

HEADQUARTERS 83d INFANTRY DIVISION

Office of the Commanding General

APO 83, U. S. Army

10 May 1945.

SUBJECT: V-E Day.

TO: All Ranks, 83d Infantry Division.

1. At 1500, 8 May 1945, V-E day was declared by President Truman and all hostilities officially ceased in this theater. The war against Germany had ended in complete victory for the United States and its Allies.

2. The accomplishments of this Division in combat against the Germans have been outstanding. The hard fighting done by the Division in Normandy against Germany's best troops helped to prepare the way for the breakthrough at St. Lo. In Brittany, we secured a port for the Allies by the capture of St. Malo and Dinard, and a battalion combat team assisted in the reduction of Brest. By successfully blocking along the Loire River on a frontage of some 300 miles, we protected the south flank of the armies advancing eastward and freed other combat units for use in that drive. In Luxembourg, we drove the enemy east of the Sauer and Moselle Rivers in a wide zone. In our first battle in Germany, we secured a decisive victory by breaking out of the Hurtgen Forest and driving the enemy east of the Roer River. Immediately following this, and without time for rest, the Division was moved to the Ardennes where it attacked to the south on the shoulder of the German penetration ("Bulge"). In extremely severe weather conditions and again against the best German troops, we accomplished our mission by securing a breakthrough that was exploited by an armored division. After a period of rest and training in Belgium and Holland, the Division was again at peak efficiency as was proved by its operations east of the Rhine. In these, the Division showed that, in addition to its excellence in hard fighting and close combat, it had speed and audacity in a breakthrough. At the end of the last drive, we secured the only American bridgehead over the Elbe River and held it against repeated counterattacks.

3. These are accomplishments of which you may well be proud. They were achieved by your stamina, your courage, your skill, and your devotion to duty.

4. We are now engaged in occupational duties. On these you should put forth your best efforts, for our success or failure as an Occupational Army will have a direct bearing on the years to come.

5. We must be watchful that we do not harm in any way the fine name the Division has earned in combat. So, show by your dress, your bearing, and your conduct that you are superior soldiers in a superior Division, for that is what you have already proven yourselves to be.

6. The United States is still engaged in a bitter war against the Japanese. We may be called on to play our part in that war. For this reason, the Division must maintain its combat efficiency. So, when the time comes for training, put the same spirit and enthusiasm into it that you have put into your training in the past. It has proven well worthwhile as you know.

7. The question that is uppermost in all of your minds is: "What happens now? Will I be discharged; will I be sent to the Pacific; will I remain here in the Army of Occupation; or will I be placed on duty in the United States?" I do not know the answers to these questions. Any one of the things that I have listed is a possibility. I will give you the best advice I can. That is, select the alternative that seems least desirable and then prepare your mind for that eventuality. If you will do this, it will prevent many cruel disappointments, and if what you consider to be the worst does not come to pass, then it will be so much to the good.

8. You may be assured that to the very best of our abilities, the policies on discharge and return of individuals to the United States will be carried out with the maximum speed and fairness.

9. Whatever happens to you individually, I wish you the best of luck, and want to express to each of you my appreciation for what you have done. It has been in the finest tradition of our people.

Robt C Maccon

ROBT. C. MACCON
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding.