China's back door is open again, and the stuff is pouring in through what the US commander in Burma calls "the first breach in the Japan blockade of China."

The Ledo Road — renamed for General Stilwell by Chiang Kai-Shek — has been carved through the Burmese jungles to a junction with the Burma Road. And the Burma Road has been cleared of Japs. And more important than either road, a new pipeline is taking a big load off the limited railroads, trucks and cargo-planes in this rugged theater.

Some 100,000 tons of war supplies are now scheduled for delivery to China each month. This is over three times as much as the 30,000 tons

ARMY TALKS is a publication of the Information and Education Division, ETO, US Army.
which have been flown over the mountainous "Hump" from India to China during the last two years. And it is more than eight times as much as the 12,000 tons a month which used to be trucked into China before the Japs muscled into Burma back in 1942.

These increased supplies may have arrived just in the nick of time — like William S. Hart in a wild west movie — to buck up the Chinese government and army which have been undergoing crisis after crisis since the Japs encircled them. China has been slowly bleeding for many years and the new supplies are like plasma which will fight off the gangrene of despair and start its recovery toward full fighting strength. This strength consisted of 6,000,000 troops when China began its war with its invaders, but lack of supply, defeat, confusion and casualties have cut this force to some 2,000,000 today.

Oddly, traffic on the re-opened Stilwell-Burma Road is nearly all one-way — trucks haul supplies to China and then stay there, replacing the 6,000 beat-up trucks which have had to serve the Chinese for three years. Special Dodge trucks were built to haul the munitions which have been stockpiled while the roads were being built and cleared. The first six-mile string of vehicles rolled into China through jubilant archways reading "Welcome Honorable Truck Convoy."

The Ledo or Stilwell Road is not a substitute for the Burma Road (see map). It takes the place of the Jap-held railroad from the seaport of Rangoon up to Mandalay. China-bound material now goes by rail from Calcutta to Ledo, then is transferred to trucks and hauled south to Lashio over the Stilwell Road, where the Burma Road begins its northward climb into China.

A Chinese Army under a US general cleared the Japs out of the way as US engineers — mostly negro — bulldozed the road through the jungles and gorges of northern Burma. The road cost $1,000,000 per mile, and at times 80% of the US personnel were laid up with tropical diseases.

The pipeline was kept secret for two years. It follows the railroad and highway from Calcutta to China. When it finally is pushed over the 9000-ft. mountains and into China, it will be some 2000 miles long. The section already finished and in use is longer than the 1400-mile "Big Inch" from Texas to New Jersey. Three different kinds of fuel — aviation gas, regular gas, and diesel oil — are pumped through the same pipe without spoiling each other. Fuel still has to be hauled on the last lap into China, but the pipe takes a big load off the transport planes and frees them for more urgent cargo.

The combined capacity of the Burma routes is not big enough to sustain campaigns on the ETO scale, but it will be enough to put a considerable squeeze on the Japs from the west while our Pacific forces tear into them from the east.

Good Eyesight

The Soviet magazine, The Crocodile, shows a monkey-faced Nazi seated in a chair at an oculist's office testing his eyesight. Opposite him is the usual chart with letters of diminishing size. At the top the biggest word is PARIS, then in smaller and smaller type come the words Brussels, Helsinki, Sofia, Belgrade (all capitals of countries from which the Germans have been driven) and at the base of the chart, in tiny, almost undecipherable letters, is the word gallows. The Nazi in the chair is muttering: "Odd, I just can't read the top lines, but the lowest line is as plain as daylight."
Today, right now, the US is faced with an acute manpower crisis. The increased pace of the War has brought increased casualties and demands for more and more supplies. More men in uniform and more war workers are needed. ZI troops (Continental USA) have been combed out and few qualified men are left in civilian life. Every trained, fit soldier is needed for more duty.

A good many men have been overseas for long periods on tough assignments. Some have been in combat time after time. Others have worked for many months under tension in pretty hot spots, or in the deadly monotony of uncivilized areas. Most of them have undergone the roughest sort of living conditions. Many wonder why it isn’t now possible for them to be sent back home.

In the US many of the few returnees who did get home are being groomed for a second trip overseas. A lot of other men find their units being converted for combat assignments, and thousands of individual soldiers are being transferred out of their old outfits into combat training centers. Some of these men are confused about their situations.

Sometimes there are complaints about “a lot of USO Commandos back in the States.” Others gripe that “there must be plenty of civilians at home who aren’t doing anything to help the War.”

The difficulty arises from an acute manpower crisis aggravated by the increased tempo of the War. We are grappling with the problem of finding qualified men for new military
and industrial needs in an already strained manpower situation.

We need replacements to fill gaps caused by increasingly heavy casualties. Still more men are required to relieve tired combat troops for rest, and to add to the forces in constantly expanding operations. More men are needed to man lengthening supply lines. With supplies being expended at ever-increasing rates, more workers are required in factories at home.

In January a joint Army-Navy report said that in the first six months of this year we must find an additional 1,600,000 men if our urgent military and industrial needs are to be met. The Army had already sent overseas, or was training for overseas assignment, virtually every combat-fit soldier available in the US. Certainly there are many men left in civilian ranks. Many of these, however, are unqualified for military duty of any type. Most of these are engaged in either essential war work or in occupations necessary for the production of basic civilian goods. Some, however, of the highly-skilled men in these industries and public services are qualified for military duty. These latter are being inducted into the services as rapidly as replacements for them can be found and trained. Both sides of our combat-production team are strained for manpower.

The nation is faced with a crucial question: Have we the manpower for the big job ahead?

**What Caused Crisis?**

When the War hit us we set out to carry the fight against Germany and hold the line against Japan. This was the strategy decided on by our top leaders. The requirements in men and material created a tremendous problem but we solved it. In four years we built the world’s largest Navy, the world’s largest merchant fleet, and one of the world’s largest and best equipped armies.

Last year it looked for a while as though we were licking our man-
Tagged for the Far East, this Engineer trainee is learning the M1 sight-picture. Returned veterans recuperating in government hospitals number about 180,000.
power problems. Production was good enough to permit some factories which had met quotas of war goods to resume making some badly needed civilian items. Labor shortages were confined to particular plants and areas, and the major headache was moving the right kind of workers with their families and belongings to places where they were needed.

The war news looked good, too, when our troops swept across France. Hopes arose, in and out of the armed forces, that the end was near for Germany. By making the most of their allotted men and supplies, our forces in the Pacific had not only stopped the Japanese but had rolled them back toward inner defenses.

Gains Add New Needs

Last fall our favorable situation in the Pacific made possible a major change in strategy. We were in position to strike the Japanese with strong offensive blows. In October, General MacArthur’s forces invaded the Philippines and were soon ahead of schedule. Shortly afterward came Germany’s December counteroffensive into Belgium and Luxembourg — aimed at knocking off balance our threat to vital industrial areas in the Ruhr and Saar. We stopped the German drive and threw it back. We lost men, materiel, and time, but in a few weeks we were pushing forward again in violent fighting up and down the entire Western Front.

The gains we have made, and are making daily, bring ultimate victory closer. But the closer victory comes, the tougher the fighting gets. Fighting major battles 13,000 miles apart costs a price and calls for increasingly greater effort.

This year combined Army-Navy military needs are averaging about 150,000 men a month — casualties are huge. Forty thousand to 50,000 wounded pour into the hospitals overseas each month, 20,000 to 40,000 are killed or missing, and many thousands are hospitalized each month for non-battle causes. All those not returning to duty must be replaced. We are using up supplies so fast that in some cases frontline rationing has been necessary to avoid serious future shortages. The demand for more and more supplies grows almost daily.

Our need for additional men in uniform and workers to supply them had, by early this year, made our original overall manpower planning seem incapable of meeting the crisis. We had to find a way to get more men into both ends of our combat-production team.

Why Not Tap ZI Troops for Combat?

Some soldiers think we still have “plenty of men lying around in soft jobs at camps in the United States.” The fact is that five-eighths of the Army is already overseas and the other three-eighths are not the “USO Commandos” they have sometimes been painted. Early in February, out of 8,050,000 in the Army only 2,900,000 were left in the United States.

Almost half of these (roughly 1,355,000) now at home stations have already been marked for overseas duty and are being trained for it either in tactical units or as individual replacements. 180,000 others were in Zone of Interior hospitals. The remaining group (some 1,365,000) were in essential ZI administrative and service jobs — supplying overseas theaters, servicing planes, loading cargoes, or doing transportation or communication work. Every man in this group is destined for overseas service if he has not already had it and is physically qualified, as soon as he can be replaced by an

So far nobody has invented a self-loading ship. It takes plenty of men to keep supply lines flowing to Europe and the Far East.
overseas returnee, a Limited Service man, or a civilian, male or female.

Just how effective this War Department policy has been can be best estimated from the large numbers (over 750,000) that are already Limited Service in the US and from the fact that since last spring fully a half million physically qualified enlisted men have been combed out of ZI operating personnel for overseas duty.

Other ZI ranks have been continually combed, also, for Infantry combat replacements, and the screening process is continuing. The first batch were taken from divisions training as units. A call for volunteers yielded 90,000 infantrymen from other branches. Another 50,000 were taken from the Army Specialized Training Program; 55,000 came from Air Forces and 25,000 from Service Forces. These men get an intensive six weeks course as riflemen. Conversion of antiaircraft units has produced both infantrymen and artillerymen.

Overseas, physically qualified men in rear installations and non-combat units are being converted to infantry at the rate of 10,000 a month. Officer Candidate Schools set up in the ETO turn out several hundred new junior officers every eight weeks. By using combat veterans as candidates, training time is cut to about half the period required in United States officer schools.

Plenty Of Civilians Left?
The present urgent need of the armed forces is largely for combat soldiers. For this purpose, the Army needs healthy young men, and we are at the bottom of the barrel in this respect.

In January the Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson, said: "Our resources in youth are not exhausted, but these resources are now almost entirely engaged in industries which

make some contribution direct or indirect to the war effort." By February, the pressure had been increased for men up to the 30-year limit. It is estimated that most of those available under 30 will have been called up by 30 June 1945.

There are only 300,000 men 18 to 26 now deferred in agriculture who may be fit for general military service. The number of men in this age group deferred in industry is negligible, and will provide very few additional men for the service. New inductees are not available for combat until after
several months of training, and it takes time to train industrial recruits to fill their places in vitally important war jobs.

There are on the lists about one and a third million 4-Fs between 18 and 26, but these men have been so classified because they have been found unfit for military service. Many 4-Fs are also in essential industry.

**Nation’s Manpower Limited**

How did a great nation like ours run short on manpower? We have always considered our country to be big in everything including population. It is hard for some to see why we don’t have enough men for everything and plenty to spare — even when fighting a global war — when we started with more than 130 million people.

But in wartime our manpower requirements are relative to enemy manpower. In addition to their own populations, the Axis countries have used millions of conquered people as forced labor.

We may also overlook the fact that not all our 130 million people were available to work and fight. After subtracting millions of children, women, aged, and physically unfit, we have a lot less usable manpower than we might have first thought. In October 1940 our total labor force was only 54,500,000 persons.

Besides raising huge armed forces, we had to get out of our limited manpower pool vast numbers of workers to produce weapons. Every soldier knows it takes several workers to maintain one fighting man. We also had to continue providing the people at home with what they needed to live on.

In addition, we took on the important job of supplying our allies. We have used part of our working force to furnish them with over $36,557,000,000 in lend-lease aid, according to Leo T. Crowley, Foreign Economic Administrator, 10 March. This aid was a big factor in helping to prevent our losing the War before we were ready to fight. It has paid off in the saving of many American lives. It has brought victory nearer by helping make possible Allied success in North Africa, Europe and in the Pacific. An American-made rifle in the hands of a Frenchman, a Russian, a Chinese or a Pole makes it possible to increase the death-rate among the Germans or Japanese.

**How We Did It**

Starting with a labor force of 54,500,000 in 1940, in the next four years we expanded our armed forces by more than 11 million. By October 1944 our fighting men and workers increased to a total force of nearly 65 million. At the same time we built our war industry which now produces at the rate of 15 billion dollars a month — almost equal to the war production of the rest of the world combined. How did we do it?

A big block of new workers came out of 6,500,000 unemployed and some who previously worked part-time. But millions more were stu-
Distribution of Army Personnel

Our Army already has over five-eighths of all its personnel abroad, and a large part of the 2,900,000 remaining in the United States is being prepared for overseas shipment. These are the actual figures, as of 1 February 1945:

Overseas: 5,150,000 in theaters in every part of the world.
In Training: 1,355,000 training as replacements, in tactical units or training regiments. All these are destined for overseas, except small groups in defense commands.
Operating personnel: 1,365,000 are being used for necessary administrative or other duties in the United States. These are mostly limited service personnel, overseas returnees, or WACS.
Hospitalized: 180,000 are undergoing hospital treatment in the United States.

dents who postponed their education, housewives who left homes for war jobs, and older men who came out of retirement. The average age of workers increased from 37 to 40.
The proportion of women workers rose from one out of four to one out of three. Our people went without many luxuries and cut down on essentials so that workers could make weapons instead of civilian goods.
By the first of this year there weren’t enough qualified adults left to maintain civilian economy at current levels and also meet the increased demands of offensive war. The armed forces estimated their military needs in the first half of 1945 at 900,000 additional men. Many would have to be taken from essential industry. Besides replacing drafted workers, industry needed 700,000 more to fill stepped-up quotas for

TOP: Average age of workers, 40 years — and one out of three is a woman.
more shells, guns, planes, and other supplies.

There was no longer a big pool of unemployed to draw on. New war workers would have to be women, "teen-agers," discharged veterans, and recruits shifted from less essential occupations. To insure getting the right kind and number of workers transferred as needed, it looked as though laws might be required to replace the original voluntary manpower system.

What Has Been Done?

To meet immediate needs, the Government made use of existing regulations. The Army draft was increased from 60,000 to 80,000 for January and February, then was set at 100,000 for the next four months. To this should be added enlistments and Enlisted Reserve Corps calls to active duty. The Navy draft was put at 32,000 to supplement 25,000 enlistments expected monthly. Reclassification of deferred farmers and industrial workers was ordered.

Early this year Selective Service boards began inducting men under 38 who left essential jobs without permission of their draft boards. These men, when found unfit for general military service, are sent to Army camps for a special four weeks basic training course. The course includes Adjustment and Health, School of the Soldier, Rifle Marksmanship, Offensive and Defensive Combat, and various tests and inspections.

Those who possess needed skills and who volunteer to return to essential industry revert to inactive status in the Enlisted Reserve Corps, from which they can be recalled to active duty if necessary.

Others who do not volunteer for essential jobs but have needed skills may be assigned to work in Government owned plants at Army pay. The remainder, who have no special

BELOW: Severely wounded in Sicily, this veteran carries on in war industry.
skills and who have not volunteered for war work, are assigned to various Army installations.

Any of these inductees found to be qualified for general military service are processed, trained, and assigned in the usual Army way.

Civilian production was "frozen" at December levels. Food rationing was tightened. Race tracks were closed and a midnight curfew ordered put on entertainment places.

Even with manpower controls tightened in the Army and at home, it will be a constant problem to keep the Army at effective strength and supplied with everything needed for the big battles ahead. In this crisis every experienced soldier is vitally necessary at his assigned post.

There are now 12,000 personnel (other than air crews) returning home from overseas each month on rotation. They can be returned only for short rests, and the rate cannot be increased. It should be remembered that from four to seven soldiers are immobilized for every one rotated.

Veterans who have already given much are needed to give more. Some can be used to help train newly-drafted civilians, but few GI jobs are left for additional returnees. Battleproven veterans are urgently needed back on the fighting fronts for their valuable experience and to spark-plug units receiving unseasoned men.

**War Is Not Over**

The hardest of the struggle still lies ahead in the Pacific. Geography favors the Japanese, with their supply lines shortening as ours lengthen. We may have to fight big-scale battles on the continent of Asia. Wherever the decision does take place, we have yet to come to grips with the bulk of Japan's 4-million-strong, fanatical army.

The War is not over. There is only one sure way to end it quickly so that we can all go home — and home to stay — in a world fit to live in. That is by every fit, trained man staying on the job. With a big job still ahead, any slowing down by civilians or soldiers may postpone total victory by months — or even years.

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**Men for the War in the Pacific**

"The basic elements in the War Department readjustment plan were made public last 6 September and remain unchanged. When hostilities cease in Europe the War Department intends to marshal against the Japanese every soldier and every item in equipment that can be used effectively to speed our final victory.

"It means that shipping priority will be given to the movement of men and materiel to the Pacific. This will be a tremendous undertaking, and it must be carried out with all possible speed and vigor or we will pay a heavy price in the higher casualties of a longer Japanese war.

"All speed consistent with the military situation will be applied in returning men who can be released from the Army from overseas. But any suggestion that large numbers will be coming home for discharge immediately after the fighting stops in Europe can only lead to cruel disappointment."

— Secretary of War Stimson, 28 February.

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**Manpower**

One of the jobs of Radio Luxembourg is to broadcast German language jokes which needle the Nazi. Among the radio staff's biggest rewards has been to launch an original joke on the air and have it return some weeks later on the lips of a German PW. A typical one:

"Why did Grandpa join the Volkssturm?"

"Because he had no one to take care of him now that Grandma's in the Luftwaffe."
THE BRIEF LIFE-SPAN OF A VOLKSGRENADIER DIVISION

Until the 28 October 1944, the Ninth Volksgrenadier Division was nothing but a hasty plan on paper. It was nothing. Less than four months later, by 26 February 1945, it did not exist even on paper. Again it was nothing.

The life-span of this division provides a graphic case history of the disintegration which has affected many of the Wehrmacht units during the past few months. The record is a testimony to Hitler's murderous decision to continue the battle — as he threatened — "even after the clock has struck twelve." The details provide part of the answer to the question: "Why don't the Germans quit?"

The story of the division begins, and almost ends, with Rudolf K——, an intelligence clerk in the headquarters of the First Battalion, 36 Régiment, Ninth Volksgrenadier Division. He was a member of the nucleus cadre, and survived long enough to become a prisoner of war less than five weeks before the division's extinction.

Rudolf K—— is described by an interrogator as a "typical German
In his late thirties, he had had several years legal and historical training. In civilian life he had been employed in administration of one of the towns of his native Thuringen. He had retained in his memory a fairly detailed knowledge of the division’s history, and possessed, moreover, the mental capacity to make sense of the story.

What is more, he showed an intense desire to recount his tale, recognizing that its narration might have more than personal significance. No doubt he hoped that he might, by his candor, ingratiate himself with his captors. Many a prisoner of war will try some dodge to show that he ought to be given favored treatment. They will allege that they have never been Nazis, or at least not “real” Nazis. They hope that interrogators will accept their statements at their face value. Consciously or unconsciously, they may provide information of substantial value.

(One prisoner of war, recently captured, tried a novel and amusing device to “prove” that he was anti-Nazi. His technique will be described later.)

The record of the division in which Rudolf K—served so briefly can be summarized almost in his own words, as pieced together by the interpreter and interrogator:

The new Volksgrenadier division was mobilized 28 October 1944, as Truppenübungsplatz Wildflecken, and given the code name of Division Dernwitz. This intelligence clerk came from Landesschützen Abteilung, 11-9, Giessen. He was assigned to the first of three regiments which were to make up the division, with code designation “A.”

The regiment arrived in the town of Oxboel 5 November with orders to be ready for combat 30 November, a scant three weeks. This brief period may seem absurd but it must be remembered that virtually every male German, although “scraped from the bottom of the manpower barrel,” has behind him several years of military training. The seventeen- and eighteen-year olds who have been in the Hitler Youth from the age of twelve, were vigorously disciplined and trained to march and shoot. Older men who went to the VG roughly fell into three classes: a few who had been retained in civilian capacities and had not fought in the war; others from civilian life who had fought, been discharged for disabilities, and
in the dire emergency had to be called up again; and convalescents recently in hospitals.

Red tape and senseless confusion, reported Rudolf K——, set the keynote from the first day. The orderly room of the First Battalion had one corporal — who functioned as sergeant-major — and three clerks. These four worked daily from 0700 to 2300 almost continuously filling in questionnaires, preparing statistics and answering inquiries from regimental HQ, all of which became "more and more senseless" as the days went on. Especially confusing and chaotic were the inquiries and orders from a Colonel Roos.

The acting commander of the regiment was Hauptmann Schaefer, a regular officer who had lost his right arm in the USSR.

Six officers, 24 NCO's and 120 men made the trip to Oxboel. Horses were not taken and until 16 November none arrived. Then, only 32 were furnished. Gradually reinforcements came from other VG units, although some arrived from the Thirty-sixth Grenadier Regiment which had been almost annihilated (presumably in the Crimea). These and certain specialists went to "A" company to keep up traditions, and to provide a leavening of experience. But in the main these reinforcements were either raw recruits or convalescents.

The physical state of the men was what might be expected in the sixth
year of a war which had been a severe strain on manpower. A really objective appraisal of their condition can scarcely be made. The official classification of the medical officers—*kriegsfähig* (fit for service) and *Bedingt kriegsfähig* (limited service) had only paper value. For line troops the proportion was roughly 50-50 at the beginning, but this was adjusted in simple fashion. One Sunday morning toward the end of November the limited service men were ordered to report to the chief medical officer for a check-up. Many of these were upgraded. HQ men were transferred to line duty. Men from behind-the-line jobs, such as craftsmen and clerks, were sent to combat platoons. HQ got more limited service men as replacements.

The only question then was: “Can the men shoot?”

The effect of this primitive method of classification with respect to physical ability was evident on the march, where speed had to be largely determined by the weakest men. In combat a large percentage of sick men had to be sent back to the service echelon—up to twenty a day from one company.

Toward the end of November the T/O strength of the battalion had been approximately reached: fifteen officers, forty NCO’s and 600 men. A few days later several specialists were added. Even so, such equipment as wagons, weapons and horses had still to arrive. Training could not start until the latter part of November. Lack of ammunition, even for training purposes, was evident until the last minute. Signal equipment also was lacking. “In short,” to quote the prisoner of war “nothing really functioned well, although much was amazingly well improvised.”

On the day that the division began to move toward the battlefront the battalion in which Rudolf K—
served had a strength of eleven officers, 650 men and 221 horses. For weapons, there were “four infantry guns, four medium mortars and fifteen to twenty LMG’s.” Each man had one Gewehr 98 or a Karabiner 98, and perhaps one-quarter of the men had the excellent Sturmgewehr 43. The number of pistols was small. Each officer had one but not more than half the NCO’s were so equipped.”

Supply vehicles were scarce and in the movement forward several were lost or damaged. On arrival at Kreuzberg the entire First battalion was equipped with bicycles, except for vehicle drivers and assistant drivers. The advance continued, after two day’s rest in Kreuzberg, on the evening of 21 December. Proceeding by way of Adenau-Daun-Bitburg, the division reached a point near Wiltz, Luxembourg. Extensive defects in organization and equipment were hourly obvious.

Bicycles were most impractical in a terrain which became more and more mountainous. Some were loaded on vehicles, others were simply left by the roadside. Several fell off the wagons and no one bothered to pick them up. “Material was irresponsibly wasted which could have been used at home.”

Horses and wagons also suffered rapid deterioration. It was difficult enough for men to drive on icy roads in unknown country at night (during the day it was impossible to proceed owing to continual threats from Allied aircraft), but for horses, from start to finish, it was the utmost cruelty. A daily movement of from fifteen to sixteen hours was normally attempted. There were few breather stops. During the rare halts, if there were no suitable places for them, the horses remained harnessed during the “rest” period, and were covered only superficially with one blanket each.

On the losing end, the tune has changed: “It’s all Hitler’s fault.”
As no — or at least not enough — food was carried along, it had to be "requisitioned." Prescribed days of rest could not be observed as the division had to be brought forward in a hurry. The "great offensive" (the Battle of the Bulge) had already collapsed, although the officers and men of the foot-weary Ninth Volks-grenadier Division did not know it at the time.

The effect of the torture was obvious. Men fell out or apathetically limped along. Horses were sick, lame and weak and died miserably. The exact number of horses thus ruined is not known. An NCO charged with feeding the horses estimated that 100% were lame, 80% sick and 50% of the lot incurable, although none was known to have any infectious disease.

It was typical, said the clerk, that no veterinary was attached to the battalion, in spite of its more than 200 horses. The regimental veterinary remained at regimental CP, which was devoid of horses. There was also a sad tale to be told about the wagons. They were in no condition to stand the wear and tear of the advance. The light, small infantry wagons stood up best, and few of the larger two-horse wagons were lost except through enemy action. But construction was too weak. Several of them burst at the sides as some of the contents inside moved about, and others suffered from front or rear broken axles. The result was almost continuous repacking and hence delay.

The battalion, and the division, finally got into action but too late to contribute to the issue. The strength of the First Battalion after
its last engagement on 22 January 1945 was two officers, eleven NCO's and forty-nine men. Of these, twenty withdrew with the new CO, a certain Hauptmann Mertens, who should have his minor niche in history for his final words to those who remained. His last order was:

"Ran an der Feind! (Forward against the foe!"

Intelligence clerk Rudolf K——, owing to the hazards of this last engagement, was not in position to record the remainder of the history of the division. But it can be told from other sources. Retreating continually under Allied pressure and suffering heavy losses, it was saved temporarily from extinction by the arrival of 200 green and convalescent replacements during February. About the same time it received an addition by absorbing the 352nd. Volksgrenadier Division. But these only postponed slightly its ultimate fate.

In fighting on the Kyll River these reinforcements and more were lost. Thus in barely a month losses accumulated through battle action and faulty organization until physical and morale demoralization were virtually complete. As a battle group all cohesion disappeared.

On 26 February 1945 the new divisional CO, a Colonel Kolb, was recalled with his staff to Wildflecken, where it was reported that a new division was being built up to rise from the ashes of the old.

Meanwhile, for the Ninth Volksgrenadier Division, the wheel had come full circle. The unfortunate remnants in their turn had been absorbed into the ranks of the Second Panzer Division... From zero to zero:

Earlier in this article reference was made to a contrasting attempt made by a PW to get on the right side of his captors. He was Karl S——, from Berlin, who claimed to be so anti-Nazi that he was willing and eager to write, or even sing, a rude parody on the Nazi Horst Wessel "sacred song." He was told to write it down:

Die Preise hoch,
Die Laden fest geschlossen.
Der Hunger geht
Im Deutschen Volke mit.
Es hungern leider nur.
Die kleinen Volksgenossen.
Die grossen hungern nur
Im Geiste mit!

(Translated roughly)
The prices rise,
The shops are firmly shuttered.
Starvation marches
With the German race.
Yet those who starve
Are just the little Nazi people.
While those above
Can merely sympathize!

Karl S——'s Soldbuch failed to show evidence that he had been other than a very recent convert to anti-Nazi action. His offer to sing the parody was discouraged. With thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands in the ETO, he shuffled off to the waiting stockade.
one dead Jap

...but there are a lot more left