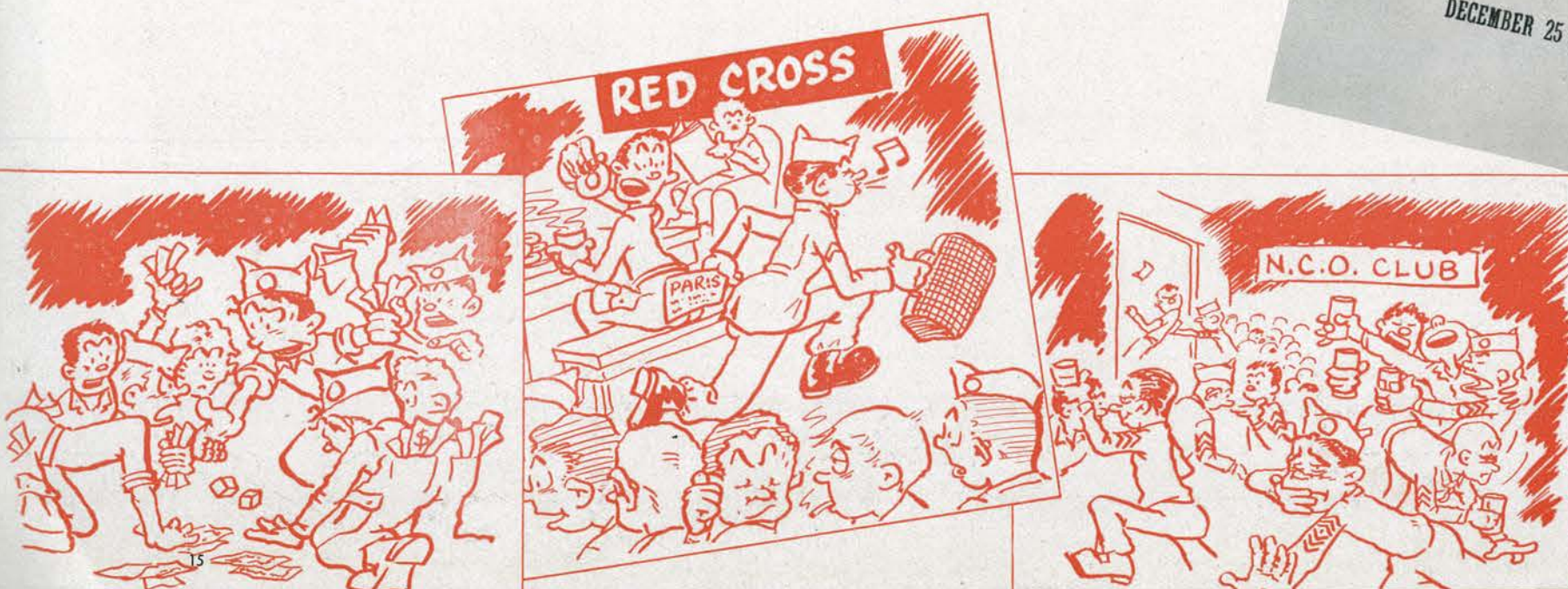


RAN THE ANTICIPATION OF THE PARIS PASSES. MORNING, NOON, AND NIGHT, ANYWHERE YOU HAPPENED TO BE YOU COULD HEAR IT BEING DISCUSSED. THE OBJECTIVES WERE ESSENTIALLY THE SAME BUT THE MEANS TO THE END VARIED CONSIDERABLY. REENFORCEMENTS BEGAN TO BE FLOWN IN FROM ENGLAND. WE WERE ALL READY TO TAKE A GOOD REST AND THEN GET SET FOR A FUTURE MISSION. THE BARRACKS BAGS, WHICH AS USUAL HAD BEEN WELL LOOTED, BECAME NEARLY FULL AGAIN AS S-4 GOT ON THE BALL AND OD'S WERE BEING PRESSED NIGHTLY FOR ALL THE FREE TIME THE FUTURE SEEMED TO HOLD. THE FORTUNATE COMPANIES WHO DID SEE PARIS FOUND IT TO BE A FABULOUS CITY, A CITY WHERE ONE COULD REMAIN IN A PLEASANT STATE OF SATURATION, AND IN EXCELLENT COMPANY, FOR 48 GLORIOUS HOURS. THE MAYORS OF RHEIMS AND CHALONS OFFERED THE KEYS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE CITIES. AT MOURMELON ITSELF, RECREATIONAL FACILITIES WERE AMPLE. THE FLEET OF FOOT, THE AGILE, AND THE BRAWNY STRUGGLED FOR POSITIONS ON THE REGIMENTAL FOOTBALL, BOXING, AND BASKETBALL TEAMS. A FOOTBALL GAME WAS SCHEDULED FOR CHRISTMAS DAY WITH THE 502ND, A GAME TO DWARF THE GRANDEUR OF PASADENA'S ROSE BOWL. THERE WERE THREE FINE THEATRES SHOWING THE LATEST AND CHOICE IN FILM FARE. THE RED CROSS, THE FAIR POLLY BAKER PRESIDING, OPENED. THE NCO CLUB, COMPLETELY STOCKED WITH A VARIETY OF DISTINGUISHED POTABLES' PREMIERED WITH IMPRESSIVE CEREMONIES. THE CHOW WAS SUPERB. PASSES TO PARIS, RHEIMS, AND CHALONS. LULU WAS DISCOVERED, A RARE GIRL. LIFE WAS NOT WITHOUT PLEASURE.



But on the other side of the Rhine a grey-faced heavy-lidded German general... A very shrewd apple... was planning. A steel fist was being welded which would drive almost to the allied vitals. And we were opening the first Christmas packages on the morning of 17 December.....