

From the Boys in Service

SEPT. LAWRENCE HARRIS
SIXTY STORIES OF 30th DIVISION

The following history of the activities of the 30th Infantry Division on the Western Front in Europe was sent to Mr. and Mrs. Harold Lamm by Sgt. Lawrence Harris, who is with an anti-aircraft unit as a radioman. The story was passed for publication by Capt. E. C. Lavelly, chief press censor.

For some time I have been hoping I could tell you "Old boys" home about this outfit of ours and the great record it has made in World War II from the time it hit the Normandy beach and began fighting on June 15. Cameraship has kept our Old Hickory Division's engagements pretty much "under wraps" but we have made a record we'll stand up against any other division's and the Public Relations staff has made it easier for us to get the information back to you by summarizing the highlights of the 30th's great campaigns and getting the material cleared through the press censorship.

This is some of the information we can tell:

When the 30th Infantry Division troops charged through the greatest concentration of artillery and mortar fire they had met in the Western Campaign to storm the bunkers of the German Siegfried Line and establish a bridgehead in the Paderborn, they reached an objective for which in three months of bitter fighting, they had been paving the way since the battle near the beaches.

Smashing the Siegfried Line, the sector north of Aachen where it was heavily manned and then sliding in closing the gap that forced Aachen's fall constituted one of the toughest jobs assigned any division in the Battle of Europe.

But the 30th Infantry Division received its baptism of fire on a tough assignment June 15th and its progress to the German Front was marked by battles that have been vital in the master strategy of World War II.

The all-important breakthrough north of pulverized St. Lo on July 25, a date already historically significant, was spearheaded by the Old Hickorymen. A real fighting team, the troops of the 30th had qualified for that assignment—which hastened open a passage through the hedgerow country allowing American armor to fan out over France—by a series of successful offensives against the Germans. At the outset the 30th drove the Germans back across the Vire River. Then in a spectacular dawn attack the Old Hickorymen forced a crossing of the Vire River and opened the drive to St. Lo.

The battles in the hedgerow sector were real slugfest matches, every foot advance being skillfully and stubbornly contested and they were complicated by rough and frequent counterattacks.

However, some of the heaviest fighting remained to be accomplished by the 30th after it had given the "green light" to the armored drive.

That occurred in the Mortain-St. Barthelmy sector when the 30th took over the area of the First Division at a time when four German panzer divisions struck in the most powerful blitz effort of the campaign, to drive through to Avranches and separate the American First and Third Armies.

It was here that Infantry men—men with bazookas, artillery and tank destroyers, tank engineers, AAA units, cooks and messengers, RAP rocket-riding Typhoons and all three back the German tanks in a battle that saw—over for three days before the Germans concluded that they were no match for one American division.

In this same battle, the great defensive at Mortain-St. Barthelmy, a battalion was isolated on a hill near Mortain—cut off without food, ammunition and medical supplies for five and a half days and despite the fact that the harassed infantrymen were under constant enemy observation, artillery and mortar fire, they refused repeated demands to surrender.

The 30th Infantry Division was commended for its heroic stand, for the courage and skill of its men who refused to let overwhelming odds discourage them in the battle against tanks at St. Barthelmy, and for the loyalty and stamina of the members of the "lost battalion," who defied surrender demands, their spokesmen telling the German officer:

"Go to hell. We wouldn't surrender if our last round of ammunition broken off in a Jerry belly."

This battle of the 30th against the best of the German armor started on the night of August 7-8 and a week later the Old Hickorymen again were forcing the retreat of the Germans.

The 30th troops drove rapidly against the Germans to free Breux and Loviers, then crossed the Seine at Mauges Chateau to outflank the bridgehead there and prepare for the next breakthrough, this time into Belgium.

An opposed infantry speed march record was made and another commendation was won on August 21 and September 1 the 30th dashed to Fozzard, Belgium, covering 100 miles through enemy occupied territory in 72 hours. The march was postponed during the last two days and was screened by a task force of the division. The 30th was the first allied infantry division to enter Belgium.

Still disrupting German efforts toward an orderly withdrawal, the Old Hickorymen drove on to become the first allied troops in Holland, arriving there on September 12, after having captured the famous border fortress, Eben Emael, on September 10.

Maastricht, Holland, fell to the 30th on September 13 after which Old Hickory troops fought on into Germany, advance elements crossing the border at Horbach on September 14.

The attack on the Siegfried Line started October 2, continued for two weeks, to establish the bridgehead in which was reported by the Germans to be their "impenetrable West Wall."

More than 1,500 battle decorations have been awarded officers and men of the 30th Infantry Division for gallantry in action and meritorious service in the face of the enemy.

The 30th Infantry Division is commanded by Major General I. S. Hobbs, who has been twice decorated.

Although it was originally built around troops from National Guard units of Tennessee, Georgia and The Carolinas, and thus gets its name Old Hickory, from President Andrew Jackson, who led troops in that sector, the 30th's officers and men represent all states in the union.

The Division cleaned a colorful World War I history by creating the Hudebusch Line, saving the way for Germany's ultimate defeat there. Will history repeat itself?

VALLEY GROVE
(Arrived too late for last week)

Mrs. Shelton Roop was hostess to the High Point W. M. S. December 21. It being the annual all day, Lottie Moon Foreign Mission program. Mrs. Erma Wallace gave the devotional and Mrs. Will Swisher had charge of the lesson.

Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Southton entertained the High Point W. M. S. with a Christmas party Thursday night. Gifts were exchanged. Mrs. Will Swisher and Mrs. Shelton Roop had charge of the entertainment for the evening. Refreshments were served at 8:45 hour.

Mrs. Rhel Riles, Valley Grove teacher, had the misfortune to fall and injure her knee December 24. There will not be any school before January 2.

Charley Cooper spent Sunday with the Forrest Coopers.

Mr. and Mrs. Shelton Roop spent Sunday evening in the Vest Cooper home.

ATTENDED CONFERENCE

C. B. Edmonds and G. L. Weidman, accompanied by Alvin East of Clinton, attended a planning conference at the Sodala Christian Church Friday morning.

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1945/01/11 Story of the 30th battle history

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Fri, Dec 1, 2017