CHAPTER III

Training, Morale, and Health

THROUGHOUT the winter the Army prepared its physical equipment and its lines of communication for a spring offensive. At the same time it was necessary to prepare its personnel for the forthcoming attack, both physically and mentally. Men had to be trained in new procedures and techniques, and refreshed on old ones. Thousands of replacements had to be integrated. Complete retraining of some units was necessary to prepare them for new types of work; a large percentage of Army units was reorganized. The morale of the troops had to be maintained at a high level during a winter in which most of the men lived in the high, cold mountains. It was necessary to keep a close check on the health of the command.

The program for the winter period was outlined to the corps and divisions in a letter from General Truscott on 22 January, calling for thorough preparation for all-out offensive operations by 1 April, combined with a constant state of readiness for combat before that date if necessary. (*See Annex No. 1G.*) To accomplish this directive a schedule of reliefs was worked out by the Army whereby each of the major units would be out of the line for a period of 4 weeks. This time was to be devoted to intensive training with not more than 1 week of the 4 given over for rest, rehabilitation, and the assimilation of replacements.

General directives for training of American organizations were handed down through the training subsection of the Army G–3 staff. Practical training, particularly by small units, was designed to take advantage of all lessons learned during previous combat. Great emphasis was placed on high standards of discipline, physical conditioning, and the use of weapons. The program was directed not only to divisions in rest but also to those on the front, where similar activities were to be carried out as much as possible when they did not interfere with operational missions. Operations Instruction No. 3, published on 26 January, formulated a plan of action to combine the training program with the tactical situation. (*See Annex No. 1H.*)

The program was designed to deny the enemy any clues as to our offensive intentions and prevent him from withdrawing any units from the front. Continued aggressive patrolling, raiding, and similar measures were ordered carried out tactically; other activities, particularly the use of radio nets, were to be continued and increased, partly for training purposes and partly to provide operational security.

A. *IMPROVEMENT OF TROOPS AND WEAPONS*

1. *Reorganization, Reinforcements, and Replacements.* In the 5 months of stalemate widespread reorganization of service units took place, with emphasis on simplification of the Army structure and the grouping of units of one type of service under a command headquarters, distinct from but closely connected with the corresponding special staff section. The 2626th Engineer Group (Provisional) was formed to assume command functions over Army engineer troops; the 2660th Ordnance Group (Provisional) similarly handled all ordnance battalions and separate companies. Army signal forces were placed under the 3142d Signal Service Group and transportation organizations under the 21st Traffic Regulating Group. The quartermaster and medical units remained under direct command of the special staff sections. Despite the difficulties presented by the climate and terrain, the operations of army service units was smooth and efficient, largely as a result of many months of experience, and the shifting of units and reorganizational moves was carried out with a minimum of difficulty.

The 2695th Technical Supervision Regiment, charged to the Mediterranean Theater overhead allotment, was activated by Fifth Army on 11 February to act in a supervisory capacity to the approximately 16,000 Italian service troops attached to and maintained by the Army. The 56 officers and 224 enlisted men comprising the personnel of the regiment, who were drawn largely from the disbanded 45th Antiaircraft Artillery Brigade, were sent out in small detachments to work with the various Italian groups. These units were primarily engaged in performing engineering, ordnance, or quartermaster functions. Prescribed duties of the regiment were the assisting of Italian organizations in administration and procurement of supplies and rations, transmission and explanation of orders and instructions on technical operations assigned the units, inspection of the work which they did, and reception and issuance on memorandum receipt of such technical and special equipment as might be necessary to carry out the missions. No command function was exercised over Italian troops, whose activities were directed by their own officers.

The continued virtual absence of the German Air Force enabled the Army to

carry out official reconversion of numerous antiaircraft organizations to other branches. The 630th Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion, for instance, became military police. On 14 January a new separate infantry regiment, the 473d Infantry, was activated from members of antiaircraft artillery battalions who had been functioning as foot soldiers for approximately 6 months under Task Force 45. Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2d Armored Group, and the 434th, 435th, 532d, and 900th Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalions were disbanded and their personnel used to form the new regiment with an authorized strength of 143 officers, 5 warrant officers, and 3,049 enlisted men. On the same date headquarters and operations detachment of the 45th Antiaircraft Artillery Brigade also was disbanded. The name Task Force 45 was retained for some time, however, as a security measure, and several organizations entirely separate from the old force carried this designation for varying periods.

Reinforcements from outside sources were few, the 10th Mountain Division being the largest single unit added to the Army strength during the winter. In March, however, in immediate preparation for the final spring offensive, the Legnano Group, an Italian infantry unit about two-thirds the size of an American division, was assigned to Fifth Army, and nearly a dozen new artillery battalions were also received. The 442d Infantry returned from France to add its weight and prestige.

The first units of the 10th Mountain Division arrived on 27 December, and the entire division was in Italy slightly more than 2 weeks later. This division was the only one in the United States Army organized primarily for mountain fighting, and about a fourth of its personnel had seen service in the Aleutian Islands. The principal differences between the 10th Mountain Division and a standard infantry division lay in its transport, which consisted almost entirely of horse and mule pack trains, and in its artillery, which was made up of only three battalions of 75-mm pack howitzers. The division contained an antitank battalion and a quartermaster battalion rather than a company. The men were specially trained for operations in the mountains, the use of skis and snowshoes and specialized mountain climbing instruction having been included in its preparation for combat.

Three platoons of war dogs were assigned to Fifth Army in December and were in action soon after the first of the year. Each of these platoons consisted of 18 patrol dogs and 6 messenger dogs. Under guidance of their own individual handlers the patrol dogs accompanied infantry patrols and used their keen sense of smell to detect the presence of enemy soldiers. The messenger dogs were handled by two men and ran messages between these handlers, one of whom might go out with a patrol while the other stayed with the headquarters from which the patrol departed. The messenger dogs, however, were used less extensively than the patrol dogs.

MTOUSA made strenuous efforts to provide infantry replacements for Fifth Army from its own resources when the quota of enlisted replacements from the United States reached a low ebb in late fall and early winter. A widespread conversion program, changing troops of other arms into infantrymen, was instituted. This program and a midwinter increase in arrivals from home combined to provide a satisfactory flow of new men to the Army. In February and March divisions were assigned approximately 4,500 officers and men above their tables of organization strength to allow the units to orient their own future replacements. In mid-February sufficient infantry replacements were available in Italy to restore expected losses in an extended period of aggressive action and in a 30-day all-out offensive. By the first of April the figure of available replacements had increased to nearly 25,000, although only a limited number of colored replacements arrived. Specialized instruction was provided for 1,200 replacements for the 10th Mountain Division.

In order to provide replacement officers for anticipated future losses, an officers candidate school was opened in Italy in February. This program was set up because of a reduction in the number of officer replacements received from the United States and a belief among infantry division commanders that expected vacancies could no longer be filled solely by battlefield commissioning of enlisted men in the infantry divisions. The first two courses, each consisting of a 6-weeks' program devoted only to candidates from infantry units, began on 12 February. Fifth Army sent 160 candidates chosen from outstanding enlisted men. A 12-weeks' course for producing infantry officers from noninfantry branch candidates to which the Army sent 100 men began on 26 March.

2. *New Techniques and Weapons.* Rigorous training in both basic military subjects and in recently developed weapons and methods of operation was carried on behind the lines. Activity of this type was greatly increased over the previous winter when more active operations were being carried out and the majority of the troops had received up-to-date instruction in use of the then modern equipment. Introduction of new models and practices during the preceding year necessitated these greater periods of training during the winter of 1944–45.

Two weeks after its activation the 473d Infantry began a strenuous schedule of infantry training along lines which previous experience in organizing and training new infantry units had shown to be necessary. In general the work was the same as that prescribed for older infantry regiments in the Army, but as it was comparatively newly formed more basic principles were included. Artillery and tank elements were attached to the regiment to provide combined arms training. Intelligence and counterintelligence instruction was stressed. A provisional infantry battalion formed in February by the 1st Armored Division was given similar, but less extensive training. This battalion was made up of troops from tank battalions for

service in the mountains where the tanks could not be operated. Mechanized cavalrymen of the 81st and 91st Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadrons, as well as members of various tank destroyer battalion reconnaissance companies, received training and performed in infantry roles during the winter.

A large percentage of the Fifth Army allotment to schools being conducted by the Replacement Command (MTOUSA) initially went to the 473d Infantry. Schools in leadership and battle training and in signal training lasted for 3-week periods, while an engineer training school covered 9 weeks of instruction. Half the Army quota for the second February leadership and battle training school went to the BEF. Among other schools operated in January and February were courses in construction of Bailey bridges, photography, and mine planting and clearing. Instruction in the use of skis and snowshoes also was given. General areas for training set up south of Futa Pass by II Corps were used by three infantry divisions during December. The 85th Division trained near Gagliano, the 91st Division at Villanova, and the 34th Division at Barberino. These areas contained facilities for training in practically all phases of infantry work.

Much effort was exerted to bring the Brazilian troops up to American standards, and a group of American instructors was assigned to help prepare approximately 3,500 Brazilian replacements for combat duty. In addition to hard training along strictly military lines, these troops were drilled in personal hygiene, field sanitation, and in the development of a sense of individual responsibility for equipment. A second contingent of 5,214 Brazilian replacements, who had never received basic training, arrived at Naples on 21 February, and it was necessary to send them through an 8-week recruit training course. Special instruction for BEF artillery battalions was conducted by IV Corps.

The 1st Armored Division set up an experimental and training center near Prato for armored units, including the 6 South African Armoured Division and separate tank battalions assigned to the Army. These experiments were directed toward determining best operational methods for use in the swampy Po Valley. Special tactics and equipment for armored assault operations were devised. Fifth Army ordnance units manufactured 9 ark assault bridges and 16 fascine carriers which were mounted on medium tank chassis, manned by members of a special armored engineer assault company formed by the 1st Armored Division. The Army engineer section established a river-crossing training site on 22 February in the area adjacent to the Arno River between Pisa and the sea. This school, operated by the 39th Engineer Combat Regiment and the 755th Tank Battalion, was designed to instruct crews of LCM's, LVT's, Weasels, Quonset barges, and other river-crossing assault craft. After 21 March combined exercises were held by infantry regiments and armored combat teams consisting of a tank battalion and an armored infantry battalion.

The work was closely coordinated with similar instruction being carried on by the British near Viterbo.

Training and experiments with new types of weapons and in new uses for old weapons was another important phase of the program. One of the most important items was the introduction of the VT (variable time) fuze for artillery shells. These fuzes contained miniature radar sets which caused them to detonate the projectiles when they approached within 20 yards of an object, thus producing almost foolproof airbursts at the most advantageous height above the ground and eliminating the necessity for setting time fuzes. Extensive training in the use of the VT fuze and in safety precautions necessary to observe in the handling and firing of this type of ammunition was inaugurated for artillery battalions. Experimental shoots were held, and by the end of January the VT fuze was made available to all battalions for combat use. Further improvements in the fuze itself were expected to allow more widespread tactical use of the weapon. Receipt of reduced charge ammunition for 3-inch guns greatly increased the value of these weapons in a field artillery role. The new ammunition, with a muzzle velocity of 1,550 feet per second, about 60 percent of the velocity with the regular charge, enabled indirect high-angle fire to be used. Previously the flat trajectory of this tank destroyer weapon imposed great limitations on the targets which might be engaged. Successful tests were conducted in high-angle fire of 105-mm howitzers, using reduced charges which enabled them to fire at ranges of less than 2,800 yards. Eight Italian 105/28-mm gun-howitzers and four 149/19-mm howitzers manned by American troops added to the artillery strength of the Army and allowed use of approximately 25,000 rounds of available Italian ammunition. Tests were conducted in the direct illumination of ground targets by searchlights. Star shells fired by artillery to illuminate enemy positions for attack by our night bombers also proved very satisfactory.

Experiments with ground-mounted rocket guns also were carried on in January. The 4.5-inch projectiles were fired from the same type of tubes that are used on aircraft. Several mounts were tested. One type consisted of 54 tubes placed atop the turret of a medium tank; another had 18 projectors mobilized on the same carriage as that used by the towed 37-mm gun; and a third consisted merely of placing 24 projectors on small frames. Initial tests showed that due to the great variation in both deflection and range the weapon was not practical for use against a point target and the large blast of flame and smoke given off when it was fired tended to disclose its position. For placing a heavy concentration on a given area, however, it proved effective. The short maximum range of the rocket, slightly less than 4,000 yards, was a limiting factor. In February and March some tank-mounted rockets were used to deliver harassing fire. New model portable flame throwers were issued on the basis of 12 per infantry regiment.

Another innovation was the receipt of a new type mount for the 37-mm gun. Known as the T–32, this mount was a heavy tripod, somewhat similar to that used on the ground-mounted .50 caliber machine gun. The tripod and the gun could be broken down into small pack loads, greatly increasing the mobility of the weapon in mountainous terrain. One hundred mounts were received in February, and 147 more were scheduled for delivery in the spring. Improvisation of the T–80 sighting equipment of the self-propelled antiaircraft weapons, the M–15 half-track carrying one 37-mm gun and two .50 caliber machine guns mounted coaxially, and the M–16 with quadruple-mounted .50 caliber machine guns enabled these vehicles to be used in direct support of ground operations. First tested in the campaign in France, the new use for these mobile rapid-fire guns proved successful, and modifications for the sights were provided for all the battalions in the Army equipped with them. Special training areas and exercises were developed to acquaint the gunners with tactics to be used in close support of infantry operations and in functioning as short-range field artillery. Antiaircraft battalions equipped with 90-mm guns were given increased firepower when each was assigned 16 of the towed M–51 quadruple .50 caliber machine-gun mounts. The heavy antiaircraft guns were used extensively throughout the winter for firing at ground targets. Three 8-inch howitzers were received which were assigned to corps artillery battalions.

Yet another weapon which would have added to the hitting power of the Army was the M–36 tank destroyer, similar to the old M–10 destroyer but mounting a 90-mm instead of a 3-inch gun. First shipments for the Army arrived during December, but shortly after arrival they were reconsigned to France. The first of the 200 LVT's (landing vehicle, tracked) which had been requested came in December, and the training of crews was begun. The LVT was an amphibious vehicle developed by the Navy and known to the sailors as the Alligator. It was expected that these vehicles would prove useful in forcing water barriers such as the Po River, ferrying assault troops and supplies across the broad stream. Other means to force such a crossing were provided by standard medium tanks modified by "DD" equipment to transform them into amphibians. New light 81-mm mortars with short 24.5-inch barrels, weighing 65 pounds and carried in two manual loads, were received in limited numbers in February. Their range was considerably less than the standard mortar, 1,616 yards being the maximum with light shells. Experimental issues of carbines modified to fire either automatically or semiautomatically also were made. Each of the infantry divisions received a small number of these weapons for trial.

B. *MAINTENANCE OF MORALE*

Fifth Army was faced with a serious problem in the maintenance of morale during the winter period. For many men it was the second winter spent in Italy in far from comfortable circumstances, and the fact that the Italian front seemed to have been relegated to a secondary status did not serve to buoy the spirits. Large numbers of troops had been overseas for extended periods of time. That the soldiers keenly felt all these factors was indicated in the increase in the number of court martial cases, which soared especially among the veteran divisions. Consequently Army officers approached the problem with the idea of providing the men with adequate facilities for rest and recreation, of educating them in the place of the Mediterranean Theater in the war, and of giving them a general view of the entire war scene.

1. *Rest Centers and Recreation.* The Army had become a large "resort hotel" operator through establishment of rest centers in Italy at Caserta, Sorrento, and Capri in southern Italy late in 1943. This idea, new to American armies, proved highly successful, was carried out on a much greater scale in Rome, and expanded during the late fall and winter of 1944–45 in the Arno Valley area. Hundreds of thousands of troops were rotated through the rest and leave centers set up under the supervision of the Army G–1 section to provide a place of relaxation where the men could forget the rigors and dangers of the front line, sleep in a bed, take baths, visit places of historical interest, and generally indulge in the pleasures and entertainment of civilization, if only for a brief period.

The rest centers for officers at the Excelsior Hotel and for enlisted men at the Foro Italia in Rome were continued, and great expansion took place near the base of Army operations around the city of Florence. In Florence itself the huge central railroad station, relatively undamaged despite the great destruction caused by bombing in the nearby railroad yards, was converted into a rest center similar to that at the Foro Italia. In the station sleeping accommodations for 1,800 men were set up. Messes, barber shops, shower facilities, and motion pictures were all concentrated under the same roof. The men attending this center had only to step outside to find themselves in the center of historic Florence. In midwinter, when the weather began to become much colder, heat was provided for the big building after engineers repaired two battered locomotives in the adjacent yards to such an extent that their boilers could be used and steam heat piped into the station. Many free services were provided; mattresses were furnished. The special service personnel operating the center were directed to "make the men feel like civilians while they are here." The Anglo-American Hotel was opened for officers. The Florence and Rome centers

were occupied by individual soldiers sent under special orders, usually for 5-day periods. On 18 January daily train service was restored between Montecatini and Rome to carry troops to the capital on leave. Due to the one-track line with consequent frequent sidetracking, the train ran slowly, requiring 16 hours for the schedule, but it afforded an improvement over the previous method of transportation in unheated cargo trucks over bumpy roads. Troops making the trip were issued clean, pressed clothing before leaving Montecatini.

The Florence rest center drew between 10,000 and 12,000 enlisted men and about 1,000 officers per month, while the Rome center allotment approximated 6,000 officers and men monthly until early spring, when the quota was reduced. In addition to the soldiers sent to Florence on rest 3,000 troops per day were allowed passes to visit the city. Five Army-operated restaurants there served an average of 47,000 meals weekly, using the best possible food and providing free wine and beer.

The area of Montecatini, a small resort town famous for many years as a European spa, was established as a rest center in November when entire divisions were relieved from the front lines for 10-day periods. Thirty-two thousand troops passed through the area during 15–30 November. This figure was reduced in later months since entire divisions were not rested simultaneously thereafter. Montecatini could accommodate one division with ease, and complete units went to it on their relief from the lines after the end of the fall campaign. Operated by the City Command Section of Fifth Army Headquarters, Montecatini was ready for business on a large scale by 1 November and received the 88th Division as its first big customer. Limited training facilities, including firing ranges, were set up in the vicinity.

Where tourists formerly came to take the sulphur baths, battle weary soldiers luxuriated in dry rooms, slept in real beds, and partook of the many entertainment facilities offered. There were five different types of mineral waters to choose from, and civilian masseurs were provided to put the finishing touches on a trip through the baths. Army quartermaster bath and sterilization units were also set up where the troops could clean themselves and exchange soiled uniforms for new and clean clothing. One such company during November exchanged 45,681 wool trousers, 43,703 wool shirts, 52,060 wool drawers, 34,713 wool undershirts, and 38,995 pairs of socks. This unit was equipped to process 3,000 men daily. Quartermaster laundries servicing these bath units and other Army organizations washed an average of 800,000 pieces of clothing each week.

The Montecatini of the peacetime tourist days contained scores of large and small hotels and many "pensione" or boarding houses. These were all requisitioned by the Army for troop billets; in addition many private villas contributed one or more rooms, and various other public and private buildings were utilized. By the middle of November 305 buildings were in use as troop quarters, and this number was

slightly increased when some damaged structures were put in condition for occupancy. Two hundred winterized pyramidal tents were erected on the old race track grounds further to increase the capacity of the city. Space was allocated to organizations on the basis of six men per room; wherever possible each man was allowed 60 square feet of floor space. A minimum of 40 square feet was insisted upon. The Army made available a total of 15,000 cots to augment the rather scanty supply of civilian beds. Improvements constantly were made. The best available food was served, and after several months of operation rest centers here and in Florence were serving ice cream daily.

Despite the large facilities in Montecatini itself, the demand was greater than the supply during the period of peak occupancy by units in November. Additional quarters were obtained in the small town of Monsummano, about 3 miles south of Montecatini, and facilities also were set up at Pistoia, 10 miles to the northeast. Former Italian barracks were the site of the largest billet in that city, and with the addition of other public and private facilities there it was possible to quarter almost all of the 91st Division in this area for its first rest period. The Montecatini—Pistoia rest sector was primarily for American infantry divisions of Fifth Army. Members of the 6 South African Armoured Division set up a rest center at nearby Prato; the American 1st Armored Division utilized buildings in Sesto. When preparations were made in December for establishment of a railhead in Pistoia, the rest facilities there were reduced, and Montecatini handled the bulk of the troops, although billets for 4,000 men were set up at the town of Pescia, 6 miles west of Montecatini. These later were used as a civilian refugee and partisan center. In February rest facilities for the 92d Division were established at Viareggio on the coast.

All official and private organizations concerned with entertaining and comforting the soldiers operated in the rest areas. The American Red Cross provided clubs at Monsummano and Pistoia and ran two in Montecatini itself. The estimated attendance at all Red Cross clubs in the Army area during February was 896,000, an average of 32,000 daily. Four theaters were opened in Montecatini and one in Pistoia. Most of these were operated by the 45th Special Service Company, which during November showed 62 motion pictures to 45,950 spectators. Army special service officers estimated that in that month the motion pictures shown at the rest centers and at various units throughout the Army area attracted a total of 882,000 spectators. While such pictures formed the bulk of the entertainment, stage shows were not neglected. Various USO units presented daily "live" entertainment at Montecatini and Florence; others toured across the Army front to various organizations, some of them well forward. In March Army Special Service reported the following figures: 1,609,945 attended movies; 213,790 attended USO shows; 28,076 men were billeted at rest centers; 138,830 meals were served at rest centers; 249,873

meals were served in five restaurants operated for the troops. All the entertainment features were presented free of charge to military personnel.

Other services were set up for the troops, including an exchange service where dirty blankets could be turned in for clean ones, and steps were taken to protect men at the rest centers from exorbitant prices. Civilian services were restricted by ceiling charges. During the winter an Army-sponsored liquor warehouse was established at Montecatini. Here local liquors were assembled, analyzed to determine their contents, and then sold to enlisted men at reduced prices. The warehouse grossed an average of $300,000 business each month. This enterprise served a double purpose, enabling the men to purchase liquor at lower rates than on the open market and assuring that no poisonous liquids were consumed. Army post exchanges were opened at the principal cities, where various toilet articles, tobacco, beer, candy, and similar items could be purchased. The exchanges also maintained a stock of locally manufactured articles valuable as souvenirs. Prices here were usually much lower than in civilian stores. Troops in forward areas received their tobacco rations free, along with limited amounts of toilet articles.

Special efforts were made during the holiday season to cheer the troops. All military services combined to insure that gift packages were delivered on time, and turkey for Christmas and New Year dinners was distributed to all units. In the 15 days preceding Christmas army post offices received 2,675 pouches and 48,383 sacks of mail for distribution. The average transit time for first-class mail during this period, figured from the postmark date shown at home offices to the date received at Fifth Army post offices, was 9.2 days for official letters, 11.7 days for V-mail, 15.1 days for air mail, and 20.8 days for ordinary postage letters. With improvement of the weather in the spring more of the mail was sent by air, considerably shortening the transit time.

Even the troops in the foxholes and those quartered in the old stone Italian farmhouses near the front managed to brighten up the appearance of their surroundings for Christmas. II Corps provided the finishing touch. High on Radicosa Pass, where the wind swept across the summit of the Apennines and the snow piled deep into drifts, Corps engineers anchored a 40-foot tree, complete with strings of colored lights and a lighted sign reading "Merry Xmas." The tree was far enough behind the front to be on the friendly side of the light line, and military police stood by ready to extinguish the illumination whenever hostile planes appeared in the night sky. The climax of the holiday attractions was the "Spaghetti Bowl" football game between opposing teams representing Fifth Army and Twelfth Air Force played on New Year's day in the cement municipal stadium in Florence before approximately 25,000 service men and women, many of whom were trucked to the game from the front line. Players on the victorious army team were drawn primarily from combat

units, and all the traditional sidelights of a big game in the United States were reproduced.

All types of athletics were stressed during rest periods whenever weather permitted. The Pistoia center included tennis courts which were in constant use. Army special service organizations maintained four gymnasiums during the winter season in which basketball leagues operated and where tournaments which proved immensely popular were played. Some of the combat divisions set up gymnasiums in their rear areas. On 5 February a ski run, equipped with a mechanical tow and a hut arranged as a hostel, was opened near Radicosa Pass. One hundred and four ski sets were available, and the area was operated as a 1-day leave recreation center while the snow lasted. On 17 March a renovated Italian country club and golf-course was opened at Ugolino near Florence.

2. *The Education Program.* Activities of the Army Information and Education (I & E) office, working as a subsection of the Army G–3 section, were greatly expanded during the winter lull. This expansion was given impetus by the creation of the subsection by the War Department on 4 September. Previously the work had been carried out by a morale services officer working under the special services section, but the new organization was completely divorced from connection with that group. Officers and noncommissioned officers were appointed in all organizations down to company level to disseminate information. Their principal duties were to bring to the men information on the background of the war, the conduct of the war, and the possible conduct of the peace. They were to encourage discussion among the troops on all phases of these subjects and, in general, maintain morale as it is affected by such activities. Weekly newsmaps and summaries of the progress of the Allies were distributed, covering all the phases of the conflict in accordance with a War Department directive which stated, "The fundamental principle of American information about the war is that we will speak the truth." These summaries attempted to explain the relationship between action in the various widely scattered combat zones.

Among the topics outlined for discussion by the soldiers were the war and peace aims of the United Nations, postwar privileges and duties of the American armed forces, the equal importance of all branches of the service to the successful conclusion of the war, appreciation of the part played in the war by all the various Allies of the United States, and the need to show no discrimination on the basis of race or color. This last subject was especially appropriate to forces in Italy. During the winter of 1944–45 the Fifth Army roster included Brazilians, South Africans, British, Indians, and Italians as well as American white and Negro troops, while Eighth Army contained New Zealanders, Canadians, Poles, and Jewish troops from Palestine in addition to United Kingdom units. News from the home front was included each week

in these programs of orientation, although discussion of topics on a partisan basis was banned.

Special emphasis was placed on the policies dictating the conduct of the campaign in Italy which indicated the importance of the war in this theater in relation to the other fronts in Europe. The facts that Fifth Army had destroyed more than 200,000 axis troops since the beginning of the campaign; that the Army, together with Eighth Army, was holding 24–28 first-class German divisions from participation in battles in eastern or western Europe; that we had captured great airfields from which heavy bombers could strike at the heart of German production; and that we had provided bases from which supplies could be shipped and flown to Yugoslavian partisans to aid them in tying up an additional 300,000 German troops were brought home to the men. Motion pictures in the "Why We Fight" series, graphically illustrating the background of the war, were widely distributed.

Enrollment in some of the various educational courses offered by the United States Armed Forces Institute was encouraged and increased to a marked degree. During the last 3 months of 1944 nearly 12,000 applications for courses were received. MTOUSA was able to supply from stock 123 correspondence courses in various academic fields and in practically all vocational lines. Twenty-eight self-teaching courses, emphasizing mathematics, bookkeeping, and related subjects, also were kept on hand, and many more could be obtained from the United States. These courses were available to enlisted men at a cost of $2 for the first one requested, while papers for any additional courses in which the man might enroll were issued free. Officers paid on the basis of set fees for each subject. Many American colleges and universities were prepared to grant college credits on the basis of the work done by soldiers. Arrangements were made with the University of Florence whereby certain courses were opened to Army personnel on 26 February.

Efforts to encourage saving on the part of soldiers of the Army were intensified during the winter. Figures compiled by the finance officer indicated that almost 82 percent of the total pay credited to members of Fifth Army found its way back to the United States in one form or another. From the time the first Army pay roll in Italy was paid in October 1943 through December 1944 individuals in the Army had earned $253,798,115.65. Of this total $140,451,042.28 was withheld for allotments, insurance, purchase of bonds, and other normal deductions, amounting to 55.4 percent of the entire pay roll. Cash returned to the finance officer through Personal Transfer Accounts and from various Army post offices, mostly in the form of money orders, amounted to $66,493,834.68, or an additional 26.2 percent. Cash actually remaining with members of the Army amounted to $46,853,238.68 or 18.4 percent of the total amount earned.

C. *GUARDING THE ARMY HEALTH*

The long period of stabilization on the Apennine front with the resulting reduction in the flow of battle casualties enabled Fifth Army medical organizations as well as troops to obtain rest, following a strenuous year of campaigning for more than 200 miles up the Italian peninsula. At the same time, climatic conditions faced by the thousands of troops high in the mountains challenged the efficiency of the medical corps personnel, but the absence of great numbers of wounded enabled them to concentrate much effort in the field of preventive medicine. This was of paramount importance since the troops were exposed to the elements, to a countryside whose sanitary facilities had been greatly damaged in the course of combat, and to the always present danger of venereal disease, increased by periods of rest and opportunity for contact. How well the Army solved these prevention and health discipline problems can be seen from the fact that — aided by improved clothing and equipment — winter diseases such as trench foot were reduced to less than half the rate of the previous winter, as previously noted. A typhoid epidemic which swept parts of the Arno Valley, especially the town of Prato, was controlled and prevented from spreading to the Army; the filth and squalor resulting from bomb- and shell-smashed buildings was not allowed to impair the general health of the soldiers; and the venereal rate was substantially reduced.

Command and medical personnel concentrated on these preventive measures following the termination of the Gothic Line campaign, during which heavy casualties and the previous reassignment of many Fifth Army medical units to Seventh Army in France had strained resources to the limit. Despite many months of severe fighting during 1944, the medical services of the Army always had been able to meet the demand for care, and coincident with continued improvement in technique and equipment in surgery and medicine a systematic plan for evacuation of casualties had been developed. This basic plan of hospitalization was the fourth practiced in Italy after three previous methods had been discarded when experience proved them to be unsatisfactory. This fourth system was followed by the Army throughout the year; the pioneering experiences encountered during the campaign served as the foundation for improved handling of casualties in other theaters of operation.

The flow of wounded from the battlefield was carefully controlled. Evacuation hospitals were set up well forward and located in depth along the main axes supporting the various zones of attack. The more forward of the hospitals were kept as free from patients as possible, enabling them to provide immediate facilities for care of the most urgent cases. It was found desirable in the daylight hours to direct the main

stream of casualties to hospitals located farther in the rear, while during the night most of the patients were sent to the most forward units in order to reduce the delay caused by blackout ambulance driving. An attempt was made to limit to 100 daily the number of surgical cases admitted to each hospital, although this figure was often exceeded in periods of heavy fighting. Each morning instructions were sent from the office of the Army Surgeon to the corps evacuation officers, stating the number of surgical and medical cases to be directed during the day to each specific hospital. When the total was reached at the first hospital subsequent admissions were assigned in designated sequence to a second, third, or fourth hospital unit. (*See Annex No. 2C3.*)

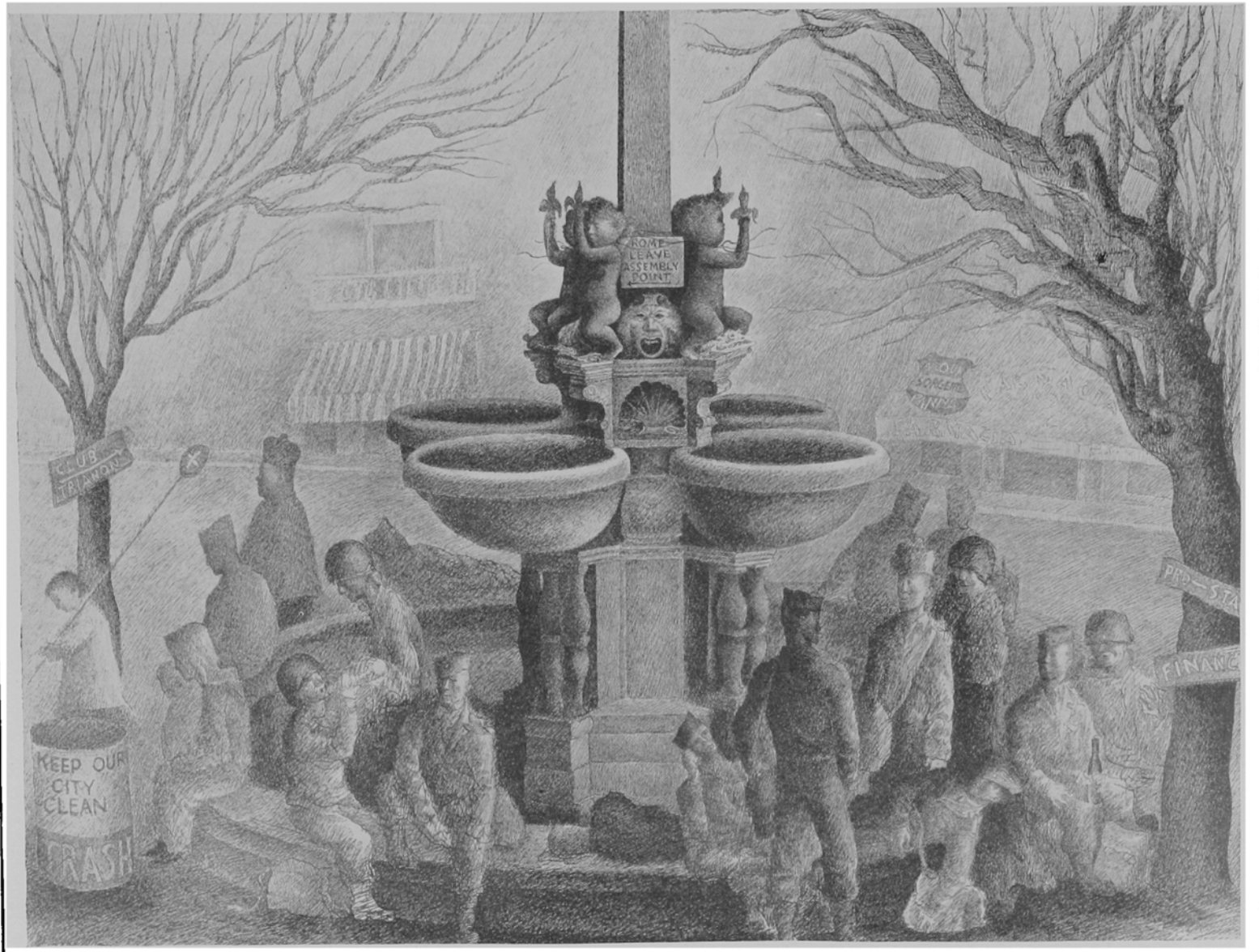
This evacuation plan was linked with the hospitalization policy followed by the Army, in which a concerted effort was made to prevent an unnecessary flow of casualties from the Army to the base zones. The maximum number of men was thus returned to duty without prior evacuation from the Army area for treatment and consequent slow process of return to the units through replacement depots. The normal chain of evacuation within a division area began at the combat battalion aid station, continued to the regimental aid station and collecting station, and ended at the division clearing station maintained by the division medical battalion. A field hospital unit normally was located adjacent to the division clearing station to perform emergency work; from both the field hospital and clearing station casualties were routed to the evacuation hospitals in either a corps or the Army area. Here treatment was continued and the patient eventually dispatched either to an Army convalescent hospital or to a base evacuation control point from which he was taken to a general or station hospital in the base area. Hospital trains, ships, and air evacuation were used at various times to augment ambulance transportation for the journey to the base hospitals.

In some cases the retention of men in the Army area was dictated by therapeutic considerations since the rehabilitation of psychiatric or psychosomatic casualties often was speeded or slowed in direct relation to the forward or rearward point at which they were treated. Faced with a great loss of manpower through neuropsychiatric causes late in 1943 and early in 1944, the Army Medical Department set up a four-point program to salvage patients of this type: (1) to distinguish the psychiatric casualty from the medical casualty in order that early specialized treatment could be provided; (2) to separate the true psychiatric casualty from the malingerer; (3) to establish responsibility among medical and command personnel for the prevention of psychiatric diseases among the troops, to treat such diseases, and to employ men correctly after their treatment; and (4) to create means through which the complete treatment could be effected while the patient was still in the combat zone.

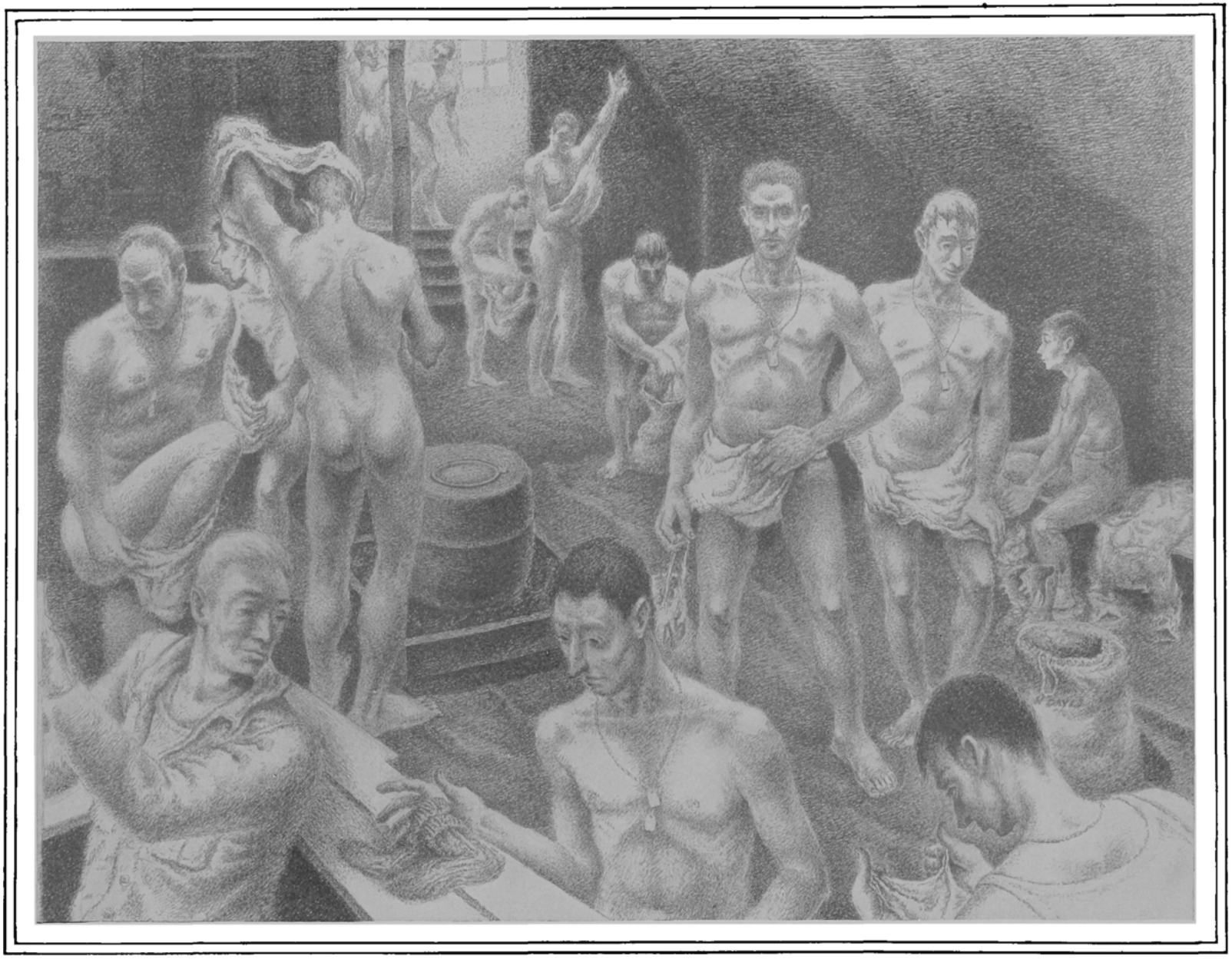
The improvement in rehabilitation brought about resulted from better facilities for handling the patients, rather than through a great change in the mechanics of treatment. (*See Annex No. 2C4.*) Three new institutions to which all neuropsychiatric cases were sent were created to provide for complete treatment closer to the front lines and to eliminate this type of patients from evacuation hospitals, which did not have the staff or time to treat them properly. A neuropsychiatric hospital and a gastro-intestinal center, which functioned in either the Army or corps zone, were set up. The Army neuropsychiatric center was formed at the beginning of the year from the 2d Platoon, 601st Clearing Company, 161st Medical Battalion, and until July all psychiatric cases were sent to this unit, which was located from 4 to 24 miles behind the front lines, often within sight and sound of our own artillery. Only the most severe cases were evacuated to the rear from this hospital. In July training and rehabilitation centers were organized in each division area. The facilities at division level were created following initial successful experiments conducted by the 3d Division at the Anzio beachhead and by the 88th Division on the main Army front. These centers treated patients close to the front before they had a chance to go far to the rear and allow their psychoses to become more firmly fixed. All cases which were too severe to handle here were routed to the Army center. Conditioning and training schedules were also carried out, and in some of the divisions the center acted as a screening agency for recovered wounded and other troops returning to duty. Here their capabilities for return to combat duty were determined.

The rehabilitation program improved to such an extent during 1944 that the percentage of returned to duty patients reached 91.2 percent in December as compared to only 26 percent in January. Of the total of 16,202 cases of this type handled during the year, 7,516 were evacuated from the Army area, the great bulk of them during the first 9 months of the year. Division rehabilitation centers returned 3,183 to duty. The Army center sent 4,168 back to their units; an additional 1,335 men were released for Class B noncombat duty in the Army area. The great increase in returns to duty in the last quarter of 1944 brought the total in this category to 54.2 percent of all cases admitted during the year.

An additional stopper in the leakage of men from the Army area was established late in October when the 1st Platoon, 601st Clearing Company, was designated as an Army center for gastro-intestinal diseases, the first organization of this type to be established in an American field army. It was closely allied to the neuropsychiatric center since previous smaller-scale experimentation had disclosed that more than 50 percent of psychosomatic patients suffered from gastro-intestinal disturbances. By November successful operation of this new center resulted in 80 percent of all gastro-intestinal disease patients treated being returned to full duty as against only 55 percent of those treated at base hospitals. Time as well as men was saved since



Combat soldiers relax in a Montecatini square . . . painted by Master Sergeant Mitchell Siporin



Tired soldiers scrub off the mud of the Apennines . . . painted by Sergeant Harry A. Davis

the average hospitalization period when disposition was made in the Army area was 9.7 days compared to approximately 21 days in base installations.

The venereal disease rate of Fifth Army was substantially reduced throughout 1944, due in part to the changed tactical situation and in part to an increased program of control, prevention, and education carried on through both medical and command channels. In the course of the year the Army had advanced north from the area around Naples to the region of the Apennines. The southern city was notoriously infested with venereal disease and was always outside the jurisdiction of the Army. In contrast to the situation at Naples, the city of Florence, which had a much lower disease rate, remained in the Army area and under its direct control. However, a strict program of control of prostitution and a continuous program of education among the troops remained necessary, since approximately 60 percent of the Italian women are afflicted with disease and the economic stress of the nation had forced many amateurs to join the ranks of the professional prostitutes. In the preventive field houses of prostitution in Florence, Montecatini, and other rest centers were placed off limits, and every effort was made to discourage street walkers. Since it was impossible to control every prostitute, a great number of prophylactic stations were established both in the urban areas and in bivouacs to protect troops who had exposed themselves. In Florence in October only .04 percent of the 14,265 men who obtained prophylaxis at one of the stations contracted a disease. The combined Army venereal disease rate for both white and colored troops dropped from 190 to 83 per 1,000 men per year between January and December 1944. In February 1945 the rate hit a low of 64.

The curing of infections also was greatly improved due to new methods of treatment with penicillin and to better facilities. The 2d Platoon, 602d Clearing Company, 162d Medical Battalion, was reorganized as the Army venereal disease treatment hospital with a capacity of 250 patients. The segregation of all venereal disease patients in this unit freed bed space in evacuation hospitals and also simplified the treatment. After 20 November increases in the amount of penicillin available allowed the Army Surgeon to authorize division clearing stations to use this drug in treatments in cases of gonorrhea, but all syphilis cases were handled at the Army center. Although the great majority of diseased prostitutes remained at large, all those discovered in clandestine meetings with soldiers were hospitalized and treated. In March a 200-bed hospital especially for treatment of such women was opened in Pistoia by civilian authorities in conjunction with the Allied Military Government.