

## From Stateside to the European Theater

After final processing at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, the Division sailed from New York harbor aboard the Cunard Line's Queen Mary on July 1, 1944. It was the last time in World War II that an entire Division would be transported on a single vessel.

While the voyage across the Atlantic was comparatively uneventful, Elbert Custer (B Btry) has several vivid memories. He recalls the very heavy seas encountered several days out: "When the bow rose, it froze you in the position you were in. When it went back down, you would run two or three steps to keep you balance. I remember I went to use the latrine that day. When the boat started rising, I couldn't get off 'the john'. When it started back down, I could hardly stay on it."

Elbert also recalls that the 314th provided details to help man the ship's guns in the event of an attack. "On the fifth day a British plane came out to escort the ship into port. When the plane was first spotted, the alarm was sounded. We went into action. One of us jumped on the gunner's side of the AA gun and I got in the 'Number One' seat. Someone loaded it and I hollered 'shoot it, shoot it.' I didn't know I was the one that was supposed to pull the lanyard. Then two angry British sailors arrived and yanked us out of those seats. They had to get permission to fire the gun out over the ocean in order to unload it."

Arriving in Greenock, Scotland on July 7, the Division proceeded to the Manchester/Liverpool area of England. The short stay there assembling supplies and drawing new equipment was interrupted for a few days when the Battalion went to a British artillery range in Wales to calibrate the newly issued howitzers. "While in Wales," Francis Neighly (C Btry) recalls, "I walked into a nearby village one evening. There I met an Englishman who told me that every night at 12:00 a white horse would go up the road with a woman on it. It was said to be a ghost. When I returned to the Battery, I told 1st Sgt. Rudolph Madsen that I was going to stay out along the road to see the ghost. Sgt. Madsen joined me and we sat out there along the road until 12:30 hoping we would see the ghost of Lady Godiva. She never did show up."

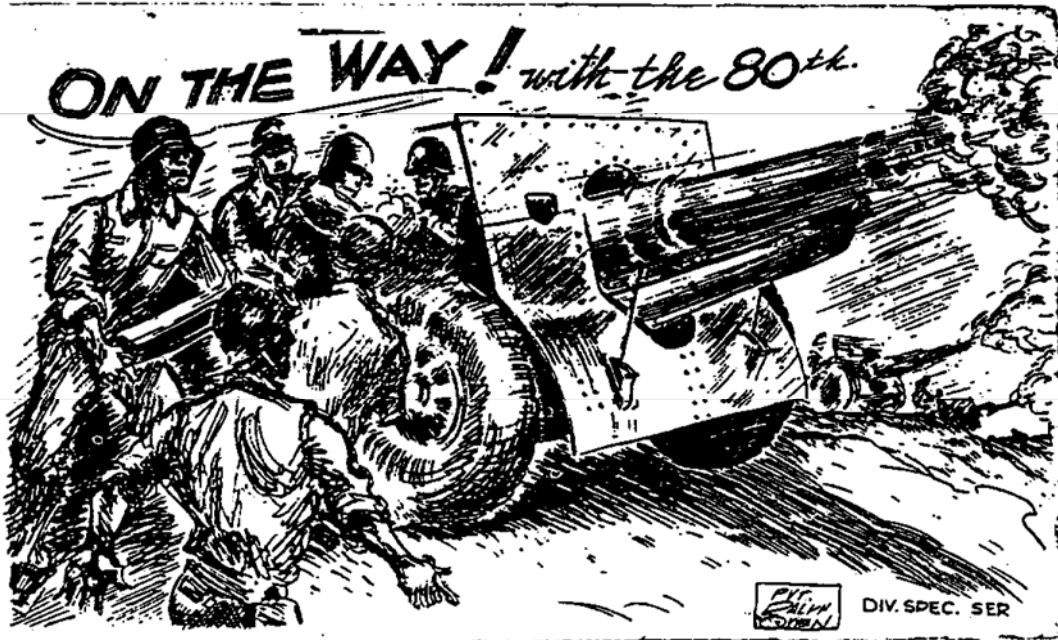
On the other hand, Chester Rutkowski (B Btry) remembers Wales for more mundane reasons, namely, "the pub, the canal, and playing ball until after 10:00 p.m." We were on British Double Summer Time.

This little excursion was also recalled by Hubert Kenyon (Pilot -- Air Observer) who says: "When we went to Wales to calibrate the guns, we landed at an English airport to gas up our cubs. We arrived just at the beginning of 'tea time' and had to wait for an hour or more for someone to pump gasoline for us. It seems that not very much moves during 'tea time' in England. I have wondered what happened when they had an air attack at that time."

After a few days in Wales, the Battalion moved to a base area near Dorchester. On Aug. 4, the 314th moved to Portland Harbor, south of Weymouth, and loaded up on the LST's that were to transport us to the French coast.

Just before departure, Paul Bassett (Asst. S-2) went to an Army Depot to get sea-sick pills for the Battalion. When he asked the dispenser whether we

should take the pills before or after embarking, he replied: "These pills are useless. If you can swallow one, you don't need it. If you need it, you can't swallow it."



PORTLAND HARBOR, ENG

