

THE RAG-TAG CIRCUS - THEY MAKE REAR

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WITH 83RD INF. DIV. ACROSS THE ELBE,
Apr. 14 (Delayed) -- Gen. Simpson him-
self sent down to find out how they ever
did it.

This rag-tag "travelling circus",
that rode and fought over more than 200
miles of Germany in some ten days, keep-
ing up with the best of American armor,
just didn't belong in the books of
modern warfare.

It was impossible but the 83rd Inf.
Div. did it. From the time they were
relieved from the bridgehead they had
secured across the Weser to the crossing
of the Elbe and the holding of the bri-
dgehead on the far side, they had not
only kept up with the armor - they had
outstripped it.

They used any kind of transport you
can name - tanks, TDs, trucks, and jeeps,
all bursting at the seams with GI pas-
sengers, and then added to that were
German cars, trucks, fire engines, bi-
cycles and even wheelbarrows.

Except for a day or so they had abso-
lutely no attached trucks to haul their
fast freight so they made do with what-
ever they could find along the road, and
they found plenty.

Strange things happened in that ten-
day blitz - things that could only have
happened to this "Coxey's Army."

The other day as they were rolling
along a little German sedan was weaving
in and out of the column, passing vehi-
cles. No one would have noticed it -
there wasn't anything unusual in this
convoy about a German vehicle - if the
driver hadn't kept honking his horn
imperiously.

Pfc David Webster, a Signal Company
man from Terre Haute, Ind., took a sec-
ond look at the car and saw that the
guy inside had on a German uniform -
with red collar patches. The 83rd had
captured a German general who was going
east in even a greater hurry than they
were.

In another case, the column overtook
a German convoy, consisting of a Colonel
and his staff, travelling the same way
on the same road.

Up with the First Bn. of the 329th
Inf. Regt, fighting their first real
battle since they took off, the men were
still reminiscing between ducking shells
at the perimeter of the Elbe bridgehead.
They were bitter about some of the things
they saw.

S/Sgt. Dean Dercy, of Bristol, Tenn.,
described the British and American pri-
soners they had freed in their sweep,
about how they had cried when the 83rd
came along and how the German guards had
previously beaten the civilians who so
much as offered them a glass of water
in their death march across Germany.

Sgt. George McKane, of Augusta, Ky.,
told of taking 57 pistols, a shotgun and
a rifle away from some German Army doc-
tors who insisted they had a right to
carry them. Pfc. John Shuford, of Marietta,
N.C., told of his capture of two boys, one
nine years old, and another 11, wearing
Wehrmacht uniform in a trench by
the roadside.