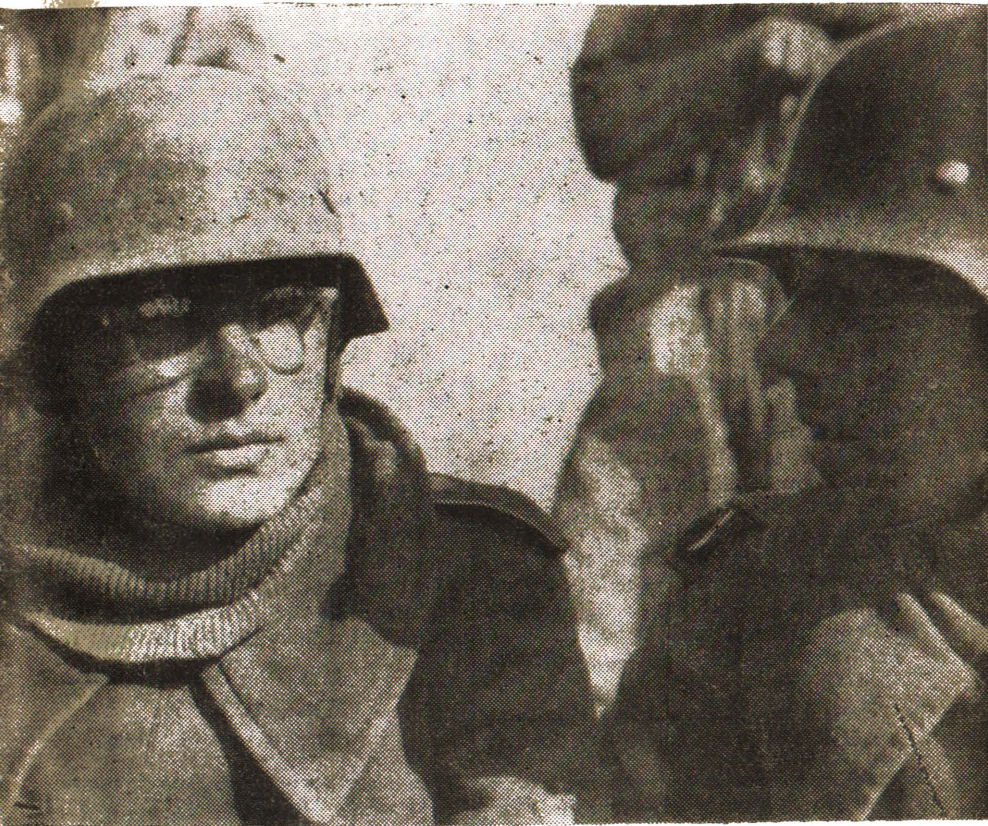


Vol. II. No. 35
30 Aug. 1944



ARMY TALKS



What Boche PWs Think About You



RESTRICTED • EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS • UNITED STATES ARMY

A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR OF



Dear Lieutenant :

This is what the German soldier tells us about our ourselves, after he has been captured. He may be wrong ; he probably has exaggerated, but he is evaluating soldiers as only a professional soldier can. We're just giving you the dope from the horse's mouth—from the men who fought us in France.

ARMY TALKS sent a qualified interrogator to discuss American fighting ability with German prisoners from combat units. Their opinions are rather positive !

"You lack battle experience . . . you've lost objectives by too much caution . . . with your kind of support our infantry would throw you back in the ocean . . . at night we can tell you are coming by the rattle of your mess kits and the light of your cigarettes . . . you'd have smaller losses if you advanced faster . . . you're winning with air and material superiority—your infantry isn't winning it . . . when a plane can waste a bomb or strafe a single man on a road, it's time to quit . . . your paratroopers were no more effective than snipers. . . ."

Quite a kick in the old complacency at a time lots of us feel our Army's the best

in the world, and surrender is just around a few more hedgerows.

Wartime's no time for compliments. It's the time to DO something about it, if we are to beat down Hitlerism and get the maximum number of American soldiers home in one piece.

This is one of the weekly ARMY TALKS, prepared for leaders of discussion periods in your unit. The object is to make men more efficient soldiers. In this type of warfare, where service force troops are up under fire, fighting against attacks, EVERY SOLDIER must know what it's all about if he's to live to enjoy the privileges of the GI Bill of Rights.

You, as a platoon officer, are responsible for the orientation of your men. ARMY TALKS are prepared to assist you in this important mission. Are you using them to the utmost? Do your non-coms read them ?

And isn't this matter of Combat Orientation something so vitally necessary that it should be carried into training and work twenty-four hours a day, instead of just one day a week ?

You might be interested in checking the way this and similar ARMY TALKS topics are presented to the men whose lives are in your hand. Give the matter your best attention and at the first opportunity read General Eisenhower's directive on combat orientation dated August 1.

ARTHUR GOODFRIEND,
Major, AUS,
Chief, Orientation Branch.

"The purpose of the program is to give the soldier psychological preparation for combat, and a better realization of the import of every phase of his military training. Emphasis will be placed on combat orientation. The mental and physical conditioning of the enemy, and a proper evaluation of the enemy's weapons and fighting qualities will be stressed. A better understanding of the background of the war, and the soldier's responsibilities in the post-war world will also be developed. . . ."

BY COMMAND OF GENERAL EISENHOWER.

(Extract from letter ETO, 1 August, 1944, AG 352/2 OpSS, Subject :
Combat Orientation Program.)



ARMY TALKS

EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS

What Boche PWs Think About You

THE big American push across Brittany trapped thousands of German soldiers. They fell into the hands of our infantry and tanks and were rapidly carried back to the PW cages. There, fresh from combat—but a few hours away from their last clash with the Yanks—they were interviewed by an ARMY TALKS reporter.

“What do you think of the American soldier?” he asked. “What do you think of his equipment? How well does he use it? You were in a good position to judge his ability. Tell us what you think about him.”

Here are some of the answers. They are completely unedited. They are presented exactly the way the interrogator translated the German prisoners' remarks. They should be evaluated with caution. Some of these Germans were arrogant Nazis. Their statements may not be trustworthy. They may be colored by their Nazi indoctrination. Others—conscripts from conquered nations—may have been trying to curry our favor. Their flattering remarks should not be taken too seriously.

Every company officer, however, can conduct an interesting Army Talk by quoting these statements of German prisoners. Somewhere in the bulk of these statements by German prisoners is a residue of truth. From this truth every American soldier can profit. Mistakes can be avoided, strengths can be exploited. The German enemy can be better understood, and above all, pride in the great military machine our “feeble democracy” has so quickly built will be strengthened.

For whatever the criticisms, the defects and the errors the experienced German soldier points to in us, the fact remains that these Germans are our prisoners. The German Army is in retreat. And the German ambition is being foiled by “weak, green, decadent Americans.”

Statements By German Prisoners

About Our Infantry

(Note : If this gets the infantry mad, remember, it is the German PWs—not ARMY TALKS, whose opinions are expressed here.)

S/Sgt. (a Panther tank platoon commander with a year's service on the Russian front): “I have just come up to this front from fighting against the British down south. Although I have been here for only two days, I have already taken part in two attacks against the American troops,

and it seems to me that they still lack battle experience. Instead of staying in their foxholes when our tanks roll up, and taking cover until we pass, they jump out and try to elude us in the open or try to knock us out with small arms fire. That doesn't work with a Panther, as the British seem to have discovered already. Then again, your men do a good deal of apparently aimless firing and give away their positions. This terrain is strictly for infantrymen: all that we tankers can do is to act as infantry support. In Russia massed regiments of tanks used to plow over the steppe without any infantry in sight, but here even one tank platoon can hardly operate as a unit. That is how I got captured."

"Infantry Didn't Even See Me"

Acting Sgt. (an SS artilleryman acting as infantry squad leader, with service at Narvik, and two years on the Russian front): "In this last action I was lying in my LMG pit, with the rest of my squad disposed around me. I didn't dare stir out of my hole for over two hours because of the terrific artillery and mortar fire we were getting. Right after the fire let up, I noticed American infantry next to my hole, they must have suffered casualties from their own fire being that close (a thing I have seen happen on this front more than once).

"They were making their way past our position and across the field we were supposed to be covering without even noticing our presence there. The funny thing is that I was in a shallow little pit I had scraped out with my bare hands—no camouflage but a few potato plants stuck around. I could have mowed down the first wave at my leisure if I had been a fanatic. The Russians have a slyer way of doing things; they would have liquidated us before exposing their rear. If I hadn't been sick of the whole business I think I could have got away without any trouble; there was a long interval between the first and second wave. Finally, however, after a lot of troops had passed, I saw some medics wandering around, and decided to give myself up."



Lt. (Commander of a rifle company in an SS division, with service on the Russian front): "We look upon the American soldiers as pretty good troops, but lacking in experience. Rather often I have

noticed that objectives which could have been gained by aggressive and resolute leadership of rifle companies and platoons were forfeited by too great caution. Also, we don't think much of your small arms marksmanship : your men have a tendency to spray the countryside with vast numbers of bullets aimed at nothing in particular. Even when you do have a good target, it takes you a long time to hit it. My own



case is an example of that. My company was pretty badly cut up by your attack, but I didn't want to withdraw without letting the flank company know about it. My messengers had all been killed or wounded ; so I went over to the other company myself. Half way there I suddenly found myself in front of four of your machine guns and about a dozen riflemen. They opened fire on me with everything they had at a distance of only fifty yards, and expended over a thousand rounds before hitting me. Those demonstrations you occasionally put on of massed small arms fire in a given sector don't really mean anything."

Sgt. (a professional soldier with seven years of service, including the French and Russian campaigns) : "I don't think that your troops clean out the areas they cross carefully enough. After I became separated from my unit during your last attack I wandered around behind your lines for five days, noting troop concentrations and artillery positions so that I could report them to my CO when I got back to my unit. I was almost across the lines when I finally got captured, but a lot of others do manage to get through."

Sgt. (Infantry) : "Your infantry hasn't any guts in an offensive push. Lots of times they are held up when there really isn't anything against them. Ten men and a couple of machine guns have held up a whole company.

" Why Don't They Come On? "

" Yesterday I said to my friend, ' Why don't the Americans come on— there is nothing here to stop them? ' But they waited another day before they attacked.

" The German infantry soldier is a better soldier than the American infantryman. We could beat you easy if we had your equipment.

"Your riflemen are too cautious and when they are bold they are foolish. They just walk out boldly as if nothing would hurt them and don't make use of the available cover."

Pvt. (Infantry) : "Your infantry doesn't take advantage of their supporting weapons. The artillery has us down and out, but by the time the infantry get there we are freshed up and ready for them. The same thing happens when we are battered by your bombers."

"Your infantry doesn't stay close enough behind the artillery fire and when they attack they haven't any push."

Sgt. (Infantry, three years in Russia) : "The American infantry is too cautious. They are always thinking of how to save their own lives. The Russian soldier goes through just as though we weren't shooting at him." (The interpreter suggested to this man that we were interested in saving as many lives as possible because we could afford to with our equipment even though it would take a little longer. His response was a smile which was a combination of disbelief and scorn.)

"Your riflemen shoot well but they are not aggressive enough. When the infantry starts coming up all we have to do is to throw a few shots at them and they stop. They are altogether too cautious."

"Your machine gun fire is badly aimed and doesn't hit anything. Instead of waiting till we get close they just start firing without seeing anything."

"Your Attacks Not Followed Up"

"The men are very frightened by mortar fire. In some ways it's worse than artillery. You can hear the artillery shell but the mortar shell just goes 'boom' and it's right there on you. Your mortarmen are very good."

Cpl. (Infantry) : "Your attacks are not always followed up quickly. We have time to reorganize and entrench ourselves before your thrusts are resumed. A long time elapses between your artillery concentrations and the appearance of your foot troops."

Lt. (Panzer division) : "When we withdrew from the town of — your troops didn't occupy and secure the town. As a result we were able to send combat patrols back into it. We didn't occupy the town in force but we prevented your taking the place for a much longer time than was good for you. Finally, you outflanked us, but you could have done this to good advantage in the first place."

Sgt (Infantry) : "After being subjected to two days of your continuous artillery fire we would have crumbled quickly ; in the face of a strong infantry attack we would have surrendered immediately, but your infantry took too long a time in arriving. We were better prepared and were able to kill many of your men before we finally gave up."

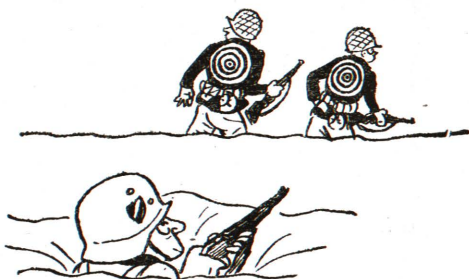
Cpl. : "Your infantry is too careless. They don't take advantage of cover and concealment."

Cpl. : "Your infantry is too cautious. They rely too much on the

artillery to pave the way for them. If our infantry had the same kind of support you would be thrown back into the ocean by now."

Sgt. (Military police) : "Yes, you are winning the war. You are winning it with air superiority and superiority in material. But your infantry is not winning it. It has no assault power."

Sgt. (Infantry) : "It is hard for me to tell you what we say among ourselves about your infantry. What we say seems to contradict itself, but this is it : you are careless, or foolish, or heroic beyond conception. You don't seek cover. You go along unprotected. Even when two



men are on an outpost, instead of being on edge, they relax. You are over-confident. You don't stay alert. When you use your small arms you are better than we are. Your marksmanship is better. But you seem to consider it all a sport, a game. You behave like you were on a hunt. You don't seem to realize this is a killing thing."

Lt. (SS division) : "We have nothing but contempt for your infantryman so far as his military qualities are concerned. He doesn't understand cover or concealment. He doesn't follow his artillery barrage. You give us plenty of chance to reorganize. If we had your artillery support not one of you would leave France alive. Compared to our German soldiers you are not proficient in armored vehicle combat. If armor gets too close you lose your head. Our men stand their ground and throw grenades. The best I can say for your men is when we capture you, you don't talk. You are good soldiers in that way."

"Barbarous Weapons Like Knives, Axes"

Pvt. : "We have respect for your commandos and raiders with black faces. Our men are afraid of your barbarous weapons like axes and knives.

We can fight you well at a distance, but we fear close combat with you. We especially fear your negro troops. Why? We are told they never take prisoners and they fight with razors and knives."

Capt. (Tank corps) : "I no longer have any faith in our victory. I am speechless at your equipment ; your armored force is wonderful, it kicked my company to pieces in three days. But our German infantryman is better than yours. He could do much more with your material than you are doing. Our discipline and organization are better. Our German soldier goes out with his squad and fights as a team. Your men have no

idea of unit fighting and you are not hard enough either in your bodies or your minds."

Sgt. (Panzer Grenadiers) : "I cannot figure your infantryman out. He is either too cautious or, if he is audacious, he is careless. The Russian soldier is a harder man to deal with. He is sly and sneaky and he prowls like an animal, but the American walks out straight and we bowl him over with a few bullets. You attack fiercely with your artillery and your air force. We burrow in our holes and are shocked into impotence. Then maybe three hours later your infantry comes along—too late, we are ready again."

"You Americans Shoot Well"

Sgt. : "Your infantry would get bigger objectives if they pushed harder. I think you would have smaller losses if you advanced faster. You hesitate now so we have time to shoot well-aimed, careful shots at your men. The Americans shoot well. He is about on a par with our shooting. Advancing men seldom shoot carefully—that gives us an advantage—but you do pretty well. In this campaign the infantryman on both sides is about equal. It's nip and tuck."

Pvt. : "To our green troops your mortar is worst. After we learn to take cover and protect ourselves from it we think your machine gun is worse. Many of our men believe your rifle ammunition explodes on impact. Your artillery fire is mentally terrible. It leaves us demoralized, but its actual effect isn't always great because we keep spread out and we dig in. But it makes our green troops dizzy."

Sgt. : "We think your scouts are good. We admire the courage and spirit of the officers who lead your patrols. We don't have officers any more who go out on patrol. Nowadays our officers are older men who can't be scouts—or won't be. Our young officers are not skilled enough."

Officer (Parachute regiment) : "Your infantry doesn't know how to use the ground. They don't use holes when they hear our machine guns. They run standing up instead of falling, seeking cover, keeping their heads and moving forward when the shooting stops. Men who run around erect are easy to shoot down. We are shooting down plenty."

Capt. (Infantry) : "You are too noisy at night. We can tell you are coming by the rattle of your mess kits."

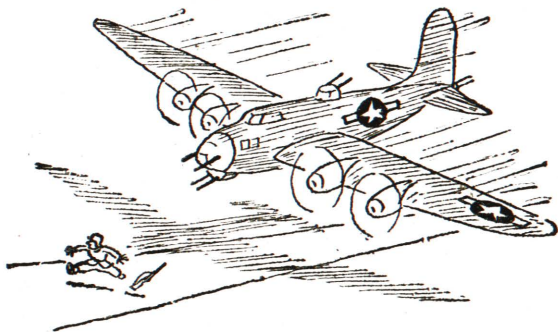
Lt. (Infantry) : "What do I think of your night fighting? I will tell you. The other night one of your patrols came toward our position. It was pitch dark but we could see them clearly. How? By the light of their cigarettes. Your men were smoking on night patrol. There isn't a *schuetze* (rifleman) in the German army so stupid as to do that."

Sgt. (Infantry) : "Your artillery and air force are trained to the last ditto point in accuracy, but your infantry is bad. Its main fault is that it is not aggressive. It expects the air force and artillery to knock out all our automatic weapons before it attacks. If it were a little less

cautious many of your lives would be saved. You give us a chance to reform and lay mine fields. We are proud of our mine-laying system. Our mines play havoc with you and we enjoy making up new devices ; we keep changing them all the time. When you learn one trick we have a new one ready."

Sgt. (Pioneer regiment) : "When you attacked our bunker you seemed satisfied when you captured it. Already we were badly disorganized and if you had pushed harder you could have easily captured more ground. This was very noticeable in a combined tank and infantry attack in our sector on July 5. Your tanks advanced to their assigned objective and stopped. Your infantry advanced only so far as the tanks. Had your advances continued we could never have stopped it. Our reserves were completely worn out."

An EM from a supply company : "We are most afraid of the fighter bombers. They go everywhere. We have to stay in foxholes in the day and can't move a truck. Then we have to do our work at night and get no rest.



"The big bombers didn't bother us very much except for new soldiers who hadn't been in it before. We were well dug in and just waited for the attack which did not come till much later.

"Being battered heavily by the bombers is hard on the men but they are not at all accurate in knocking out gun positions or small targets. Of course it's different if they bomb a whole area."

"Walking Along Highways Is Suicide"

Capt. (Infantry) : "Our air superiority in the Polish and French campaigns was nothing in comparison to your air power over here. When a plane can waste a bomb or strafe a single soldier walking along a road, then it's time to quit. To attempt to walk along highways in the daytime is suicide."

Sgt. (Ordnance) : "Your big bombers are the most terrifying. When

they lay a carpet of bombs eight miles deep and eight miles wide then we should give up."

Sgt. : "It is not like the old days when we had our own Luftwaffe. Now whenever there's a plane in the sky we take cover. We know even without looking that it's yours. Where is the Luftwaffe? We do not know. We think it has no fuel. We were told it would be over us on July 10th, then they promised the 20th; next they said the 30th. Still we have not seen it. Only the Fuehrer knows."

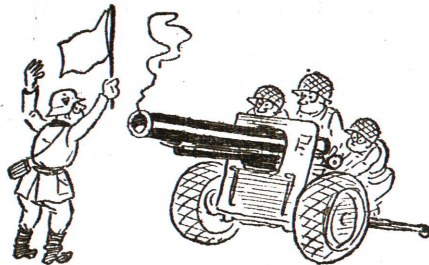
Lt. (Parachute division) : "Our word for your air bombardment is *Bomben Teppich* (carpet of bombs). It covers every inch of the ground. There's almost no escape from it. It's a miracle if any of us survive. Our air superiority in the Polish campaign was nothing in comparison to your air superiority in this campaign. It is not unusual that one of your planes dives just to strafe a single German soldier on the road. To walk in uniform on highways during daytime is suicide. Your pilots must have eyes like an eagle because they know exactly whether it's a soldier or a civilian on the road."

"Your Artillery Fire Is Terrific"

Sgt. (Infantry, with two years of combat) : "The toughest thing we have had to face was your artillery. Its accuracy, concentration and fragmentation are terrific."

Pvt. (Infantry, with five years in the army, three of them on the Russian front, after criticizing several other parts of our Army) : "Your artillery is OK." His expression and eyes indicated his admiration as he said it.

Sgt. : "When your infantry is coming up under a creeping barrage we are almost sure to stop them when the artillery stops because they haven't the guts to drive on through."



Lt. (SS division) : "Everybody hits the dirt and doesn't dare to move until your artillery fire stops. And the accuracy of your artillery fire is uncanny, especially that of the big naval guns. They seem to adjust by millimeters, and make living in a house very inadvisable. As a result, those artillery observation planes of yours are the most hated thing on the battlefield. No one dares move an inch when they are up :

we all just dive for cover and hope to God we weren't seen, as you seem to think nothing of bringing down a battalion concentration on one single man. And your air force is pretty annoying too, particularly those fighter bombers you have. So far as your individual soldiers are concerned, we have a pretty good opinion of you; you are an athletic people, and in good shape physically. But a soldier is no better than his leadership; and yours still has the usual faults of inexperience."

Sgt. (Ordnance company, Infantry division) : "We were in the thick of the fighting on the Russian front, but we have never seen anything like your artillery and mortar fire. Your fire is very exact. The nerves of the few soldiers you didn't hit were so badly shattered that we could not fight. We actually become careless because we consider it a miracle if we survive such an ordeal."

Sgt. (Austrian Infantry regiment) : "We used to think the Russians were masters of mortars, but we have changed our opinion since fighting against you Americans. Even the SS troops are surprised that people not belonging to the master race can produce such equipment and artillery pieces as you have. Also, we must admit you know how to use them."

Sgt. : "Your artillery is more terrifying than anything I have ever lived through in Russia. They are accurate and don't waste ammunition."

Lt. (Artillery battalion) : "Our artillery is afraid to fire counter battery missions. After the first few rounds our men know they can expect to be paid back ten for one."

Sgt. (Infantry) : "We think this is worse than Russia. Your artillery and air force is worse to face than the Russians. We are nervous and shocked by it, it is so accurate—so much—the fragmentation is terrible. We are most afraid of your fighter bombers. Your mortar fire also, when it is well placed."

What Jerries Think Of Other Branches

About Tanks

Sgt. : "You should camouflage your tanks better. Your Shermans come along the road shining and bright. We Germans used mottled paint like dirt."

Lt. : "Your tanks don't terrorize us. We have a special shell—our *faust patrone*. It is an anti-tank rocket that launches itself and it knocks out your tanks. Whenever our infantry knows that there are two good men in front with our *faust patrone*, the rest of the men feel brave. They figure the *faust patrone* will take care of your tanks."

About Paratroops

Sgt. (Infantry division) : "Your paratroopers are magnificent but they fail to organize in large enough groups. They were no more effective than snipers are in ordinary combat."

More Statements By German PWs

About Medics

Sgt. (Medical corps) : "Normally our wounded are treated about as well as yours. We lack the variety of food you have, but our sick get good food. Your evacuation service is better than ours. That is because your air force and artillery have destroyed so many of our vehicles. Our soldiers carry a bandage in compress, that's all."

Cpl. : "There is not much difference in ability and willingness in your men and ours. Both are good. But around your American hospitals you have ammunition dumps and vehicles. In our hospitals we don't even permit men to enter with weapons. Most of the wounds we treated were in the legs, arms and butt. Your mortars do most damage."

About Equipment

Pvt. (Infantry, fanatical) : "I still think we have a chance to win—this year will decide. If we just had your equipment we could beat you."

Cpl. (Transportation corps, three years in the army) : "It won't last very long. We can't fight all your equipment."

"I didn't think it was possible for an army to have so much equipment. Most of our men are just bewildered when they see it all."

Cpl. (Wireless company) : "We hoped for a German victory up to the time we were captured. Since then we know the war is lost. Coming up on the truck we were able to see your equipment and supplies for the first time. We never dreamed you could have so much stuff so quickly, and right here where it can do us the most harm. Against it we can't win. It may take a little time before those boys left on the other side of the line find it out, but I know that if they could see what is in store for them they would surrender."

About Supplies

Pvt. (after receiving a K-ration box with chocolate bar, etc.) : "Our Christmas presents weren't half as good as this kind of ration."

Pvt. (to whom interrogator offered a German cigarette) : "Please, Lieutenant, could I have an American cigarette?"

Maj. (General Staff) : "After five years of war things are not the same any more. Our equipment is getting old and we can't get replacements, but your trucks—they are new and in good shape. Their motors sing and hum while ours sigh and groan."

Pvt. : "I could not believe my eyes when I first came behind your lines. It is unbelievable how much material you have brought over in such a short time."

Pvt. (Quartermaster company) : "Our trucks don't compare with yours. We have only coal gas to make them run. From one gallon of coal gas we get about three kilometers in one of our 8-cylinder trucks

made for the Russian front. Our men cannot drive as well as yours. They have all learned in the army and had no driving experience in civilian life ; so many of our trucks are destroyed by stupid handling."

About Engineers

Capt. (Panzer division) : " We are stunned by your engineers. How fast they work and how ingenious they are ! We sometimes think you remove mines faster than we can lay them. We think that it is due to the abundance of your supply and to your air force. Germany has been fighting for five years and we are exhausted. We cannot afford the things you have. You are too rich for us."

About Morale

Sgt. (Infantry) : " The American and English don't fight fiercely with real spirit like our soldiers or the Russians. They don't have a real cause to fight for. The American fights as he is told to fight. He does not fight for an ideal. We fight for our Fatherland, you don't."

Pvt. (Infantry division) : " I am glad that they tried to kill Hitler. I think that the next effort will succeed even though this one has failed."

Col. : " If it comes to a rift between the Nazi party and the German army the higher officers will undoubtedly turn against Hitler and go with the Wehrmacht."

Cpl. (SS regiment) : " All the men in our SS units have been warned against surrendering. We were told that if we were found in a captured American prisoner of war camp we would be immediately shot. Many of us would have surrendered, but were afraid to because of this threat."

About Yank PWs

Sgt. (SS regiment) : " Your soldiers don't talk. We try to ask them many questions, but they were very security conscious. We can get nothing from them."

Excerpt from a captured German document (this document specifies procedure for interrogating Allied prisoners of war) : " In general it can be assumed that British and American prisoners will not talk or give information. Much valuable time can be wasted in useless interrogation."

About Allies

Sgt. (Infantry) : " We prefer first to fight Americans, second Englishmen and third Russians. Why ? Because the Americans are sportsmen and fight a fair, above-board fight. Britishers fight more fiercely. But the Russians are the worst."

Cpl. (Infantry) : " Many of us don't like to fight Americans. We feel we may be fighting cousins. Some of us think there are Jews mixed in with American troops and that these Jews are barbarians and will kill us if we are taken prisoners. But generally we expect kind treatment from the Americans regardless of what our officers tell us."

Pvt. (Infantry) : " We would gladly surrender to you and the British because we feel we would be well treated like decent human beings, but from the Russians we fear the worst."

Sgt. (Infantry division) : "I was in Russia from March, 1940, to February, 1942. Then I came to France and I have been fighting you for four days. I prefer to fight Americans because you fight fair. Russians take very few prisoners. They are out to kill us to a man. Your artillery hurts us more than anything else."

Sgt. (Engineer battalion) : "I was 19 months in Russia. I prefer to be an American prisoner to being a Russian prisoner. In fact, I am glad to be a prisoner because I am 34 years old and I have had enough. We cannot win any more. I am not for Hitler any more. Something has gone wrong with his head."

"Of all our enemies we prefer you Americans. The Russians don't take prisoners, they shoot us. Yes, we took Russian prisoners because we needed them for laborers. I am a Czech and I knew Russians in a Czech university. They had no standards of behavior. We prefer you to occupy Germany. You are correct."

"I was in the Labor Corps for five months and then volunteered for the army—but not for the SS. They put me into the SS because I was a good physical specimen. I have the distinct impression that the U.S. is very careful of its infantry and use their artillery and air force to win its purpose. Germany is very reckless of its human material. I have also fought against Russians. Fighting against Russians is different. The Russians are not concerned with human life. They send in their troops recklessly. Hitler is finished. Germany is finished. I never had my heart in it anyway." (Note : On the belt buckle of this soldier was inscribed this legend : "My honor means loyalty.")

"Left to Die By The 'Hauptmann'"

Pvt. (Parachute regiment) : "We had very little ammunition left, but our Captain put us in position in the front line. 'When you run out of bullets,' he said, 'throw rocks at them.' Then the captain retired to the rear."

Lt. (Assault gun brigade) : "If the end comes, let it come fast. Too many people have fallen already for no good reason."

Lt. (Infantry) : "Hitler will remain to the last with the troops."

Sgt. : "Five years of war is too much. We want to go home."

Cpl. : "Germany has to fight on until the last bullet is spent. I know that things look black for Germany now, but my Fatherland has risen from deeper pitfalls than the present. If, however, Germany should lose, I shall rush home and shoot my wife and baby, for the western Allies don't have a chance to stop the Russians from introducing their barbaric methods in Germany. I would rather see my loved ones dead than have them live under Bolshevism. I still think that Germany will win. The German mind will conquer the superiority of allied war material. Our *Vergeltungswaffen* (revenge weapons) will swing the tide. After final victory Hitler will

really be able to establish a new order in Europe and solve the problems of this continent."

Pvt. (SS division, 19 years old) : "I was in the Hitler Youth and in the labor corps. For 11 months I have been in the army. Am I good Nazi? I don't know. I don't know anything else. I am very confused."

Sgt. (Signal company) : "You ask me for my opinion on something. It is useless. We have lost the ability to have an opinion on anything. We do not think any more about anything. We have been told to leave that to them."

Pvt. (SS paratrooper) : "We will win. The Fuehrer knows. I can't tell you. I don't know. But the Fuehrer knows. Where is our Luftwaffe? We have a big Luftwaffe, but the Fuehrer is waiting for the time to strike."

M/Sgt. (Infantry) : "We trust our Fuehrer. The Fuehrer knows."

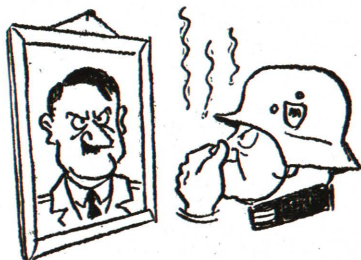


Sgt. (Interpreter, Infantry division) : "I used to be in the Czech army. I was forced to join the Germany army. The morale of our regiment is bad. With our old-fashioned carbines we have to fight your automatic rifles. We get a quarter of bread a day. In the morning we had coffee. For lunch we had a thin slice of meat and some potatoes. Often that was all we ate. These last few days we got a few slices of bread—nothing else. We were always hungry. We have been working day and night. Your troops are better than we were told. They are brave and correct. We were told that they would slay us and that Jews driven out of Germany were employed by you as interrogators and would burn us with cigarettes and torture us by burning off our hair, our eyebrows and our breast. It was made clear to us we would be taken to a cemetery and you would say, 'Look, choose your own grave.' We could never tell if it was true or not. We also saw some directives of yours found in a commando raid on the island of Sark. It said you had special chambers and torture rooms for prisoners."

"He Should Have Stayed in Austria"

Sgt. (Medical corps) : "Hitler was all right in peace. The worker was better off. Now our opinion is changed. We realize that bettering the workers' lot was only a cheap trick to swell the ranks of the Nazi party."

But I still believe in many things Hitler demanded. I believe in selective production of the human race. Cripples and sick people should not be allowed to breed. Do I hate Jews? No. My mother used to work as a laundress for a Jewish family and she was treated well. I never believed in Hitler's Jewish prejudice. German people have no prejudice against Jews. It was just Hitler and the Jews. Now I feel it would have been better for Germany if Hitler had stayed in Austria."



Pvt. (Infantry regiment): "Many of us would like to surrender, but there are strict orders to bring out all men who act suspiciously and all strangers in our company area. One false move and we are arrested. We can't give up."

Sgt. (Wireless company, a Czech who claims he was forced into the German army against his will): "Sixty per cent of the men I knew in the German army were real Germans and good fighters, but the rest were men like myself, Poles, Czechs, Russians, Todt organization men, Sudetenlanders. Behind their backs we spat at the SS men. This whole thing is nothing but a fraud. They terrorize our countries with propaganda. We were bullied and brow-beaten. But it is all bluff. Today the real German army is dead."

Capt. (Panzer division): "Your weapons are better. Your training is better. You are fresher, and your air force is complete. We are helpless against you."

Worried About Germany's Future

Pvt. (SS division): "I am 18 years old and I have been in the army since January, 1944. Before that I was in the labor corps. Before that, since I was 12 years old I was in the Hitler Youth. Before 12 I did not belong to the party. Ordinarily I would like to fight on, but with your air superiority I cannot continue. Our light machine gun is better than yours—it is faster and lighter—but against your 50 caliber machine gun we have nothing to offer. Your shooting is very good. I myself had very narrow escapes. I am worried about the future. If you send me to Russia I will kill myself. What will happen to Germany after the war?"

Pvt. (Infantry) : " I am 38 years old and have been in the army 16 months. I am a Pole and was a butcher in civilian life. I was a Polish soldier in 1939 and became a prisoner of war and was finally drafted into the German army. I didn't like it, but I could say nothing. They made me a cannoner in a battery of 120 mm. guns. Did I fire these guns? Yes, but without enthusiasm."

Cpl. : " The situation is desperate but not hopeless. A German never loses hope or faith in his Fatherland. We may be beaten again, but in the long run we will win."



This issue was prepared by a staff member of ARMY TALKS, who interviewed more than one hundred German war prisoners in France just after their capture and while their battle experience was still strong in their minds.

Kraut Prisoners Are A Mixed Crowd



BACK from western France poured thousands of prisoners wearing the *Reichswehr* green. Most of them were Germans, but a surprising proportion was not. With the Aryan supermen came a polyglot sprinkling of at least 12 nationalities. Some of the slave peoples, it seemed, could be persuaded to fight for the *Herrenvolk*.

Prisoners taken in France included Poles, Czechs, Yugoslavs, Hungarians, Italians, Belgians, Croats and onetime soldiers of Russia—Turkomans, Cossacks, Tartars, Armenians and Georgians. A unit of Axis Russians under White Russian Lt. General Andrei A. Vlassov was reported swaggering around Vichy France with German uniforms, long sabres and red Cossack fur caps.

In Italy the 162nd Turkoman Infantry—former Russian prisoners officered by Germans—was fighting to help save Kesselring's army. Almond-eyed, some with pigtails, they were helping the Germans for a meal ticket.

Prisoner interviews indicated that most of the soldiers fighting for Germany were not so much hired mercenaries as men under compulsion. For them it was fight—or die in labor battalions and prison camps. Many seemed brutish peasants, long trained as soldiers, used to obeying orders. Foreign elements were estimated at 15 to 20 percent of the German army.

The Germans kept them in units no larger than a platoon, watched them carefully, used them to man prepared positions, where they did a generally tough job of fighting. A relative few were Nazi-indoctrinated, like the fanatically pro-German, anti-Allied quisling troops mustered in every occupied country.

Typical of the blown-in-the-bottle *Herrenvolk* was a captured, one-eyed German infantry captain who told interviewers that Germany would never give up, said he wanted to fight "until America realizes Germany must have *Lebensraum*." He admitted that the German army contained criminal elements, explained, "We have been fighting the Russians and we must fight very hard."

How to prepare this Army Talk

LOTS of people learn from their friends. It's a smart person who is willing and able to learn from his enemies. In this issue we are trying to do just that. An ARMY TALKS staff representative, assisted by G-2 interrogators, put in several long days quizzing German prisoners. This booklet is the boiled-down version of that "Information Please" session.

Probably at some time or other you have boxed with a buddy. Being friends you probably exchanged tips after the bout. This is the same idea with one big difference. The guy giving the information is not a friend, but an enemy, an enemy filled with the bitterness of defeat and all the accumulated hate of ten years of Nazi indoctrination.

This means that the testimony has to be taken with a grain of salt. Weigh the opinions carefully. Compare their ideas with what you have seen and heard. There's lots of discussion in this. Sometimes the Jerries disagree. Which view is right? Which comment seems to be the truth as Jerry sees it? When is he trying to curry favor or maintain a front? Here it is, straight from the Nazi's mouth: He Sez:



- (1) **"Your infantry hasn't got any guts in an offensive push."**
- (2) **"You are over-confident. You don't stay alert."**
- (3) **"You are too noisy at night. You smoke on night patrol. There isn't a *schuetze* (rifleman) in the German army so stupid as to do that."**
- (4) **"The American and English don't fight fiercely with real spirit like our soldiers or the Russians. They don't have a real cause to fight for."**
- (5) **"You think too much about saving lives."**

Take about ten minutes to set the stage. Read a few items that will be of special interest to your group. There is meat in this for every unit—infantry, artillery, air force, medics, and supply men. Raise some of the issues listed above or select some controversial points for yourself. Briefly summarize the points of view expressed at the end of the hour. Schedule the discussion so as to coordinate your Army Talks with ARMY TALKS on the air over American Forces Network, every Saturday at 1430 hours.



Orientation

ORIENTATION is global because the Army is global. We are fighting this war on many fronts and it is our business to know why. The enemy is being pushed out of the Pacific and he is being wrecked in France. It is our business to know why. More than that, it is our business to know where and how. That is the job of Orientation.

ARMY TALKS is one weapon in Combat Orientation's War-room. It comes to you every week to give you the latest, the most effective and the most pertinent material on the nature of the enemy and how to kill him.



Tune in on your American Forces Network station for a dramatized presentation of the week's ARMY TALK. Tie it up with your talk, use it as a self-starter for the discussion.

Time : **Saturday, 9 September, 1944, at 1430-1500 hours.**

Choose any convenient spot where you have a radio and a room for your platoon to listen in and follow up discussing the subject.

Warweek

The subject matter of this week's ARMY TALK will appear in an illustrated GI digest in the Warweek supplement of Stars and Stripes on **Thursday, 7 September, 1944.**

Purpose : to enable the soldier to enter the discussion with prior knowledge of the subject. Warweek, official orientation organ for the ETO, is striving to make the American soldier in this theater the best informed soldier in the world.

1ST *in importance is morale...*

GENERAL GEORGE C. MARSHALL