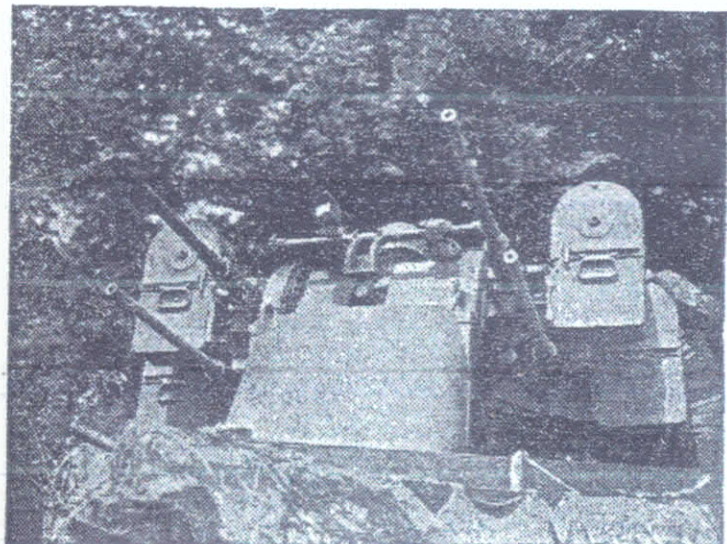


# ACK-ACK CREWS SUPPORTING 83rd KO 40 NAZI AIRCRAFT

SPEARHEAD Feb 24, 1945

The story of air-ground teamwork would hardly be complete without the part played by the 453rd Antiaircraft Bn, the Division's counter-air arm since Carentan.

These veteran ack-ack men were off their trucks and swinging their guns into action. The attacking planes were still on their first sweep over the column when the AA men



(Signal Corps Photo)

son under their protection. And they have also served in some rather unorthodox AA roles.

Shortly after being attached to the 83rd Btry A was called up to "Culot" About 75 yards from town, they opened up with a barrage of 50s and sprayed the dug-in enemy for 30 minutes until Jerry finally got out on his call for artillery support and the 88s came creaming in. Although two racks were hit, Sgt John Sams of Toledo, Ohio, who had been directing fire, and Lt Henry Heddon, platoon commander, succeeded in evacuating the wounded immediately despite a continuous shower of 88s.

## LOW AMMO DUMP

The Division next made use of the 453rd's fire power by employing a number of 40 mm guns and racks with quadruple mounts against enemy forces on La Varde Peninsula. In a record preparation fire, that included blowing up an ammo dump, the Krauts were kept pinned down so that the Division doughs could advance on the peninsula against a minimum of small arms and machine gun fire.

## SHUT UP A FUSS

One night during the Lofse river campaign, the usually quiet enemy decided to cross over to the 83rd side. Col Edwin Crabill, commanding the 19th Infantry, ordered the racks of Provisional Btry X to turn their guns 50s loose on the opposite bank. The sound of all those 50s firing at once and the echoes kicking back broke

let loose. Within five minutes one plane had been knocked down, two badly damaged and the rest driven off.

## KNOCK TWO DOWN

On another afternoon in the forest, two FW 190s hopped an artillery liaison Cub right over Btry A's positions. The Cub zoomed for the ground, then veered off, leaving the FWs diving directly at the AA guns. Six seconds later Btry A marked up two more kills.

The Bulge Battle brought a record number of enemy fighter-bombers over the Division front to give the 453rd its biggest bag to date. The Nazis attempted to stay out of range but miscalculated on spotting the batteries. Btry D was on the highest ground and delivered the most fatal fire, accounting for 12 of the attacking ME 109s and FW 190s to boost the battalion score over the 40 mark.

SPEARHEAD March 10<sup>th</sup>, 1945.

## Eagle Scout...

Another medal has been added to the collection of T/S Clarence Van Leanen of Seattle, Wash. Jeep pilot for Btry D, 453rd AAA Bn, he holds the Bronze Star, Purple Heart and three battle stars. The new hangle came in a package from home, an Eagle Scout medal he had earned but not received. Now he's wondering on which side of the Good Conduct ribbon to

SPEARHEAD April 28<sup>th</sup>, 1945.

MASTER

## Dying Luftwaffe



The dying Luftwaffe came to life from time to time during the 83rd's dramatic dash from the Rhine to the Elbe—but not for long—as this funeral pyre, vivid testimony of the accuracy of 453rd AAA gunners, proves. (Signal Corps Photo)

THUNDERBOLT MAY, 5<sup>th</sup>, 1945.



## Loses Wing

The Liaison pilot lost a wing, but the Kraut pilot lost his his plane and his life.

It all happened in a matter of minutes near Bad Lippspringe when a ME109 came over the 83rd Artillery airfield to stroff and caught Lt William Law just after his take-off.

When Law saw the ME109 coming at him shooting, he made a sharp dive toward an AA position, and as the enemy fire went through his wing, 453rd AAA gunners let loose. The ME109 burst into flames and went into a death dive. Law landed his damaged plane safely and put in a requisition for a new wing.

## Quick Action

Lt Howard Downey, Bellefonte, Pa., Exec Officer of D Btry, 453rd AAA Bn, had christened one of his flak half-tracks with a bottle of Calvados (remember?) He named it Baby Anne, for his one-year-old daughter, and sent a picture home with the name on the turret.

Downey's wife wrote back that the picture was fine, but why were there no pretty swastikas painted on the half-track to indicate planes shot down? The complaint was bucked down to T/5 Charles Welch, commander of the Baby Anne

## AAA Men Get Ahead of War

THUNDERBOLT May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1945

Four men listed as missing in action turned up at their company after spending five days traveling from one uncaptured German town to another in a German staff sedan, fighting off one enemy patrol and narrowly missing being blown to bits by fire from a German tank.

Pvt. Loren D. Kissick, Tacoma, Washington, Cpl. Wilbert G. Kriger, Mannington, Va., Pfc. William H. Buzzard, Marlinton, W. Va., and Pvt. Bob L. Hemstreet of Milwaukee, Ore., of Battery A, 453rd AAA were left behind in the Hasserode Forest when the German truck in which they were riding broke down.

"It was a question of who was more upset, the Germans or us," said Kissick. "We knew from the towns that we had previously passed through that the Germans were trying to get away; so we decided that if we travelled during the day time we might be able to brazen the thing out."

In order to get moving, the men needed a vehicle, so they calmly walked to the nearest town and commandeered a German staff sedan from astonished civilians.

"We played hide and seek with the Wehrmacht for the next five days," related Hemstreet. "We drove through