

YANK The Army Weekly • JULY 16

There were four days on the road to Cherbourg when everything seemed to happen—catching spies, hunting snipers, ducking the "incoming mail" and, generally, fighting a tough war.

With the Forward Battalion

By Sgt. WALTER PETERS
YANK Staff Correspondent

CHERBOURG, FRANCE. (Delayed)—On our way to the front lines we stopped at a certain town not far away from Cherbourg. A large crowd of natives had gathered at the town's highest point; the artillery fire had stopped and there was silence everywhere except for the dogs barking. The day was Thursday—four days before the fall of the great French harbor city.

A gray-haired woman, speaking perfect English, came to us and said we should go no further without investigating a certain young woman whom she suspected of being a German spy.

"I've seen her with my own eyes," she said, "as she gave signals through her window last night. I warned one of your officers about her, but I see she is still free. I think something should be done about it pretty quick before she is able to do some very serious harm."

While we talked, a jeep with three MPs in it pulled up. "What house is she in?" one of the MPs asked the woman. The woman gave them the address and the MPs drove away. We followed them.

The MPs stopped before a local hotel and asked the cafe proprietor downstairs where they could find the suspected spy. The cafe proprietor led the way upstairs, and upon reaching the furthest room in the building, knocked on the door.

The door was opened by a brunette who appeared to be about 25. We followed the MPs into the room where three other women were sitting on a bed. The girl in the center was still very much undressed, and when she saw the MPs she let out with a scream.

"Okay," said the shortest of the MPs, "which one of you speaks English?"

One of the girls, a brunette wearing dark-rimmed glasses, stepped forward and asked in half French and half English what the MPs wanted.

"The girl who flashes the signal-light at night," said the MP. "Where's the light?"

The spokesman for the girls explained that none of them had a flashlight of any type and insisted that none of them ever had anything other than "business" relations with the Germans. In fact, the girl said, "We hate Germans because they always took what they wanted from us and never paid for it."

The questioning went on for fifteen minutes, then the MPs began to search the room.

"What's this?" asked one of the MPs as he lifted a German signal flashlight from one of the girls' suitcases.

The girl who did all the talking began to do plenty more. She had never seen the light before, she said.

The mess sergeant is figuring up paperwork of "Consolidated Can"—GI name for field rations—near the Cherbourg front.



She didn't know how it ever got into the room, and even if she had seen it she wouldn't have known how to use it.

"Okay, girls," said the short MP, motioning with his hands while speaking, "get yourself decent and let's get cracking to somebody who can speak French better than I."

The MP looked at us. "I think three of these dames are honest. You know, probably brought here by the Germans. But the one doing all the talking is a German okay. I'll stake anything she's done a little more than just entertain the Jerries."

A group of natives, smiling approvingly, were gathered in front of the hotel as the girls were led out. One man grabbed the short MP's arm and said, "Merci, Merci."

THERE was a loud roar coming from the direction of Cherbourg, and more people came from all over the town to join those already on the hill. Word had gotten around that the infantry was having trouble driving the Germans out of the strongly fortified positions in the area of Mt. du Roc, and that the Air Force was coming in to bomb them out.

I stood on the roof of a chicken coop to get a better view of the bombing. The distance was too great and the planes were flying too high to see them clearly. But the smoke columns caused by the bombs rose high above the hills and seemingly into the blue of the sky itself. Later, we learned that some of our more advanced troops were in the bombed area, but that they retreated several hundred yards so that they wouldn't be endangered by the falling bombs.

After watching the bombers for about thirty minutes, an elderly Frenchman with a flowing white mustache called on me to join him in his home. As I entered he kissed my hand, then offered me a drink of cognac. In sign language he explained that his daughter lived in Cherbourg and that he was very happy the Americans were closing in on the city. He filled my glass again. "Vive l'Amérique," he said.

"Vive la France," I answered.

FIGHTER bombers of the Ninth Air Force were still attacking the German stronghold at Mt. du Roc when we arrived at the regimental post command. Enemy flak was bursting all around the planes and the infantry svated out the fliers with every burst. "Look at 'em. Look at 'em," a corporal exclaimed. Other men said little, but concern for the pilots was plainly written on their faces.

"The forward battalion is going in now," the commanding general of the division said, after the last plane had dropped its bombs.

"If you're going down to the forward battalion," a young lieutenant cautioned us, "you'd better be on guard against snipers. They got a couple of our men around here this morning. There are still a number of them in the area."

Three other correspondents and myself piled into a jeep and drove off. About two hundred yards forward of the CP there was a soft crack from a rifle.

"The same bastard," said our driver, "who got our guys this morning. They'll get him though."

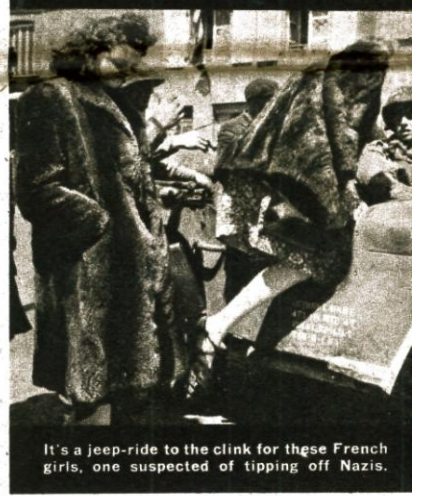
We turned off at a junction in the road. Artillery fire resumed soon after the Air Force had completed its job and the closer we approached the front lines the louder became the noise from the guns. None of us had been over this road before, but there was evidence everywhere that we were travelling over territory our men had taken. Here and there, on either side of the road, were the bodies of dead Germans, their equipment scattered all around them.

There was another crack from a rifle. It appeared to have come from over the hill on our right.

"Yep, that's a sniper," said the driver. "You can always tell the difference between a sniper's fire and our own carbines by the flat sound. Like the sound of your knuckles beating against marble."



Tank-buster tells YANK's Sgt. Peters how he knocked out a German pillbox.



It's a jeep-ride to the clink for these French girls, one suspected of tipping off Nazis.

WHEN we caught up with the tail end of the forward battalion our driver parked the jeep under a tree and we proceeded on foot with the infantrymen.

Our first stop was in an orchard where a heavy weapons company was engaged in mortar fire. I ran toward one of the mortars. Cpl. Howard Hodgson, of Calumet, Mich., the number one man, was kneeling by his weapon while Sgt. Kongsle, of Upham, N. Dak., relayed information which he was receiving from the OP by means of a walkie talkie. "Twelve hundred. Fire for effect six rounds," Kongsle was shouting.

Pfc. Eugene Rossman, of Ellwood, Pa., assistant third gunner, pulled out the pins and took off the increments from the shells. Then he and the second gunner, Pfc. George Evanoff, of Hammond, Ind., loaded the mortar. When the mortar was loaded Hodgson yelled back to Kongsle.

"Six rounds ready," he said.

"Okay," Kongsle replied.

"On the way," Hodgson yelled again.

Immediately after Hodgson fired his six rounds,

there was a whining sound from overhead. "Incoming mail," Rossman shouted. Everybody took cover in a foxhole. Jerry was hitting back.

COMPANY A's OP was about five hundred yards in front of the mortars. I found my way by following our communications wires. "Follow the wires and you'll be okay," Hodgson had told me before I left him. The OP itself was in a large hayfield surrounded by trees and hedges. In the center of the field were dummy guns of wood which the Germans had made to fool our reconnaissance crews. Our men were dug in all round the edges of the field. I began to walk toward the advanced section of the OP when a sergeant behind a machine gun told me to keep well under cover "or get your goddam head blown off." There were Jerry machine gun nests and snipers to

Just about then a shell whizzed by us. Then came more of them.

"Screaming meemies," Brusic said. He picked up the phone and said: "Let's give them some incoming mail." When he got the heavy weapons company on the phone, he gave them directions where they should fire. Then when the mortar shells started hitting on the hill he corrected the fire.

ON Friday morning two rifle platoons advanced to the foot of the enemy hill. I followed a group of medics toward the advanced section. The road from the OP to the advanced section was wide open for snipers. We ran and ducked at fifty-foot intervals. When we reached the section where other medics had gathered, a private warned us to hug the side of the road. Snipers were shooting at everybody in the



There are no more fond dreams of conquest for this despairing German prisoner captured by American troops in France.

20 mm. shell had hit him in the face, an infantryman said.

The captain was ready to leave with the medics when Pvt. Frank Volpa, of Fresno, Calif., came running in.

"They got my lieutenant, sir," he said. "They got him with a machinegun right in the arm and his bone's sticking out. We dragged him from the hills, but we have to get some help to him in a hurry."

"How was it coming over this way?" the captain asked. "Many snipers?"

"Yes, sir. There are quite a few of them. But I think we can do it all right."

"Okay, let's go," said the captain.

By Saturday night there were reports all over the lines that one of the divisions had entered the eastern section of Cherbourg. I found later that rumors can be wilder on a battlefield than in any barracks latrine back home. Anyway, on this night I joined a well-known regiment.

"There goes the colonel," said Cpl. Thomas Donnelly, Jr., of Jersey City, N. J.

The colonel passed by in a jeep.

"He's the fightingest guy I ever saw," another corporal said.

"Even the Germans printed our insignia," Donnelly said. "Boy, we're really getting to be somebody."

S/Sgt. Marvin Bogart, of Lima, Ohio, commander of a half-track, told me he thought we might march into Cherbourg that night.

"You can ride in my half-track," Bogart said. "I think all they're waiting for is to get rid of a few more pillboxes and that 88 over there. Then we go."

As if in answer to Bogart, the 88 began to belch out with fire. Everybody took cover. A couple of shells hit across the road from us and one of them split a tree. Another shell hit Bogart's half-track.

"Don't worry," Bogart said. "We'll have it ready for the ride to Cherbourg in the morning."

ON Sunday night I was with the same regiment in a town called Octeville, about two miles from Cherbourg. The colonel of the outfit was standing in a church cemetery and around him were all the battalion liaison officers.

The colonel was pointing a pencil at a map of the Cherbourg sector.

"If we get that far"—he paused—"then it may be street fighting from then on. That's why I'm putting Tucker here."

The colonel looked at one of the lieutenants. "Tucker's had special training in that."

"Yes, sir," said the lieutenant.

When the briefing was over a soldier brought the colonel a canteen full of black coffee. Then another soldier poured in some sugar.

"Now," said the colonel, "who's going to split this coffee with me?"

He looked at a Pfc. The Pfc.'s face was unshaven, and his eyes were very tired.

"You will split the coffee with me, won't you, son?"

"Yes, sir," the Pfc. said.

The colonel lifted the cup to his lips.

"To tomorrow," he said.

"Yes, sir," said the Pfc. "To tomorrow."

The next day they both marched into Cherbourg.



Ignoring the fierce rifle fire crackling about them from the Nazi lines, these U. S. Medics carefully snip the clothing from a wounded American soldier near Cherbourg.

the front and side of the OP and they tried to pick men off as they passed sections of the field not covered by hedges.

When I got to the advanced position I found Sgt. Frank Brusic, platoon leader, of Passaic, N. J., giving the orders to cease firing.

"Look out there on the hill," Brusic said.

He gave me his binoculars and I saw a Jerry waving a white flag.

"Well, that son of a bitch has been waving that flag for a half-hour, and he's still not coming in," Brusic said.

Some of the men in the platoon started to yell. One yelled in Polish, another in German, still another in Russian. "Come here," they yelled. "Come here." But the German just kept waving the white flag.

"We stopped firing, but they haven't. I'd send a man out after him but it looks like an old Jerry trick. They shot my best friend by pulling this stunt in Italy," Brusic said.

"Did he die?" a man next to him asked.

"Hell, no," Brusic replied. "He's an Irishman."

center.

A couple of medics brought in a wounded man on a litter. They carefully laid him on the ground. Then Capt. Edmund Torkelson, of Seattle, Wash., came over and began to cut the wounded man's pants so that he could administer first aid.

"How do you feel?" the captain asked.

"All right, I guess, sir," said the soldier.

"What got you? Machinegun?" asked the captain.

"No, sir. A sniper," the soldier said.

No sooner did the soldier stop talking than a sniper's bullet whizzed over us. The captain ordered the litter to be moved back of the road.

When the wounded man was carried off, the captain looked at his hands. "I washed them a dozen times today." He looked at his hands again. They were stained with blood.

Another wounded man was brought in.

"My God," said one of the medics. The man's face was half blown off. His chin was hanging by a few shreds of skin, his nose was not visible. A

Yanks in the ETO

Isigny to Cherbourg

[Herewith—taken down verbatim and reprinted in the simple, unpolished manner in which they were uttered—are the oral reminiscences of YANK's Staff Artist Sgt. John Scott, after he had returned to England with the drawings which you have seen on the opening six pages.—Ed.]

THE members of the 75 airborne artillery battery that I met outside of Carentan were firing from a field from which they had driven the Germans earlier. From the marks of those 75 shells, it looked as though the fire had just walked across that whole area, sweeping it as you would with a broom. When our artillery got there, they told me, the ranks of our infantry had been thinned pretty badly. "They sure were glad to see us," one of the artillerymen said. "Then those little 75s of ours got going and systematically worked over that area. The infantry would let them know of a machinegun nest or a mortar unit and the 75s would wipe them out. Some of those infantry guys are plenty tough and plenty rough, but some of them actually cried when they saw us, they were so damned glad."

These artillerymen have a terrific respect for the infantry. They call them the doughboys, never the dogfaces or plain GIs. They know the infantry are the boys that really do the fighting. They say, "Well, we just help out, but they do the real work."

We had reached the French coast during the night and in the morning there it was—an absolute forest of ships. While I'd lived with this engineer regiment for a year and had known them for two years, still I was surprised to find that when the time for unloading came they were going to handle the job, which was really the work of a port battalion.

On shore, traffic is directed with a great deal of speed and efficiency. Once a vehicle hits shore, it must stop or stall. It keeps going right on through, leaving the beach after a few hundred yards, and turning up a road carved out by bulldozers, leading inland, on up to the transit area. Only a few hundred yards from the beach you'd go past a house that had been hit, and standing outside or perhaps visible in the window would be a small child or perhaps an old peasant woman, making an incongruous sight in the midst of this area that looked as if a tornado had struck it. That was all you'd see.

At the transit point, we found it rather desirable to sleep under the vehicles because as soon as it got dark Jerry planes came monkeying around over the beachhead and the ack-ack batteries proceeded to throw everything except the gun barrels at them.

Next morning we camped in a field, about a mile beyond Isigny. It was a typical French field, edged with hedgerows and slightly sunken drainage ditches around it. The hedges were utilized by both the Germans and our own troops as they fought over the country. In our field the Americans had dug in and you could almost read the history of their stay in the articles they left behind them. Their empty or half-empty K-ration cans. In the nervous tension of battle, it's hard for a man under fire for the first time to eat very much. That was noticeable all along. Cans half empty or a third empty, and you sort of had the feeling that you knew why these husky, healthy men hadn't eaten more heartily. In one corner they'd either set up an aid station or some men who'd been pretty badly hit had been treated there. There were empty plasma bottles, sulfa envelopes, bloody bandages and discarded first-aid packets, the contents of which had been used. Tank tracks were approaching a gate which was smashed in. In the field you could see where the tank had stopped, probably to fire into far corners of the field to wipe out the last zones of German resistance, and having completed its mission, had gone back on to the road.

It was just about noon when we got to the camp beyond Isigny, and in the evening two little French children appeared. The men gathered around the kids, and then just stood and looked at each other—children and soldiers—with the same look of curiosity in their faces, both unabashed. Pretty soon the chewing gum and chocolate appeared—along with the French phrase books. It was there we first



To the victors belong the sausages. Grinning American soldiers triumphantly carry their toothsome "captives" through the streets of Cherbourg. Someday they'll get Vienna bread.

heard the request. "Cigarette pour papa?" that became as common as "Got any gum, chum?" was in England. A couple of the men knew a little French and there was some feeble attempt at conversation. Their first question was about the Germans. Then: Any big sisters? The boy was a little yellow-haired kid, all shaggy, dressed in sort of a pink and blue-checked smock. He had a hard sort of a birdlike look, with stork-thin young legs rising out of cumbersome wooden shoes. The men got out some candy for the kids and they went away with a sizable haul. Next day they came back, but not with their hands out asking for more. They carried a bag, and in the bag were several bottles of wine. They gave these to the men who had given them candy. As might be expected, the wine paid them back good dividends.

BULLDOZER crews the next morning went back to Isigny and started clearing streets. Others got started on the small port, where a German flak ship had been sunk alongside the concrete quay.

I rode back to the beachhead with the chaplain, who was looking for the APO. One of the GIs whose home was a little timber-covered, blanket-draped shelter on the beach, took me over to the kitchen that was set up for the crew there. We had ten-in-one-ration, which comes in two boxes containing enough for ten men. It contains corn, lima beans, string beans, cereal, canned beef, biscuits.

The GI I was eating with told of how his unit, a beach outfit, whose job was to clear, maintain and operate the beach, had landed. Resistance was so strong that the infantry still had not advanced. His unit's boat was hit and sunk and they stayed in the water and floated in with the tide on their lifebelts. Played dead in the water, with dead bodies floating all around them. The infantry finally advanced and pushed up to the crest and then they got ashore, still under fire, but not as bad. The unit all split up, he said, and all available stray GIs were being commandeered to assist the medical officers, so he became a medic for a while. Learned First Aid under fire. He crawled about with little kits containing syrettes of morphine, administering it with a needle. He did things he thought he'd never be able to do. It's very likely that guys like him, who pitched in and helped, saved a good many lives.

I hitched a ride back to Isigny. The whole countryside was being organized by our men. Bulldozers were chewing out level stretches for air strips. Food and ammunition dumps were being established,

road blocks removed, wreckage cleared.

I got accommodation that night at a field hospital and they fed me and gave me a stretcher and some blankets for the night—and a tent.

That night the beachhead had one of its heaviest raids, but perhaps because of the false feeling of security that the tent gave, I managed to sleep through most of it. Next morning it was raining and I hung around talking to the medics. They were supposed to have established this field hospital on D-Day, but resistance was too strong. Not only did they not establish it until late the next day, but when they did land, instead of being free to carry on their own operations, they found themselves in with the infantry, pinned down on the beach under heavy fire, administering first aid. A medical captain told me one of the hardest things he'd ever done in his life was to pull his frame out of the little depression in the sand where he had taken shelter and go to the aid of a man who'd been hit.

I wanted to get back to the engineers, so I went on three miles beyond Isigny to where the outfit was now camped. I was sleeping in the tent that the regimental mail clerks were using for work and quarters. It was rather noisy around there that night, so in the morning Duffy proceeded to dig himself a foxhole in the middle of the tent. He was in such a hurry that he buried my shaving brush under the mound of earth. It's still there, I guess.

That morning I heard about the fall of Carentan and went to see the railroad yard there that had been badly hit. The Engineers had the job of getting the tracks in shape again. The whole place was a jumbled mass of shattered freight cars and twisted rails. There were bomb craters all over the place. Some airborne infantry had a gun position alongside the remains of a locomotive, their machinegun pointing down the tracks away from town. They'd been in the town before and had been driven out. This time they were taking no chances.

I went back to the bivouac area, where I spent the following day, and the next day I went back to the railroad yard. Already the bulldozers had filled

in most of the craters. It was raining, and the mud was getting rather deep. The Germans were still letting go with a few 88s, but there weren't any hits near enough to bother the men in the yards. They might just as well have been clearing up a train wreck in a Brooklyn railroad yard.

The next jump was to Valognes, an ancient town built mostly of gray stone blocks. Some of its sanitary arrangements were as primitive as parts of the town itself seemed to be. The picturesque little streams winding around in back of the houses, besides being picturesque, served a utilitarian purpose, too, carrying away the sewerage from the homes. That explains why few French in the small towns drink the water from their wells.

We must have gotten to Valognes only a few hours after the infantry had passed on through. We saw no other troops and no civilians. The town was deserted. Not so much as a cat in the square. There was a nightmare quality about this entrance into the town, uncertain as the men were as to whether or not there were Germans still in the town. Not a sound was to be heard. There was no sign of life. Only the lazy smoke rising from smouldering ruins.

The men found a small motorized railroad car with two rows of seats down the middle and a motor at one end. After a day or so of experimentation, they got it running and used it to haul track and carry men back and forth to the damaged areas of

Other groups of engineers were busy clearing the town, blowing down the shaky walls. At the old Cathedral of St. Malo, which was ruined by shell fire, even the crumbled walls couldn't detract from the majesty and dignity of the building. You didn't feel that the building had been desecrated, but rather that its ruined walls had been consecrated to the task at hand. There was a tragic grandeur about the structure, even in ruins, even in spite of the incongruous bulldozers gnawing away at the crumbled rubble at the base of the walls.

THE Engineers were waiting for word to move into Cherbourg and had most of their stuff loaded, ready to go. As soon as the infantry would enter the town, the Engineers would be in the rear, starting to clear the roads. We waited several days, during which I roamed around the area, and on one of my absences they got word to move and had to leave without me. I borrowed a jeep and started ahead to find the front. There was a feeling of tension along that road to Cherbourg. You knew that the lines were pretty fluid and there was no telling whether the enemy might not be off to one side of the road. We met an M.P. and asked him how far we could go, and he said: "When you see the boys crawling along the side of the road on their bellies, you'll know you've gone far enough."

Then we met some men in a half track and they



"NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I SUPPOSE ENGLAND DID HAVE ITS GOOD POINTS."
—Pvt. Tom Flannery

field phone beside the road at the end of a wire. The Germans had been driven from the hill just a few hours earlier. Apparently Jerry gets a great deal of mail. In the debris in the bottom of his foxholes there were always a lot of letters from home. Somehow these personal things, even though they belonged to the enemy, made you feel more of the tragic pathos of war, much more than a bloody scene of destruction. I picked up a letter written apparently by a little girl to a German soldier. It had a heart with flowers drawn at the top of the sheet in colored crayon and started out: "Mein Lieben Papa."

There were about a dozen GIs of the 79th Infantry, wearing the Cross of Lorraine on their shoulders, resting on the hill with their backs to the banks of the road near the German foxholes from which they'd just driven the enemy. They were quite indifferent to the remnants left behind by the Germans. They'd seen so much of it by then. Perhaps it's my imagination, but there is a look in the faces of men in combat that is characteristic, and that is not entirely due to the fact that their beards are grown and their faces are dirty. Even though they are under complete control and are quite calm, there is a wideness about their eyes and fixed staring quality in their glance that betray their tension. The chips are down and small details no longer matter.

Looking out from the OP, you could see all of Cherbourg. The Germans were dropping smoke shells at the bottom of the hill we were on and at the base of the hills nearby. The wind was blowing toward the town and the smoke drifted back to cover their installations there. In the distance was a German fort that we were shelling. It was almost hidden in clouds of yellow dust from our shells.

I went on back to Valognes, and two days later moved on with a port-construction outfit into Cherbourg. German dead still lay in the streets. Beside the road were the wrecks of their tanks and the everlasting .88mm. guns. I was surprised to see in what good condition the town was. Most of the houses were undamaged and we seemed to have successfully concentrated most of our fire on the German fortifications in the town.

A DEMOLITION SQUAD was out on the sea wall, blowing a hole through it so that DUKWs could come in. I went over to watch some engineers remove the wreckage of one of the main bridges in the town. These guys take things apart and build so fast that the bridge literally melted away before my eyes. It was a heavy steel structure. They had one of the largest of our cranes set up beside it and with acetylene torches the men would cut up huge sections of steel and the crane would lift them to one side.

There was still one German fort which had not yet surrendered. The Germans here showed they had not learned any lessons from the Maginot Line and Singapore. Their guns, like the guns at Singapore, pointed mostly toward the sea and they were unable to shell our forces in the town. While I was standing by the bridge, there was the sound of approaching aircraft and a formation of nine Thunderbolts swung over the harbour. As they peeled off one by one, their guns spitting fire at the fort, you could see the two black dots of their bombs drifting away toward the fortress. Almost all of the bombs scored hits directly on the fort. There was a delicate precision about the operation, as though inexorable fingers were being stretched out toward the fortifications. The fort practically disappeared in smoke and remained shrouded in a yellowish cloud of dust from its shattered walls.

This was the end. Cherbourg was ours.



The people of France waited four years for this laugh. They really cut loose as a German officer, being hauled through captured Cherbourg by two Nazi soldiers, pulls up his pants to show his wound.

the rail yard. The motor was run by alcohol and there was none to be had. The controls were an intricate confusion of peddles and wheels, and it required considerable experimentation to get it to run on common old gasoline. But they did it. It ran perfectly after a while, giving out a high-pitched whistle like a peanut vendor's machine.

A signal corps outfit came through, replacing the damaged wire along the tracks to restore telephone communication with the men up ahead. Out beyond the station a couple of times the boys working on the poles, especially toward evening, were forced to come down rather hurriedly to get out of range of the snipers. That seemed to be the hour that the snipers worked most—toward evening, when they could take their shot and melt away into the shadows.

told us we couldn't go any farther in a jeep. Just beyond the crest of the hill we were approaching, they said, the road was under direct observation of the Germans and a vehicle would be sure to draw mortar fire. So we parked under a tree by a shattered farmhouse and went down the road on foot. At the bottom I met a captain of artillery who had one of his men with him and he said the chap with him was going to their forward OP and would take me along. I and my GI guide went down the road a little further and up a curving dirt track, partly sunken between banks, that led up the side of a hill about a quarter of a mile. The climbing was kind of hard because you had to bend half over to keep your head down below the shelter of the banks.

When we got to the top of the hill, there was a