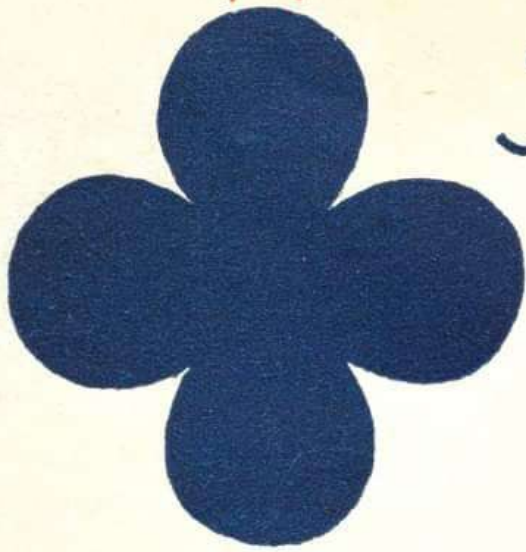


The 88th



WELCOMES YOU

ITALY
1945

"hello soldier!!

WELCOME to the 88th"

"Let me introduce myself... I'm one of the old timers of this outfit. We're sure glad to have you with us as one of the 'Blue Devils.' I suppose you're a little bit confused as to where you are and what's going on after shuttling around over half of Italy. So if you have any \$64.00 questions, just butt in on my little welcome speech at any time and I'll answer them if I can. I'm just trying to pave the way for you a little. To start with, you are now a part of the 88th Infantry Division ----"



" YOU SAID 'BLUE DEVILS' — WHAT'S THAT ? "

"Well, that goes back to when we first went in the line on the Garigliano River near Minturno. 'Nazi Sally' used to broadcast to us for the Krauts in those days. Before the big push started on May 11th, she kidded us about being Boy Scouts. We used to listen to her program because she had some pretty good music, and we got a lot of laughs out of the Kraut propaganda. Anyhow, after the big push, she changed her tune. The first thing she said was that 'we didn't fight like gentlemen, but that we were blood-thirsty cut-throats.' After we cracked the Winter Line at Santa Maria, we took off across the mountains



and broke out behind a bunch of Krauts that were retreating along the coast. Then Sally came back on the air whining that 'those blue clover-leaved devils are after us again.' So from then on we were tagged with the nick-name 'Blue Devils'."



They picked it out in their training days at Camp Dodge, Iowa, back in '17. It represents two crossed

**“ SAY—WHAT KIND OF AN OUTFIT
IS THIS ? ”**

“ As far as organization goes, it is a normal infantry division with three infantry regiments, artillery and what-have-you, but all in all we think it's a little bit better than any other outfit. Let me tell you a little about its history. The old 88th fought in France in the first World War. We got our shoulder patch from them.

8's as a four leaf clover for luck, with the blue for the infantry. They nicknamed it the 'Cloverleaf Division.'

“ I well remember the hot and dusty day we were activated for this war at Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, on the 15th of July back in '42. I was a part of the Division's cadre from the old 9th Division that's now fighting in France. We trained at Gruber for almost a year, and then took off for Louisiana maneuvers and got commendations from everybody who saw us — even one from General Marshall. After sweating out the Louisiana swamps, we thought we were in heaven when we hit Ft. Sam Houston down in San Antonio, Texas. We really had a time there!!!! It wasn't long though, and we found ourselves on ships headed for North Africa — the *first* draft division to go overseas.

“After a couple of months of hard training in North Africa, we found ourselves the first draft division in combat when part of the outfit went in the line near Cassino. Then they moved the whole Division into the line at Minturno on the west coast. After a couple of quiet months there, we jumped off on May 11th in the biggest show any of us have ever seen. You probably read about us in the papers: how we broke through the Winter Line (the Krauts called it the Gustav Line) at Santa Maria and Mt. Damiano—then took off across the mountains and captured Itri and Fondi—broke through the Hitler Line and finally joined up with the Anzio Beachhead. Then they pulled us out of the line and shoved us in again on Highway No. 6 just south of Rome for the final drive on the city, and we were among the first Allied soldiers to enter Rome. We chased the Krauts about 40 more miles north of Rome and then went back near Rome for our first rest after 100 straight days in the line.



“We went in the line again southwest of Florence and took the town of Volterra just after we jumped off. Then we got into some of the toughest scraps we’d had—with the 351st Infantry fighting for Laiatico and the 349th Infantry going for ‘Bloody Ridge.’ We finally pushed the Krauts back across the Arno River and then we got another rest. We went back in on the break-through of the Gothic Line and had pushed through the Appennine Mountains to within 4 miles of the Po Valley when the push stopped. You’ll hear the fellows talk about the fights we had on Mt. Battaglia where the 350th Infantry stood off almost three Kraut regiments that tried to retake the mountain. The 349th Infantry did a swell job when they took Mt. Grande just before we stopped. That brings us about up-to-date with the action, because since then we’ve been in and out of the line and things have been pretty quiet—so the rest centers have been getting a big rush from most of us.”

“ THAT SOUNDS LIKE A LOT OF FIGHTING — IS THAT WHEN YOU GOT ALL THOSE RIBBONS ? ”

“ Yes, it was. A lot of the fellows have won decorations in all this fighting. They tell me that besides one Congressional Medal of Honor won by Lt. Shea (by the way, he started out as a squad leader in the 350th Infantry), there have been over 25 Distinguished Service Crosses, over 50 Legion of Merits, over 270 Silver Stars and over 1100 Bronze Stars all told awarded in the Division. Not only that, a lot of fellows like Lt. Shea won battle field promotions and have become officers. Incidentally, speaking of decorations, you're now entitled to wear a bronze battle star on your theater ribbon if you don't already have one for the Rome - Arno River campaign.”

**“ ARE THE GERMANS REALLY AS
TOUGH AS THEY CLAIM TO BE ? ”**



“ Yes, they're plenty tough and fanatical in their fighting. We've had to be just a little tougher and smarter to outfight them. We've tangled with paratroops, panzer troops, regular infantry, and, in fact, about every type of 'Nazi superman' there is. So far we have destroyed six German divisions, practically wiped out another six and really mauled three. We have been up against eight other divisions, and the only reason we haven't messed them up is because they were not against us when we were attacking. We've heard we have quite a reputation with the Krauts—having captured over 5,400 of them.”

“SARGE, WHAT’LL HAPPEN TO US NOW?”

“Well, bud, that *IS* the \$64.00 question! Most of you will probably be assigned to one of our three infantry regiments — the 349th, the 350th or the 351st. However, the Division is a complete fighting team in itself, and has other units you may be assigned to. We have four battalions of field artillery that can really lay ‘em in — the 337th, the 338th, the 339th and the 913th. Our 313th Combat Engineer Battalion keeps the roads open and does all kinds of other engineer jobs.



The 88th Reconnaissance Troop, the 88th Signal Company and the 313th Medical Battalion all help the Division in its fighting, and the 88th Quartermaster Company and 788th Ordnance Company get the rations, ammunition and other supplies up to us, plus doing maintainance that

keeps us rolling. If you do go to the infantry, you will be trained in a rear area for about a week. After this shake-down period, and you sorta get the hang of things, you’ll go to your regular company and finally into the line to get a crack at the Krauts.”



“WHO’S OUR OLD MAN AND WHAT KIND OF A GUY IS HE?”

“You mean General Kendall, our Division Commander? Well, bud, don’t kid yourself — he’s a real soldier from way back. He won the Distinguished Service Cross as a doughboy shave-tail in the first World War. He was the Assistant Division Commander back in the States and was the first one to be decorated for bravery in the Division in this war. He won the Silver Star and Purple Heart at the Rapido River



**GENERAL
KENDALL**

crossing at Cassino while he was an observer with the 36th Division before the 88th came into the line. Back around Fondi he was also awarded an Oak-Leaf Cluster to his Silver Star for mopping up three Kraut snipers' nests. Also, he's won the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star and two Croix de Guerre Medals. Not a bad record, eh? You'll get used to seeing him prowling around the front lines. He's one General who doesn't mind being up where the lead is flying and the going is rough. He

took over the Division in August '44 from General Sloan who had commanded it since we started back in Gruber.

"Our Assistant Division Commander, General Sherman, is another tough fighter. He led a regiment of another division through the entire North African campaign, on through the fighting in Sicily where he won the Legion of Merit, and then into Italy. Here he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross when he reorganized one of his battalions which had become split up in an attack. Under artillery fire and in the face of heavy sniper fire, he got the battalion back together and personally led it forward to capture its objective. He later fought on the Anzio Beachhead and on up to North Italy where he was transferred to the 88th last November. So if he ever grabs you up front and tells you how it's done, you can bet that's the way to do it.

"General Lewis, our Artillery Commander, made quite a record for himself before coming to the 88th this last January. He was in on the original landing in the North African Campaign as II Corps Artillery Officer and later won the Purple Heart while landing in Italy on D-Day

as Fifth Army Artillery Officer. He pulled a fast one on D-Day at the Anzio Beachhead — landing there in a Piper Cub rigged up with pontoons. For this gallantry in action, he was awarded the Silver Star. Also, he has been awarded the Legion of Merit, Commander of the British Empire, Croix de Guerre and the Italian Silver Star Medals.

“ You should know the names of the three regimental commanders, too. Colonel LeSturgeon, commands the 349th Infantry — they are known as the ‘ Kraut Killers.’ Colonel Fry commands the 350th Infantry, and they call themselves the ‘ Battle Mountain’ Regiment because of the hard fight they had on Mt. Battaglia (‘ battaglia’ is Italian for ‘ battle’)—their 2nd Battalion won the War Department Citation for that scrap. Colonel Champeny commands the 351st Infantry—it’s known as the ‘ Spearhead’ Regiment, and their 3rd Battalion won a War Department Citation for their fight for Laiatico.”

“ HOW IS IT — PRETTY TOUGH UP AT THE FRONT ? ”

“ It all depends on how you look at it. Frankly, a lot of times it’s tougher than hell, but when the going gets roughest, just look around and you’ll find the other guys are taking it and you’ll find you can too. You’ll get scared at times—everybody does—and anybody who says he’s never scared up there is a plain liar. You’ll have to learn tricks pretty fast: you’ll get to know what an incoming shell sounds like and how to tell the difference from one that is going out, how to use every piece of cover and how to keep warm and make yourself as comfortable as possible. The old timers will tell you during your shake-down week how to get along up there, and don’t be afraid to get one of them over in the corner and just have a regular bull session with him. They’ll be glad to teach you all the tricks they know.”



“ HOW ABOUT A FEW COMBAT TIPS RIGHT NOW ? ”

“ I’m afraid that I’ll have to leave the real combat tips up to your sergeant when he can show you, but there is one thing and that’s to take good care of yourself physically. Here are a few tips on that. First, you won’t get a bath very often, but get a little water in your helmet from a stream or spring and wash your face and hands every day. The ground around here is dirtier than a barnyard back in the States, so have the medics take care of even the smallest cuts or you may end up with an infection. You’ve gotta take care of your feet over here. So start in doing what we’ve all found out is necessary — keep your feet and shoes as dry as possible, change your socks every day and rub your feet and toes every time you take your shoes off to keep the blood flowing. Part



of the time you won’t be able to get any drinking water from a mess. When that happens, fill your canteen at some clear stream or spring, put a Halazone tablet in it and wait about thirty minutes before drinking it. No matter how clear the water is, it still needs a tablet. You can get Halazone tablets from your squad leader or the medics.

“ Well, buddy — I’ve got to take off now, but before I go, I want to tell you again that we’re glad to have you with us. I know that after you’ve had a chance to look over the outfit and get acquainted, you’ll be proud to be a ‘ Blue Devil ’ . ”



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