

POPULAR MECHANICS

MAGAZINE

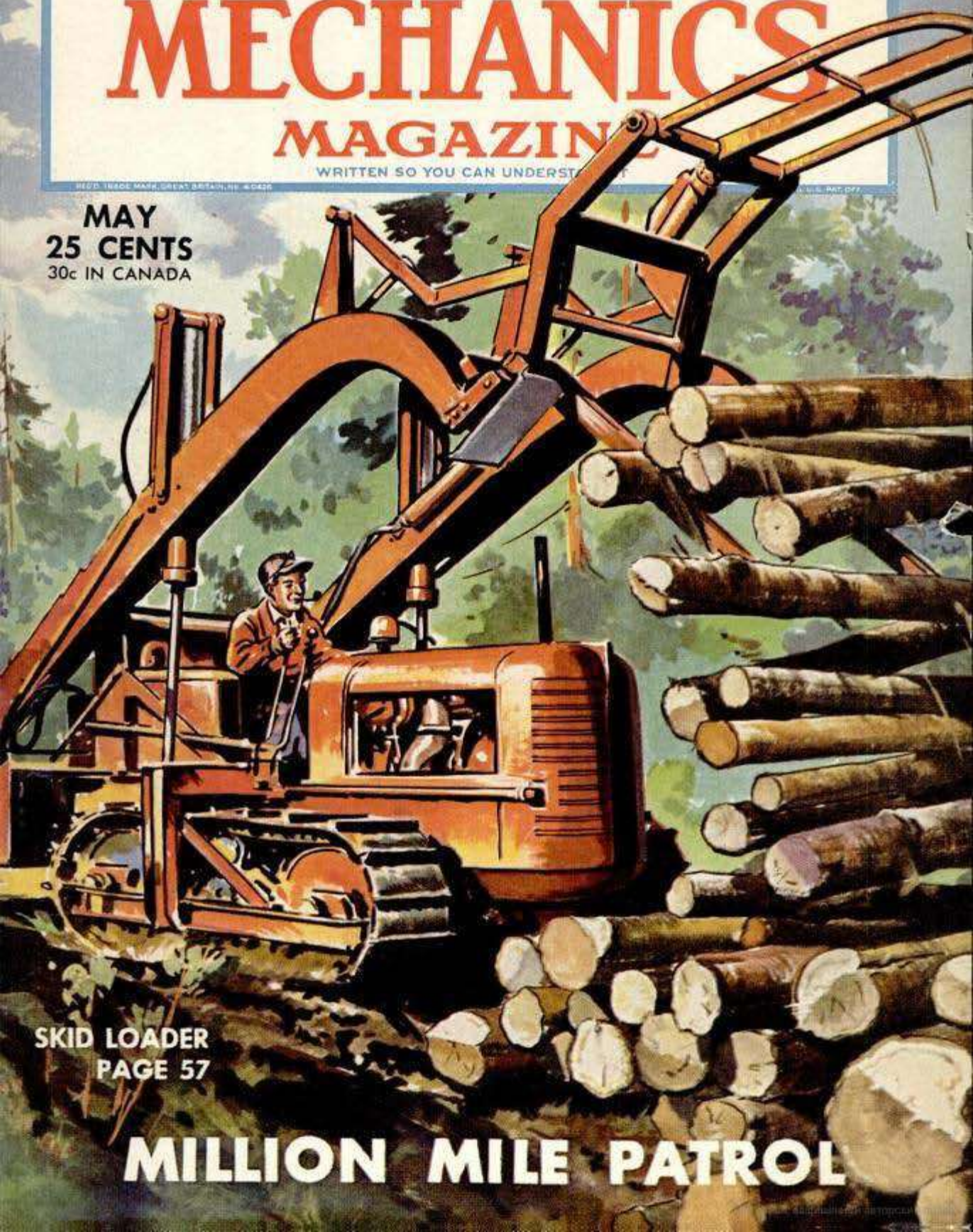


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Popular Mechanics Magazine

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H. H. WINDSOR, Founder

H. H. WINDSOR, Jr., Editor and Publisher

Next Month

WITHIN 10 years after the war there will be 400,000 small private planes buzzing about America's skyways if—and here is the catch—these planes can be made to serve a useful purpose and not be the expensive playthings of prewar days. Before the family can sprout wings, says T. P. Wright, Civil Aeronautics Administrator, industry must produce a safe, four-place plane to sell for \$2,500 and provide us with "front-door transportation." An authoritative article by Mr. Wright appears in the June issue.

IF THE Japs had ever guessed that one day a U. S. task force would sail 8,000 miles without returning to base they might have held their fire at Pearl Harbor. How our Navy is able to range the vast Pacific is told by Captain F. L. Oliver in "The Train That Follows the Fleet."

EVERY once in a while the sun and moon stage an inspiring show, possibly to remind us of their tremendous effect on the earth. Looking forward to a total eclipse of the sun on July 9, a noted astronomer tells some startling facts about our celestial neighbors in "Blackout in the Sky."

YANK jungle fighters are proud of their new lightweight rocket guns and mortars, but what they are shouting about from the tree-tops is a portable ice cream machine. It is one of a score of ingenious items described in a June feature presenting GI Joe "At Home in the Jungle."

POSTWAR cooks will have to wear fur-lined mittens if the ambitious plans of the frozen food industry materialize. One item is frozen egg bars to be broken off like chocolate squares. "Zero in the Kitchen" tells what's ahead.

Volume 83

MAY, 1945

Number 5

Managing Editor.....Roderick M. Grant
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Shop Notes and Crafts Editor.....E. R. Haan
Radio and Electronics Editor.....Frank L. Brittin
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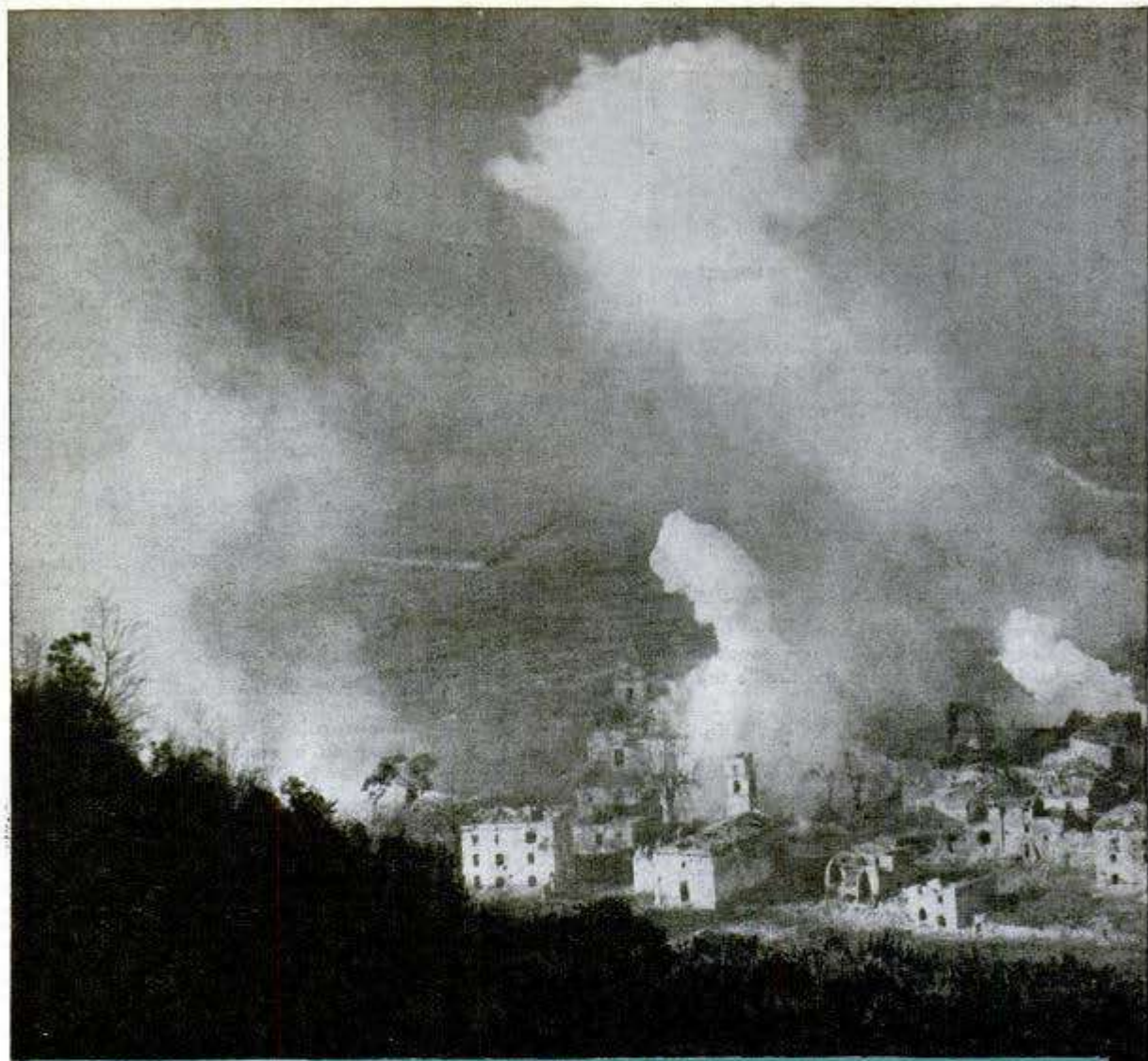
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Published monthly by POPULAR MECHANICS COMPANY, 200 East Ontario Street, Chicago 11, Ill. H. H. Windsor, Jr., president; Paul H. Dunakin, vice president and general manager; D. F. Windsor, vice president and secretary-treasurer; Clover L. Perkins, advertising manager. Single copy in the United States, 25 cents; subscription rates in United States and possessions, and countries of the Pan-American Postal Union, 1 year, \$2.50; 2 years, \$4.50; 3 years, \$6.00. Single copy in Canada, 30 cents; subscription rates, 1 year, \$3.00; 2 years, \$5.50; 3 years, \$7.50. To all other countries add \$1.00 a year over United States prices for overseas postage. If you plan to move, notify us at least 60 days in advance so you will not miss an issue. Give both old and new addresses. Entered as Second Class Matter, September 15, 1903, at the Post Office at Chicago, Illinois, under Act of March 3, 1879. Entered as Second Class Matter at Post Office Dept. Canada.

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I COVER THE BATTLEFRONT

By Bert Brandt

Agne Newspictures War Correspondent

COVERING World War II with a camera is certainly much different from photographing the biggest home front stories—fires, floods and wrecks included. To begin with, the effective range of even a telephoto lens is only about 500 yards, while it seems as if any kind of German machine gun or rifle can shoot accurately at least 2,000 yards. If you're too far away when you snap a battle picture, the images are so small they can't be sufficiently enlarged for newspaper use, and if you're too close you're more worried about saving your neck than about getting a few pictures.

So you're on the move a good deal, trying to be at the right place at the right time.

After all, you can't tell them to fight the battle over

just because you didn't happen to be there when it was going on. I was with the infantry when it went into Cassino, Anzio, Normandy, St. Lo, Paris and Aachen and I know you have to stick right with the doughboys or you don't get any good pictures. Yes, and you have to have a lot of luck, too, to get anything exceptional.

I remember when we were on the Venafro Ridge in Italy I wanted to get a series of pictures showing our shells falling on the little German-held town of Conacasala. Three Rangers with whom I was living at the time volunteered to take me to a place where I would have a good view of the barrage. They led me about half a mile along

This shot of the razing of a town by U. S. shells was taken behind German lines



Photos by Bert Brandt

a ravine and then up through some bushes onto a rocky hill that overlooked Conacasala — a swell spot to shoot pictures. I immediately got out my 12-inch telephoto lens and went to work. But the view of the town was so good I became suspicious and questioned one of my companions. Blandly he told me we were behind the German lines. I gulped and peered around cautiously. From foxholes 60 yards away on the same hill came the unmistakable sound of German voices.

"Why don't they shoot at us?" I asked, shivering quietly.

"Oh, sometimes they do and sometimes they don't," came the



Loaded down with invasion pack and with camera ready for quick shooting, Brandt (left) embarks for Anzio beach



The picture above captures the friendly greeting of French family as Yankees troop past their farm. Below, a rifleman of the U. S. Fifth Army hunts Germans in ruined San Vittore





GI and monk eye one another in first picture ever taken inside 13th century monastery. Right, raft ferry shuttles across Volturno River. Below, cameramen emphasize their identity during liberation of Paris



casual reply. Finally I settled down, and the Rangers stayed with me on that hill for almost two hours while I shot a whole series showing the destruction of the town by our artillery.

Even in the middle of a war a news photographer has to worry about getting his "hot" negatives back to the processing point while they are still news. He also likes to beat the official Army cameramen. Probably the greatest competition of that kind occurred during the invasion of Normandy, when each of more than 100 military and civilian photographers was determined to get his pictures back to London first.

The infantry outfit I was assigned to had the job of storming the little stretch of beach that was to have more casualties than any other that day. Be-



fore our LCT had even touched shore I began "shooting," for there were picture possibilities everywhere.

I waded ashore with 72 pounds of equipment hanging about me. This included a Speed Graphic with two lenses and a month's supply of film, 50 flash bulbs, color film, shipping envelopes, a Rolleiflex with 30 rolls of film and assorted filters, two canteens of water and six chocolate bars. For protection, I'd shoved my Rolleiflex and a supply of film inside a slit innertube, put a repair patch over the hole and inflated the tube to wear as a combination camera case and life preserver.

After dodging up and down the shell-riddled beach awhile, making pictures

as fast as I could change film, I became anxious to get the stuff back to London for developing and transmitting. As soon as I could, I hitched a ride on a Higgins boat that was going out to a destroyer. Aboard ship the skipper, who naturally had more important things to worry about, said he couldn't guarantee that he could get my films back to London. But I managed to "thumb a ride" on a small craft full of wounded en route to a troop ship, and I got them to take me across the Channel and put me ashore at Weymouth, England. There a transportation officer lent me his jeep and driver and I raced on to London.

Arriving there early on D-Day plus one, I found that my stuff was the first to get back and the censor labeled two of my pictures No. 1 and No. 2. Thanks to radio, these pictures were being published in papers all over the United States less than four hours later. Although none of the other cameramen, military or civilian, had beaten me, it wasn't really a world "scoop"



Fifth Army soldiers became khaki Santa Clauses on Christmas Eve when they distributed candy from gift packages to hungry Italian children. Below, infantry reinforcements plod into Normandy hills





Purely for comedy, these GIs and an Army nurse posed for Bert Brandt in a royal throne room at Naples. Right, an Allied truck burns fiercely after strafing by German planes "somewhere in Italy"

because the noncompetitive wartime pool agreement makes all war pictures available to everyone.

Under ordinary combat conditions the Army's public relations office takes care of shipping film back. In Belgium, for example, my captions and negatives are delivered to press headquarters, where they are addressed, put into a canvas bag and car-

ried by jeep to a Piper Cub field, then flown to the airport at Brussels. From there they go in a larger plane directly to London, where the news picture agencies have offices. After developing and censoring, the negatives are flown by bomber to the United States. Pictures of exceptional spot news value are transmitted to North America via radiotelephoto.



Usually I carry only about 15 pounds of photographic equipment. I keep the trusty Rolleiflex around my neck, the Speed Graphic in my hand, six film packs and my big 12-inch telephoto lens in a chamois inside my shirt, and roll film and a K ration in my pocket. This is not too heavy but it certainly gets in your way when you dive into a foxhole or try to dig one with your nose during a strafing or bombing.

A combat photographer doesn't have much time to fool around with "trick" shots. However, I did manage to capture what is reported to be the first battle scene ever made by moonlight. When the Germans were holding out in the Lagone, Italy, a British newsreel man and I went to the top of a hill

Assault troops hang 72 pounds of photographic equipment on Brandt as he heads for bloody Normandy beaches on D-Day

overlooking the little moonlit town to try to photograph the shells bursting in the night. I put my camera on a rock and made a 15-minute time exposure at f:5.6 which resulted in a most unusual effect. The moonlight brought out the buildings and the shells made a peculiar glowing effect in the dark. We stayed there until dawn. Then, when our infantry attacked, I made pictures of the sunlight glinting on the bayonets as the troops swept past. Soon afterward the Germans spotted us and sent a barrage of 88s our way. It killed 14 communications men dug in around us.

A month before the Allies took Cassino I decided to try for the first aerial pictures of the town. One of the Army's intrepid flying sergeants took me over the town at low altitude in a Piper Cub and I grabbed 12 shots through the open door of the cabin while a German rifleman drilled a couple of neat, round holes in one wing. As we flew back I was already congratulating myself on a "beat," but when the films were developed I got a shock. Shooting on the back shutter, I'd pulled the prize boner of forgetting to open the compur shutter in the front of the camera. All 12 plates were blank!

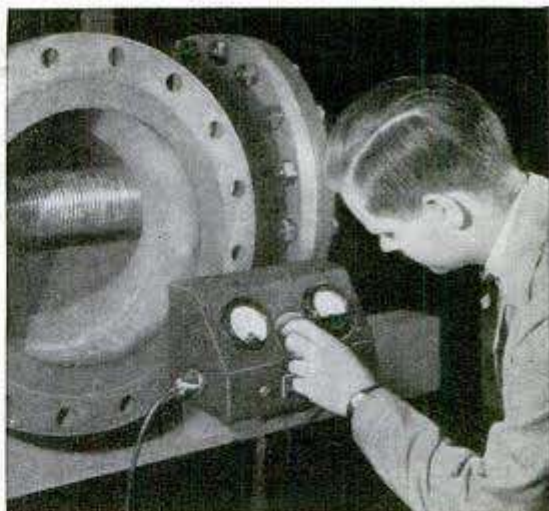
At Anzio my Rolleiflex was a casualty and I had no one but myself to blame. After landing with the first wave at 2 a.m. I stayed near the beach till after dawn to photograph the reinforcements and supplies coming in. German planes kept strafing until it got "under our skin." Once, to escape a low-flying Messerschmitt, I dived under a bulldozer but one of Jerry's .50-caliber shells went through the engine, dousing me with oil. It made me so mad I jumped up and pitched my valuable "Rollie" in the direction of the vanishing plane. Of course I didn't bring it down and I completely ruined the camera.

In GI slang, Anzio was "sticky business." The Germans, settled high in the surrounding hills, lobbed over shells at us on our narrow beachhead whenever they felt like it. The war was right on top of us every minute of the day and night. I could even sit in the bedroom window of the villa where I stayed and shoot pictures of the Jerry dive bombers trying to hit the ships a half mile out in the harbor. I got one shot that way which showed a stick of four bombs falling all around some Liberty ships. When I left the beachhead some time later on an LST a strafing's bullet hit the deck nearby and a piece of it ripped through the back of my camera but luckily did no damage to me.

There have been a number of close calls, each of which scared the devil out of me. Near San Vittore, Italy, I was with attack-

(Continued to page 148)

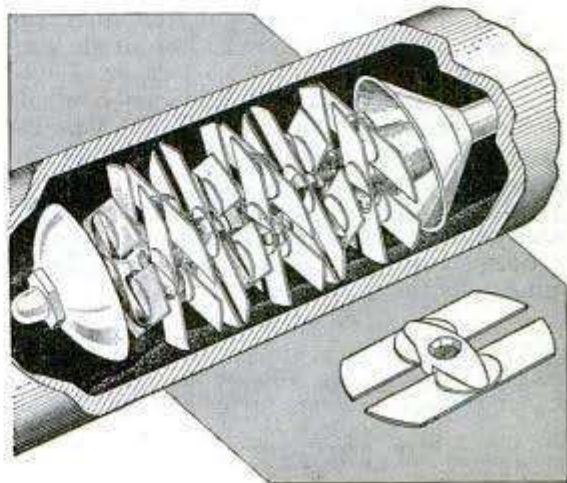
Portable Vacuum Gauge Unit Reveals Leaking Parts



An all-metal thermocouple vacuum gauge unit which is easy to carry about and plugs into any 110-volt a.c. outlet has been developed by the National Research Corporation, Boston, Mass. The gauge is enclosed in metal. Direct pressure readings in microns from 1 to 1,000 may be obtained. Parts in vacuum systems suspected of having leaks are sprayed with acetone or ether and if a leak is present a sudden increase in the apparent pressure reading will occur.

11-Blade Tool Shaves Boiler Flue Of All Carbon Deposit

To remove the tiniest specks of packed soot and scale which usually remain on a boiler flue after it has been cleaned, an 11-blade cutting tool literally shaves all carbon deposit from the inside walls of a flue. The tool is rigid when straight but folds into any position when it is necessary to reach places where the boiler is too close to the wall to use straight cleaner rods.





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Food Is A War Weapon — Use It Wisely!



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BATTERIES**
IN THE NATION'S SERVICE



I Cover the Battlefield

(Continued from page 87)

ing infantry when we ran into a Nazi barrage. I dived into the nearest trench, landing on top of two Jerries. They were apparently even more frightened than I, for they held their hands above their heads and cried "Kamerad!" I like to think I captured them.

At Aachen I was with 10 doughboys who were moving an antitank gun into position on one of the bitterly contested streets. The Nazis spotted our movement and immediately showered us with mortars. As I ducked for the protection of a doorway one of the mortars hit the street not five feet away. I'm glad to say it was a dud. But some of the others were real—and they got seven of the men in our group.

Editors like unusual human interest pictures, which vary the familiar pattern of routine war photography. You're always sure a humorous picture will get a good "ride" in the papers. For example, one of my most widely published pictures shows a bearded little gnome of a Trappist monk and a jeep driver staring curiously at each other in a 700-year-old Belgian monastery never before photographed. Another is a "gag shot" of three GIs standing at exaggerated attention behind an infantryman and an Army nurse who are sitting in the throne room of the Royal Palace of Caserta, near Naples. It was good for a laugh.

Sometimes people get the impression that cameramen are taking more risks than anyone else and therefore are heroes. The real heroes are the slogging infantrymen, who take risks day in and day out as a matter of course and keep right on going.

What really makes my job worthwhile is to see a gaunt, unshaved GI proudly dig a clipping from his pocket and say, "Remember when you took this picture of me? Mom cut it out of the hometown paper. She thought it came out pretty good."



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| Thread | 3/8"-24 | 1/4"-32 | 1/4"-32 |
| Thread Length | 7/32 | 7/32 | 7/32 |
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