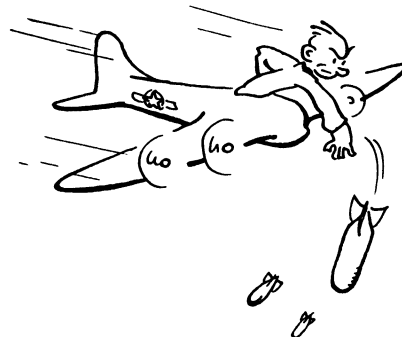


We didn't know what it meant, that day, as we watched three thousand airplanes drop their lethal loads beyond the Pérriers-St. Lo Road. It was July 25th, and a bright summer's day. We stood or sat or lay on the ground watching the wave upon wave of bombers pass over. We saw the smoke markers streaking down, we felt the hot blast of the bombs as they exploded, we saw three planes fall. It was the awe-inspiring beginning of the breakthrough - the race across Northern France, Belgium, Holland, into Germany itself. We didn't know then that there would even be a breakthrough.



We were still in support of the 30th Infantry Division. When the great bombardment ended, the Division advanced to Canisy, despite the toll that bombs which had fallen short took. There, the 2nd Armored Division passed through them. When we reached Tessy-Sur-Vire, just 11 miles south of St. Lo, we thought we'd be stuck there for a while. The 2nd Armored had been delayed temporarily, but bitter fighting ensued, and the Yanks took the town. Then we were called in.

"B" Company built a bridge over the site of the existing bridge which was damaged. It wasn't an easy job. The approaches were mined, and the mines were booby-trapped, but they were removed without mishap. At 0600 on 3 August, the first and the second platoons had put in a Bailey Bridge; at 1500 hours, traffic began to flow over it.



"B" COMPANY'S BAILEY BRIDGE AT TESSY SUR VIRE. AUGUST 1944