

Photo Essay

THE FOLLOWING PHOTOGRAPHS were selected to tell the story of the 1st Infantry Division as it learned to fight, wage war, and sustain excellence over time. There are very few photographs of German and Italian soldiers or their generals. This is not their story. Most of the photographs shown here were taken by Army photographers.

Prewar Training

The 1st Infantry Division went through the training system that all of the Army's divisions did, but the Big Red One focused along with others on amphibious operations. At one point the Division was earmarked to seize Vichy-held Martinique. Obviously an amphibious assault of NAZI-held Europe had to be undertaken.



Figure 1: 16th Infantry Soldiers at their boat station aboard the USS *Wakefield* (converted SS *Manhattan*) preparing for a practice amphibious landing near New Bern, North Carolina. Soldier photo, courtesy of the Robert R. McCormick Research Center, 1st Division Museum at Cantigny, Wheaton Illinois. (Hereinafter MRC)



Figure 2: Infantrymen making their way down cargo nets from the *Wakefield* to a US Navy launch in the summer of 1941. Using a launch, normally utilized to support ship-to-shore and shore-to-ship traffic, to land troops illustrates how bereft the US Navy was of amphibious craft. Note the descent to the launch is some 30 feet or more. Soldier photo, MRC



Figure 3: An early amphibious craft seen from the *Wakefield*. Note the rails on the ramp for unloading vehicles, in this case a light tank. Soldier photo, MRC



Figure 4: The menagerie of different craft being used to train amphibious operations. Soldier photo, MRC



Figure 5: Troops in the chow line aboard the *Wakefield*. Note that they are wearing “fatigue” uniforms which were made of blue denim. Their trays are well laden with food. The sconces in the background reflect the *Wakefield*’s history as a luxury liner. Soldier photo, MRC



Figure 6: Colonel Teddy Roosevelt Jr. (in the passenger seat), then commanding the 26th Infantry, chatting with Lieutenant Colonel McClure the G-4 (logistics officer) of the Division. Soldier photo, MRC

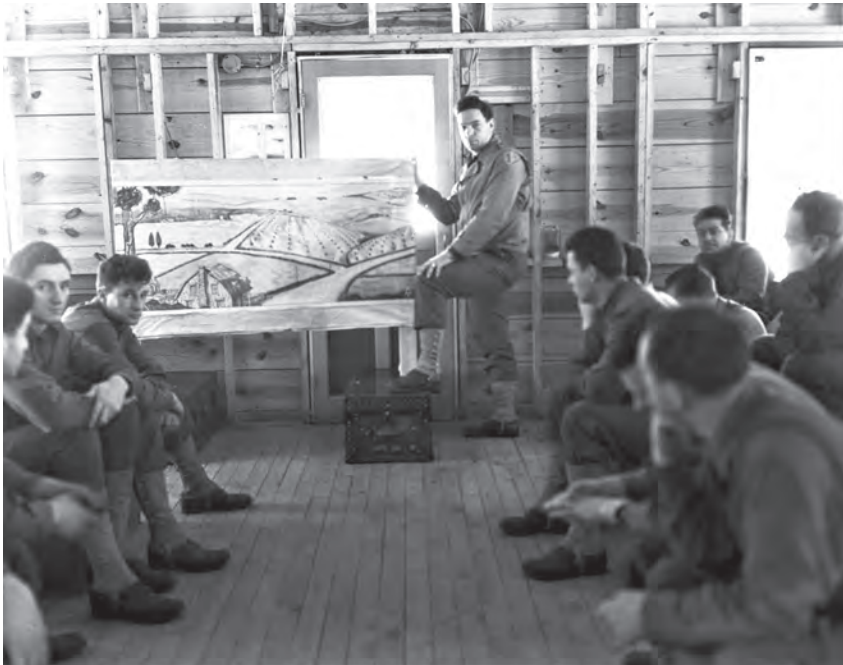


Figure 7: An officer conducting classroom training at Fort Devens, Massachusetts. Soldier photo, Fort Riley Museum Complex

North Africa and Sicily

In August 1942, the Big Red One deployed to the United Kingdom, where it planned and trained for Operation Torch, the invasion of Northwest Africa. The Division began its shooting war on November 8, 1942. The British First Army committed the Division piecemeal with unsurprising results. At the Kasserine Pass, the Germans taught some hard lessons. The Division recovered and showed growth at El Guettar. After the fighting ended in North Africa, Terry Allen's troops became the bane of rear area commanders with some reason. Even so, their behavior went beyond the pale. Given time to integrate replacements and train them, the Big Red One demonstrated excellence in Sicily. The troops clung to the beach at Gela because they learned they could survive tank attacks by doing so. Aided by naval gunfire, they turned the Germans back.

After the end of the campaign in Sicily, Clarence R. "Coach" Huebner and Willard Wyman took over from Terry and Teddy. The newcomers cleaned house, but did so with an eye to training as well as rest and recreation.

Figure 8: 1st Infantry Division soldiers aboard a British landing craft heading for the beach near Oran, Algeria, on November 8, 1942. They all look young but perhaps the youngest is the baby-faced soldier in the center of the photograph. He was Donald C. Wright. He earned two Silver Stars and survived the war. Wright passed on May 27, 1988. Photo by F. A. Hudson, Lieutenant Royal Navy, Wikimedia Commons, accessed May 2022. See also *Bridgehead Sentinel*, Spring 1990





Figure 9: Thomas O. Beauchamp supervising the unloading of 33rd Field Artillery equipment on the beach in Algeria. Beauchamp served in the Big Red One from 1917 until he retired as a Warrant Officer in 1955. Photographer unknown, MRC



Figure 10: M-7 "Priest" self-propelled howitzer assigned to the 16th Infantry's cannon company near Tébessa, Algeria, on the Tunisian border. Soldier photo, MRC



Figure 11: “Official” link-up point for the First and Eighth British Armies. US II Corps sign notes its command post has moved to Gabes, Tunisia. The truck seen in the photograph is hauling a SOMUA S35 French tank. Soldier photo, MRC



Figure 12: 2nd Battalion 18th Infantry positions east of Djebel Berda at El Guettar. These positions are being prepared on the south side of the valley. This is a pre-battle photograph as there is no combat detritus. The ridge on the far side of the valley is the one the Rangers moved along in the early stages of the battle. Signal Corps photo, MRC



Figure 13: 16th Infantry post-operation critique in Tunisia. Ernie Pyle can be seen toward the back with his ubiquitous stocking cap (just below the arrow). Soldier photo, MRC



Figure 14: On 11 July 1943, D+1 of Operation Husky, Ju 88s (German fighter bombers) struck the SS *Robert Rowan*, a liberty ship carrying soldiers and equipment from the 18th Infantry and tons of ammunition. The ship was heavily damaged and on fire. The Captain concluded that the ship was doomed and ordered it abandoned. Shortly after he had evacuated all hands the *Robert Rowan* blew up. No lives were lost but the 33rd Field Artillery lost most of their equipment. The author believes this to be a Signal Corps photo, MRC



Figure 15: View of the Herman Göring Fallschirmjäger Panzer Division counterattack in Gela. In the foreground, two US soldiers are looking out from a rooftop. In the background, dust and smoke from artillery and tank rounds obscure the Gela plain. The 1st Infantry Division repulsed the attack with the support of naval gunfire. Photographer unknown, MRC

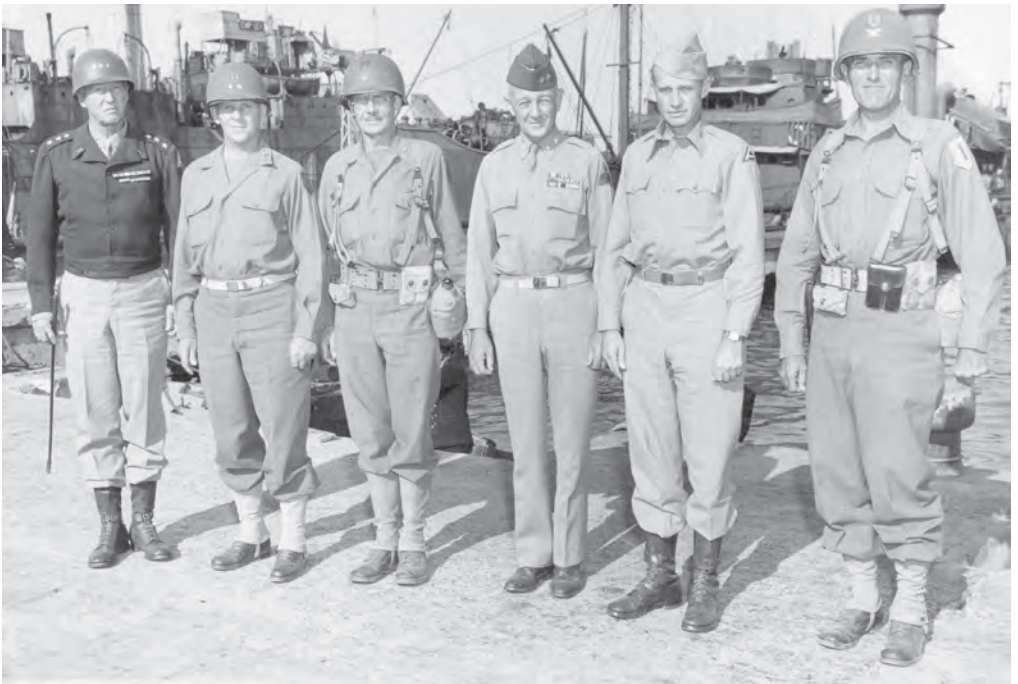


Figure 16: From left to right, Patton, Huebner, Brigadier General Clift Andrus, Hugh J. Gaffney, an unidentified Seventh Army Staff Officer, and Wyman just prior to Patton's farewell to the 1st Infantry Division. The Division sailed for the United Kingdom to prepare for the invasion of France on October 23, 1943. The author believes this to be a Signal Corps photo, MRC

Overlord, the Breakout and Pursuit

In October 1943, the Division returned to the United Kingdom, where it planned, integrated replacements, and rehearsed for the invasion of Normandy. Courage from top to bottom, naval gunfire, and small unit excellence assured the outcome on Omaha Beach. After fierce fighting in the Bocage, First Army broke out during Operation Cobra in August 1944. The 1st Infantry Division played a key role during the exploitation and pursuit, including hard fighting at Mons. In September, the Big Red One reached the Siegfried Line, where it culminated. Hard fighting followed.



Figure 17: An 18th Infantry half-track from the regimental antitank company moving to a “de-waterproofing site” following a practice landing. Signal Corps photo, MRC

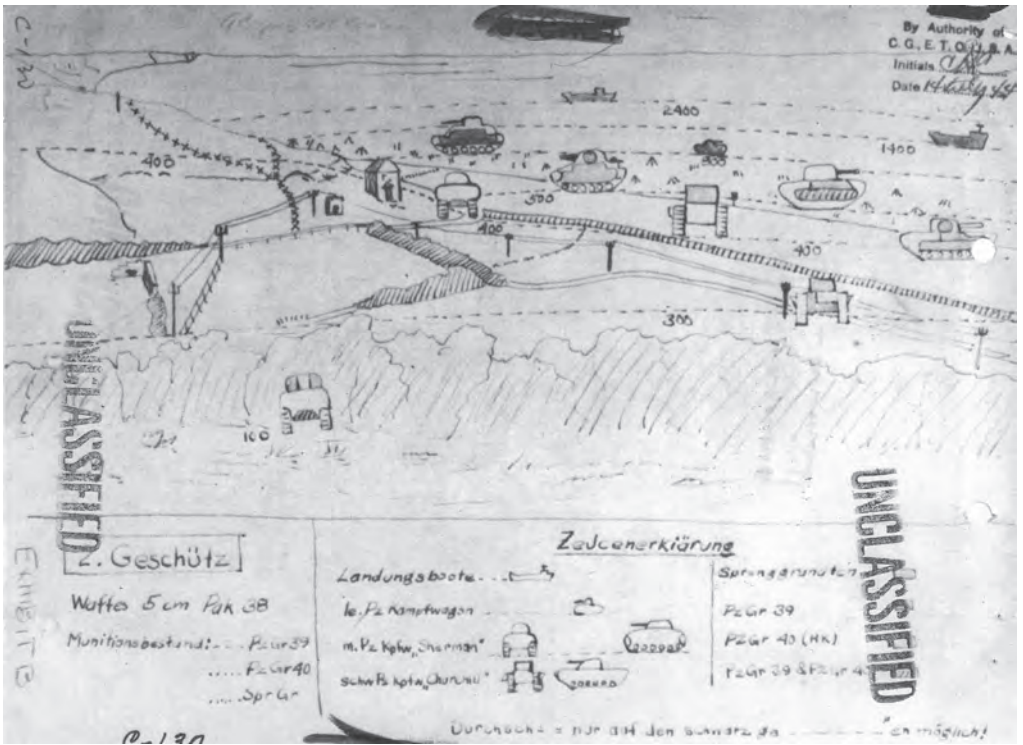


Figure 18: A German range card/sector sketch taken from a bunker on Omaha Beach. The sketch shows the crescent shape of Omaha Beach as it extends to the west, permitting enfilading or flanking fire along its entirety. Ranges are in meters. This sketch was made for a 50 millimeter antitank gun. MRC



Figure 19: Wounded men from the 3rd Battalion 16th Infantry waiting to be evacuated from the beach on June 6, 1944. Signal Corps photo, MRC



Figure 20: Willard G. Wyman and part of his command-post team sheltering in defilade among reeds inland from the beach. General Huebner's scrapbook, MRC



Figure 21: Mulberry Harbor at Omaha Beach. General Huebner's scrapbook, MRC



Figure 22: Huebner briefing Eisenhower and Bradley on 1st ID operations. Andrus can be seen between Huebner and Eisenhower. Bradley is on Eisenhower's left. Although he cannot be seen, the record shows that Leonard Gerow, the V Corps commander, accompanied Eisenhower and Bradley. This photograph was probably taken on July 2, 1944, the same day Eisenhower awarded a number of Distinguished Service Crosses to 1st Infantry Division soldiers. General Huebner's scrapbook, MRC



Figure 23: 3rd Armored Division troops, attached to the Big Red One, celebrate with newly liberated French civilians during the breakout. General Huebner's scrapbook, MRC



Figure 24: Unidentified “liberated” French town in Normandy, summer 1944. General Huebner’s scrapbook, MRC



Figure 25: Huebner chatting with troops in Normandy. General Huebner’s scrapbook, MRC



Figure 26: Major General J. Lawton Collins, (Lightning Joe) conferring with 1st ID troops during the pursuit. The sign in the background points to Danger Forward, the 1st ID Command Post. The Army caption for the photo reads in part “conferring with cavalry.” This is mistaken. This is a photograph of Joe Collins using a Greyhound Armored Car marked with the VII Corps flash on right fender, just above number 9, signifying weight classification as 9 tons. Given the direction he is heading, it is likely he has just left Danger Forward. Photographer unknown, MRC



Figure 27: During the pursuit the Big Red One “motorized” on anything that rolled, including tanks. This tank, carrying at least 12 infantrymen, is rolling through the town of La Ferté Macé, France on August 14, 1944. The tank and its passengers are about 20 miles east of Mortain almost certainly heading east. Signal Corps photo, Fort Riley Museum Complex



Figure 28: One of the many river crossings during the pursuit across France. The soldier on the “handie talkie” radio (Signal Corps Radio set 536) is calling forward the next unit to cross. The soldiers crossing the bridge are from one of the regimental antitank companies. General Huebner’s scrapbook, MRC



Figure 29: An Infantry squad using defilade cover. One of them appears to be high enough to see over the rise ahead. Photographer unknown, MRC



Figure 30: Terry Allen, fourth from the left, now commanding the 104th Infantry Division, and soldiers who had followed him from the 1st Infantry Division visiting the grave of Teddy Roosevelt Jr. in September 1944. Soldier photo, MRC

Aachen and the Forest Battles

The 1st Infantry Division fought on the edge of the Hürtgen Forest in the early fall, avoiding the decimation that other divisions faced. It too had its hard share of fighting to seize Aachen, the first German city to fall to the Allies. Afterward the 1st ID entered the maw of the Hürtgen, where it suffered attrition in breaking out of the forest.

The Division began withdrawing by regiment as they were relieved from the Hürtgen on December 6. The 16th was the last regiment to come out, withdrawing on December 13. In the midst of being relieved, Major General Huebner departed on December 11, 1944 to take command of V Corps. Brigadier General Clift Andrus assumed command of the 1st ID that same day.

All of the regiments needed time to bring on replacements and equipment. However, on 16 December both the 16th and 18th Infantry Regiments were detached from the Division while the 26th was ordered to Camp Elsenborn in Belgium. The 26th Infantry Regiment headed south on December 17 and entered the line at Bütgenbach, where it helped hold the northern shoulder of the German penetration. Andrus and Danger Forward moved the next day. Ultimately, the Division played a key role in retaking St. Vith, Belgium, and reducing the German penetration. By the end of January 1945, the Germans had been driven back to their start line.



Figure 31: A 745th Tank Battalion Sherman firing in Aachen, October 1944. The author believes this to be a Signal Corps photo, MRC



Figure 32: Corporal Eugene McKay observes from the turret of his C Company 745th Tank Battalion Sherman as an M-10 tank destroyer from the 634th Tank Destroyer maneuvers forward in Aachen, October 20, 1944. Signal Corps photo, www.tankdestroyer.net, accessed September 20, 2020.



Figure 33: Oberst Gerhard Wilck in the passenger's seat of the jeep that will take him to captivity. Members of his staff are in the back seat. This photo was taken shortly after his surrender of Aachen at 1300 on October 21, 1944. The three Americans in the background are from K Company 26th Infantry, including the company commander, his executive officer, and First Sergeant Ted Dobil. The author believes this to be a Signal Corps photo, MRC



Figure 34: Huebner, Colonel J. F. R. Seitz (commander of the 26th Infantry), and Lieutenant Colonel John T. Corley in Aachen after the surrender. Note the German prisoners of war to their left. Huebner is carrying Corley's M-1 and Corley is carrying an airborne version of the carbine. Huebner was trying to convince Corley that he should carry the folding stock carbine. Corley remained unconvinced. Photographer unknown, courtesy of Michael Corley.



Figure 35: The 3rd Battalion 18th Infantry advancing through the Hürtgen Forest. Photographer unknown, MRC

Figure 36: In the late winter, the road in Hürtgen Forest was deep literally. Note the cobweb of telephone wires to the left of the halftrack. Signal Corps photo, MRC





Figure 37: 18th Infantry troops taking a break in Bütgenbach, Belgium, on January 24, 1945, before continuing the attack to reduce the bulge. Telephone wires festoon the building in the foreground. Photographer unknown, MRC



Figure 38: M-10 Tank Destroyers firing as artillery on January 26, 1945. The M-10 in the foreground is using propellant designed to reduce the flash. The one in the background is firing with far less stealthy propellant. Signal Corps photo, Fort Riley Museum Complex



Figure 39: L Company 3rd Battalion 26th Infantry on the march, January 31, 1945, during operations to reduce the bulge. The lead soldier in file on the right is wearing the new shoe pac outerwear. He was likely a replacement who received the shoe pac en route to his unit. Soldiers in the file on the left are wearing combat boots that provided little protection against cold or wet weather. The second soldier in that file is carrying a half mile reel of WD 1 telephone wire. Signal Corps photo, MRC



Figure 40: A soldier from L Company 3rd Battalion 26th Infantry receives treatment after being wounded by a mine on January 31, 1945. Signal Corps photo, MRC



Figure 41: Rocco J. "Rocky" Moretto (on the left) and friends during the Battle of the Bulge. The soldier in the center is Rocky's best friend, Robert (Bob) Francis Wright. Wright was killed in action on January 25, 1945, and was interred in Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery in Belgium. Moretto ended the war as a Staff Sergeant. He was one of only two soldiers assigned to C Company 1st Battalion 26 Infantry to fight all the way from Omaha Beach to V-E Day. Soldier photo, courtesy of Jill Moretto



Figure 42: 18th Infantry soldiers chatting beside a 28th Infantry Division Reconnaissance Troop armored car, which was captured by the Germans and then recovered by the 18th Infantry in Faymonville, Belgium. Photographer unknown, MRC

The Battles for the Roer and the Rhine

In February 1945, the 1st Infantry Division returned to the same ground where it fought in the battle to take Aachen. Next, the Division crossed the Roer River at Kreuzau, Germany, on February 25. From there it took ten days to reach the Rhine River at Bonn, which it took on March 7. On March 16 the Big Red One began crossing the Rhine, where it formed part of the force that broke out of the bridgehead. The Division raced north, where it helped encircle German Army Group B. Once the circle was closed, the Division turned east with VII Corps to clear the Harz Mountains.



Figure 43: Brigadier General Clift Andrus, sporting a brand new field jacket, leads 12th Army Group commander Omar N. Bradley into a dugout. This photo was likely taken in the Hürtgen Forest in mid-February 1945. Signal Corps photo, MRC



Figure 44: 18th Infantry bivouac back in the Hürtgen Forest on February 19, 1945. PFC Joseph Porcarelli of C Company 2nd Battalion 18th Infantry reading his hometown paper is in the foreground. Signal Corps photo, MRC

Figure 45: Private Michael Swinkin of B Company 1st Battalion 16th Infantry waiting to make the assault crossing of the Roer River to seize Kreuzau, Germany, on February 25, 1945. He is carrying at least three fragmentation grenades. Two flares can be seen just under his right hand and above a bandolier of ammunition. Part of his lifebelt can be seen just below the grenades. He has placed a box, possibly from a K Ration Meal, atop the barrel of his M-1 Rifle to keep rain or the Roer River out. He has the look of a veteran—ready to go. Signal Corps photo, Fort Riley Museum Complex





Figure 46: Soldiers from E Company 2nd Battalion 26th Infantry sleeping or resting on 27 February 1945 near one of the Sherman tanks supporting them. They are in Soller, Germany, a little more than a mile east of Kreuzau. Signal Corps photo, Fort Riley Museum Complex



Figure 47: C Company 1st Battalion 18th Infantry moving forward through the village of Frauwüllesheim after crossing the Roer River on February 28, 1945. The 16th Infantry made the initial assault crossing, repulsed a counterattack, and with the 26th Infantry broke out of the bridgehead. The 18th followed to exploit success. Frauwüllesheim is five miles northeast of Kreuzau. The jeeps are returning to the crossing site, possibly after delivering supplies to the forward units. Signal Corps photo, Fort Riley Museum Complex



Figure 48: 745th Tank Battalion Sherman moving through a German village, en route to the Rhine River on March 1, 1945. Signal Corps photo, MRC



Figure 49: C Company 1st Battalion 26th Infantry .30 caliber light machine gun crew watching for enemy movement in Bonn, Germany, on March 7, 1945. Signal Corps photo, MRC



Figure 50: B Company 1st Battalion 16th Infantry soldiers watching the approaches to the bridge over the Rhine in Bonn, March 9, 1945. They are adjacent to a German Panther Tank. Signal Corps photo, Fort Riley Museum Complex

The Harz Mountains and the Last Yard

The Big Red One crossed the Weser River and began what led to the final campaign of the war in Europe. The Division along with other VII Corps units cleared the Harz mountains. Near the Elbe River, the Division was assigned to Huebner's V Corps, fighting its last battles of the war in Czechoslovakia.



Figure 51: Private Michael Di Carlo, H Company 2nd Battalion 16th Infantry, hauling 81 millimeter mortar ammunition with a “captured” German wheelbarrow in Weiler, Germany, on March 5, 1945. Weiler is south of Bonn. Signal Corps photo, MRC



Figure 52: 1st Infantry Division troops crossing the Weser River on April 8, 1945 at the start of the Harz Mountains campaign. Signal Corps photo, MRC



Figure 53: A photo from the Harz Mountains, April 14, 1945. The 1st Infantry Division caption reads, "Scattered shots by Germans disturb the stillness of St Andreasberg, Germany. Tank swings broadside across street and offers cover as they see[k] out snipers in buildings." The tank on the left is the long-barreled 76 millimeter variant of the Sherman. Photo by 1st Infantry Division, MRC



Figure 54: 1st ID soldier with POWs at war's end. Signal Corps photo, MRC



Figure 55: 1st ID MPs welcome the 100,000th POW taken by the Big Red One. Signal Corps photo, MRC



Figure 56: Staff Sergeant Tommy Macdonnell home after the war. Photo courtesy of Tommy Macdonnell, MD



Figure 57: Staff Sergeant Tommy Macdonnell in Normandy for the fiftieth anniversary of D-Day. Tommy is standing next to an M-16 Gun Motor Carriage mounting a quad fifty like the one he fought with on D-Day. Photo courtesy of Tommy Macdonnell, MD