



"A" COMPANY'S BRIDGE AT BONNERVILLE, FRANCE. AUGUST 1944

The medics will long remember the motor march to Sameon. Their 1-1/2 ton personnel-carrier was the last truck in the convoy, except for the heavy equipment following immediately behind them. In the middle of the black night the vehicle following the medics bumped into them. They stopped to inspect the damage. It was slight, but when they got started again, they took a wrong turn and lost the convoy. They came into Cambrai at about 0300, and it was deathly quiet. Captain Swirsky, the medical officer, took off in the parts truck to find the right route while Captain Freedman, the dental officer, held the remainder of the vehicles in the town. The only sign of life was a Frenchman who lumbered up out of the darkness to offer "Des filles et beaucoup champagne" to whoever wanted it. Nobody wanted it just then; they were too preoccupied wondering where the krauts were. Captain Swirsky returned an hour later and the little convoy took off in the general direction of Sameon.

From the back of the truck, S/Sgt Salganac, Tec/3 Costello, and Tec/5 Fling peered into the darkness around them and prayed. There they were, unarmed, and leading a convoy of heavy equipment into territory that was not only strange, but perhaps not yet liberated! Captain Swirsky and Captain Freedman climbed the signposts at every intersection, shined their shaded flashlights on the signs and prayed that there were no snipers in the vicinity. Everybody scanned the roadside for signs of a recently passing American Army. They looked for used "K" Ration boxes or cigarette butts or recently laid telephone wires. They looked up at the windows for a sign of the French tricolor.... but there was nary a sign.

It was 0430 when the jittery section crept into Sameon. Tec/4 Weiner and Tec/5 Condeluci, who had taken turns driving the truck, were well-nigh exhausted. They knew when they had arrived because a "C" Company guard leaped onto the running board, shoved a rifle into Captain Freedman's ribs, and asked for the password.