## A WHITE CHRISTMAS IN KRINKELTER

FITTING TRIBUTE to the men who fight on far-off fronts this Christmas is this striking photograph of Allied infantrymen moving up over the snowy wastes of no-man's-land. James Thrasher's editorial expresses our deep appreciation for the selfless service of our fighting men.

BY JAMES THRASHER,
NEA Staff Writer

They had plenty of snow for a white Christmas in Krinkelter — snow that stung your face as the North Sea swept it across the Belgian lowlands; snow that made walking slow and heavy; snow in gray clouds that pinned air support to the ground and left things pretty much up to the infantry; snow that made you a sitting-duck target in your OD uniform; snow that melted and soaked and froze if you fell in it.

A white Christmas, and back home some luckier guys were having a hot turkey dinner, and a cigar afterwards, and dry clothes and a fire. But up here the Krauts had forgotten to take time off for the holiday. They were hell-bent on going places and somebody had to stop them, Christmas or no Christmas.

So they walked across the fields outside of Krinkelter on Christmas, with guns slung over their shoulders and cold feet in their boots.

And some of them thought., "Well, maybe next year."

## DREGS OF GERMAN MANPOWER

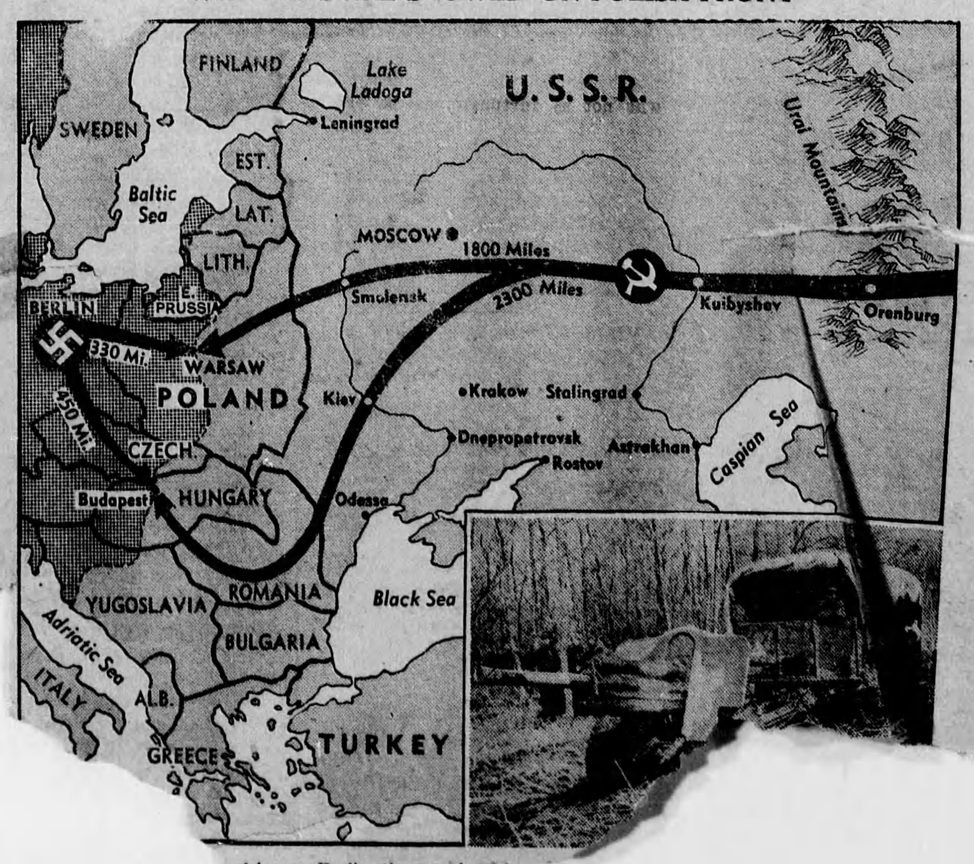
While Germany apparently was massing its "crack" troops behind the lines for the current counter-offensive, the Volkssturm — German People's Army comprising old men and boys — was dispatched to defend the Siegfried Line. But the above members didn't stay in the fight for long — they were captured by Allied Army Forces.

## 82 . . . AND STILL SWINGING

## JOYOUS JAILBREAK

Pushing joyously from jail in the Alsatian border town of Haguenau, where they had been imprisoned by the Nazis for political offenses, the French women above were some of 300 freed when the Nazis left town as the Allies moved in. Many had been in jail two years.

## WHY REDS ARE SLOWED ON POLISH FRONT

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## CANADA'S 8TH. WINNER OF V.C.

Canada's Eighth and British Columbia's Fifth winner of the coveted Victoria Cross is Pte. Ernest Alvia (Smoky) Smith, 30, the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada. "Smoky", The one man Army as he is known, showed outstanding courage and determination in establishing a bridgehead over the Savio River which led to the capture of the Town of Cesena. At point black range, he destroyed two German tanks, and shot it out with the tank borne infantry.

Eighth Canadian in this war to win the highest award for valour in the British Empire, Pte. Smith is the first Canadian V.C. of the present war below the rank of commissioned officer. He hails from the same town, New Westminster, B.C., as Major John Mahony, who was awarded the V.C. in July.

**Twice Wounded**

Twice wounded before the brilliatn action which won him the Victoria Cross, Smith had been in action with the Seaforth Highlander throughout their long and tough campaign in Sicily and Italy, with the exception of two months spent in hospital in North Africa. He was first wounded in Sicily on August 4, 1943, and was shipped to North Africa for hospitalization. He was wounded again in February 1944, when the Seaforths crossed the shell-torn Moro river, blocking the road to Ortona.

Pte. Smith was born at New Westminister on May 3, 1914, and lived there until he enlisted in the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada on March 5, 1940. He has been overseas since July 18, 1940.

"Smoky" and his two brothers are serving in the Canadian Active Army, Jack, aged 25, is with the Canadian Scottish "somewhere in Europe," and Burton, father, of three children is with the Saint John Fusiliers.

**Text of Citation**

Following is the complete citation covering the award of the Victoria Cross to Pte. Smith:

"In Italy on the night of 21-22 October, 1944, a Canadian infantry brigade was ordered to establish bridgehead across the Savio riv The Seaforth Highlanders of Ca ada were selected as the spearh of the attack and in weather n unfavorable to the operation t crossed the river and captured objective, in spite of strong opp tion from the enemy.

"Torrential rain had caused Savio river to rise six feet in hours and as the soft vertical ba made it impossible to bridge river no tanks or anti-tank g could be taken across the ragi stream to the support of the rifle companies.

"As the right forward compan was consolidating its objectiv was suddenly counter-attacked a troop of three Mark Five Pa ther tanks supported by two se propelled guns and about thirty i fantry. The situation appeared most hopeless.

**Inspiring Leadership**

"Under heavy fire from the proaching enemy tanks, Pte. Sm showing great initiative and insp ing leadership led his Piat group two men across an open field t position from which the Piat co best be employed. Leaving one m on the weapon, Pte. Smith cros the road with a companion and tained another Piat. Almost mediately an enemy tank ca down the road firing its machi guns along the line of the ditch Pte. Smith's comrade was wounde At a range of 30 feet and havin to expose himself to the full vie of the enemy, Pte. Smith fired t Piat and hit the tank, putting out of action. Ten German infan immediately jumped off the b of the tank and charged him w schmeissers and grenades. With hesitation Pte. Smith moved o onto the road and at point bla range with his tommy gun kill four Germans and drove the re mainder back. Almost immediate another tank opened fire and mo enemy infantry closed in on Smith postion. Obtaining some aban-

doned tommy gun magazines a ditch, he steadfastly held his p tions protecting his comrade fighting the enemy with his to gun until they finally gave up withdrew in disorder.

"One tank and both self-propelled guns had been destroyed by this time but another tank swept the area with fire from a longer range. Pte. Smith still showing utter contempt for enemy fire helped his wounded comrade to cover and obtained medical aid for him behind a nearby building. He then retur ed to his position beside the r await the possibility of a f enemy attack.

**Bridgehead Held**

"No further immediate attack developed and as a result the battalion was able to consolidate the bridgehead postion so vital to success of the whole op