

This'n That About "Top Kicks"

CAMP ATTERBURY, August 4.—Cannon Co., of the 424th Infantry, is the scene of today's top-kick interview, and the 1st sergeant being cross-examined is a 23-year-old West Virginian who enlisted in the Army in July, 1942, and is now "growing old with the men."

The top-kick is 1st Sgt. James R. Wheeler, who is known as a "good egg" everywhere in the 424th area. Just tipping 5 ft. 8 inches and weighing 160 pounds, Wheeler does not resemble the magazines' versions of a 1st sergeant. As one of his men remarked, "He's just one of the boys."

Before answering Uncle Sam's call, Wheeler was a coal miner in Elkins, W. Va. He received his basic training with the 80th Division at Camp Forrest, Tenn., and before long was rated from Pfc. to staff sergeant. He then transferred as part of the original cadre for the 106th Division at Ft. Jackson, S. C.

Wheeler was assigned to a cannon company — something new in an infantry regiment. He admits he started from scratch, but in October, 1943 knew his job well enough to rate the top-kick post of the 424th's company. His willingness "to learn with the boys" brought him closer to his men.

Maneuvers were uneventful, according to Wheeler, but a GI in the orderly room revealed the top-kick spent two weeks in the hospital because he went out to check up on his men during a blackout. He received severe bruises when he brushed against a towed gun.

This past May was a big event in

(U. S. Signal Corps Photo.)



1ST SGT. JAMES R. WHEELER

the sergeant's life. Soon after arriving at Atterbury, he went home on furlough to see Chryl Ann, his eight-month-old daughter. Training and maneuvers kept the sergeant busy, and this was the first opportunity for him to meet his child. A proud papa, he let it be known that "she's a cute kid."

Byrnes Moves in Manpower Crisis

WASHINGTON, Aug. 4.—(INS)—War Mobilizer James F. Byrnes today issued a directive extending manpower ceilings to all non-essential industries in groups one and

1944_08_04 1st Sgt James Wheeler is Top Kick

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