

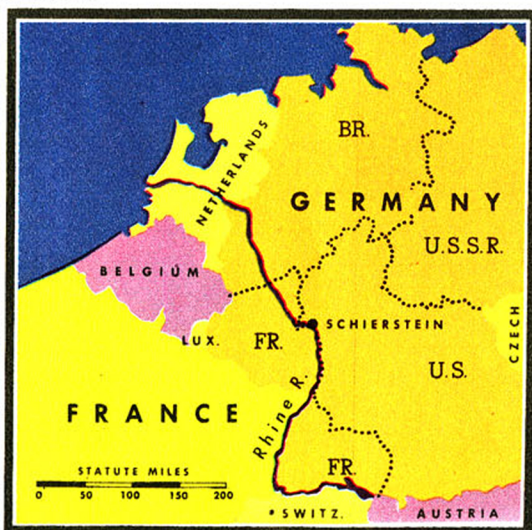
## *The Navy's Watch*

ture, the Rhine has always been considered a natural bulwark of defense. But in the last days of World War II, onrushing Allied troops broke through German defenses and forded the Rhine at numerous points.

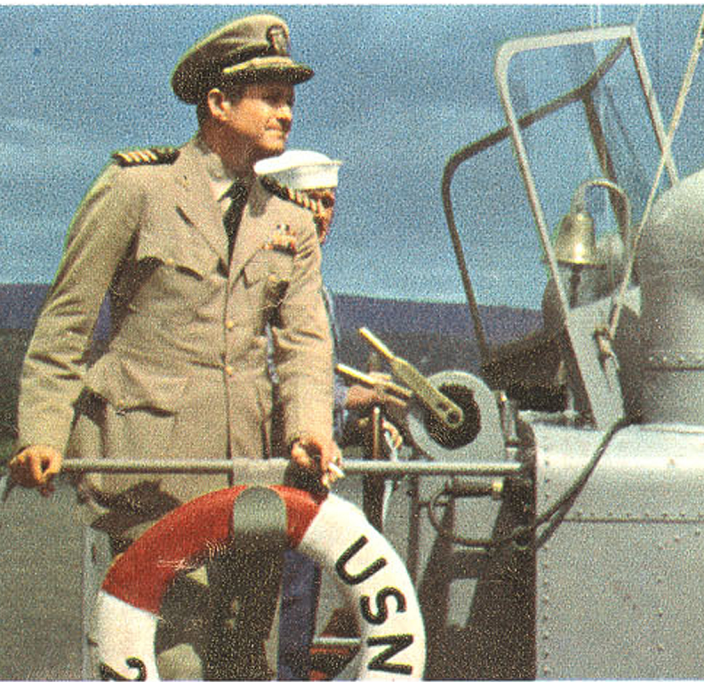
"An unfordable river is a military obstacle of importance," noted the Military Review, a publication of the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College, in analyzing the German setbacks in 1945. But, the analysis continued, a river is only an obstacle if the defenders keep it unfordable by maintaining frequent patrols and by having enough fire power and mobile reserves on hand to thwart any possible attack. The Western powers, while not by any means forgetting what happened to France's Maginot line, are determined to make the Rhine a bastion of defense. In the struggle against Communism the Yalu and the Rhine have become frontiers for the forces of the free world. And certainly history hinges on what occurs on these two rivers in the immediate future.



AL TARTER



## The Navy's Watch



Capt. S. A. Robbins, Jr., commander of the Navy's tiny, but tactically vital Rhine River Patrol, directs maneuvers from flying bridge of boat



Medium tank splashes ashore from Landing Craft Utilities (LSU). One of patrol's top jobs is lightning-paced movement of heavy equipment

**A**FTER World War II, an official Army report described the Rhine River as the "greatest barrier of all in Western Europe." Today, if war should ignite that section of the world, a tiny unit of the U.S. Navy might well decide whether that "greatest barrier" remained steadfast or fell before the might of the aggressor. The American Rhine River Patrol, under the command of Captain S. A. Robbins, Jr., of Los Angeles, dominates about 100 miles of the river, while the British, French and Dutch are watchful in their sectors to the north and south.

If future hostilities follow the pattern of World War II, the 384 American sailors and the 125 carefully screened Germans who work with them would sweep their sector of all shipping, then go about the grim task of systematically demolishing anything that blocked the efforts of our forces or aided the enemy.

Thus today, while tugs and barges and excursion boats ply the swift waters of the Rhine, Robbins is continually putting his force of 75-foot former German torpedo recovery boats through their paces, familiarizing his men with the river and practicing amphibious landings and evacuation operations.

"Our worry," says Robbins, "is defense, not occupation." ▲▲▲

## *The Navy's Watch*



A Rhine River Patrol boat knifes through the water at full speed. The U.S. patrols 100 miles of river; French, British, Dutch share the rest

[OldMagazineArticles.com](http://OldMagazineArticles.com)