

YANK

THE ARMY



5¢ APR. 13
VOL. 3, NO. 43
1945

By
GENERAL LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
ANN ARBOR MICH
JAN 27-46

APR 6 1945

PERIODICAL ROOM
GENERAL LIBRARY
UNIV. OF MICH

**Front-Line Portrait
of a Rifle Company Medic**



Digitized by Google Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



"Pfc. Oliver Poythress dodges a dud."



"A doggie going down as a barrage of 88s bursts around us."



"I saw a man floating in the black smoke of an exploding mine."



"I saw a GI in his hole, slumped in his last living position."



"Two doughs had their arms around each other; one was sobbing."

Assault Company

THE pencil sketches on this week's cover and on these pages are the result of four days of action that Sgt. Howard Brodie, YANK staff artist, went through with K Company of the 406th Infantry in the 102d Division when it jumped off to lead an assault on German positions around the Roer River.

Brodie enclosed with his sketches a vivid report of his four days with the company. He told about moving up from the assembly area and passing "a still doughboy on the side of the road with no hands, his misshapen, ooze-filled mittens a few feet from him." He told about joining a forward platoon the next day and described some of the things he saw: "A dough bailing his hole out with his canteen cup." . . . "Lt. Joe Lane, the platoon leader, playing football with a cabbage." . . . "A dead GI in his hole slumped in his last living position, the hole too deep and too narrow to allow his body to settle. A partially smoked cigarette lay inches from his mouth and a dollar-sized circle of blood on the earth offered the only evidence of violent death."

Brodie went with the platoon when it advanced on the first of its objectives. "Some Germans and a couple of old women ran out onto the field from a house," he wrote. "There was the zoom and crack of 88s. A rabbit raced wildly away to the left. We went down, listening to the shrapnel. I saw a burst land on the running Jerries. One old woman went down on her knees in death in an

Sgt. Howard Brodie, YANK artist, sketches his impressions of four hot days in action with riflemen of the 102d Division in Germany.

attitude as though she were picking flowers. "A dud landed three feet in front of T/Sgt. Jim McCauley, spraying him with dirt. I saw a man floating in the air amidst the black smoke of an exploding mine. A piece of flesh sloshed by Sgt. Fred Wilson's face. Some men didn't get up. We went on. A couple of doughs vomited. A piece of shrapnel cut another one's throat as neatly as Jack the Ripper might have done it."

Then the platoon headed for Objective 2—a large building with a courtyard and a number of farm outhouses and sheds. Sgt. Brodie stopped to watch an 88 explode over the arched entrance and then followed the riflemen into one of the rooms, where the company exec was reorganizing the platoons.

"A dying GI lay in the toolroom," Sgt. Brodie wrote. "His face was a leathery yellow. A wounded GI lay with him. Another wounded dough lay on his belly in the cow shed, in the stench of dung and decaying beets. Another GI quietly said he could take no more. A couple of doughs started frying eggs in the kitchen. I went

into the toolroom to the dying dough. 'He's cold, he's dead,' said Sgt. Charles Turpen, the MG squad leader. I took off my glove and felt his head but my hand was so cold he felt warm. The medic came and said he was dead.

"Lt. Bob Clark reorganized his company and set up defenses. The wounded dough in the cow shed sobbed for more morphine. Four of us helped carry him to a bed in another room. He was belly down and pleaded for someone to hold him by the groin as we carried him: 'I can't stand it. Press them up, it'll give me support.' A pool of blood lay under him."

"I crossed the courtyard to the grain shed where about 60 doughs were huddled. Tank fire came in now. I looked up and saw MG tracers rip through the brick walls. A tank shell hit the wall and the roof. A brick landed on the head of the boy next to me. We couldn't see for the cloud of choking dust. Two doughs had their arms around each other; one was sobbing. More MG tracers ripped through the wall and another shell. I squeezed in among several bags of grain. Doughs completely disappeared in a hay pile."

"We got out of there, and our tanks joined us. I followed a tank, stepping in the marks of its treads. The next two objectives were taken by platoons on my right and I don't remember whether any 88s came in for this next quarter mile or not. One dough was too exhausted to make it."

Assault Company

K COMPANY's final objective was another large building with another courtyard, but this time in a small town. Brodie's platoon moved toward it behind some tanks which spattered the town with fire. He saw Lt. Lane racing toward a trench full of Germans and saw one of the Jerries pull a cord, setting off a circle of mines around the lieutenant. The lieutenant was only sprayed

with mud. S/Sgt. Eugene Flanagan started shooting at the Jerry who pulled the cord. He and a few other Germans jumped up and surrendered.

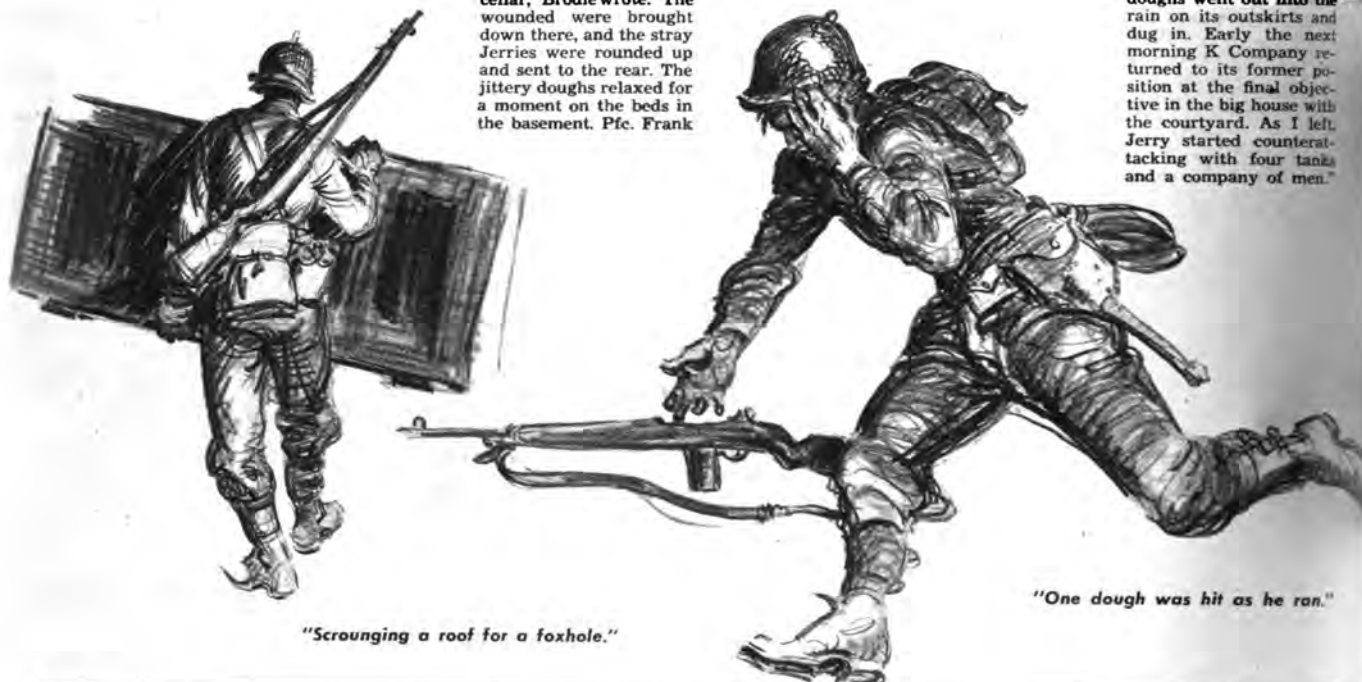
German soldiers and a few women started to come out of the large building. German mortar and 88 fire began to land in the courtyard. Pfc. Ernie Gonzales, Pfc. Bob de Valk and Pfc. Ted Sanchez brought prisoners out of the basement, and the prisoners dragged two wounded men on an old bedspring and a chair. An 88 crashed through the roof and a platoon leader's face began to bleed, but it was only a surface wound.

"We made a CP in the cellar," Brodie wrote. "The wounded were brought down there, and the stray Jerries were rounded up and sent to the rear. The jittery doughs relaxed for a moment on the beds in the basement. Pfc. Frank

Pasek forgot he had a round in his BAR and frayed our nerves by accidentally letting it go through the ceiling. A pretty Jerry girl with no shoes came through the basement. The CO started to prepare a defense for a counterattack. Platoon went out to dig in. L and M Companies came up to sustain part of our gains.

"Most of us were too tired now to do much. The battalion CO sent word he was relieving us. All of us sweated out going back over the field, although this time we would go back a sheltered way. We were relieved and returned uneventfully

to a small town. The doughs went out into the rain on its outskirts and dug in. Early the next morning K Company returned to its former position at the final objective in the big house with the courtyard. As I left, Jerry started counterattacking with four tanks and a company of men."



"We passed a still doughboy on the side of the road with no hands, his misshapen, ooze-filled mittens a few feet from him."