languid and nervous guard and they had not gone far into the city when the American prisoner took his guard's gun away and made HIM a prisoner. With his German prisoner in tow, Flight Officer Stern proceeded to the nearest unbombed house and persuaded its German-civilian proprietor that it would be to the best interests of all concerned, particularly the German civilian, to provide room and board for a few days—until the Americans arrived—to a stranded American flier. He must have talked very persuasively, for the civilian eagerly agreed, and the meals proved to be good.

Already the Munich area was pocketed by fast-moving American troops and in a few days Flight Officer Stern took his prisoner on a walk and turned him over to a U. S. Army patrol. In charge of the patrol was a hard, tough-looking sergeant, described by Flight Officer Stern as follows:

"He was the most beautiful sight I ever saw in my life!"

The nicest part of the war for Captain Leonard Bessman was the period he spent in Germany. By the time he reached the Nazis' homeland, he was attached to what the Army calls G2, and his job was to run down the worst of the bigshot Nazis—the high-up party officials, the SS men, the Gestapo gentry—to arrest them and to question them.

Captain Bessman was a lawyer back in his home town, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, before the army made him an Infantry private long, long ago (on June 4, 1941), and this job of interrogat-

ing the Nazi criminals was similar to a lawyer's job of examining an unfriendly witness, matching wits with him, drawing out the truth which the witness does not wish to reveal.

Sometimes the captive Herrenvolk were arrogant witnesses and sometimes they fawned and slobbered at the mouth in their eagerness to prove what good, democratic anti-Nazis they had always been. But always the American captain put them through the same paces, the same thorough grilling.

For that was the job the Army had given him to do, and in any case he liked his work. He loved to probe the Nazi mind, to find out if possible what made it tick. And to send the deflated masters of the Master Race to prisoner of war camps segregated from other German prisoners eager for a chance to hang them or at least to beat them up. It was congenial work. It was pleasant work.

And it was a cool, quiet, restful contrast with the kind of war Bessman had personally experienced since about November of 1942.

He was a Second Lieutenant of Infantry then, having been commissioned the preceding July. He came over from England with the original assault landing in North Africa on November 8th. He fought through most of the Tunisian campaign, chiefly doing reconnaissance ahead of the Allied front lines, behind the lines of the enemy.

On one such mission he was wounded and captured. He escaped from a PW camp in Italy and for nine months roamed the Italian countryside, deep in enemy territory, far behind the German lines.

Then, in March, with a couple of other Americans who had

made the prison break with him, he slipped through the German lines. At 4 in the morning of March 2, the two men walked into an advanced British 8th Army outpost. Captain Bessman got a few weeks' holiday in the States, then asked to be sent back into combat. By June 15, he was in England again, now a staff officer of the First Army. And with the First Army he fought his way through France, Belgium, Holland and finally Germany. By that time he was entitled to wear a small acre of campaign ribbons and decorations, including the D.S.C.

That he won back in North Africa, the day he was taken prisoner by the Afrika Korps. The fighting was in Tunisia, in the vicinity of El Guettar. In a lone jeep, accompanied by only a corporal-driver, Bessman drove a mile ahead of the American lines, on a feelout reconnaissance errand, to see what opposition our troops were likely to run into.

As the jeep crawled along a path over a hill, Bessman caught sight of what he was looking for: A large enemy force, artillery pieces in place, a tank, machine gun nests on an adjoining hill.

This was highly useful information to take back to headquarters. But now some one had caught sight of the two-man reconnaissance group. An artillery shell came whining over, struck the jeep parked by an old olive tree, knocked it out.

Captain Bessman ordered his corporal to get back to the U. S. lines on foot as fast as he could, and report on the Nazi ambush they had located. To cover the corporal's going—divert attention away from him—Bessman made use of the only weapon he now had, his pistol. Machine gun fire was coming his way and now and then he caught sight of shadowy forms in the near distance stalking him.

He tried to work his way back himself, making full use of every inch of ground cover, every rock, every rise or depression in the sand. He hoarded his pistol ammunition like a miser, fired only with the greatest caution—and skill. He did all right, too, for about a quarter of a mile.

Then a burst of machine gun fire came his way, left him wounded and helpless on the ground. Only then did the warriors of the Afrika Korps close in on him . . .

A year and a half later, when Bessman got back to the American lines, the first question he asked was one that had troubled him while he lay in a Nazi field hospital recovering from his wounds, while he was held a prisoner in Italy, and while he hid out from the Nazis among the Italian Partisans: Did the corporal get back with his information about enemy installations at El Guettar? The answer: He did.

After months of questioning Nazi bigshots and Nazi medium- and little-shots, Captain Bessman came to these conclusions: (1) That Germany must be policed for possibly a life time to come; (2) That all personnel of the German General Staff and German intelligence organizations, except the leaders and policy makers, must be imprisoned or otherwise put out of circulation forever; (3) That the leaders and policy makers must be executed.

"A Nazi is a German with a gun. Without a gun he is a good German who had nothing to do with it"—Sergeant Irwin Fox of Brooklyn, who fought the Nazi-Germans through France, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Battle of the Hurtgen Forest, and who spent six months in a German prison camp.

"I have talked to many Germans in Germany and they were all (they said) good Germans, not Nazis. Well, I guess I do not know what a Nazi is, but a good German is somebody you find standing over the murdered body, with a smoking gun in his hand, and you cannot blame him as it is all the fault of the man who sold him the gun"—Sergeant Robert Levine of Paterson, New Jersey.

"I was born and brought up in Germany, and came to the U. S. only in 1937, but when I got back into my native land (leading a squad of U. S. infantrymen), these people speaking German, signs in German, German streets and buildings—all that was completely foreign to me. I was glad to get back to my nice American foxhole" – Sergeant Carl Hess, Sunnyside, Queens, New York, who was awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart for bringing in two wounded comrades under fire during the fighting outside Aachen.

Among the little ironies of history which cropped up as the war in Europe came to an end was this: That Julius Streicher, the Nazis' chief Jew baiter, grew a white beard and took on the appearance of a venerable patriarchal Jew in an effort to escape capture. And that he was nevertheless captured, by an American army officer who was a Jew.

Streicher had been the foulest and most unrestrained anti-Semite in a nation which had made anti-Semitism a diabolic religion. After the beaten Herrenvolk surrendered he, along with others of the chief war criminals, vanished from public view. The now bearded ex-editor of the now defunct "Der Stuermer" took up a quiet residence in a peasant's cottage on a

farm near the village of Waldring. The name: Herr Sailer. Occupation: Artist.

There Major Henry Plitt of New York located him, peacefully working on an oil painting. He knew nothing, he said, about Nazis and nothing about politics. Art had been his whole life. The young major wasn't sure—also his German wasn't too good. "You look so much like Streicher," he tried to say in German, "that I have a notion to take you in."

The once-clever Streicher misunderstood, thought the major had said, "I know you are Streicher and I am going to take you along"—and admitted his identity. Thus he was started on the road that led to the war crimes trial, and execution, at Nurnberg . . .

The Streicher capture was a minor incident in the war record of Major Plitt who was probably the first American to jump into Normandy and who was wounded five times in one day after jumping at Arnhem, in Holland. Each won him a Silver Star. Major Plitt had enlisted in the Air Corps back in 1940, two months after graduating from Brooklyn Law School.

But they gave him a desk job and, particularly after Pearl Harbor, he wanted action. In March, 1942, he got himself transferred to paratroops. There was a long training period, at home and in England, and his first combat jump was on the night of June 5, 1944—Normandy's D-Day minus 1.

Fifty-four men in three planes, all of them Pathfinders whose mission was to pave the ground for the main body of paratroops, flew in that first flight. Everything had been carefully worked out in advance, to the last detail—but, Major Plitt recalled, almost everything (fortunately) went wrong. Plitt's was

the second plane in the formation, but the pilot for some reason gave him the signal to jump ahead of the first.

When Plitt tumbled to the ground, he was, for a few seconds, the only American paratrooper on French soil. The 54 Pathfinders, once on the ground, had half an hour in which to set up their secret equipment including radio with which to flash a series of colored light signals to guide the rest of the arriving paratroopers. In particular, the paratroopers needed guidance to a German gun position which it was their job to put out of action.

But the major soon noted that the transports were overshooting their mark, some by as much as 20 miles, and the light signals would serve no purpose except to give away the Pathfinders' position to an alert enemy. So he set himself another mission. Starting with three men who had landed with him, he assembled most of the Pathfinders and about as many more men who had jumped from other planes, more than 100 in all.

Armed only with machine guns, tommyguns and grenades, he led them to the gun position and knocked it out . . .

Scattering of the remaining paratroopers over the countryside, Major Plitt recalled, worked to our advantage. Wherever they dropped, the men started at once for their agreed-on assembly point, and the more distance they covered in getting there the more Germans they wiped out on the way. By H-Hour of D-Day, he recalled, "we didn't have just a narrow beachhead, we held all that section of the peninsula."

In Arnhem, he found, the first day was easy but after that, "you got hit every time you turned around." He had four jeeps

shot away from under him in one day, and was himself shot five times.

Lee Felder left his native town of Nurnberg in 1934, when it was no longer safe for a Jew to remain in Germany. He returned in 1945, this time as a New York citizen and a captain in the United States army, assigned to act as interpreter in the questioning of Reichsmarshal Herman Goering, highest ranking surviving Nazi with Hitler out of the way. He was unimpressed by this example of Nazi greatness.

"Goering," he recalled, "was a dismal, disgraceful spectacle. He turned alternately pale and flushed red. He sweated with guilty fear, constantly wringing his pudgy hands."

CHAPTER TEN

WE DRIVE ACROSS THE PACIFIC

FORTY-THREE was the year of the turnabout in the Pacific. There, as in that other part of the war half way around the world, the forward drive of the Axis had already been stopped.

It was stopped in Europe when the Nazis were pulled up short by the Russians at Stalingrad—a long, bloody, desperate engagement which did not shape up as a decisive German defeat until early Spring of '43. But Hitler's troops never again got as far East after that, and never recovered from the beating they took there.

In North Africa the Germans-Italians were stopped cold by the British at El Alamein, and when Spring came in Tunisia, the Spring of '43, the last of the Nazis in Africa gave up the ghost at Bizerte.

In the Pacific war against the Japs, the give-away battle, which showed the enemy had reached his farthest point of advance and would go no farther, was Guadalcanal.

This had started earlier and continued longer than the other two, and when it was over, our victory was far less spectacular and less promising for the future. It took half a year and incalculable blood and anguish to drive the Japs from a few square miles of streaming, malaria-ridden jungle, for which we would have no use at the war's end.

The pessimists said, Look, there are thousands of Pacific islands like this one of the Solomon Isles on the road from Guadalcanal to Tokyo, and if it takes as much in time and anguish to capture each of them, we face an endlessly long-drawn-out war.

This was the stepping-stone theory of how the Pacific would have to be reconquered, island by succeeding island, each a bloody and bitterly-contested Guadalcanal. And beyond the Pacific's ten thousand islands lay the China coast and the untested and unbeaten Japanese armies in China. And the home islands of Japan.

Already there were signs in the sky—the sea-air battle of Midway Island, which we won decisively, was one of them—that a different pattern of rolling back the Pacific was in the making. But for a time the signs were not clearly persuasive of an important turn in events. The day-to-day news told of air attacks on Rabaul, on New Britain, on New Guinea, again and again on Rabaul—softening-up preliminaries to the next island landings.

When the Navy stood off the sandy atoll of Tarawa, in the Gilbert Islands, pounded it with terrific shell and rocket fire, took it in a matter of hours—when Tarawa was thus taken, but at high cost in dead and wounded, nothing seemed to have

been changed. If every pin-point island had to be bought at such a price, victory in the Pacific war was still far away.

But Tarawa, with its more than 1,000 dead, more than 2,000 wounded, was the beginning of something new—a drive across the central Pacific which, starting with the Gilberts on Thanksgiving Day week, 1943, raced on without a stop into the harbor of surrendered Tokyo itself.

In the year from November 21st to November 21st, Army, Navy and Marines drove steadily across the central Pacific, in a series of amphibious landings which swept in the Marshall Islands, the Marianas, the Carolines and a host of others. Up from the South at the same time, General Douglas MacArthur's troops joined the drive, over Northern New Guinea.

Guam was retaken and Saipan, and by November, 1944, we were back in Leyte, on the Philippines. During this westward surge, the last of the Japanese Navy was sunk or crippled, and U. S. naval fleets roamed the Pacific unchallenged up to the very shores of the mikado's homeland.

This is not to say that it was all a walkover. The fighting in many places was as vicious as any in the history of warfare. Much of it was atoll fighting and jungle fighting, not only against the Japanese enemy, but against tropic heat and disease, insects and the elements. Malaria was an ever-present contingency. New battle techniques were invented and developed for the amphibious actions on strange new terrains.

And men of every service—as of every creed and race—contributed their share to the fighting advance. Soldiers, sailors and Marines, Infantry riflemen and fliers, paratroopers and

Seebees and Army engineers . . .

On a hundred landings from Guadalcanal and Tarawa on, the Marines fought—and paid a grim price in casualties. Among them was many a Jewish leatherneck, boys fresh out of shops and offices in Brooklyn and the Bronx, colleges in the East and Middle West, in city and country throughout the United States.

Marines, for instance, like Corporal Leroy Diamond of Brooklyn, who led a three-man machine gun squad on Guadalcanal. The other two were a Private Schmid and Private John Rivers. When the Japs started firing, Rivers was killed, and Diamond took over the job of feeding the ammunition. Schmid reported:

"Japs fell like flies. Diamond was furiously at work loading the gun when they got him in the arm. He fell across my legs and could hardly move. He picked up his Reising automatic and tried to work it with his one good hand.

"There were movements of feet on the river bank just outside our little barricade. Diamond sprayed the river bank with lead and the movements stopped. Then something struck me in the face and I felt blood and raw flesh. We lay motionless. A couple of Japs had climbed some trees behind us and fired a steady rain of bullets that clipped the dirt all around us, ripped through our sandbags, spattered oil on our wounds. Diamond kept saying, 'Stay down! Stay down!'

"After a while our boys came and carried us back. They counted 200 dead Japs!"

Or like Marine Private First Class Bernard Siegel of Brooklyn who enlisted at 20 to fight Fascists and died at 22 of wounds

received in a first-wave landing on the beach at Saipan.

Or Marine Corporal David Yush of Hartford, Connecticut, who enlisted in 1942, giving up a job as machine operator, and was killed in action under a hail of fire from a Jap pillbox on Kwajalein in August, 1944.

Or 23-year-old Marine Louis Slep of East Haven, Connecticut, who turned down a chance in the Air Corps (he had a civilian pilot's license) to enlist in the Marines. After two years of Pacific fighting, he was killed on Eniwetok Atoll in the Marshalls.

Or Marine Herbert Wolf of White Plains, New York, who was badly wounded on Eniwetok, was awarded a Purple Heart.

Or Marine Captain David Zeitlin of Norwalk, Connecticut. He was 25, in civilian life a newspaperman. Directing landing operations at Vella Lavella, he saw a landing ship explode, setting fuel and ammunition on fire, and swam to the rescue of wounded men despite burning oil on the water's surface and strafing Jap fliers overhead. He organized and led a party of volunteers to rescue the wounded from the deck of the burning ship, supervised their removal though the ship was again hit by bombs. For that day's work Captain Zeitlin received a Silver Star and a public commendation by Admiral Halsey.

Or Major Martin Rockmore of New York, who led his men in a series of dashing, heroic exploits on Cape Gloucester, which won him a Silver Star 'for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy." His men at the same time were awarded a Presidential unit citation.

Or Marine Private First Class Norman Cohen of the Bronx, New York, who enlisted the day after Pearl Harbor and made

a specialty of wiping out machine gun nests singlehanded—at Guadalcanal, Cape Gloucester, New Britain. The boys got to calling him "Jap Killer," and the Navy awarded him a Silver Star.

There were many others, those with awards after their names and those (who perhaps did just as heroic things) without....

Marines are young, and boys of 25 have been called "old man" among them. But it takes more than youth to make a Marine. It takes dash and drive and the ability to keep on fighting whatever the odds—regardless of age. Thus there was a Marine named Melvin Krulewitch. He was a schoolboy in 1917, at the outbreak of the first World War. He left school, enlisted in the Marine Corps as a private, went through some fiery action in France including Belleau Wood, was wounded.

Between the wars he became a lawyer, and remained a Marine. When Pearl Harbor came he was the highest ranking Jewish officer in the U. S. Marine Reserve, and went back at once to active duty. Colonel Krulewitch was presently launched on a series of actions in the Pacific. When Marines took over Namur Island in the Marshalls, he was among them, leading headquarters troops which made the landings in February, 1944.

Jap machine guns were still in position, firing without let-up, Jap riflemen were still in action, when the colonel raised the Stars and Stripes over Namur. It was the first time the American flag flew over what had been Jap territory before the war. He then personally captured three Japs, at a time

when the myth still prevailed that Japs never became prisoners.

The flag which he raised at Namur, Colonel Krulewitch carried with him all the way across the Pacific, unfurling it on one after another of the islands we took away from the Japs. He set it fluttering again over Saipan, and of the action which gave us that island he wrote back home to New York:

"This was our toughest campaign yet and, as Admiral Nimitz announced, the longest, bloodiest and most costly battle in the Pacific. This fight again demonstrated that the buck Marine has no superior as a fighter in the world. From the moment my amphib crossed the reef and crawled onto the beach until yesterday it was hard fighting. We were met with heavy fire on the beach itself and all during the first days. Artillery, mortar, sniping, plane strafing and bombing—it was all there."

Colonel Krulewitch himself was struck by a fragment of mortar shell which, however, was stopped by a dispatch case he was carrying and did him no harm.

By Saipan time, the pattern for invading a Jap-held island had been pretty well worked out. First you gave it a going-over from the air. Then came the navy, to pound the shore with heavy artillery. Then the LC's, landing men and tanks, trucks and supplies. Then the men on the beaches made for the nearest air-strip. Because on an air-strip, once captured, you could set up air power to control the rest of the island—and then on to other islands, the next on the schedule.

It was D-Day minus 2 for Saipan, next door to Guam, when Marine First Lieutenant Leonard Wollman got his initial view of the island. He came over as an observer, in a torpedo boat

bomber operating out of a carrier. From early dawn to dusk he hovered over Saipan (except only for a midday return to the carrier for refueling), watching the island, studying it.

It was "a nicely laid-out island," he found, "with sugar cane fields of different shades of green. Very pretty." But beautiful nature was not what he was looking for. Gun emplacements along the coast interested him more, and big coastal guns (which the Japs had captured from the British at Singapore) ready for an invader. And farther inland other artillery positions, formations of tanks, troop bivouacs.

These he noted in detail that day, and again the following day. Then D-Day came and again he was up there, watching our off-shore artillery, reporting back what hits were accurate, which were short or long. And watching in particular the attack on Aslito Airstrip.

The ack-ack was thick over Saipan, and each time it was in a bomber riddled with ack-ack holes that he came back to the carrier.

On D-Day, Wollman was returning from an observation flight over Aslito Airstrip. The ack-ack seemed thinner, he thought—when out of the sky somewhere above the shore line a Zero appeared. The Jap drove at the observation plane, left it laced with bullet holes. The plane began to lose altitude.

The pilot fought with the crippled controls to keep from falling into the sea. The more he fought the more the plane went down.

Five hundred feet above ground, it burst into flames—then crashed on an ammunition dump. The pilot was killed instantly. Wollman lost consciousness. When he came to, he

was in an emergency hospital on a landing craft. Both his legs were broken.

Aslito Airstrip, however, was taken. Aslito, from which soon the B-29's set out on their devastating fire-bomb devastation attacks on the homeland of Japan . . .

Among the Saipan population, some 20,000 simple Pacific islanders who had seen no white man in 25 years and had heard of Americans only what the Japanese wanted them to hear—among these, the Marines who landed came across the solemn belief that before a youth could join the U. S. Marines he must prove that he had killed at least one of his parents, preferably with his bare hands.

The Saipan Islanders, according to Lieutenant Wollman, soon learned that it wasn't so. And even the Japanese now know there was some other and better reason why the Marines fought as they did.

Kavieng on New Ireland was a big staging area for the Japs, the base from which they kept Rabaul and the Admiralty Islands supplied. Before MacArthur's men could move in to take over the Admiralties, Kavieng had to be neutralized, or knocked out.

That was a job for the air, in particular the 5th Air Force. On an early morning in the middle of February, 1944, the fliers and the gunners and bombardiers were briefed about the job ahead. The target, 20 miles as the plane flies from Rabaul, was a Jap pivot point and strategic center and a natural harbor all in one.

There was a boy from the Bronx among the people at the

early morning briefing, a technical sergeant named Robert Blumstein, and his job was to ride in a B-25 as the waist gunner and the radio operator. Like the others he knew, as he trotted to the plane, that things were going to be rough that day.

There were B-24's on that mission, heavier bombers that fly high, and also the B-25's, lithe and fast and easier to maneuver. And in a B-25 it is feasible to drop to tree-top level, about 50 feet above ground, and from that height a waist gunner can let his gun go at an enemy port or town or dock.

The flak was coming thick and fast as the planes flew over Kavieng. The B-24's flew high and dropped their bombs and turned back. The B-25's followed, and Blumstein's squadron was the last in. Its job was to knock out the ack-ack guns and anything else that the heavy bombers had left.

They came in fast, faster than a bat out of hell, and low, and, flying in the C.O.'s ship, Sergeant Blumstein caught sight of Japs on the ground, sending 20- and 40-millimeter slugs up at the fliers, saw light and heavy machine guns in action.

But the 24's had done their job and the place was a roaring ocean of flames, out of which great rolling cylinders of black smoke rose. Between the smoke the red flames leaped up and licked the plane as it shot past. Down went the plane almost touching the earth, dropped its half dozen 500-pounders to make the destruction complete. Through it all, Sergeant Blumstein worked his guns without letup, pouring 3,000 rounds where they would do the enemy below least good.

The action took only a minute and a half, he recalled, "but it feels like a lifetime when you are in the midst of it." Two

hours later, half way back to the home base, Sergeant Blumstein could still see the fires of Kavieng.

That was Blumstein's 35th air mission, and he went through 65 in all, hitting various points on New Guinea, Wewak, Rabaul, Cape Gloucester, Hollandia, Saidor, Biak, Iatope. After the 65th mission, which was the longest and the worst, they sent him home with the Air Medal and two Oakleaf Clusters, the Bronze Star, two Presidential citations, and a Purple Heart.

But in the Bronx Sergeant Blumstein explained that it was no particular heroism. "I was just lucky," he said.

Truk became, during the war years, a half-mythical symbol of the mysterious power of Japan in the Pacific. There, in a circle of sandy atolls surrounded by a thousand miles of uninterrupted ocean on every side, the Jap, they said, had hidden his navy. There he packed, to protect his navy, a vast concentration of other power, by air and on the ground, and there he sat brooding behind his ocean frontiers and behind his piled-up guns, nursing his navy for whatever black purpose he might plan.

It was more than others the Jap's Forbidden Base, which it was death to enter.

It was 2,000 miles, non-stop, to Truk and return when the raiding flight set out. Too far, thought First Lieutenant Sidney Simon of Richmond Hill, New York, for fighter planes to come along. Whatever the bombers ran into, they would have to fight off alone.

Sitting at his navigator's chart, near the nose of his plane,

he noted right away that the weather was bad. The cloud masses piled up and got worse. For five hours, they flew steadily in a sea of heaving, turbulent fog. At last, somewhere near the target, there was a break in the clouds—and then came the bad news.

Instead of the air armada that set out for Truk, only ten planes had come this far. The others either were lost or developed engine trouble, or turned back. What to do? The ten lone planes did their best. They dropped their visiting cards —and headed for home.

Over the target there wasn't much trouble, but now the Jap's power was really let loose, suddenly and with nothing omitted. From every side Zeros swooped down on them, with light and heavy machine guns blasting away. Lieutenant Simon, standing between the pilot and co-pilot, giving warning of arriving Zeros to the gunners over the interphone, heard the bullets whizzing past his ears, over his head, wondered how he remained alive. Flying glass cut the pilots' faces, but no one in the fore part of the plane was hit.

Things like that were happening, Simon thought, in the other bombers, and all ten were flying close together now, for warmth, as it were, and for protection, flying like one huge plane of ten parts. It gave a man a feeling of weird unreality —and of comfort, too.

Then something happened—fast. The plane's control system was shot out, and only the automatic controls remained. The pilot and co-pilot worked on them but with not too much effect. When next the navigator looked up, the other nine planes were gone "and we were alone."

"That is a pretty lonesome feeling to have, up there in a Jap sky," Lieutenant Simon reflected.

Now the shooting got worse. The Zeros closed in, determined to finish the wounded bomber. A waist gunner came up front asking for first aid—he had been hit in the head, the neck and the cheek by flying shell fragments. It happened, said the gunner, while he was fighting off four Zeros. He grinned despite his cuts, for he had knocked three of the Zeros out of the sky, and probably also the fourth.

Simon bandaged him up, said "you sit here, I'll take the gun." But the injured gunner pushed him out of the way and was presently at his waist gunner's station again, talking to the approaching Zeros, arguing with them, pleading with them to "come and get it," coaxing and cajoling them to venture into his line of fire and die.

In the tail of the plane two other men had leg wounds, and Simon bound them up. Then he went back to the pilot, who now had a problem. He had dived the bomber into a cloud ten thousand feet below to shake off the Zeros—and they never showed up again. But where did we go from here?

Pilot and navigator took stock of their situation, and it wasn't good. Controls shot out, one engine hit and leaking gas fast, a gas leak in the bomb bay, the radio gone, the plane riddled with holes—and a thousand water miles to home.

The only chance to survive, they decided, was to take to the water and the lighter the plane the farther it would fly before going down—and the longer it would stay afloat when downed. They ditched everything that would come loose. For four and a half hours they kept on flying, marveling each

moment that they were still in the air.

The navigator calculated, at last, that they were near a certain tiny island—but it was nowhere in sight. Now they were coming down. Simon took a last look out of a window—and in that instant saw the island. The plane came down, gentle as a feather. The pilot fractured an ankle, but no one else was hurt.

It seemed not too bad. The men got into three rubber rafts, which they tied together. They took rations on board and water enough for a month. They anchored for the night.

But it wasn't a calm night. For sharks appeared in the water, pushing their snouts at the frail rubber boats, harassed them and chased them. All night long the airmen fought off the sharks with their oars.

At dawn, they were picked up by a destroyer.

George F. Shapiro was an infantry soldier in that other, earlier World War. He was still a boy when he got out. Between then and the coming of World War II, he achieved, among other things, a fine record as an athlete. At City College of New York (his home city), he won his varsity letter in football, polo, track, swimming and wrestling. He played pro football, after graduation, on the Flatbush Giants.

In a world at war again, they offered him a commission in the Navy—as an athletic instructor. He held out for combat officer, but they said, politely, no—he was 43. He turned down the commission and enlisted in the Navy instead. This being a war against the Nazis, he said, he wanted to be in it and "I wanted to see some action."

That's how it happened that he became Electrician's Mate Second Class George F. Shapiro. He was in the crew of the carrier Franklin when she stood up against a terrific beating from Jap air bombs in the Pacific. She came back to port, crippled, limping—with more than 800 men lost—but on her own steam.

Shapiro was on watch in the ship's electric repair shop, when the bombs struck, one and then another. He worked his way forward, somehow, to the wardroom. The bulkheads had closed automatically. Smoke was filtering into the room, in which two hundred men were waiting. They sat or stood around as the smoke grew thicker, and some prayed silently and some wondered, trying to drive the thought from their minds, if they were not hopelessly trapped. Then a lieutenant appeared, a Lieutenant Gary, and took the men out, ten at a time, in a breather escalator through the air uptakes.

Shapiro, with the others, thus made his way up to the flight deck, which was on fire. Flames billowed and rolled over the deck, and groups of men trapped by oncoming fire leaped into the oil-covered sea.

Many were picked up by destroyers, but not all. Far from all. Shapiro joined a fire fighter group, and when the transport Santa Fe drew alongside, braving fire and possible explosions, he was one of those who helped tie her to the Franklin's side. A gangplank was laid from deck to deck and orders were given the men to get off their ship. Shapiro was one of those who stayed. Who chose to stay.

He was still on board when the staggering Franklin got into New York Harbor. Every Friday night, on board the Franklin,

they used to hold Sabbath-eve services, and because there was no Jewish chaplain on board, Electrician's Mate Second Class Shapiro usually presided. Fifteen men or more used to assemble there, a good percentage out of some 40 or 50 Jewish boys in the crew. Most impressive ever, however, was the service they held on the first Friday night after the bombing.

Only six men were there, four short of a minyan. Some who used to attend had been taken off. Some were dead and some were missing. But the six who remained held their service, all the way through, from beginning to end. Not in the ship's library, which was a shambles, but on the damaged, beaten and burned flight deck, which was also a shambles.

There was something about that service, the six men felt, which was like the Franklin herself, returning defiantly across the Pacific though licking her wounds. There was sorrow among the six. And there was also great pride.

On his first combat flight, Lieutenant (junior grade) Alvin E. Levenson ran into trouble. It happened during the Saipan campaign. Levenson was a Navy flier, pilot of a fast Helldiver torpedo bomber. His squadron was dive bombing a small island North of Saipan, and Levenson took his turn, dived at the blinding speed which the Helldivers attain in the downward plunge—at the exactly calculated instant released his bombs, pulled out of the dive, started to climb. Then he crashed into another Helldiver in the air.

Both planes broke up and for an instant Levenson was knocked unconscious. When he came out of the daze, he was falling, spinning as he fell, like a top. He didn't know

how far he had fallen already, but it couldn't be very far, for he had crashed at only 1200 feet. He reached out, automatically, for the ripcord of the parachute and pulled, without waiting to count ten.

It didn't respond. He yanked at the ripcord again and waited—but no result. The parachute didn't open, the silk umbrella that lay folded and packed on his back, which might spell the difference between life and death, remained closed.

In frantic desperation, he tugged and tore at the obstinate ripcord until finally he tore it off the packed parachute. The parachute silk broke out and flapped around him like a fluttering silk banner. But it didn't open. As he fell, pieces of the exploding planes dropped past him into the sea.

It doesn't take long to fall 1200 feet. But in that short time Levenson thought swiftly—about his wife—about the three-year-old son at home, whom he had never seen and whom he would now never see. About the pilot in the other plane. The sea, that was coming up toward him fast, was rough. Suddenly he hit the water, in a sitting position.

He hit the top of a high wave and coasted down. The flapping parachute, though it didn't open, evidently had slowed up the fall, broken the force of the impact against the water. Levenson dived and, even before coming up to the surface, began ripping off the parachute harness. When he had struggled to the surface he was surprised to find himself still alive.

His troubles were not yet over. The Mae West (life saving belt) inflated only part way, though enough to keep him afloat. Then he had bird trouble. Sea hawks swooped down

on him, again and again, and one of them lunged at his eye. Levenson drew out his ditching knife, slashed at the birds, screamed at them to go away. They circled around him and around, calm, confident, waiting for him to die.

Levenson made up his mind he wouldn't die. After three hours, a patrol boat picked him up. He had burns, lacerations, severed leg tendons and an injured arm, and they put him in a hospital.

The day the doctors discharged him, he remembered that when a horse throws you, the way to overcome both the horse and your own fear of it is to get right back in the saddle. He asked for an assignment to a carrier again.

On his next combat flight he hit and probably sank a medium sized freighter.

On Bougainville Island, in the battle for Hill 260, Private First Class Leonard J. Gordon of Waukegan, Illinois, was very thoughtful about the defending Japs. There was an obscure trail the Japs were using, half obliterated by jungle growth, and Gordon was ordered to cover it. Near the top of the hill, hidden by underbrush, he set up his machine gun. With an assistant gunner, he thoughtfully watched the trail, and the Japs who tried to use it that afternoon didn't succeed. By sundown twelve Jap bodies had piled up.

Long before sundown, Jap snipers had learned of the American machine gunner in the vicinity and bullets persistently pinged around him. Under cover of darkness Gordon pulled out his machine gun, leaving the snipers to keep on taking their pot shots all night. Now he set up his machine

gun, still overlooking the trail, some distance away. Here both gunners remained on wakeful guard all night.

Just before dawn a couple of Japs came skulking along. Gordon tossed a pair of hand grenades in their midst, ending their careers. At daylight, when the company's advance was resumed, Gordon disposed of two Jap machine gun nests, with six dead.

A stray bullet now damaged the machine gun. Gordon and his assistant crawled back, over terrain under heavy fire, in search of other weapons, found rifles and returned with them. Gordon killed two more Japs before he himself was wounded and carried out of action. His total was 22 Japs dead and many others wounded. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for heroic action and the "exceptional courage and aggressiveness" with which he fought.

Marine Major Irving Schecter, 27, of Smithtown Branch, New York, landed on Tinian Island with his rifle company of Marines, took over a narrow beach section between cliffs and coral boulders. Theirs was the left flank of the entire landing force and it had to be held.

The Japs' counter-attack did not come until the next day, and by that time the men were dug in, prepared for a vicious defensive fight. It came. The Japs poured down on the little beachhead with rifles, machine guns, grenades, threatening to overrun the Marines by sheer weight of numbers.

Not more than 60 Marine riflemen were on the firing line at a time, but they weren't overrun. They held their ground, Major Schecter moving constantly among them, until another

unit of 1,000 arrived to relieve them.

More than 400 enemy dead lay in front of the defensive position then, and the Japs' counter-attack was broken. Huge quantities of enemy weapons including mortars were captured.

Major Schecter was awarded the Navy Cross for his part in this action. The accompanying citation declared: "By his heroic action Major Schecter was responsible for eliminating a serious threat to the success of the entire operation and contributed greatly to making further organized resistance by the enemy virtually impossible."

The Japs used unorthodox battle techniques, and you had to devise appropriate counter measures. On Biak Island, North of New Guinea, the problem was caves. Here as on other islands later, including the Japanese home islands, the enemy had prepared extensive caves networks in which they hid troops with arms and supplies, for a bitter-end defense. On Biak the cave fighters had resisted for several days and might continue to do so indefinitely.

To Colonel Harold Riegelman, 52-year-old New York lawyer, former assistant state attorney general and a veteran of World War I, was assigned the job of finding an answer. He led advanced Infantry elements which, under his direction, enveloped and eliminated the cave fighters. Demolition charges of various types were exploded at the cave entrances, and Colonel Riegelman made a close personal inspection of the effects of each as well as of the Japs' type of defense. His subsequent report, with detailed sketches, on what he found formed the basis of later operations on Okinawa and elsewhere in cave country where

the Japs chose to go underground. He was awarded a Bronze Star.

Odd things happened in the drive across the Pacific, more than perhaps in any other campaign or theater of the war. Odd and quaint as you read about them now, but they had their serious part in winning the war. For example:

Sergeant Jacob Blackoff of Brooklyn was directing a detail of GI engineers on the small island of Loe Roi in the Southwest Pacific, on which U. S. troops had just landed. The Japs had made it an ammunition dump and naval base. Opposition was slight at the landing, but more trouble was to be expected. Somewhere in the interior, no doubt, the Japs had assembled and were preparing for the counter-attack.

But there was no counter-attack. Instead the Jap major in command, wearing a dark blue uniform with a long jewel-studded sword swinging from his belt, approached the American command tent and inquired—Blackoff was standing nearby —"Is there a Harvard man among your officers?"

He spoke in flawless English, with what might be called a Harvard accent, explained that he was himself a Harvard graduate and added, "We won't be able to hold out. We wish to give up."

A Harvard-educated officer or one just as good accepted the surrender.

Sergeant Blackoff went through the entire New Guinea campaign and helped build roads and airfields along the tough route from Port Moresby over the jungle mountains and on to Bougainville. He was wounded in the process, but he also learned to detect Jap tricks—fast. Thus on one small island,

which the Japs had abandoned, our men discovered a Jap post exchange, well stocked with food, wrist watches, even bicycles.

The GI engineers, seeing all that from the outside, nevertheless hesitated. They were suspicious. It was too good to be true. Working carefully, they tied a long wire to the post exchange door, got a few hundred yards away and pulled.

When the door was half opened, the tempting post exchange was blown sky high. The too clever Japs had planted half a ton of dynamite under their cache of bicycles and wrist watches. Blackoff was wounded later, when a shrapnel fragment caught him while at work on building an Infantry bridge in Dutch New Guinea...

Jack Richburg of Houston, Texas, Navy photographer second class, took combat and other pictures on the ground and from the air all over the Pacific. Twice, while pointing his camera in the open nose of a plane, he lost his balance when the plane swerved and went hurtling into empty space. The safety belt held and they pulled him in.

"It's a curious sensation dangling in the air and clutching at nothingness," he reported. Still more curious was Richburg's experience in the New Hebrides, where he photographed the inauguration ceremonies of a new island king. The monarch, pleased with the pictures, rewarded Richburg with a double strand of shells and announced, "I will take you in as a son."

Thus Photographer Second Class Richburg became, in a way, a Prince of the Hebrides.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

PHILIPPINES TO OKINAWA

AFTER THE year-long drive across the open Pacific, came the leap to the Philippines.

This was as ominous a warning to the Japanese branch of the Axis as invasion of Normandy was to the Nazis.

For the Philippines, once we took and held them, must become a great springboard from which to jump-off to Japan itself, a mighty staging area for invasion of Nippon's home islands.

The Japanese knew it. But, as in Normandy, we outguessed the waiting enemy, made the first landing where we weren't expected, struck at the dismal central island of Leyte rather than Manila in Luzon or farther South on Mindanao.

The Jap high command very soon reacted violently to what they saw was a life-and-death struggle.

Japanese land forces assembled in the hills of Leyte to put up their bitterest defense since Guadalcanal. And by sea, what remained of the Jap navy, in hiding since the disastrous drive

against Midway, came out to give battle.

The Jap warships came down from the North in two divisions, no doubt conceived as a sort of naval pincers against the American fleets supporting the MacArthur landings—and both divisions were wiped out. The Battle of the Philippines Sea lasted three days, and when it was over Japan had no navy either in action or "in being." Most of her warships were sunk, the rest badly crippled. Only the Tokyo radio announced—once—a great Japanese victory.

It took longer to finish the land battle of Leyte and longer still to repossess the rest of the Philippines, including the metropolis, Manila. The Leyte campaign was followed by landings in Lingayen Gulf, on Northern Luzon, and by long-drawn, vicious fighting in the Luzon hills and in and around Manila. That city, once the "Pearl of the Pacific," became a city of rubble and wreckage, of buildings bombed and battered by artillery, of shattered walls and walls half broken and teetering fantastically at impossible angles. Organized opposition did not die down until the Spring of 1945.

The Philippines campaign was not yet completed, when we took over the tiny stepping-stone island of Iwo—Iwo Jima—in a fierce and bloody battle, and followed through with the more extended campaign of Okinawa. With the Philippines, Iwo and Okinawa ours, we were set for the big showdown—invasion, either of the China Coast or Japan proper. (It would have been Japan, but a couple of atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought Japanese surrender instead.)

In the sea battle off the Philippines, Commander Leon S.

Kintberger of Bay Ridge, Maryland, commanded a destroyer. A destroyer which tangled with "a large task force" of the Japanese Fleet. It happened around Samar Island. The Japs were superior in number of ships, in firepower, in armor, but not in resourcefulness. As they fired and fired, Commander Kintberger maneuvered his ship close up to a couple of the enemy's heavy warships, and at a distance of 4,000 yards sent torpedoes into their sides.

Two heavy cruisers were still firing at him, and again the destroyer crept close up to them, put the surface guns into action at short, effective range, helped to put them out of action. Commander Kintberger, 35, won a Navy Cross for that day's doings, and the citation with the award points out the importance of what he did.

"By his actions," the citation declares, "he diverted enemy fire to himself from the lightly armed carriers he was protecting" . . . giving "inspiration to his officers and men during a most critical situation." Wounded in the action, he was also awarded the Purple Heart.

An LSM—landing ship medium—was discharging cargo on the shores of Leyte. The operation was complicated. Suitable docks were lacking, and artillery and mortar shells came lobbing over from Japanese guns inland. On board, helping direct the unloading under difficulties, was Lieutenant (junior grade) Donald Samuel Brody, 25, of Indiana, Pennsylvania. One shell made a direct hit on the ship, exploded on deck. Several men were killed. The commanding officer was badly injured.

Lieutenant Brody, next in rank, took command, maneuvered

the ship out of danger, got the wounded crew members off to a hospital ship and, said a citation, "expeditiously resumed the successful performance of the mission assigned, in the face of continued enemy fire." He was promoted on the spot to full lieutenant and was awarded the Silver Star.

Private Robert Hirsch of Chicago fought the Leyte campaign carrying a rifle and also a pencil and sketch pad. He was the foxhole artist of the 96th Infantry Division. As the combat troops moved up, fast on the heels of the retreating Japs, he moved with them. His job: to make sketches of the fluid, moving front at Ormoc.

It was probably the first time in the long history of Art that an artist did his work under so great a variety of conditions—all bad. Artist Robert Hirsch made his sketches in foxholes half full of water, in knee-deep mud, in tropical rain, in damp clinging weather with temperatures over 100, in the midst of actual fighting when the Jap mortar shells were bursting all around. At such a time, he sketched with one hand—leaving the other free for handling a rifle.

Once, while his platoon was advancing on Ormoc, the night's silence was suddenly broken by a terrific outburst of yells, shouts, noise of every sort, and some 400 Japs came pouring out of an ambush hiding place. Hirsch reached under the flap of his jungle pack for his sketch pad—here was his big chance to sketch a banzai attack from life.

He never made that sketch, for before he could touch pencil to paper a roving bullet caught him in the shoulder, knocked him out.... Somehow the platoon worked its way out of that predicament, and Hirsch, with other wounded, was hurried to

the rear for hospital treatment. He won his Purple Heart but he'd rather have had that "Banzai Attack" picture, from life.

We won in the long run but that does not mean that every action was a victory. We had defeats, too, before the victories. Thus there was the fire fight in the mountains of Capul. High on a hillside the platoon of Private First Class Leo Winicour of Chicago was advancing slowly—when suddenly the advance was stopped and even to remain in place was to invite suicide.

A Jap machine gun was pouring murderous fire on the platoon flank. The platoon leader—Winicour was at his side when it happened—gave the order to fall back.

Down the hill the men started, and after a while Winicour looked around, could not see the platoon leader anywhere. He realized that the platoon leader must have been badly wounded and left behind.

Back up the hill Winicour went despite heavy fire, found the platoon leader, carried him back 1500 yards to where other willing hands took charge, gave him necessary medical treatment.

The "courage and fortitude" he displayed, said the Silver Star citation Private First Class Winicour won for his deed, "saved the life of the platoon leader."

It was like that among the hills of Mindanao, where the Japs never put up a full-scale defense, but constantly harassed us as they withdrew and withdrew. For fifteen days Captain Stanley Grossman of Long Island City, New York, and his men cleaned out the lurking nests of armed Japs, destroyed their equipment, laboriously carried into the hills by unwilling Filipinos at pistol

point. It was an exhausting push, in the course of which two out of every three infantrymen fell by the wayside, victims of fatigue, dysentery, wounds.

At the end of one such day of mopping-up along ridges and streams, Captain Grossman and a dozen men with him halted for a rest beside a mountain creek. From the mouth of a cave across the stream, a 37-millimeter gun began to talk—firing point-blank. The men jumped, fast, out of the gun's range. Once safe behind a protective hill, they sprawled out on the ground. Then the captain stood up before his men and announced:

"I'm going to pay a little—ah—social call. Who's going with me?"

Out of the 12 dog-tired men, 12 stood up, prepared to go. They worked their way down-stream and across to the opposite bank. They headed for a patch of woods. Two men covered the captain, who led the way, and the rest covered the two. By a roundabout route he came to a point not more than ten yards from the mouth of the cave.

While the men held their weapons, ready to fire at the mouth of the cave, Grossman tossed a live grenade into it. They waited a reasonable period after the explosion and looked in. The Jap gun was smashed and the gunners were dead.

After that, the captain and his men took a short rest before continuing the advance.

Corporal William Friedman of Brooklyn—a Barbey Street neighbor of Sergeant Irving Strobing who radioed the last message to the world as Corregidor fell to the Japs in 1942—

was a cannon company gunner. On Luzon Island he fought with a mobile tank destroyer, a 105 howitzer mounted on its own tank.

At Lupao on Luzon, the tank destroyer took on a small flock of Jap tanks, with a 47-millimeter anti-tank gun in their midst. Friedman's gun knocked out the 47, got probable hits on two of the tanks—and then things turned bad. From an open rice paddy the gunners were trying to locate a hidden target in a wooded knoll, when a Jap shell came lobbing over, made a direct hit in the driver's compartment, less than a foot from where Friedman stood. Two men were slightly injured, Friedman escaped unhurt.

Telling about it months later, Friedman said:

"Let me tell you. I was brought up in a very Orthodox family, but I was never really religious while at home. But—ever since I've been overseas, through campaigns and through rest periods, in training and in action, there hasn't been one single day that I've missed my prayers."

Corporal Friedman was 25 when he said that, and he had been continuously overseas 2½ years.

For wounds received and for heroism in action in the South Pacific, chiefly on Luzon, 24-year-old Lieutenant Melvin Garten of Brooklyn accumulated the following decorations: Silver Star, Bronze Star, Air Medal, Presidential Citation, Purple Heart with three Oakleaf Clusters.

Twice Lieutenant Garten wiped out a Jap machine gun nest single-handed. Again, when his company was halted by heavy enemy fire and a machine gunner was killed and his assistant

wounded, Garten took over operation of the gun at the same time that he directed defense of the area against repeated Jap counter-attacks. When a withdrawal had to be made, he remained long after the others, kept on firing to keep the enemy from starting too soon in pursuit. Men like that win their Purple Heart again and again.

Fort Drum is the island fortress that guards Manila Harbor, outside Corregidor. It isn't a fort of the usual kind but the replica of a battleship, built of concrete and steel. It stands up high above the surrounding water so that the ramp of a landing craft would not reach its "deck." After Corregidor was ours again, the Japs on Fort Drum held out.

A platoon of picked men, including Sergeant Louis Gross of Washington, finally took the fort, with the help of specially-constructed ramps and a tower, a kind of modern Trojan horse. It was done only after special preparation and special training. Working from aerial photos, officers laid out a life-size design of the Fort Drum "deck" on Corregidor's old parade ground. Every air vent, every gun emplacement, every opening of every kind, was clearly marked.

On this life-size "map" the men trained for the coming Battle of Fort Drum. Each member of the platoon thus learned what opening he had to cover, where he must stand, what he had to do. On the chosen night, they pulled alongside the fort in a weird-looking landing craft. From a tall tower on the craft, a ramp was lowered swiftly to the "deck."

Somewhere on or in the complicated fort, desperate Japs were waiting, but they got no chance to do any mischief. In a matter

of 30 seconds, every possible opening at which they might appear was under the muzzle of a tommygun, automatic rifle or Garand. Sergeant Gross leaped over the ramp to the fort, followed by ten men, each carrying 60 pounds of TNT.

Meanwhile a mixture of oil and gasoline was being pumped down an airshaft from the landing ship. The boxes of TNT, each with time fuse, were lowered into the vent, the gasoline and oil acting as a cushion to prevent premature explosion.

Back the men raced to the landing ship, which pulled away. Presently the explosions came. Smoke and flames rose high in the sky as the powder magazine went off.

The men returned to the wrecked fort the next day. They met no opposition. Deep down in the bowels of the fort were the charred remains of the Jap garrison....

When I met Major Edwin A. Bernstein of Washington on Northern Luzon, he was intelligence officer of the 25th Infantry Division. He had entered the Army back in May, 1942, as an enlisted man, and had seen long service overseas, including service as platoon leader in the bitter fighting on Guadalcanal. But he didn't want to talk about that. He said:

"The only thing worth writing about me is this: That in the United States it is still possible for a Jewish boy to be drafted in the Army and to become a major and a regimental staff officer. Without prejudice and without discrimination. That is something real in a world which came within an ace of being overwhelmed by the anti-Semitic enemy. It is one justification of the drive of our Jewish parents to have their children well educated despite all hardships."

Sergeant Harold A. Weinberger, photographer, had an easy assignment on Iwo Jima. When he landed with his outfit of the 4th Marine Division, all he had to do was take interesting pictures. He was grinding away at his newsreel camera as his landing craft hit the Iwo beach, and was still doing it when a couple of Jap shell fragments, not knowing that he was shooting only pictures, slammed him in the groin and elbow. After a while, the cobwebs in his brain cleared and the bells stopped ringing in his ears—and he realized that (1) he had become a casualty because he forgot to duck in time, (2) the camera was still grinding away.

On that day on Iwo and for many days before and after, there was no safety for any one.

From a hospital cot Sergeant Weinberger wrote home:

"Now I know what Hell is like. We were bracketed by artillery, mortar and rocket fire from the cliffs. The Japs' artillery fire was deadly in its accuracy. It didn't matter where a shell fell, the beach was so densely populated that any missile was bound to cause a half dozen casualties or more. Not one of these men (the Marines) underestimated the enemy and not one did not know his statistical expectancy of life. Too many of these men became statistics. Friends of mine—husbands, brothers and sons—now lie in the loose gravel and sand of Iwo ... So forgive us, please, if in the years to come we sometimes grow morose and pensive as we speak of Iwo."

Once the little stepping stone island of Iwo was ours, it was turned into a base for further attacks, on Okinawa and the main Japanese islands. It was then thousands of men on Iwo

watched a weird battle in the skies between a U. S. Black Widow night fighter plane and a pilotless Superfortress bomber, or B-29.

Lieutenant Arvid Shulenberger of Mitchell, South Dakota, piloting the Black Widow, was on a routine patrol flight miles out to sea when he caught sight of the obviously crippled B-29, lumberingly trying to get back to its base. An enemy anti-aircraft shell had cut a three-foot gash in the pilot's compartment, killed the pilot, slammed the bomb bay doors shut with the bombs still inside. The rest of the bomber formation went on to the target and then back home, the wounded B-29 had to make its way back alone. Lieutenant Shulenberger fell in ahead of the bomber, to lead it to its base.

Nearing Iwo, he saw that the bomber's crew members were preparing to bail out—and he understood why. If the B-29 landed, with bombs irregularly jammed up in her belly, the bomb load might explode, causing widespread havoc on the ground. To avoid that, the co-pilot set the automatic controls and, following the rest of his crew, jumped.

The crewless Superfortress, with only the automatic "pilot" in control, continued out to sea. Shulenberger followed, opening up on the derelict, as soon as it was safe, with all eight guns. There was no return fire, but otherwise this battle with the ghost of a great bomber was hardly one-sided. One burst of fire from the fighter plane went into the bomber's left engine, which broke out in smoke and flame. But the bomber continued to fly. With the left engine gone, it circled left, swung into a new route, back toward Iwo.

Now Shulenberger and Lieutenant Arthur Shepherd, with

him on the Black Widow, held their fire, fearful of forcing the flying wreck down on the island—exactly what they were trying to prevent. Over the open sea again, they opened up once more with all guns at full blast. Nothing seemed to have any effect. The fugitive bomber went on, swung slowly left again as if deliberately determined to get back to the Iwo base.

It seemed, said Shulenberger later, as if the ghostly bomber was going to keep on flying forever.

But suddenly, the plane dived and plunged into the sea.

On the fourth day of the Okinawa campaign, Steven S. Ditzian, of the Bronx, Army photographer, decided that the best place from which to take combat pictures was in front of the American firing lines—pictures showing faces of men advancing to the attack. He was taking pictures like that when a couple of bullets intended for rifle-bearing GIs caught him in the leg and he crumpled to the ground.

In a daze, he pulled up the uniform trouser leg to examine the damage. On the left side of the upper leg, blood was gushing in a stream from one wound, and there was a second bullet wound on the right side, just below the knee. Sitting on the firing line, with a heavy barrage from U. S. tanks passing over his head in one direction and the enemy's return fire whizzing by in the other, he got out his medical kit, tied a tight bandage around the leg above the wounds to stop the bleeding, swallowed a couple of sulfa pills and decided he was OK. He then recovered his battered camera, cleaned off the lens and resumed taking action pictures.

After a while a U. S. tank came by and the commander

invited him aboard. "But," he warned, "don't try to get in through the turret. Too many Japs around, and they're liable to knock you off." Pushing his camera ahead of him, Ditzian crawled under the tank, was pulled up through the escape hatch. Later they transferred him to an ambulance jeep which took him to a battalion aid station. Ditzian turned over his pack of films to another combat correspondent—and collapsed in a dead faint.

On the flats of Okinawa in late August of 1945, I learned about Leo Rosskam. Among the GIs waiting to cross over to Japan, tough oldtimers who knew him in person and the latest replacements, he was a legend and a name to swear by. There were other good soldiers, who had done heroic things. But for the men of the 27th Division, the men of his regiment, the 106th, and his Company, Company B, there was something special and particular about Leo. Months after he had left them, going into a hospital, they talked about him.

Rosskam came into the Army from Brooklyn. He was not a citizen then. Born in Germany of Jewish parents, he had had a full opportunity to assess Hitler's "new order" in Europe and find it loathsome. He had been a prisoner in Buchenwald, charged with the crime of being a Jew, and got out, one of the few to get out alive.

The stories were that he would never talk about those days in the Hitler concentration camp and also that he escaped by the trick of impersonating a corpse destined for the annihilation ovens. When a careless guard looked the other way, he rolled out of the wooden box that was his coffin, lay in the grass all

day, crawled off at night, somehow worked his way out of the camp and out of the Reich.

He escaped, but his father was killed by the Nazis. What happened to his mother he didn't—and still doesn't—know. He was one of the first refugees to get into an American uniform.

In the army they made him a corporal and a medical aide. And soon, as the division went into action, this is what happened. During the bitter fighting on Eniwetok in the Marshall Islands and again in the long, bloody action on Okinawa, when a man was knocked out by bullet or shell splinter, the first word that came to his lips was Rosskam's name. Above the chatter of machine guns and the evil growl of bursting hand grenades, on many a field of battle the cry rose from many a boy in mortal anguish: "Leo! Le-oooo!"

Leo, the boys said, always responded. He had, they said, a kind of reckless contempt for the Japanese enemy—and for death. He used to joke about that sometimes, and he laid at least one wager, of five dollars, that he would be killed before the war ended. He lost that wager—by a small fraction of an inch. The bullet that finally sent him home, with a wound in his throat clear through to the back of the neck, missed the jugular vein by that much.

Some of the stories the boys told were also in the official records. On a day in April, on Okinawa, the records say, elements of Company B came under obstinate fire from a gun position in a cave. One man was cut down just as he approached the cave's mouth and lay there, badly wounded and helpless, where rescue seemed impossible. For any man who tried it would also come into range of fire from the protected gun in

the cave. It couldn't be done.

Rosskam tried it. He crawled forward, with face in the dirt. When he could crawl no farther, because the bullets were chattering very close now out of the mouth of the Jap cave, he called for a flame thrower. The spurts of flaming gas shooting into the cave drove the Japs back. Rosskam reached his man, went to work swiftly and efficiently administering first aid.

When Rosskam was so engaged, they said nothing could distract him, not bursting shells nor gunfire, nor (for more than a moment) advancing Japs. Glancing up once, Rosskam saw two armed Japanese coming toward him out of the cave. The wounded man's rifle lay beside him. Rosskam picked it up, shot both Japs to death, then resumed "methodically" treating the wounded man's hurts. That done, he carried the man back to the lines.

The records say that Rosskam did the shooting in self defense, for only in self defense is a medic supposed to kill. But the boys of the regiment used to tell that the records were too squeamish. Self defense or no, they said, he hated armed Japs and killed them whenever he could, in between the business of keeping American soldiers alive.

The records say that a few days later, on April 24, the company was fighting on the edge of the village of Iso, on Southern Okinawa Shima. A Jap platoon infiltrated through the company lines, and there were wounded and Rosskam went to their aid. He was working over a seriously wounded sergeant when two Japs jumped out of a foxhole not many feet away and charged toward him, prepared for the kill. He snatched up the wounded sergeant's rifle, fired two shots and killed two

Japs. Again the records say that he did this in self defense. Again he resumed "methodically" treating his patient.

Leo Rosskam was finally himself wounded and evacuated. It happened during the fighting on April 28. That day the company was attacking a hill just West of the village of Najana. The regiment had a line established on one slope of the hill, but a couple of platoons had worked their way 400 yards beyond, to the forward slope, the one nearest the enemy. When the Japs opened up, spraying both slopes with heavy mortar and artillery fire, the two platoons were cut off, unable to advance or fall back to their main lines.

Rosskam was in the third platoon, back with the regimental line. But he knew there were casualties up front. Without waiting for orders—no one was being ordered to cross that shell-riddled 400 yards—he ran forward across the open field. Somehow he got through.

Just beyond the hilltop he found two wounded men, sheltered them with his body while he treated their wounds. As he worked there, two other men in the platoon, not far away, were hit. He went to their aid too. One of these, "a large man," was in serious trouble that required more attention than could be given on the spot. Rosskam picked him up, started to carry him back across the open field.

He was half way across when a machine gun bullet pierced his steel helmet, knocked him to the ground. Rosskam staggered to his feet in a daze, picked up his man again, bore him to the company aid station. Then he started once more across the blood-soaked 400 yards.

He was working over still another wounded soldier when a

bullet cut through Rosskam's neck, front to rear, missing the jugular vein by less than an inch. He nevertheless completed his first aid work on the wounded man, moved him into a dry ditch that provided some natural ground protection. Only then did he try to attend to his own wound.

Now something strange, in its way weird, happened. Swiftly word spread over the battlefield that Leo was hurt. And from men in holes in the ground and men hiding behind rocks and behind clods of earth—from all directions—the cry rose again, the familiar battlefield cry, "Leeee – ooooOOOO!" Only now it didn't end there. Added to the name was the urgent, anguished plea:

"Get back to the rear! Leo, get back to the rear!"

Leo heard but shook his head. He said, "No." He said, "This is my job. This is where I belong."

After a while, after about 20 minutes, a company lieutenant worked his way forward to where Rosskam rested.

"This is official, Corporal Rosskam," the lieutenant informed him. "You are to go back to the rear."

Rosskam said, "I can't do it, lieutenant." He said, "There are others here worse than I am. I've got to stay with them." He was bleeding profusely and dangerously.

"If you don't return, now," the lieutenant warned him, "I will bring charges against you for insubordination, for refusal to carry out orders. I will see that you are court martialed and thrown out of the army."

Only then Leo Rosskam went to the rear.

The records say that that night he saved the lives of "at least seven men."

He wasn't court-martialed. Instead, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. Awarded, says the citation, "for distinguishing himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty . . ." and for "extraordinary heroism."

It was late August, 1945, and in the chaplain's tent on Okinawa, on the edge of the East China Sea, we were talking about heroes, about soldiers who do heroic things, such men as hero stories could be written about. An incredibly lurid crimson sunset lit up the calm waters and the chaplain shook his head. About heroes, he said, he didn't know. There were so many—those who had died and those who were lucky and were cited and all those others who did their hero-stuff when nobody was watching and so they were never cited and never decorated. How to dramatize one man above the others—all heroes—that, Chaplain Milton Rosenbaum said, he didn't know how to do.

Then he remembered something.

"I'll tell you the sort of thing that strikes me as really heroic," he said. "It's a story about a soldier who, to his own thinking, was no soldier. It's the story of a boy named Leonard Rabiner, of Chicago, by trade a glass cutter. Maybe, the way you writers look at these things, this isn't a story at all. Maybe Leonard was no hero. But to me—"

Leonard Rabiner was 34 when he joined the 27th Division in Okinawa, at the height of the Okinawa fighting. He was a replacement, filling in along with other arrivals for men now listed as casualties. He had a wife and two children back in

Chicago. He had come up from New Caledonia, where things were quiet, and was dropped into an infantry company of tough, seasoned young fighters who had been through every type of jungle and amphibious action in the Pacific—and were still alive. In the current bitter fighting on Okinawa they knew how to take care of themselves.

Rabiner was far from that kind of soldier. He was five feet six in height, weighed 178 pounds and didn't look like a soldier. He wore thick-rimmed glasses without which he couldn't see in broad daylight. At night he couldn't see at all. He was subject to racking headaches and couldn't sleep. He had bad arches and couldn't walk. Except for the 13 weeks of basic, right after he was drafted, he had had no infantry training.

And so, in the curious pattern that sometimes develops in an army at war, they made him an infantryman. These were troubles enough, but he had others which brought him to the chaplain for help. His wife, Lillian, was worrying about him and sending him worrisome letters, and that made him worry too.

"You see, chaplain," he explained, "if I go out there and break my glasses, I am a dead man. All right, so I'm dead. Maybe I don't mind getting killed. But I have a wife and two children. What's going to happen to them?"

He showed the chaplain pictures of the family. They were nice children, Eileen and Jerry. They had a nice-looking mother. The chaplain wrote her, trying to quiet her fears. But Rabiner had something more on his mind.

The boys of his outfit—they, well, didn't like him, said

Rabiner. He was too old for them. He was a funny-looking soldier in their eyes. He was clumsy with a carbine. He was clumsy doing a lot of other soldier things. Couldn't the chaplain—and this was what he had come mainly to talk about —get him transferred somewhere, anywhere?

But the division was going into combat again and things like that couldn't be done. Rabiner wasn't transferred.

Then, unexpectedly, something else happened. For no reason at all, Rabiner was given a special job to do. They made him driver of a supply truck, carrying rations and ammunition to the boys in the line.

Rabiner's first reaction was that that was good. It was wonderful! He wouldn't have to walk. He threw himself into his new job with enthusiasm. The roads he had to drive over were bad, cutting through sniper-infested brush—and a truck makes a big moving target. But Rabiner drove on.

There was a point beyond which it was dangerous to go, and most drivers didn't. They told him, if you go there, you're looking for trouble. They told him, don't do it. Rabiner went. Where the road ended, he pushed through his truck, making his own road. He did it by daylight. He did it after dark.

"Every day," the chaplain recalled, "that boy was playing with the malach ha-movis, the Angel of Death."

To the fighting men in the foxholes, the chaplain explained, there is no hero like the man who brings up the supplies, the man who brings the hot chow every day, and the ammo. They know what it is to wait for the rations that don't come, because the supply truck driver is held up. Or to have to nurse the last few cartridges and the last grenade, for the same reason.

They know, too, what it is to push the supply truck through, day after day and without missing once, to the advanced front. They knew that Leonard Rabiner was pushing daily, to bring them their food and their supplies, over Suicide Road.

And suddenly, the chaplain said, all the lithe, tough young soldiers of the company who used to sneer at him talked about Rabiner as "the best damn soldier in the outfit!"

Eventually Rabiner was hit. A sniper got him in the leg, and they ordered him evacuated to a hospital in the rear.

Rabiner pleaded with the medic to let him stay. It was only in the leg, and the way he sat in the truck a little leg wound would make no difference. The doctor was firm, and Rabiner argued with him.

"They can't do it, sir," he argued. "I got to stay with the guys. You see, sir, the guys need me. If I go, who's going to bring up the supplies?"

"The battle is over and won," the chaplain said. "The war is won. Maybe heroes aren't important any more. But to my way of thinking, that boy was a real hero!"

The war was swiftly approaching its end, though few or none outside the Japanese high command had any inkling of that. On the liberated Philippines and on captured Okinawa, we had massed terrific power, land and sea and air power, for invasion of Japan. It would be a desperate and bloody business—and the war might drag on for months or years, on continental Asia, after that. It was then that the Navy in the South Pacific took the biggest single batch of Japanese prisoners since the war began.

It was done in an operation in which no one was killed and

no one injured, but it might have turned out otherwise. It happened when a couple of destroyers, patrolling among the Pacific islands, ran down the "hospital ship" Tacbipana Maru.

Hospital ships have the freedom of the seas, even in wartime—if they are really hospital ships. To qualify, they must carry no guns, no ammunition, no fighting men except the sick and wounded. The Tacbipana Maru sailed with all lights on at night and displayed huge Red Cross signs, but a 12-man detail went on board to check on what she carried.

While the destroyers stood by, their guns aimed at point-blank range, while small boats waited, loaded to the bursting-point with Marines armed to the hilt, the searching party clambered on board the "hospital ship." A lieutenant commander went up on the bridge, chatted politely with the Jap ship's officers. His voice carried, by walkie-talkie, to the decks of the waiting destroyers . . . where officers and men listened for the agreed-on password. "Mickey Finn" would mean "we have found guns."

The searching party, meanwhile, led by Navy Lieutenant Robert L. Kowetz of Roxbury, Massachusetts, surveyed below decks. As they searched, Kowetz talked by portable telephone to Commander Peterson up above. He chatted constantly, without a stop—the commander would know, as long as the talk went on, that nothing untoward had happened. For if the Japs at any point decided to fight, their first act would be to cut the telephone wires.

Kowetz and his men noted the Japs, packed tight on deck after deck—there were 1640 of them in all on a vessel designed to carry perhaps one third the number. He opened boxes and

crates marked with a Red Cross to indicate medical supplies—and in one of them he found mortar shells and machine gun ammunition. "Mickey Finn" he shouted into the portable telephone, and an instant later over the destroyers' loudspeakers came the words "Mickey Finn."

Kowetz and his men waited for the Japs' next move. If they decided not to be taken prisoners but to fight, there was no hope for them—but none for the lieutenant and his search party either. Should the Japs open fire, the destroyers would have no choice but instantly to sink her.

The next move came, however, not from the Japs but from the waiting boatloads of armed Marines. In a matter of seconds, they were up over the Jap ship's sides and had the situation under control. Not only ammunition but machine guns, rifles, swords, all sorts of fighting weapons were found on the "hospital ship", which had no hospital facilities and no wounded on board. The 1640 soldiers whom the Japs were thus trying to slip past the Navy blockade became 1640 meek prisoners of war.

CHAPTER TWELVE

CHINA-BURMA-INDIA

WHILE THE MAIN war raged in two parts—Europe and the Pacific—a side war also was fought out in what come to be called the CBI theater. This was the most extensive of all the war theaters, stretching over most of the great land mass of Asia below Siberia. It was also the oldest theater. Here, in China, World War II broke out with the Japs' "China Incident" of 1931. For the Chinese, 14 years of war ended with the Tokyo surrender of 1945.

It was mainly a Chinese-Jap show in CBI (China-Burma-India), although the British battled on the fringes, in Burma, and defended India, and in the last few days before the end the Russians struck with violent force from the North. But there were also Americans in this theater, and Jewish Americans. There were special troops with the British units and with the Chinese. And most of all the Americans made themselves felt by air.

Even before Pearl Harbor U. S. fliers did an astonishing job

of harassing the Japs as Chennault's "Flying Tigers" and they continued that work thereafter when officially brought into the U. S. Air Corps. When all supply roads to China were closed, by sea and land, other American fliers kept a road open through the sky. They played the part of "truck horses of the air," keeping the thin but very valuable trickle of supplies moving to China's beleaguered forces "over the hump."

In 1943, they sent Lieutenant Milton Miller of New Haven, Connecticut, to join the U. S. fliers in China. Leaving his bride of a few months in Tucson, Arizona, where he had trained, he flew by way of South America, the South Atlantic, Africa, Arabia, India, and then over "the roof of the world" —the Himalayas and Mount Everest, earth's highest mountain peak.

Miller was a bombardier. From the China base they sent him out on missions in Jap-held Indo-China. The first time an airfield was the target. He sprayed the field with fragmentation bombs. He watched the runways break out in a pattern of pock-marked craters, saw the hangars go up in flames. On the edge of the field there was an antiaircraft gun which kept firing and firing. From the air Miller caught sight of white puffs of smoke, and the ack-ack rose as if to welcome him to Indo-China. Miller the bombardier thought to himself, What a thing it would be for a man to line up that gun through his bombsight (as he was doing right then) and drop a bomb flush on the gun—a direct hit! and then he saw a direct hit land on the big gun and tear it apart.

On mission No. 2, also to Indo-China, the target was a string

of Jap warehouses, which went up in flames. But now a couple of Zeros started in hot pursuit, and one of them came so close that Miller could see the Jap pilot grinning at him, grinning as if in glee at the American's predicament—for Miller's gun had jammed and wouldn't fire.

"You don't feel much at a time like that," he recalled long afterward. "You feel like some one watching a movie—while at the same time you're on the screen."

Now the wings of Miller's B-24 caught fire and a third Zero came swooping down for the kill—but the tail gunner sent him spinning down to earth and the other two, maybe frightened by what happened to their pal, fell behind. Somehow the crippled Liberator eventually got back to her base.

Sometimes the fliers in CBI went on hunting trips to knock off enemy ships, and on one such mission Miller dropped half a dozen bombs on an island radio station, wiping it out, and then sent a supply ship to the bottom. There was a lot of flak in the area, little pink puffs and red flashes, very pretty to look at unless you happened to remember that there was flying steel there, too, which could easily turn into flying death.

Some of the flak hit the plane this time but no one was injured and no important damage seemed to have been done. Then, on the way back, a convoy of ten Jap freighters turned up in the sea below and Miller prepared to present them with the rest of his bombs. But the bomb bay doors refused to open —the whole hydraulic system had been shot out, and the brakes and flaps shot away.

The crew radioed the location of the ten ships back to the home base, explaining that there had been a little trouble on

the way and maybe somebody else might take care of this little job—and then the pilot headed for home, fast. He made a trick emergency landing, the plane coming to a stop five feet from the end of the runway—about ten feet from a yawning ditch.

Miller started on his 34th mission, for a target somewhere in Thailand, in early February, 1944. He never reached it. The weather was bad and got worse. After 13 hours of non-stop flying, it became evident to all the crew members that they were lost—in a sky covered with impenetrable cloud that stretched in every direction without apparent end.

They tried to get back, only to lose themselves still more. The fuel supply was running low, and down below might be jagged mountain peaks or savage Japs. When there was no longer much choice left, they jumped. Miller landed on soft snow, and the whole country-side was snow-covered, so that his first guess was that somehow they had wandered into Siberia.

They hadn't. It was a small hill town of friendly Chinese country people, somewhere in central China. The whole village came out to welcome the nine visitors from the sky. The villagers knew no English and they had never seen an American, or a white man. In their own language they could not read or write. They did not know the name of their province, and they weren't sure what country they were in.

But they recognized the U. S. insignia as that of the great ally of the West, and presently they prepared a huge feast for the strangers, of chicken, pork, noodles and rice. With childlike delight they listened to the ticking of the men's watches, and a flashlight not only fascinated but frightened them. Miller, the

only officer of the group, took his flashlight apart, demonstrated that there was no fire in it though it produced light, put it together again and presented it to the village chief.

A boy of eight turned up who had gone to school for a year and was the most book-learned of the villagers. Miller tried him out on the "pointie-talkie" dictionary. The idea is, you point to a question (in English) that you want to ask and then to its equivalent, beside it, in Chinese: the native reads the Chinese question and, somehow, answers it. Despite his schooling the boy of eight could not make out any of the questions until he came to: "Where is the nearest telephone?" That, he indicated, he understood, and he made motions indicating great eagerness to take the strangers there right away.

Lieutenant Miller didn't know where the boy might take them—maybe, for example, it would prove to be a telephone of the Japanese police—and there was no easy way of finding out. He decided to follow the young guide himself and leave the enlisted men behind, with orders to wait 48 hours and if they didn't hear from him to start out on their own.

From 10 a.m. until 4 in the afternoon the American lieutenant and the small Chinese boy walked up and down snow-covered hills, and just before sunset they reached not a telephone but a Chinese Army military headquarters. The general in charge told Miller that some members of Miller's crew had already been picked up. The rest were presently brought in and taken to a nearby town. There another feast was spread for the Americans and there were speeches of welcome, some of them in English. Children of the Young Revolutionary Society (Chinese Boy Scouts) entertained with songs and the rescued

fliers, feeling it was the least they could do, responded with a chorus of the Air Corps Song.

Eight days later—nine days after they had bailed out—Lieutenent Miller and his men were back at their base. By that time they had been listed as "missing in action" and one War Department telegram to that effect had gone to Miller's young wife in Tucson. He immediately wired: "DISREGARD ANY PREVIOUS OR SUBSEQUENT MESSAGES THAT MISSING IN ACTION STOP EYE AM NOT MISSING."

Before the war ended the fliers of the A.T.C. (Air Transport Command) girdled the globe. They fired no cannon and dropped no bombs and theirs was not combat duty—and there was no popular glamor about them as about the combat fliers. They only carried to battle areas the men and equipment including cannon and bombs required in combat.

They were the Army's heavy-duty drivers of the air. They didn't do the heroic combat flying but the first U. S. Army air unit in the China-Burma-India theater, which set the stage for those who came later, was the A.T.C.

Back in 1942, when only a handful of engineer troops wore the American uniform in India, A.T.C. set up a base in Assam and took over the job that was more important there and then than fighting itself—delivering the goods. The fliers and the ground crews lived in bamboo huts and ate such British Army rations as they could wangle and lived isolated from the news of the world, but come hell or high water they delivered their cargoes deep in China and Burma and Thailand or wherever the pressure of war required.

Alan J. Liberman of New York was a college undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania when war broke out. Two weeks later he had enlisted in the Air Corps and he became, presently, an Air Corps lieutenant and among the first of the flying truck drivers in Assam. He was there through most of 1943 and 1944.

He pushed his transport planes many a time over the Himalayan plateau—"The Hump"—highest land table in the world, often flying through the Summer monsoon, in clouds many thousand feet deep, flying with oxygen masks all the time, because at those high altitudes a man must breathe oxygen out of a bottle to live.

Sweating out "The Hump" in the Summer monsoon season, Liberman reported when he finally came home for a brief stay, meant this: That you never knew where you were as you flew. That your chances were at least even that, high as you were, the mountain peak ahead would prove to be higher and that you might crash into its slope. That in the heavy monsoon weather, likely as not, you would have to land under a cloud ceiling no more than 80 feet—and that isn't easy to do. (Civilian pilots need at least 800 feet to land.)

Sometimes the ceiling reaches down to the ground itself, so that no runway or airstrip is visible, and then you do not land at all. There was a flier he knew (First Lieutenant Liberman related) who flew from India to China, rising to 16,000 feet over the Himalayan peaks to cross the border, and when he got to his scheduled landing-field, the weather was so thick that to make a landing was impossible.

After circling several times and finding no break in the

clouds, he turned around and started for his home field in India. Again he battled his way over the rugged and largely invisible Himalayan "Hump" and at last reached his starting point in India. But here too the field was socked in. Once again he turned around and started back to China—and again landing proved to be an impossibility. By this time, his gas tank was dry, and he bailed out.

"That's the monsoon for you," the lieutenant commented.

And in winter, up in the high levels, 16,000 feet altitude and more, the engines started freezing up, with results almost as rugged as having the engines shot out by Zeros or flak.

Men like Lieutenant Liberman were the life line that kept supplies moving for the Chinese ally, for General Chennault's 20th Bomb Group that carried on into Burma and Thailand. They are the boys who had a share in the work of all the bomber groups, in the fight that the Chinese were able to put up against the Japanese invader, in the vast oil pipeline between China and India.

Of all the jungle fronts of World War II, Burma was the weirdest and the worst . . .

In Burma, a U. S. soldier would stroll into an orderly room and lay a 3-foot snake before the supply clerk—in payment for four rounds of rifle ammunition. Snakes as well as Japs had to be shot and killed in Burma—but cartridges were precious things, each shipped from ten thousand miles away, carried by difficult air transport. A soldier had to prove he had used a bullet to good purpose before he got it replaced.

After a year in the Burmese jungle—a year of malarial mos-

quitoes and atabrine tablets that turn your skin yellow, of mud deep enough to swallow a jeep and rain that never ends and reptiles and all the other jungle things that creep and crawl and fly—after a year of Burma, Sergeant Leon Rosenfeld wrote home in 1944:

"Walking through the underbrush, you find at least one leech and usually two or three leeches on you. They fall off the branches overhead. When they land on you they push a minute, pin-like head through your skin. Then they begin to suck. The first time one landed on me I felt an itch, but since then I cannot tell there is one on me unless I see it.

"They draw blood out of you until they swell to about ten times their normal size. Sometimes they burst then and sometimes they just fall off. Even if you see them, they are very difficult to remove. You cannot pull them off because if you try, the head will break off and remain in the skin, causing a painful swelling infection." The GIs, he said, learned to burn them out with a cigarette or match, or discourage them with mosquito repellent.

In Burma, wrote Leon Rosenfeld, "every type of insect seems to have wings and there are millions of them. Some are really terrifying. There is one I call the Diamond Gold Saturn. It is about the size of a dime and perfectly round. In its center is a golden orange body with a crystal head that sparkles like a diamond. Around all that is a transparent halo-like film. When the sun strikes it, it reflects a thousand colors. There is the Black Scorpion. They say it is deadly. It is easy to believe that when you watch its hooked tail strike menacingly upward. Snakes are plentiful. Three or four times a day your rifle cracks

and a snake hits the mud. My first was 2½ feet long, brown, beautiful, sleek and—poisonous."

And of the Burma weather he wrote:

"It is so damp here that everything metal turns green in a couple of days and everything else sticks. Leather goes green: books, billfolds, shoes. We wear wooden contraptions instead of shoes around the camp. It is impossible to keep paper book matches dry."

He mentioned that, to add to the other difficulties, the PX rations had been held up by shipping priorities because "everything has to come by plane, and gasoline, ammunition, equipment of all kinds and mail come first." Then he concluded:

"If you think I am griping because of all this, you are wrong. Actually I am bragging, and damn glad to be alive and really in the thick of it."

Edmond J. Arbib entered the Army Air Forces as a ground crew enlisted man, in September, 1941, two months before Pearl Harbor. He became a flier a year later and thereafter, until just before V-J Day, did some of the toughest flying in the world. He ferried bombers to every war theater, delivered planes with full crew to India, flew wounded men home from Italy.

In the summer of '44 they sent him to CBI and there, in a matter of eight months, he made 88 round trips over the Himalayan "Hump," carrying all sorts of badly needed supplies through "Hump's Worst" weather including 125-mile-an-hour winds—flying unarmed and unarmored at high altitudes over impassable, mountainous terrain, along the Assam-China

air routes "where enemy interception was probable and expected." All that without a serious accident and without a scratch.

Arbib was promoted to the rank of captain and received a long series of awards including the Air Medal with two Oakleaf Clusters, the Distinguished Flying Cross and three Bronze Battle Stars. In April, 1945, he came back home to New York and the following month was married to Miss Harriet Brodie. He was next sent to be Operations Officer at Love Field, Texas, a home-front post with no duty more strenuous than that of instructing combat fliers in the handling of the new C-26 plane.

He brought his bride with him to Texas, and he had two months of quiet life at Love Field. Then, on a day in mid-July, Captain Arbib stepped into a C-26 with his current student, a veteran of the Pacific War. On the takeoff the plane exploded and both men were instantly killed.

Lieutenant Morton Sher was 22 when he was killed in action in China. Young as he was he had already served two and a half years as a fighter-flier in Asia and was, for a time, one of the legendary Flying Tigers.

He was flying a P-40 fighter plane, one of six P-40s escorting a successful bombing attack on Hong Kong, when Zero trouble developed on the way home, and Sher was forced to land in what proved to be friendly Chinese territory.

The Chinese among whom he found himself had never seen an American or a white man but, before guiding him back to his base, they did their best to honor this flying soldier of the

great Western Ally. Fifteen thousand Chinese turned out to hear him make a speech—in English, which none of his audience understood. Then they asked for an American song and a story —and he sang college songs he had learned at Alabama University and "The Star Spangled Banner" and told the story of Little Red Riding Hood. These were translated by a none-too-certain interpreter and met with general acclaim.

In a letter to his mother, Lieutenant Sher told how the air battle started when, after the attack on Hong Kong, a formation of Jap Zeros appeared in the sky and aimed for the U. S. bombers. Sher picked his Zero, dived for it, "opening fire when I got him in my sights," and "My shots went into the canopy and through the pilot. The Zero fell off in a wild spin and crashed in the bay." That was the beginning. Lieutenant Sher wrote:

"At this point the sort of thing happened that a flier banks on to survive but which never ceases to astonish him. Five Zeros streaked at me, one on the tail of the other, each giving me a pointblank round of fire. One came so close we nearly crashed. I still wonder how they missed.

"I regained control of my ship and looked around. The sky was full of twisting, turning, diving planes. Friend and foe looked alike and it was hard to pick out a victim. Then I noticed that one of our bombers was hit. Its left engine was smoking badly and it appeared to be in danger of crashing. Four Zeros were still pounding it. I dived at them and opened fire. Three turned on me. I tried to dive away from them. They stayed with me. I straightened out within 50 feet of the surface of the bay and set out for home, skimming along just above the water.

"Then my engine began to run very rough. I decreased manifold pressure and began to climb so that I could estimate my position. I had shaken the three Zeros, but after climbing for a few minutes I glanced behind and saw two more Japs coming for me. I nosed down and dived away again.

"My engine got worse, shaking the whole ship with its uneven vibration. Every time I slowed down to save the engine, the Zeros would catch up with me, and I would have to dive away again. I could see they were determined to follow until they got me. My gas supply was getting low.

"A river appeared below. I followed it, hoping to find level ground along the bank where I could come down. If there weren't any I'd have to bail out. My ship began losing altitude. I looked down and seeing that I had come upon a fairly level piece of ground, decided to try a landing. I made my approach and got my wheels and flaps down. I hit three points on the near end of the field and began to roll across it. Then my right wheel plunged into a three-foot hole and my plane bounced into the air and came down on its back. I was knocked unconscious.

"When I came to I was hanging head down in the cockpit. I managed to unloosen the safety belt and looked out to see where I was. A small group of people, Chinese or Japanese, I couldn't tell which, were standing about the plane, looking at it.

"My canopy was crushed and wouldn't open. I broke the glass with my automatic and crawled out, gun in hand. They looked at me curiously but did not attempt to molest me, so

I guessed they were Chinese. I showed them my Chinese flag, with the legend attached to it which informed them that I was an American ally fighting for China.

"When they read this they became excited, motioned toward the sky and began to pile grass and shrubs over my ship. In a few moments, the two Jap Zeros came over, apparently still hunting me. They passed over without noticing the ship.

"The Chinese then escorted me into a nearby town . . . News of my arrival spread rapidly and the whole countryside turned out to have a look."

Lieutenant Jerome F. Eisenman of Cincinnati was 19 when the little world he lived in was for the first time smacked hard —by ack-ack.

Lieutenant Eisenman was in China at the time, and the world he lived in, alone, was a P-51 Mustang fighter plane. It was a speedy thing, lithe and almost human in responding to the flying lieutenant's slightest wish.

It could race through the sky and climb and drop and hide behind clouds and dive for a hostile target at 400 miles an hour or better and send out a hail of lead as it dived. Lieutenant Eisenman, young as he was, knew every strut, every wheel, every r.p.m. and every engine throb of his flying little world.

When Jap ack-ack crashed into it, leaving the engine crippled and the gasoline leaking, it was as if in actuality his world had been shattered. He knew that he and the Mustang would have to part—but he put off the fatal moment as long as possible. He listened, anxiously, to every engine-cough as to a sick child's. He wrote home, later:

"You may wonder what I thought of, sitting there in a badly smoking plane, hearing the engine cough and bang its heart out. I knew I must leave the plane, but it was still part of me. All the technical little details of flying—how to possibly ease the strain on the engine yet fly as far as possible—these were in my mind.

"I unbuckled my belt and took off my microphone and headset wires. I unfastened my oxygen mask and hose, preparing for the last moment. I was scared—plenty—but flying the plane kept my mind busy. The scare was mostly of falling into Jap hands.

"The parachute is a wonderful invention. I purposely fell quite some distance before opening the chute, so there would be as little time as possible to present a target for hostile guns. Even so there was a moment of helplessness as I hung in my harness. I saw men running and surely they saw me. But then I splashed down in a rice field, quickly unbuckled my harness and ran to hide in the bushes . . ."

The men he "saw running" proved to be not Japs but friendly Chinese, and in not too many days he was back at his base and, in another Mustang, again flying in his little world "doing the maximum harm to the Japs."

He was a boy of 19 then, and his first act when he got back to the base was to send a cablegram to his mother and father in Cincinnati, with the news that he had returned "safe." Weeks later came a letter from an Air Corps colonel in China, sadly reporting that the Eisenman boy was missing in action. By that time they were able to compare dates and confidently conclude that it wasn't so.

They awarded Technical Sergeant Joseph Krissman, 27, of Chicago the Legion of Merit for "exceptional meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding duty," and "extraordinary stamina and organization ability." It was a posthumous award, for Sergeant Krissman was killed while on active duty in China, though it was not on the field of combat . . .

It took men of his "stamina and organization ability", working with almost nothing except enthusiasm and ingenuity, to prepare the ground in China for the long, harassing fight there against the invading Japs.

Sergeant Krissman was one of the early U. S. soldiers to get to China. His job was "special ordnance work." He had a handful of men under him and, the citation declares:

He "adapted bombs of foreign make to American aircraft," he "supervised their handling, fusing and loading so as to instill great confidence in their safety and use," he trained his men on such a high standard so that "when outlying bases were opened, he was available to go forward and prepare for the incoming units."

Using machine guns salvaged from wrecked planes and such other odds and ends as he could collect, Krissman designed and constructed antiaircraft mounts used in successful fighting-off of Jap strafing attacks.

In a letter to his family, Sergeant Krissman's commanding officer wrote simply that, upon his death, he was replaced by an officer and three enlisted men for the job required "one officer to do the thinking and three men to do the work" the sergeant had done.

In a mountainous region of Western China, a second lieutenant named Robert Whesselhoeft Jr. was taken down with infantile paralysis. He needed hospital treatment and the nearest hospital was in Calcutta, beyond the Himalayan "hump," more than a thousand miles away.

Major Morris Kaplan of Denver was commanding officer of the "hump" sector Air Evacuation Unit, Air Transport Command, and to him the job was given of seeing that he was moved. He got to the nearest airfield, 100 miles from the village where the stricken lieutenant lay. He gathered a rescue party, intending to fly to the scene and land by parachute.

At dawn, the scheduled hour of departure, heavy weather came down, making the takeoff impossible. The next morning, he started but again the weather became impossible and he had to turn back. Now came word by radio that the lieutenant's condition was critical, his legs paralyzed and his breathing difficult. The rescuers decided to go by land.

The major, with a captain and a sergeant, piled into a jeep and made the 100-mile trek in three days. They forded dozens of streams on the trip, climbed a 12,000-foot pass, built four bridges. In the stretch they hired a gang of native carriers with pack horses to get over the steep, rocky terrain. The lieutenant, when they reached him, was being kept alive with the aid of a crude respirator made out of strips of canvas cloth and a lever hinged on the wall.

He was too sick to be moved overland. For the next three days, the little Chinese village became the center of furious industrial activity. Army Air Force men flew over and dropped supplies, equipment, machinery. A gang of 250 men was put

to work and they laid out an airstrip on a river island adjoining the village. Here a plane was landed and remodeled into something of a hospital plane, to carry the sick lieutenant. Then, with the whole village looking on, the patient was borne to the plane and started on his way to a modern hospital.

Twice the Distinguished Flying Cross was awarded to Captain Marvin J. Silvershatz of Nashville, Tennessee, bomber navigator, for his share in what might be called thumbing his nose at the Japanese enemy. The official citations called it "heroism and devoted service" in action.

In one action, Captain Silvershatz's plane was one of a heavy bombardment force which went out to bomb Jap installations. When almost over the target, they were attacked by more than 50 Jap fighter planes which resorted to every trick in the book to divert them from their objective. The bombers, however, continued straight to their target, smashed it, returned to their base.

Again, Silvershatz was the navigator when a group of 18 bombers went after a powerful stronghold in China. This time the Americans were set upon by more than 70 Jap fighters. Again they continued to their target despite every effort of the Jap fliers, dropped their bombs as planned. And as if to complete the job, the bomber crews incidentally knocked 57 of the Jap planes out of the sky.

In Burma, Corporal Heimie Goren of Milwaukee was on duty with the Allied Ground Forces. He was attached to a radio crew directing the movements of fighter-bombers, and his

job was radio. Despite the fire from Jap snipers and machine gunners, he and his crew set up a radio operations center at the end of a contested bridge, put it in readiness for immediate use. There was sharp Infantry fighting all around, and soon the Japs put on a powerful counter-attack. Goren got orders to leave the equipment and withdraw with his three men—fast.

Goren and his squad did not obey that order—not literally. Instead, they dismantled the valuable radio equipment, packed it, carried it through intense hostile fire to safety. "Displaying extreme courage and devotion to duty," says the citation accompanying the award of a Silver Star, the men "by their valorous action" saved "communications equipment vital to air support in Burma."

A transport plane took off at a base in Upper Assam, India. It was heavily loaded, with bombs and gasoline. The time was midnight of a day early in 1944, when planes for transport (or anything else) were scarce in CBI and air cargoes were always the heaviest that could be lifted from the ground.

These bombs were urgently called for by U. S. fliers in Western China, and you had to start with extra tanks full for the gas-consuming climb over "The Hump." The loaded transport barely left the ground, struggled to rise and, a quarter of a mile beyond the end of the runway, crashed. The bombs exploded, one by one.

The crash and explosion awoke an Air Force captain, Daniel Green of New York, in a bamboo hut on the edge of the field. Half dressed and half awake, he raced to the side of the burning plane, joined in the search for surviving crew members. Un-

exploded bombs were still in the wrecked and burning aircraft, and one 250-pounder suddenly exploded, knocking him to the ground. He got to his feet, dazed, and turned at once to help dazed and injured crewmen. When medics arrived and removed the survivors to the nearest hospital, he went along, gave a blood transfusion to one of the injured.

He was awarded the Soldiers Medal.

As a civilian, Herman Straussner of Forest Hills, Long Island, used to be a millinery salesman, and like any good salesman he knew his product and could talk fluently about synthetic and natural and blended straws, about fur or wool felt, novelty trimmings or "fancies" of feathers or flowers or ribbon.

Equipped with intimate knowledge like that, he became Technical Sergeant Straussner, engineer on a transport plane operating in CBI and ultimately an expert and authority on the fine points of acting as flight hostess to a mule.

Twice in India Straussner's plane was assigned to the job of carrying a dozen mules into mountainous West-China areas, where roads are too rough for a jeep but a mule can make it. On a trip like that, Straussner discovered, an aerial engineer has to know how to lash the mule-passengers' legs to bamboo stakes, to keep them from kicking a hole through the floor of the plane.

By the time he was 26, Technical Sergeant Straussner had been 28 months overseas and spent 1400 hours on 300 flights, including flights in combat. Transferred from the CBI Theater, he worked with planes that landed paratroopers in the invasion of Sicily, carried wounded men—and mules again—in

Italy, and landed men and supplies in the invasion of Southern France. In between, he went on a nine-day search for three French generals whose plane was lost over the Sahara Desert.

Sergeant Straussner, the prewar millinery salesman, became the wartime wearer of: The Distinguished Flying Cross, French Colonial Medal with Sahara bar, Air Medal with two Oakleaf Clusters, and campaign ribbons in four theaters of war.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE FIGHTING MEDICS

THERE IS HARDLY a soldier (or sailor or Marine) returning to civilian living who does not have his favorite story of the medics—the doctors in uniform and also the medical aides and technicians who worked under the doctors' direction. You gather from the GI and the ex-GI stories that others may have fallen short in this or that respect, but never the doctors.

These medical officers of the Army and Navy, volunteers who gave up established practices at home or young doctors fresh out of the medical schools and hospitals, brought with them their professional dedication to the business of healing the sick, restoring the injured and the wounded.

In wartime they simply carried forward their peacetime tradition on a larger scale and at a heightened tempo—often under imminent danger to life and limb from battle raging around them.

Medical men of all races and faiths fought with equal devotion to keep the suffering and deaths of war to the lowest possible

minimum, though it happened that the number of Jewish doctors in the service was larger both in proportion to the Jewish population and to the total number of Jewish doctors than was true for the country as a whole.

The U. S. doctors in uniform did a tremendous job, unequalled in all history. They cut down deaths from battle wounds to 3½ percent, as against six percent in World War I. By preventive devices they fought malaria in all the tropical hell-holes of the world to a standstill. They conquered typhus, which in World War I took 6,000,000 lives. They fought, though they carried no arms, on all six continents and seven seas, often right up where the guns boomed and the shells of enemy guns exploded.

It is not possible here to tell all the stories of heroism and devotion of Jewish doctors in the war.... The doctors landed in France with the paratroops on D-Day. They were among the infantry fighters at Cassino. They moved into Germany, right behind the tanks, with the armored divisions, and they were with the men who battled for Biak and Saipan and Luzon and Okinawa and all the islands of the Pacific. When a soldier was wounded, it is almost literally true, a doctor was there to catch him before he touched ground.

For a year Lieutenant Colonel Maxwell Rosenzweig of Brooklyn was chief of surgery of the 20th Station Hospital on Guadalcanal. For two months out of the twelve he was chief of the hospital. It was January, 1943, when the hospital was set up as the Army took over the island, or part of the island, from the Marines. The Japanese lines were only four or five miles

away and their air power was superior to ours and they used to come bombing by moonlight night after night.

While the 20th Station Hospital was being erected, 200 yards from a native village, the village was hit by Japanese bombs and the hospital's first patients included wounded villagers as well as soldiers.

The hospital was set up in a clump of coconut palms on the Teneru River, and it contained 500 beds. But it frequently had as many as 1,000 patients at a time, and in the first year, from January to January, 10,000 sick and wounded were treated there. Among this first ten thousand, Dr. Rosenzweig reported, there were ten deaths, or one tenth of one percent.

In the beginning the hospital suffered from a shortage of air raid shelters and in those days it happened not infrequently that soldiers who were not yet recovered asked to be discharged for service at the front because at the front a man at least had a foxhole to hide in, and it was safer there . . .

There was a fighter pilot who was brought in for an operation. He had an acute gangrenous condition, but he asked the surgeon, "Can't this thing wait, colonel? Because I have a couple of missions I have to go on first." It couldn't wait. But that is the kind of fighters, said Lieutenant Colonel Rosenzweig, we had at Guadalcanal.

There were all types of surgical work to do at the Station Hospital, with a great deal of traumatic surgery, gunshot wounds and accidents and orthopedic surgery and burns. Not only burns inflicted in combat, but a great many gasoline burns. For everything was always damp on the island, from rain or sultry mist, and to start a reluctant fire putting a match to a

heap of sticks was not enough. A dash of gasoline was usually added to get the flames going, and often the shooting flames took erratic courses, burning the hand that fed them.

You used to shake the lizards out of your hair and your clothing on Guadalcanal, for it was a land of lizards and rats and bats and butterflies and mosquitoes and a few snakes. The rats used to climb all over the canvas tents—you could hear them all night.

But the mosquitoes were worse, and almost as many men were struck down by the malaria they carried as by the enemy. In the beginning some outfits had at times 80 percent of their people knocked out by malaria. Later the swamps were cleared in the vicinity, and soon, said Dr. Rosenzweig, "we had penicillin and loads of sulfa and plenty of quinine and atabrine" and malaria was licked.

Lieutenant Colonel Rosenzweig, who went from Guadalcanal to Russell Island and other nearby posts, was himself harassed by a recurrent ulcer of the ankle, peculiar to the tropics. Though it refused to respond to any treatment in the Pacific, it healed without treatment soon after he returned to the U. S.

On New Georgia Island, the 161st Infantry, fresh from a Guadalcanal assignment, cut off Munda airfield on the land side, but the Japs had slipped out along the north coast, got as far as Bairoko Harbor. There they stopped because a few miles beyond, at Enogai Inlet on the other side of a formidable hill, our Marines were waiting.

The 161st sent two battalions and a medical company in

pursuit, to close the trap . . . It had to be closed fast, for across a small lagoon at Bairoko sat Kolumbangara, volcanic island and airport to which the Japs, who still had small boats, might escape. The idea was to smash them before they could slip away again.

The distance to Bairoko, as the crow flies, was ten miles. But the route to be taken posed a question. A Navy map showed the intervening terrain as all swamp. On a Marine map it was marked all "mountainous." One or the other had to be chosen, and the expedition finally started (August 7th 1943) along a route marked on the Navy map. There was heavy undergrowth and high and rough terrain which, by the end of two days, became impassable. The expedition turned back.

After a rest, the boys made a new start, this time with the Marine map as guide. The Marine map said "mountainous," and the trail led over high, rough ground, jagged and precipitous, sometimes 3,000 feet high—but the swamps were there too. At the foot of one precipitous slope, the mangrove swamps began. Here the trees reached 75 feet into the air and their foliage completely cut off the sun. Between the trees was slimy, black and stagnant water, six feet deep and more. The only footing was on mangrove roots—knotted "elbows" of roots extending just above water. It was slow progress as the men leaped or stepped from root to slippery root. The air was muggy and steaming hot, and each man carried a 35-pound pack. When a soldier mis-stepped and slipped, it took three others to drag him up from the slime.

The expedition made four miles a day, sometimes as little as two. The ten-mile distance on the map stretched into many

more by winding mangrove-root trail. The food supply gave out. Native runners were sent back with the bad news. Soon rations were dropped by parachute. But much of it landed in tree-tops—and there was a race with the lurking Japs for the rest, with the Japs not infrequently the winners. After the first day, along with the ration bundles, telephone linemen's spikes were dropped, and with the aid of these a man could shimmy up a mangrove tree and shake off a much-needed rations package. But the Japs got some of the spikes, too. For much of the time the men lived on one third rations, or the equivalent of a meal a day.

It took the infantrymen and the medics 19 days, including the four days of the first false start, to get to the edge of Bairoko. They camped on a hill 500 yards from the Japs and waited—for the heavy weapons company and the mortars and the machine gun company were a day's march behind, and it would not do to attack with rifles alone. They camped on coral ground, and at night huge land crabs came by and dug holes in the ground, frequently next to a man trying to sleep, throwing clods of earth into his foxhole. And the men in the foxholes could do nothing about that, for the Japs used to go stalking among our foxholes at night, dropping clods of earth at whatever looked, in the dark, like a hole in the ground. And if anything moved, as a man in a foxhole might move when a clod of earth dropped on him, they would follow through with a hand grenade. So the men in the foxholes remained quiet, whether Japs or land crabs harassed them. It was their only defense . . .

They brought the medical (collecting) company along, to

care for men wounded in the expected clash with the Japs. No fight developed and there were no wounded. But other problems developed for the medics. One problem was the commanding officer of the collecting company himself, Captain Louis Kriendler of Cincinnati, winner of the Legion of Merit and the Silver Star. Malaria knocked him out and Captain Harrison Hines, a young Jewish doctor from Newark, New Jersey, took over in his place. Then the first critical casualty turned up: a soldier with acute appendicitis.

Captain Hines had only crude instruments with him and only such other equipment as men could carry, in addition to their regular packs, on their backs. To operate under those conditions would almost certainly mean peritonitis and other infections, perhaps death. To delay too long might mean death from a burst appendix. To carry the sick man back by litter would call for more men as litter carriers than could possibly be spared—and far too much time.

On a hunch, said Captain Hines later, he radioed his dilemma, by walkie-talkie, to the base at Munda. He didn't know whether the signal would penetrate the intervening swamp-and-mountain terrain, nor whether it would be picked up. But the message did get through, and as the sun was going down, a PBY, Navy flying boat, landed in the lagoon, picked up the sick soldier, carried him back to a field hospital on Rendova Island. There the operation was properly and successfully performed.

Something of a botanist as well as a doctor, Captain Hines made several useful discoveries during the trek through the mangrove swamp. He found that the rattan palm grew in the

swamp, with long thick vines embracing it. You cut the vine in two places and fresh water drains out of it—pure and palatable. And drinking water to men pushing through that muggy, seething and poisonous swamp, was more to be desired than precious stones.

There was a tree in the swamp similar to the mahogany. A man could tap one of these and fill his helmet with a saplike water—not very good to the taste but good enough to wash with. And palm cabbage—the buds of young palms—made good eating, and also the fiddlehead ferns, which taste like fresh spinach when cooked, very good....

Eventually the 161st got Kolumbangara too—though again the Japs were able to slip away. But this corpse of a dead volcano was hardly something the men were pleased to occupy. Flies swarmed so thick that they settled in solid layers on a man's face and hands and everywhere, got into his eyes and ears and mouth. This was in the days before DDT, and nothing could be done about it except to wear head nets night and day, to keep the insects at a distance. It made a man look like a weird mechanical man.

They awarded the Bronze Star to Major Merrill Moore of Squantum, Mass., a Jewish doctor in the Army Medical Corps, not for performing operations under fire or otherwise treating those wounded by shell or sniper fire, but for "meritorious achievement in connection with military operations against the enemy at Bougainville"—as a psychiatrist.

An accompanying citation speaks of his "untiring energy, zeal and enthusiasm" in detecting and giving preventive treat-

ment to "the potentially neurotic soldiers, thus forestalling liabilities to the Army by conditioning men so that they could come through combat operations soundly."

That, too, was part of the doctors' war against the Nazi-Japanese Fascists, and thus Major Moore "contributed materially to the success" of military operations on Bougainville and elsewhere.

At Bougainville, on New Britain and Dutch New Guinea and at other Pacific stations, Major Moore not only applied the most modern methods in psychotherapy to every soldier he found suffering from a mental breakdown, but he did a good deal of thinking on the subject of what makes a soldier crack.

"Most interesting to me," he wrote from New Guinea, "are the cases of so-called psychoneurosis, and most difficult are the so-called constitutionally psychopathic individuals. We have certainly neglected these cases in civilian life. They need to be studied a great deal more and from every angle. You cannot neglect them in military life. The most interesting question I see again and again illustrated is this: Why is it that some soldiers break down and some others do not, even when they go through identical experiences? What is different in their personalities or their home backgrounds? And why were not some of these cases that I see here every day ever picked up at home, or in school, or in their own communities?"

It is a question that, maybe, the home and the school and the civilian community might want to consider. . . .

From his New Guinea post the major wrote: "There is no ice here, no fresh milk, no fresh meat or fresh vegetables. Every thing we consume comes out of a tin can, including the music

and our movies that seem utterly unreal in the strange setting." But the strangeness of the setting, to a contemplative nature, had its consolations. The doctor noted:

"The great shaggy mountains look like buffaloes. The natives are the most primitive I have ever seen. They are living practically in the Stone Age, in shacks made of palm leaves or grass huts. These things and the largesse of the land seem to be sufficient for their needs. But they badly need medical attention. This is slowly being given to them, as they will take it, for they are naturally very cautious and wary of doctors and needles.

"The lake is magnificently pictorial, all shades of blue and green. It is like looking down into the sky. The natives live along the shores of this lake and a good many of them have also built their huts along the shores of the ocean where the hills come right down to the water.

"Their huts are set just above the high-tide level, which seems rather precarious to me, but they don't seem to mind it. Little children paddle around in their tiny canoes. The children all go to school over the water, each school room of children in one long canoe."

Of a flight over the interior of New Guinea he told:

"We flew most of the day at 20,000 feet, using oxygen part of the time. He (the pilot) took me over the inland plateaus where I saw snow-capped mountains more than 17,000 feet high. Then he flew over the place that the pilots call Shangri-la, which is very close to the real thing. It is a deep valley surrounded by high mountains, far in the interior of the island, and there is no obvious entrance.

"In it lives a race of people said to be taller and larger than the usual New Guinea native. They have fine farms and well laid out homes, gardens and plantations, and their pattern of living appears from the air to be more agrarian and more advanced than the others we have seen.

"They are said to be cut off from the rest of the world, and though the local natives know they exist they are unable to tell us details about them. 'Him big fella I no see' is all I could get out of those I asked."

Colonel Bernard Ehrenpreis was a boy of 17 in Austria and a two-term medical student at the University of Vienna when he was inducted into the Austrian Army in World War I. He gained quick promotion there, he recalled, for almost at once they sent him to the Piave River front, where fighting was heavy, and they put him in charge of a dispensary, then a field hospital through which passed 60 wounded men a day, finally a 4,000-bed hospital.

The promotions troubled rather than pleased young Ehrenpreis for, he later recalled, in his medical studies he had not progressed as far as the anatomy of the skull, and he was disturbed when they brought him men with head wounds. Again and again he sent elaborate reports to higher-ups explaining his lack of knowledge and asking for a transfer.

He was not transferred. Either the German-Austrian army leaders were short of trained doctors—or they didn't care.

In sharp contrast was Colonel Ehrenpreis's experience as an American doctor in the U. S. Army of World War II. He was a successful physician in Brooklyn, and chief of the X-Ray

departments of Kings County Hospital and Brooklyn State Hospital, when Hitler's war was edging closer to America. In 1941, before Pearl Harbor, Dr. Ehrenpreis gave up his lucrative private practice, stepped out of his hospital posts and entered the Army Medical Corps. He explained once:

"I wanted to fight the Nazis. Maybe this doesn't sound like a medical man, but ever since 1933 I had been very much aware that I, for one, preferred to die on my feet rather than live on my knees."

The year 1933 was, of course,, when Hitler took over Germany and began laying his plot for enslavement of the world.

In the U. S. Army, Dr. Ehrenpreis became in time X-Ray chief of the vast 79th General Hospital overseas. But in spite of his professional knowledge and high standing, it took time—two years of training in army medical methods—before his appointment to the high post. That was one incident, Colonel Ehrenpreis liked to point out, to indicate the extent of the Army's infinite care in watching over the health of its officers and men.

"Every GI in the American Army," he said, "gets the kind of medical attention that in civilian life only the wealthiest can afford."

Colonel Ehrenpreis, late in 1944, was ordered back to the States because of illness, and, though he badly wanted to see the show through to the end, he accepted the medics' verdict —knowing that the U. S. Army medics, best in the world, don't often make mistakes.

On Anzio beachhead, in Italy, U. S. troops were always—

until the Nazis were chased from Cassino and driven beyond Rome—under fire. There was no hiding place at Anzio. Wherever you were and wherever you looked, the Germans' 88 millimeter guns looked down on you out of the Alban Hills, and the German machine guns swept the open fields. When the break came at last and the men of Anzio advanced to meet the men of Cassino, they made their advance through and in spite of the fire of the German guns and machine guns.

It was in this advance in early May, 1944, that Medical Captain Harry J. Stone of Ashland, Kentucky, earned his Distinguished Service Cross "for extraordinary heroism." The D.S.C. normally goes to a combat soldier or officer, for heroic action in combat. A medical officer carries no arms and does not directly take part in combat. But the activities of Captain Stone, as recorded in the citation by Lieutenant General Mark Clark, then commanding the Fifth Army in Italy, reads very much like the story of a combat soldier in action. Said General Clark:

"Captain Stone advanced with a company attacking in daylight across an exposed field. During the advance the enemy laid down heavy concentrations of artillery and machine gun fire on the unit. Carrying full equipment, Captain Stone kept pace with the foremost elements and, following the assault, maintained an aid station under direct enemy observation."

The captain, that is, was right up there where the fighting went on and so was able to give prompt treatment of the wounded under fire—a "vital necessity," the citation explains, because every move of the Americans was in full view of the enemy and the wounded therefore could not be moved to the rear.

A few days later, Captain Stone's battalion took up a new position which was heavily attacked by the Nazis. Again the enemy could see our every move, and again every foot of ground in the surrounding area was under fire. By daylight the battalion was completely cut off, but night after night, despite continuous Nazi fire, Captain Stone made repeated trips to the battalion lines and evacuated the wounded to safety.

In another heroic incident cited by General Clark, Captain Stone, during the height of an attack, pushed through heavy machine gun and artillery fire to treat two men lying wounded "directly in the rear of the objectives." The citation continues:

"Leaving his place of cover, he then proceeded under continued heavy fire to treat two more men in an open field swept by machine gun fire. Despite the intensity of artillery and small arms fire, he carried to safety one of the men who was unable to walk. Still under fire, he went to the aid of five other casualties. During the following hours of continual combat, Captain Stone was ever available to render aid where needed. With no regard for his own safety, he promptly treated and evacuated all casualties."

Two of the medical men who made D-Day landings, together, in Normandy, were Major Benjamin Cohen of Brookline, Massachusetts, regimental surgeon, and Captain Samuel Horowitz of Ogdensburg, New York, the battalion surgeon. In the dark of the night, they set up a temporary field hospital at Le Havre De Puits. Enemy mortar and machine gun fire began to probe their position, kept it up all night and the next day and the next night.

Medical aids crawled through the Nazi fire, brought back the wounded. In the temporary hospital shaken now and then by mortar shells exploding in the vicinity, throughout that first night, the two doctors bound up wounded men, operated on the badly wounded—by the illumination of a single GI flashlight . . .

During a bitter battle on Guam, Lieutenant Jerome D. Kaufman and one other medical lieutenant treated a total of 750 wounded. There was a shortage of medical aides as well as doctors, and the two officers organized cooks, ambulance drivers, Seebees, into a corps of emergency aides, instructed them in the rudiments of nursing. These two doctors worked over the wounded men for seven days and nights, with little food and almost no sleep or letup. The lives of all but five of the 750 were saved. Four out of every five ultimately returned to active duty . . .

In the amphibious attack on Biak Island, North of New Guinea, Medical Captain Bernard Sollod of Baltimore landed an hour after the first assault wave, set up a hospital tent, turned his attention to those who fell wounded on the beach. He and two other doctors were thus engaged when the Japs counterattacked. Shells exploded all around them on the beach but the doctors—with more wounded constantly arriving—stuck to their job. At last one shell ripped away the tent roof, and Captain Sollod and his men then gathered up the wounded, moved their hospital to what looked like a safer position.

The Japs were swarming closer, the mortar and machine

gun fire became hotter—and the number of wounded increased. Wrapped in blankets, they were placed side by side on the ground, waiting their turn on the operating table. The doctors, as methodically as if at work in a quiet hospital back home, stayed with the wounded until all had been treated, until long after the counter-attack had been thrown back and the rain of shells was stopped . . .

Captain Leslie Caplan of Steubenville, Ohio, Air Force flight surgeon, was a prisoner in Germany, and after the war in Europe ended and he was freed and returned home, they brought him to an Army hospital at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, for treatment of accumulated injuries and illnesses. There he received a unique document, a certificate citing his heroism as a war prisoner, signed by ten staff sergeants who had been his fellow prisoners and witnessed—to give it an official force—by a lieutenant colonel.

The ten sergeants testified in their certificate that the captain, while in the German prison camp, gave medical treatment under the most discouraging conditions to thousands of American prisoners, and that he continued this during a 600-mile march through Northern Germany which the Nazis, as their invincible Reich was falling about their ears, forced on the imprisoned Americans. Throughout that torture march—without enough food or water or medical supplies—Captain Caplan constantly treated the sick and wounded and injured. The citation continues:

"At no time did this officer, who himself was suffering from an injured leg, ride a wagon or even put his pack or blankets

on board. He at all times showed such unselfishness in looking after our men before himself. He continuously argued and fought with the Germans in order to get more food and medical supplies for his sick men, and frequently he was successful.

"Other times Captain Caplan traded his own cigarettes, candy, soap and coffee for eggs, so that the sick might get the nourishment they needed. He would never complain, but he no doubt suffered as much as the worst of us. He assisted the limping to walk. He helped carry those who could not move a step."

Arriving at another prison camp, "he was offered accommodations, comfortable ones, but he preferred to stay with his own personnel and to sleep on the floor with the rest. After a week at this camp, the American AAF personnel were told that they had to evacuate. Again there was an arduous ordeal of marching by sick spirits and bodies, but Captain Caplan was our guiding spirit.

"He knew that this camp would shortly be taken by our Allies, but he took to the road with his men."

As a New York City physician, Dr. Lawrence Loewinthan did his work in some of the most modern and best equipped hospitals in the world. As Captain Loewinthan, U. S. Medical Corps, attached to a mechanized cavalry outfit, he practiced right up where the armored units fought the Nazis through France and into Germany—in a hospital which, he liked to boast, was as well equipped in all essentials as any in New York.

Like the combat unit to which he was attached, the captain's movable hospital was "mechanized"—set on a half-track, or

armored vehicle that moves on tractors and wheels—and outfitted with a full-fledged operating room complete with operating table, surgical instruments, first aid equipment and all the rest.

Again and again, Captain Loewinthan performed emergency operations in his hospital on a half-track within the near sound of a battle—he got into France shortly after D-Day and continued on into Germany itself—and with remarkably good results.

Because he was able to give emergency treatment to wounded men almost immediately after they were wounded, losses were light, the percentage of complete recoveries high. They awarded Captain Loewinthan the Bronze Star and he wrote his wife at home: "Don't ask me why I got it—but frame it for Peter anyway, so he'll know his father was a fighting cavalry medic."

Captain Loewinthan was very proud of the enlisted men in his detachment—the "fighting medics in the cavalry"—whom he gives chief credit for the hospital's success.

There was a seriously wounded Nazi picked up in the fighting for Brest and, wrote Medical Captain Levinson, "we gave him the works: Quarts of blood, repeated units of plasma. I sweated out three eight-hour operations to save a German soldier's life. And he helped. He was stubborn, kept repeating through tightly closed teeth, 'Ich will leben!'— 'I want to live.' "

The Nazi lived, and soon he was greeting the doctor with a cheerful "Guten Morgen" every time Levinson entered the ward. As the prisoner improved, he became friendlier, told about his wife and three children and how he hoped some day

to take them away from all this misery and bring them to Hollywood to live. One of those little but significant things which go to show, thought the captain, that even a Nazi is human.

When the prisoner volunteered for the distasteful duty on kitchen police, Levinson wasn't surprised. He was evidently witnessing, he thought, the evolution of a Nazi into something better.

Then, one day a routine examination of prisoners' quarters turned up a little box hidden in Hans's mattress. In the box was ground glass—suitable, from the Nazi view, for sprinkling (by a prisoner doing kitchen duty) on food for American soldiers.

Captain Levinson was disillusioned.

At dawn of a day late in 1944 Captain Benjamin Leavitt of Fall River, Massachusetts, battalion surgeon on duty in a sweating valley in Burma, got a radio message: Somebody ill, operation indicated.

In a dour, early-morning mood, Captain Leavitt mentally sized up his professional situation and it wasn't good. If this was something serious, calling for the help of a medical technician, he was in a jam. His only medical technician, Sergeant John Klepey, was at that moment on duty with the air warning crew of the Tenth Air Force—on top of a mountain 50 miles away.

He studied the message again. It was from the air warning crew, and the illness, diagnosed by Sergeant Klepey, was acute appendicitis. That sort of thing was serious, and Capain Leavitt at once radioed the order to evacuate the patient at once. In

a few minutes the answer came back: "Can't. Patient too ill to be moved."

By this time, the captain became curious enough to ask who was the patient. It was—Sergeant Klepey.

Since the patient couldn't come down for the operation, the captain had to go to him. Between the doctor and the patient, however, stretched miles of jungle so thick that there was no landing place anywhere for even an L-5, or "Jungle Angel," the little plane that could come down in jungle spots beyond the reach of any other means of transportation.

Leavitt chose a jeep instead, and he commandeered Captain Anson H. Sollner, battalion dentist, to accompany him and serve as surgical technician. They reached the foot of the mountain in three hours, and there the jeep could go no farther.

They hired Burmese guides and carriers to haul the surgeon's equipment up the mountain. The climb to the top took five hours. When they got there, Sergeant Klepey was in a bad way. Peritonitis had set in, and gangrene, and Leavitt saw he would have to work fast. Already the sun was going down, and there was no way of providing electric or other artificial light at the station. To wait until next morning might be fatal.

A Signal Corps crew, working fast, built an operating table out of beer cases which had been dropped by air only the day before and bamboo poles covered with canvas and blankets. Leavitt administered a spinal anesthetic, then made his first incision just as the last rays of the sun disappeared behind the next mountain peak.

"Flashlight, somebody!" the doctor pleaded. A tough-faced Signal Corps photographer stepped up, turned his flashlight on

the open cut—and collapsed in a dead faint.

Another enlisted man picked up the flashlight, and a sergeant stepped in to administer the ether anesthetic. For 45 minutes, by the uncertain light of a Signal Corps flashlight held in a nervous soldier's hands, Leavitt cut, clamped and stitched.

Though performed without the aid of the captain's medical technician and his anesthetist, the operation was a success. Nine days after he was operated on, Sergeant Klepey was clambering about the Burmese mountains again, prepared to administer first aid, if necessary, to the men who had aided him.

Navy Lieutenant Sol M. Kozol of Boston came back from long service in the Pacific with a new formula for putting a Marine at ease. A dentist by profession and a member of the Navy Dental Corps, he worked on the teeth of some 2,500 Marines in such odd locales as a beachhead on a South Pacific isle, the hold of a ship, a native thatched hut and a wobbling landing craft off Tarawa.

Marines, the lieutenant found, are like people everywhere—afraid of the dentist. "Most of them," he stated as a matter of fact, "would rather face a thousand Japs than face me"— particularly if facing Kozol for the purpose of having a tooth pulled. Therefore Lieutenant Kozol devised a few pleasant little phrases to calm the terror-struck Marine and drive his fear away. Looking down at a tough Marine sergeant about to undergo a dose of dental surgery, he would coo invitingly:

"Open yer kisser, chum." And, "Am I hurting you, dear?"

Talk like that "puts them at their ease immediately," Dr. Kozol would have you believe.

They sent Captain Samuel R. Rossman of Philadelphia to Cairo and gave him orders to take care of the dental needs of some 1200 U. S. soldiers in Egypt and elsewhere in North Africa. But he arrived with no dental equipment or supplies. Just about then, fortunately, came the battle of El Alamein and the drive along the North African coast. Captain Rossman followed in a jeep, raided the captured enemy dental clinics, helped himself to whatever German equipment he could pick up. Eventually, he built himself a clinic of his own, set up on a trailer, and outfitted it with German drills and other dental instruments.

In the trailer, which also contained his sleeping quarters and such furniture as a chair made out of a salvaged P-40 pilot seat, he traveled long distances through Tunisia, Sicily, Italy and later India and China, relieving the pain of soldiers with toothaches. The trailer had to be stripped and crated before it could be transported by plane across "The Hump" of the Himalayas from India to China, but once on the other side it was set up again and the practice of trailer dentistry was resumed.

The combat medical unit headed by Major Julian Fried of New York reached Leyte in the Philippines with the first fighting troops and cared for 2,270 wounded and sick in the ensuing campaign. The major himself described what happened in a letter, so:

"When the amphibious landings were made my unit was the only hospital put ashore. We all scrambled out of the landing craft in a hurry, infantry and medical units at the same time,

for the boats and the shore proved to be more vulnerable to enemy air and sea attacks than scattered units on land. We were on our own.

"We set up a field hospital immediately and as the division progressed we moved along in its wake. Unfortunately the hazardous sea communication interfered with evacuation seaward. We had to treat and hold all the wounded for some time. Once we had to move and take 200 patients with us. It was impossible for us to stay in one place, because as we moved forward our rear was left exposed to Jap troops which had split open to let us through.

"In addition to the enormous problem of caring for, operating on, feeding and housing a big load of casualties, we were subject to all the war hazards of rear troops—bombing and strafing, artillery and mortar fire, the constant fear of banzai attacks."

During the first two weeks neither the major nor any one on his staff slept as much as a dozen hours.

Major Fried was awarded the Bronze Star for "meritorious service" in the campaign, but he took greatest pride, he reported, in the work of the enlisted men assigned to him—technicians, litter bearers and ward attendants. "These were all men I trained myself during the three years we had been in the Army," he said. "These boys did all the sterilizing, nursing, litter bearing.

"They gave all the intravenous medication, the plasma and the whole blood transfusions. They requisitioned supplies, put up wards, prepared patients for operation. They kept records and ran the kitchen, the latrines, the fly and mosquito control and screening and built up the area, all without medical officer

supervision, for the medical officers were busy professionally." They were "busy professionally" in that Major Fried, for example, working constantly on two operating tables, performed 400 operations before the Leyte campaign was over.

On December 26th, 1944, Captain Jesse Frankel of Brooklyn had a birthday but no birthday celebration. There was no time for celebrations because, said the medical officer later, "we were busy at the time." The Battle of the Bulge had been in progress several days and there had been little or no sleep for any one at the front line hospital set up near the Belgian hamlet of Celles, on the road to Dinant.

Night and day the wounded were coming in, some in serious condition. For hours at a time, with only brief intermissions, Captain Frankel had been at work at the operating table. When a tank drew up and a couple of GIs helped another patient into the hospital, he thought only that here was one more soldier, probably in need of another operation.

But it wasn't. Instead, Captain Frankel was presently confronted with a whole Belgian family: M. and Mme. Leon Girard and a two-year-old daughter. Madame Girard, the doctor was told, needed emergency assistance, for she was on the point of becoming a mother again. The army medical captain, perforce turned obstetrician, thereupon attended to the delivery of a healthy girl baby, in due time named Jessica Marie Girard. Her first baby wails had to compete with the roar of exploding bombs and bursting artillery shells in order to be heard but, said Captain Frankel, hers was otherwise a normal birth. Jessica was still "a very healthy baby" when he called on her the following June

and again in August before he left for home.

This writer met Dr. I. E. Goldberg of Kansas City, Missouri, in early August, 1945, when the war was almost but not quite over. In a small officers' mess of the 6th Infantry Division, on Northern Luzon Island, somebody introduced "Major Goldberg," and the none-too-military-looking officer beside me asked, "What's the name?" and then: "Have some gefuelte fish?"

Gefuelte fish, even when it comes in a tin can, was a wonderful find in that part of the world, and Major Goldberg proved to be a mild, pleasant, informal sort of a medical officer eager to chat about New York and Kansas City. Details of the war seemed to interest him much less.

But that was in August. Months earlier, when the fighting for Luzon was at its hottest, he must have been keenly interested in details he now brushed aside. Others of his medical staff—he was regimental surgeon of the 63d Infantry—told about that. They told, for example, of how Major Goldberg stood precariously on the side of an almost-perpendicular cliff of 1600-foot-high Dutchman's Hill, South of Baguio, during a pouring tropical rain in the midst of a bloody battle, and with one foot wedged into a narrow crevice and the other suspended in midair, administered plasma to a badly wounded GI. The boy lived. The major got a Silver Star—and a Purple Heart. For he, too, was wounded before that night's action was over.

The cliffside plasma application was made at night, during the hard-fought battle for Couringan, outside the Philippines Summer-resort city of Baguio. The regiment was attacking up the steep slopes of Dutchman's Hill, over "tortuous, canalized ter-

rain, rough and impossible." Two companies had reached almost to the hilltop when Jap artillery found the range, presently had them completely "zeroed in." You are "zeroed in" when the enemy drops a few rounds just ahead and just behind, each time nearer and nearer until the distance between target and exploding shell in both cases is "zero" feet.

Enemy shells, that is, were falling amid the two companies as well as just ahead and behind them. Word came down that there were eight dead, 25 wounded—and no medical aid.

It took 16 men to carry a wounded man down the steep jungle paths of Dutchman's Hill. Major Goldberg assembled a 50-man litter squad and led it in person up the hillside. More than once he stopped on the way to administer plasma to a dangerously wounded soldier. One wounded boy lay groaning in the dark where he could only be reached by the doctor teetering with one foot in a crevice, the other resting on air. Two soldiers held him up in that position while the plasma was administered. Then the litter-bearers, using infinite care, were able to move the wounded soldier from the ledge, carry him back to a field hospital. Through all this enemy shells continued to fall. Eventually, a shell splinter got the major in the left leg, tearing several ligaments. By that time most of the wounded had been removed and, said Major Goldberg, he just "limped away."

A month later—in February, 1945—the fighting was in the vicinity of Manila. Leaving a medical aid station in a jeep with two other officers and a driver, Major Goldberg started along a road East of the city. There was shellfire on the road and it grew steadily heavier as they drove on. All four, after a while, left their jeep on the roadside, tumbled into a ditch for protection.

The enemy gunners, however, were not satisfied with this small victory. As the quartet lay there in the ditch, they became aware that the guns were closely pursuing them.

A shell burst forward and to the rear. Then—they realized they were being bracketed in and it was suicide to remain where they were. The four leaped up from their hiding place, made a dash for the jeep again and drove away. The shelling pursued them, not without result. One shrapnel splinter lodged in Major Goldberg's right arm. It was his second wound.

Still another came during the fighting along the Japanese Shimbu Line, and that, said Major Goldberg, was his own fault: At a critical moment he picked the wrong foxhole. The major was working on wounded men in a medical aid station when a Jap shell made a direct hit on it. One man was killed, several were wounded. As the shell came screaming down, all those who were physically able dived for the nearest foxholes. So did Goldberg. But he was seconds slower than at least one other man, and when he came to rest in the foxhole his ambulance driver was resting beneath him. He was thus left partly exposed to the shower of shell splinters, and one of them pierced his chest. "But I was all right again in a couple of months," Major Goldberg commented.

The major's army career dates back to his assignment to Hawaii, where he organized a course in jungle medicine which became standard for the Army throughout the Pacific war area. He went from there to New Guinea where his regiment fought the bloody battle of Lonetree Hill. Here the ground was solid coral and Jap dead couldn't be buried, lay where they fell.

For eight days the battle raged, and for eight days Major

Goldberg and a Roman Catholic chaplain, Father Francis Dietz, S.J., of Cleveland, manned a medical aid station without other help. Sniper fire was continuous in the area, and once a sniper's bullet smashed the bottle from which Major Goldberg was giving blood plasma to a wounded soldier. (No one was hurt.) Jewish doctor and Catholic priest were awarded the Bronze Star.

Major Goldberg's awards: Silver Star, Bronze Star, Combat Medical Badge and Purple Heart with two Oakleaf Clusters. And of these, he told this writer, he cherished most the Combat Medical Badge, for it symbolized what he liked to believe was the physician's role in wartime—the role of the fighting doctor.

Major Irving Trutt, Brooklyn physician, commanded the 313th Medical Battalion Clearing Station in Italy, which handled all sick and wounded of the 88th Infantry Division on their way to the rear. Included were those who fell in the violent battle of Cassino, the push on Rome, the Arno River crossing, the break through the Gothic Line, the winter stalemate in the freezing Appenines and finally the easy crossing of the River Po and the swift chase thereafter to the Alps foothills and the Germans' surrender.

A very large allotment of fighting, all this, and more than once in the course of it Major Trutt's 313th handled as many as 500 sick and wounded—mostly wounded—in a single day.

Once—it was on June 12, 1944—during the battle for the Arno River, within shouting distance of historic Florence, a Nazi bomb made a direct hit on the house in which the major's clearing station was located. A clearing station is in effect a division's emergency hospital, and while a fight is on it is likely to be

filled, at any hour of the night or day, with wounded men receiving treatment, with doctors and medical aids. The bomb which struck on June 12 completely destroyed the house and left 50 new casualties.

The major, himself somehow unhurt, immediately set about organizing a new hospital—and had it completed, with all patients transferred to the new quarters, in a matter of 12 hours. He was awarded the Bronze Star for heroism in combat.

During the lull in fighting, just before we crossed the Po, I found Major Trutt in his battalion tent, and I asked him, Was there a difference in treatment of our own soldiers and the occasional wounded German prisoner who might be brought in? He said:

"All who are treated by Army medics, GI or Jerry, get the best that medical science knows. That's what the Geneva Convention provides, isn't it? We abide by that. But the Jerries may get it a little later. We don't delay treating our own for the health of any Jerry."

Had he ever run into any Nazi's objection to being cured by a Jew?

"No," said Major Trutt. "Most of them don't know we are Jews."

Captain Adrian Z. Leon was killed in action in Austria on May 3, 1945, a few days before the final surrender of Hitler's "thousand year" Reich. Fascism was in its death throes then, but it still had fangs to strike with—vicious, diabolic, inhuman as always. Death came on a steep hillside near the Austrian town of Zirl. Retreating Nazis had given full play to their fiendish in-

genuity in planting the battlefield with mines, and Captain Leon knew that sudden death lurked within the mined area. But wounded men called for his help there, and he went.

Something of the stark courage and devotion of the American doctor faced with the worst of the Nazi death threats is evidenced in the eye-witness account by a Catholic chaplain, William V. Cummings, who was himself badly wounded at the same time and by the same mine. From a hospital in France, Chaplain Cummings wrote to Mrs. Naomi de Sola Pool Leon, widow of the captain and daughter of Dr. David de Sola Pool, rabbi of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue of New York:

"We were part of a motorized column moving into Austria. About 10 o'clock in the morning word came down the column that A Company had run into a mine field and the medics were needed. I went forward to contact Dr. Leon, only to find that he had already received word and was at the scene of the casualties.

"Some of the men had been moved down to the road and the doctor was busy taking care of them. Due to a lack of litters two men had to be left in the mine field until the ambulance returned. The mines were cleared and the 'safe' area wired off up to where the men were.

"Dr. Leon, with the zeal and devotion that was characteristic of him, went up to take care of them. I went with him. We reached the first man and the doctor attended to his wounds. By that time the ambulance returned and a litter was brought up. We carefully lifted the man onto the litter only to discover that he had been lying on a mine which was not detonated until we moved him. It was a type of mine that springs about three

feet in the air before it explodes. There is a ten second delay from the time it is detonated until it springs out of the ground.

"Just after we lifted the wounded man onto the litter I noticed a trickle of smoke rising out of the ground and shouted a warning, but I scarcely had the words out of my mouth when the mine sprang up and exploded, about a foot above my head.

"Dr. Leon fell unconscious a few feet from me and one of his aid men fell at his side. We were on a steep hill and both men rolled about ten feet from where they fell, setting off another mine as they did so. I was wounded in both legs and could not move. When first aid arrived a few minutes later, Dr. Leon and the first aid man with him had breathed their last . . ."

Captain Leon was posthumously awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action, and the accompanying citation records that:

"Captain Leon set up an aid station on the edge of the field. Disregarding enemy artillery, small arms and sniper fire, he continued administering aid, and speedily evacuated the wounded. Hearing a cry for aid from a seriously wounded man in the mine field, and despite warnings of the danger, Captain Leon entered the field to aid the casualty . . . He was mortally wounded by a mine explosion."

Born in Ploesti, Rumania, Captain Leon had studied medicine in Paris, Vienna and New York, joined the Army Medical Corps as soon as he became an American citizen.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

CHAPLAINS ARE FIGHTERS

THE JEWISH CHAPLAINS in World War II—orthodox American rabbis in uniform, and Conservative and Reform—handled no firearms, but they were up there with the GIs and the sailors, on every fighting front and in every armed service. They went to sea with the Navy and flew with the Air Corps and moved up on land with the moving fronts.

Often they held religious services that were recurrently interrupted by the boom of the enemy's big guns and the crackle of snipers' rifles—under a tent or in the shelter of a bomb-wrecked stone wall. Often those who prayed and chanted with them were grimy, dirty-faced men dragging rifles—men who came to the services out of the foxholes and the firing lines, and who returned to fight again when the services ended.

To the Jewish fighters of World War II, many of them boys perhaps for the first time away from home, the chaplains brought comfort when wounded, advice and help to meet individual problems, and always the growing conviction that the good

fighter for America and American democracy was by virtue of that circumstance also the good Jew.

There were 311 Jewish chaplains in the Army and Navy of the U. S. during World War II and of these more than three-quarters—236—saw service overseas. They lived with the men in training at home and in the training camps and rest camps and battle areas on the other side. They served on all the continents and in all the lands around the globe to which the war brought men in the uniforms of the U. S.

On one side of the world, the chaplains went, along with the fighting men, to lonely outposts in Alaska and the Southwest Pacific, to India and China and Korea and the Philippines, to Okinawa and Iwo Jima and Japan. And half way around the globe, they went with the American fighting men to England and North Africa and into Italy and France and the Low Countries and then into Nazi Germany.

Those Jewish chaplains who got into Germany simultaneously with our liberating soldiers performed, in addition to everything else, a tremendous and heroic service which only they could carry out, for which only they at that precise turning-point in Europe's history were suited and prepared. That was the job of caring for the pitiful survivors of Hitler's war, in the critical hour of their liberation.

Already in the approaches to Germany, in the lands the Nazis had overrun—North Africa and Italy, France and Belgium and Holland—as the American armies moved in, the doors of the political prisons and concentration camps had swung open and the still-surviving victims of the Nazi Weltanschauung came pouring out. All were in a bad way, but the liberated Jews were

in the worst plight of all. Though free now, they had no homes and no place in the community or in any community to return to. They needed—immediately—food, clothing, medical aid, a place to sleep. The chaplains, aided by other officers and by enlisted men, managed by various devices to provide a minimum of these, helped them over the transition period until official arrangements were made for their care.

Worst of all were the liberated Jews in Germany itself—often skeletons of human beings, only a day or two removed from the Hitler annihilation chambers. To them the chaplains brought not only the physical things but a revival of the spirit all but extinguished by Nazi terror. They needed assurance—and reassurance—that, though Jews, they were still accepted as human beings.

The chaplains in the uniform of the American Army officer appeared among them as sole representatives of world Jewry and, applying heroic measures, acted simultaneously as physicians, social workers, statesmen . . . The records show—letters and reports from the field to the National Jewish Welfare Board abundantly show—that they did a magnificent job.

The Jewish chaplains in World War II, Army or Navy, were no sheltered men of the cloth who stayed at a safe distance from the fighting. They went where the fighters went, regardless of danger, and they suffered the same consequences. Eight Jewish chaplains in all lost their lives while in the service of the U. S. A. These were:

Chaplain Alexander Goode of Brooklyn, lost on the torpedoed Army transport Dorchester, in the Atlantic. June 15, 1943.

Chaplain Irving Tepper of Chicago, killed by bomb splinters in France. August 13, 1944.

Chaplain Louis Werfel of New York, known as "The Flying Rabbi," killed in an air crash in Algeria. February 24, 1944.

Chaplain Henry Goody of Philadelphia, killed in an automobile accident in Washington. October 19, 1943.

Chaplain Samuel D. Hurwitz of Fort Wayne, Indiana, died while on active duty with troops in Texas. December 9, 1943.

Chaplain Herman L. Rosen of Brooklyn, died by drowning. June 8, 1943.

Chaplain Frank Goldenberg of Utica, New York, killed in a jeep accident outside Vienna, Austria. May 22, 1945.

Chaplain Nachman S. Arnoff of Chicago, killed in an Army truck accident at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, while on the way to be discharged after 18 months service overseas. May 9, 1946.

The story of Chaplain Goode is an incident out of the Battle of the Atlantic against Hitler's prowling submarines, which went on from the beginning of the war to the very end. It is a brief, illuminating story not of Jewish chaplains alone but those of all faiths...

War on the high seas seems, somehow, more sinister and more menacing than fighting by land. Death strikes suddenly in the dark, often just before dawn, a terror that comes without warning and gives no chance to strike back. It came that way to the Army transport Dorchester, somewhere in the North Atlantic. One moment she was riding the waves while men slept or stood watch. The next, she was ripped apart and sinking. The ominous order sounded, "Abandon ship!"

There was the rush to lifeboat stations. There was the confusion among men shocked out of sleep by the shudder of the stricken ship, racing for safety along decks blocked off by fires blazing fore and aft . . . You make the life boat and have a chance to survive. Or you leap into the cold sea with lifebelt, gloves and the rest, and you have the slimmer chance of being picked up by life boat or raft . . . Men hurrying against time, stumbling up blocked gangways and over tilting decks, sometimes discover that they have been caught without lifebelts, for which it is now too late to go back. Their chance to survive is next to nil.

On the Dorchester, at least four men who were thus trapped nevertheless got their full chance. One after another was seen by a chaplain who called to him, gave him his own lifebelt, said casually, it was all right, he (the chaplain) had another. And to men accustomed to getting help from their chaplain when in trouble, this seemed a natural thing.

Lieutenant Junior Grade John J. Mahoney, for instance, later told of his own experience. When the abandon ship order came, he snatched his Parka and life preserver, worked his way to the promenade deck. Then he discovered he had left his gloves behind. Swearing at himself for stupid forgetfulness, he started back to his cabin—a dangerous trip, from which a man might not have time to return.

Jewish Chaplain Alexander Goode saw his difficulty and called after him.

"You can have these," the chaplain said, pulling off his own gloves. "I have another pair."

Later the lieutenant learned that Chaplain Goode did not

have "another pair," and that he had already given his only life belt to an enlisted man. In the same way, Chaplain John P. Washington, Catholic priest, and Chaplains Clark V. Poling and George L. Fox, Protestant ministers, had handed their life belts to men who had none.

Against the gray, cold morning sky, as the Dorchester went down, the men in the boats saw the four chaplains—Protestant, Catholic, Jew—arm in arm and in prayer, as the wounded ship plunged to her death. Differing in creeds, they were one in the creed which overleaps all differences, that greater love hath no man than to give up his life for his brother.

Mahoney spent eight hours, before he was rescued, in a crowded life boat awash with freezing-cold water. Without the chaplain's gloves, he said, "my fingers would have frozen stiff, I would never have made it. As it was, only two of us survived out of 40 who were on the boat. I owe my life to those gloves."

Just before he boarded the Dorchester, Rabbi Goode had written in a letter to his wife:

"We are fighting for the new age of brotherhood, the age of brotherhood that will usher in at the same time the world democracy we all want. The age when men will admire the freedom and responsibility of the common man in American democracy. Our methods will be imitated and improved upon. Our spirit of tolerance will spread. Systems of coinage, vocabularies, trade products, scientific discoveries, inventions useful in commerce, new tools of useful living, will find a worldwide distribution and use.

"Justice and righteousness as dreamed of by the prophet who gave the world the democratic spirit will cover the earth as a

torrent. Men the world over will have enough to eat, clothes to wear, opportunity for improvement through education, and full employment. Tyranny will no longer be possible in a united world because, before it can gain power, the forces of justice speeded through space by airplane, will have overwhelmed it. Protests against injustice will be heard in every capital of the world the moment it occurs and redress granted at once.

"What has seemed like civilization up to this point is but a crude effort compared to the era that lies just before us. The new world will be the goal of the cavalcade of democracy through the ages. Toward this new world the cavalcade of democracy marches on, heralding the century of humanity."

Near the French town of Vire, while war was still raging in France, a Nazi bomber sliced through the air overhead and a Nazi fragmentation bomb exploded over the roadside. Chaplain Irving Tepper of Chicago was on that road, bringing aid to wounded men trapped in a house nearby. Before he could dive out of danger 22 shrapnel splinters bit into his body.

They carried him to a field hospital. They gave him first aid and all the other aid that the Army's doctors and nurses could furnish. They watched him, despite his many wounds, wage a terrible, determined fight for life. But the wounds were too many and too grave. He died two days later, on August 13th, 1944. He was 31.

He was the first Jewish chaplain killed in France—and it had been in his power to avoid such a fate. The men who knew him, men of the 9th Infantry Division which he had long served, called him Chaplain Courageous. He was a GI's chaplain.

He was in the first wave to go down the cargo nets at Mahdia Plage, Morocco, on November 8, 1942. He marched with the foot soldiers through Tunisia. He walked with them through Sicily. He went to England with the 9th division, and as invasion time drew near, they offered him a headquarters post, in the safe areas.

He said, no. He said his place was with his battalion—and when the battalion moved to the front, his place was there. On D-Day that started the liberation of France, he was among the first to step on a Normandy beach. He was constantly with his men in action until he died.

They interred his remains under a Star of David in the 17th Corps U. S. Military Cemetery at Chasney, France. When the division got into Germany, the first Jewish religious service was held inside the anti-Semitic Reich – a memorial service for Chaplain Tepper.

Said Chaplain W. J. MacLeod, Tepper's room-mate during their pre-D-Day waiting in England: "He was a great morale builder . . . He was the real thing!"

Chaplain Werfel was on duty with the 12th Army Air Force Service Command in North Africa when he met his death. He had become "the flying rabbi" because only by air could he keep in touch with his soldier-congregation, scattered over the far-flung North African wastes from Casablanca to Egypt . . . He was setting out, by plane, to preside at a Hanukah service in the Spring of 1943, when he was warned that ceilings were low and it might be dangerous flying. He decided to take the risk . . . In a heavy fog, his plane crashed in the Algerian mountains . . .

Chaplain (Captain) Arnoff was 46 at the time of his death. A graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, he was rabbi of Congregation Bnai Israel, in Chicago, when he entered the service. He was stationed at the San Francisco Port of Embarkation and then, in December, 1944, was sent to Italy. He was there a year and a half, devoting his last few months, in the Spring of 1946, to the work of rehabilitation of displaced persons. Before he left for home, the Jewish community of Leghorn gave him a community tribute . . . He was on his way to a processing center for discharge at Kilmer when a truck accident occurred in which he was killed.

Like Chaplain Arnoff, Chaplain Goldenberg was killed, at 27, after the shooting war had ended. He met his death in a jeep collision near Vienna on May 22, 1946. On leave from Temple Beth El, Utica, he was on duty with the 42nd (Rainbow) Division in Austria.

Out of Nuernberg, when the rampant Nazis were on the march, came the Nuernberg "laws" – phony race-superiority formulas by which the Hitler gang planned not only to bind the Jews but to enslave a world. And into Nuernberg in the Spring of 1945—the date was April 21st—came U. S. occupation troops, and a band playing the American national anthem, and the Stars and Stripes raised high over Adolf Hitler Platz, the square on which the Nazis used to hold their indecent Nazi ceremonies.

And there came also an American jeep decorated with a big blue-and-white Mogen David, Star of David, symbol of Judaism and Jews. Seated behind its wheel, an American rabbi in Army

uniform, Chaplain David M. Eichhorn, drove across the city, across the square and then into the Zeppelin Stadium. In this huge arena the Nazi Party Congresses used to be held, and there, ten vicious years before, 250,000 Nazis roared their sadistic approval of the "laws" that outlawed everything Jewish and wrote the death warrant for 6,000,000 of Europe's Jews.

The arriving jeep brought, besides the chaplain, a Jewish chaplain's assistant, and, in a second jeep, five Palestinian Jewish soldiers of the 45th Infantry Division, men who had shared in the fighting before Nuernberg.

Slowly the two-jeep procession wound around the perimeter of the huge stadium. It halted before the speaker's rostrum, from which Hitler in person had many a time screamed his hatred of the "degenerate democracies" and of all Jews. Over the rostrum still stood the towering swastika, glittering in gold-leaf, symbol of evil.

The soldiers came out of their vehicles. They formed a guard of honor around the Holy Ark. They carried it up the steps to the speaker's platform. There, reverently, the Ark was opened, the Torah was taken out. Led by the chaplain, a dozen men offered up prayers and sang songs of thanksgiving to God in an ancient tongue.

Now others arrived, men of the 3d Division which, with the 45th, had beaten down and taken Nuernberg. There was a major general, Wade H. Haislip, of the 15th Corps, which conquered Nuernberg. He said:

"We stand today amid the ruins of a city which gave its name to the infamous laws that violated every concept of human decency. Here Hitler reigned and strutted, and here he shouted

at the multitude who used to gather in propaganda-filled stupefaction. In this city Fascism flourished. We have conquered Nuernberg and we have destroyed it just as thoroughly as we shall destroy Fascism and every evil thing connected with it."

As he spoke, soldiers placed demolition charges at the base of the gold-leaf swastika, and when he finished they touched off the charges and blew the thing into a thousand splinters...

Chaplain Eichhorn drove back through wicked Nuernberg, through Adolf Hitler Platz. The sights and the sounds and the tales of bitter tragedy from Nazi prison camps throughout liberated Europe were fresh in his mind. He remembered that this had been, in pre-Nazi days, a beautiful mid-European town, its streets and houses redolent of history. That was before the Nazis and before the war against the Nazis. But that day Chaplain Eichhorn wrote of Nuernberg:

"I have never seen a more completely satisfying heap of ruins."

There were 13 men in a slit trench on Saipan, and the Japanese were not far away. The Jap mortars came lobbing over, exploding with a deep BOOOOOM that shook the earth. The machine guns rattled their irregular shriek of death. The fighter-bombers flew low, strafing as they went, and in a lull the snipers' bullets crackled in the air. Then again the Jap mortars roared and exploded.

The thirteen men in a hole-in-the-ground crouched lower to escape flying death. Said one of them after a while: "Chaplain, what about a prayer?"

Out of 12 of the 13 some, by religion, were Protestant and some were Catholic and only Chaplain Milton Rosenbaum of

Cleveland, Ohio, was Jewish. But as they now turned to him—Well, thought the chaplain, it is time for prayer. Amid the pounding of the guns, he recited, and they intoned after him: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters . . . Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil . . ."

The chaplain's voice rose and fell and rose and came to a halt. The guns broke out angrily again, like a long rattle of approaching thunder. The men, though of diverse creeds, faced their fate together, stronger now for what they had heard.

They say that in the foxholes there was no discrimination by man against men because of creed or race or color.

Army Chaplain Eliezer A. Levi, born in Canada, received his rabbinical education in New York and had been 15 years an American when war broke out. He enlisted in 1942 and was the first Jewish Army chaplain assigned to the South Pacific. For more than a year he roamed over that far-flung theater. Then he spent ten months in the jungle battle-ground of New Guinea.

His first night at Port Moresby he spent in a jail—a privilege, the jail being one of the few buildings which still had four walls and a roof. Thereafter he traveled all over the vast jungle island, talking to Jewish soldiers, writing letters to their families, holding services.

"Primitive conditions," he wrote then, "increase the spirit of friendliness and tolerance. There are no bigots in foxholes. In this atmosphere personal problems are increased and accentu-

ated. The boys spend long nights in slit trenches worrying—about the folks at home.

"The boy who should be complaining of his wound worried only about how his family would take it on learning he had been hurt. They are a curious lot, these fighting men of ours, whose minds and hearts have never stopped thinking along civilian lines. One night I lay in a foxhole while Jap planes swarmed overhead, and farther down the line I could hear a sergeant reciting Shelley!"

The kunai grass—tough, tall, rough edged—that cuts your hand when you grasp it—grows everywhere in New Guinea, higher than a man's head. As you walk through it, it blocks from sight what is ahead and on either side. Visiting a jungle outpost, Chaplain Levi was thus walking along a road flanked on either side by kunai grass hedges that seemed like unending forests of tall grass.

At last he reached the American lines and the first soldier on post. "Did you just come up that road?" the soldier asked, and broke into loud and almost-impertinent laughter. "Chaplain," he explained, "that whole area through which you just came is alive with Jap patrols. It's a miracle you got through!"

There was a Passover service, in the Spring of 1944, in the jungle, or at least at Port Moresby, entirely surrounded by jungle. The Red Cross building became the Passover synagogue. Men of all faiths volunteered for work to make it a success. They worked as cooks, as decorators, in many other ways. A general contributed paper cups for the Passover wine. Volunteers carried Wiley cookers on foot through the jungle from a distant army

camp to Port Moresby.

There were matzoth and wine and prayer books supplied by the National Jewish Welfare Board and brought from half way around the world. Preparations were made for 350 soldiers—600 showed up. The equatorial rains came pouring down without a letup throughout the service, but the overflow crowd stood outdoors, through the deluge, and not a man left.

Said Chaplain Levi:

"There is nothing glamorous or entertaining about the things that happen on New Guinea while they're happening. I kept no special notes of what was going on, and now I find I can scarcely remember these events at all.

"I only remember courageous men surpassing themselves in the interests of mankind, that every inch of ground on New Guinea has been a battleground. And that every man who fought there is a hero."

Herewith are excerpts from a letter which Marine Chaplain Roland B. Gittelsohn of Rockville Center, New York, wrote from still flaming Iwo Jima, back in March, 1945:

"The worst hell was the first two days. By the time we landed the front lines were far up enough so that we had no trouble at all. We are living at 14 Gut-Ache Lane. The street was so named by me on discovering that digging a foxhole big enough for two is a little strenuous on the belly muscles. I started this letter this afternoon while visiting wounded . . . I can look down on the ground where we made our landings and see more ships of more different kinds than you would ever believe possible . . .

"I spent most of the day visiting one of the hospital ships off-

shore. Besides doing what I went for, I met several Jewish boys from the crew who had not seen a Jewish chaplain before, and I promised to write their folks when I got a chance.

"Yesterday I spent the whole afternoon at the division cemetery. It is gruesome business. I have seen and smelled human bodies the way they should never be seen or smelled. It is impossible to believe how even a softy like me could build up so carefully a wall of detachment under these circumstances . . .

"There was a group of 12 Christian boys to be buried yesterday afternoon, and Chaplain Guthreal invited me to participate in the service along with himself and two Protestant Chaplains. I read a Psalm for the scriptural portion of the service. Later in the afternoon I had two Jewish burials, two of the first in our cemetery . . .

"I could write reams on how wonderful most of our kids are in combat. I haven't heard one whimper yet, no matter how badly hurt the boy is. I have a kid whose hand I held while the doctor was digging hunks of shrapnel from a hole in the back of his knee big enough for two fists, and I felt his hand trembling in mine but he wouldn't admit it hurt.

"I have seen another tell the medics to take care of every one else, saying there was nothing wrong with him but a scratch, and then discovering an hour later that he had a bullet clear through his leg. The only time those kids break down is when they tell you about buddies who were killed beside them. Their behavior is encouraging and wonderful and terribly, terribly pathetic . . .

"Last night I held what was probably the first Jewish service ever held on Iwo Jima . . . Eighteen men gathered for a most impressive service just before dark. We stood high up on a cliff

overlooking the beaches on which our landings were made 12 days ago, with the setting sun at our backs.

"This morning at 10 we held a Sabbath morning service, on the other side of the line, for artillery and a few Army boys. We weren't more than a few hundred yards from a battery of 150 mm. howitzers, and our prayers were punctuated by their concussion and blast."

It was Chaplain Gittelsohn who delivered the famous eulogy at Iwo Jima cemetery, one of the fine pieces of literature to come out of the war.

Private Joe Cohen was in the third bus that drew up before the entrance to Halloran General Hospital in Staten Island. Joe Cohen wasn't his name, but it will do. There were other Joe Cohens in the bus, of different names, religions, national origins. Some leaned on crutches, preparing to get out. Some clung to their seats, conserving every ounce of strength to the last minute. They were hollow-eyed, hollow-cheeked men, some with fresh bandages over old wounds. Private Joe Cohen's face was fearfully burned.

A chaplain in uniform, Aaron Blumenthal of Houston, Texas, climbed in as the bus came to a stop. He talked to the men. He welcomed them "back to the United States and to the hospital." A band played military marches and Chaplain Blumenthal said he knew they had been through much suffering, as prisoners in Germany, but now that was behind them.

Now they were back in their own country, among relatives and friends, "and if there's anything any of us can do for you, we shall consider it a high privilege to be helpful." He said that

many relatives waited for them here in the hospital and they would be able to see them soon.

In the tense silence that followed, crowding in with a sort of physical weight you could feel, Joe Cohen said—as if to himself—"Gee, that's bad."

In the receiving ward later the chaplain made a point of shaking hands with the boy of the flaming red face, repeating individually the welcome he had already given to the returning "repatriates." The boy interrupted him impulsively.

"Look, chaplain," he said, "how can I find out whether my folks are here. And if they are, do I have to see them?"

"You don't have to," said the chaplain. "But—why not?"

The boy shrugged thin shoulders and said, "Look at me." Then he said, "It's all right. The way I feel about it, I'm lucky to be alive. I'm not worrying about myself. But I don't know. How's the family going to take—this? How would, well, anybody take it? They told us about plastic surgery and later on, I guess, I'll be all right. But now—"

Gently the chaplain told him the miracle of plastic surgery was not performed in hours or days. It would take many months, and could he keep his family away that long? The boy—he seemed so young when you didn't look directly into his malformed face—said it wasn't only the family. He didn't explain that. He said would the chaplain speak to his dad—before?

In a hospital corridor the elder Cohen asked, "Did you see my boy, chaplain? How bad is he?"

How do you answer a question like that? the chaplain asked himself. What words do you use? What intonation of voice? How do you go about telling the truth he must know, but without

that shock to a seared mind that must go with the truth? Suddenly, the chaplain decided to hold back nothing.

"Your son," he said, "is very badly burned. Very. Otherwise the Nazis would not have permitted him to return. His face—"

He continued, describing brutal details.

The father, his own face in his hands, moaned only "God—God—God!"

"All that," said the chaplain, "doesn't worry him. He knows about plastic surgery. He knows he'll be restored, almost to normal. He says, 'Thank God I'm alive,' but he doesn't know about you and his mother. He doesn't know how you two will take it."

"Can I see him?" asked the father. He promised, "I'll be all right." The boy's mother—she'd be all right too. But there was a girl.

"If she breaks down, if she takes it wrong—that's what's worrying my boy—it will break his heart."

Father and son met that evening in the merciful shadows outside the hospital. "Thank God you're home, Sonny!" said father to son. As they threw their arms about each other, the chaplain quietly closed a door and walked away. What more was said between them nobody else heard.

Private Cohen was pleased about the meeting with his father. "The old man's a great guy," he said. "I knew he could take it."

He knew, he said, that Mother would be all right too. He had spoken to her by telephone. He had also spoken to the girl, told her she must not try to see him—ordered her to stay home until he was ready to pay her a call. He was obviously uneasy about that. She hadn't promised, despite all his arguments, to stay home and wait.

There was a special ceremony in the hospital auditorium next morning when, in the presence of 400 men, they presented awards to 11 of the repatriates, awards for outstanding heroism before they were made prisoners.

One after another an officer on the platform called out the names and read the citations. Sitting up in a front row, Joe Cohen glanced nervously now and then, over his shoulder. But there was too much of a crowd. Whether his parents—or the girl—were there he couldn't see. The colonel's voice droned on. At last he called "Private Joe Cohen." Joe Cohen took his place beside the others, at a strict attention. The voice on the platform read on. "For extraordinary heroism in action against the enemy . . ." "Above and beyond the line of duty . . ." "With complete disregard of his own safety . . ." "Distinguished himself through his display of personal courage, dauntlessness and devotion to duty . . ." "Reflects great credit on himself and the Armed Forces . . ." The award: the Distinguished Service Cross.

The chaplain watched him as the medal was pinned to Joe Cohen's jacket and he returned the salute. More names were called and more awards given. Standing at rigid attention, Joe Cohen wondered—he couldn't drive the thought from his mind—how he looked in his fresh uniform from the rear of the auditorium.

The ceremonies ended. Chaplain Blumenthal came up to shake hands with the boy, to tell him "We're all proud of you." But Private Cohen hardly heard him. His eyes roved restlessly, searching, trying to pierce the auditorium full of soldiers and others, most of them now on their feet.

"Did you see my dad?" he asked.

At that moment a group of three broke through the crowd, and young Cohen saw them: father, mother and the girl. For a fleeting moment the chaplain noted that she was slim and smiling with head held high, and in holiday dress, as if for a proud occasion. An instant later, Joe Cohen had broken away from him and was racing down the aisle, while the girl was making her way swiftly, between the rows of chairs, toward him.

They met in the middle of the auditorium. Four hundred pairs of eyes were on them but they didn't care. The girl held him very close, never flinched as she looked into his poor, mutilated face and said over and over again: "Joe! Joe! Joe! You're the most beautiful man in the world!"

The chaplain turned to leave before some one remarked about his moist eyes.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THEY DELIVERED THE ATOM

THIS IS THE STORY of the Jewish men in the 20th Air Force—the Air Force of the B-29's which in the last year of World War II pounded Japan's home islands, burned her cities and her war plants, left the Japanese Empire helpless and beaten even before the first atom bomb came fluttering down over unsuspecting Hiroshima. Then dropped the atom bombs, too, on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as a war-ending clincher.

It is a cross-section story, just as the Jewish story of any U. S. Army, or Air Force, or fleet, or lesser unit of any of these, would be a kind of cross-section of each unit story as a whole.

In the 20th Air Force, as in every large outfit of the U. S. fighting forces and many small, the Jews in uniform were to be found up and down the ranks and through all the commands. The Jewish fighters were not in any one place or organization, nor were their records. Their story, therefore, could be assembled only the hard way, by reaching out to the men themselves wherever they were, by visiting their commands which dotted

a string of tropical Pacific Islands, searching their records, corresponding with the men and, at times, with their families at home.

That job, of gathering, assembling, compiling the material that goes to make up this story was done by the 20th's only Jewish chaplain, David I. Cedarbaum, then of New York, now of Chicago, as a by-product of his regular chaplain's duties. Major Cedarbaum—that was his Army rank—took up his post at headquarters at the 20th A.F. on the island of Guam, on March 7, 1945, a turning point date, as it happened, in the history of the B-29s.

On that day, by order of 38-year-old Major General Curtis E. LeMay, the B-29s reversed their previous methods of flying and fighting and so launched a five-month period of the most destructive air warfare in history. The sky giants, up to then, had bombed from sub-stratosphere altitudes of 20,000 to 35,000 feet and carried heavy armament for self-defense against fighters. General LeMay stripped his superbombers of almost all armament, sent them in at 7,000 feet—and sometimes at 4,000—and sent them in at night instead of by day. Flying this low and using less fuel, they carried more bombs, bombed more accurately and, as it turned out, were no less safe than before.

From the beginning, Chaplain Cedarbaum sensed the unique character of the 20th Air Force in the war and to the manifold other duties of a chaplain in such a far-flung organization he added the task of historian of its Jewish personnel.

The 20th Air Force has a stirring history which began back in 1942 when the first XB-29, experimental ancestor of all the great line of superfortresses, went up in a test flight—and flew. By

April of 1944 the first 200 B-29s were in India, bombing the fringes of Japan's stolen empire, and from there they moved across the Himalayan "Hump" to bases in China—and finally to the Marianas, to come to close grips with Japan itself.

By the time Chaplain Cedarbaum joined the 20th, it consisted of five wings and numerous auxiliary units. These were located on Guam, on Tinian, on Saipan. Some units were on recently-won Iwo Jima. He made an intensive study of one wing, the 73rd, and found that it contained 473 Jews of whom 166 were flying personnel. Eleven were pilots, 65 were navigator-bombardiers. Eight were killed in action, 13 were listed as missing and of these one was later liberated. Of the 166 flying people, 94 won the D.F.C. or higher decoration.

There is every reason to believe that these figures represent only about 60 percent of the decorations.

By September, 1945, a month after the war's end, the number of Jewish fighters and fliers killed in action in the 73rd Wing had risen to 13. The missing were 48, the liberated 10. The large number of the missing gives an indication of how often men and planes were lost on the 1600-mile flight to Japan and, even more, on the flight back.

If the distribution of Jews to overall personnel was about the same throughout the 20th, he calculated, it meant that General LeMay's command had some 3,000 Jews, about 900 of them flying men.

To visit them all, and with any frequency, was of course out of the question. Chaplain Cedarbaum found what other chaplains coming to other outfits also found, that small groups of Jewish soldiers, ten or fifteen or twenty men, without a chap-

lain's service, had organized themselves into minyanim, held their own Friday night services, and thus in a layman's way kept up their Jewish consciousness, their communal feeling toward other Jews in their outfits, their spiritual bonds to Jews all over the world.

The newly installed chaplain, using these groups as a basis, presently organized a series of larger services, at which he presided, making the rounds of the islands each month. In the one month of July, 1945, he presided at 35 different services, meetings, group discussions on the three islands.

He had hardly reached his new post when he found himself involved, along with Navy chaplain Philip Lipis, in the organization of an ambitious Passover service on Guam, the first ever held in that part of the Pacific. The ancient Seder services were celebrated on March 28, simultaneously in two large mess halls.

Twenty-seven hundred soldiers and sailors attended. The Hebrew Hagadah they used had been printed on the Island by 20th AF presses. No doubt to all of them it was the most impressive service of their lives.

Things like this happened. At one Friday night service on Guam, the chaplain noted a late arriving GI who took a front seat. He looked unkempt and unwashed, as if he had just returned from a tough mission—which indeed was the case. The visitor was Staff Sergeant Abraham Veroba of Brooklyn, central fire control gunner. During the service his peculiarly fervent singing voice rose above the rest. The chaplain invited him to sing the Kiddush, which he did. Came the following Friday and Staff Sergeant Veroba was there again,

neatly dressed now, and this time he sang the whole service.

But between the two Fridays, the chaplain told his congregation, the singing sergeant had gone on another mission to Japan, had had to bail out on the way home from a badly damaged B-29, had drifted for hours in a small boat at sea and was rescued and brought back . . . Things like that were not rare among men of the 20th AF. Such men, too, were not rare—men who flew 1600 miles to Japan and back, who risked their lives and who were also devoted Jews.

There were some Jewish officers above junior rank in the 20th. Colonel Sol Zoller, a regular Army man originally from New York, was commanding officer of the 91st Service Group among the first to reach Saipan, in November 1944. He won the Bronze Star with Oakleaf Cluster for supervising construction of service facilities, installing ingenious labor-saving devices. Lieutenant Colonel Martin Meater was Assistant Staff Judge Advocate at 20th Air Force Headquarters, Major Jacob Goodman was assistant to the deputy chief of staff for administration.

Months after the war was over, months after most of the fliers, the bombardiers, the radar men and the others who did the job on Japan had left for home and reconversion to civilian life, Chaplain Cedarbaum continued to gather information about the men of the 20th.

For example, on February 26th, 1946, Stanley H. Levine wrote from Hughesville, Pennsylvania:

"I was a member of a B-29 crew of the 5th Squadron, 9th Bomber Group, stationed on Tinian from the end of April till we were shot down on our 17th mission on August 8, 1945.

Our crew was captured by the Japanese—I believe the last B-29 crew to suffer this fate. We were liberated from our POW camp by American forces on September 12th."

Or there was the inquiry of a heartbroken mother, Mrs. Lillian Sheshansky of Brooklyn, seeking some certain word about her son, Staff Sergeant Harold Sheshansky, whose B-29 never returned from a mission over Japan back in March. The answer came in a letter from a Protestant chaplain, Malcolm D. Hooker, 27th Engineering Construction Battalion. Under date of November 20th, 1945, Chaplain Hooker wrote that in the Nagoya area of Japan he found an English-speaking Japanese civilian who located the grave of Staff Sergeant Sheshansky and the ten members of his crew who had crashed with him on March 25th.

"All eleven were killed," the chaplain wrote. "They were buried in the grounds of a nearby temple. After peace, civilians built a white cedar fence around the plot, placed flowers on the grave, erected a huge cross with the words, in Japanese, 'The Grave of Brave Warriors Under the American Air Force.'" The bodies were subsequently removed to a U. S. military cemetery with services by chaplains of the appropriate faiths. Chaplain Cedarbaum wrote to a Jewish chaplain in Japan and service in the Jewish tradition—Kaddish—was recited at the grave.

In May, in the last year of the war, 400 B-29s at a time used to raid the home islands of Japan. Before the war ended, the number rose to 800 a day. But that was later. On one of the 400 that flew on May 23, a New York boy was the navigator, a second lieutenant named Seymour Sacks. The target, Tokyo.

Nothing of consequence happened as the big birds of doom for Nippon assembled from their bases on the Marianas and as they flew toward Japan. Nothing until landfall. But from landfall to land's end—all the time the plane was over Japan, coming and going—everything, it seems, happened.

(You look at a B-29 at close range, on the ground or alighting or taking off, and it is a huge man-made bird of metal, incredible in size and weight, a winged monster. To the men in it, flying long hours to the attack and then home, their B-29 is a self-contained little world of its own, in which you live-or-die by special rules, by special B-29 laws of nature: The law of the pressurized air chamber, and the law of the engines which must go on and on, and the law of the fuel supply and of the bomb bay and of the bombs and of other such laws.

(And it is also a law of those who fly the B-29, or almost an unvarying law, that the fighter planes come darting out of the sky, spitting at the microcosm which is your B-29, and that the flak comes up in billowing waves of shrapnel intent on your destruction.)

From landfall to Tokyo, Jap fighters pressed in on the B-29s and on the B-29 which the young lieutenant navigated. The big, fast Superfort shook them off. And all the way, as the B-29s flew, they awoke the ack-ack guns on the ground below, like so many snarling watch-dogs whom a stranger's passing aroused. All along the straight course of the B-29's flight, the guns barked savagely. And after a while, Navigator Sacks came in sight of the target city, and the plane was at 7,000-foot altitude and she straightened out, along with those other B-29s, for the bomb run.

Now it was a matter of minutes or less before the aiming point would show up in the bombardier's sights, and the incendiaries would go floating down . . . and then the B-29s, their day's job done, would turn and fly for home.

Suddenly a persistent Jap fighter shot across the bomb run course. Into the little world riding the bomb run, in which every mind was centered on the approaching moment of attack, came the crash of the fighter's 20-millimeter explosive shell. Hot shrapnel tore through the navigator's compartment, cut deep wounds in both his legs and in the right arm, banged up one knee, making any movement almost impossible.

His blood flowed profusely and "the seriousness of his condition," a citation later recorded, "was aggravated by shock from loss of blood." But—such is the law of the B-29—the superfort did not waver from her set course. Some moments later, before the bombs had been released, rising flak tore into the bomb bay and exploded an incendiary bomb. The explosion blew open the forward pressure door, wedged part of the burning bomb in between the navigator's compartment and the forward turret.

There it rested within a few feet of the helpless navigator, inches from the remaining incendiaries still packed into the bomb bay, threatening at any instant to set off all the remaining incendiaries in one inclusive explosion.

The danger was imminent and would not wait. Lieutenant Sacks, despite the pain and the shock and the loss of blood, saw it. Gathering his waning strength by a kind of act of will, he thrust the pressure door closed, turned the jammed bomb around, opened the door again, pushed the incendiary out

through the open bomb bay.

That necessary job done, the lieutenant returned to his navigator's post, guided the plane over the target and then from the target to land's end. Other crew members offered to come to his aid, but he wouldn't have it.

The Jap fighters were still pecking away at the home-bound B-29, and the flak was coming up, and men could not be spared from their regular jobs nor could a navigator afford to stray from his instruments. He declined a sedative, which would have lessened the pain, stuck to his job.

Only when land had been left behind, and the fighter planes and the flak guns with it—only then did he let the boys patch him up a little. That done, back he went to his maps and his instruments, and completed the job of navigating the B-29 1,500 miles over the open sea to home base.

They awarded him the D. S. C. for "intrepid courage"... "gallant action"..."disregard for his own personal safety"... which reflected great credit on himself and the Army Air Forces of the U. S. A.

Men of the 20th Air Force went through that kind of experience again and again. First Lieutenant George Backer of Brooklyn was in on the May 24 attack against Japan's capital. This was one of the big night incendiary raids, coming only four days after the big attack of May 20. Between them, the two raids burned out 22 square miles of Tokyo, left it a flattened desert of rubble.

Four planes led the 400 that day, as pathfinders. Their job was to start the fire at a precise point, light up the target for

other planes that followed. Pathfinders must make no mistake. Their instructions were: To bomb at 1,000 feet, almost building-top level. Fierce winds swept Tokyo that night but the sky was clear. Searchlights caught the Backer plane as he piloted it over the target and the bombs were dropped.

Fighters and suicide planes roared in from every side. The gunners' fire drove the fighters back, exploded four of the kamekaze in mid-air.

Then the flak, automatically co-ordinated with the search lights, came hurtling up with deadly accuracy. The wings were riddled. A direct hit stopped the No. 4 engine, set it afire. The big B-29 shuddered but kept on. A second hit exploded in the radar compartment, filled it with smoke and flames, left the right gunner wounded. The probing searchlights clung to the crippled ship, wouldn't be shaken off.

Pilot Backer, working with his plane commander, succeeded, finally, in lifting the B-29 beyond reach of the searchlights and the flak. Now he personally closed the still-open bomb bay doors and put out the fire in the radar room. But the ship had taken a terrific beating. A main gas line had been cut and gasoline, life blood of the flying B-29, was pouring out. Never would this B-29 reach the Marianas, 1,500 miles away. On three uncertain motors, the pilot turned the plane toward Iwo Jima, just managed to land. There the terribly battered B-29 had to be junked. For his part in the flight, Lieutenant Backer was awarded the D.F.C.

One of the 500 B-29s that raided Japan on June 19 came back limping. In spite of the crew's best efforts, the plane

cracked up on landing. Struts and side walls caved in, fuel lines snapped, gasoline and oil squirted in all directions and the hazard of fire breaking out any instant was great. Most of the crew were pinned under the wreckage, unable to move. There was a lucky exception. First Lieutenant Sherman S. Cohen of Rochester, New York, radar navigator, was unhurt and free to step out to easy safety.

Only, he didn't. A short distance from him, the plane commander lay jammed under a confused heap of shattered plane parts. Cohen ripped away the debris, freed the battered commander, helped him to the pilot's escape hatch, where others carried him away.

The lieutenant then turned back and groped his way into the wrecked bomber's nose. There he found the navigator, pinned down and seriously injured. Him he half dragged, half carried to the escape hatch. Only when he had made certain that all crew members were out of the wreck did he, too, leave it. Awarded the Soldier's Medal, he was cited for "courage," for "utter fearlessness in the face of danger."

Also awarded the Soldier's Medal was Staff Sergeant Milton Nash of Denver, Colorado, for heroism on Tinian Island on May 20, 1945. There a plane, taking off on a combat mission, "swerved off the runway, cartwheeled and started to burn in the midst of parked aircraft." One after another the mines with which the plane was loaded blew up in a series of terrific explosions. Other planes in the vicinity were badly damaged, trucks and jeeps standing by were smashed, their occupants hurled to the ground.

Staff Sergeant Nash, in the area of the crash when it occurred,

made for the burning plane, forced his way into it even while the explosions were still going off, searched the wreckage for survivors and for still unexploded mines. That job done, he noted that another B-29 nearby had caught fire. Says the citation: "Disregarding the possibility that it also might be loaded with bombs, he directed the fire fighting so skillfully that the intense blaze was extinguished."

The Soldier's Medal citation speaks of the Sergeant's "courage . . . disregard for his own personal safety . . . heroism."

Back in December, 1944—on Dec. 3—there was a collision over Tokyo. An "enemy aircraft," the records tell—maybe a suicide plane—crashed into the B-29 on which First Lieutenant Joseph Hankoff of Baltimore was the bombardier. The Jap plane went hurtling to earth, trailing a ribbon of black smoke, and the B-29 remained in flight, but not without damage.

No. 4 engine was knocked out. The right blister was broken and the plane was depressurized—leaving the crew with no defense against the bitter cold they must meet in the upper altitudes.

As the big plane stumbled along on three engines, the Jap fighters closed in, like jackals eager to finish a wounded lion. But the lion still had fangs. The B-29 gunners knocked two of the attacking fighter planes out of the sky and badly damaged a third. The rest, discouraged, turned back. Throughout the air battle, Lieutenant Hankoff, besides keeping up his share of the defense, paid personal visits to the other crew members, kept their morale high and "contributed materially to saving the airplane and lives of the crew." He was awarded another Oak Leaf Cluster to his Air Medal. All his awards: Air Medal

and six Oak Leaf Clusters, Distinguished Flying Cross, Presidential Unit Citation with Oak Leaf Cluster.

Staff Sergeant Alexander Gorwitz of Philadelphia was a gunner in a night incendiary attack on Kawasaki. His B-29, a pathfinder, had the duty of reaching the target first, lighting it up for the other bombers. Still 200 miles from the target city, mechanical trouble developed in two of the engines. One of them was silenced. The other, though functioning, smoked and backfired. The pathfinder pushed ahead but at dangerously slow speed. Deadly ack-ack fire came pouring up during the slow, perilous bomb-run, but the bombs were dropped and the target was brilliantly lighted up. The B-29s which followed reduced it to ashes.

Homeward bound, the second engine had to be silenced. And as the crippled big bomber turned out to sea, clouds of enemy fighters rose to bring her down. But the "brilliant gunnery" of Staff Sergeant Gorwitz and others in the crew drove the attackers back, kept her from further harm. With only two engines operating, the halting B-29 found her way home, safe. Staff Sergeant Gorwitz was awarded the D. F. C.

Incidents like that recurred again and again. Thus, on April 24, 1945, the plane commanded by Captain Leo Nathans of Newark, New Jersey, on its way to bomb the Tachikawa aircraft engine plant near Tokyo, ran into a wolfpack of more than 50 Jap fighters. It was a raid by daylight, and the attacking fighters kept up their pursuit to within 50 yards of the target, trying to split-off the bomber from the others in the formation. Then, on the bomb run, the ack-ack guns tossed up their shellfire. One

engine (No. 2) was hit and knocked out. An oil line was smashed and oil leaked in a dangerous stream. Flak broke through the bomber's nose and into the pilot's compartment.

But the pilot, Captain Nathans at the controls, kept the B-29 on course with, the citation records, "excellent results," flying her back home, 1500 miles, on three engines. He was awarded the D. F. C. . . .

On a plane attacking in February, 1945, Flight Officer Edwin I. Kushner of New York was the bombardier. Fighter planes in swarms and the anti-aircraft guns did what they could to interfere. But a worse hazard than either of these was the heavy smoke that lay over the target, result of the bombing by preceding B-29s. The smoke clouds made it almost impossible to pick out the target and to find the aiming point. Somehow, Bombardier Kushner found both, and three quarters of his bombs dropped within 1,000 feet of the aiming point—in B-29 language that is a bull's eye. His award, a D.F.C. Officer Kushner was reported missing in action on a subsequent flight mission on June 27.

Sometimes the things that happen on a bombing raid pile up and pile up until it would seem that nothing could save plane and crew. It was so with a Superfort attacking the Nakajim aircraft works near Tokyo, on February 15, 1945. Staff Sergeant Harold Danchik of Cleveland was the flight engineer on that mission, the man whose job it is to watch for any developing mechanical trouble, to see that all the plane's complicated gadgets work right.

The usual pattern of fighter planes and ack-ack met the B-29,

caused some damage though not enough to keep the bombs from settling on the target. The harm to the plane appeared slight and, with bombs away, it seemed that only a quiet, routine homeward flight faced the crew.

It did not turn out like that. No. 3 propeller gave the first sign of trouble. For what seemed no reason—but the reason lay in that going-over by the enemy ground guns—it wavered and wobbled and got out of control. Then the No. 3 engine caught fire, burst into flames. There is a way of putting out that kind of fire if you are high enough in the air, and if your plane will stand it. The pilot in this case had no choice but to try. Down he dived, all engines roaring full force, for a mile or so, and when he leveled off the fire was out.

But the terrific speed that doused the flames had also yanked off the wobbling No. 3 propeller, and as the plane banked, the loosened propeller crashed through the fuselage, cutting the controls of the ailerons, the "little wings" that keep a plane on balance, and of the No. 4 engine. A wealth of in-flight emergency repair jobs was thus created for the flight engineer, and for the rest of the crew too.

"Despite this severe damage," related the citation with Danchik's D. F. C. award, "they (the crew) successfully completed the long over-water return to their home base at a dangerously low altitude."

In story after story of the men who bombed Japan, the outline is similar, the phrases and the terms that recur are the same. Small differences in detail crop up—but to the men in the B-29s they were large differences, sometimes as

large as the difference between life and death.

Thus the B-29 which attacked Tokyo in the raid of May 25, with First Lieutenant Abram Grossman of Asbury Park, New Jersey, as flight engineer. From landfall to land's end came the constant, severe, harassing attack of fighter planes and ack-ack guns. On the bomb run, when a bomber must not veer from a set course and is therefore most vulnerable, one engine was knocked out by flak and a large hole was torn in the right wing. With only three engines functioning and gasoline pouring out of the wing tank, the Superfort nevertheless finished her bomb run, dropped her bombs.

Now the propeller of the damaged engine, flopping about like the arms of a windmill, tore away from its moorings, slammed against the side of the fuselage, "resulting in further structural damage."

This damage the flight engineer and the rest of the B-29 crew never got a chance to repair. Badly crippled as it was, and still within a short distance of the Japanese coast, the bomber was now attacked by converging fighter planes. First the instrument and control cables were heavily damaged. Then a second engine caught fire and nothing the harassed crew could do would put out the blaze. Then a third engine went dead. Now the plane, breathing heavily on a single engine, dropped down and down. There came the moment when the decision had to be made, the hardest required of a flier. The plane commander gave the order—bail out.

Seventy miles from the Japanese mainland, on the well-traveled route which the B-29s followed between the Marianas and Japan, Lieutenant Grossman and the others of his crew

stepped out of their battered B-29 into nothingness, with only air and sea water below. As they hung, precariously, from their silken parachute-umbrellas, they watched, with a sort of helpless anger, their beautiful but now crippled B-29, nose dive past them into the sea.

One after another they hit the water and floundered about. Rescue came fast, but not fast enough for all. Lieutenant Grossman and four more members of the crew were fished out of the water, brought home to safety. Six others never returned.

When the time came to try for the knockout blow of Japan with the new and terrifying and even to its makers unknown atomic bomb, that duty was given as a matter of course to the 20th Air Force. It was given to the specially-selected personnel of the 509th Composite Group, each man picked for reliability and skill in the particular job assigned to him. Ground crew men as well as those who went on the two historic flights of August 6th and August 9th 1945 were on the atom bomb mission. And among both, a due proportion of officers and enlisted men were Jews.

There was Captain Joseph Slusky of Hartford, Connecticut, engineering officer of the Group, technical inspector and flight test engineer. Major Guy Geller of Lebanon, Pennsylvania, was Squadron Adjutant. First Lieutenant William Schiller of Brookline, Massachusetts, had the post of armament officer. Captain Bernard H. Budmen of Philadelphia, ammunition and delivery officer, personally supervised delivery of the two atom bombs and their loading on the planes. First Lieutenant Meyer Rothenberg of Denver, Colorado, was adjutant of the squadron which maintained the atom-bomb planes. And First Lieutenant

Richard J. Podolsky of Amelia, Ohio, was the group's electrical officer.

Said 1st Lieutenant Jacob Beser of Baltimore, the only Jewish officer who flew in both the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombing planes, in a letter to Chaplain Cedarbaum.

"There were numerous Jewish GIs in the outfit. They contributed their utmost wherever they were, as did every man in the 509th."

Lieutenant Beser had been in charge of the radar maintenance section of the 393d Bomb Squadron during its training period. On the August 6th strike he was the radar counter-measure observer in the plane that carried the atom bomb to Hiroshima. As it worked out, this was a mission that ran into just about no trouble. Accompanied only by two observation planes, the atom-bomb plane was ignored by Japanese fighter planes, as it drew near its target city, and left alone by the anti-aircraft gunners.

After the huge formations of B-29s to which the Japanese had been subjected, up to 800 in a single day's raiding, two or three lone planes in the sky were, no doubt, dismissed, if they were sighted at all, as carriers of nothing more lethal than a camera for taking pictures of a previous day's destruction.

The atom plane moved in over Hiroshima shortly after 9 a.m., as scheduled, and exactly at 9:15 a.m., Japan time, as scheduled, the bomb release was pressed and "the bomb cleared and fell toward the planned objective." Then the plane "headed from the area." On the return trip, too, there was no interference from the enemy, and no interference at all except for a few moments of wild rocking in the turbulent air, moments of

man-made storm set off when an atom split 1500 feet above Hiroshima.

But throughout that history-making flight from the takeoff in the Marianas until "bomb away," a weird, mysterious and terrifying danger flew with the men in the atom-bomb plane. Never before had an aircraft cleared the ground, prepared to attack with this newest of man's scientific super-weapons, and no one knew—the men in the plane didn't know—what might happen if, somewhere along the line, something went wrong.

In every man's mind hovered the troubled thought of a premature explosion. Every take-off is an adventure which carries with it a percentage, though small, of possible mis-adventure. If in this most perilous of takeoffs an accident should intervene—if any one of a hundred possible accidents should cause a crack-up at the start—would this newest little gadget thought up by the scientific mind of man go off, and instantly disintegrate plane and crew into atomic dust?

All precautions had been taken against a mis-step, either at the takeoff or later. But the possibility of sudden atomic death for the crew remained even after the plane had safely taken to the air, and struck out toward Japan. It became an acute danger as the doomed target city drew near.

It was a clear summer morning, that morning of August 6th, in Japan. The jagged coastline of Kyushu Island lay clearly outlined far below. The green isle was criss-crossed by a pattern of rivers, dotted with brownish-gray spots that were cities. Any moment, out of the slightly hazy sky, the enemy's fighter planes might appear and come roaring in with guns wide open, and any moment the ground guns might open up. And if from

fighter plane or ack-ack gun one direct hit landed—

What Lieutenant Beser and the rest of the crew did not know was that the Japanese down below were not bothering about the three B-29s, which seemed to be bound on a reconnaissance mission, nothing worse. Actually the air raid alarm was sounded in Hiroshima that morning, as it was sounded almost every morning, when the B-29s in heavy formation flew by, bound for targets elsewhere. Hiroshima itself, with its quarter of a million population, had been let alone by the big bombers and though the quarter million worried about that, and rumors spread that the Americans were preserving the city for some extra-special punishment, this day in Hiroshima started like many other days for months past. The alarm sounded and then as the B-29 formations disappeared came the all-clear. When the bearer of the atom bomb and her two escort planes appeared overhead they aroused no new alarm.

"Throughout the mission," said Lieutenant Beser's citation with his Silver Star award, "the element of hazard from the unknown prevailed, for this was the first time this bomb, much more destructive than any other in existence, had been dropped from an airplane . . ."

Homeward bound from the Hiroshima mission, certain now of its terrific success, the atom bomb men thought and wondered about this thing they had let loose upon the earth: About the dead and the wounded, to be counted by the tens of thousands, their single bomb had left in a fleeting instant, there in Hiroshima; and about the future of war. Like men and women now all over the world, they were oppressed by the thought that this must mean the end of war—or the end of the human race.

Also on the Hiroshima mission, flying as radio operator in one of the two observation planes, was Sergeant Abe H. Spitzer of the Bronx, New York. He and Lieutenant Beser were together on the plane which dropped the second atom bomb, on the Japanese industrial city of Nagasaki. Both were awarded the D. F. C. for their share in that "extraordinary achievement."

The Nagasaki strike proved to be more hazardous to the fliers than its predecessor, just as the bomb they delivered carried greater destructive power.

The B-29 which set out on the August 9th mission was not at its start headed for Nagasaki at all. Its mission was the industrial city of Kokura. For 1500 miles the superfort with its atomic burden flew, from its base on Tinian Island, to the Japanese target city and while the observation planes hovered close by, it struck out along the bomb run—hopefully but without assurance. For above the target city hung a heavy layer of cloud and smoke, blotting it completely from sight.

Once and then again and again the superfort made the bomb run, but never a hole opened in the blanket of mixed smoke and fog, that might give the bombardier a chance to sight on an aiming point. When the third try had failed, and when at about that time the barking of anti-aircraft guns came up from below, any further attempts were abandoned as not only hopeless but suicidal. The atom-bearing plane and its observation escorts headed away from there fast and sought out a secondary, or alternative, objective. That was Nagasaki.

Thus it happened that the last—atomic—blow of the war

fell on Nagasaki and that Kokura was spared.

The citation with the D.F.C. award which went to both Lieutenant Beser and Sergeant Spitzer noted:

"Finding their primary objective obscured by smoke, they (the crew) made three bomb runs in an effort to fulfill the original plans but were then forced to turn to the secondary target.

"Despite a rapidly dwindling gasoline reserve, they reached the target and released the bomb on the important industrial city of Nagasaki with devastating effect. The power of this missile was so great as to threaten disintegration of the aircraft if it had been detonated while still in the bomb bay by a burst of flak or a hit by enemy fighters, or if it was dropped while the B-29 was close to the ground, as might have occurred during engine trouble."

Flying as bombardier-navigator of one instrument (observation) ship was Captain Charles Levy of Philadelphia. And four hours after the bomb's explosion, a photo reconnaissance plane moved in over the devastated city, brought back photographic evidence of the havoc wrought. Said the D. F. C. citation of First Lieutenant Frederick Charnes of Los Angeles, who was the navigator:

"Due to the daring of this crew, information of the greatest military, scientific and historical value was secured. Photographs, the first depicting the destruction at Nagasaki, were speedily returned to Guam." In addition to the usual dangers there were "the unknown perils connected with flying over this city so recently subjected to atomic bombing."

The shooting war came to an end, with the help of the 20th Air Force, in mid-August 1945. In September, the High Holy Days were celebrated by the Jewish men of the 20th, in solemn yet joyous services of a sort that that part of the world, or any part of the world, had never witnessed before.

The synagogue for this first after-the-war Holy Day services was a great B-29 hangar on Guam. There, for Rosh-Hashanah services beginning on the night of Friday, September 7th, and again for Yom Kippur ten days later, 1500 Jewish men in uniform assembled to worship, to give fervent thanks to God for victory and returning peace.

On a military cemetery not far away, a visitor or a passer-by could see—then or now—mute testimony of another sort to the part played by the Jewish soldiers of the 20th Air Force to get the war job done. For on this palm-fringed cemetery, alongside white wooden crosses are three white wooden Stars of David, side by side. They mark the graves of three Jewish men of the 20th Air Force who flew together, died together and were buried next to each other. One was a navigator, one a radio man, one a bombardier. They were trapped in their plane when it cracked up on a takeoff and couldn't escape. Their names: 1st Lieutenant Irving M. Stein, of Cleveland; 1st Lieutenant Bernard M. Miller of Cleveland; Technical Sergeant Arthur J. Dobrow of New York . . .

After the war was over, also, there was this 20th Air Force reunion in the Sellz home in Omaha, Nebraska:

It was the reunion of the twin Sellz brothers, Norman and Edward, after the only important separation of their lives. These two had always done things together. They enlisted

in the Army together. Together they attended radio and radar school and then gunnery school. They won their sergeant's stripes at the same time. They trained at the Kearney Air Base together and they were sent to Saipan at the same time and with same B-29 unit.

Both were B-29 radar men and, of course, they did not go into action on the same plane. But a good many times they found themselves on the same mission, though on different planes. And more often, one twin remained behind while the other flew.

On April 7, 1945, Norman Sellz flew on a Tokyo-bound mission and Edward remained behind, sweating it out. Norman's plane never came back. Ack-ack fire broke it in half and when somehow, Norman Sellz came to earth alive he was in a Tokyo back yard. Japanese civilians gathered him up, beat him unconscious, rushed him off to a Jap dungeon. There followed more beatings, tortures, semi-starvation. Until August 15th. Then, the invincible emperor having meanwhile surrendered, the beating of Norman Sellz and the other American prisoners stopped, the food became better. On August 29th he was liberated. But until that happened, to his brother Edward and to the family back in Omaha, Norman was among those "missing in action."

When he was finally liberated and flown back to the U. S., his brother Edward had preceded him there. And the twins were reunited . . . One of those who understood perhaps more keenly than the others what Norman Sellz had gone through was his father, Emanuel. He had been a Russian soldier in World War I, spent four years as a German prisoner of war.

This history of the Jewish fighters of the Twentieth Air Force, written from material assembled by Rabbi David I. Cedarbaum when he was its chaplain, is a typical story. It is similar to other stories that might be written of the Jewish fighters in every Army, Fleet and Air Force of the U. S. in World War II.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE STORY THE FIGURES TELL

FROM THE EARLIEST days of this country's history, Jews have contributed their share toward building America's democracy and defending it from its enemies.

They took part in the French and Indian Wars of two centuries ago and in every war for the nation's life from the American Revolution on.

This book is part of the record of their most recent contribution, in World War II.

Up to this point the book is made up of individual stories of Jews in the war—tales of high and unusual heroism and of run-of-the-mill fighting and bleeding and dying by the rank-and-file GI, by officers of all ranks, in all branches of service—actions on all war fronts and in every type of warfare, on the earth's surface and in the sky and under the sea.

These individual stories show the quality of the participation of American Jews in the war. The overall contribution, however, is best summarized in the statistics compiled by the Na-

tional Jewish Welfare Board through its Bureau of War Records.

These are the highlights of the statistical picture revealed by the latest tabulations *from the records, still incomplete, collected by the Bureau:

A total of 550,000 Jewish men and women served in the United States Armed Forces during World War II. In Military terms, this is the equivalent of 37 divisions.

Of the Jewish population of the United States, between 11% and 12% served in the armed forces of the country. This was about the average for the total population.

Jews in service were about 3½% of the total armed forces of the United States. This approximates their ratio in the total population.

The record for casualties and awards is as of July 1, 1946. Although this is more than a year after the guns were silenced in Europe and nearly a year after the last bomber dropped its last bomb on Japan, the figures are still not final. Information is still being transmitted on additional cases by various local war record committees throughout the country.

ALL THE CASUALTIES, DEAD, WOUNDED, CAPTURED AND MISSING—authenticated up to July 1, 1946—came to a total of 35,157.

10,500 JEWS DIED IN THE SERVICE, 8,000 IN COMBAT.

At least 50 Jewish families lost two sons in the war. One family lost three. More than 36,000 Jews in uniform received

*the sources and the computations for all the conclusions stated here are reported and explained in Volume II.

awards for valor and merit. They won among them an aggregate of 61,448 awards. Included were these:

1	MEDAL OF HONOR
74	DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSSES
37	NAVY CROSSES
47	DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDALS
344	Legion of Merit awards
1,627	Silver Stars
2,391	Distinguished Flying Crosses
222	Soldiers' Medals
30	Navy and Marine Corps Medals
6,090	Bronze Stars
16,068	Air Medals
26,009	Purple Hearts

The records show further that:

Jewish men and women were in every type of fighting service —on the ground, in the air, on the sea, and under the sea.

Information on over 120,000 servicemen from 403 cities and towns throughout the United States indicate that 81% were in the Army, 16% were in the Navy, 2% were in the Marines, and 1% in the Coast Guard. Of the men in the Army, a sixth were infantrymen and over one-fourth served in all Ground Force units combined. 29% of all the Jewish Army men were in the Air Forces, with about every fifth man a flyer.

Twenty-three men of Jewish faith reached top-level rank in the U. S. Army and Navy:

6 Major Generals	1 Admiral
13 Brigadier Generals	2 Rear Admirals
1 Commodore	

More than a third of all Jewish physicians were in uniform, —60 percent, or three out of every five of those under 45. Thirty percent of Jewish dentists in the New York metropolitan area entered the service.

Four Jewish families contributed eight members each to the armed forces. Twelve families contributed seven each. Nineteen families contributed six each.

That is the statistical record.

The gathering of the statistical material was a long and difficult undertaking. It required a sound administrative and technical organization, the collection of basic records from many sources, and thorough checking of these records for accuracy, completeness, and authenticity. More than the customary statistical precautions had to be exercised in the handling of the material because of the varied sources from which it came. Scientific tests had to be applied so that the conclusions and generalizations based upon these records might be sound and technically acceptable.

Fundamental to this task was unqualified confidence in the justice and in the soundness of the principles and the procedures of the Selective Service Act. It was anticipated that certain differences might be manifested by Jews in the service. It was equally apparent that a substantial portion of these differences could be interpreted in terms of the characteristics of the Jewish population of this country: its history and background, its age and sex composition, its occupational and industrial distributions, and other factors. That this confidence in the fair and satisfactory functioning of Selective Service was

not misplaced is clearly evident from the results.

Preparations for carrying out of this formidable statistical undertaking were launched as early as two months before the Japanese attack upon Pearl Harbor—on October 9, 1941. On that day, the Bureau of War Records of the National Jewish Welfare Board was set up. Its assigned duty was to assemble records of American Jews in a war already in the making. Twenty-one national organizations affiliated with the National Jewish Welfare Board agreed to sponsor the project. Others joined later, bringing the final number up to thirty-eight.

Representatives of these sponsoring organizations composed the Advisory Committee of the Bureau of War Records. A smaller Technical Committee was then appointed for the purpose of examining and approving all of the procedures involved in collecting and in analyzing the information that would become available, and in passing upon the final results and conclusions. The National Jewish Welfare Board was fortunate in enlisting the interest and cooperation of Dr. Louis I. Dublin, world renowned statistician, a vice-president of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, who from the beginning contributed his knowledge and direction in the development of the program of the Bureau of War Records and in the adoption of suitable procedures and techniques for collection and interpretation of material.

At the outset, a number of important decisions were made: first, the compilation of war records was largely the responsibility of local communities and, therefore, the Bureau of War Records planned a decentralized program. Second, a current census of Jews in service was utterly impracticable, and the

determination of the number and percentage of the Jewish population in the armed forces of our country would necessarily be based upon studies in selected Jewish communities throughout the country. Third, a current, name by name count of all Jewish casualties and awards would be maintained by the Bureau of War Records. Fourth, studies of special groups, such as physicians, dentists, men from farm families, refugees, would be made by the Bureau if practicable.

Through existing local Army and Navy Committees of the National Jewish Welfare Board, local Federations and Community Councils, together with the cooperation of national Jewish organizations, the Bureau was able to form local War Record Committees, which became the local instruments of the Bureau for gathering information from Jewish communities all over the country.

During the period of its functioning for the past six years, (and still continuing), more than 1000 communities shared in this enterprise— 208 cities and towns in the country, with a Jewish population of 1,000 or more each (having an aggregate of over 95% of the total Jewish population of the U. S.), contributed facts and figures through their local committees. In the smaller communities, numbering over 800, a dependable correspondent was found to supply information about local men and women in the armed forces.

Everywhere the backbone of the enterprise was the local volunteer. In ten of the largest Jewish communities, the local War Records Committees employed one or more full-time paid professional workers. The others operated with full-time volunteers and part-time paid clerical workers under professional

supervision, or (in the case of two) with part-time volunteers who were provided the necessary clerical help. The National Office of the Bureau of War Records set itself the task from the outset of becoming the central supervisory agency for war records work throughout the U. S., and also the repository of all information required in order to meet its objectives.

From this National Office of the Bureau, the various local War Record Committees received instructions for setting up and operating the local program, standard forms, record cards, schedules, letters of inquiry, authentication blanks, and a periodic newsletter advising each local committee of the progress of the general war records program, and serving in the interchange of local experiences between different communities. Thus, standardization of methods and procedures was achieved.

In turn, the local War Record Committees throughout the country transmitted to the Central New York Office of the Bureau of War Records, periodic and monthly reports on casualties and awards, information on local men and women in the service, and other pertinent data required for the final report on the participation of Jewish men and women in our armed forces.

Excellent cooperation was secured from the War and Navy Departments, and from Selective Service, both nationally and locally, which greatly facilitated the operation of the program and the ultimate interpretation of the accumulated data.

In the course of its work, the Bureau was confronted with some extremely difficult problems. One of these involved the question of identifying Jews who were not affiliated with any local Jewish organization, and who had not indicated their

religious preference when entering the service. A second problem, already referred to, involved the determination of the number and proportion of Jewish men and women entering our armed forces from the country as a whole and from our largest Jewish communities where, because of their size, complete canvasses of the local Jewish population could not be made. In this category, were such communities as New York City, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, Detroit, Los Angeles and Cleveland. The armed services keep no separate statistical records of Jews among their personnel. Special techniques were developed in order to estimate the figures.

Thus, in New York City, in order to determine the number of Jewish men in our armed forces, at various times during the war all available information was periodically reviewed in order to arrive at reasonable and valid estimates. Figures from Selective Service giving the total of men entering the armed forces were utilized, and the Jewish participation was determined on the basis of these draft figures and the latest and best available information obtained from local Jewish and other population studies. Somewhat comparable procedures were followed for data from Chicago, Philadelphia, and other communities. In Boston, the Bureau of War Records was successful in securing a complete canvass of an estimated 90% to 95% of the entire Jewish community in that metropolitan area. It was on the basis of such computations and compilations that the over-all figures for Jewish men and women in our armed forces were determined.

But this was not enough. As an additional test to determine the accuracy of the figures, sampling studies were undertaken

in New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles involving a door-to-door canvass of all Jewish families in statistically selected areas in the city. In New York City, these selected areas totalled approximately 50, and their selection was based on a careful scrutiny of census tract and health area data. These areas in the aggregate provided a satisfactory cross-section of the entire Jewish community of the five boroughs. Elsewhere, specific communities were selected as "samples", covering every section of the country, and included small, intermediate, and large cities.

The detailed studies completed in 20 representative cities, demonstrated that the percentage of Jews in uniform was always equal to and, in some instances, higher than the ratio of Jews to the general population.

This volume was designed by GEORGE HORNBY. Composition and printing by REAL TYPOGRAPHERS, INC., New York, N. Y., under the direction of HARRY D. MONSEY. Binding by the F. M. CHARLTON CO., INC., New York, N. Y.

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