

THEY CALLED IT
“PURPLE HEART
VALLEY”

A Combat Chronicle of the War in Italy

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY
MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE

SIMON AND SCHUSTER · NEW YORK · 1944

155-mm. Flash Bulb

EVEN IN the daytime the battery CP was always in a half twilight. It had been dug deep in the earth and was lighted by candles melted onto distinctive holders—jagged pieces of shrapnel. These were not just any flak fragments. Each piece, I was to learn, was one to which some crew member had a personal attachment because it had missed him.

When I crawled down into the dugout, the gun computer, a young lad who had grown an amazing mustache, looked up from his chart, his eyes popping.

“Jees,” he exclaimed. “We’d heard that a lady had been seen taking pictures from foxholes, but we didn’t believe it. Do my eyes deceive me?”

“Wake up,” said another boy. “This is *Life* goes to a party with Long Toms. Isn’t that the idea?” he asked, turning to me.

“Something like that,” I replied. “I thought it might be nice to be at the sending end of artillery instead of the receiving end for a change.”

“We can’t guarantee that you’ll see only the sending end of things tonight,” they explained. “We never can tell when we’ll get counterbattery.”

Counterbattery is a matter of answering back at the enemy. Whenever you can spot his gun position you aim at his battery and try to wash him out. He does the same to you. Counterbattery is a game that both sides can play.

“We’ve been under a lucky star lately,” said the battery executive. “It’s a month since we’ve written any names on shells.”

“What do you mean, writing names on shells?” I inquired.

“We have a custom in our battalion,” the battery executive explained. “When the Krauts fire counterbattery, and we lose any men, we write the names of the men we have lost on the very next shell we fire.”

Lieutenant Robert Maxwell, the battery executive, was a wide-browed

young man with pleasant dark eyes. He was sitting in the midst of a mass of wiring and field telephones on a kind of earth bench which had been carved out of the ground and ran completely around the dugout.

"We have to have a telephone to each separate gun," he explained to me, "because the Long Toms are set so far apart that the crews can't hear shouted commands. With a battery of smaller guns, the commands come in direct to a phone by the guns and are shouted for all the crews to hear. Our CP here is a relay post from the Fire Direction Center to the guns."

He picked up a phone and started a kind of incantation into it. "Battery adjust. Shell HE. Charge Super. Fuse quick. Base deflection: left two-six-niner. On number two, close three; battery one round, quadrant five eight zero."

"Sounds like double talk," I said as he hung up.

"Those are the commands for Abel battery," said Lieutenant Maxwell. "Now we're just firing harassing fire at Highway Six toward the end of the Valley. But tonight, when you take pictures, we're going to be trying to knock out a certain bridge we've got designs on, just in front of Cassino."

I had met A for Abel before, in the word alphabet used by artillery. I knew that in the same battalion there would be a B for Baker and a C for Charlie battery, each with its four 155-mm. rifles.

"We'll have just time to show you a round before mess," said the Lieutenant. "You'll be interested in seeing how the Fire Direction Center works."

The FDC, 500 yards away, was the nerve center for the big guns. The enemy was always trying to knock out your FDC, I was told, and you were always trying to do the same with his. But a Fire Direction Center was always hard to find.

This one was located in the deep cellar of a ruined farmhouse which, if seen by enemy air observers, would look like nothing more than a frozen splash of stone. Inside, the cellar had an academic look, in keeping with the higher mathematics employed there. Its scholarly appearance came from its furniture of little school desks which the boys had brought from a half-ruined schoolhouse just up the road.

One desk was shared by the Abel computer and the Baker computer. At the next sat the Charlie and the ammunition computers. Opposite the computers, and facing them over a desk full of charts and transparent

deflection fans, were two men carrying the august titles of Vertical Control Operator and Horizontal Control Operator. By an odd coincidence all the computers and control operators in this FDC came from Milwaukee except the Charlie computer, who was from Fort Wayne. Consulting a Fire Possibilities Chart this band of Milwaukeans and the lone Hoosier assigned the guns to each fire mission which could best reach the target. By the use of their computers, or deflection fans, as they were called, plus more mathematics than most of us ever had to learn in college, they worked out the vertical and horizontal shift of guns and tied in the guns for range.

By the time this tight little midwest group got through with their range and deflection calculations, a mere spot on the map where the Germans had a juicy target like a tank park, or a nest of mortars, was translated into a firing command for the Battery CP, and in no time at all a battery of Long Toms was blasting away at it.

"Almost time for chow," said Lieutenant Maxwell. "We'll have just enough time for a visit to the Counter-Battery Section."

We climbed out of the cellar and over the sandbags and piles of rubble and made our way up the side of a steep, rocky hill. Almost hidden in a thick olive grove near the summit was a dilapidated pink plaster farmhouse. An outside stairway led up to the second floor. We paused on the upper landing for a few moments to take in the superb view it afforded of Cassino valley.

Every little while a shell from guns emplaced behind us swept over our heads with a roar, and if we watched carefully for a full minute we could see something that looked like a ripe cotton boll disengaging itself from the far end of the valley floor and rising until it dissolved in the air.

"Routine harassing fire," said the Lieutenant. "Just enough shells on the highway to make things inconvenient for the Jerry supply lines." And we went indoors.

I was always amazed at the number of typewriters and filing cabinets that could be found in a combat zone. The Counter-Battery Section looked like any well-run office, except that its personnel all worked with their helmets on. Also, a certain aura was lent to the filing room by the presence of the Family Willms.

Before the Americans pushed their way into this territory, the Germans had used this same pink farmhouse as an infantry CP. Some

would-be artist had found the stretch of plaster wall irresistible, and the result had been a mural-size rendering in charcoal of Nazi home life. When the Germans were forced to retreat, they left the Family Willms behind.

Mama Willms (each figure was captioned) was large and terrifying. Papa Willms was so small and frightened that one wondered if he were a true representative of the Aryan home life which the boys had left behind. Baby Willms was any baby who needed to be housebroken. In the mural, which covered the whole Counter-Battery Section's wall, Mama was making Papa attend to a certain ritual which one usually considers the province of the distaff side. It made one wonder about home life among the Nazis.

Under this scene of Teutonic domesticity was stationed what the artillerymen called the Hostile Battery Historical File. Here, as neatly as though it had been filed in the Library of Congress, records were kept of everything that happened to every known battery of the enemy. For months back, and reaching to the present minute, reports were filed on every location we made of an enemy gun, every time we shot at it, every time it shot at us. Data were collected on enemy artillery all over the front lines. Information was turned in from forward observers, from Cub pilots in flying OP's, from Sound and Flash Battalions, who computed the distance of hostile guns by measuring on a tape the lapse of time from the instant the flash was spotted until the sound was heard. Our Counter-Battery Section co-operated with the British on their left and the French on their right to build their Historical File.

They examined all fragments of enemy shells they could collect. Doughboys were urged to turn in for analysis flak falling near them. By the width of the rotating band (the part that engages in the rifling and gives the shell its twist) they could get the range of the enemy gun and estimate its location.

This list of enemy guns is consulted before an attack, and firing is done on the Counter-Battery Section's recommendations. Immediately before and during an attack, our artillery attempts to silence these known enemy positions, so as to protect advancing infantry as much as possible.

Through the Hostile File, we learned as much about the enemy's firing habits as a diagnostician knows about his patients. The Germans are fond of using a roving gun, which they shoot from one position and rush

through a camouflaged road to an alternate point, hoping we will waste a lot of shells on the first location where it is spotted. They go to enormous trouble to conceal this connecting road. Knowing through our files where these positions are, we never waste shells on a roving gun unless we actually see it in place.

But there is one type of hostile gun at which the Counter-Battery Section advises our gunners not to shoot. Every once in a while, through their cross-filing system, the Counter-Battery experts discover that the enemy is firing inaccurately into an area where we have no troops. Then they just let him go ahead and shoot.

After this lesson in enemy-artillery psychology we went down into the cellar of the pink farmhouse, which had been made into a mess hall, and ate C rations, dehydrated potatoes and stewed pears for supper. It was beginning to grow dark, and time to load up cameras and guns. I had planned to work all night with the heavy artillery, because I wanted to learn what a night in the life of a gun crew was like.

"Hope you don't have an artillery duel," said the mess sergeant as we started out of the cellar.

"Hope you're quick at getting into foxholes," wished the KP, "or you'll get dents in your helmet."

When we reached Number 2 gun in Abel battery, the first thing the Lieutenant did was to show me the nearest foxhole, in case I should need it in a hurry, and then I was introduced to the gun crew.

I had seldom seen people more thrilled about having their pictures taken. It seemed to them too good to be true that their own battery, for which they had an almost human affection, had been selected for photographs. They had worked with these 155's throughout the whole Italian campaign, and had named their battery Superman.

"How'd you come to pick our battery?" they asked. Usually these choices are the result of chance, but this time there had been a reason. It had been the idea of the Grasshopper pilots, who had been flying me from spot to spot during my work at the Italian front, to arrange for me to photograph the same battery whose smoke puffs I had caught in my pictures over Cassino valley. This was the battery with which Captain Marinelli had been in communication the day I had flown his mission with him, and it was these very Long Toms which had knocked out the German *Nebelwerfer*. Although Superman had moved periodically for-

ward every time our troops had made an appreciable advance, Captain Marinelli was still air-liaison officer for the battalion.

As I ran around getting cameras ready, the boys warned me that there were two types of stakes I should stay away from. The first were aiming stakes, which the guns were "laid on" to put them on the "base point." The others were sticks marking small disturbed areas of ground. "What's in there?" I asked.

"We don't know exactly," I was told. "Possibly mines. But we don't like the looks of those spots, and there's been no chance yet to investigate. Healthier just to keep away."

The crew pushed back the camouflage net from the muzzle of the Long Tom. The heavy barrel, which had been depressed out of sight under the net, rose majestically into firing position. Squatting on the edge of the gulch, camouflage still blanketing its flanks, the great gun looked like some oversized mechanical giraffe sitting on its haunches, stretching out its long neck to survey the landscape.

The moon rose from behind a translucent rim of misty hills, and a thin line of silver slid along the gun tube like a sword. A red light drifted up above us; it was a lighted meteorological balloon. By following it with an instrument that measured its speed as it moved, it was possible to apply weather corrections on the flight of shells.

It seemed mysterious and extraordinary to me that a streamlined missile like a shell, making a journey faster than sound, could be blown off its course by the wind. But I had been told that in the projectile's fourteen-mile journey, even the earth's rotation would have time to affect its aim. Already the Abel computer whom I had seen in the Fire Direction Center had allowed for the world to turn fifty yards under the shell's swift path.

The crew helped me plot out camera positions. Each time the gun fired I wanted to get four different effects with four different cameras. It was hard to judge with the eye how far into space the flash from the gun extended, or how much photographic light it gave out. I was particularly eager to get one picture from as far toward the front as practical, to get the fullest possible effect of the muzzle flash. The men helped me choose a position where I would not be blown off my feet by the concussion, and they helped me ease into it gradually, trying it a little farther with each round until we had achieved the desired view-

point. They gave me cotton for my ears so that I would not be deafened by the blast.

Each time the gun fired, the whole crew turned away from the flash and shut their eyes tight, and at the same time put their fingers in their ears and opened their mouths wide to protect their eardrums from the concussion. Getting the faces of the gun crew in action was an important picture in the series; Padgitt could be trusted to catch this as he had a quick trigger finger. I set his camera with one midget flash bulb to throw a slight illumination on the men's faces. The other two cameras I placed to catch other viewpoints, and the force of relief gunners divided into two groups to man each camera.

The crew chief called out his commands: *Load! Ready!! Fire!!!* The great gun let forth a roar, and each of us from our various locations tried to catch it at the exact instant of firing. Then I ran from my post at the side-forward angle of the gun, watching where I ran in the moonlight so as not to trip over the mine stakes, and changed the films and reset the cameras for the next round. Since there were several minutes between rounds, I had time to figure out new viewpoints, take measurements, and reset the focus between each firing of the gun.

There was so much interest in photography that night that relief crews from Baker and Charlie batteries came up to help during the hours they were off duty. Soon practically everyone not actually engaged in loading and firing a Long Tom was busy holding film packs, moving tripods, handling lens hoods and camera gadgets, helping me get the four cameras set up and synchronized in time for each round from the gun.

In order to catch each picture at the exact second of firing such close timing was needed, and we had so many signals to one another, that finally the boys said: "We think it would be easier if you would give the command to fire."

It isn't very often that a war correspondent gets the chance to command a Long Tom firing at a bridge by Cassino, and I was delighted. So each time the next round was due, I would yell *load—ready—fire* at the top of my lungs, and four pictures would be taken on four cameras while that 155-mm. shell crashed into space.

It was a little after midnight when the Brigadier General of the artillery brigade came along. He had heard that some pictures were being taken, and he dropped by to see what was going on. Everybody was so

busy by that time, synchronizing the shooting of cameras with the firing of guns, that no one stopped for formalities with the Brigadier General.

So many camera gadgets were being passed from one man to another that soon the BG found his hands full of film-pack adapters, cable releases, and film slides. By that time the enthusiasm for photography had risen to such a pitch that it wasn't much longer before the General was operating my camera while I was giving the command to fire.

Invitation to a Big Shoot

THE FIRING mission was completed just before dawn. There had been no counterbattery, and everybody was in a splendid mood. The gang started into the battery CP and told me to come along and have some cocoa. The BG was sitting inside with the computers, all of them holding steaming canteen cups of cocoa.

"I was ready to stop hours ago," he told the others, as I came in, "but I was too proud to quit."

I looked over my exalted assistant with a critical eye and decided that he was my favorite general. He had snow-white hair which stuck up above his ruddy face in sharp little points. He wore an expression as though he had been laughing at little private jokes all his life. Tied around his neck was a voluminous red and white scarf, which I had never seen worn with a uniform before. I asked him about it.

He took it off and showed it to me. It was a red cloth flag, somewhat torn, with a large white circle in the middle—an artillery sign used by the enemy, he explained, in signaling to their own guns whether the aim is short or over. He wore it as a souvenir of what was, to date, his closest call.

He had been with a group of his forward artillerymen during an attack. Affairs had taken a difficult and confused turn, and they were having to do some speedy diving into ditches. In the course of this he found himself cut off from the others and between his own forward artillery and the Germans. Just ahead of him was a group of Heinies, signaling to their own gunners with the red and white flag. The enemy artillery was "bracketing" to perfect their aim, and the General wondered whether he would ever see home again. Suddenly a high-explosive burst from a German gun fell short of its target, and hit right in the midst of the signalmen with the flag. So the General decided, in his

words, that "they didn't need it any longer," and with his trophy he made his way back to his own side.

While Padgitt and I tidied up the unbelievably snarled extension wires, tripper cords, and cable releases, put the various lenses back in their individual leather boxes, folded up the cameras, counted and labeled the exposed film packs, and straightened up generally, the BG sat with the crew on the earth bench, batting the breeze as he called it.

They were discussing happily a recent decoration which three of their number had received. Three artillerymen had volunteered to go into a forward area and burn magnesium to make the Germans think we had a gun position there. The men had dug foxholes first, set off the magnesium, and crawled into their holes. The Germans showered the spot with lead, but the men managed to keep alive in their foxholes, and when the barrage quieted down they crept back to safety. Everyone was proud that this unit had thought up the feat and had accomplished it so successfully.

As the talk rambled on, becoming more and more technical, I was impressed with the constructive attitude of these men toward their jobs. Artillery to them was not a fixed science; the posts they filled were not mere jobs. They were always seeking new ways to employ their tools in the service of their country.

I have observed that in branches of the service where the men have this absorption in their work, the morale is correspondingly high. This was particularly noticeable with the tank-destroyer battalion, and with engineers and men in certain other jobs requiring a high degree of skill. With the artillery liaison pilots, who have the attitude of evangelists toward their calling, this creative spirit is outstanding. In these cases there is none of that fatal numbness which afflicts many soldiers.

Possibly the answer lies in being able to see the results of one's work. Even in civilian life, it is a blessed thing to see the purpose for which one works. But in battle, where the stake is life itself, I believe this is a spiritual necessity. It is inevitable that in war there must be thousands of soldiers fitting like chips into a vast mosaic whose pattern they cannot see. And, lacking that inner support which would rise from understanding the deeper purpose for which they serve, they take their hardships severely. But where men have the good fortune to be able to see their niche in the scheme as a whole, they can take a healthier stand

against the ravages of danger. Certainly with these artillerymen, both morale and zeal were superb.

By the time the Corporal and I had the equipment neatly packed, and our caption notes in order, the men were too absorbed in their conversation to notice that daylight was streaming through the hole into the dugout. The Brigadier General was discussing the desirability of synchronizing their firing missions more closely with the Air Force. He wanted to get after the enemy antiaircraft installations which would threaten specific bombing missions. The afternoon before, eight B-26's had been shot down in full sight of the artillery CP. If he knew when the planes were going on a bombing mission in the area reached by his guns, he could concentrate on enemy flak batteries, timing his attack so the Germans would not have the chance to bring up fresh ack-ack guns before the mission was flown. Later that day he was having a group of air officers come up to work over the details.

While this discussion was going on, the firing officer was heating a remarkable object over the coals of a brazier. It was a shell fragment the size of a telephone book and almost too heavy to lift. "The night I heard that piece of flak coming my way I called on all the thirty-eight Apostles," he said. He had been sleeping soundly with it ever since, he told me, using it as a foot warmer.

At this point the General turned to me and asked, "How about some shut-eye?"

I was more than ready. Now that the long, exciting night was over I had suddenly folded up. The boys had arranged for me to have a dugout to myself, and had equipped it with extra blankets. But the General decided that I should use his trailer, and insisted on swapping with me. I was too sleepy then to take in all the extraordinary features of his improvised home, but when I woke up several hours later I realized what a remarkable trailer it was. The entrance was designed like a refrigerator door in reverse. When you opened the door the light snapped off. No matter how absent-mindedly you might hurry out, it was impossible to break blackout regulations.

Over the built-in couch was a reading lamp, and in the ceiling was a blue night light, as in a Pullman car. The GI five-gallon can, which one sees in war areas by the million, had been fitted with a little spigot. You washed in your helmet, according to standard Army practice, but a little brace had been devised against that annoying tendency of hel-

nets to tip over. Under the helmet rest, moreover, there was a drain.

At the right was a tiny electric coil for heating a small amount of shaving water, and at the left was a larger heater. Little drawback curtains of blackout fabric masked the windows; a built-in desk had compartments for V-mail blanks, air-mail stationery, maps and charts, lighter fluid, and the usual hard candies. The field telephones hung on neat hooks. A ventilator had been built in over the bed, and pictures of an extensive and charming family stood all about on tidy wooden shelves.

I had just finished observing these facilities, and using as many as a woman requires, when the General came to make sure I had everything I needed. "All the comforts of home is an understatement," I commented.

"I don't miss my girls at all," the General told me slyly. "When my aide and orderly get through I can't ever find anything. So I come in and start fishing around for what I want, and it's just like being home."

It was time for noonday mess, and while we ate scrambled powdered eggs in the cellar of Counter-Battery's pink farmhouse the General talked to me about flying OP's. Frequently he made surveys from the air to study the disposition of his guns, and to make sure the boys were on their toes with camouflage. On these flights Captain Marinelli was his pilot.

Recently the Cub pilots had flown a visiting commission of three Russian generals to various points along the front. Lieutenant Mike Strok, who speaks Russian, had acted as interpreter. The BG was impressed at the comprehensive knowledge the Russians had of artillery problems.

During their expedition, the Soviet delegation was taken to see a Prisoner of War camp. It happened that many of the Germans in the enclosure had also fought at Stalingrad. They were dumfounded when they saw the Soviet generals, and they began muttering among themselves. A few minutes later, several of our Hawaiian Japanese soldiers came into the camp, and when the prisoners saw them their demoralization was complete. "We thought you were fighting on our side," they exclaimed.

"Might be a good idea to turn some of those Heinies loose so they could spread the glad tidings back in their own ranks," chuckled the General.

The word had traveled around the artillery post that I was going

home soon, and when I finished mess a boy came up and shyly begged me to take four dollars to buy a dozen roses for his girl when I returned.

"Since you're going home so soon," said the General, "I wish you'd call my gal and tell her I'm quite alive and kicking."

"Of course," I said.

"I think a lot of my gal or I wouldn't trouble you to call. Tell her as far as you saw there were no signs of senility or premature decay."

"I'll give her an eyewitness account," I promised.

Then I told the General there was one more thing I wanted to do before I went back to America. I had photographed incoming enemy shells and outgoing "friendly" shells. Before I left I wanted to photograph "friendly" shells landing on enemy territory. Was that possible?

"Yes, that's possible," replied the General. "But it's not always healthy."

However, he consented to arrange it. Within the next few days there was to be a "big shoot." D-Day and H-Hour were of course secret. In fact, they had not yet been precisely set as the date depended on the infantry's reaching certain positions. But it would have to come soon. It was absolutely essential to capture Mt. Trocchio.

Mt. Trocchio was the last razorback peak guarding Highway Six at the end of Cassino valley. As long as the enemy had their OP's on the mountain where they could direct fire on every jeep, tank, and half-track that came through the valley, it was impossible for our infantry to advance into Cassino. A heavy night barrage was planned in the hope that it would win us the mountain.

Already large stores of extra ammunition were making their way to the front. All the guns in the countryside would be trained on that one mountain.

"I've never seen a photograph of that sort taken," said the General. "I don't know whether you'll be able to get anything. But it will really be something to see. I'll send my aide along to help you. Stay alerted so you can leave at a minute's notice. You'll be notified at the proper time."

On our way back to Naples, Padgitt and I stopped at an ordnance depot which our artillery friends had said would be interesting. Here the Monday-evening *Frontepost* was being packed for delivery. I had seen newspapers delivered by foot, bicycle, truck, train, and airplane, but never before by shell.

The Bureau of Psychological Warfare had found 105-mm. smoke shells ideal as news carriers. The smoke candles, used ordinarily for laying camouflage screens for infantry, were removed from the shell casings and replaced with newspapers; just enough of a powder charge was left so that when the shell landed the end would be blown out and the leaflets would scatter. Papers were packed on Saturdays to be delivered on Mondays; deliveries were made according to a rigid twilight schedule. This was to help German soldiers to pick up their papers without being caught at it by their higher officers.

Sometimes outstanding news events called for special midweek bulletins. Extras had been issued to announce major Russian victories, in which case the newsheet pointed out to its German readers on the Casino front that the Russians were now several hundred kilometers closer to Berlin than they themselves had been.

When our troops were faced by Austrians, a little quiz sheet was shot over the lines with the query: "Who has been sucked dry by the Germans?" And the answer read, "The Austrians—now more than ever." After the next question: "What will happen to Austria after the war?" the bulletin informed its readers that "the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain solemnly declared at the Moscow conference that Austria's independence is to be restored."

Following the third question: "What do Austrians do about it?" it pointed out that already hundreds of Austrians had gone over to the Allies, because "to continue fighting would mean to fight against a free and independent Austria."

Frequently a short lesson in English was catapulted into the German ranks. It was headed *Fünf Minuten Englisch* and contained, with parallel translations, such tantalizing phrases for study as:

"Some more coffee, please."

"Where is there hot water?"

"When can I take a bath?"

"I am hungry."

"Thanks for the cigarettes."

On the reverse side of the language lesson was a list entitled:

"4 Arten nach hause zu kommen" (4 ways to get home)

"1. See it through and trust to luck." (Under this one it was pointed out that the living are put in again and again, and replacements arrive only for the dead.)

“2. Lucky hit—also called the million-dollar bullet. Rare but altogether efficient. Shouldn't be too high or too low. But often there is only an inch between death and getting home.”

“3. Gravely wounded—Cripples get home.”

“4. Captivity as prisoner of war.” (Here it was stated that prisoners are treated fairly, given good food and adequate medical care, paid in conformity with the Geneva convention, and would be shipped back to Germany after the war.)

This bulletin, and other leaflets like it, was a *Passierschein*, a free pass for Germans who wanted to surrender. When it was persuasive enough, which I was told it frequently was, Germans would slip across the lines waving it over their heads.

One prisoner who had crept through the lines with one of these propaganda sheets turned out to be a portrait painter who had been sent to the front to paint a picture of his CO in action. He did not say whether it was distaste for his commanding officer as an art object, or our psychological warfare, which had made him decide to throw over the whole thing. But he stated quite positively that if there were more single men in the German army, more of them would surrender: the family at home was an ax held constantly over the married men.

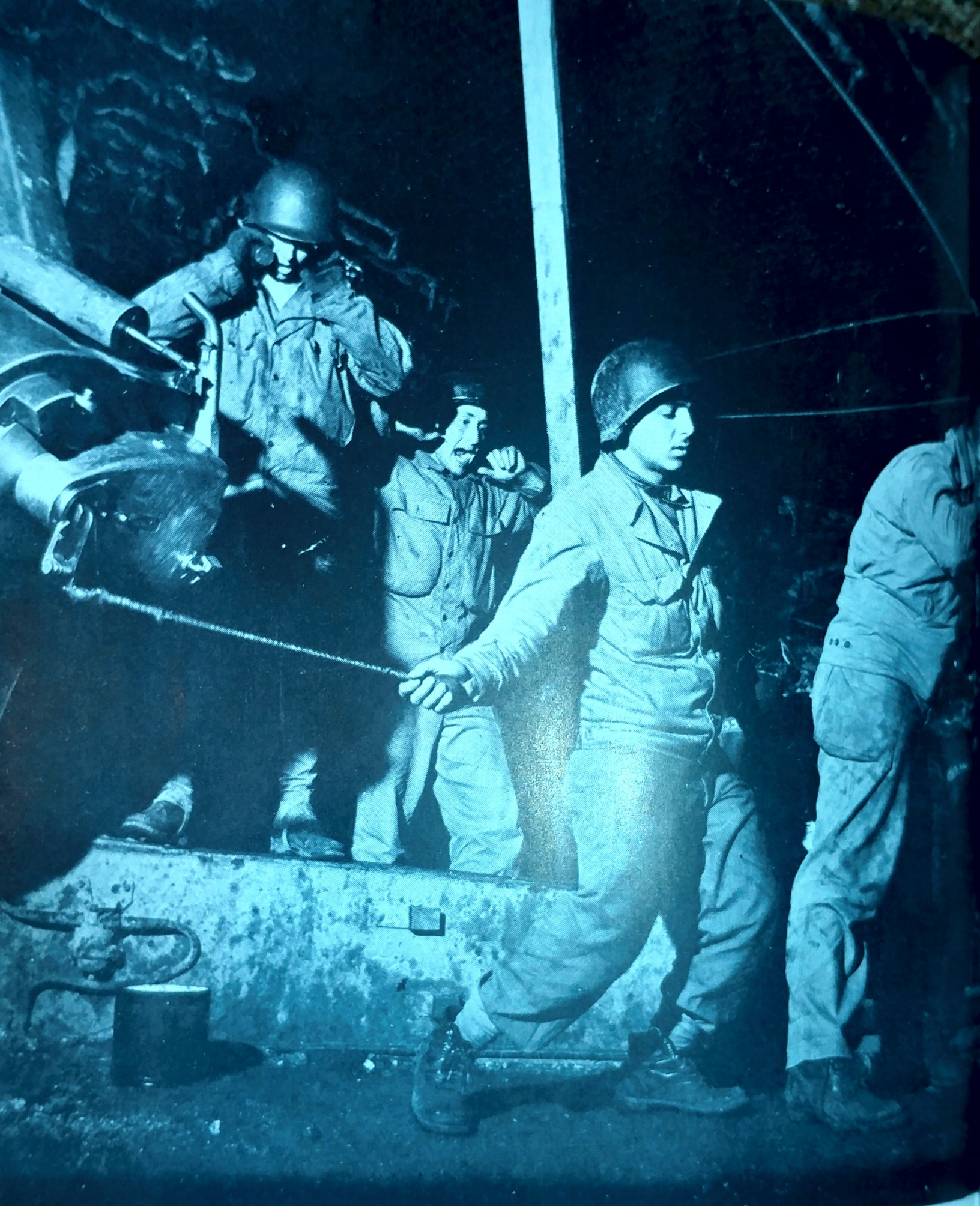
However, the major cargo of the propaganda shells was the weekly *Frontepost*—a serious, well-edited newssheet. It contained four pages of straight news, and was as careful to stress Allied losses as successes. This policy seemed to have won the confidence of its readers.

Some prisoners whose homes were in Berlin stated that the only news they got of home came from our paper. It could not have been cheerful news for them; often it was their only source of information as to the intensity of Allied bombings over their home city. Some recent prisoners had indicated that the *Frontepost* had assumed such a place in the lives of German infantrymen that if we were late with an issue, German soldiers would go along the front lines complaining, “Where is my *Frontepost*? The paper is late today!”



Too big for a courthouse square.

PHOTOGRAPH SECTION VII. BIG SHOOT





Rolling with the punch.



Speaking for 130,000,000 of us.





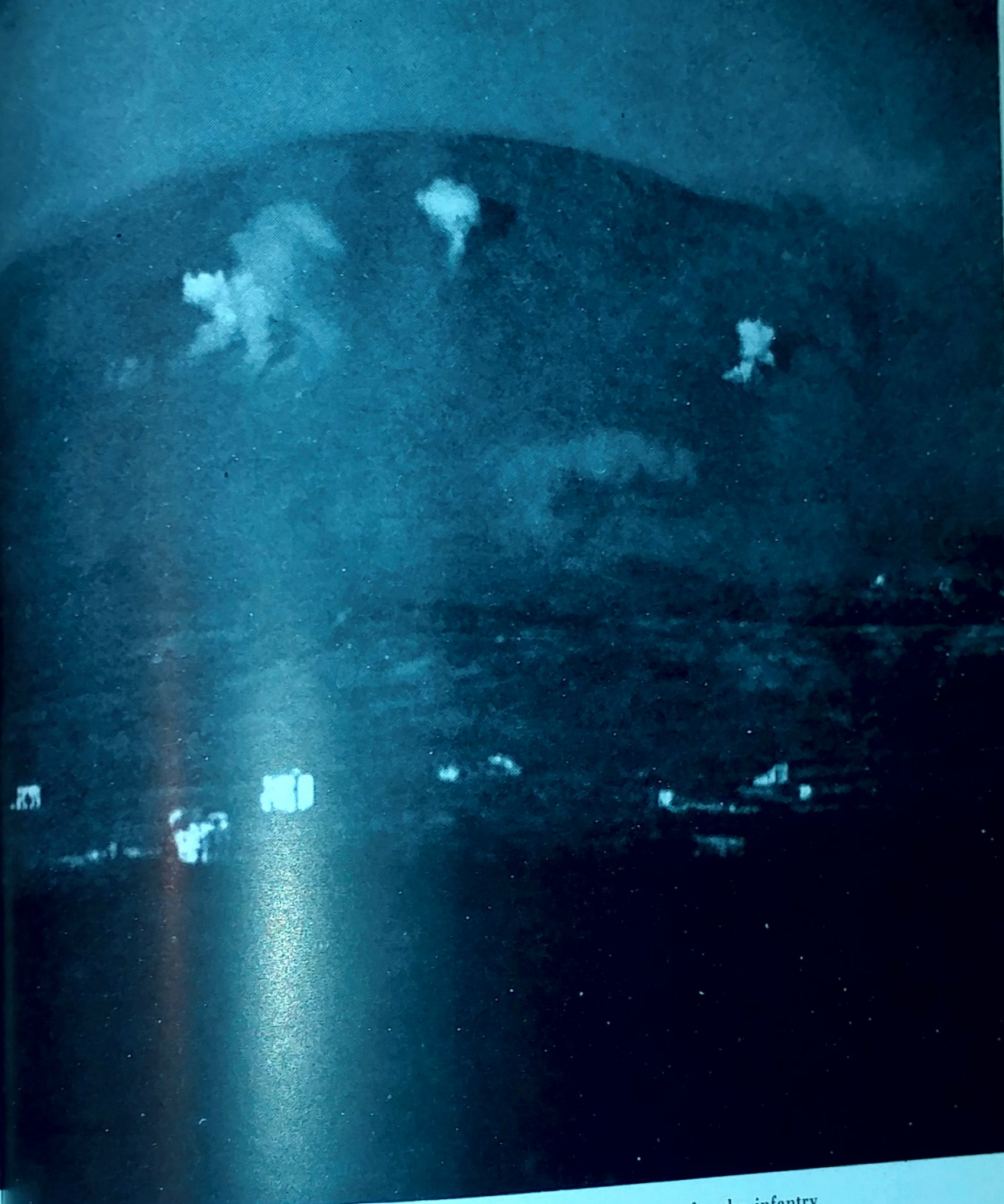
He must calculate how much the earth will turn under a moving shell.



What a city room is to a newspaper, this fire direction center is to a battery of Long Toms.



H-hour was at 5:30 A.M. The barrage lasted exactly one hour.



At sunrise smoke shells were fired to provide a smoke screen for the infantry.



The enemy held the other side of the hill and the job of this security patrol was to keep the gun crews from being surprised, while firing or while sleeping.



These were the most forward observers on the Fifth Army front. Their job: to spot enemy movements of men or vehicles and enemy batteries. They relayed the information back by radio phone to the fire direction center.



A thousand yards down the road are the Germans. These observers for mobile guns are watching . . . watching.



Sugar mule, sugar mule, where are you now?



Men, mules, and machines all struggling forward together through mud and enemy fire to capture this lethal curve of the highway. At the end of this horseshoe lay Purple Heart Valley.