

First YD Soldier To Enter Reich!

Oscar Watters of Attleboro on Patrol Didn't Know He Was on German Soil

By ANDREW TULLY
(Traveler Staff Correspondent)

WITH THE 26TH DIVISION INSIDE GERMANY, Dec. 19 — The first YD soldier to set foot on German soil is a gangling, rawboned, wise-cracking guy who logically enough comes from eastern Massachusetts, home of so many of the YD troops.

NOW HE'S SERGEANT

He is Oscar Watters of 495 South Main street, Attleboro. He was a private first class before he crossed the German border. Now he has been promoted to sergeant in company I.

Sgt. Watters was a member of a company I patrol which scouted out the terrain preceding entry into Germany last Tuesday by foot sol-

TULLY

(Continued on Page Twenty-one)



MAJ. WILLIAM CALLAHAN
East Boston

Bereza. Two other Bay Staters in the patrol were Pfc. Elliott Freedman of Beacon street, Boston, and Sgt. Bill Crotea of Lawrence.

SAME OLD MUD

The others were from all over the country: Pfc. Bob Staffeld of Neenah, Wis.; Staff Sgt. Clyde Erb of New Athens, Ill.; Pfc. Edison Strong of Dunbar, Pa.; Staff Sgt. Bob Madison of Saginaw, Mich.; Pvt. Ed Krause of Detroit, Pfc. Bernard Kazmierczak of Stevens Point, Wis.; Jim Frye of Wardsville, W. Va., and Pfc. Johnny Colletti of Uniontown, Pa.

What bothers Watters and Freedman and Corteau and all the rest was that there was no sudden change once they got into Germany. The mud was still there

and so was the enemy. The land looked just like the land of France in which they'd been fighting for almost three months. "Maybe," suggested Bereza, "there should have been a brass band waiting for us." Watters set his prominent adam's apple bobbing with his quick, jerky grin. "Yeah, maybe the Krauts will learn how to play tunes on their mortars."

I told Bereza the hill they went up didn't look very steep from the observation post where I stationed myself to watch the advance by Company I and Company A. "Not very steep?" he yelled. "You ought to try climbing it some day while you're worrying about getting a bullet in the skull." He turned to Capt. John Dumaine of

New Bedford, Company I's commanding officer. "I say it was about a 60 per cent. slope, don't you captain?" The captain smiled in agreement.

Incidentally, it's almost impossible to straighten out the details on a story like this one about which soldier went into Germany first and when the story cannot be complete, or even pretend to be authentic, unless it goes on to give credit to the troops who got on to German soil and held it. Watters and his patrol were the first YD men actually to touch the earth of the Reich but then they returned to their own lines. The men who got into Germany and stayed there

were the men of company A of the 328th Regiment.

STORMED THE SLOPE

Part of the First Battalion, commanded by Maj. Bill Callahan of 115 Barnes avenue, East Boston, Company A, stormed the slope the day after Company I's patrol had scouted it. They took the high ground in that little forest and held it to be joined a little later by soldiers of Company I.

Second Lt. Jack Kahner of New York city led that first Company A platoon to reach Germany and in that platoon was a slender, carelessly-dressed soldier with tousled black hair named Flynn, Staff Sgt. Johnny Flynn of 17 Mentrose street, Somerville, a platoon guide.

"Were you in Germany?" I asked Flynn. "Well, I was on the hill," he replied. "I guess that was Germany. I didn't care too much. It was so miserable that it was just another muddy field, barren and damp. And there was a lot of shelling and small arms fire to worry about. It was rough up there." He chewed on a chocolate bar for half a minute. "Yeah, it sure was rough."

The CO of Company A is a dark, slender, personable first lieutenant named Clark Reynolds, who comes from Nebraska. He looks like the kind of officer men like instinctively. He introduced me to Sgt. Ivan Hutchison of Tremont, Ill., a platoon leader.

"Half of Hutch's platoon was pinned down by machine gun fire all the time," the lieutenant said. Hutch was sober about it. "Men

killed around you," he told me as though the thought had just occurred to him and it hurt him a lot.

Yeah, men got killed all right in taking that hill which was in Germany and those who lived didn't realize that they really were standing on German soil at last. It's not the way you pictured it, Bud.

Tully

(Continued from First Page)

dlers of both company I and company A of the 328th regiment. He was the lead scout of the patrol, sort of a one-man patrol up the steep slope leading into a little forest which was a bulge of German land sticking down into France. Sgt. Watters was told by his patrol leader, Staff Sgt. Bill Bereza of New York city, to probe the hedge rows dotting the hill and find out what was on the other side of the crest. "I didn't think much about it at the time," Watters told me. "There

was too much to think of without worrying about who was going to go into Germany first."

Even when Watters finally completed his laborious crouching reconnaissance and reached the hill crest to wave his buddies forward he was not impressed. "I didn't know I was in Germany," he said. "There was a rumor that day that those woods were in Germany, but you know how Army rumors are. I didn't pay much attention to it. When we got back, our colonel told us we'd been in Germany and I felt pretty good. But it didn't seem as big a thing as I thought it would." The entire patrol got into Germany and didn't lose a man; which "is damned more important, to our way of thinking," according to Sgt.

FINAL AND HOME -- STOCKS

Boston

*New England's Largest
Evening Circulation*



*Complete Associated
Press and United Press
Wire Services*

Traveler

EST. 1825—120th YEAR—NO. 142—TUES., DEC. 19, 1944 40 PAGES 3 CENTS