

Leaves from a War Correspondent's Notebook

By Hal Boyle

WITH THE U. S. 517th PARACHUTE COMBAT TEAM (AP)—Every parachute trooper sweats out that 13th "black cat" jump.

Cpl. Burton E. Meandor, Waco, Texas, made his without benefit of a parachute. He was dozing peacefully in his billet in a frozen sector of snowy Belgium one night when flames swept through his third floor room.

A fellow trooper accidentally had kicked over a can of gasoline and a stream of it ran by a hot stove and ignited.

There was only one sure exit—a window—and there was a three-floor drop to the ground. But Meandor didn't hesitate. He dived out the window, counting from force of habit as he fell, and plunged into a deep snowdrift—unhurt.

"That was my 13th jump—and I didn't even have time to worry about it," said Meandor.

A Nazi military decoration made a perfect target for Pvt. Ellwood Dobbins, of Boston, Mass.

Moving forward on the flank of a company attack, Dobbins saw a German wearing an Iron Cross on his chest about 10 yards away.

Dobbins drew a bead on the medal and put a bullet directly through it—and the enemy heart behind it.

In an attack to relieve a pinned down parachute company, Pfc. Donald "Kitty" Karr, of Barberton, Ohio, hit the dirt on the top of a small knoll when small arms fire splattered around him.

Suddenly he heard German voices directly under him—and realized that he was lying on a Nazi dugout.

Karr, who speaks little German, called out in a stern voice:

"Throw your rifles outside and surrender."

Out came the rifles followed by three Germans with their hands

up. All Karr had for a weapon was an empty mortar tube—about as dangerous as a three-foot rain pipe!

Returning from a sniper unit to clean out some woods for his infantry company, Pvt. Gerald G. Stokes, of Tampa, Fla., became separated from his group.

When he bumped into the men from the relieving infantry unit he walked up to the company commander and said:

"What's going on?"

The captain took one look at his "Gott Mit Uns" belt, his Iron Cross and Nazi bayonet—all battlefield souvenirs—and immediately put him under arrest as a Nazi suspect.

"I am a paratrooper," yelled Stokes indignantly.

"You're too small to be a paratrooper," replied the captain.

Stokes was herded back to a prisoner of war pen, probably the most forlorn paratrooper in the history of airborne armies.

There someone recognized him and a few minutes later he was free and boiling mad. He gave the captain a meaning look as he stalked away.

"It's funny," said the captain; "I thought he was the first prisoner we had taken with a southern accent."

A new way to double a cigaret ration has been found by Pvt. David G. Twilight, of Hawthorne, Wis.—but it is a little dangerous.

He was with a group building an "up front" bridge and the enemy was pounding away with 88s. During one "10 minute break" Dave reached into his jacket for a cigaret.

He found that a piece of shrapnel had ripped through the jacket, cutting his pack of cigarets squarely in half.

"Here, fellows, have a quickie," he proffered. "I've got two packs of 'em."