

One By One to Victory

Aachen Produces One Hero As Generals Salute Another

By Jimmy Cannon

Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

WITH THE 35TH INFANTRY DIV., Lorraine, Dec. 6—S/Sgt. James Spurrier admits he was in Aachen that day. If you press him, he will tell you he fired a few rounds at some Germans. Some Germans fired a few rounds at him. But the Pacific was much tougher, and he had been in the Pacific, too.

"It beats me," said Spurrier yesterday. "I was paying no attention to what was coming off in Aachen. Ask them what seen it. I was shooting and ducking and I don't remember much."

The ones who watched him that day say Spurrier, who is a 21-year-old Regular Army man from Blue Ridge, W. Va., took the town with a solitary offensive that lasted eight hours under constant fire.

They counted the dead when he was through and he had killed 25 Germans and captured 18 more, including a lieutenant and a captain. They say he fired weapons he had never seen before, and before the day was over had used a German BAR and our BAR; a German bazooka and a U.S. bazooka and grenades of many types.

"I didn't know how to aim some of them things but I caught on after a while," he said. "My basic weapon is an M1."

"This was not the act of a dumb, brave soldier; every move he made was carefully figured out," said Maj. F. C. Roecker, of Walla Walla, Wash. "I saw him fire the different weapons and I've never seen a cooler or a smarter soldier under fire. He used one weapon until he ran out of ammo and then picked another one and fiddled around with it until he started it going. We would never have taken the town that day without him."

By Dan Regan

Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

WITH U.S. SEVENTH ARMY, Dec. 6—When Lt. Gen. Alexander M. Patch, commander of the Seventh Army, pinned the Congressional Medal of Honor on T/Sgt. Homer I. (Blackie) Wise and turned to five other general officers and said, "Gentlemen, let's give this man a salute," one of the great stories of individual heroism in World War II came to light.

The simple language of the War Department citation tells the story of the 27-year-old member of the 36th Division from Baton Rouge, La. It reads:

"In an attack on Lagliano, Italy, Sgt. Wise led three other men through sweeping fires to carry a member of his platoon to a point where he could be given medical treatment. Later he noticed an enemy officer and two men armed with automatic weapons sneaking to the side in an effort to flank his unit. He rushed forward alone and sub-machine-gunned all three.

"Returning to his unit he found them facing a disastrously effective fire from enemy gunners in desfiladed positions inaccessible to small-arms fire from our troops. He gathered up all available anti-tank grenades and, moving through a hail of bullets, inflicted so many casualties on the foe that their positions became untenable and they fled.

"The battalion moved forward to its immediate objective and came under machine-gun fire. The range was too great for his sub-machine-gun so he picked up an automatic rifle and walked forward, firing his weapon from a standing position.

"His company again moved forward, and noticing a machine-gun on a tank unmanned he leaped upon the tank, repaired the jammed weapon and fired 750 rounds that neutralized flanking positions."

A veteran of five major battles, Wise also holds the Silver Star, the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart with two oak leaf clusters.