

Company C, meanwhile, had her hands full. They put in a ford across the Vire River at another point. They, too, had to clear mines before they could reach the site. The ford was constructed with the stones that materialized when Tec/5 Porter pushed down a barn. South and east of Vire, "C" Company also put in culverts in case the one-lane bridge in the 30th Division MSR got knocked out. Choking dust and bottomless holes made that a tough assignment. At times it seemed that the whole battalion was hauling rubble to fill in those shell holes so that the road could be made passable. It was a grueling 24 hours, but the job was done with time to spare, when time was our greatest advantage.

"A" Company was assigned two principle tasks in the clearing of Tessy-Sur-Vire: they had to clear all the mines on all the routes into and out of the town, and then remove the rubble and road blocks within the city limits. We learned a lot of lessons on this job. We cleared one road of mines and marked it accordingly. Then we pulled a wrecked jeep off one of the road

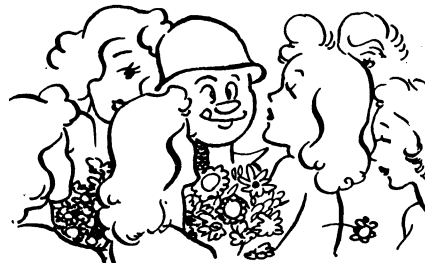


shoulders. A vehicle passed over the spot where the jeep had been, and was blown up. The krauts had sown mines under the wreckage of the jeep where it was impossible to detect them because of the presence of so much metal. It was on the same road that we first encountered dead animals being used as road blocks. Mines, all over which were activated, were either sown beneath the carcasses, or

directly attached to them with trip wires. Our experiences here and our methods of handling them were later published in the First Army's "Battle Experiences."

Pfc's Pearson and Giglio, both truck drivers, spent an uncomfortable day ducking sniper fire here. Despite their protests, nobody would believe their hair-raising tales of near-misses, but they were vindicated the following morning, when five enemy prisoners were captured in the church steeples.

For the battalion, it was now Move, Move, Move. From 9 August until the end of September we never stayed in one bivouac for more than three days. Sometimes we moved twice in a single day. Life seemed to be a perpetual digging of foxholes, pitching of pup-tents, and riding bumpy roads; but instead of death and destruction all around us, there were the French. We had liberated them and they showed us how happy they were. They tossed apples, pears, and tomatoes to us. When we stopped, people pressed bottles of cognac, wine and cider into our hands. Girls kissed us. We felt like heroes. We were beginning to experience the joys of war too. God knows they are few and far between!



We threw the cigarettes and candy from our "K" rations out to the children and people lining the sidewalks; it was like a huge carnival - the war seemed worthwhile after all. Oh, those sweet, adorable mademoiselles.....how appreciative they were.....!