

FREEZE AND SQUEEZE

Sub-freezing temperatures and iron-hard slit trenches impose winter hardships on the fighting soldier. Maybe this will picturise what you have read about in letters home from British Second Army men. Watch and ward in a frozen hole in the ground; a defence point and a domicile in one. An ice-covered water hole is quite an asset in this bleak residence, with no modern convenience, by the River Maas. This is the morning's shaving water being served on the occupant of room 504.

The ubiquitous cup of tea which has followed the British soldier round the globe and back again has never been more timely than here.... From a living-room in Holland, Private Atkins writes home: "Dear Mother, Am sending you ten shillings - my frozen asset."

American patrols push into Laroche, the most important communications centre in the Northern half of the German salient. The follow-up of the enemy is a job for keyed nerves and absolute concentration.

In the conditions like these the sapper becomes the most important man in the Army. The speed of advance depends on how quickly he can pick up the mines sown in the enemy's retreat, which will be made to stretch from Laroche to the Wilhelmstrasse.

British patrols heading in from the West penetrated through the extensive forest of St. Hubert and reached the main lateral road running from Laroche. Semi-frozen limbs and ice-gripped vehicles are squeezing out the remains of the German bulge.

Laroche provided some shelter for those who were able to breakfast in the town before moving on to continue writing off Von Rundstedt's self-styled "all out effort."

Madam Menrique, a brave Belgian woman, helped to halt the spearhead of Rundstedt's attack with a white lie. The first tiger tank to reach Madam's cafe at the crossroads at Celles blew up. When German officers demanded information she said that American soldiers had mined every road, when in fact, they had not. While the Germans sent off engineers, our troops had time to deal with them and the German drive stopped short at Celles.

Americans starting from Malmedy push on towards St. Vith. On the way they pass the mutilated bodies of over a hundred of their comrades taken prisoner and slaughtered in cold blood by the S.S. German prisoners look on the ghastly scene without emotion. Maybe they're case hardened against the work of Himmler's Black Guardsmen. Strange isn't it that there are still people who doubt the truth of stories of German atrocities? Such DOUBTING THOMASES should see some of the things we in Newsreels dare not show.

This corner of Belgium bordering the Ardennes has a history. Its gruesome evidence is ready for writing on the crime sheet of the Third Reich.

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