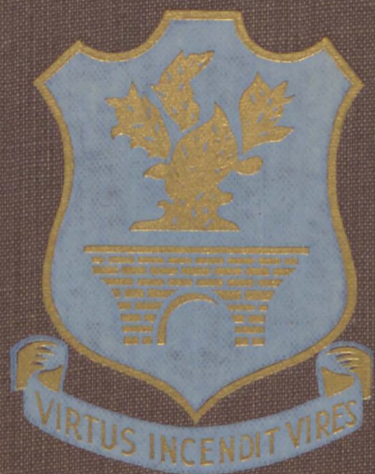




E N G L

G L A N D

LONDON

N E L

Dieppe

Le Havre

Rouen

Louviers

Falaise

Evreux

Pacy

Nonancourt

Longy

Sennoches

Chartres

Alencon

Mamers

Domfront

Fliers

Mortain

Dreux

Chartres

F R A

Scale in miles

Scale in miles



**BATTLE ROUTE OF THE
120TH INFANTRY REGIMENT 1944**

HISTORY OF THE 120TH INFANTRY REGIMENT



NORMANDY

13 June to 24 July 1944



NORTHERN FRANCE

25 July to 14 September 1944



RHINELAND

15 September 1944 to 21 March 1945



ARDENNES-ALSACE

16 December 1944 to 25 January 1945



CENTRAL EUROPE

22 March to 11 May 1945

History of the 120th Infantry Regiment



By

OFFICERS OF THE REGIMENT

WASHINGTON
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TO THE MEN OF THE 120TH INFANTRY REGIMENT
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN BATTLE

THEY WILL ALWAYS BE AN INSPIRATION
TO THOSE OF US WHO KNEW THEM

OUR CONSTANT PRAYER
IS THAT
WE MAY BE WORTHY OF THEIR SACRIFICES

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FOREWORD

This history of how brave men fought and won has been compiled from all available sources. Testimony of many members of the Regiment, official reports, personal observations of the several contributors to this story, and personnel and award files are the most important of these sources.

The history is a narrative of several thousands of men who were brought together in a common cause. It is an attempt to tell where these men went, what they did, and how they lived. It does not attempt to gloss over failures nor to exaggerate the many successful actions. To the best of our knowledge, it is a simple, straightforward story of what actually occurred, with no coloring, padding, nor superlative. The history was written for the most part during combat. Its greatest failure is obviously that it does not mention many, many men who fought with courage and distinction through all or most of the campaigns. We have suffered in knowing that we could not speak of every man who contributed to the record of the 120th Infantry.

This record is outstanding. The Regiment never lost a key point. It never failed to capture an assigned objective. During the ebb and flow of battle, several units occasionally were driven backward, but never was a battalion position lost. At times, companies and battalions failed to capture positions on the first attempt, but ultimately all Regimental objectives were reached. Few organizations that fought as many days as did the 120th Infantry Regiment have claim to such a record. We are indebted to those men who achieved this record and to those who helped in recording it.

We hope that this work in some measure may recall the rugged but heroic days, the rough but ready comradeship, of the memorable months when the Regiment was in combat in the European Theater of Operations.

If the purpose of this book were to tell the history of the 120th Infantry in detail from its origin, one might devote the entire volume, and many more besides, dealing with the fascinating story of its part in the Revolutionary, the Mexican, and the First World Wars. But since this work is of limited scope, the story of the 120th must deal almost entirely with its combat record in World War II.

HISTORY OF THE 120TH INFANTRY REGIMENT

BACKGROUND

The 120th Infantry Regiment has a distinguished past and a colorful tradition. From the clay-red soil of North Carolina, throughout the broad area extending from its woods covered mountains to its sloping beaches, sprang its different units. The towns which produced the various companies are as follows:

1st Battalion Headquarters Company	Oxford
Company "A"	Burlington
Company "B"	Warrenton
Company "C"	Henderson
Company "D"	Durham
2d Battalion Headquarters Company . .	Albemarle
Company "E"	Concord
Company "F"	Charlotte
Company "G"	Winston-Salem
Company "H"	Waynesville
3d Battalion Headquarters Company . .	Asheboro
Company "I"	Wilmington
Company "K"	Shelby
Company "L"	Parkton
Company "M"	Wilson
Regimental Headquarters	Reidsville
Medical Detachment	Graham
Service Company	Raleigh

As early as the Revolutionary days, some of these companies were making military history. Some historians believe Company "L" to be the oldest company in the United States Army. Another of the oldest of the group was Company "F," originally called the Mecklenburg County Minute Men. During the historic Battle of King's Mountain, this group so consistently and effectively dismayed the forces of Lord Cornwallis, that the British General was heard to refer to the resistance offered by this unit as "a veritable hornets' nest." Today, on the Regimental colors, the acute observer will note a stalk of goldenrod, the North Carolina state flower, near a swarm of hornets and their nest. A recent opponent paid a like compliment when he called men of the Regiment President Roosevelt's Storm Troopers. The other companies were all organized during the nineteenth century, but they were not formed into a regiment until 1916 when, as the North Carolina Infantry, they served on the Mexican Border.

In September, 1917, the Regiment was first assigned to the Division with which it has served in two great wars—the 30th (Old Hickory) Division which was comprised also of units from South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee.

The 120th Infantry first landed in France in June, 1918, twenty-six years and a day before the Great Invasion of Normandy. Its members were among the first American troops to enter Belgium, although they did not enter fighting as in this war, being used to replace other troops which occupied the stabilized defense line in the sector of the British Second Army. In September the Regiment was assigned first to the British Third and shortly thereafter to the British Fourth Army. It was as part of the latter unit that on the 29th of September 1918, the 120th made the celebrated assault upon the formidable Hindenburg Line, near Bellicourt, between Cambrai and St. Quentin. The drive was successful in smashing the German defenses, and precipitated the end of the war. A month later the Regiment moved to a rest area, and there its men received news of the Armistice. After six months overseas, the outfit had gained an enviable reputation for having never retreated, and had earned three streamers for the Regimental colors: France, the Ypres-Lys Campaign, and the Somme Offensive. From the Portuguese government the Regiment was honored with the order of Torre-e-Espada (Tower and Sword Cavalier). The 120th returned to the States in April, 1919.

Following World War I, the Regiment was inactivated for two years. In 1921 it was reorganized, again on a National Guard basis, and received Federal recognition. For eighteen years it trained faithfully in regular weekly sessions and yearly practice problems and bivouacs.

WORLD WAR II

In 1940, a year after the outbreak of the war in Europe, when the first mild warnings against military unpreparedness were being voiced to an unwilling public, the 120th was ordered to Fort Jackson, S. C., where it was inducted into active service for what was scheduled to be a year. The response to the call to duty by the "Tar Heel" volunteers was so great that many of the North Carolina companies came to camp overstrength, and the excess men of the Regiment were later turned over to other units which needed personnel.

In February, 1937, the command of the Regiment was given to Colonel John H. Manning, who had been executive officer under the previous commander, Colonel Don E. Scott. It was Colonel Manning who brought the Regiment to Jackson, and in his charge was the extensive course of training which the Regi-



Major General (formerly Colonel) John H. Manning



Generals Eisenhower, Hobbs and Bradley inspect

ment was to take there. It had become clear that Colonel Manning had not only the ability to build a strong, well-knit unit, but also the capacity to make men extraordinarily fond of him. Under him, the traditional, informal title applied to any regimental commander, "The Old Man," became a term of endearment and profound respect. Under him, the Regiment was readily molded into an efficient organization, ready for battle whenever it was needed.

When the appointed year of training at Fort Jackson was completed, during which the 120th had participated in maneuvers in Tennessee and the Carolinas, the outrage at Pearl Harbor shook the nation. The men of the Regiment, preparing to return to civilian life as scheduled, learned that all discharges were canceled and that they were in uniform to stay. The 120th was alerted as one of the units capable of moving into instant action should the homeland be imperiled by the enemy at that time.

With the year 1942 came a rejuvenated and ambitious program of reorganization and modernization within the United States Army. The 120th Infantry, still stationed at Fort Jackson, was subjected to a multiplicity of changes, which included the addition of Cannon and Antitank Companies within the Regiment. The Division organization was changed from the square, or four-regiment, type to the triangular of three regiments. Intensive training made exemplary

show troops of the 120th Infantry, and it was reviewed by leading dignitaries of many nations. But in the fall of 1942 the first real change in personnel of the 120th took place. Because of the demand for com-



Field Marshal Montgomery learns about the Hornets' Nest



Brigadier General (formerly Colonel) Hammond D. Birks



Motors were waterproofed



. . . but not always successfully

petent leaders so pressingly needed elsewhere in that crucial year, Colonel Manning¹ was taken from the Regiment. Furthermore, the 120th Infantry was called upon to supply officers and men for the 118th Infantry which was given an overseas mission; it gave men and officers to activate a new brother regiment, the 119th Infantry; and it sent more personnel to the 117th Infantry on assignment as school troops at Fort Benning, Georgia. In addition, other commissioned and enlisted cadres were drawn from the 120th to help activate new divisions.

BASIC AT BLANDING

The 120th received replacements and once again began the arduous work of training. Under a new, energetic Regimental commander, Colonel Hammond Davis Birks, the 120th moved to Camp Blanding, near Gainesville, Florida, in October, 1942. Blanding was the cradle of the highly efficient unit which distinguished itself consistently during its days of training, and was later to prove itself magnificent in combat. After seven months of rigid training, emphasizing particularly marksmanship and physical fitness, the Regiment moved to a tent city on the outskirts of Camp Forrest, Tennessee, and for three months underwent 30th Division maneuvers, closely followed in September, 1943, by Second Army maneuvers. In the latter, where the 30th maneuvered with and against the 94th and the 98th Infantry Divisions and the 12th Armored Division, the 120th Regiment established a remarkably outstanding record. One battalion

marched thirty-six miles in pouring rain and maintained contact with the "enemy" throughout that night, while on the same day the other two battalions marched thirty miles and waged mock battle, all with a maximum of coordination.

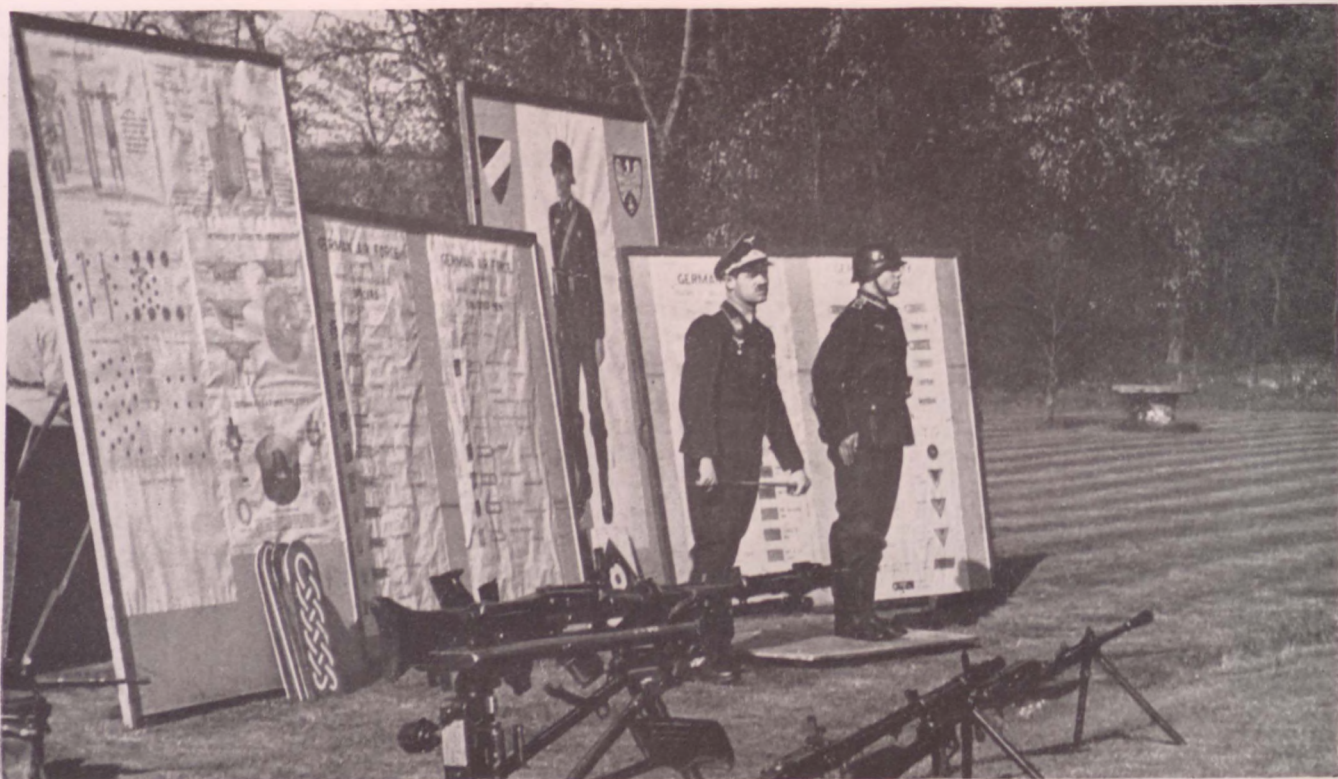
OVERSEAS MOVEMENT

In November 1943, following the completion of maneuvers, the 30th Division moved to Camp Atterbury, Indiana, where for four months the men of the Regiment trained in preparation for overseas movement. Then, with complete equipment and in full strength, the 120th moved to the staging area, Camp Myles Standish, Mass., where for a week the men were given final processing. On the 12th of February, the Regiment sailed from Boston on the SS *Argentina*, headed for England and for a long, hazardous trip through Europe which was to last eighteen eventful



Training to knock out pillboxes

¹Throughout this history, the indicated ranks are the ranks at the time of the narrative, and not necessarily the highest grade attained.



Top: Demonstration of German uniforms and equipment. Bottom: Field Marshal Montgomery tells us we have been chosen to help do the big job.

months. Carrying all the units which comprised the 120th Regimental Combat Team, including the 230th Field Artillery Battalion, Company "C" of the 105th Engineer Battalion, and Company "C" of the 105th Medical Battalion, the ship was part of one of the largest convoys in history.

In twelve days the troops were debarking at Gourock, near Glasgow, Scotland, which became the established point for troop arrival in the European Theater of Operations until many months after the invasion of the Continent. Trains carried the units of the Division the length of England to the southern coasts where, at the seaside resort of Bognor Regis, between Portsmouth and Southampton, the 120th Infantry established its headquarters. Then followed more training, including one week of tank-infantry problems near Warminster. As the gigantic D-Day approached, however, orders came that all coastal towns must be evacuated to allow room for supplies and troops about to assail the enemy in Normandy. On the 3d of April the Regiment moved north to the vicinity of Woodland Park, Buckinghamshire, where the battalions were assigned to separate areas. Both Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery and General Dwight Eisenhower inspected the Regiment during its training there.

LEADERS

About to enter combat, the officers of the 120th Infantry worked hard to shape their units into effective, fast-driving teams. The former Regimental Executive, Lt Col Garvin B. Farris, had become ill shortly after arriving in England, and his place had been taken by Lt Col Peter O. Ward, formerly 3d Battalion commander. Lt Col Henry C. Crumley, who commanded the 2d Battalion during most of the training period, was also evacuated to a hospital.

Just prior to entering combat, the battalion commanders of the 120th were: Lt Col Hugh I. Mainord, 1st Battalion; Lt Col William S. Bradford, 2d Battalion; and Lt Col Paul W. McCollum, 3d Battalion. The staff included Lt John J. Eberhardt, S-1; Capt Ezekiel L. Glazier, S-2; Maj Leland L. Lambe, S-3; and Maj James J. Bynum, S-4.

CWO James B. Lyles exemplified the spirit of the



General Eisenhower talks with a member of the Regiment

120th during his long service as Regimental Sergeant Major and later as Assistant Adjutant.

On the 1st of June, 1944, speaking to his men about what lay ahead for the 120th, Colonel Birks said: "This is a great athletic contest. We are supposed to be the greatest athletes in the world. We must live up to our reputation . . . With all our minor troubles we have been successful in everything that we have done. We are the outstanding, and most trusted, infantry regiment in this Division . . . For the future, I ask God to bless you . . . that you come through the ordeal ahead, safe and sound, with your head high in the pride of victory. For myself, I don't ask God for any special favor to protect me from death or wounds, for instance, . . . but I do ask Him, with my whole heart and soul, to give me the moral, physical and mental courage and strength to do my duty to the utmost."



"We don't know when we'll leave; it may be tomorrow, or the next day, or a month from now. But when we do, it will be for the most important task this Division has ever faced." The speaker was Major General Leland S. Hobbs, commander of the 30th Division. He was talking to the men of the 120th Infantry, a battalion at a time, in their areas around Great Missenden, England, on the 5th of June, 1944. The fact that Rome had fallen to the Allies a few days before didn't seem very important. Wrestling France from the Germans was much more momentous to the men of the 120th. "You will remember this day," he said. No one knew then that it was the day originally planned as D-Day, the day before the actual invasion took place.

It seemed hardly possible that after the pleasant three months in England this was at last the moment of action, the moment to which all the training had been directed, the moment when the Division would become in reality a "combat outfit." But events proved the correctness of the General's words. Two days after D-Day, word was received at Regimental Headquarters in a mansion at Great Missenden that the 120th Infantry was to move immediately to a marshalling area some ten miles north of Southampton. The men packed excitedly, and by the next morning were speeding in convoy over the route toward the coast, toward the ships that were to carry them to the beaches of France, to Normandy, scene of the bloody battle upon which the attention of the world was then fixed.

After arriving at the marshalling area, the Regiment moved to the port of Southampton, where it embarked for France, some elements leaving on the 9th of June while others sailed on the 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th. Our men and equipment were carried on Liberty ships, British troopships, American LCI's¹ (Landing Craft Infantry), and American LCT's (Landing Craft Tank).

OMAHA BEACH, NORMANDY

The passage to France was in each instance made in convoys of considerable size. Like most military operations of the enormity of the D-Day invasion, there was, for the doughboy, a period of high confusion. The boats were misguided during the passage across the English Channel, and it was not until after they had landed that the troops found in some in-

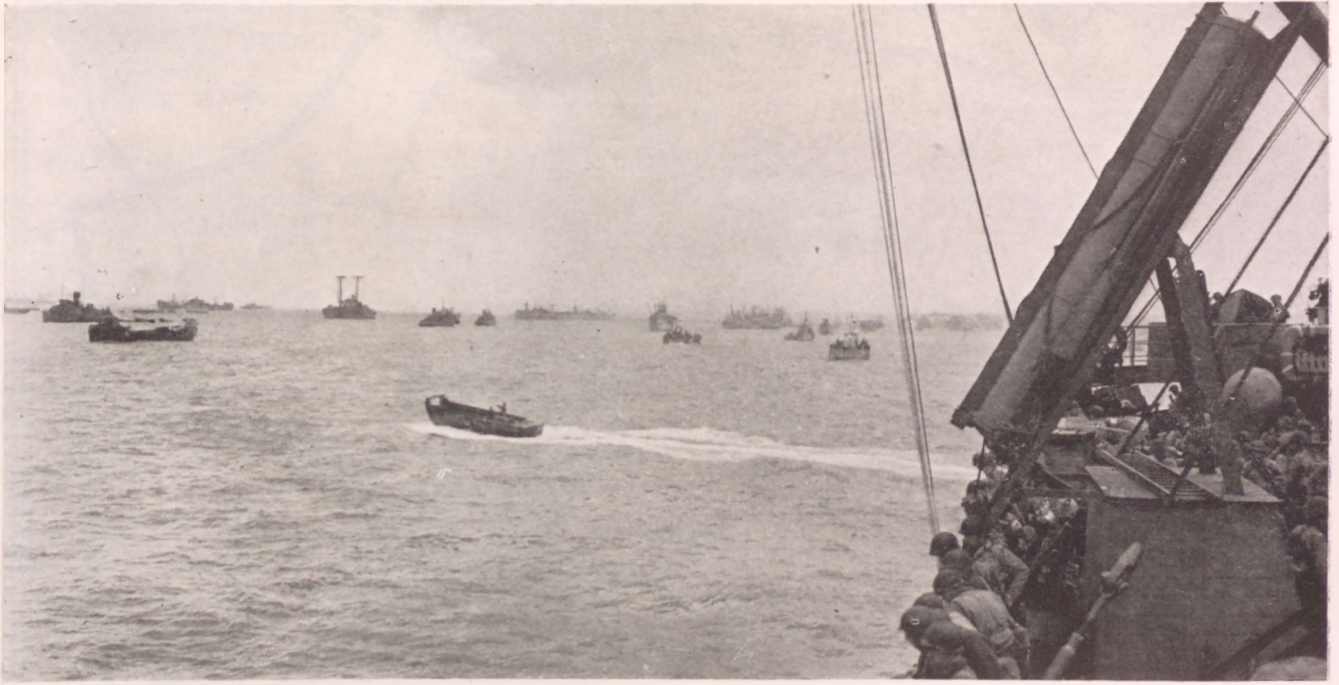
stances that they were at the wrong beaches and had to embark again and be landed a second time. The appointed spot was Omaha Beach, located on the coast of northern France approximately a mile to the east of Pointe et Rez de la Percee. During the crossing, some boats drew close to a beach still being shelled, and some drifted from one point to another, so that a portion of the Regiment stayed at sea as long as two days and had their first taste of combat when at night German planes strafed their vessels. At this period the Germans were regular as clockwork about their night air operations; GIs passed on the warning with a wry smile: "Here comes Bed Check Charlie."

Members of the 120th pushed their way from the beaches up the steep slopes into the rich but devastated Normandy country. They found the battle had left memorable and fresh marks. It was the first time the men had seen the real horror of war, and they were green and incredulous. Some sought to rationalize the stark fact of the vast quantity of American corpses with the remark, "These Jerries are trying to scare us putting wax dummies all over the place." The Regiment stopped in an area near the coast where waterproofing was removed from the vehicles. It then proceeded directly to the front.

Thus, on the night of June 13th, 1944, some units of the 120th Infantry moved into positions on the front lines. The units comprised the principal element of a Combat Team which also included the 230th Field Artillery Battalion, Company "C" of the 105th Engineer Battalion, and Company "C" of the 105th Medical Battalion. In doing so, it replaced the 327th Infantry (101st Airborne Division) and readied itself immediately to regain ground from which both the 175th Infantry (29th Division) and the 327th Infantry had been evicted by enemy action. The Regiment was arrayed on a line extending parallel to and north of the railroad which runs between Carentan and Airl, being bounded by the flooded low ground on each flank, and being directly south of the small town of St. Pellerin. The Regimental Command Post, in its first combat operation of the war, was established in an orchard and later moved to the chateau of M. Paul Fremont. For the first week, headquarters personnel had operated in trenches dug by Germans for their artillery horses. After that, Lt Col Ward, the Regimental Executive, decided to move the Command Post to the mansion.

The route taken by the vehicles in moving from the waterproofing area was west along the main Carentan-

¹Abbreviations are defined on page 266.



Off Omaha Beach

Bayeux highway, which was entered at the town of Surrain. Proceeding west along this highway, the Regiment passed through Isigny, which at this time was still on fire as a result of fierce fighting which had taken place only a short time before. When the Regiment reached a point immediately below Katz, it turned south and proceeded to the front in the neighborhood of St. Pellerin.

Meanwhile, Service Company, which had been landed by mistake on Utah Beach, rejoined the Regiment near Isigny. Capt Layton C. Tyner, commander of Service Company, told how he had brought the kitchen train through Carentan from the beach to Isigny. Carentan was far from cleared when the company rode through it; the Germans were then being driven from it a second time. But neither he nor his men were frightened or perturbed by the ping of snipers' shots or the crash of artillery directed at them; they were simply unaware of its existence. The confusion was too great to permit them to do anything but keep on the appointed route. Where ignorance is bliss, they say, 'tis folly to be wise.

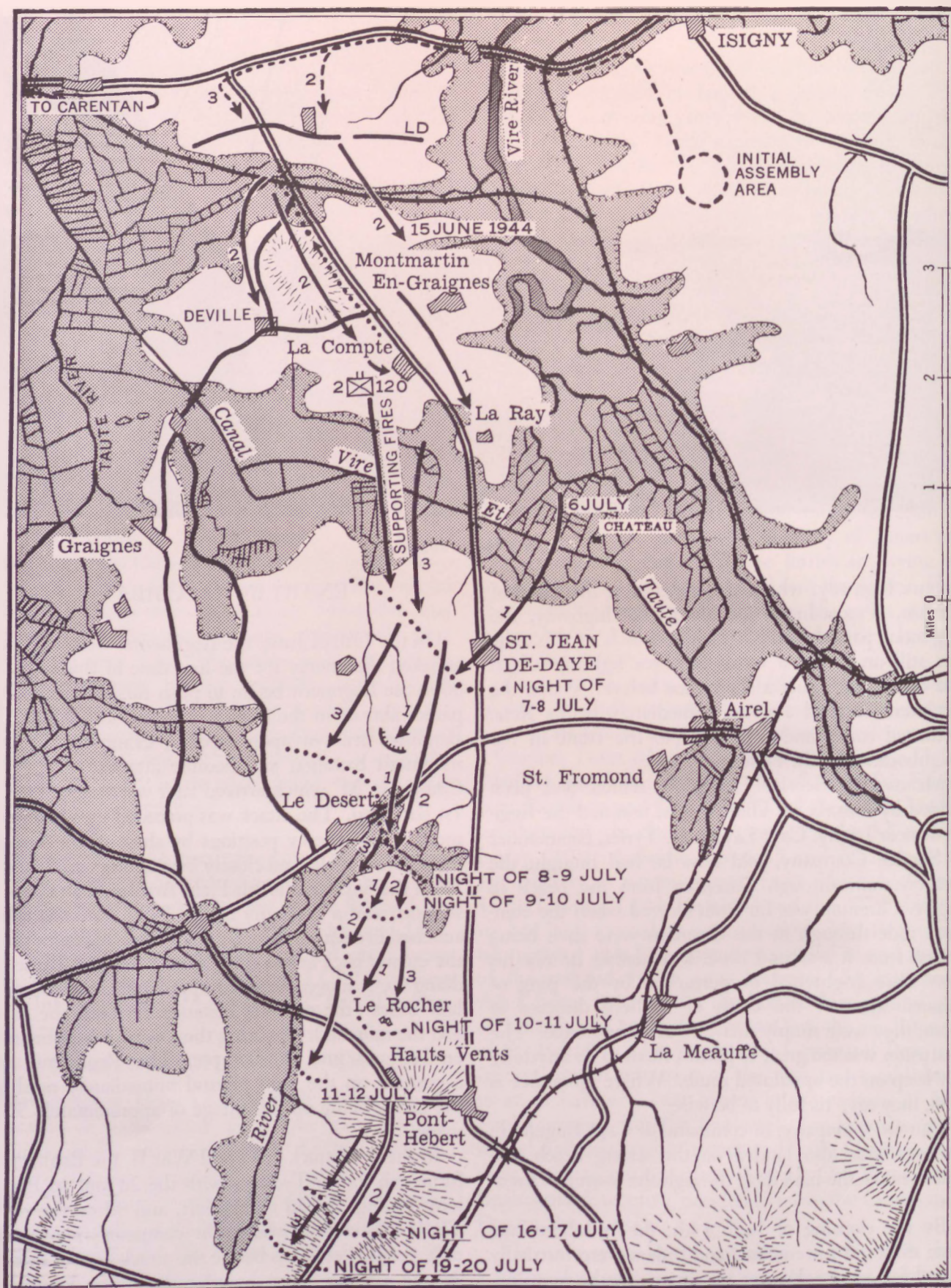
Cannon Company, in command of Capt Eugene F. Krueger, was also landed on the wrong beach and had to make the mad dash through the town of Carentan.

By the evening of June 14th, the battalions had been disposed for combat, and orders were hurriedly issued for an attack upon the enemy in the morning.

ENTRY INTO COMBAT

On the 15th of June, the Regimental Combat Team attacked the enemy for the first time in this war. At 0800 the Regiment began to push forward, four companies abreast in the assault echelon. To give the 3d Battalion heavy-weapon support, Company "D" left its parent battalion and became attached to the 3d. Company "M" which arrived later was attached to the 1st Battalion. The attack was preceded by a bombardment of the enemy positions by ships of the United States Navy, followed closely by a strong aerial attack. With the 58th and 179th Field Artillery Battalions in support, and a company of the 743d Tank Battalion attached to each infantry battalion, the Regiment drove the enemy back across the Canal de Vire et Taute. In doing so, it moved forward approximately two and a half miles (the extreme distance between the canal and the railroad), liberating the towns of Montmartin-en-Graignes and la Compte. The Regiment took a position on the high ground immediately north of the canal, being on a frontage of approximately 5000 yards.

In the first attack of World War II, the Regimental formation took a T-shape, with the 2d and 3d Battalions leading, the 2d on the left, and 3d on the right. The 1st Battalion, whose rifle companies had landed only a couple of hours before the attack, was in reserve. As the advance started under the heavy blanket of



Normandy

artillery, fighter-bombers, and naval guns, some one remarked that it was just like a problem at Fort Benning.

But the resistance met by the 2d Battalion, with Companies "E" and "F" leading, was not of the training variety. The snap of the bullets and blast of shells told the men that this was the proverbial "It." The 2d Battalion reached a point a few hundred yards north of Montmartin-en-Graignes by 1145, and at 1235, still against determined resistance, it entered the town.

Meanwhile the 3d Battalion with Company "L" on the right and Company "I" on the left had started the attack at the same time. It was remarkably quiet at first, and during the first 500 yards an observer could hear glib remarks like, "I thought this was supposed to be combat, not Tennessee maneuvers!"

Shortly thereafter began an unmistakable real-life exchange of fire—rifle and artillery. Though Company "I" advanced rapidly, Company "L" was held up in a heavy close-range fire fight, and Lt Col Paul W. McCollum, 3d Battalion commander, committed his Company "K" on the battalion right flank. Company "L" was thus enveloped into the center of the formation, and with strong support on either side, it surged forward till it was abreast of Company "I." Late in the morning, with companies abreast, the battalion reached the hamlet of la Compte. There as they dug in, the men realized that they were no longer experiencing a second "maneuvers." The artillery taking a heavy toll made them realize it. The land mines which were killing men and disabling tanks brought the fact home forcefully too. And then there were many other things, like the atmosphere, the nervous tension, and the way men talked hurriedly, breathlessly together.

At 1145 Company "E" made contact with Company "I" and the two battalions tied into a line. The fight continued until around 1530. It had no sooner died down than the 120th carried forward the attack again, driving onto the assigned objective by 1730. The battalion "buttoned up" for the night.

During the course of the afternoon, two platoons of Company "A" with a platoon of tanks from the 743d Tank Battalion had moved to the west of the town of Deville, endeavoring to outflank la Compte. But tanks found the roads hard to maneuver over; the 3d Battalion was not too materially aided in the effort.

Before the fall of Montmartin, the 1st Battalion was committed between the 2d and the 3d, and it swung to the southeast, pinching out the 2d Battalion and threatening the town of la Raye.



Tankers of the 743d Tank Battalion were good fighting men

The orders for this sudden commitment were issued hurriedly. It was a situation which demanded the utmost in speed. Lt Col Hugh I. Mainord attempted to draw his troops together to push off rapidly. But he found two platoons of Company "A" were separated 1000 yards from the remainder of the battalion while attempting to clear out an assembly area to which the battalion had prepared to move. Company "C" had begun its march, turned off the main route, and was moving into the new assembly area. There was not time to regroup all these elements before the jump-off.

Company "B" was rushed into the attack at once, and plans were made for the other companies to follow. The men were so hastily snatched to go into action that they became bewildered and were only half sure of their mission. In the confusion, the men of the 1st Battalion ran into part of the 2d Battalion, and at the distance mistaking friend for enemy, elements of both began firing against each other. The 2d Battalion commander, Lt Col William S. Bradford, rushed forward of his troops to stop the firing, and met Capt Ellis W. Williamson, 1st Battalion S-3, who had also moved forward to help correct the error. In short order, the firing among friendly units ceased. The 1st Battalion pushed on, and by nightfall had pinched out the 2d.

On the 16th of June, the 1st Battalion continued the attack at dawn, and cleared the enemy from the southeast corner of the Regimental zone of action north of the canal, thereby enabling Company "F" to take the town of la Raye. During the assault numerous snipers were by-passed by the forward elements. The Battalion Command Group following behind had a real taste of combat excitement and some narrow

escapes when the German snipers pecked at some of its members. The S-2 and the S-3 seized the chance to practice rifle marksmanship, and each is said to have bagged a sniper before the group continued forward.

Meanwhile the 3d Battalion dispatched a patrol to the vicinity of a small bridge located on our extreme right flank, which learned that the enemy was still resisting in the vicinity of Deville. Therefore the 2d Battalion was moved by truck to an assembly area in the vicinity of the railroad bridge to the north. It then attacked south, clearing the enemy out of the area. The Regiment, as a result, was situated on a line extending from the Vire River on the east to Taute River on the west, occupying the high ground immediately north of the canal. On the Regiment's right flank and on the far side of the flooded low ground, the 501st Infantry (101st Airborne Division) held the line beginning at a point south of Carentan and extending to the west. To the east of the low ground on the Regiment's left bank, and in the vicinity of Airl, a battalion of the 117th Infantry was located. The rest of that regiment was in Corps Reserve.

FIRST NIGHT COUNTERATTACK

Without having had much fighting previously, the 3d Battalion had an active day on the 16th of June. After a restless night, Company "K" had been ordered to help drive the enemy from the north banks of the canal, and pushed ahead 2000 yards to seize and dig in positions on the Regimental right flank by midafternoon. Company "I" was ordered to relieve Company "K" and at 2100 that night had moved into the line in place of Company "K." It was here that the Germans launched their first night attack against members of the 120th Infantry, men of Company "I."

It began at 2300, when a force of what Capt Chris McCullough, then Company "I's" commander, estimated as two platoons of infantry, started to scramble across the canal, while an overwhelming artillery concentration was fired upon the Company "I" line. The 3d Platoon of Company "I" was so battered and groggy from this initial barrage that it was no longer a unit; its casualties were immense.

When the artillery barrage stopped the Germans began to heave hand grenades in order to keep the Company "I" men glued in their holes. But as a trick it did not work. Capt McCullough tells this story of the heroic action.

"These grenades were picked up by the fighting men of Company 'I' and thrown back at the enemy.

A hand-to-hand fight started on the banks of the Vire Canal. I called Battalion Headquarters and reported the situation. Artillery fire was called to help repel the attack. This was a difficult problem. The enemy artillery preparation had knocked out 'I' Company's telephone line and had damaged its 300 radio. After about ten minutes working on the 300 radio, it was repaired. In the meantime Company 'I' men were fighting the Germans on the north banks of the canal.

"We were finally given the familiar 'On the way' from our artillery." Capt McCullough then gave the order for all his men to get in their holes, to seek cover from the shelling he had called down upon the area.

"The first rounds were about seventy-five yards from our front lines," he said. "The men called back to me to bring the artillery in closer. The adjustment was given, 'Deflection correct, 50 yards over.' The next concentration landed about twenty-five yards to the front of 'I' Company's front lines and on the south bank of the canal. The men shouted, 'Perfect. Give us all you can.' For fifteen minutes the artillery fired for 'I' Company. Its accuracy was amazing. Only three rounds fell short. These rounds landed on 'I' Company's left flank where its 3d Platoon used to be."

Fifteen minutes of the artillery sent the Germans scurrying to their own lines, whimpering and licking their wounds. After the deadly concentrations, all was quiet. Company "I" had suffered heavy casualties, however, and the men in the platoons wondered how many the enemy in their turn had sustained. In order to ascertain exactly how many of the Germans had been killed, Capt McCullough led a patrol across the canal the morning of the 17th. He and his men returned with the report that they had discovered five enemy dead on the north bank of the canal, and on the south bank, twenty-three.

THE LINE, CANAL DE VIRE ET TAUTE

On the 17th of June, an attempt was made to secure the high ground immediately south of the canal on the Regiment's extreme right front. The attempted crossing of the canal by two platoons of the 2d Battalion was unsuccessful. It was not until the end of this day that the ground north of the canal was totally cleared of enemy troops with the exception of snipers who actively continued to harass our men for a considerable period thereafter.

A boat contact patrol was set up to meet a patrol from the 101st Airborne Division on our right. The 117th Infantry, on our left flank, also established a patrol which made contact with us in the vicinity of



Briefing today for the fight tomorrow

la Raye. These patrols met at least three times during each 24-hour period.

Up to and including July 6th, 1944, the Regiment held the canal line. It patrolled enemy-held territory south of the canal extensively each night. While the majority of these patrols were sent on missions of reconnaissance, a few were combat patrols, and all of them accounted for many enemy dead. They were able to supply the Regiment with much valuable enemy information, including strength, disposition, location of strongpoints, types of weapons in use, etc. They were forced to operate in extremely difficult terrain. The territory covered was an extensive, inundated marshland. To penetrate enemy-held ground required crossing the canal. In many places, the approach to the canal was over knee-deep with water and the canal itself was found to be steeply banked, with water seven feet deep in many points. The enemy had the whole area to their front well covered with machine-gun and mortar fire. It is be-

lieved that the extensive patrolling conducted by this Regiment in a large measure led the enemy to think that a much larger force was to his front, and that a further attack was imminent, thus placing him solely on the defensive. In reality, the 120th Infantry was holding a line greater than 5000 yards in length, which would normally represent a divisional sector, and there were no combat troops stationed between its front-line positions north to the beaches to its immediate rear.

Our accomplishment in throwing the enemy back across the canal materially improved the American positions south of the beachhead, and deprived the Germans of a valuable bridgehead from which to attack during this critical period. The holding of this line enabled the all-important debarkation of troops and supplies on the beaches and the successful occupation of the Cotentin Peninsula by American troops. It also provided space for construction of one of the first large airfields on the beachhead. Furthermore,



Blowing a path for our tanks



. . . and then through the blasted hole

our successful attack completely opened the only road connecting the two beachheads, Omaha and Utah. The Germans, fighting hard to maintain observation on this road, had successfully resisted two previous attempts to drive them out. One attempt had been made by a battalion of the 101st Airborne Division and the other by a task force from the 29th Infantry Division. Proof of the difficulty of our accomplishment was found near la Raye; there in a single field lay 68 unburied dead of the 29th Infantry Division, victims of the stubborn German defense.

During this period effective artillery fire kept the enemy off balance, caused him many casualties, and increased his problem of supply and communication. Initially he was very active with his patrols, and much activity was noticed within his lines. But, after the first week, this activity ceased, due in large measure to the accuracy of our mortar, artillery and sniper fire, together with the aggressiveness of our patrols.

Prisoners taken were identified as belonging to the 984th Infantry Battalion, the 352d Reconnaissance Battalion, and the 38th Regiment of 17th S.S. Division (G. v. B.). For the most part, these prisoners were of Germanic origin, and only a few were believed to be over twenty years of age.

The Regiment buried 111 German dead who were found north of the canal in our sector.

The fields of Normandy, surrounded for the most part by high, thick hedgerows, offered difficult terrain over which to maneuver, and called for the use of new tactics in the attack. For example, in order that the tank-infantry team might work closely in support of each other, it was quickly learned that it was necessary

to blast avenues of approach through the hedgerows for the tanks. In some situations, it was found expedient to cause the infantry to precede the tanks. In order to continue to progress, we quickly learned that the attacking elements must by-pass snipers and small isolated strongpoints; these were taken care of by "mopping-up groups" in the rear. While holding the canal line, we evolved a plan of infantry-tank assault tactics and, one by one, pulled each of our platoons to the vicinity of the Regimental reserve line for training. The results of our planning were consolidated and forwarded to higher headquarters, being recommended for consideration as a solution to the problems created by this type of warfare.

As a result of the highly successful action which cleared the enemy from the ground north of the canal, and as a direct result of his brave and inspired leadership on the field of battle, Colonel Hammond D. Birks, commanding officer of this Regiment, was awarded the Silver Star, being the first man in the Division to receive a battlefield decoration in World War II.

PERSONALITIES

Many heroic deeds were made by our men in taking the canal line and subsequently holding it. While it is not possible to record all of them here, a few may be mentioned which are of interest.

One day S/Sgt John J. Gilson, Sgt William E. Stevenson, Sgt Oliver C. Trantham, Jr., Cpl Joseph R. Dillman, T/5 Irving Stiber, T/5 Joseph B. Alexander, Pfc Rolf Laerm, Pfc Frank M. Thompson, Pvt Jack G. McCanless, Pvt Howard E. Peterson, Pvt

Ralph W. Estevez, Pvt Paul J. Fontaine, Pvt Dorrance C. Tennyson, Pvt James J. Anderson, and Pvt Glenn W. Davenport, under the command of Lt Edwin J. Franklin, reconnoitered the banks of the canal which were under continuous enemy observation. The terrain was swampy and inundated, the going exhausting. Along flats totally devoid of cover and concealment, these men worked their way for three miles. Despite the fact that S/Sgt Gilson was killed and Cpl Dillman was wounded by machine-gun fire, the patrol successfully accomplished its mission of investigating possible crossing sites, and contributed information of vital importance to the planning of future operations.

During the battle of June 15th, Lt Franklin, Sgt Trantham, Pfc Laerm, and Pvs Fontaine, Estevez, McCanless and Tennyson, together with Pfc Ray E. Depue and Pvt Walter S. Bruce, were given the patrol mission of protecting the right flank of the Regiment and were ordered to guide tanks to the scene of battle by riding on the tanks and walking ahead of them when they were buttoned up. Through a misunderstanding of the order, these men continued in an effort to complete what they believed to be their mission. Although two platoons, a rifle and weapons platoon of Company "A," were on their way to join the tank-infantry combat group in the protection of the Regimental right flank, these men went a long distance alone, forcing their way through towns where the heaviest fighting of the day occurred, working never more than fifteen yards behind the heavily armored tanks, and frequently in front of them.

A Company "G" patrol under Lt Robert A. Tyler was sent on a combat mission to secure prisoners for interrogation. While carrying out their mission they entered an enemy strongpoint and despite fire from enemy machine guns and grenades, rifles and machine pistols, proceeded against superior forces to try to divide the enemy and surround and capture individuals. Despite injury to other patrol members, Lt Tyler with S/Sgt Gossett and Pvt Vingate pressed on to hand-grenade a strongly fortified house held by the enemy. Since this action took place at night, the enemy sent up many flares which made the completion of the mission most difficult and enabled the enemy to bring down accurate mortar fire. Finally forced to retire, the patrol evacuated six wounded members, a great accomplishment in itself because these men had to be brought across low and swampy terrain and across the canal before reentering our lines.

S/Sgt Furney M. Rivers of Company "B" is the type of fighting man we all would like to have with



Lieutenant Colonel Hugh I. Mainord

us when the going is hot. On June 22d, S/Sgt Rivers of Company "B," with Lt Foster S. Pease and Pvt Lawrence L. Elkins, crossed the canal on a special mission. Noticing a soldier immediately to his front and believing him to be American, Rivers called him. But when the soldier turned about he proved to be German—and a second German immediately appeared. S/Sgt Rivers opened fire at once, killing them both. However, before he succeeded in killing the second German, the latter fired a rifle grenade which killed Lt Pease. This was the signal for heavy enemy fire to be directed against S/Sgt Rivers from his right flank which forced him to return to the canal bank, but not before he had secured both rifles belonging to the dead Germans. Then, in the face of continued enemy fire, S/Sgt Rivers made his way to Lt Pease, ascertained he was dead, and returned to our lines.

Some men are just naturally heroes. Take Pfc William Lazenby of Company "H" for instance. On his first day of battle, his platoon met very strong sniper fire east of the town of Montmartin. Knowing the



First award ceremony: General Hobbs decorates Captain Howard Greer, Technical Sergeant Robert Bondurant, Staff Sergeant James Duggans, Private Elbert Freeze, and Private Cosmo Riozzi

general vicinity of the snipers, he stood in the open and directed fire, enabling his platoon to eliminate the enemy and continue their advance successfully. He himself killed one of these snipers. Of the same fiber is Pfc James MacCune, of Company "E," who on the following day personally charged an enemy machine-gun nest which was holding back his platoon and knocked it out of action with hand grenades. Later he exposed himself to another machine-gun nest and sniper to determine their exact positions as targets for our men.

Pvt Arthur Krueck of Company "F" almost spent the remainder of the war in Germany. On the night of the 27th-28th of June, while on patrol in enemy territory with Lt Spitzer, of Company "H," he attempted to climb over a hedgerow in order to gain the objective. Lt Spitzer, who led the way, emerged on the far side of the hedgerow to find himself in the arms of a four-man patrol. They immediately took him prisoner and one of the Germans remarked that if there was one American, there must be more. Krueck successfully evaded discovery and returned to our lines with valuable information which had been obtained that night.

The old men will all remember 2d Lt Marshall B.

Gerth of Company "F." While advancing with his platoon in the vicinity of Montmartin on the 15th of June, his men suddenly received fire from machine guns which he thought came from friendly tanks to his left front. Disregarding his own personal safety in favor of his men, he crossed open ground which was heavily covered by enemy machine-gun fire in order to inform his company commander of the friendly tank fire. Although he was successful in delivering the message, he was killed by enemy fire.

During the afternoon of the 15th of June, a platoon of the 1st Battalion was pinned down by fire from an enemy skirmish line. On his own initiative Capt Ellis W. Williamson, who at that time was the Battalion S-3, led two volunteers across an open field and killed three of the enemy, enabling the platoon to continue its attack. He then led three more platoons in the same manner. His action materially assisted the battalion to accomplish its mission on that day.

And then there was 2d Lt Myron G. Wood of Company "L" who displayed outstanding leadership and courage when, with thirty-five men and a section of machine guns, he wiped out an enemy machine-gun strongpoint and killed twenty-five of the enemy on the 15th of June. Lt Wood's mission was to secure a

bridge, which he found in the hands of the enemy. For a considerable distance he and his men waded through water five feet deep in order to force the enemy to withdraw. Seeing that one of his men was severely wounded, and that he was lying in an open field which was covered by enemy fire, he crawled forward seventy yards and administered first aid. He then returned to his platoon and continued the attack.

There were others, many others, who could be mentioned as contributing greatly to our cause during this period. Among those others who successfully maintained our patrol activity in enemy-held territory were Lt Matthew M. Lutzkivich, S/Sgt Silas L. Baird, Cpl Alva L. Brown, Pfc Ralph E. Kirkpatrick and Pfc Clarence J. Cote of Company "A"; Sgt Earl Burry, Pfc Glenn F. Helvie and Pfc Ernest F. Overhoff of Company "L"; Sgt Roy T. Westmoreland, Pfc Donald Currie and Pfc James Robinson of Company "G"; S/Sgt Roy E. Rummage, Pfc Elmer Johnson, Pvt Willis M. True, and Pvt Earl Stalling of Company "E"; also Sgt William R. Overman and Pvt Lucien Huard, Lt William P. Shanks and the 1st Platoon of Company "C."

Certainly, the fine work of Lt Carl C. Harnden of Company "K" should be mentioned. On several occasions he successfully led patrols behind the enemy lines and obtained very valuable information. Two of these patrols spent thirty-six hours in German-held territory. On the night of the 19th of June, for example, with S/Sgt Lester G. Dickens and Pfc Willy Schoen, he went behind the enemy lines to a depth of two miles and remained there for thirty-six hours watching enemy movements, checking the location of emplacements and installations, and watching the effect of our bombing on an enemy-held town. This patrol located several gun positions and enemy bivouac areas, an enemy command post and many entrenchments. It killed two Germans and secured identification of enemy units confronting us. It returned with information that affected the actions of a large number of troops. The men moved behind enemy lines in daylight and at night, making excellent use of cover and concealment and staying alert throughout with little food and water. Artillery fire placed at locations indicated by this patrol resulted in numerous enemy casualties.



JULY

On the 6th of July, 1944, final arrangements were made for an attack calculated to carry us across the Canal de Vire et Taute, through the enemy-held territory to the far side of St. Jean de Daye to the south. If successful, this would mean a major advance toward the key city of St. Lo which was being used by the Germans as the main control point for all of their operations against the American effort in Normandy. This was a particularly difficult undertaking. With the canal and the flooded lowland to our front and a river on each flank, the enemy occupied high ground which commanded these formidable natural barriers. The enemy knew that there were but two feasible avenues of approach into their position. One of these was through the narrow corridor which included 200 yards of land on each side of the main Carentan-St. Lo road at a point where it crossed the canal. The other approach was some 2½ miles to the west, being a very narrow peninsula which stretched down from enemy territory in the vicinity of Graignes. At each of these points, the bridge had long since been blown and the enemy had enjoyed ample time in which to set up strongpoints covering the approaches with automatic fire. The enemy also had the distinct advantage of fighting on familiar terrain, which had been amply sown with mines of all types. It was decided, after much study of the situation, that the only point for crossing the canal which offered any chance of success, was through the Carentan-St. Lo road corridor.

The plan called for placing the 2d Battalion in Corps reserve. Occupying the right flank of the Regiment's main line of resistance, it had the primary mission of checking any attempt which might be made by the enemy to cross the canal into our positions, and at the same time, it offered as distinct threat to the enemy a possible crossing on our part at this point.

At 1300, on July 7th, the 120th Infantry launched its attack.¹

Making use of hastily placed footbridges and by fording the canal at many places, the 3d Battalion (on the right) and the 1st Battalion (on the left), with the main highway as the boundary between the battalions, stormed across the canal. Our men met determined resistance. The enemy made the canal line a veritable hell by placing heavy concentrations of artillery and mortar fire at the crossing point. Machine guns swept the level ground to their front from strong-

points within the enemy lines, making it extremely difficult to progress beyond the far bank of the canal. Despite heavy casualties, our men successfully pushed forward, gained the solid ground to the south, and hurled the enemy back beyond St. Jean de Daye.

One company lost all its officers but one, and yet it was the first to enter the town. By nightfall, they held a line south of the town and were preparing to meet any counterattack the enemy might see fit to throw at them.

Many brave deeds were executed on the 6th of July; most never were recorded because of the fury of the battle. An example of bravery shown that day was the exploit of Sgt Jonathan G. Mullinex, squad leader of Company "A." He and the men in his company were pinned down by enemy machine-gun fire which suddenly opened up on them from their front. Two men were killed. Seeing this, Sergeant Mullinex immediately exposed himself by firing a rifle grenade in the direction of the enemy machine-gun nest. Realizing that the first grenade was ineffective, he rolled over on his back to attach another grenade and, at this time, was hit in the nose and foot by the enemy fire. Despite the pain of his wounds and the fact that enemy bullets were tearing the equipment from his back, he rose on one knee to fire two more rifle grenades at the enemy emplacement. He knocked it out, and thereby enabled Company "A" to advance upon its objective.

Under the original plan, this regiment was not expected to attack until the 117th Infantry on our left had taken the high ground to the east of St. Jean de Daye, and thereby commanded the enemy positions to our front. Meeting considerable resistance, that regiment was unable to follow the required time schedule, which meant that the 120th Infantry met much greater resistance than was expected, necessitating the release of the 2d Battalion to the Regiment at 1400. By 2200 our line was 6500 yards south of the canal.

During this eminently successful attack it was necessary not only to fight the enemy to our front, but to combat considerable opposition on each flank due to the inability of friendly forces to move forward.

While all of our units performed in a masterly fashion this day, mention should be made of the fine job done by Company "A" of the 246th Engineer Battalion, which succeeded in building a treadway bridge for vehicles across the canal at the old bridge site. Company "A" built its bridge while under intense artillery and mortar fire.

¹In support were the 230th Field Artillery; Company "C", 105th Engineers; 246th Engineer Battalion; 531st A.A.A. Battalion; 58th Field Artillery Battalion; and three platoons of the 743d Tank Battalion.

Mention, too, should be made of the excellent courage of Lt Edward M. Hill, assistant Regimental S-3, and of Lt Robert McClain, Service Company executive officer, who controlled the priority of motor traffic across the canal. Lt Hill made sure of dispersal and order among the vehicles as they approached to cross the bridge while Lt McClain at the field phone called to the motor assembly area in the rear when the time came for the next scheduled serial or vehicle. The men took up their positions before the attack was launched and were, therefore, subjected to most of the heavy fire directed by the enemy upon the crossing site.

Lt Col Hugh I. Mainord, who led the 1st Battalion at this time, related afterwards that he insisted that each man, down to and including the privates, know what the plan was, where he was going, how he would get there, and just exactly what he was going to do after he got there. He also made sure that each man knew what his immediate superior's jobs were so that when casualties occurred these men were able to take the place of the fallen.

He also relates an episode which illustrates the spirit of our men and their determined attitude to be successful in this great enterprise. A few days before we jumped off, Lt Col Mainord sent word to all of the men in his command that those wishing passes to St. Jean de Daye (the objective) should send in their requests to him. He was overwhelmed with requests, and a later tally disclosed that every man under his command had taken advantage of the offer.

Lt George M. Tuttle, liaison officer, relates that while he was with Col Birks at the Regimental Observation Post, five generals at one time or another dropped in to determine how things were going and to offer advice.

The men in the CP at the time can recall Major General Walker and Lt Gen George S. Patton. General Patton made a flashy but nonchalant appearance in a brilliant shellacked helmet. During the early days of combat Gen Courtney H. Hodges spent many hours observing the Regiment. His calm, quiet and assured manner always had a heartening effect upon all with whom he came in contact.

Colonel Birks never let his attention veer from the problems at hand. After the attack had gained the far side of the canal, Lt Tuttle accompanied Colonel Birks to the foremost of our elements and relates that Colonel Birks was one of the first of our men to enter the town of St. Jean de Daye.

Lt Tuttle states that he never thought that Colonel



It's safer underground

Birks was addicted to strenuous calisthenics before that day. When they reached the far side of the canal, they found that enemy artillery shells were landing in close proximity to their persons. These shells landed at intervals of approximately thirty seconds, which meant that he and Colonel Birks, for a short period, were forced to hit the ground many times. They would no sooner rise than another shell would fall, forcing them to seek safety by falling to the ground.

With St. Jean de Daye securely in our hands, at 2200, the 113th Cavalry Troop crossed the canal, then turned west in an attempt to push the enemy from the canal, on the western side of the St. Jean Peninsula, and thus secure our immediate right flank. They met with only limited success and as a result, when our attack was launched at 0530 on the morning of the 8th of July, we advanced slowly. The 2d Battalion, in the lead, had both flanks exposed, since the 117th Infantry on the left was about 600 yards to its rear.

Stopped by stiff resistance, the Regiment was counterattacked with armor and infantry three times and each time it repelled the enemy successfully. In the meantime the 117th Infantry was forced back farther leaving our troops in an even more exposed position. The enemy then launched his heaviest counterattack from three sides, his main effort coming from the southwest. It was estimated that the enemy strength was one reinforced regiment strongly supported by armor. This counterattack succeeded in penetrating to some extent the position held by the 2d Battalion, and some of its elements broke under the pressure. But with the 1st Battalion, and with fine support from the 230th Field Artillery and the 743d Tank Battalion, the enemy was thrown back.

Lt Col Hugh I. Mainord, 1st Battalion command-er, stated that the German attack was made with



Lieutenant Colonel William S. Bradford

tanks and self-propelled guns accompanied by infantry. The enemy succeeded in breaking into our lines and disorganized the 2d Battalion. Lt Col William S. Bradford, commanding officer, was wounded and so was the executive officer, Maj Garner M. Simes, as well as many of the key officers and noncommissioned officers of the rifle companies. Major Simes, although painfully wounded, refused to leave until the counter-attack was halted. Capt Walter A. Bunch, Jr., one of our old-timers from the days at Fort Jackson, was killed while in command of Company "G." Lt Henry A. Duncan also gave his life while directing fire for Cannon Company.

Six of our supporting tanks were almost immediately destroyed. With so many leaders either killed or wounded, some platoons broke under the strain and fell back in confusion on the 1st Battalion which, being in support, was directly in rear of the 2d. Ammunition having been expended freely, vehicles moved rapidly to the rear for replenishment. Word of the destruction of our leading tanks and the considerable use of

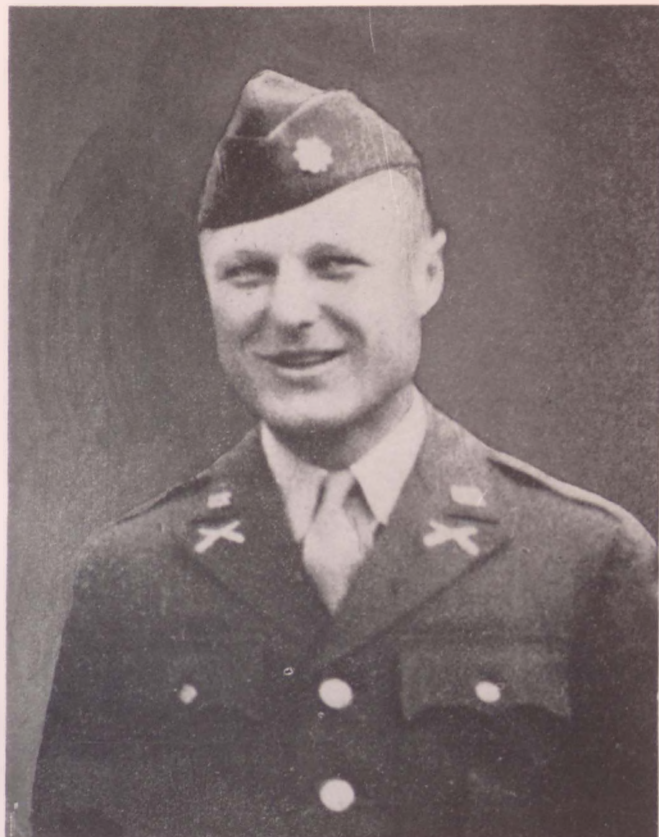
German armor against us spread like wildfire from front to rear. The fast rearward movement of our ammunition vehicles along the main supply road caused green supporting troops who had just come off the boat to believe there had been a breakthrough. In a short space of time a near-panic ensued, with the result that the main supply road became clogged with vehicles and men on foot streaming to the rear. Some vehicles were abandoned. The 1st and 2d Battalions clamored for ammunition which could not be carried forward because of the traffic jam. The Regimental Commander knew from previous combat experience, not only in this war but in World War I, how easily a panic can start among green troops. Therefore, he rushed Lt Col Peter O. Ward, the Regimental Executive Officer, with a group from Headquarters Company, to the crossroads at St. Jean de Daye to stop all rearward movement of men and vehicles, if necessary at the point of a gun. This difficult mission was ably handled by Lt Col Ward and his detachment. Order was restored in a short time, the road was cleared, and the much needed ammunition was delivered to Lt Col Mainord, who had been placed temporarily in command of both battalions. By the end of the day, the counterattack had been repulsed and all parts of the position re-established. Only ten men of the 2d Battalion were picked up at the Division straggler line. Vehicles from Headquarters Company and Company "H" were found in rear of the old Command Post of the day before. However, upon investigation, it was learned that these vehicles had been sent back upon order, as a safety precaution.

In the meantime, Lt Col Mainord's battalion stuck at its positions, as did one company of the regiment on his left. Lt Col Mainord relates that he and his officers stopped what men they could from the 2d Battalion and sent them back into the fight. His own tank support attempted to leave at this critical point, saying that they had been ordered to the rear. Lt Col Mainord firmly told them they were attached to him and would stay and fight regardless of what happened. Under his supervision, the counterattack was stopped in our sector and the enemy was thrown back.

Lt Col Eads G. Hardaway took command of the remnants of the 2d Battalion which had joined the 1st Battalion, and with the valuable aid of Capt Ernest W. Bell, 2d Battalion S-3, did a fine job of reorganizing them and placing them upon the line, filling a small gap which existed between the 1st Battalion and a battalion of the regiment on the left. He accomplished this without the aid of vehicles or radio. It is



All who were able moved forward



Lieutenant Colonel Eads J. Hardaway

Lt Col Mainord's belief that artillery support saved the day. Our positions were boxed in by the fire from eighteen battalions of artillery and one battalion of 4.2 mortars, as well as by the tanks firing as artillery from rear positions.

This experience of near panic was a definite and conclusive lesson to the men of the 120th Infantry, from which they profited later. It is true that the 2d Battalion suffered considerable losses but nearly all of these casualties occurred among the men who ran from their defensive positions. The platoons that held their ground had comparatively few losses even though the enemy tanks overran them. During training, commanders had tried to impress upon all men that safety lay in holding ground, but here was a concrete example that was certain to make a lasting impression on every soldier who knew about it. Later, at Mortain, the 2d Battalion reinforced would not give the enemy an inch of ground even though it was surrounded for five and a half days.

The 1st and 3d Battalions in column jumped off in the attack at 0700, the 9th of July, the 2d Battalion temporarily remaining in position. Progress was slow.

The enemy, identified as the SS *Das Reich*, made use of prepared positions to such advantage that it was found necessary to commit the 3d Battalion in the zone of action prescribed for the unit on our left flank. Our advance was further complicated by the fact that the 9th Division, on our right, had not taken the town of le Desert, which caused our right flank to be wide open for approximately two miles from front to rear.

3D BATTALION MOVES ITS CP

It is difficult to tell all of the day-by-day excitement of the July fighting. Each man had a thousand adventures and thought nothing of it, except to be glad he was alive. All the battalions went through fire and brimstone, each grinding its way "like a buzz saw," as Colonel Birks used to say, toward its next objective. The following account of the 3d Battalion is not so unusual as it may sound. All the battalions did almost similar fighting. But the following account tells to some extent of the constant movement which the men experienced. But if it is slightly out of focus, it is not once exaggerated. Its heroes are real heroes.

It was on the afternoon of the 10th when the 3d Battalion, following behind the 1st, was alerted to go into the attack. The unit on the left flank had not kept pace with the 120th, and in order to close the gap on the east side, Lt Col McCollum's men were to seize the ground around Le Rocher, some 500 yards to the south.

In a column of companies the battalion pushed ahead, and against opposition secured the objective by 2200. The companies took up what were to be temporary positions, consolidating a defense which was admittedly not strong. In the first place, the battalion was unable to tie in with the remainder of the Regiment. It was extended on its objective, and neither tanks nor tank destroyers could come to supplement the positions. The companies, with "I" and "K" facing south, were drawn into a tight perimeter defense; the roads were covered by automatic weapons.

At 2300 the 3d Battalion rear CP was ready to move forward to the new position. The order came from Maj Joseph Adams, the executive officer; Capt Raymond J. Payne, Headquarters Company commander, gave the signal to move out. There were two elements, the foot and the motor.

In the hedgerow days particularly, it was easy for the enemy to be by-passed and left for extended periods, unnoticed until they chose to make their presence known. One of these enemy groups heard the

approach of the foot elements of the 3d Battalion CP. The night was black; it was easy for the enemy to effect an ambush and in no time the Germans had pounced upon the group and dispersed the men, wounding some, including Capt Payne. Most of the men scattered and headed back to the old CP location. One man never made it that night. That man was T/5 Louis Gallic, whose story follows later.

The motorized section was having its difficulty, too, struggling over a supposedly reconnoitered route. The blackness of the night forced the vehicles to creep, and an overhanging fog made it impossible to see the vehicle in front. It became necessary, at last, to have one man walk ahead of each vehicle dangling some white paper or cloth, or even the luminous dial of a GI watch, so that the drivers, straining forward, could know where to follow. It was slow work, and T/Sgt Harry R. Peters, Battalion Sergeant Major, who was guiding the artillery liaison jeep, said afterwards that he found himself knee-deep in the water and mud of shell holes several times. After three hours and many angry undertones among the men, it was discovered that the guide had taken a wrong turn. With a queer, uneasy feeling in their stomachs, the men realized they were in German territory. Quickly and with hushed nervousness, a roadbank was partially cut away and a fence was flattened to allow the vehicles to turn around and backtrack.

"We were lucky," said one man who was there. "'Jerry' was either asleep or thought the commotion was being caused by his own vehicles. We escaped without a shot being fired and with every vehicle in the convoy intact."

In the early morning the convoy arrived at the assigned area. No foot elements had reached the spot, of course; most had returned to the old site and were to stay there for the best part of the next day. The members of the CP in the convoy descended, and half-stupid with fatigue, started to put up the CP tent. The sergeant major had to keep priming the men to make them work. It was a lot of wet canvas, this CP tent, for rain the day before had caused the tent to be triple its normal weight. It was one of those times when a man would give half his life for a few minutes sleep. But there was to be no sleep for the 3d Battalion that day or night.

All of us will take home with us one personal story, at least, which will be foremost in our memories. T/5 Louis Gallic has his already, and we will let the reader judge as to whether or not he will ever have a better one. It seems that on the night of the 10th of July,



If we couldn't go through, we went around

Capt Payne was leading the foot elements of the Headquarters Company, 3d Battalion, from the rear CP to the new forward location.

Since Gallic had been in this area in the afternoon, he was selected to lead the group forward. Apparently the group proceeded beyond their front lines. In the darkness, Gallic could see someone standing beside the road a short distance in front of him. Believing this man to be an American, Gallic demanded the name of his outfit. He received no answer and, recognizing the camouflaged raincoat usually worn by the Germans in this area, Gallic, who could speak German, told him to put his hands up. When the German reached for his hand grenades, Gallic shot him four times and saw him fall beside a wall as he attempted to run away. At this point, another German came out through a gate in the wall and onto the road and shouted something, probably in Polish, which Gallic did not understand. The man was unarmed and without a helmet. Thinking that this man wished to surrender, Gallic told him to put his hands up, whereupon the man ran back into the area behind the wall before he could be shot.

Receiving instructions from Capt Payne to go back, the party had gone about fifty yards when the enemy opened fire on them with machine pistols from be-

hind the fence. Gallic was hit by five in each leg. He rolled into the ditch alongside the road, while the others in the party escaped. Gallic hoped that the Germans would withdraw and that our men would return and pick him up. However, the Germans commenced to lay antitank mines in front of a gate near by and when they had finished this job one of them discovered Gallic in the ditch. One of them touched his legs and remarked that he was still warm.

Gallic then relates: "They shot two rounds point-blank at my head. I thought I was finished. I felt the blood spurting from my neck and I was surprised that I didn't lose consciousness. I was lying there motionless, with blood flowing slowly out of many wounds and with only one thought . . . to get away from this spot. I pulled my raincoat off and crawled to the other side of the road. The Germans were only two yards away from me. I couldn't by-pass the gate. The only place for me to go was a field opposite it which was also occupied by the enemy. In great pain, I scaled the hedgerow and let myself fall down in the field. There I found a few German grenades of the egg-shaped type. I unscrewed one and tossed it in the direction of the Germans, only six yards away. Then I started crawling in the direction I thought our area was. I crossed three fields thinly occupied by Germans. They were lying on the bare ground fast asleep. I crawled painfully, hiding behind their sleeping forms while their flare pistols lit up . . ."

When daylight came, Gallic had worked his way into some low ground which was apparently no-man's land. At about 0900 he heard some of our machine guns firing. He crawled in that direction where he was discovered and sent to the hospital. By September, however, he was doing fine and scheduled to be soon on his feet.

As one GI remarked, "Some guys is sure lucky."

COUNTERATTACK AT LE ROCHER

The 3d Battalion CP was settling down at 0230. Sentries had been posted, Sergeant Major Peters was straightening out his papers, and the staff was going over plans for the next day's attack. Lts James L. Ashmore and Leroy H. Steelman, of Cannon and Anti-tank Companies, respectively, had arrived, received instructions, and were out bringing up their guns to go into action. Word had come from higher headquarters that friendly tanks and tank destroyers were farther forward in an area to the battalion's front.

About this time, Cpl Marvin Hayes entered the tent; he had been on guard. He said that some tracked

vehicles had passed his post, and he was afraid they were enemy. Of course, that meant that the enemy had passed close to the CP, and Hayes was barraged with excited questions. Lt Col McCollum urged everyone to take it easy, since the tanks were in all probability some friendly reconnaissance unit, or American TDs. Hayes then explained that he had thought so too; he had called T/5 Harry Schmeyer when the tanks first approached, and they had decided that the Germans on the vehicles were prisoners. But when he heard the tankers talking German as if making plans among themselves, Hayes had decided not to delay notifying the CP. Almost simultaneous with this revelation, a telephone call came from Company "K," saying that a German armored vehicle had been discovered on a road in their area, and was firing at the doughboys and at a tank from the 3d Armored Division.

Possibly the enemy sensed how precariously the 3d Battalion was situated, and chose just that time for a strong push headed at St. Jean de Daye. In any case, the men at the CP quickly realized that the route which the enemy had chosen led north into Le Rocher along a road which, though covered by a Company "I" roadblock, came close by the Battalion CP and curved slightly into the flank of Company "K's" line. Obviously the enemy vehicles had slipped by the Company "I" roadblock and the CP, and some were already reaching Company "K." Germans were no doubt infiltrating past the headquarters that very moment.

There was no time to lose; Peters called all the companies to alert them, and called for all bazooka teams available. Men picked up their weapons hastily and left the tent, headed for the road. The night was still quiet, but at the road there was the rumble of armored vehicles. Not far from the CP by a hedgerow was a wire jeep with a mounted .30-caliber machine gun. Into this jeep slipped Lt Charles E. Pritchard, Communications Officer, of Headquarters Company; his hands clasped his weapon in readiness.

At that moment a German tank had slipped up a few yards from the Battalion CP. Two others were spaced behind, farther down the road, following the first as it crept forward, apparently unaware that it was on top of an American installation. Several hundred yards from the CP, men of the Company "I" roadblock still thought the parade of tanks was friendly. One of their number was on his way to the CP to explain the dubious situation, but he never arrived. Too many things happened first.

Fifteen feet in front of his jeep, Lt Pritchard

could make out a German, probably an officer, standing in the turret of the tank trying to deliver a radio message. He thought he heard the click of a belt being fed into an automatic weapon, and he squeezed his trigger. There was a vicious clatter from different guns, several times. A few seconds later, the enemy's gun was silent; Lt Pritchard's gun was still rattling in the night.

There had been much hushed activity in the area meanwhile. Lt Col McCollum speedily organized his men for defense of the immediate area. Maj Adams, executive of the battalion, was moving about to make sure the men were in best positions.

Pfc George F. Talarico was hugging a bazooka at a crossroad close to the CP, when "Major Adams told me to follow him. We both duckwalked towards one of the tanks that had stopped on the road beside the CP. As we were creeping up the Major stepped on a twig and one of the tankers challenged."

At this moment Lt Pritchard had heard the click of the enemy weapon, and even as he fired, Talarico was loading a bazooka round, and within the minute he had fired squarely into the tank's turret. From inside voices screamed and moaned and men shouted unintelligibly. From then on the night was loud with small arms and voices, and hard fighting. The hedgerows rustled with movement; here and there men scurried for cover. Peters had meanwhile made his way to a roadblock manned by Company "D," then attached to the battalion, and had procured from it a bazooka team, which was creeping up on the other side of the tank from Talarico and Maj Adams. Two explosions lit up for split seconds the same tank, and then there was no doubt that it had been destroyed. The moans from it faded. Lt Arnold Snyder, who with T/Sgt Peters had led his Company "D" bazooka team forward, saw that Pfc Omer W. Franklin, who had fired the bazooka and thereby knocked out the tank, was burned by the backflash and sent him to the rear.

By this time, the company commanders of both Companies "I" and "D" were on the scene, since the enemy had struck their area. Capt McCullough, of Company "I," reached the roadblock hastily and ordered the men to stay in their holes, lest in the confusion of the night men begin shooting their own comrades. He also ordered that the road be so covered with fire that no more tanks could either penetrate or withdraw from the position. With two enlisted men, he headed for the still active tanks.

Capt Shaeffer had just ordered Talarico to assault



Hebecrevon was torn to pieces

the second tank with him, but Talarico had first gone to procure more bazooka ammunition. He was coming back when he found Captains Shaeffer and McCullough about to rush the tank. "Capt McCullough of Company 'I' came over," Talarico told later, "and said, 'Good shot. Let's get the other bastard!' I went down to the hedgerow along with another bazooka man from Company 'I.' We both fired at the tank. I fired my carbine between bazooka blasts. Col McCollum was beside me and he directed some of my shots." Still on the other side of the road, Lt Snyder had a bazooka man, this time S/Sgt Albert Hutman of Company "D," who fired a shot at the same time as Talarico. The tank was on fire.

By a prearranged plan, coordinated so as to be most effective, the two captains meanwhile fired antitank grenades at the tank, and finally rushed it. Capt McCullough was wounded in the leg by fragments of one of the grenades, but he swung himself onto the tank and threw fragmentation and phosphorous grenades into the hatch. In the fury of the moment, he even pulled out his pistol and bashed it down upon the tank commander's head. It slipped out of his hand and fell into the tank. With Capt Schaeffer he struggled to pull the enemy from the turret; the German had already lost his left leg, however, and he dropped limply back into the hatch.

Small-arms and automatic fire was still whirring through the air from every direction, and Capt Shaeffer in a hurry to quit the tank dropped inaccurately and caught his hind parts on the bayonet of a rifleman standing close to the tank. The two enlisted men with Capt McCullough also had been wounded in the fast fight at the tank.



We pause at a hedgerow before taking the next

There was still a third tank to take care of, and it was firing its utmost. S/Sgt Hutman dodged to a position close by and fired a round which damaged it. Capt McCullough also slipped up and fired some anti-tank grenades at it, but it was not destroyed for at last it rumbled aside to the shelter of a building and later escaped.

It had become apparent by now that there were approximately one hundred infantrymen following behind and attempting to protect the tanks. They had fired consistently throughout the desperate battle, but they had been slowly driven back. When the third tank limped off, the Germans on foot abandoned the cause; they withdrew into the night, leaving dead and wounded behind.

Capt McCullough was heading back to the Battalion CP for medical aid, and after he had called his executive officer, Lt Burton K. Fox, he was administered sulfa pills and bandaged by the omnipresent Talarico, until a medic arrived. When Lt Fox arrived, he and Capt McCullough stepped outside the tent, and the captain must have been explaining briefly what had happened.

It was about this time that a loud commotion was heard in the rear of the Company "I" lines. Apparently the vehicles, discovered to be a halftrack and two scout cars with infantry, which had pierced the lines before the tanks and reached the Company "K" positions, realized they could not go farther and had

turned about to make a return trip. They advanced past the CP with guns clattering, and the lead vehicle, the halftrack, was spraying flame from four nozzles, lighting up frightened faces in brilliant orange billows about fifty feet long. Capt McCullough hit the ground hard, and when the flame swept close to him, he had to roll into a ditch to avoid the searing fire. Meanwhile some Company "D" men, who had established a roadblock some distance away, turned their .50-caliber machine gun upon the halftrack and Pfc Sigmund Wisnewski fired about a hundred rounds into it. It burst into flame, its nozzles ceased functioning, and the billows rose skyward rather than earthward. The .50-caliber then turned its aim upon the two vehicles behind, and shortly both were destroyed.

There was great turmoil while the German infantrymen endeavored to escape and ran wild in the area around the CP. Still very much alive in spite of his wound, Capt McCullough got to his feet, went to a light machine gun near by, and in Hollywood style, threw the ammunition belt over his shoulder. Then, still furious because of the vicious flame which had so nearly seared him, he strode down the road toward his company's roadblock, shooting at the ditches and the bushes which might have held cowering Germans. He reached the roadblock again and checked the positions. They were almost intact. He returned to the battalion CP again, and turned himself over to the medics.

It was becoming quiet, but a small fire fight continued through the night until approximately 0615. Nobody had much sleep that night. Cpl Hayes must have been happy, though, that he hadn't slept when the first tank passed his position. He would sleep better now.

The enemy had used armor and infantry to make a concerted attempt to penetrate with the apparent intention of breaking through to St. Jean de Daye and recovering all the ground he had lost south of the Canal de Vire et Taute. His final objective was the town of Isigny on the coast, as revealed by captured orders and maps. In his report for the 12th of July, the Regimental S-2, Capt Ezekiel L. Glazier, listed eleven enemy tanks and one armored halftrack knocked out. By 1030, the 11th of July, the enemy had been thrown back with great loss and had given up any attempt to continue his attack.

The morning of the 11th of July found the men of the 3d Battalion sleepy and tired. But food and water had to be brought forward, and T/Sgt Peters picked

a detail to bring up the supplies. When he returned late in the morning to the CP, he found twenty-two Germans lined up in the area. They had been brought in by Pfc Henry A. Snotherly, a machine gunner of Cannon Company, who had ridden with Lts Ashmore and Steelman when they were trying to put their guns in position the night before. His story was full of action:

It seems that when the three tanks had approached within fifteen feet of the CP the night before, Snotherly had seen the form of the German in the turret, and had helped fire on him with his carbine. The hatch dropped abruptly and no further orders came from this tank that night. A moment later, a bazooka team which had arrived from one of the companies opened fire and knocked out the tank, then another, and finally a third. With daylight approaching, Snotherly and the four men with him (the two lieutenants, driver Pfc Clayton Moore, and radio operator Pvt Paul R. Kannan) started back to their position in a jeep. In the distance, they saw what they believed to be a friendly vehicle beside the road. When they got within ten feet of this car, three machine guns opened up on them, wounding Snotherly in the hand, killing the two enlisted men, and wounding one officer in the leg. There were about fifty Germans at the armored car.

Another jeep was heard approaching down the road, and when it had come within close range, the enemy fired upon it, killing two men, Lt Frederick A. Schlemmer, Company "D" platoon leader, and Pvt Kenneth L. Cross, while two others, Sgt Francis P. Riley and Sgt Cecil N. Blankenship, were wounded. They had all been sent from 3d Battalion CP to procure ammunition. The Germans then placed Snotherly behind the armored car, together with the other prisoners they had taken, and then moved up the road to within 300 yards of the 3d Battalion CP. Our bazooka team, which was lying in wait, opened up and made a direct hit.

Snotherly then related: "Machine guns were firing and in the confusion I crawled over the bank on our left. I tried to crawl to our CP to let our men know what was down there and what to expect. I got out in the middle of the orchard about fifty yards from our CP. It was then light enough to see, but I still could not make out whether the troops which were coming across in front of me were ours or German. I raised my head to get a better view to see whether they were ours or not. They were Germans and one of them saw me. He came over and hit me with a ma-



On guard

chine gun, kicked me a couple of times and made me get up. They were the same ones who captured me before. They took me over to a little trail that led off down the road from the CP. We dispersed into ditches on each side of the trail beside the hedgerows and lay there until daylight. From that time until 1030 our tanks were maneuvering all around us in the area.

"I was looking for the tanks to come down the trail most any time and the Germans were too. I was the only prisoner they had at that time. Every time I would attempt to raise my head, the German guarding me would tap me on the head with a machine gun to make me keep my head down. About this time one of our men shot a German who was up in the front of me in a hole. When this German was shot, the two immediately behind him raised up and surrendered.

"I nudged the German behind me and nodded in the direction of the two men who had surrendered. When he looked up, I grabbed his machine pistol, which he was holding down close to my right leg, jumped out of the ditch, and covered him. The GI threw his gun on me when he saw me jump out of the ditch, but he saw I was an American and did not fire. He came on up to me, making the Germans come out of the ditch in front of me. While I was covering those behind me with the machine pistol, a German jumped up and started to run away. I tried to shoot him, but didn't know how to fire the weapon. I was pulling on

the magazine, thinking it was a trigger. However, he turned around and came back in with the rest of the prisoners I had in the rear of me.

"We took the Germans up to the 3d Battalion CP and turned them over. There were twenty-two of them when they were counted and searched."

ATTACK AND COUNTERATTACK

The fight in the hedgerow days was made up of many, many small-scale attacks, all driving ahead, forging yard by yard to gain more and more footholds in German territory. It was hard consistent going, but each day gained a little ground; each day meant more supplies and troops arriving on the beaches; each day led to the time when all Normandy, all France, would be in American hands; and many could see peace in only a short time after the enemy had been evicted from Normandy. So the men struggled on, hoping that each day would be the one before VE Day, hoping beyond hope that this sleepless day would be the last. There was a long, rough road ahead.

On the 11th of July the 3d Battalion attacked again. No one had slept a minute the night before, but when the attack orders came down around 0900, plans were made and the men were readied to push off at 1000. There was some delay, however, and the attack did not take place till 1100. The command group had already moved forward on reconnaissance. The Battalion Executive, Maj Adams, had left to contact the leader of the tank force which was to support the battalion that day. Company "I" was in the lead when at last the riflemen pushed forward. Shortly thereafter word reached the CP that the going was slow and rugged. Already the casualty list was mounting.

Shortly after the jump-off the air became heavy with shells when an artillery concentration saturated the area. German artillery was zeroing in from the Line of Departure back to the Battalion CP.

Perhaps more than any other time, the CP suffered that day. Many of the personnel were wounded in the deadly concentrations. Two radio operators were hit badly, and a third lost his senses and began to yell incoherently at odd intervals. There were no runners available, since they had been in the ambushed group of the night before. The 610 radio was ruined by shrapnel and all lines to Regiment were cut. Only the 300 radio maintained contact with the Battalion CP, and over it came the discouraging news that the companies were held up by the heavy artillery fire, and that the enemy was preparing a counterattack.

On the 300 radio was T/Sgt Peters, standing, as

Pfc Talarico says, "with the radio receiver in one hand and the telephone receiver in the other trying to keep contact with the companies. The CP trailer was on fire and he was attempting to put that out also. All this time shells were bursting around him, but somehow he was unscratched." Two jeeps were also on fire, and the small-arms ammunition in the vehicles was popping everywhere. Then came some of the riflemen singly and in small groups, infiltrating to the rear, and thoroughly shaken by the unnerving activity. Many of them were ordered to return to their company, and they moved off to take up the fight. Tanks had been requested, and they arrived finally at the CP. But they drew more disaster than they gave help, for enemy 88mm guns fired intermittently into the area and the tanks were stopped.

Lt Frank W. Towers, liaison officer from the Battalion to Regiment, made his way through the intense fire to report at the CP that he had been unable to find Lt Col McCollum. Another newcomer reached the CP, a lieutenant who was to distinguish himself in brilliant achievement throughout his combat career: Ralph E. Kerley, then a platoon leader of Company "E." At that time the counterattack suffered by the 3d Battalion had brought it to a halt, but the enemy was infiltrating through to the CP and beyond. Sent to help relieve the situation, Lt Kerley decided to commit his platoon on the right flank, where the counterattack had struck. As his men moved out to take up the line there the enemy, apparently unaware of how far they had come and how great an advantage they had, withdrew.

Brig Gen William K. Harrison's face was familiar to the doughboys, for he came often to the 120th lines during combat. At this time he sent fifty men to bolster the lines—men who had left their positions for the rear. Sgt Peters dispatched them to the left flank, "some of them," as Sgt Peters said later, "to return no more."

Artillery and mortars were still pounding the area late in the afternoon. Lt Towers started for the front again down a hedgerow, but at the end of it, an 88mm shell landed within a few feet of him, and when he staggered to his feet he was half-conscious and so seriously shaken that he was laid up for close to six weeks thereafter. Finally an armored ambulance was sent to the Battalion CP, where six men had been lying seriously wounded for many hours. Maj Adams never returned from his contact mission; he was captured during the counterattack.

It was dark when finally the line became stabilized

and the artillery died down. The battalion had gained a few hundred yards. It had been a hard day. T/Sgt Peters back at the CP would remember it well:

"Finally quiet reigns. The fight is over. What is left of the battalion is dug-in and buttoned-up for the night. Lt Col McCollum returns to the CP all alone, a weary but unbeaten man. He takes a last long look at the burning vehicles and parts of bodies laying about, shakes his head and says 'Let's go.' Casualties were heavy in officers, men and matériel. The battalion is hurting, and needs replacements badly. Not one company commander survived the day."

Captains McCullough and Shaeffer were wounded the night before. Capt Herbert Wier, of Company "L" and Capt Marvin M. Smith, of Company "K," were wounded during the counterattack on the 11th. Lt Leroy H. Steelman of Cannon Company was killed.

PRELUDE TO THE BREAKTHROUGH

On the 12th of July, the 117th Infantry passed through our lines and together with the 119th Infantry, continued the attack to the south while the 120th Infantry protected the open right flank in their rear and attempted reorganization. This was still front-line duty since we were holding an open flank and subject not only to enemy mortar and artillery fire, but also to enemy patrol activity and constant small-arms fire. Indeed, on the 13th of July, the enemy attacked our positions with armor, which the 1st Battalion successfully repulsed.

During the 14th and 15th of July, our men were taken from the front lines a platoon at a time and transported to the vicinity of Airel where they were given showers. This was the first opportunity for the men to bathe in over a month.

At 2400, July 15th, the 30th Division was transferred from the XIX Corps to the VII Corps.

The 117th Infantry and the 119th Infantry having advanced only some 1000 yards on the 16th of July, at 1000 the 120th Infantry passed through their lines with the 1st and 2d Battalions in the attack. Stiff enemy resistance was met, but by 1150 on the 17th of July our line was roughly 2600 yards south of Hts. Vesnes astride the main road leading to St. Gilles. During this engagement, Company "C" lost three company commanders in four hours. It was found that the enemy tanks which were immobilized for lack of fuel had been dug in and used as pillboxes. Eight of these tanks were destroyed. Intelligence revealed that on this day we almost wiped out entirely the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 14th Parachute Regiment.



The Normandy villages were badly beaten up

The German paratroopers were full of the extreme fanaticism of which Hitlerism always boasted. It was the first time the Regiment encountered screaming terrorism; the paratroopers carried their arms at high port and yelled at the top of their voices. They leapt over the fields and through the hedgerows, blaring their triumphant war chant at a dead run. But they fell right and left, and their repeated attempts to throw the battalions back failed each time.

The continued advance by our men demanded the highest in leadership. Company "C's" original commander, Capt Robert Hobgood, was as energetic as the wildest German paratrooper that day. When the enemy drove at his company's lines, he moved rapidly from man to man, urging continuous firing, inspiring the troops with steady orders and stout words. At one time he had to call down artillery fire as close as twenty-five yards from his own men, but the artillery did the trick, and Capt Hobgood's men did not budge. Shortly thereafter, Capt Hobgood was killed in the heat of battle. By nightfall of the 17th, only three rifle and heavy weapons company commanders of those who had crossed the Canal de Vire et Taute were left in the Regiment. None of the original officers of Company "C" were left.

Sgt Henry Comancho, of Company "A," the gunner of the bazooka team, stood up in the open and faced withering enemy fire including that from 88mm guns, disabling one tank and forcing two others to flee. The tanks were spearheading a German battalion attack, and when Comancho succeeded in stopping the tanks, the German infantry lost their zeal for battle and our men successfully routed them. Sgt Coman-



Occasionally a rifleman got a good shot at a German

cho fired on the tanks at a range of sixty yards amidst fire by the heaviest guns carried by tanks. Pvt Abbot was his assistant gunner and the team got off thirty rounds of ammunition.

S/Sgts Howard E. Callaway and Dewey H. Harris of Company "A" both were privates engaged in their first battle on the 16th of July. They were a bazooka team. No veteran could have fought more skillfully or bravely than did the two that day. Seeing enemy tanks were a threat to our troops, the two set out under intense enemy artillery, mortar and small-arms fire. Within a short time, they came upon two tanks. One, 30 yards away to the north was firing upon our troops, while a second was approaching from the south. Exposing himself, S/Sgt Callaway fired two rounds and knocked out the tank to the south. Approached by another enemy tank to his front, he fired one round, knocking off one of the tank's treads, eliminating it from the action. By crawling along the hedgerows to

escape detection, the two men turned their attention upon the tank to the north and, at a range of 60 yards, S/Sgt Callaway fired one round at it, knocking it out. Later, discovering another enemy tank, they again advanced under cover of the hedgerows to within 75 yards of it. Still assisted by S/Sgt Harris, Callaway knocked out the tank with two rounds. With four tanks destroyed, the enemy resistance was weakened, and the advance continued. It is sad to relate that S/Sgt Callaway was later killed while fighting in Germany on the 24th of November, 1944.

Capt Murry S. Pulver was a lieutenant commanding a Company "B" platoon on the 16th of July. He had a full day, displaying great courage as he did in all of his battles. When enemy resistance stiffened Captain Pulver observed an enemy tank. He radioed for artillery to be placed again upon the enemy, repeatedly fired a bazooka which knocked out two enemy tanks, fired antitank grenades at the enemy infantry, and

rendered first aid to a wounded man under fire. Capt Pulver ended his heroic actions by personally capturing seven prisoners.

Assuming the defensive, the east flank of the Regimental zone of action was occupied by the 119th Infantry on the 18th of July, 1944. The 120th Infantry took over the protection of the right flank from the 117th Infantry, setting up seven roadblocks and eliminating the enemy from our Regimental sector as far west as the Division boundary.

The following day, at 1100, the 3d Battalion attacked the enemy in an attempt to push our lines forward to high ground a short distance to the south. Again, dug-in tanks and well emplaced infantry were met. Flanking this resistance, Company "L" was able to reach the objective. Lt Col Paul W. McCollum, with his usual disregard for his own safety, personally led the attack. He was wounded at the outset but, despite his wound and heavy losses among his men, he set the example by leading from the very front. Lt Col McCollum's bravery and superb leadership inspired his troops to gain a victory against nearly impossible odds.

On the 20th of July the remainder of the 3d Battalion jumped off at 1400 in an attempt to seize the whole of this line. The attack was unsuccessful, the total advance being but 200 yards. Unquestionably, our troops were exhausted from constant use under fierce and protracted battle conditions.

For the twenty days of July, and for the most part since the 7th of July, the Regiment had suffered 1,169 casualties. Twelve officers had been killed, forty-four were wounded, and two were missing in action. Two hundred thirty-three men had died, 828 had been wounded, and fifty were missing in action.

For the fourteen days beginning with the 7th of July, intelligence information revealed that we had knocked out and eliminated the following enemy troops: the *Das Reich* Engineer Battalion; the 517th Battalion, 30th *Schnelle* Brigade; the 2d Battalion, 902d Infantry; a battalion of the *Panzer Lehr* Division; and the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 14th *Panzer* Regiment.

Other enemy elements known to have been decimated by our troops included: the 275th Infantry, the 275th *Fusiliers*, the 275th Engineer Battalion, the 130th Artillery Battalion, the *Angers* Engineer Battalion, the 17th Engineer Battalion, portions of the 901st Infantry, and portions of the 352d Division.

On the 21st of July, for the first reported time, enemy aircraft strafed our troops. Three times in suc-

cession, three enemy ME-109's came across our front from east to west strafing men of the 1st Battalion until the planes were finally driven off by friendly aircraft.

On the 22d of July, plans were being made for a big drive to the south which would carry us eventually south of St. Lo and to the western banks of the Vire River. The plan called for the use of aerial bombardment of enemy positions and, therefore, was dependent upon favorable weather conditions. Due to inclement weather, it was not until the 24th of July that the plan could be attempted.

ABOUT GAS

There is something about the very word "gas" which sends the cold shivers up and down the spine. We find ourselves unconsciously on the alert for the enemy to make use of it and it is unfortunate that certain individuals, whose discernment is not too good, are prone to accept any strange smell as a gas attack by the enemy, particularly if this odd aroma is accompanied by anything resembling smoke.

On the evening of the 21st of July, 1944, the Regiment experienced its first gas scare. In some strange manner, a report became current that a group of front-line troops were hurriedly returning for their gas masks in the rear. Assuming that this report was true and that these men had neglected to take their masks along with them and were merely returning to pick them up, by the time the story reached the man in the slit trench it had these front-line troops already subjected to gas, suffering casualties and disorganization and, further, that the lethal stuff was coming in their direction.

This, of course, was entirely false. Lt Edward M. Hill, assistant Regimental S-3, was attempting to make a telephone call when he heard someone break into the line and shout, at the same time "Gas!" He was unable to trace the source of this disconcerting news. At the same time, our men throughout the area commenced to fire their rifles and carbines, placing three shots into the air, the signal for the presence of gas. Not knowing the true situation, nearly everyone hurriedly located their masks, and men could be seen wearing them throughout the vicinity, adding to the questionable truth of the reports. It was at least an hour before all of our front-line units were convinced that no gas existed in the area.

Meantime, the false reports caused such consternation in our rear echelon, which was located approximately fifteen miles from the front lines, that it be-

came necessary to send a sound truck through the area which advised all personnel that no gas attack was taking place and that none was expected.

The following night, about 2330, another false alarm became current among the troops. It was suggested that a possible cause for this was that the enemy threw smoke shells into our lines which were mistaken by troops farther to the rear as being gas. If the Germans received word of what went on within our lines during those nights, they were no doubt greatly pleased and immediately wrote it down in their book as a possible secret weapon to be used in the future. We can almost hear the order being given:

"Fritz . . . go out to der enemy wire und tap her. Den, all it takes to do is say, 'GAS.' Der troops will do der rest."

On the evening of the 23d of July at 2135, three enemy planes flew over the Regimental Command Post. We could hear the antiaircraft guns firing for several minutes before they appeared flying beneath the clouds and heading north. As we watched them proceed on their way, our fire finally caught one of them and it began to smoke. As though this was the signal for the release of pent-up emotions, thousands of voices from miles around filled the air with a great cheer which lasted until the enemy plane crashed to the ground, some distance away.

It is of interest to note that during the period from July 7th through July 23d, when the Regiment was not attacking the enemy it was committed in defense of an active flank, meeting constant enemy pressure, and successfully resisting determined enemy counterattacks. The men had had little, if any, rest in the full sense of the word. Indeed, it can be said that since June 15th, when the Regiment launched its first attack, it had been in the front lines and subjected to all the hardships, both physical and mental, that such a position means.

BREAKING THE LINE AT ST. LO

"H-Hour" was set at 1300 on the 24th of July; by 1130 all of our front-line troops had been withdrawn to a location a considerable distance from the Line of Departure. This was done in order to create a safety zone between the bombing line and our own troops. It was with some misgivings that we abandoned land which had been so valiantly fought for, but, as events proved, the idea was well taken even though in practice it failed to produce the desired results. The Regimental Command Post was placed well forward on the reverse slope of a hill, in order to keep better contact with our

units when they jumped off. To our consternation, however, our troops were bombed by friendly aircraft at 1150, causing much disorganization and the heaviest casualty figure on a time basis we had suffered to date. Companies "G" and "H," in particular, took the brunt of the shock. The Regimental Command Post received a heavy concentration of bombs at 1240. As a result of this bombing, the attack was postponed and we were ordered to occupy the original line which we had evacuated that morning. In doing so, we straightened this line; the 3d Battalion of the 117th Infantry (attached) cleaned out one enemy pocket of resistance which had stubbornly maintained itself to our right front. As a result of the bombing this day, we suffered fourteen killed and sixty-five wounded.

With "H-Hour" set for 1100 on July 25, 1944, on that morning we again completed the withdrawal of our forward elements to the safety line, and once again our own Air Force, appearing in overwhelming strength, bombed our positions and disorganized our troops. Heavy concentrations hit our area at 0955, and at 1012 a particularly heavy bombardment was received in the vicinity of the Regimental and 2d Battalion Command Posts. Our casualties were ten dead and 199 wounded, and again the 2d Battalion bore the brunt. Capt Ernest W. Bell, 2d Battalion S-3, was among the men lost this day. He was buried in the battalion CP dugout. The loss of this outstanding officer was a great one for the Regiment to suffer.

Despite these casualties, loss of equipment, and lowered morale, we succeeded in reorganizing. Spearheading to the south, the Regiment jumped off at 1130 with the 2d Battalion leading the way as planned. Lack of time prevented passing the 1st or 3d Battalion through the 2d. It is believed that at no time in history have men attacked a determined enemy under more adverse conditions than did the 2d Battalion on that day. Fearful as was the first bombing, it was not to be the end. Again the men of the 2d Battalion were struck by our own Air Forces, this time just as they reached the first of the enemy's lines. Despite the fact that this magnificent battalion suffered 175 casualties within a very short period of time, the gallant troops overcame unexpectedly stiff enemy resistance to make the initial penetration.

Immediately after the 2d Battalion first pierced the enemy's lines, the 1st Battalion moved around the left of the hostile resistance, while the 3d went to the right. The Regiment finally broke through the enemy lines at 1800 and advanced to two crossroads farther to the south. In this vicinity, at approximately 2200, we suc-



The command post at Pont Hebert: Colonel Birks, Lieutenant Colonel Ward, Major Knaus, Captain Eberhardt, Captain Glazier, Major Bynum, Major Lambe

cessfully met and repelled a last-ditch enemy tank attack, which was flung at us in an attempt to plug the hole our troops had made in his line of resistance.

The accomplishment of our men that day, in the face of stiff enemy action and after suffering so heavily, is certainly an illustration of the fine spirit of the American infantryman at its best. It was on this day that Lt Gen Lesley J. McNair was killed while with the 2d Battalion.

The following description of the great aerial bombing of July 24th and 25th, as told by Lt George M. Tuttle, is of interest:

"I guess none of us will forget the 24th and 25th days of July, 1944. There just aren't words in the English language to adequately describe the chaotic terror experienced on those two days. *Stars and Stripes* estimated that 1500 heavy bombers, 500 medium bombers, and 500 fighter-bombers plus escort aircraft were used, and when you pack that many airplanes into a comparatively small sector . . . you really have something. P-47 fighter-bombers attacked first, followed by great formations of B-24 Liberators which flew at approximately 15,000 feet. It was an awe-inspiring sight to see the big bombers approaching in tight formation from the north, filling the sky like a cloud of huge locusts. The roar of their motors became louder as they approached, until the roar in our ears made speaking difficult.

"On the morning of the 24th of July, I had been sent to the 119th Infantry CP which was located approximately one-fourth mile to the east of our position. It was there that I witnessed the first aircraft approaching. These were fighter-bombers and after passing over our front lines in an obvious attempt to determine our location, they then swung to the east, turned about, and approached our lines so as to bomb parallel to our front. I remember being pleased to see them do this because I felt that they would be able to keep the bombs in enemy territory more easily in this manner. They proceeded to fly across what appeared to be enemy-occupied territory, dropping down and releasing their bombs at a low altitude, two or three planes at a time. I learned later that this initial bombing had hit some of our troops in the foremost positions.

"While other planes continued to bomb the area to our front, three aircraft flew back into our lines and passed over the 119th Infantry CP. Then to my consternation, I saw them drop down and bomb positions approximately five hedgerows to the north of the CP. I believe that this was a tank park. Men in the locality immediately fired yellow star shells and yellow smoke was set off in the vicinity (yellow being the color designation for friendly troops). However, possibly attracted by the black smoke from burning vehicles, the area was bombed again a few minutes later.

"Wishing to determine the situation in regard to our troops, I returned to the 120th Infantry CP. I had no sooner reached the vicinity than a heavy bomber formation began to come over. I was standing outside of the dugout used by Regimental Headquarters, watching them approach. As they reached a position nearly directly overhead, a strange, whistling sound could be heard above the roar of the motors. I did not need to be told what it was and, with the other men near by, dove into the dugout. A second later and the bombs landed in the area. We could hear and feel them approaching as bomb after bomb landed. Finally, in perhaps thirty seconds, they reached the vicinity of the dugout. The ground was shaken as though rocked by a great earthquake. The concussion, even underground, felt like someone was beating you with a club. We could not understand how the dugout had been missed by a direct hit. It was 'saturation' bombing, all right. Many men were wounded. The liaison officer from the 8th Infantry Regiment was killed a few yards from the Command Post.

"When the bombing was over, I saw General McNair talking with Colonel Birks. So great was the disorganization and confusion that the attack was postponed.

"On the 25th of July, it happened again. The bombs struck Regimental CP area first at 0955 and continued to fall intermittently, for over half an hour. I was again at the 119th CP which was bombed three times, once by heavy bombers and twice by fighter-bombers. Some men, who received direct hits, were blown to bits and no evidence of their existence remained. I was told of one man who was indeed lucky. He was blown out of his deep slit trench into the air, yet suffered only minor injuries. This was most remarkable because another man occupying the same slit trench was killed, and the trench was not only deep but covered by a roof consisting of boards covered with earth. Those vehicles which were not destroyed by direct hits were apparently set on fire by fragments striking gasoline tanks. In the immediate vicinity of the 119th CP, I counted six jeeps and tracked ammunition carriers knocked out within an area of 100 yards.

"It was related to me that after the final bombing had ceased and the occupants of the 120th Infantry CP had picked themselves up from the floor, a goat and a dog were found to have been the first to reach the questionable sanctuary of the dugout. Other men reported that rabbits, seeking safety, leaped into their slit trenches, preferring the presence of their old enemy, man, to the unknown terror above ground.



Rifle grenades helped to soften the next objective

"It was hard to believe that any living thing could be left alive in front of our positions after the bombing which had taken place for two days in succession. However, on moving to enemy-held territory, our men ran into some determined resistance."

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE BOMBING

A year later, one man present during the fateful bombings, Major Reynold C. Erichson, remembered the disaster so vividly that he sat down and wrote the following description of it:

"Today is July 25th, 1945; a year after the terrible experience at St. Lo. We talked of it last night, over a couple of drinks of cognac. We can talk of it all, now, but it'll never be relived completely again. As our stomachs warmed to the effect of the cognac and our minds turned more to the melancholy, a part of it came back to us. Not the nerve-racked tiredness

of our bodies, not the awful tension that we felt that day, mind you. That can never be felt until you yourself are ready to attack, or have a stick of bombs rattling down toward you, or have been without sleep for days on end. Things you do remember, however, are the pictures in your mind. Pictures that will never be put on canvas.

"It started at midday. Huge flights of planes in seemingly endless numbers, coming from beyond your scope of vision. Moving, seemingly, slowly and ponderously, on toward their target. Wraith-like, they seemed to thread their way, like huge fish, in and out of a sea of clouds. Ack-ack goes up towards them, most of it not reaching quite high enough. Occasionally however one is caught, and there is a burst of flame, and a long trail of smoke. Then, still like a huge fish, the ship spirals slowly earthward. As you watch, the death throes of the fish seem to last for hours. Actually it's a matter of seconds.

"Fascinated, we stood and watched this mighty drama, entranced to such an extent, that all thoughts of our own role were put into the back of our minds. Then came that awful rush of wind—that awful sound like the 'rattling of seeds in a dry gourd,' as Ernie Pyle said. We were jarred back to reality then.

"It started far in rear of us. Two or three miles or more, and slowly, fatefully, moved up toward us. Instinct made the more fortunate of us seek foxholes, folds in the ground, ditches, anything. Instinct made others forget all reason and logic, and they began running blindly. The terrible waves of concussion swept them like leaves before a storm, and they were cut down. The earth trembled and shook. While hedgerows disappeared, and entire platoons were struck, huge geysers of earth erupted and subsided leaving gaping craters, dust, and the acrid smell of burnt powder. Yellow smoke grenades were thrown in an attempt to show our airmen that they had erred, but the smoke only mingled with the dust and smoke of the bombs and that was in vain. Panels were displayed everywhere, and airmen, seeing them on vehicles far to the rear, perhaps thought they were designating our front lines, and released their bombs, still more to the rear.

"Between the flights of bombers, there was sufficient time to get out of the holes, dig frantically for those who had been buried alive, put the wounded into ambulances, and then dive into cover again, from another menacing flight overhead. Ambulances loaded between flights, and rushing to the rear, were torn to pieces. Tanks were burning everywhere. Ammunition

dumps had been hit, and the large shells were booming, and small-arms ammunition crackling in the distance. Men were screaming for aidmen and medics, others cursed the planes still coming in endless groups out of the distance. Finally, after ages, it seemed, the bombs stopped dropping in our midst, and were hammering down to our front where the enemy was.

"Reorganization began. Small-unit leaders tried to account for their men. Commanders tried to determine how badly shattered their commands were, tried to learn what subordinate commanders they still had left to carry out the attack. New leaders were appointed in many cases. Individuals were torn between the desire to help the needful, and duty to straighten out what was left. Intermingled with all this was the heroic effort of the medical personnel. Some men had gone mad, and were forcibly carried to the rear; others were too badly wounded to move before plasma was administered. Digging was going on all around for the buried ones, in an attempt to free them while they were still alive. I saw them dig one's head out. He was still breathing, and a desperate attempt was made to free the rest of his body, but it was in vain. The breathing stopped.

"Then the order came to attack, to take advantage of the condition of the enemy, who must have been driven senseless by the pounding. Commands, that earlier in the day numbered three times the battered groups, moved forward. Communications were gone, lost, or in the hands of someone wounded or dead. Commanders gave orders directly to their subordinates and the attack got under way. Slowly though, for response was slow, because of the dazed condition of most of us.

"Tanks, spearheading with the point elements of the infantry, ran into minefields covered by enemy antitank gun fire, were knocked out and set afire. Doughboys, forced off the roads by fire, took to the ditches, and ran into antipersonnel mines. A man a few yards in front of me stepped on one, and his entire lower legs were blown off. As I passed by him, he asked me for help. An aidman was summoned, and everyone kept moving.

"Now flights of medium bombers started coming over, and again the action was repeated. Bombs started far in the rear, and worked up to where you were. You could see the bombs actually fall through the air; tiny little dots at first, growing and growing, as they neared the earth, and then the dull, dry thump, as they detonated. One particular stick of bombs dropped quite close to where we were lying in a ditch, and a rock

near my head, the size of a volleyball, actually bounced in the air. This bombing lasted only a short while, and again the attack was resumed.

"After an advance of about three or four hundred yards, the enemy was encountered. Resistance was mostly in the form of dug-in tanks offering direct fire, largely 75-millimeter, but there were a few of the famed 88s. The flanks of these dug-in tanks were protected by probably squads of machine gunners, and maneuver was extremely difficult. Each of these tanks seemed to cover routes of approach, and the attack was stalled momentarily. We crawled to within a few yards of one, and fired a bazooka into its front, but since vegetation, used for camouflage, was placed around it, we could get no detonation on the armor plate itself. At this particular time, I had been in a house very near one of the dug-in tanks. Two of my officers had been wounded in this house. It was necessary for me to return to my support platoon to have them maneuver around to the right, and I left the men at the house and around the tank in charge of my best platoon sergeant. I had recommended him for a battlefield commission to 2d lieutenant, but he never received his bars, although the order came through a few days later. I found what was left of his body the next morning. Just his legs and hips were there. One arm, with the wrist watch still on it, lay near the house. Another sergeant reported to me that he had to go back for aid. His entire right leg had been riddled with machine-gun bullets. Miraculously all of the slugs must have missed the bones of his leg, and he was walking. Another man came back holding his jaw. Part of it was shot away. One man was trying to dig a hole on the safe side of a hedgerow. His squad leader told me that he was badly shaken up, and wanted to know if he should be sent back. I went up to the man, and tried to talk with him. His face was as yellow as the dead ones that lay near him, and his eyes seemed to be on fire. He tried to answer my questions, but his vocal cords were uncontrollable, and he couldn't utter a sound. He went on digging. Our attack had carried us too near the obstacles for us to effectively use artillery, and many of our wounded were lying near the enemy tanks. Finally, after evacuating the wounded, we withdrew far enough to adjust our artillery and threw concentration after concentration on them and set the tanks on fire. It seemed the defense of the enemy was finally broken, and our commanders, realizing this, ordered a renewal of the attack, and we advanced without resistance except for isolated groups and a few snipers, until dark.



The fight is over for a while

"The next morning, the code word 'Bobcat' was given, and the tremendous 'Bobcat' operation started under way. The 'crust' had been broken, the 'Battle of the Breakout' was launched. Tanks, tanks, and more tanks rolled southward, units spreading out like huge spider webs, west into Brittany, south toward Avranches, east toward Falaise. We had beaten the hedgerows, the Campaign of Normandy was finished.

"Words cannot express in definition, the grandeur, the hope, the suffering, the anxiety, the terribleness of that day, a year ago. Ask me why one of my lieutenants, wounded in the chest, came to me with tears in his eyes, and 'alibied' about having to go back for aid, and reassured me he'd be back as soon as he could.

"I can't tell you, unless you yourself have been ready to jump off in the attack, or have had bombs hurtling down toward you, or have been days without sleep. And if you yourself have had these things, I won't try to tell you, for you'll know."

Capt Ellis W. Williamson, 1st Battalion S-3, was a happy man when the bombing was over on that ill-fated day. At least, he was comparatively happy. He was watching the bombing from near the 1st Battalion CP when he saw some "eggs" begin to drop upon the position where he stood. Startled, he turned to head for his hole, but suddenly sensing that he could not possibly reach it before the bomb struck, he dodged aside to a nearer hole, which happened to belong to Lt Col James W. Cantey, the battalion commander. After several loud earthquakes in the area, Capt Williamson dared to look up from the hole. He saw much

devastation near his own slit trench, and went over to it to investigate. There he saw all the destruction that a 500-pound bomb would leave. It had landed directly in the opening, and none of his clothes or equipment had survived. "One of these things," someone mumbled on hearing the tale.

BREAKTHROUGH TO THE SOUTH

"Bobcat" came over the radio to the companies on the morning of the 26th of July. It was a magic word which meant that after two torturous days of saturation bombing, a breakthrough had been achieved, and that the 2d Armored Division was to pass through the line of the 30th Division and fan out into the interior of France. It was a wonderful word and had been long awaited.

The tank columns started down the roads at noon. When two came through the 1st Battalion lines, Lt D. Wilber Williams, of Company "D," and Capt Ellis W. Williamson each went to the head of one to guide it forward through the devastation and ruination in front of the lines. The breakthrough was complete, and the Germans were silent as the columns moved onward. Lt Williams and Capt Williamson led the tanks for 500 yards and then dispatched them. The breakthrough was achieved, for the enemy had been unable to close the gap which the Regiment had made in his lines.

Previously, the 3d Battalion of the 117th Infantry was attached to us as reserve because of the losses we had sustained. As it developed, we did not use this battalion. During the day, although we did not attempt to push forward any great distance, we took 188 prisoners who had been cut off by our advance. They were from the 5th Parachute Division, the *Panzer Lehr* Division, the 275th Engineer Battalion, the 275th Fusilier Battalion, and the 275th Artillery Regiment.

At approximately 0245, July 27th, we received word from Division that we were to continue the attack to the south. This meant that we would be following the route of the 2d Armored Division to a point below St. Gilles and then were to swing southeast in order to reach the Vire River below St. Lo and seize control of the bridges spanning the river, including those located at St. Suzanne sur Vire and at Pont de Vire, as well as wresting the land in the vicinity of Troisgots from the enemy. The bridge objectives were given to the 1st and 3d Battalions. The distance between these objectives was considerable, being some 3½ miles. At 0700, in a column of battalions, we crossed the Line of

Departure and struck south in the greatest advance we had made up to that time since the landing in France.

With the 1st Battalion leading the way followed by the 3d Battalion, the 2d Battalion and the 1st Battalion, 117th Infantry, the Regiment swung to the east, then south again to by-pass the town of St. Gilles. Crossing the main St. Lo—St. Gilles road, our column proceeded south and southeast, passing through the vicinity of le Pont Hain and on towards our objective. Although we were unable to reach the vicinity of Troisgots before it became dark, we had succeeded in reaching the bridges spanning the Vire River. Road blocks were established to prevent the enemy from crossing the river and into our newly won territory. The enemy was directly across the river to our east as well as to the south of our positions on the west side of the river. We were located approximately 8000 yards south of St. Lo with the Regimental Command Post located 1000 yards east of the St. Lo—St. Romphaire and Conde sur Vire—St. Samson de Bon Fosse road junction.

The men, all of them having traveled on foot a considerable distance during the day, carrying all of their weapons and equipment, and fighting when the occasion demanded, did a magnificent job. Once below the St. Gilles—St. Lo road, scattered resistance was met which was either by-passed or immediately eliminated as our column pressed on. At le Pont Hain en route to its objective, the 1st Battalion met stiff resistance. The enemy had organized the high ground to the southeast of the bridge and commanded the terrain for over 1000 yards in that area. In the fight that ensued, an enemy battalion commander, two lieutenants, and approximately thirty enlisted men were captured. After observing the other prisoners as they arrived in our rear, the German commander stated that we had captured all but twenty of his men. As our men arrived in the vicinity of their objective, it was evident that we had moved so far in such a short time that the enemy was taken completely by surprise.

We found that this area had only a short time before been occupied by portions of the 943d Infantry and the 8th Parachute Regiment. The headquarters of some companies had been evacuated but a few moments before. Food, only partially eaten, was found on the tables, personal effects in great profusion were abandoned and quantities of quartermaster supplies, including clothing, food, and personal items of every description were found. Horses were still hitched to their loaded ammunition wagons. Seizing an enemy CP the 3d Battalion captured a complete regimental

record. A battalion of the 266th Artillery was forced to destroy its guns in order to prevent them from falling into our hands. Unused machine guns, bazookas, mines, etc., were captured in quantity. While inspecting a proposed command post, the Regimental Commander and his driver, Cpl Carl Brooks, captured some 18 prisoners.

At approximately 2200 on this day, July 27th, word was received that the 2d Panzer Division was moving north in our direction, that it was capable of crossing the Vire River at Tessy to the south of our positions, and presumably would attack us if they did not engage the 2d Armored Division. During the night, we made what preparations were possible to meet the counterattack.

On July 28th, the 2d Battalion jumped off from a point approximately 1000 yards southeast of St. Romphaire, being at the time some three and one-half miles distant from our other two battalions. They advanced 900 yards where they were stopped by heavy automatic fire and then fiercely counterattacked by elements of the 2d Panzer Grenadier Regiment, which had succeeded in crossing the Vire presumably during the night. At 1538, the 1st Battalion made contact with the 35th Division, which was attacking south of St. Lo on the east side of the Vire River. This allowed our battalion to attack on to the south at 1800, one column moving towards le Mesnil Raoult, which is located approximately 2000 yards south of Pont de Vire, and another column moving southwest to aid the 2d Battalion. One company of the first column entered the town at dusk but was forced to withdraw far enough to allow protective fire to be laid down by our artillery on approaching enemy armor.

By early morning, the town was ours, the enemy cleared out to the bridge crossing the Vire at Sur le Mont, and driven to the south. This greatly relieved the pressure on the 2d Battalion. The 1st Battalion captured matériel including three armored personnel carriers, two armored cars, one ammunition truck, two infantry howitzers with prime movers, two 81mm mortars, and a large 150mm ammunition dump, as well as many small dumps containing all types of ammunition. The weapons captured were firing when the 1st Battalion attacked them from the rear and eliminated their crews.

In the vicinity of le Mesnil Raoult, the 1st Battalion lost its second commander, Lt Col Cantey, who was wounded and had to be evacuated. He had had the battalion since early July when Lt Col Mainord had been evacuated. Lt Col Cantey was to return to the

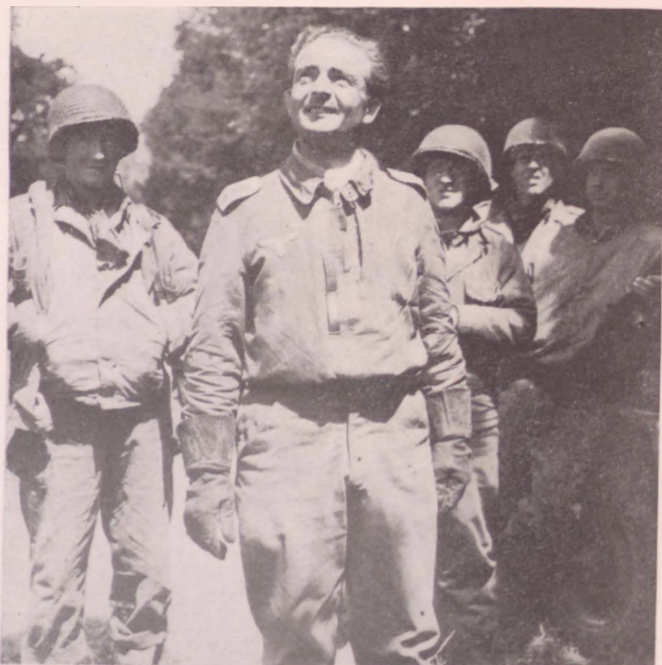


Lieutenant Colonel James W. Cantey

Regiment, and had a long brilliant career ahead. On the 29th of July, Lt Col Bradford, who had brought the 2d Battalion into combat, returned after being hospitalized and took command of the 1st Battalion.

At 1315 on the 28th, the Regiment was notified that the 30th Division had reverted to the XIX Corps. Unfortunately, at approximately 1545 our 2d Battalion in its isolated position was again bombed and strafed three times by friendly aircraft, causing an undetermined number of casualties. During the day the enemy threw portions of the 2d Panzer Grenadier Regiment and the 1st Battalion of the 304th Panzer Grenadier Regiment at our positions.

It was indicated that the enemy was determined to make a stand and once again to fight fiercely for each yard of ground. Our foot elements were greatly harassed by automatic weapons and it was noted that the enemy artillery had increased considerably, while much flak was being thrown up at our aircraft. A conservative estimate would place the number of prisoners taken on the 27th and the 28th at 275. Those prisoners were from the following units: 899th, 943d, 894th, 897th Infantry Regiments, 8th Parachute Regiment, 12th Assault Gun Brigade, and 266th, 343d, 352d, and 460th Artillery Regiments.



Company B captured an enemy pilot

Practically all prisoners had Allied propaganda leaflets in their possession when taken. Apparently our air raids succeeded in greatly lowering their morale, but the actual casualties inflicted were not high in proportion to the weight of bombs used.

It is of interest to note that the enemy expressed amazement at the accuracy and quantity of our artillery fire. Some stated that we actually hit their guns while engaged in counterbattery fire. An indication that the enemy was not sure of the exact disposition of our troops is illustrated by the fact that at approximately 0130, July 28th, six Germans on bicycles rode directly into our 2d Battalion area; three were killed, but three managed to escape.

Commencing at 2230 on the 29th of July, the *Luftwaffe* dropped parachute bombs for two hours after dropping flares over our positions. And again at 0515 on the morning of the 30th, enemy aircraft bombed our area. Casualties resulting from the bombing could not be ascertained due to the fact that the enemy was throwing heavy artillery and mortar fire into our positions at the time.

With the 1st Battalion protecting the Division's left rear, the Regiment attacked the enemy to the south, but since the units on our right and left failed to keep abreast we were exposed to very heavy enfilade fire from the enemy positions to our right and left front. At 1530, a battalion of the 119th Infantry succeeded in moving up on our right, but because the enemy

continued to hold and command the ground to our left front, the position of the 3d Battalion was not advanced. At the end of the day, the 117th Infantry was still to our left rear. Our 1st Battalion was holding the River line from Pont de Vire south to a point 100 yards below la Mesnil Raoul.

On this day, at 1520, an American airplane (P-47) was hit by enemy antiaircraft fire and crashed in the immediate vicinity of the Regimental Command Post. The pilot, Lt Carl Lindstrom, 363d Group, 9th Air Force, bailed out and landed near by. It was reported that he was only slightly injured.

With the enemy offering extremely stubborn resistance, and, in the early hours of the 31st of July, bombing the vicinity of Regimental CP, the 3d Battalion continued to attack to the south with its movement forward being governed somewhat by the advance of the regiments on each flank. Since their zone of action led them down a draw, they were subjected to heavy automatic, mortar and artillery fire from the enemy on the high ground, who had registered in with great accuracy. During the day, the enemy used five tanks against us and we set fire to three of them by means of 4.2 chemical mortars. By the end of the day, the 3d Battalion had moved approximately 600 yards, indicative of the determined stand of the enemy. This represented a greater advance than was accomplished by the units on each flank.

Early in the morning of the 31st, two enemy aircraft were shot down to the south of our positions and, at 0325, Company "B" captured an enemy pilot.

In the early afternoon the 1st Battalion had the interesting experience of aiding some twenty-four men from Company "L" of the 137th Infantry, who were hotly engaged by the enemy on the east side of the Vire River, to cross the river to safety within our lines. This friendly combat patrol had apparently been trapped by superior enemy forces as they advanced southward. The 1st Battalion laid accurate mortar fire into the enemy positions which prevented them from stopping the patrol's attempt to reach our positions. These men remained overnight. In the meantime, the 1st Battalion sent a patrol of its own back across the river which successfully contacted the commander of the 2d Battalion, 137th Infantry, informed him of the episode, acquainted him with the exact location of our units, and returned with the disposition of his troops.

From July 7th through July 31st, the 120th Infantry had driven into enemy held territory a distance of

thirty miles. Until the 27th of July, after the breakthrough of enemy positions was achieved, this advance was comparatively slow. It was fought under typical Normandy hedgerow-to-hedgerow conditions, each yard being stubbornly contested by the enemy. During July, the Regiment buried 304 German dead. Many killed as a result of action by our units were buried by other troops because of our rapid progress. During all of the attacks from the capture of St. Jean de Daye on the 7th of July to the breakthrough on the 25th, the Regiment was constantly vulnerable to counterattacks from one or both flanks. Both were exposed most of the time, while at least one flank was always open. This condition for the most part resulted from the fact that the gallant soldiers of the 120th Infantry Regiment went forward faster than units to their right and left. The enemy sought to take advantage of our vulnerability by launching counterattacks nearly continuously during this period. However, Colonel Birks' tactical ability and our troops' fighting spirit enabled the Regiment to defeat all of these counterattacks. The 120th Infantry constantly attacked in column of battalions and, as a result, always was in position to strike each counterattacking force on its flank. Colonel Birks, time and time again, caused one of our reserve battalions to overrun the counterattacking enemy soon after the Krauts had struck our leading elements.

During the night of the 31st of July, the enemy



Moving toward Tessy sur Vire

withdrew to our immediate front leaving only "nuisance groups." However, their artillery fire continued to be accurate and heavy due to excellent observation from the high ground southwest of Tessy sur Vire and from the hills east of the Vire. The Germans had heavily mined all roads and trails leading into Tessy sur Vire with mushroom, "T" and antipersonnel mines.



AUGUST

At 0015, German planes ushered in the month of August by bombing the Regimental area for fifteen minutes, using a few heavy bombs and many "butterfly" bombs. The "butterfly" type is a small antipersonnel bomb resembling their hand grenade in size and is capable of high fragmentation. Many duds are found among them.

SEIZURE OF TESSY

With the 2d Battalion in reserve, the 1st Battalion jumped off in the attack at 0600 with the 3d Battalion prepared to assist on order. At 1025, it passed through the town of Fervaches. Because our advance had been most rapid, our objective was changed to include the town of Tassy itself. Since the 35th Division had finally succeeded in reaching la Rocq, on the east bank of the Vire River, at 1310, our 2d Battalion was moved to an area immediately south of Briouville.

THE "FIRST-IN-TOWN" BOYS

When it comes to seizing towns and being first to kick the enemy out of them, Company "B" held the foremost position in the Regiment. Two major towns were taken by our men during the period July 7th through August 1st, 1944. These were St. Jean de Daye and Tassy sur Vire, and in each instance it was Company "B" which led the troops into town.

In the 1st Battalion's zone of action Company "B" had led the way in the great assault across the Canal de Vire et Taute on the 7th of July, 1944. As has been previously related, the enemy put up a fierce resistance, covering the approaches to the canal, as well as the canal itself, with heavy artillery, mortar, and automatic-weapons fire. Company "B" lost thirty-two men wounded and killed that day, twenty-three during the crossing of the canal.

Tassy sur Vire was a tough nut to crack. Elements of the 2d Panzer Division held the town and occupied the heights commanding it. In order to cling to their holdings west of the Vire River the enemy was desperately striving to stem the tide of Americans who had broken through their lines six days before. The town of Tassy is situated on the ground by the river and is, therefore, at the mercy of whoever holds the high ground surrounding it, both on the east as well as on the west side of the river.

With the Germans firmly established on this high ground, the 1st Battalion, at 0600 on the 1st of August, 1944, jumped off in the attack with the town as

its objective. Company "B" led the way and after much bitter fighting, Capt Greer led his men into the town at 1545.

Occupying the town with Company "A," they found that the enemy was well zeroed-in with his artillery, which made their position unenviable. To add to their problem, at 2050 friendly aircraft (P-47's) bombed the town, which was more difficult to understand since our men had been in occupation for more than four hours and their entry into the town had been reported immediately.

Capt Greer's troops had attacked along a secondary road leading from the northwest. When they had reached a point about a mile from the outskirts, an incident occurred which should be recorded. Pvt Carlos J. Ruiz, who had been lead scout all that day (and doing a wonderful job), was fired on by a German machine gun located in the bend of the road about 150 yards from the forward elements of the company. This gun was covered by about thirty riflemen. With this machine gun firing upon them and heavy mortar and artillery fire falling in their immediate vicinity, the forward progress of Company "B" was stopped. The Germans at the machine-gun position were able to direct their mortar and artillery fire into our positions with accuracy by firing pistol flares. This established the location of our troops immediately to their front.

With our mortars firing on the German mortars which were located behind the machine-gun position and farther down the road, Pvt Ruiz worked his way forward along the hedgerows, and when within range, knocked out the machine gun, killing four of the enemy and wounding one. He accomplished this in only a few seconds. Company "B" then advanced while the Germans retired toward town.

Farther on down the road, the Germans had placed a large antitank gun which commanded several hundred yards to its front, and more important, the crest of the high ground onto which emerged the sunken trail used as a route of advance by Company "B." Mortar shells dropped in and around the sunken trail giving our troops added incentive for moving forward to the top of the hill, where the main highway leading south and downhill into Tassy was encountered. As our troops came to the crest of the hill, they were greeted by direct fire from the AT weapon. Furthermore, to keep our men on the road where they could be slaughtered, the Germans posted "burp" gunners on each side of the highway. This ruse failed, how-

ever, when our men dashed to the protection of the hedgerows and overran and wiped out the enemy defenses there. Pvt Lonnie W. Groves then set out to take care of the antitank gun. Crawling alongside the road under the continuing direct fire, he reached a point only twenty-five yards from the gun, which he proceeded to knock out with rifle grenades. The Germans stayed just long enough to boobytrap the gun.

With Ruiz leading the way, Company "B" fought its way into the town, pushed the enemy out to the south and readied itself to hold what was gained during the day. That town was a hot one to handle, with all the metal the Germans were pouring into it in an effort to make it untenable. As if German troubles were not enough, they were subjected to a bombing by friendly aircraft (P-47's) at 2100. But Company "B" hung on until friendly troops had driven the Germans from the heights.

The men of Company "B" will long remember the scrap they had in taking Tessy sur Vire. They will remember the mushroom, "I," and antipersonnel mines placed along the roads and trails leading to the town. They will remember the enemy sitting on the hills across the river and pumping heavy stuff on them after they got into the town. And they will remember Pvt Francis L. Kimmel who, alone, ran down a street in the town, under heavy fire, to knock out a German 88 with his BAR.

Prisoners secured in the taking of Tessy were found to be from the 38th *Panzer Pioneer* Battalion, which was used to cover the withdrawal of the *Panzer Grenadier* units retreating to the south. After Company "B" had entered the town, Combat Command "B" sent four tanks to them to aid in consolidating the position. The following day, these tanks joined their unit and moved west. During the night, roadblocks were placed on all approaches to the Vire, and engineers cleared the mines from the main roads leading to the town, enabling traffic to approach by way of la Butte and Lazerie.

A very unfortunate occurrence was reported at 1540. As the 3d Battalion CP group was moving forward, an enemy shell struck a tree near by killing seventeen of our men including five officers. Among the latter was Capt James W. Smith, then 3d Battalion S-3, a man who had risen from the enlisted ranks with the Regiment and who had distinguished himself consistently throughout his army career. Also killed was Lt Carl C. Harnden, of Company "E," who had been an aggressive and frequent patroller in enemy territory since the landings in Normandy.

By 1700 on the 2d of August, it was possible to withdraw our outposts on the river with the exception of those in the immediate vicinity of Tessy. This was possible because the 2d Battalion of the 137th Infantry had advanced to a point almost opposite Tessy on the east bank of the river.

August 3d and 4th were spent in reorganization and rest. Our troops practiced tactical maneuvers in which the lessons learned in recent action against the enemy were studied on the ground. Regimental personnel were given showers; Red Cross Clubmobiles visited the battalion areas; and mobile theater entertainment was provided for the men.

On the 5th of August, the 120th Infantry Regiment set forth on what was to prove one of the most dramatic crucial battles of the present war.

At 2024 on that day, orders were received to move the Regiment by motor from the vicinity of Tessy sur Vire to the town of Percy where it was to be met and conducted to Mortain. Attached to the Regiment at this time were the 230th Field Artillery, Company "C" of the 105th Engineer Battalion, and Company "A" of the 823d Tank Destroyer Battalion, plus one Reconnaissance Platoon.

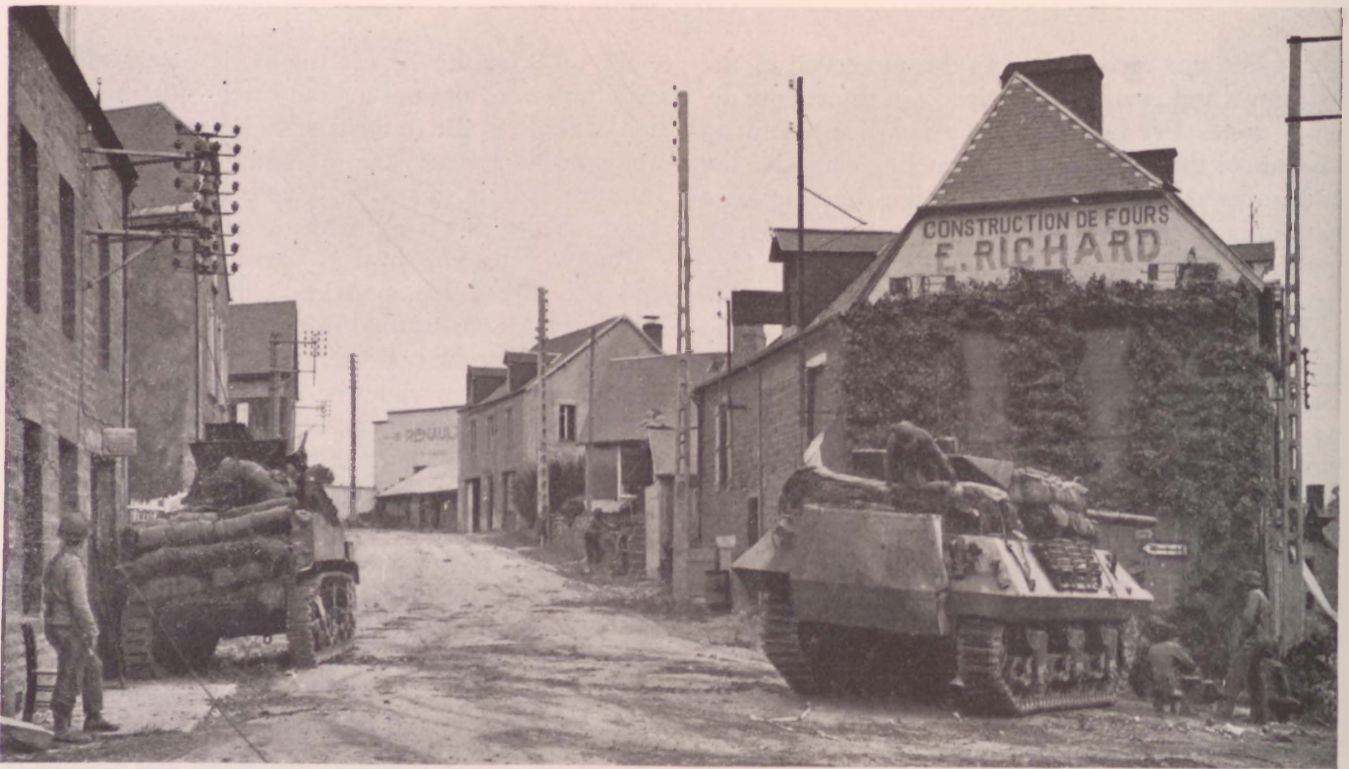
Arriving at Mortain early in the evening ahead of the Regiment, Colonel Birks was given to understand by the 18th Infantry that the town was running full blast with all normal functions existing. Even the hotels were open. The 120th Infantry was scheduled to relieve the 18th Infantry (1st Division) and, since things were comparatively quiet in the area, it was decided that this could be done by a physical relief in daylight.

The Regiment, with the 230th Field Artillery leading, passed the IP at Tessy sur Vire at 0130 on the 6th of August, with the remainder of the Regimental column following. They were met at Percy and led to an assembly area near Mortain, closing into this area at 1000. They traveled approximately forty-six miles from Tessy to Mortain.

Subsequent operations are divided into two separate actions—the Barenton battle of the 3d Battalion, less Company "K," and the stand at Mortain by the rest of the Regiment.

3D BATTALION AT BARENTON

Initially, on the 6th of August, the 3d Battalion, less Company "K," was placed in reserve on the high ground west of Mortain in the vicinity of the Regimental CP. However, the battalion soon was needed elsewhere. Task Force "X," consisting of approxi-



It doesn't look it now, but Tessy sur Vire was a tough nut to crack

mately one company of infantry and a company of tanks of the 3d Armored Division, was having difficulty in holding the town of Barenton. To assist this task force, the 3d Battalion, minus Company "K," received orders at 1545 to proceed to Barenton.

As its column moved out at 2200, it was attacked by nine enemy planes (FW-190's armed with rockets). Four 2½-ton trucks were knocked out, and fifty-three casualties were suffered, including five killed. Passing on, the battalion traveled some sixteen miles to the southeast. In this movement, the Regimental I & R Platoon led the march ahead of the reconnaissance troops, returning to the Regiment when the vicinity of Barenton was reached. At this time, it was discovered that Task Force "X" had been forced out of the town and was unable to retake it that night.

Company "L" assumed a defensive position on the north side of the road leading to Barenton, while Company "I" went into position on the right. At 0300 on the following morning, one platoon of Company "I" and one platoon of Company "L" advanced on Barenton. Company "L" severed the road leading into the town from the north, while Company "I" accomplished a similar mission at the south edge of the town. Heavy fighting continued until daylight. Despite darkness, enemy casualties were severe, although our own losses were slight. The town was

taken early that morning by the two rifle companies.

In conjunction with Task Force "X" the battalion set up roadblocks and an all-around defense of the town. By this time the Task Force had been reduced to little over a company of infantry and armor. For the ensuing twenty-four hours there was little enemy action.

On the morning of the 8th of August, an ambulance loaded with wounded was sent from Barenton toward Mortain. The ambulance was halted by the Germans while en route, and two slightly wounded men were taken off. The Germans then put two seriously wounded men on the ambulance and sent it back to Barenton. Upon the return of the ambulance, the battalion knew that it was cut off from the rest of the Regiment.

Personnel of 3d Battalion Headquarters as well as kitchen and ammunition dump personnel then dug in to protect the rear of the battalion. On the following day, tanks of the 3d Armored Division Combat Command "B" were sighted toward the battalion rear. The battalion was attached to Combat Command "B." Roadblocks were reinforced, and plans were made to seize the high ground south of Barenton.

On the 9th of August, the 3d Battalion moved forward to seize the high ground three miles south of Barenton, to provide a springboard for the 3d Armored



. . . but it was not so tough a day or two later. In the cart are Corporal Eugene Jaglowiski and Corporal Carrol Bryla.

Division. The Battalion CP was displaced forward two miles south of the town. The battalion was moving into an assembly area in preparation for the attack during the late afternoon, when plans were changed and an order was given to attack west to cut and seize the road leading southwest from Barenton.

A night attack was carried out, with Company "L" leading. The enemy was driven from his roadblocks, the road was cut and positions consolidated. Our casualties were light. One enemy armored vehicle was knocked out.

On the following morning orders were received to move back and seize high ground to the east and south to protect the right flank of the 3d Armored Division, but before these could be executed, countermanding orders were issued to attack north and west of Barenton. The high ground, which was the objective, was seized within an hour after the attack was initiated.

Orders immediately came down to attack to the west and seize a ridge line south of Mortain. Plans were made for an air strike and artillery preparations. Before they could be executed, however, the battalion was relieved of this mission and sent back to occupy the ground southeast of Barenton. A line was established, patrols were organized and roadblocks set up, and the original mission of protecting the right flank of the 3d Armored Division was taken up.

During this 48-hour period, the Battalion Command Post did not move. The troops of the battalion, however, attacked in a complete circle around the Command Post.

Enemy artillery was heavy, and a direct hit on an ammunition truck set the vehicle on fire. Quick action on the part of the men in the ammunition dump prevented further losses.

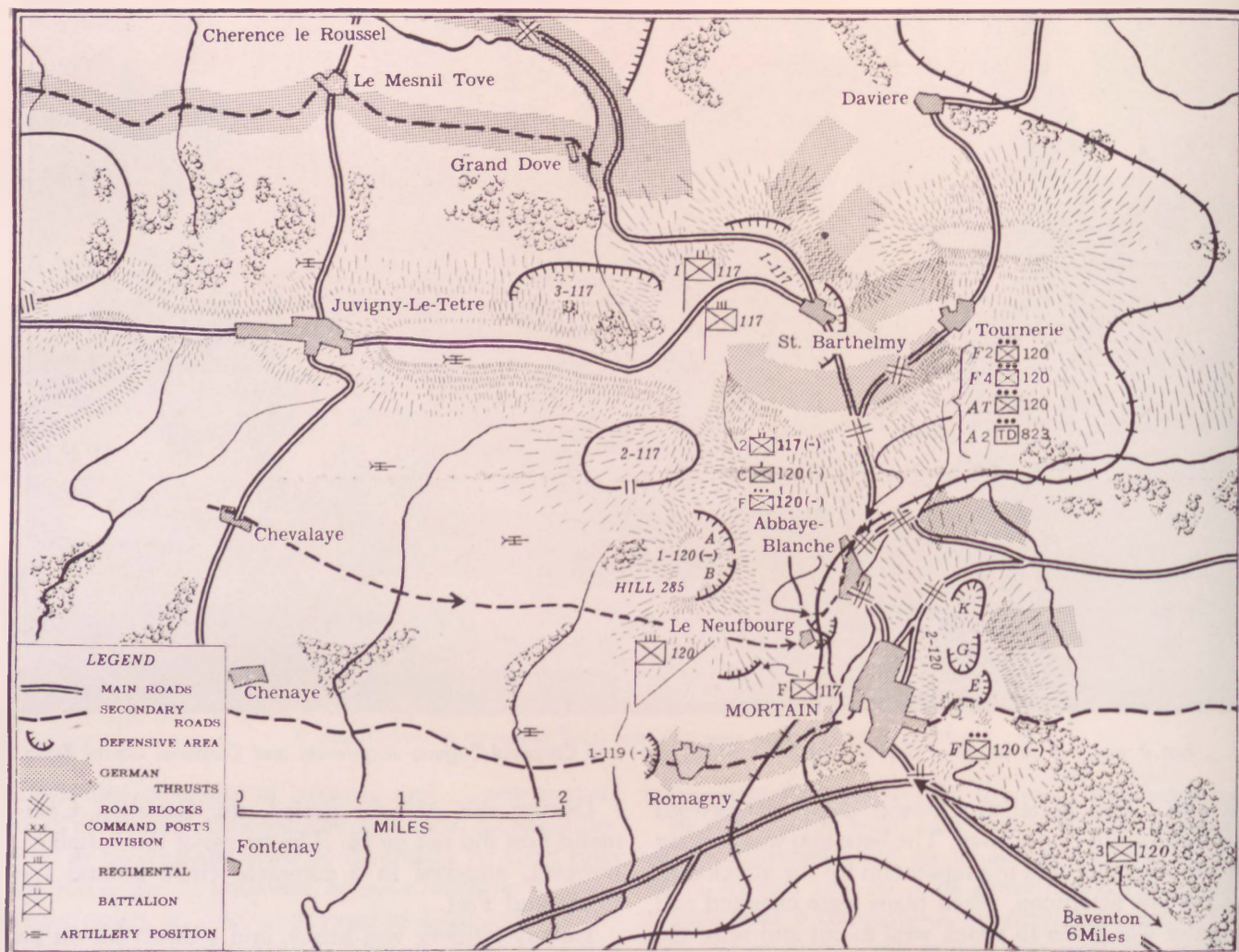
On August 13th, the 3d Battalion, less Company "K," rejoined the Regiment and learned of the events at Mortain and Hill 314 during the past week.

MORTAIN

Mortain lies at the base of a hill, in a valley, and is surrounded by high ground. The highest ground, Hill 314, was located immediately east and northeast of the town, and Colonel Birks was advised that it was the key to the whole area. Colonel Smith, of the 18th Infantry, pointed out that in case of an emergency, this hill would have to be held at all cost.

East-west roads lie to both the north and south of Hill 314. These roads lead to the sea. With Hill 314 in American hands, the enemy could not use the roads during daylight which meant that these routes were virtually denied him because less than five hours of darkness separated the long summer days.

To the northwest of Hill 314 and nearly due north



Mortain

of the town of Mortain is found the hamlet of Abbaye Blanche, where five roads converge. Another important terrain feature, Hill 285, is west of Abbaye Blanche. This hill overlooks the ground northwest and west of Mortain.

A less important hill is due south of Hill 285. The Regimental CP was installed on the western slope of this hill.

Shortly after the 1st Battalion arrived in the assembly area during the morning of the 6th of August, it moved to occupy Hill 285. Relief of elements of the 18th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division, was carried out during the day. Since the southward movement of the 3d Battalion had left the Regiment's left flank unprotected, Company "C" was moved to the 3d Battalion's former positions near the Regimental CP. The 1st Battalion, less this one company, continued to improve its defensive positions on the hill.

Key Hill 314, due east of Mortain, was assigned to

the 2d Battalion, plus Company "K," under the command of Lt Col Eads G. Hardaway. Two platoons of tank destroyers and a platoon of the Regimental Anti-tank Company were placed in support. The battalion CP was installed in a hotel in the town of Mortain. These troops spent the rest of the day of August 6 in relieving the elements of the 18th Infantry which had been garrisoning the hill. A reinforced platoon from Company "G" installed a roadblock to the south of Hill 314, while a larger block was placed in the vicinity of Abbaye Blanche. The units assigned to the Abbaye Blanche position were:

1st Platoon, Company "F" (Lt Tom F. H. Andrew)

1st Platoon, Company "A," 823d T.D. Battalion (Lt Thomas Springfield)

One platoon from AT Company (Lt Sidney Eichen)

One mortar and one machine-gun section, Company "F."

During the afternoon, friendly aircraft bombed our troops in the town of Mortain.

On August 7th, at 0125, word was received at Regimental Headquarters from the 2d Battalion that small-arms fire could be heard to the east of its CP. Five minutes later a heavy enemy attack struck Mortain, penetrating the south and southeast sector. Using infiltration methods, the enemy had succeeded in moving into our positions on the hill and getting troops well into town. In so doing, they had by-passed and surrounded the roadblock which had been established south of Hill 314. The Germans soon overran this roadblock. Six men escaped and ultimately rejoined the Regiment by way of the 35th Division CP at Bion.

Sgt Crowe, Antitank Company, who was with this roadblock, was wounded in the leg when the troops were overrun. He was found alive five days later. He lost his leg because gangrene had set in. The only persons whom he had seen were two German soldiers and a doctor whom the soldiers had brought to him. The doctor took one look at the leg, grunted, and walked away.

Since Lt Col Hardaway's troops were strongly engaged in defending their positions, Colonel Birks sent Company "C" at 0250 to the town with the mission of contacting the 2d Battalion CP, driving the enemy out of the town, and establishing another roadblock astride the route of the enemy approach. Although they succeeded in getting into Mortain, it developed that they were unable to fulfill all of their mission. Lt Col Hardaway kept one platoon with him and sent the remainder of the company to the southern roadblock. This latter group was never able to establish itself.

At approximately 0200, word was received that



The Germans also tried to slip through



Hill 314, east of Mortain, as seen from the southwest

another enemy attack was coming from the north, converging on the roadblock guarding the entrance to that route into the town. Fierce fighting was taking place there, with some of the enemy succeeding in by-passing the block and getting some troops into Mortain. At 0345, Lt Col Hardaway reported that the Germans had taken part of the key hill to the east. Colonel Birks told him to send Company "G" to drive them off.

At dawn Lt Col Hardaway informed the Regimental CP that tanks and armored vehicles, with infantry, were entering Mortain in strength. At the time he had one platoon of Company "C" with him and he was advised to hold on with what he had for there was nothing more to send him at the moment. The enemy had by this time infiltrated between the 2d Battalion CP in the town and the troops on the hill to the east.

In the meantime the Regimental I & R Platoon had been sent to the town of Romagny located to the south on the Regiment's right flank. Its mission was to investigate the high ground in the vicinity. It was also to locate a supply route from the south for both the 2d and 3d Battalions. When it reached Romagny, it was ambushed and only two vehicles and a few men succeeded in getting out. However, although surrounded, the platoon succeeded in holding the enemy off for two hours. The radio operator continued to relay information and later succeeded in escaping.

Some time after 0700 Lt Col Hardaway informed Colonel Birks that it was necessary for him to get out of Mortain. He was advised that help was coming from a battalion of the 117th Infantry, less one company, which was at the time some two miles away, and that he should attempt to join his troops up on the hill. A few hours later, Lt Col Hardaway radioed back that he had been unable to join his men on the hill, but that he was in hiding and couldn't say where he was. At this time, he had with him Maj Simes, his Execu-

tive, together with Capt Anthony, his S-2, Lt Pike, his S-3, Lt Irby, his S-1, Lt Hagen, his Communications Officer, and ten or 15 men from the Battalion Headquarters Company. He was completely out of touch with men on the hill and was forced to use his radio sparingly because his batteries were low.

The 2d Battalion of the 117th Infantry, less Company "G," finally reached the vicinity of the Regimental CP late in the day. At the time of their arrival, the enemy was attacking and penetrating the south flank of the Regiment, as well as occupying the town of Mortain. Although the need for support on our right flank was great, Colonel Birks decided to send this battalion, less Companies "F" and "G," to Mortain in relief of the 2d Battalion. Since eight tanks had arrived to aid us in throwing back the enemy, four were attached to this group under the command of Lt Col Lockett, and they were committed at 2300. Company "F" of the 117th Infantry was given the other four tanks and sent out on our right flank with the mission of attacking the enemy along the Neufbourg-Romagny Road and seizing the town of Romagny.

Lt Col Lockett's force was able to get only to the outskirts of Mortain on the west, but this allowed us to control the supply route to the roadblock at Abbaye Blanche. This was of vital importance if we were to be successful in containing the enemy. It was also successful in aiding what was left of the Company "C" platoon in Mortain together with some men from Company "F" to break through the German lines and join Lt Col Lockett, and thereby enhancing the strength of his force. The group which was to take the town of Romagny met strong opposition and was unsuccessful in reaching the town.

August 7th was an eventful day, to say the least. Our area was bombed and strafed approximately ten times by both friendly and enemy aircraft. The whole of our sector was heavily shelled by German artillery which, at 1435, was directed by airplane upon our Regimental CP location. At 1507, two enemy tanks worked their way to within 250 yards of the Regimental CP. One of these was knocked out with a bazooka by Pfc Joe O. Shipley, telephone operator of Regimental Headquarters Company. The 1st Battalion reported that they had knocked out one Mark VI and six Mark IV tanks in addition to two halftracks. The roadblock at Abbaye Blanche had knocked out six tanks and thirteen other vehicles and, in addition, five tanks were reported knocked out by our artillery in front of the 1st Battalion position.

At the end of the day, many of our units were separated into small groups. Communication and control were exceedingly difficult. Not only was the 2d Battalion cut off by the enemy but, during the day, the 3d Battalion had found itself in the same circumstances near Barenton. However, Company "K", Company "E," and part of Companies "F" and "G," together with elements of Company "H," still held all of the key hill with the exception of one wooded knob on the southwest slope. They had arranged communication with each other and organized their positions, and although the enemy pressure brought against them was great, they were defending stoutly.

By this time it was known that the Germans were mounting a big drive to the sea by way of Avranches. The focal point of their effort was Mortain and it was their intention to split the American forces located in Normandy from those in Brittany.

To be successful, they had but eighteen miles to go in order to reach Avranches. We were meeting the best troops the enemy could employ. Among these were the "Der Fuhrer" Regiment of the *Das Reich* Division, SS; the 1st Panzer Grenadier Regiment of the 1st Panzer Division, (Hitler's Own, LAH); the 304th Panzer Grenadier Regiment of the 2d Panzer Division; and the 273d AAA.

On August 8th, at 0130, the enemy fiercely attacked the 1st Battalion in the vicinity of Hill 285, using at least eight tanks supported by infantry. At 0500, word was received that our artillery was hitting the enemy solidly in this area, and by 0615 the enemy attack had been brought to a standstill and his remaining tanks were attempting to move back. However, at 0815, Company "B" was savagely attacked by tanks and flamethrowers. They succeeded in knocking out several tanks and captured one flamethrower. Upon inspection, it was found that the Germans had been in possession of some American M4 tanks, one of which was among those destroyed by Company "B" men.

During the action which took place on Hill 285, Lt Roy Lothner, in command of Company "A," discovered his driver, Pfc McCoy, looking at him from the far side of a hedgerow. Lothner called to him several times, asking him to come and join him. Each time McCoy would reply, "I can't; I'm captured," whereat the Germans would open up on Lothner with machine guns. This is indicative of the close proximity with the enemy at which much of the fighting was conducted.

Word was received from Lt Col Hardaway at 0915 that he would be able to hold his radio open from only

ten minutes to the hour to ten minutes after the hour because his batteries were getting very low. He was still located somewhere in Mortain and was still completely cut off from his troops. He was not heard from again.

At about 1100 the portion of the 2d Battalion on the hill asked that radio batteries, medical supplies, food, and ammunition be sent to them. It was also learned that the enemy was using a few of our jeeps in the town of Mortain. Fierce fighting continued with our men holding their positions which, by means of splendid work by the artillery observers, prevented the Germans from organizing armor and troops to effect an attack of overwhelming strength.

The shelling of the Regimental CP area continued throughout the day, and by 1730 it had become so intense that the Command Post was forced to move to another location in order to prevent excessive casualties. The Regimental S-4, Maj James J. Bynum, was killed and his successor, Capt Layton C. Tyner, was wounded within four hours; WO Percy C. Dempsey took over the duties of Regimental Supply Officer. Several enlisted men of the headquarters and kitchen crew were also wounded. Lt Raymond Welch, among others, hit the dirt when an incoming shell sounded as if it had his name on it. Having landed under an apple tree, he thought he was hit with many fragments when the blast showered him with fruit.

During the night of August 8th-9th, the enemy succeeded in reaching the 2d Battalion Aid Station and captured all of its personnel together with Chaplain Gunnar Teilmann and a squad and a half of Company "C" of the 105th Engineers. In the morning, it was found that the enemy had made no attempt to destroy the equipment and vehicles located in the station, and it is believed that he was forced to withdraw with the prisoners when one of our patrols suddenly came upon his left flank and rear during the night. A dead German was found behind the wheel of one of the jeeps where he had apparently been killed while attempting to drive the vehicle away.

By 1400 on August 9th, Hill 285 was entirely in the hands of Company "A." During the engagement, the 1st Battalion reported that they had observed several of the enemy wearing US Army uniforms.

At about 1820 on this day, a dramatic episode took place. A German officer, accompanied by an enlisted man bearing a white flag, approached our positions on the hill near the location of Company "E." In his most military and formal manner, he spoke to Lt Elmer C. Rohmiller (Company "E") and to Sgt Wingate



Communications and control were difficult to maintain

(Company "G"). He stated that he was an officer of the SS and was in a position to offer the Americans on the hill honorable surrender. He carefully pointed out that the Germans knew they had the 2d Battalion, 120th Infantry, of the 30th Division, entirely cut off and surrounded, that he had a Lt Pike and a "one star" officer among many prisoners, and that the position of the Americans was hopeless. Furthermore, he said that if our men did not surrender before 2000, the Germans would "blow them to bits." The request was immediately refused on the spot; however, it was also forwarded to Lt Ralph Kerley, commanding Company "E." In turn, Lt Kerley sent word that his men would not surrender until his last round of ammunition had been fired and his last bayonet had been broken in a German belly.

That night the enemy assaulted the positions held by Company "E" with tanks whose machine guns were used to spray the whole area in front of their advance. As they reached our foremost positions, the Germans shouted, "Surrender! Surrender!" This was, of course, ignored, and after a stiff fight, the enemy was hurled back.

In the meantime the 1st Battalion was having difficulty on Hill 285. By 1100 on August 10th, having been pushed back, it was still attempting to complete the occupation of the entire hill.

On this day, American aircraft (C-47's), accompanied by fighters, flew over the hill held by the 2d Battalion and dropped food. At least half of it dropped in enemy-held territory, but almost half was recovered by our men. This meant that each man on the hill received two meals of K-ration.

Later, at 2240, our artillery fired medical supplies into the position. Carefully the smoke content of the shells had been extracted and in its place the much-

needed medical bottles and dry goods were inserted. None of the plasma got through intact, but bandages, tape and some morphine were salvaged, although the amount received by our medics did not prove sufficient adequately to take care of the wounded men.

An attempt to drop food on Friday, August 11th, failed. All of it fell in enemy-held territory.

By Friday night it was known that the 35th Division was nearing our positions on the right flank. Three days before, the 1st Battalion (less one company) of the 119th Infantry had been assigned to us. It was given the mission of attacking the enemy by way of Romagny in an effort to reach Mortain. By Friday night, it had succeeded in reaching the outskirts of Romagny. That was very heartening news indeed.

On Saturday, August 12th, the 320th Infantry finally broke through and made contact with Company "G." They immediately took care of the wounded, evacuated them, and took steps to get supplies to our men. Relief of the position by the 1st Battalion of the 119th Infantry was accomplished at 1300.

TRADITION OF THE REGIMENT

The historically proved Regimental tradition of never failing to capture an assigned objective and never giving up ground to the enemy was perfectly illustrated at Mortain. There, as in other battles, our troops reached the absolute ultimate of courage. Surrounded, short of food and ammunition, without sufficient water, having few medical supplies for the many wounded, constantly attacked by the enemy, these brave soldiers never considered abandoning their positions. They whipped the best troops of the German army, inflicting far more casualties than they themselves suffered despite the fact the Germans, being on the offensive, outnumbered our men at each point of contact.

Information gained from captured Germans clearly indicated that the enemy's goal for his massive, all-out counterattack of early August, 1944, was the sea at Avranches—his mission was the isolation of General Patton's Third Army by cutting the one supply line. A brief study of the map shows that control of the road net in the vicinity of Mortain was essential for the enemy's success. Control of the roads depended upon who held Hill 314. As long as our troops held this hill, artillery directed by observers from the high ground prevented the enemy from seizing and using these roads. Our successful stand was one of the war's great surprises to the Germans. Questioning of Colo-

nel General Jodl and Field Marshals Keitel and Kesselring following their surrender disclosed that the Germans were amazed by the failure of their attempt to destroy the American corridor, or pathway, out of Normandy in the vicinity of Avranches.

It is unfortunate indeed that so little of the story can be told. The accounts of many actions died with those who had performed magnificent deeds. Many men who were contacted for their stories remember little other than that they fought during many days which seemed never-ending. Events came so rapidly, there was so much to be done, with the result that few entries were made in the Regimental diary. Therefore, we have records of only a few of the many courageous actions and interesting details which occurred during those six eventful days.

In the opinion of Colonel Birks, the major factor which stopped the enemy drive, aside from the refusal of our men to abandon their positions or surrender, was the very effective use of artillery. This was possible because artillery observers were with the units on the hill and were in a position to see almost every move the Germans made. Any attempt on the part of the enemy to attack in great force was met with instantaneous fire from our guns. Radio communication with Regimental Headquarters was kept open by Lt Joe Reaser, commanding Company "K," and Lt Ralph Kerley, commanding Company "E." Communication was made each 10 minutes to the hour each day and night, as well as when an urgent fire mission for the artillery was necessary. Lt Reaser himself did a fine job in adjusting artillery fire missions through Capt Ezekiel Glazier, Regimental S-2, who, in turn, supplied the necessary information to the artillery. Cannon Company also helped materially in stopping the enemy through the excellent work of its observer on the hill.

The roadblock at Abbaye Blanche also was a major factor toward our success. The troops originally assigned there were reinforced by brave men who had been cut off but who fought their way to the block. Altogether some 150 men occupied it. Lt Andrew, who was in charge, estimated that at least sixty vehicles were knocked out by his group. Many were put out of action by the TD guns attached to him.

Five roads converged on this position, one from the northwest, one from the northeast, one from the east, one from the southeast, and one from the south, the latter being the main supply route into the position. In covering all these approaches, the roadblock was extended for approximately 200 yards. The enemy ap-

proached in greatest strength from the northeast and northwest. On one of these roads twenty-four enemy vehicles of all types were knocked out, indicating that the men at the roadblock manned their position with tenacity and caused the enemy to be brought to a dead stop. When the action was all over, these twenty-four vehicles were there hub-to-hub and in the same location where they were destroyed. This was true of most of the other vehicles which were knocked out on the other approaches, although the Germans had been able to get some of the partially disabled vehicles out at night.

An example of the heroic deeds required to hold the block is shown by the exploits of Pfc Robert P. Vollmer, Antitank Company. On the 8th of August, he and five riflemen were selected to man a position which covered the principal road leading into Abbaye Blanche. He occupied an abandoned machine-gun emplacement which afforded him excellent observation of the road and of the field to the right. Early in the morning, an enemy machine gun opened fire on him from a position on the edge of a patch of woods about 150 yards away. Pfc Vollmer returned bazooka fire at the machine-gun position and succeeded in silencing the enemy gun, although he did not destroy it at this time. To accomplish this, it was necessary for him to load and fire his weapon alone because the other men had taken positions in holes too distant to be of any assistance. While he was firing on the machine gun, heavy concentrations of artillery and mortars fell into the area. At 0900, he saw an enemy armored car moving along the road toward him. He hit it with a round from his bazooka, knocking it out, and forcing its crew to seek the cover of a nearby house. This house was about 200 yards from Pfc Vollmer's position on the hill and was held by a small group of German infantrymen who, throughout the day, emerged from the building from time to time to fire at him. About a half hour after the armored car was destroyed, an enemy motorcycle came down the same road. When it reached a point about 30 yards behind the armored car, Pfc Vollmer demolished it with his bazooka. Meanwhile, enemy artillery and mortar fire was still falling in the area, and some shells were digging holes within 15 and 20 yards of his position. Nevertheless, Pfc Vollmer would not leave. A short time after he knocked out the motorcycle, another armored car approached. The driver attempted to pass by the first armored car. Pfc Vollmer opened fire on this second car and set it ablaze. Only one member of the crew was able to escape from the burning vehicle,

and he was so badly burned that he soon dropped dead. The enemy machine gunner again opened fire on Pfc Vollmer during the early afternoon. Determined to knock it out and disregarding bullets kicking up dirt around the edges of his hole, he took careful aim with his bazooka and fired two rounds at the enemy position, destroying the machine gun and killing two enemy gunners. At 1400, an enemy gasoline truck approached. Pfc Vollmer set it on fire. On this day the enemy was probing for weak spots throughout the area and this roadblock covered a weak point in our lines. Pfc Vollmer's courage caused the enemy to believe the position to be much more strongly held. Such courage was needed that day.

With what information is available, an attempt will be made to piece together the story of what happened to the 2d Battalion Headquarters group.

Capt Reynold C. Erichson, commanding Company "F," relates that when the battalion moved into position on August 6th, his company was split up to form three roadblocks in the area. By 0300, his wire communication with these blocks had been severed due to the fire which was raging in Mortain and which had been caused by the aerial bombing on the previous day. After sending his executive officer to the roadblocks located south of the town, he reported to the battalion commander for instructions. He states that since the Germans seemed to be penetrating from the south, Lt Col Hardaway sent Company "C," minus one platoon, to aid in throwing them back. The other platoon he gave to Capt Erichson and ordered him to go up the hill and furnish contact between Companies "E" and "K."

It was a very misty and dark morning and after gaining the heights, Capt Erichson turned north along a trail leading to the Company "K" position. He states: "We walked right up on thirty Germans before we could see them. My scouts were so near to the enemy they could have shaken hands with them. The Germans cut loose with machine pistols, and I jumped over a hedgerow and managed to set the platoon up in a hasty defense." Capt Erichson then worked his way to Company "G's" Command Post, where he called the battalion commander and told him the situation. He was advised to pull back into the town and proceed north where the Germans were also coming through in strength.

With great difficulty Capt Erichson was able to get back into the town and, under machine-gun fire from the enemy, reached Lt Col Hardaway, who then told him to take the platoon and attempt to link up with



The Germans paid for their failure

the rest of Company "C." As he proceeded on this mission, the Germans in the town surrounded his men on three sides so that the only avenue of escape was to the east. This meant that they would be forced to climb the hill again in order to reach the Company "G" position. They finally succeeded in slipping through the enemy and joined Company "G" on the heights. This position became untenable because of very heavy direct fire from German artillery pieces. The whole group then moved north and finally made contact with Company "K" which was occupying a good defensive position. A perimeter defense was set up with Company "K" holding the nose of the north and Company "G" that on the south, with the remainder of Company "G" holding positions east and west of a trail which connected the two.

Lt Irby and Lt Hagen, both members of the 2d Battalion staff, stated that by 0600 on Monday morning the Germans were occupying the town in strength.

The Germans started to move in on the building housing the CP at about 0900. When this became evident, the group started out in an attempt to join the men up on the hill. They had gone only some 400 yards when heavy enemy fire forced them to take refuge, unnoticed, in a house where approximately twenty-nine men stayed for "two days and three nights." On the third morning, the Germans discovered them, knocked down the front door, and took one man prisoner while the rest escaped out the back way and made another attempt to join the troops upon the hill.

However, the enemy was in complete control of all the ground between the top of the hill and the town. The Germans surrounded our men, who put up strong resistance for a time, but most of the group were finally captured, including Lt Col Hardaway, Maj Simes, Capt Anthony, Lt Pike, and Lt Lee of the 230th Field Artillery.

Lts Irby and Hagen, T/5 Martin Murphy, T/Sgt



We had to pay for our success

Hodges and two TD men slipped down an embankment and escaped. They stayed in a wheat field for one day and then, at night, worked their way through the enemy into a loft over a stable located near to the hospital. A few minutes later, the enemy, suspecting their presence, took all the patients out of the hospital and searched the building thoroughly. Finding no Americans, they also searched the lower floor of their building, in which our men were hiding. During their stay in town, the fugitives were able to gather a few carrots and radishes from a garden near by. By Friday, they had become very hungry, and they decided to trust a Frenchman who was working on the lower floor of their building. He brought them water, but was unable to get them any food.

The shelling had been incessant in the neighborhood of the hospital, but it was not hit until Saturday morning, when a white phosphorus shell set fire to it, causing it to burn down to the first floor. Our men then decided to take a chance, to enter the hospital and obtain some food. On their first attempt they got two jars of jam, and on the second attempt they got a raw ham, six loaves of bread, six bars of candy and four more jars of jam. On that day, at 1100, they saw

an advance guard of friendly troops approaching the hospital. When they emerged from their retreat, the first person they met from the 120th Infantry was Colonel Birks, who was with the foremost elements pushing into the town.

As has been related, the Regimental I&R Platoon was ambushed in the town of Romagny. 1st Lt Edwin J. Franklin, platoon leader, called for a volunteer to take the wounded to the rear and to notify the Regimental commander of the ambush. While the platoon was attempting to fight off the Germans, Pvt Ralph W. Estevez volunteered for the hazardous mission. Loading the wounded on a jeep, he started on his way. Immediately he was wounded by a hand grenade. Showing the great courage found so often among members of the Regiment, Pvt Estevez insisted on continuing to carry out his mission. His bravery cost him his life. In this way, another brave man went to his Maker.

LEADERS

Men fight no better than do their leaders. The five company commanders on Hill 314 were of the best—no one could have done more than did each of these

five. To 1st Lt Ralph A. Kerley, Company "E," Capt Reynold C. Erichson, Company "F," 1st Lt Ronald E. Woody, Jr, Company "G," Capt Delmont K. Byrn, Company "H," and 1st Lt Joseph C. Reaser, Company "K," is given the major credit for the reinforced battalion's superb and heroic stand.

Company "E" was in position on the southeast nose of Hill 314. The enemy infiltrated through our lines during their first attack and cut off all avenues of approach to such an extent that contact was lost even between the companies stationed on the hill. During the period that the reinforced 2d Battalion was surrounded, Lt Kerley directed the actions of his company almost continuously day and night. Many efforts were made by the enemy, using armor, artillery and combat patrols, to penetrate our positions. Every night from the 6th to the 12th, when visibility was poor, the enemy infiltrated into the area held by Company "E." During each day, our men were subjected to heavy artillery and small-arms fire, and enemy and friendly bombing and strafing. Lt Kerley's great courage was instrumental in repulsing these efforts. He directed the laying of artillery and Cannon Company fires into enemy positions when they formed for the many attacks. His superb leadership gave confidence and determination to his men to hold out against this constant pressure imposed by the enemy, even though there was dire need of medical supplies, water and food. On two occasions during this time, Lt Kerley was offered by the enemy the opportunity for honorable surrender with the assurance his men would be well cared for. He adamantly refused these offers. During all of the long days and nights, Lt Kerley fearlessly exposed himself while leading his men. The soldiers of Company "E" fought magnificently as did their leader.

Capt Erichson, commanding officer of Company "F," took command of the battalion after Lt Col Hardaway was captured. He organized patrols, maintained communication, and directed operations during the six days in which they were cut off. He checked the security and defenses on the units on the hill, many times being exposed to direct fire and constantly under pressure by the enemy. He refused the enemy's offer to surrender and maintained control of the situation at all times regardless of the shortage of ammunition, equipment, medical supplies, water, food and men. He kept contact with Regimental headquarters by radio, and by this means directed artillery fire upon enemy concentrations. There were times when the situation seemed almost hopeless. Our own planes

bombed and strafed our positions, thereby adding to the possible demoralization of the men and the problem of leadership. Nevertheless, disregarding the apparent hopelessness of the situation, Capt Erichson never wavered in his determination to hold out against any odds until the enemy had been successfully repulsed. His heroic actions in the face of tremendous odds, his inspiring leadership and courage, gave confidence to his men and dispelled any glimmer of doubt they may have entertained.

Company "G," commanded by Lt Woody, was dug in on a wooded knoll near the center of the hill. At night the enemy would infiltrate into the position area under cover of darkness and fog when visibility was poor and attack these positions in an effort to force their surrender. Lt Woody kept constant vigil and contact with the enemy in an effort to be prepared for whatever they brought against him. He organized patrols and directed artillery fire, at one time bringing it to within 20 yards of his company's position in order to knock out a heavy enemy attack by tanks and infantry. His company was subjected to bombing and strafing by both enemy and friendly airplanes. Food, ammunition, and medical supplies were sorely needed. Water for drinking purposes and medical use was also short. The Germans counterattacked at night under cover of darkness and during the day saturated their positions with artillery and rocket bombs or "screaming meemies." Heavy casualties were suffered by the company during the time they were cut off. When the situation seemed almost hopeless for his men to be reached and relieved by friendly troops, Lt Woody refused the demands of the Germans to surrender. He continued to defend his position regardless of the many difficulties. Lt Woody, a brave man, never thought of himself or of his personal safety. Regardless of the danger, he always went where he was most needed. His company responded gallantly.

When the enemy struck shortly after midnight of August 5-6, Capt Byrn was at the battalion CP. He quickly realized that he was being cut off. With no map or guidance other than his sense of direction, he led his company command group about five miles through German lines to his kitchen area west of Mortain. On the following day, he boldly determined to return through the enemy lines in an effort to establish contact with the battalion CP. Swiftly and quietly, he made his way along, carefully avoiding any contact with enemy patrols. Upon arriving at the location of the command post, he discovered that it had been overrun by the enemy. He slipped forward unnoticed

and joined elements of Company "H" on Hill 314 where, with Company "E," they were isolated from the remainder of the battalion. Realizing the necessity for making contact with the other companies, on the following morning, the 9th of August, he gallantly led a patrol to locate the other companies on the hill. While leading this patrol, Capt Byrn constantly exposed himself to heavy artillery, mortar and small-arms fires and covered about five miles of enemy-infested territory. The route he established in contacting the other companies was used during the three remaining days of the battle as a communications lane. By the morning of the 10th of August, the stubborn defenders of Hill 314 were sorely in need of food, medical supplies and ammunition. No supplies had been received during the previous four days, and it was apparent that unless at least ammunition was received the position would become completely untenable. At about 1500 on that day, friendly aircraft dropped food and ammunition by parachute, but these supplies landed in enemy territory about 800 yards from the company's positions. Capt Byrn immediately organized and personally led a group of men into the enemy's lines to retrieve ammunition for his machine-gun and mortar crews. Moving out through heavy enemy artillery and mortar fire, and even direct fire from a 20mm anti-aircraft gun, they made their way over 800 yards of open terrain, in clear view of the enemy. The area into which the supplies had fallen was open and under enemy observation. Because the bundles contained all types of ammunition and the carrying capacity of his men was limited, Capt Byrn directed his men to open each bundle in order to retrieve only that ammunition which was most needed. Enemy fire was so intense it was necessary for the men to crawl to the bundles and drag them to cover before examining the contents. Capt Byrn constantly exposed himself to enemy fire while directing and assisting the men in this essential operation. As the result of his able direction and encouragement, all of the most needed ammunition was recovered. Burdened by the weight of ammunition he helped to carry, Capt Byrn led his group back through continuous enemy fire to their machine-gun and mortar positions on the forward slope of the hill. He then proceeded to plan and direct his fires efficiently against the enemy, inflicting great damage. There are few men so brave as to slip through enemy lines in order to join surrounded troops. Capt Delmont K. Byrn is one of the few.

Lt Reaser, commanding Company "K," constantly checked his defenses, organized patrols, administered



After the battle of Mortain: Lieutenant Willie Irby, Captain Delmont Byrn, Captain Reynold Erichson, Lieutenant Guy Hagen, Sergeant Forrest Hodges

aid to the wounded, secured food, repelled enemy attacks, directed artillery fire, and maintained communication with adjacent units. He was subjected to tremendous enemy pressure all of the time his company was isolated on the hill. He refused the demands of the enemy to surrender, even though he knew that the battalion commander and most of his staff had been captured and that there was seemingly little hope for his company to hold out. He continued to hold the position regardless of difficulties or cost. Failure would have allowed the enemy to occupy commanding ground which would have resulted in the positions of the other companies becoming untenable. Lt Reaser at all times placed his duties above safety—he completely disregarded extreme personal danger in order to help his company hold its position.

It is miraculous that all five of these exceptionally brave officers survived the war because it is a sad fact that the bravest all too often died. Capt Erichson and Lt Kerley became majors and, together with Capt Byrn, remained unwounded. Lts Woody and Reaser were promoted to the grade of captain. Capt Woody was severely wounded during the second day of the Regiment's drive from the Siegfried Line to the Roer River but, according to last accounts, was well on the road to recovery. Capt Reaser was wounded twice during the Battle of the Bulge but fortunately was not hurt badly.

HOW THEY LIVED—AND DIED

The Germans, making an all-out attack, used practically every weapon with which their army was equipped—artillery, tanks, self-propelled guns, arm-

ored cars, flame throwers, 75mm and 88mm high velocity guns, rocket dischargers, mortars (including the rare multiple-tube type), hand grenades, rifles, pistols and machine guns. The krauts made many large-scale, organized attacks. When these attacks were not in progress, they constantly harassed our troops with combat patrols which endeavored to infiltrate to within, and to the rear of, our lines. Heavy fires of all types fell nearly continuously upon our positions.

The constant enemy pressure kept our troops on Hill 314 surrounded for six days. Furthermore, the enemy's penetrations at times completely isolated each of the rifle companies from each other. Even under the best of conditions, contact between companies could be maintained only by patrols which were forced to sneak over enemy-held ground.

The men occupying Hill 314 dug themselves in as much as possible in order to protect themselves from intense enemy artillery and mortar fire. They also made use of natural cover, taking up positions behind large boulders, declivities in the rock, and in dense undergrowth. They held the enemy with rifles, hand grenades, bazookas and machine guns, supported by the artillery, whose guns were located to the west of Mortain. Communication with Regimental Headquarters was entirely by radio.

The many attacks, constant enemy fires, and frequent patrols gave our men little rest and required them to hold their positions in relays, i.e., one man would hold a position for several hours after which he would be relieved by another man.

Deep slit trenches were dug for the wounded in a central location. These men, many seriously wounded, endured the greatest of privation and pain without complaint. There were no doctors on the hill and scarcely any medical supplies. The aid men performed miracles in pulling the wounded through and, although some died, most were safely evacuated when relief arrived on the 12th.

During their stay on the hill, the men lived off the land as best they could. Some potatoes, cabbages and even chickens were secured and eaten. A Frenchman who lived on the heights gave them a little milk, but what food they were able to procure was hardly sufficient to sustain the wounded.

At the time of the relief, the following approximate numbers of men remained unwounded on the hill:

Company "C"	24
Company "E"	100
Company "F"	8

Company "G"	103
Company "H"	18
Company "K"	100
Antitank Company	4
Cannon Company	5
823d Tank Destroyer Battalion	8
230th Field Artillery Battalion	6
Total	376

The men of Company "C" are those who were surrounded in the vicinity of Mortain and who fought their way to Hill 314. The other four rifle companies ("E," "F," "G," and "K") were each of the approximate strength of 200 prior to the battle, while Company "H" had about 150 men. There was a detachment from Antitank Company, a platoon of tank destroyers, and there were forward observer parties from Cannon Company and the 230th Field Artillery Battalion. These 376 brave men were still holding at bay a vastly superior force of the best the enemy had to offer when relief came after six days of fearfully intense fighting.

Thus ends the story of Mortain, a crucial battle of the war, a battle where the Germans, had they been successful, would have seriously crippled and retarded the onward rush of our armies. But because of those who held the hill at Mortain, those who fought and lived, those who fought and died, the Germans failed in their largest counterattack in France.

ON TO DOMFRONT

On August 12th, the 3d Battalion was released from the Armored Command and attached to the 119th Infantry. The following day was spent in reorganization and rest, with the Regiment reverting to the XIX Corps at 0900. We received word to be prepared to move on the 14th to the vicinity of Domfront, and on that day, with the 125th Cavalry as advance guard, the 1st Battalion cleared the IP at Neufbourg at 0932. In a column of companies, the Regiment proceeded to Romagny, Notre Dame, Ste. Patrice, le Teilleul, la Charpenierie, and thence to the outskirts of Domfront, where the column swung north to St. Bomer-les Forges and Chatelier.

At 1240 the 3d Battalion was released from the 119th Infantry to the 120th Infantry. At 1410 the Cavalry reported its men were engaged in light street-fighting in the town of Domfront. Having swung to the north, the 1st Battalion met concentrated resistance at Pignon Blanc at 1545, while the 2d Battalion pushed into the town of Domfront. The 1st Battalion

took 103 prisoners in one group and twenty-four in another. These were all evacuated to the rear by the 2d Armored Division. At the end of the day, the enemy was putting up stiff resistance against the 1st Battalion on Hill 201.

On the morning of the 15th, at 0800, the 3d Battalion in a well-chosen maneuver speedily by-passed the 1st Battalion and took the high ground to the east, thereby enabling the 1st Battalion to push on to les Forges. The resistance of the enemy had increased. He employed mortars and artillery up to 150mm in support of his ground troops together with some *Nebelwerfer* fire and tanks. Two of the tanks were knocked out during the morning, one by the 1st Battalion at les Forges and one, which the enemy abandoned with its motor still running, by the 3d Battalion.

The enemy placed very heavy mortar fire in the vicinity of les Forges in an attempt to stem the advance of our troops. During this action, the 2d Battalion was holding the town of Domfront and covering the approaches leading to our sector from the south. At 2230, we discontinued the attack, placed antitank-mine defenses on all likely enemy approaches to our positions, and made preparations to continue the attack in the morning. The Germans, during the morning, met the 1st Battalion with one of their old tricks. They set up a defense on the reverse slope of a hill and placed tanks on the flanks. It didn't work. At 1853, the 3d Battalion recaptured one of our ¼-ton trucks which was recognized as belonging to the Commanding Officer of the 2d Battalion, Lt Col Hardaway, who had been captured during the action at Mortain. It was in fair condition but boobytrapped.

During the night, the enemy apparently withdrew in small groups to the northeast, and the 1st and 2d Battalions jumped off in pursuit at 0700, August 16th. In doing so they by-passed the 3d Battalion. Our objective was high ground 1500 yards to the northeast, which was captured with little resistance from the enemy. The position was immediately consolidated and prepared for defense. Prisoners taken during the last two days were from the 17th Labor Battalion and from the 21st SS *Panzer Grenadier* Regiment.

On the 17th of August, the town of le Chatelier was found by one of our patrols to be clear of the enemy, and another patrol, at 1630, made contact with elements of the King's Own Scottish Battalion, 3d Division, Second British Army, at a point 1200 yards west of Flers. The British had been driving from the northwest, and this meeting was one more



The Germans retreat. The photo was taken by a French civilian.

indication that the German Seventh Army had been badly broken up and pocketed. During this day, and the one following, all men who were not familiar with the rifle grenade and rocket-launcher were given an opportunity to fire them. The remainder of the time was spent in rest, reorganization and bathing. One-third of the men were given baths and clean clothes. On the 18th General Hobbs spoke to the 3d Battalion and commended them on their past successes, pointing out to them that we must continue to fight hard and destroy the enemy now.

That the German is a great believer in the use of mines and will go to great pains to plant them is illustrated in a report received from the 105th Engineer Battalion, which was operating in our zone of action on August 17th. Company "C" of the battalion erected a temporary bridge spanning a river where the old bridge had been blown up by the enemy. A search revealed no mines in the vicinity. However, two days later, a unit from the 247th Engineers discovered six Teller mines beneath the surface. Six others were found on the far approaches, placed two feet beneath the surface of the road.

After blowing the bridge, the Germans had removed the road surface, placed the mines two feet

apart, covered them with earth and then placed a final cover of asphalt on top to resemble the original "black-top" road material. The Engineers stated that mines buried in this manner would carry traffic for a number of days before finally detonating, and that at this depth they were impossible to locate with mine detectors.

TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION

On the 19th of August, the Regiment set forth on the first of several great advances which were to carry us through France, Belgium and the Netherlands into Germany.

On this day, the 120th Infantry Combat Team plus one company of the 823d Tank Destroyer Battalion and one company of the 743d Tank Battalion moved 118 miles by motor from the vicinity of Domfront to an area near Brezolles, arriving at the latter place at approximately 2100. Passing the IP at a cross-road east of Domfront, the Regiment and attachments passed through Juvigny, Pre-en-Pail, Alencon, Chassy, La Fresnaye, Pouilly, Bleves, Bellevilliers, Eperais, Belleme, Mauves, Courigeon, Boissy, Longny, Neuilly sur Eure, Senonches, Mesnil Thomas, and Brezolles.

This great move was certainly a triumphal procession. Frenchmen from outlying districts practically lined the route of our advance, in the country as well as in the towns. They were wild with joy and happiness. They threw flowers and fruit into our vehicles whenever a slight pause was made and offered wine and Calvados. As we passed through one small settlement, two small boys were struggling to hold aloft a huge sign which read "Welcome to our Liberators." Another read, "Vive l'Amerique." One old man had apparently stood by the side of the road all day in order to shout the only words of English he knew. Very slowly and with great emphasis he cried, "Heeeeep! Heeeeep! Whoooo-ray!" With traditional French exuberance, men as well as women seized our soldiers and kissed them roundly on the cheeks when the opportunity allowed.

In the vicinity of Brezolles, we came in contact with the 47th Jaeger Regiment, 17th GAF Division, which set up strongpoints along the main routes of advance. On the 20th of August, the enemy was in greatest force at Nonancourt in our zone of action with outposts at St. Lubin des Jonchertes and at Vrisseuil. He blew up all bridges across the Aire River, but defended the banks only lightly, so that our troops were able to advance to the left and rear of the city. Be-

tween Verneil and Nonancourt, the Aire River is five to eight meters wide and two to three meters deep. The enemy placed heavy artillery fire on all bridge sites in Nonancourt, and constructed log obstacles which they covered with machine-gun fire and anti-tank guns.

It was at 1421 on the 20th when, following some patrols from Company "G" which had been dispatched earlier, the 2d Battalion attacked across the Aire River. "One of the few times a mortar platoon ever led the riflemen," said Lt Robert S. Warnick, then with Company "H," "was that day when my mortars went forward to a place near the river and dropped 'beaucoup' shells on the German troops who had just blown the bridge. Then the rifle troops went through us, and they made fast time crossing the river, even capturing some of the enemy of the party which had demolished the bridge." The entire battalion had crossed the Aire in the late afternoon and had taken the town of Lersey by nightfall. There were pockets of determined resistance, but the 2d Battalion was successful finally in helping to seal off the larger town of Nonancourt.

In darkness and with men from the French underground army (*Forces Francaises d'Interieure*) as guides, the 1st Battalion took Vrisseuil and then St. Lubin des Jonchertes. With the 1st Battalion holding the Regimental right flank, the 3d Battalion moved to the right where the 2d Battalion had crossed, surged across the river, and thus cut off the town of Nonancourt.

During the night, roadblocks were set up and patrols from the 1st and 3d Battalions were sent to determine the enemy strength and dispositions in the town.

At 0415 on August 21st, the roadblock which had been set up by Company "K" captured forty prisoners. However, an immediate counterattack accompanied by heavy artillery fire enabled all but eight of these prisoners to escape in the darkness. By 0600 patrols from the 1st Battalion reported that they had succeeded in entering Nonancourt and that the enemy was apparently withdrawing in small groups to the east. The battalion immediately attacked, and at 0942, it had entered and reached the far side of the town, pressing the enemy closely. At 1341, the 3d Battalion entered Pincon.

The Regiment struck the main part of the German defense line in front of the 30th Division. The enemy was attempting to defend a large airfield. However, we continued to push him back, taking thirty-five prisoners during the day and capturing Nonancourt, la



Triumph

Madeleine de Nonancourt, la Mormiere, Buray, La Maladrie, la Coudrelle, l'Eveque, La Bremie, Le Val Leger, Grateruil, Lignerolles, Faverolles, La Herouderie, Beaufort, Coudres, Triernon, Ferriers and St. Andre-de-L'Eure. The latter place was reached by the 1st Battalion at 2200.

This was accomplished in the face of delaying action by the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 34th Regiment, 17th GAF Division. Originally elements of the

47th Regiment delayed along the river, then withdrew through the 34th, which defended in small groups of company-strength or less, confining their effort to main roads and towns. However, the enemy's knowledge of our situation was very poor. We took him by surprise in appearing so quickly and gave him no opportunity to set up anything resembling a main line of resistance. Prisoners stated that much confusion existed because their communication line had

been broken up by our bombing and armored attacks.

It was brought to the attention of our men that we were now operating in different country than that of Normandy. No longer did we have the roads and fields surrounded by hedgerows and, therefore, it would be suicidal to confine all action and movement to the roads.

On the 22d of August, the Regiment jumped off at 0900. From captured enemy maps we knew we were attacking the German MLR. The 2d Battalion reached Val David at 1500, and by 2230 all battalions had reached their assigned objectives. In doing so, the Regiment captured 159 prisoners and seized the towns and communes of Batigny, Quessigny, Foret du Parc, Buisson-Crosson, Cornier, Orgeville, Ceirrey, Val David, Jarancieres, Miserey, and Boncourt. The enemy sought to impede our advance with small-arms, mortar, and light-artillery fire. Among much enemy equipment we captured an antitank gun, four 80mm mortars, a great amount of ammunition and the regimental aid station equipment of the 621st Field Artillery Regiment.

In this war the artillery has played a major role in all of our successes. We think our Combat Team had the best artillery outfit in the Army. At least, they did a whale of a job, and their accomplishments were not limited to their specialized field of endeavor as illustrated by the following incident. On the 22d of August, the 230th Field Artillery Battalion was leapfrogging northward in two echelons, one consisting of one-half of the CP personnel together with Batteries "A" and "B," and the other echelon consisting of the remaining half of the CP personnel and Battery "C" and the 743d Armored Battery. They occupied positions successively at St. Andre-de-L'Eure, Garanceries, and Val David, bivouacking for the night in the village of Val David. Batteries "A" and "B" occupied positions at Froisy and Buisson Grossin, finally reaching the advanced position on an abandoned airfield near Gauciel, a village some two or three miles to the east of Evreux. The CP was set up in the basement of a once substantial house; Batteries "A" and "B" were reported ready to fire, and the battalion posted security and settled down for the night.

About 2400, guards heard horse-drawn vehicles moving west on the road just south of the CP area, and Sgt Strozier reported this to Maj Clement. Lt Col Vieman, Maj Clement and Sgt Strozier then went to the nearest outpost. The sound of wagons continued, and voices could be heard, but it was not possible to determine whether French or German was

being spoken. Several men were placed at intervals covering the approach of the wagons, and as the head of the approaching column reached the guard post at the crossroad southeast of the CP, it was challenged. The challenge was answered by enemy fire which was returned by members of the guard post, killing one German and causing the enemy column to withdraw and disperse in the fields east and southwest of the CP. The enemy movement continued intermittently and about 0300 shouts of "Kamerad" were heard, and one German approached the guard post again. When he was ordered to halt he turned a flashlight on the challengers and then ran to his rear. He was fired upon and is believed to have been wounded.

It was then decided to try to induce the surrender of the Germans. After investigation, Lt Col Vieman discovered that no one at the forward CP had sufficient knowledge of the German language. Thereupon a call to the rear was initiated and Lt Bear taught Cpl Schultz to say, "Do you want to surrender?"—"How many of you are there?"—"Come forward singly." With this information, Lt Col Vieman and Cpl Schultz called to the enemy from one of our outposts, but there was no answer, and they returned with only one German team and wagon which was found near the outpost.

Orders were then issued for an attack at daylight as follows: Battery "A" from its position southwest of the CP to attack with forty men to a point 300 yards east of the road running north and south through Gauciel and then to continue the attack to the north in order to take the enemy in flank and rear, as it was thought that he would try to move past the troops manning the CP. Battery "B" was to attack on the right of Battery "A" and therefore would be echeloned to the right rear. "B" was to take with it one howitzer for direct laying.

About 0540 Sgt Grant awakened the battalion commander with the information that enemy activity was increasing, and a few minutes thereafter, the enemy attacked the outpost and CP with fire from mortars, rifle grenades, 20mm machine guns, and other small arms, and began moving southwest. Batteries "A" and "B" were ordered to attack at once, and enemy fire was returned by members of Headquarters Battery and Battery "D," 531st AAA Battalion. Capt Sandager of the latter unit was ordered to attack with a squad of hastily gathered men southeast from the CP in the gap between the outpost and Battery "A."

Capt Coltrin, acting on orders from Lt Col Vieman, radioed the rear CP that the forward CP was



Top: Easy marching, and (bottom) not so easy—seventy miles on foot in three days

being attacked by a group estimated to be between a platoon and a company of enemy infantry, who were employing mortars, machine guns and small arms. This transmission was made possible through the gallantry of Sgt Pruette, who despite mortar fire falling twenty feet from his radio, maintained communications throughout. In the meantime, Lt Col Vieman had established an OP in the attic of the forward CP and decided that fire from Battery "C" could be employed against the enemy.

A warning to Batteries "A" and "B" not to cross the

road was issued and elements that had already penetrated across the road withdrew so that artillery could be used. Wire communications were established between the CP and the attic to direct fire. An attempt had been made during the night to establish wire communications between the forward and rear CPs. It was impossible to make contact; so it was assumed that the Germans had cut the line soon after wire trucks had passed them.

Lt Col Vieman, with Sgt Grant acting as telephone operator, started adjustment of fire on the

enemy, and soon after a white flag was shown by one group of Germans. The artillery fire was stopped. Prisoners later testified that it was the artillery fire which caused them to surrender.

In the meantime Battery "A," led by Capt McCauley and 1st Sgt Russel, had been attacking vigorously in the face of intense fire from all enemy weapons; they also saw the white flag, and Capt McCauley accepted the surrender of that particular group. At the same time, Maj Clement moved from the CP in an armored halftrack commandeered from near-by TD troops. It was fired upon by another group of enemy who may not have known of the surrender of part of their force, and returned to the CP after firing effectively on the enemy. Maj Clement suggested to Lt Col Vieman that it was possible that the halftrack might have frightened the Germans, and that he and Lt Col Vieman approach on foot. Upon advancing, it was discovered that the remaining German soldiers had already surrendered to Capt McCauley of Battery "A."

Total enemy casualties: ninety-six enlisted men, including six wounded, and three officers taken prisoner; five dead. Enemy equipment, aside from horses, included nine loaded wagons, one truck, one 20mm antiaircraft gun, and a large quantity of small arms together with several machine guns and burp guns.

Casualties sustained by the 230th Field Artillery were: five dead enlisted men from Battery "A" and one enlisted man wounded; two enlisted men wounded from Battery "B" when a burning ammunition wagon exploded after the fight was over.

Casualties sustained by Battery "D," 531st AAA Battalion: one enlisted man killed, five wounded, four of whom were wounded in the explosion of the ammunition wagon.

While this action was going on, Companies "A," "B" and "D" of our 1st Battalion were also engaged with a column of enemy troops, including horse-drawn vehicles which were encountered in a wooded draw near the Paris-Caen highway. The enemy was discovered at dusk, and most of the subsequent fighting took place in the darkness. Enemy machine-gun and 20mm ack-ack fire was directed principally on the highway and was of such intensity that the area was known later as "Lightning Boulevard." The entire action was characterized by confusion caused by the darkness. The battalion commander was caught in the front lines with Companies "A" and "D" and, because of the intense machine-gun fire, was forced to remain in this position throughout the night.

In the end, the Germans were forced to withdraw, but not without leaving many dead and wounded behind. Several hundred prisoners were taken the next day.

It is of interest to record here that the French who live in this part of the country were extremely helpful to our cause and did anything they could to aid in the defeat of the enemy. As an indication of their attitude is the treatment they accorded to collaborationists. If given a free hand, they showed no mercy to the men. Women who were more than friendly with the Germans were seized and their hair shaved off, after which swastikas were painted on their foreheads and they were forced to parade through the streets of the towns to the jeers and taunts of the populace.

On the 23d, 342 prisoners were taken. The Regiment cleared the following towns of the enemy: Hardencourt, Cocherel, Vaux-sur-Eure, Jouy-sur-Eure, Croisy-sur-Eure, Fontaine-sous-Jouy, St. Aquiline de Pacy. Cannon Company seized the battalion commander of 1st Battalion, 34th Infantry. So far as the 17th GAF Division is concerned, it is believed that we completely destroyed its combat efficiency.

On August 24th, the Regiment confined its activity to the clearing out of small enemy groups trapped in our area together with the consolidation of our defensive position. In doing so forty-eight more prisoners were taken.

Being in Corps reserve on the 25th August, the Regimental Combat Team held a static position and prepared itself to move on Corps order. There was no enemy activity except for a few stragglers who were quickly rounded up. Seven prisoners were taken during the day.

On the 26th, orders were received stating that the Combat Team, plus Company "B" of the 823d Tank Destroyer Battalion, would move to an assembly area located southwest of Mantes Gassicourt the following day. In compliance, the Regiment moved to the vicinity of Breval on August 27th, and at 0800, August 28th, it traveled twelve miles by motor to the vicinity of Porcheville. It was necessary to make this move by shuttling with our organic vehicles. Passing through Parneaux, Soindres, Nonganville and Mantes, the Regiment crossed the Seine River, thus achieving a goal which in the not too distant past seemed to be a great one.

At 1330, on this day, orders were received to attack. The 3d Battalion plus the 30th Reconnaissance Troop and one company of medium tanks pushed the enemy back four and one-half miles to the



Have you any eggs?

town of Meulan. At 0800, August 29th, after clearing the town of Meulan, the 1st and 3d Battalions continued the attack. In the face of determined resistance from elements of the 6th Parachute Division and the 18th GAF Division, they succeeded in clearing the towns of Jouy-le-Moutier, Vincourt, Cheverchement, Triel-sur-Seine, Glatigny, Choisy, Maurecourt, Andresy, Beaulieu, Chanteloup-les-Vignes, Pisefontaine, Tresiant and Denouval. This represented an advance of 4.7 miles.

The enemy resisted from a system of strongpoints located at road junctions, in villages, and at desirable locations along our routes of approach. They were found to be well dug-in at Courdemanche, but the most serious resistance was encountered on the outskirts of Villette, France, where Company "C," although losing heavily in a hard fight with enemy paratroopers, succeeded in holding its ground against repeated enemy counterattacks throughout that afternoon and night.

1st Lt James L. Mosby was largely responsible for Company "C" being able to hold. The company met

stubborn enemy resistance in the form of heavy artillery, mortar, antitank and small-arms fire. The only route for evacuating the resulting casualties was covered by an enemy antitank gun. Creeping and crawling for 100 yards under direct fire from this enemy weapon and ever in danger of discovery, Lt Mosby managed to get within a few yards of the gun. He then leaped to his feet and with three well placed grenades, wiped out the weapon and all of its crew. This done, he returned to the road, crossed it and located the 3d Platoon some 300 yards away. The men were badly harassed and disorganized. Lt Mosby pulled them together and personally helped give first aid to the 18 wounded in the area before having them evacuated over the route he had secured by destroying the German gun. His reorganization of the hard hit platoon enabled it to hold valuable ground until relieved.

Lt Col Bradford, and Capt Payne, S-3, of the 1st Battalion were wounded early in this action, and Company "C" lost two of its platoon leaders. The enemy employed direct-fire weapons to knock out several of our tanks and cause havoc among the troops. When



We had help from the French

two platoons of Company "C" were cut off by the fire of one of these field pieces, 1st Lt James L. Mosby, then in command of Company "C," crawled forward one hundred yards under enemy fire and knocked the weapon out of action with hand grenades. To relieve the two platoons which had suffered the heaviest in casualties, Company "B" sent one platoon under the leadership of 1st Lt Edward W. Hunn to make contact and help hold the area against the enemy pressure. He succeeded in fighting his way through to the beleaguered platoons, and upon finding that their officers had been wounded, organized a defense which was extremely successful in beating off numerous enemy attempts to flank our lines with machine-gun teams. Heavy concentrations of artillery in Corps strength eventually stopped the enemy attack in this sector, and the Germans withdrew at 0400 on the 30th of August.

In the meantime, the loop of the Seine River south

of Boisemont was investigated by the Regimental I & R Platoon and found to be clear of the enemy.

On the 30th of August the enemy withdrew before our troops, leaving small detachments at road junctions and towns, as previously, in order to force our troops to deploy. These rear-guard elements were not informed of the direction or route of withdrawal, and no arrangements were made for them to rejoin their units. They were apparently to be sacrificed to secure the retreat of higher-priority units. We pressed them closely, and the German withdrawal in force took place just prior to the arrival of our troops at many points.

Before we jumped off, a German medic came to our lines and said there were a number of wounded in the town of Condecourt, and that since the Germans were moving out, he asked if we would help the enemy wounded in the town. He said they would guarantee the safety of our men. We agreed, sent medics into the town who, unmolested, administered first aid to the wounded men. The Regiment attacked at 0800, cleared the towns of Condecourt and Courdinanche, which had previously held up the advance, and went on to seize the towns of Menucourt, Boisemont, Jouy-le-Moutier, Gency, Cergy, Pontoise, Courselles, Epluches, Vaux, Liesse, and Eragny. At Condecourt, we took forty prisoners, eighteen of them wounded. Here, Sgt "Red" Johnson, Antitank Company, had two fingers shot off.

Moving out at 0700 on the 31st of August, the Regimental Combat Team met little resistance and progressed rapidly. In all, twenty-two towns were liberated, including Champagne, Chambley, Persan, Persan Beaumont, Le Mesnil-en-Thelle, Bernes, Boran, Crouy-en-Thelle, Morangles, Bonqueval, les Sablons, Blaincourt les Precy, Montceary, Percy-sur-Oise, Le Ma Tray, Cramoisy, St. Vaast les Melloy, Barrisseuse and le Columbier. This constituted an advance of seventeen and one-half miles, the entire distance being covered by foot.

On the hills north of the town of Hardcourt, the Regimental commander saw the Eiffel Tower and the spires of the Church of the Sacred Heart for the first time since June, 1918.

On this day, a Frenchman who had only one leg walked the entire distance with our troops, pointing out good routes of approach and supplying us with valuable information concerning the terrain. Old "Peg Leg" marched with us for many days, and was a constant morale builder to the tired and weary.

The month of August was one of great importance



The French were hungry because the Germans had stripped the country of food

for the 120th Infantry Regiment. It saw our men meet and defeat the best troops Hitler commanded; it saw our men push the enemy from the vicinity of Mortain in western France back to the Seine. At the end of this historic month, our troops were driving relentlessly toward the Belgian border. This great drive was accomplished in seventeen days, and each man more than did his part to carry us forward victoriously. During this period, the men of the 120th Infantry demonstrated unusual perseverance and physical stamina while participating in long marches in pursuit of the fleeing enemy. Realizing that with every step forward the Germans were being driven back to their own borders, the men of the Regiment drove on relentlessly, sometimes averaging as much as seventy miles in three days. It was a supreme example of determination and coordination by all units. Difficult problems of transportation and supply were mastered. The enemy had ample cause to know that they were being pressed by our Combat Team.

During August the Regiment took 722 prisoners. These Germans were from many different units, chief among which were the 1st SS Panzer Division (Hitler's Own Division), the 17th G.A.F. Division, the 10th SS Panzer Division, the 18th G.A.F. Division, the 6th Parachute Division and the 621st Artillery Battalion. The principal regiments met were the 34th and 47th Regiments of the 17th G.A.F. A number of Russian laborers were also seized. The commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, 34th Regiment, was captured. A vast amount of enemy material was either seized or destroyed.

The contribution of our men to the final victory had been great. The Germans were hurled back in every engagement, and their many reverses were an indication of the fighting spirit of the whole Regimental Combat Team. Since landing on the Normandy beaches we had become seasoned on the field of battle. We were feeling the confidence born of great success.



Infantry and tanks of the 30th Division marching through a Normandy town

SEPTEMBER

Early on the morning of the 1st of September, 1944, orders were received from Division to continue what was described as a "pursuit" of the enemy. In doing so, we were to follow the route of the task force which had previously set forth under the command of Brigadier General William K. Harrison. This task force was composed of elements drawn from the 30th Infantry Division, plus special attached units.

Accordingly, late in the afternoon the 120th Infantry Combat Team¹ left the vicinity of Cramoisy, France, and traveled the whole of northeastern France to enter Belgium.

Leaving Cramoisy, we proceeded to Mello, Clermont, St. Dennis, and then to Roye. At 0305 on September 2d we crossed the famous Somme River and entered Peronne. Traveling west of Bellicourt on the San Quentin Canal, we passed through Fins and at 0500 we were forced to halt the column southwest of Cambrai until 1500 because of enemy action against the task force to our front. Entering Cambrai, we pushed on to Anzin, St. Amand and then to Hollain, Belgium. This was done in cold, wet weather, accompanied by high winds. We covered the 118 miles by motor (and three miles by foot) so rapidly that large groups of enemy were left behind us. It is believed that ours was the first infantry division of all the Allied forces to cross the Belgian border. A great many of these names and other places near by were associated with action which our division experienced in World War I. The Regimental coat-of-arms symbolizes the crossing of the San Quentin Canal by the tunnel appearing thereon.

Our leading elements entered an assembly area near Bruyelle, Belgium, at 0240 on the 3d of September, with the whole of the Regiment closing in by 0540. The highway over which we advanced was liberally strewn with destroyed vehicles, some tanks, many vans, plus a large number of dead horses and carts.

TOURNAI

At 0700 we were ordered to release all our trucks to the 117th Infantry so that it could move from France to Belgium. In the evening, the Regimental CP moved forward into Tournai where the battalions were set up in the vicinity. Roadblocks were established at strategic points leading into the town and preparations made to defend the area from any enemy who might attempt a counterblow, which was

unlikely, or who might attempt to break out of the trap which our forces had created in northern France and Belgium. The reconnaissance parties of the 2d and 3d Battalions encountered considerable enemy fire in the vicinity of their assembly areas. The Regimental CP was located in a girls' school and later moved across the river to the chateau of Mademoiselle de Toit.

From the 4th to the 7th of September, the Regiment remained in Tournai and the vicinity. On the 4th, the 2d Battalion received word from Belgian partisans that forty Germans were in the woods near Marrbrey. The battalion sent a reinforced platoon to search the area. The force killed two officers, one a captain and the other a lieutenant, wounded two enlisted men, and captured a third. During this period our men continued to train for five hours each day; one-half hour of close order drill was held each morning and afternoon; radio operators were given further instruction. The men were highly strung and in a state of excitement from the constant pressure of the drive across France. For this reason, the training was found necessary and beneficial in keeping the troops occupied and improving matters of discipline and administration.

Each battalion reviewed the use of flamethrowers in the attack of fortified positions. On the 5th of September the Division Band entertained each battalion, to the obvious delight of citizenry who lived near by.

It was on that day that reports became current amongst the Belgians that the Brussels radio had stated that Germany had quit the war. This, of course, was entirely untrue.

Early on the morning of the 5th, British armor began its drive toward Brussels. Through the 3d Battalion positions in Antoin, southeast of Tournai, passed the rumbling columns. About midmorning a German ammunition truck, towing a 75mm gun, was flushed from the woods north of town and, rushing past the British, reached the 3d Battalion lines. There, realizing the hopelessness of the situation, the Germans set their truck on fire and dispersed into the woods, where they were later seized. The truck began crackling and exploding, meanwhile, and caused surprise and anguish to the civilians, who were greeted as they returned from church by a volcano which spewed flaming rockets into their homes. In terror and panic, they made attempts to rescue valuables from the houses exposed to the fire from the burning truck. Finally, to insure the safety of the civilians, 1st Lt Edward M.

¹120th Infantry Regiment plus: 230th Field Artillery Bn.; Co. "C," 105th Eng. Bn.; Co. "C," 105th Med. Bn.; Co. "B," 823d TD Bn.; 113th Field Artillery Bn.; two batteries, 531st AAA Bn.



The Route to Belgium



Tournai, Belgium



... where we had three days of rest

Hill, Battalion S-3, T/Sgt Harry R. Peters, Sergeant Major, and S/Sgt William P. Veteto, S-2 Sergeant, stationed themselves on either side of the vehicle and, dangerously vulnerable to the fire themselves, kept civilians from dashing foolishly into the houses. The damage to civilian property was heavy, but when the fire died down, few of the townspeople had been hit, and the 75mm gun was intact.

On the 7th of September the Regimental Combat Team, plus attachments, crossed an IP located at Fontenoy at 0700. Our route carried us through Bourgeon, Wasmes, Baugnies, Braffe, Willaupuis, Tourpes, Ellignies St. Anne, Aubechies, Blicquy, Huissignies, Madeuse, Chievres, Brugelette, Hoves, Rebecq Rognon, Hennuyeres, Haut Ittre, Braine L'Alleud, and then to an assembly area in the vicinity of Ohain. Traveling a distance of over seventy miles, our units closed into the area at 1415. During the day we passed over the site of the Battle of Waterloo at Mont St. Jean. It was here that another man who sought to rule the world, one Bonaparte, met defeat at the hands of the Duke of Wellington. A temporary CP was located in the shadow of the statue of the Lion of Waterloo. The Commanding Officer and his staff had dinner that evening at the Chateau de Flex with the Comte and Comtesse d' Ausenbourg.

With the troops moving forward on foot on the 8th of September in order to conserve fuel, all vehicles advanced by bounds and all motors which were not absolutely required with the leading elements moved separately. Leading as advance guard were the 2d Battalion, Cannon Company, one platoon of tank destroyers, one platoon from Antitank Company, and one platoon from the Engineer Battalion. A patrol to protect the left flank was sent out. It operated at a

distance of one to two miles and consisted of the Reconnaissance Platoon of the Tank Destroyer Battalion, one section of 81mm mortars, one section of heavy machine guns, and one antitank gun. Our men passed through or near Hixensart, Biergas, Wavre, Le Pres, Grez Doicean, Jadoigne, Pietrain, and then to an area south of Tirlemont near Noduwez.

The following morning, at 0800, we continued our advance to the east, arriving at an area in the vicinity of Huerne St. Pierre. Some of our elements walked as far as thirty-one miles and the last of our troops reached the area at 2000.

EBEN EMAEL AND THE MAAS LOCKS

With the objective of seizing the bridges spanning the Albert Canal in our zone of action and reducing any enemy action west of the canal, our troops passed through the 113th Cavalry Group at 0800 on the 10th



British en route to Brussels



Main entrance of Fort Eben Emael

of September. The Regimental Command Group followed our troops closely, moving the Command Post to Millen at noontime and, at 1830, to Sichen Sussen. Aside from sporadic artillery fire during the day enemy resistance was negligible.

By 1930, the 3d Battalion had reached and entered a section of Fort Eben Emael and, by the end of the day, the famous and historic fort had been taken and the position thoroughly consolidated. Except for considerable artillery and mortar fire, which came from across the canal, Germany's self-style impregnable bastion, whose capture from the Allies astounded the military world in 1940, had fallen without a shot to Lt Col Paul W. McCollum's men. However, the price was heavy for us since Maj Leland L. Lambe, commanding officer of the 2d Battalion, was killed and the Regiment thereby lost one of its most outstanding officers, an officer who had contributed greatly to the success of our arms.

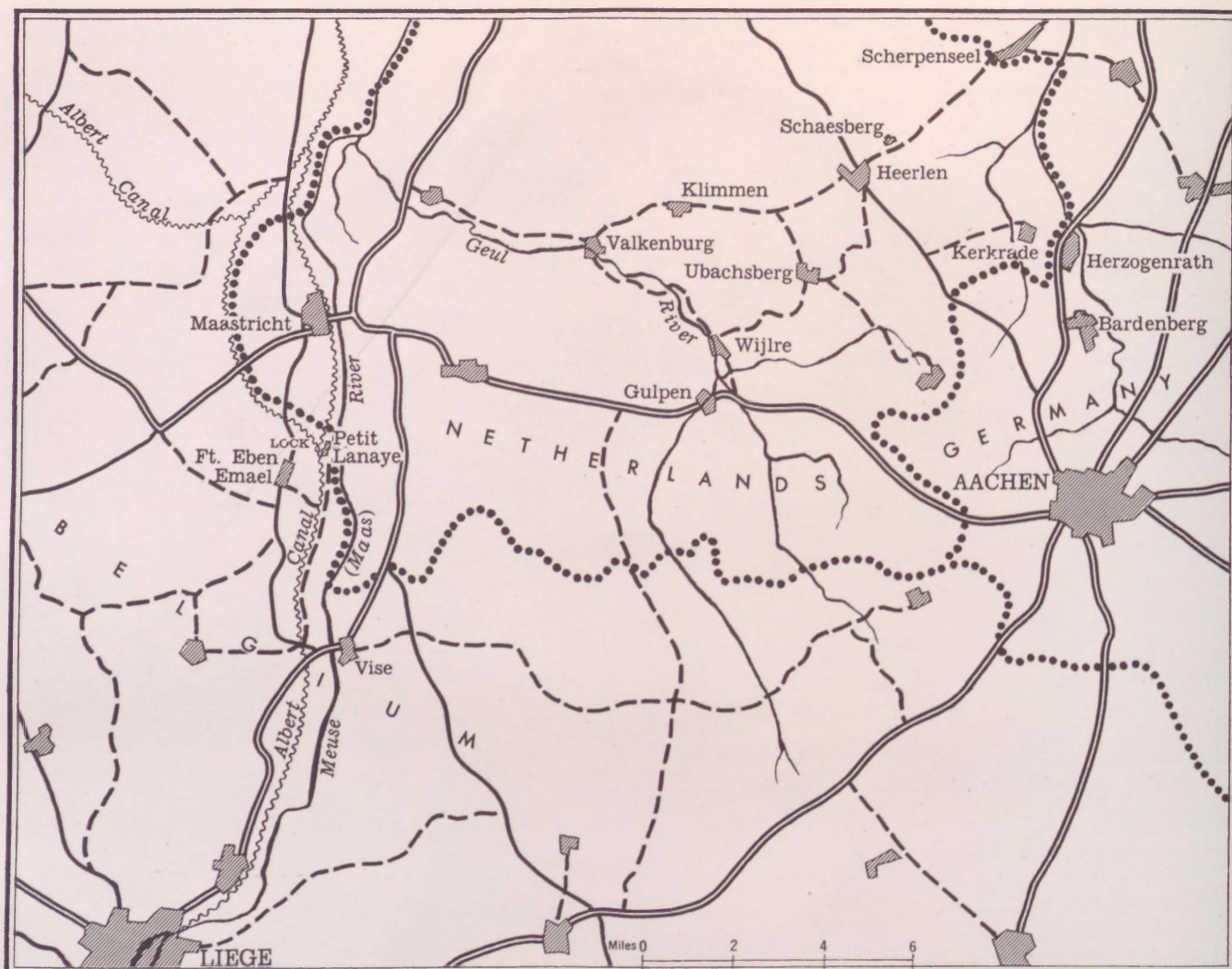
The following morning Capt James E. Lott, commander of Company "M," was also lost to the Regiment when he was mortally wounded by artillery fire.

He died the next day at the clearing station. Affectionately remembered by his associates as an adept story teller and exceptionally cool commander, this officer had developed a new system for firing the 81mm mortars, a system which was adopted by other heavy weapons companies throughout the Regiment and Division. During the hedgerow fighting, mortar observers used sound-power telephones and 536 radios for communication, giving orders pretty much according to the methods taught at Fort Benning. Observing that many casualties resulted from stringing wire, which was frequently knocked out by enemy shelling; that the 536 radios did not possess sufficient range to keep in contact with the guns when the rifle companies moved ahead in the attack; and that too much time was consumed in getting fire on targets; Capt Lott instituted a new system, based on principles used by artillerymen.

The most prominent feature in this system was firing from map data. Observers were attached to the rifle companies and moved with the company commander in the attack. Whenever a target for mortar



Major Leland L. Lambe



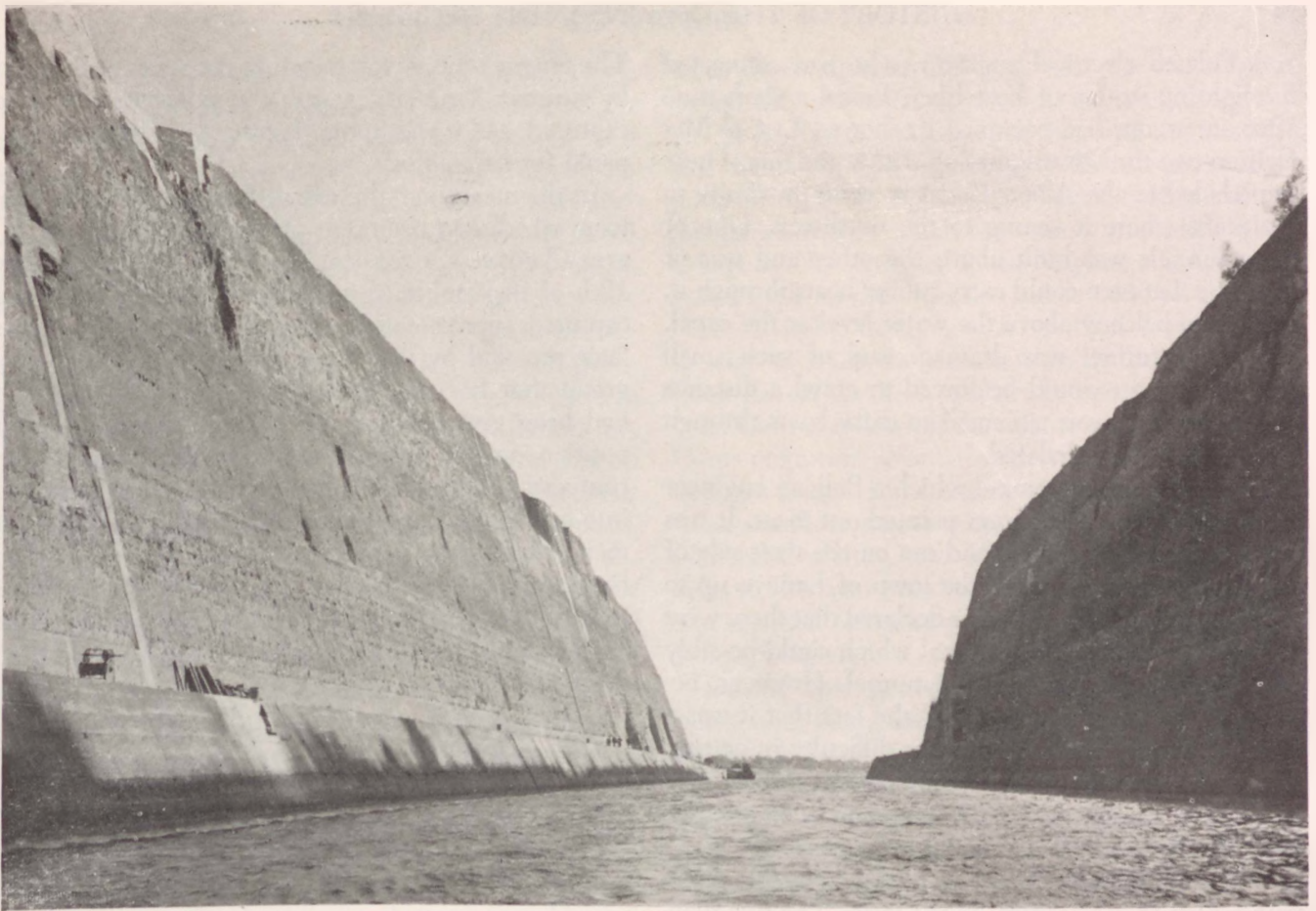
Fort Eben Emael-Maastricht-Kerkrade

fire was found the observer simply used the 300 radio carried by the CO's radio operator. Naming the thrust line, previously drawn on the maps of the area in question, he could quickly give the range and deflection from the thrust line. In turn, the Fire Direction Center, referring to its maps, could quickly determine the location of the target and compute the azimuth by means of a protractor. In this manner the mortars could remain in position for a longer time because of the increased range of communication and thus could be ready to fire more quickly than if often required to displace forward. Supporting fires could furthermore be delivered in much less time with greater initial accuracy.

It was later learned that on the morning of the 10th of September there were six officers and 300 men in the fort who had evacuated the position as our troops approached during the day. Investigation revealed that

it had apparently been used by the Germans as a machine shop and barracks. Upon seeing the many reinforced concrete pillboxes and subterranean chambers, it was hard to understand why the Germans did not put up at least some resistance to hold the position. It is undoubtedly true that we would have been successful in seizing the fort in any event, but the enemy could have made things hot for us had they chosen to do so. As it was, they did not fire a shot and, with the exception of artillery which was directed into the area, our men had no difficulty in entering and seizing this great prize.

But the 3d Battalion in the town adjacent to the fort was not permitted to enjoy the "prize" long without the enemy making his presence known. Lt Jack W. Gollust, Communications Officer, had no sooner straightened up a room in the CP when an enemy shell struck the window sill above his head and made shambles of the carefully tidied-up apartment. The



The King Albert Canal

Headquarters Company kitchen literally received a jolt when a dud landed only five feet from the kitchen tent. Everyone—including the cooks—were digging in furiously during the following two days.

The night of the 10th, patrols from the 2d and 3d Battalions were ordered to cross the Albert Canal during darkness to investigate the terrain between the canal and the Meuse (Maas) River to the east. Neither succeeded in getting across because of the violent opposition and because the enemy had observation from across the canal, being able to see all of the exposed approach even at night. Later, when crossings were successfully made, the enemy was driven by fire from the positions which afforded him this excellent observation—fire originating from the high ground held by our men west of the canal.

On the 11th of September, Company "A" moved into a position at Vroenhoven to protect the left flank of the Division. At 1225, the 2d Battalion was ordered to cross the Albert Canal opposite the village of Lanaye in order to take the town and drive all the enemy from the island on which the town is located. At 1700, mak-

ing use of assault boats, one platoon of Company "E" succeeded in crossing the canal and by 1930 it was meeting opposition in Lanaye consisting of small-arms and machine-gun fire. Another platoon was sent across the canal and the positions in the village held by our men were consolidated by 2030.

It was realized that it was imperative to seize the locks which spanned the Maas (Meuse) Canal in order to prevent the enemy from blowing them up. These locks were of great importance since they controlled the water to the south, preventing it from flooding the territory to the north. If the enemy succeeded in destroying them, it would have meant the inundation of a large area of land, including the city of Maastricht; this would have bogged down the advance of the Allied troops operating on our left flank.

The northeast section of Fort Eben Emael rests directly on the Albert Canal at a point where it swings to the northwest. A branch of the canal, however, continues north at this point and is known as the Maas Canal. Immediately above this junction are located the Maas Locks.

A Belgian electrical engineer, who had connected the lighting system of Fort Eben Emael a short time after our troops had occupied it, showed Lt Col McCollum two tunnels originating within the fort. These tunnels led to the Albert Canal in close proximity to the point where it swung to the northwest. One of these tunnels was built above the other and was of such size that men could carry rubber boats through it. It led to a balcony above the water level at the canal. The other tunnel was drainage and of such small size that a man would be forced to crawl a distance of 300 yards. It was too small to carry boats through even if they were deflated.

There was a third tunnel which a Belgian engineer in charge of the lock system pointed out to us. It was nearly one mile in length and ran on the west side of the Albert Canal opposite the town of Lanaye up to the Maas Locks. The engineer declared that there were air vents along the Albert Canal which could possibly be used to gain entry into the tunnel. However, because of the extreme length and the fact that it was a drainage tunnel and offered great difficulty in getting through it, the Regimental commander and Lt Col McCollum considered it to be impractical to attempt to send men through it except as a last resort.

Colonel Birks had the choice of three possible plans with which to gain control of the locks. The first plan was to send men through the lower tunnel in the fort to the canal. Here, boats would be dropped down to them from the upper passage at the point where both tunnels met the canal. These men would then cross to the canal and gain the tip of the island on the far side of the Maas Canal. The second plan was to send a platoon across the Albert Canal at a point where Company "E" had crossed earlier in taking Lanaye, and then send them north in an endeavor to seize the locks from the south. The third plan was to make use of the long tunnel.

Colonel Birks, after consultation with Lt Col McCollum and 1st Lt Edward M. Hill of the 3d Battalion, together with the two Belgian engineers, decided to combine the first and second plans. One squad was to cross the canal in the vicinity of the fort and two squads were to use the overland route from Lanaye; whichever group arrived at the locks first would be supported by the arrival of the second group. Thus at 1715 a squad from Company "K," under the command of Lt Grow of the 105th Engineer Battalion, worked crossed the Albert Canal by boats that were lowered from the upper tunnel. An engineer officer was sent because the locks were reported to be mined.

The enemy who were protecting the locks were taken by surprise. One officer and four enlisted men were captured, and it was found that the locks had been prepared for demolition.

In the meantime, the rest of the Company "K" platoon, which had been sent through the Company "E" area (Lanaye), arrived at the locks. At 0650 on the 12th of September, this platoon reported that it had captured approximately seventy-five prisoners. It was later revealed by the officer in charge of this enemy group that he was commanding a task force which had been given the mission of counterattacking our position on the locks. Having set forth without reconnaissance, they had become confused and stumbled into our position sooner than they had expected. Our men allowed the enemy to enter a trap which had been quickly prepared for them. When the Germans entered the position, our men opened up on them with machine-gun fire from the front and a BAR from the rear. Result:

76 captured

10 killed

6 wounded (taken to rear that night)

4 wounded (died during day)

96 Total.

Not one man escaped. All were accounted for.

The ten wounded enemy could not be retrieved during daylight, since the enemy commanded the road along the bank of the Maas River which ran parallel to and in close proximity to the canal, being some one hundred yards away at this point. They were evacuated at nightfall and of the ten, four died during the daylight hours. In addition to intense enemy fire, the pitiful cries for aid during the day did not make the occupation of the locks any more pleasant for our men.

At 2045 on this day, the 3d Battalion stopped a civilian who was trying to get through our lines to Maastricht. He was released after showing papers signed by our Division commander which stated that the city must clean out the Germans or our men would have to take the town.

During the day, a woman operating a German radio was frequently heard apparently describing our troop movements.

Our observation posts, located on the heights of Fort Eben Emael (which was reminiscent of the situation at Mortain, France), reported enemy reserves

moving south to meet the attack of the 117th and 119th Infantry Regiments. Artillery fire was directed on them which totally disorganized one group of 150 enemy. Some were seen to be blown into the air; others fled in all directions. Approximately thirty finally succeeded in banding together and retreating to the north but again our artillery was effective and it was doubtful if many escaped. The enemy artillery withdrew too, much to the relief of the observers who from the advantageous posts had watched the big German guns, and had seen green-clad cannoneers come forward to load 88mm rounds into the breeches. No doubt, too, the enemy had sensed the presence of Americans on the heights of the fort and the cliffs close by, for shells had fallen consistently within 500 yards of the posts. Observers were glad to see the 88s leave.

Extensive enemy minefields in the vicinity of the locks were laid out in regular patterns. This was the first time we had found minefields of this type and it indicated that the enemy had been preparing for defense or withdrawal from the area for some time.

The 2d Battalion, having released Company "F" to the 1st Battalion and Company "G" to the 3d Battalion, and having received Company "A" and Company "K" in exchange, remained in position under Corps control. On the 13th of September, the remainder of the Regiment moved to an assembly area northeast of Vise.

In doing so, it crossed the Maas River and entered an assembly area near Mouland by 1054. Late in the afternoon, we pushed on into Holland, with the Regimental command group crossing the border at 1840 and establishing the Command Post at Reymersstock. Preparation was immediately made for a further advance to the east. Our Division was the first American unit to enter Holland.

The 119th Infantry had crossed into Holland before the 120th at a point on the boundary south of Fort Eben Emael. The 117th had attacked through to seize the city of Maastricht from the rear (east), and was storming across the Maas to the west, the main section of the city.

The 2d Battalion was attached by Corps to the 1115th Engineer Combat Group on the 13th, with orders to strike the area north of Lanaye and the Maas Locks, toward the west edge of Maastricht. On the night of the 13th, the battalion moved north from Lanaye, passed the area of the locks, where it picked up the elements of Company "K" which held the ground there. With Company "E" in the lead, and still with Companies "A" and "K" attached in the ab-

sence of Companies "F" and "G," the battalion attacked the steep hill, opposite Fort Eben Emael.

The high knoll at the fork of the canal was strategic, and the enemy had left troops to defend it. After the jump-off at 1800, the battalion pushed ahead during the entire night, which was rainy and pitch black. Company "E" struggled to the heights, and had established itself on the objective before 0630 on the 14th.

At daylight, Company "E" pushed forward again to seize by 0825 the sizable town of Canne north of Eben Emael on the banks of the canal.

In Canne, following the seizure of this bridgehead, Corps engineers at once set to work on the construction of a bridge. By afternoon it was completed, but its weak crossbeams gave way, and it is said that just as General Corlett, Corps commander, went forward to cross it, the span buckled and caved into the canal. It was repaired sufficiently to permit the crossing of foot troops, however.

During this period plans for movement farther north were being completed, and a patrol had already been dispatched into the new area. The international boundary was less than a mile north of Canne, and the leader of the patrol which crossed it, S/Sgt Frederick W. Woods, of Company "E," was the first man of the Regiment to cross into Holland.

The following day, the 15th of September, the entire battalion, still with Company "E" in the lead, drove north at 1030 across the island formed by the Maas River and the Albert Canal. It surged through a western tip of Maastricht, and continued through numerous small villages as far north as Smeernaas, where the battalion CP was established that night. The entire island, even farther north and west, had been cleared by 1330, with only spotty resistance encountered. On the 16th September, the 2d Battalion was relieved of assignment to Corps, and reverted to the 120th Infantry.

A brief review of the accomplishments of the past was made in a report from Division on this day. Lt Col Hall, G-2, in his "Notes to Company Commanders," stated:

"In less than one hundred days since the landings in Normandy which were given nine hours by the Germans to last on the beaches, Allied forces have swept France clean with the exception of a few isolated small pockets, have liberated Belgium, have entered the Duchy of Luxembourg, are threatening the Siegfried Line on a hundred-mile front, have crossed into Germany at two points, have reduced the German Army in the west to a fraction of its original strength.



Civilians sometimes helped

This Division for its part played an important role in holding open the routes between the two beaches, helped carry the ball on the line-plunge breakthrough at St. Lo, withheld the counterattack at Mortain destroying an important part of Hitler's armor and four divisions in the act, helped to keep up the pressure against the then retreating Germans so that they could not make a stand at the Seine, then made one of the longest, fastest dashes in military history up through France and into Belgium and is now getting ready to knock at the door of Germany itself. Although it cannot be predicted whether or not the knock will be answered, the door itself will be opened."

Aggressive patrolling on the 14th of September revealed many enemy dispositions. Contact was made with friendly reconnaissance troops to the east and southeast of our positions and on this day, Lt James J. Butler realized an ambition which many of us have had. Leading the I and R Platoon with the mission to make contact with the 1st Division on our right, he crossed the German border at 1730 near Wolfshaag, Holland, east of Aachen, Germany. He was the first

individual in the Regiment to set foot on German soil.

On the 15th of September, active patrolling to the front and flanks of the Regiment was carried out and instruction was given our men in the tactics and technique of attacking fortified positions. With the Siegfried Line but a few miles away and already under observation the men were seriously concerned with the training.

With the fall of Maastricht, in which action our 2d Battalion played the important role of clearing the large island of the enemy, our Regiment again figured in the news. Prisoners declared that Hitler had ordered this island held at all cost. The British Broadcasting Company announced that this was the first large city of Holland to be liberated and that when the Germans took Maastricht early in the war, they did so with hand-picked troops who had been specially trained prior to making the assault on this key city.

Little fights which seldom are recorded in history often are big battles to the participants. Such an affray occurred during the 14th and 15th of September. While most of the men of the Regiment were engaged

in training, patrolling, cleaning of equipment, or relaxation, a small 2d Battalion detachment was guarding the lock of the Albert Canal. The enemy had excellent observation and immediate knowledge of the terrain in that vicinity and knew what positions our forces had occupied. During the day of 14 September 1944, strong enemy combat patrols consistently attacked these positions but were repulsed. At 0400 on 15 September, the enemy made his major effort to retake the locks, using two strong combat patrols. The key to the defense was held by a machine-gun section of Company "H," led by S/Sgt John Rabreau who, at the time of the attack, was returning to his gun positions from Fort Eben Emael loaded with hand grenades and other ammunition. As the enemy approached the machine-gun position, the gun crew opened fire and immediately received the full fury of the hostile patrol's fire from both rifles and automatic weapons. The enemy also used hand grenades, some of which landed within a few yards of the gun. Realizing that the gun position must be maintained if the locks were to be held, S/Sgt Rabreau worked his way through heavy automatic fire to the gun, and shouted orders to the half-surrounded crew. Then, loaded with hand grenades, he fearlessly crawled forward in front of the gun until he was within a few yards of the enemy. In full view of the Germans, he threw one grenade after another into the midst of the patrol. This courageous, daring and effective action routed the enemy completely, causing them to run pell-mell in the direct fire of our machine gun. With this accomplished, S/Sgt Rabreau made his way to his second gun and directed its fire against the enemy. Under this fire, the attack was repulsed, and the fight was over.

THROUGH HOLLAND TO GERMAN SOIL

From the vicinity of Reymersloot, the Regiment pushed to the northeast on the 16th of September with the 1st Battalion on the left and the 3d Battalion on the right. The 2d Battalion, which had been released by XIX Corps, arrived at its assigned assembly area at 1000 and followed the 1st Battalion at 2000 yards. By 1055, our men passed beyond Gulpen and the Regimental CP was moved to a point three-quarters of a mile to the west of the town. At 1850, each battalion had reached its objective and was defending the territory east of Eijs, where the Regimental CP was moved at 1900. During the day, we had successfully attacked a dug-in enemy from the 773d *Landeschutzen* Battalion. They defended their

position from a continuous trench system comparable to the type used in World War I.

Faced with this new problem, staff members went to work, and after acute study of the terrain both from the ground and from aerial photographs, they had planned a maneuver destined to roll up the enemy's flank. Major Ellis W. Williamson, then Regimental S-3, knew that the ground around the trenches was bare and easily covered by fire from the well-located enemy positions. Deciding to utilize the folds and gentle rolls in the ground instead, he explained how, without being seen, the troops could move close to the enemy which Capt Glazier, S-2, had accurately plotted on his map. The troops executed this plan even better than expected, and so adroitly maneuvered behind the hills that they were upon the rear of the Germans' flank before they could be observed. The enemy crumbled, defeated totally by the surprise of the maneuver. The 1st and 2d Companies of the 773d *Landeschutzen* Battalion were totally annihilated and the rest disorganized. A total of 251 prisoners was taken, including five officers; many enemy were killed.

Just before entering the town of Eijs, the leading tank was stopped by a loyal Dutchman at an underpass. He said that there were two German 88mm guns lying in wait for our tanks to proceed up the road after going through the underpass. Colonel Birks investigated and was able to see one of the gun positions. He therefore held up the tanks and caused machine guns to be maneuvered into position so as to knock out this threat to our advance. This resulted in the capture of the enemy crews. The Dutchman also revealed that a friend of his had ten prisoners in a barn near by. This also proved to be true and we added this group to our collection.

At 0800 on the 17th, the 1st Battalion jumped off in the attack with Company "F," a company of medium tanks, one squad of engineers, and an antitank platoon attached. The 3d Battalion, in moving towards the vicinity of Bochoholtz, took twenty-three prisoners early in the morning. Meanwhile, the 2d Battalion went into an assembly area near Simpleveld. In all seventy-five prisoners were taken during the day, but the big news came at 1030 when Company "F" crossed the German frontier and entered the town of Horbach. This represented the Regiment's entry for the first time into Germany in force. They reported that the civilians had hung out white sheets, pillow slips, towels, and, some said, toilet paper, to indicate surrender. When questioned, these people stated that there were no German soldiers in the town.

However, our men saw three of the enemy flee on bicycles up the road to the east.

With the Regimental CP located at Simpleveld, Holland, the enemy harassed the whole of the Regimental area with artillery fire during the night. Exceptionally heavy shells were used; one shattered every window of the building in which the CP was located when it landed fifty yards away. Two landed directly on near-by houses, demolishing them. Two civilians were killed and two wounded. An examination of the shell holes and fragments revealed the shells must have been fired from guns at least of 8-inch caliber.

On the 18th of September a check was made at 0200 which revealed that all telephones in Simpleveld were working and that these lines went into German territory. This dangerous condition was immediately corrected and all units of our Combat Team were instructed to close all switchboards for outgoing calls from any area occupied. On the other hand, since the telephone and telegraph lines in German occupied towns still remained in operation, we were able to receive much information of enemy movements through messages telephoned to us by members of the Dutch underground.

It was clear that the enemy intended to hold Kerkrade. The 1st Battalion, while moving in this direction, became engaged in a stiff fire fight when the Regiment, minus the 3d Battalion, moved eastward at 1500. West of Kerkrade we set up an active defense to protect against possible counterattacks, and extensively patrolled the area. Colonel Birks decided not to enter Kerkrade at this time because there were better defensive positions west of it. Also, Kerkrade, with its 45,000 people, was so solidly built-up that Colonel Birks realized it would take a great number of men to occupy the area safely. This later proved to be a very good decision because we were compelled by lack of supplies, over which we had no control, to remain in a static defensive position for the remainder of the month. The Regimental CP was moved to the vicinity of Bautsch at 1630.

On the morning of the 19th of September, at 0730, the 1st Battalion reported that they had captured a German officer who had walked through one of their minefields after getting off his motorcycle in the vicinity of Onderspekholz. Ordered to halt, he continued on, was shot, and evacuated.

During the entire day much trouble was encountered in our front-line units by civilians roaming around streets where our battalions had some of their positions. They also came through our lines in droves,

having been sent in our direction by the Germans. The enemy was apparently evacuating civilians from the western edge of Kerkrade in order to make use of the cellars of the houses as a protection for infantry against our artillery fire. It was determined that the enemy was digging in between the houses, at road junctions, and guarding all overpasses and bridges in the vicinity where our attack might be canalized.

On the night of the 18th and 19th of September, a heavy-caliber enemy gun, estimated to be 240mm or larger, continued to be active in our sector. The nature of its fire and the type of fragmentation indicated that it probably was a railway gun which constantly shifted its position. It confined its efforts to interdiction and harassing fire over a wide area. This fire was remarkably accurate.

From the 20th through the 30th of September 1944, the Regiment was engaged in aggressive patrolling with a view to discovering enemy dispositions and other pertinent G-2 information. Our troops were instructed in various methods of attack and in the use of arms against fortified positions. In addition to patrol activity we continually manned our observation posts, which contributed greatly to the value of the information obtained, and we improved our positions so as actively to defend to better advantage. The enemy during this period defended his positions to the west of Kerkrade with a series of strongpoints worked into an outpost line along the north-south ridge which passes through the town. For the first few days the artillery fire, although not heavy, represented an increase over the amount he had previously made use of. This artillery fire was interdiction in nature, being concentrated on road junctions and on high ground which he believed might be used by our forces for observation. He also attempted to place fire into locations where it was reasonable to suppose our artillery was located.

A report received from Division on the 23d of September disclosed that so far, in this theater, the First Army had taken 182,000 prisoners. This figure can be compared with the 73,000 taken by the British Second Army, and the 52,000 taken by the Canadian First Army.

Early in the morning of the 25th of September the Dutch Underground reported that the Germans were planning to evacuate all civilians from Kerkrade and vicinity between 0800 and 1200 on that day. The Dutch civilians were to go through our lines to Spekholzerheide and the German civilians (so-called) to Herzogenrath. It was estimated that about 25,000



The Germans drove 37,000 civilians out of Kerkrade

people would be coming in our direction. At 0720 the first civilians began to arrive and from that time until late in the evening thousands passed through our lines. The evacuation of the civilians was expertly handled by our troops, assisted by the Dutch Underground. The people were orderly as they struggled down the streets of Spekholzerheide with their horse carts, baby carriages, hand carts, etc., laden with whatever they could salvage and carry away from their homes. The Dutch Underground men kept them in line and carefully examined these people, pulling any suspected Nazi collaborators or disguised Germans out of line and hustling them off to jail.

For their part, the enemy lived up to their unenviable reputation. Taking advantage of the situation, the "supermen" shelled one of the roads which was glutted with this civilian traffic, killing sixteen and wounding many more. Personnel of the 3d Battalion aid station, located close by, came to the rescue of the seriously hurt and worked tirelessly to assist the innocent wounded. Captain Allen C. Neiswander, 3d Battalion surgeon, was hero of the day. By

1830, the Regimental sector had been cleared of this mass of refugees who continued on their way towards Maastricht. The total estimate of those who passed through our lines was 37,000.

Meanwhile, negotiations had been in progress between a certain priest of Kerkrade and Capt Chris McCullough, executive officer of the 1st Battalion. The priest had helped arrange for the evacuation of civilians, and the same day returned to the Battalion CP again to make the request that Kerkrade be spared shelling, since his hospital there contained many sick. The request could not be granted, but when the building itself was pin-pointed, Capt McCullough said an attempt would be made to avoid hitting it.

Shortly thereafter the priest presented himself at the CP again. The hospital had been shelled again, and now he wanted permission to evacuate the patients from his hospital and bring them to Spekholzerheide. Yes, he said, the German commander had given permission for them to go, and, in fact, feared that they were spying on his installations.

On the 26th, then, at 0900, the exodus began.

Unhappy, frightened and pallid, the patients were wheeled on their hospital beds through the streets. By 1500, they had reached Spekholzerheide, where American ambulances had been ordered to pick them up. During the evacuation people inside one of the ambulances suddenly raised a great hue and cry; a woman with them just at that minute had a baby.

Captain Ezekiel L. Glazier, Regimental S-2, made the following observations and conclusions in which he built a picture of the situation confronting us at the close of the month:

"Our lightning-like advance from France into Belgium and Holland, with penetrations into Germany itself, caught the enemy with his pants down. Despite this, because of our supply difficulties and the desperate resistance of a few Nazi units located in critical sectors, the Germans succeeded in staving off immediate disaster. They suffered from an acute shortage of troops to adequately man the Siegfried Line, and they had practically no reserves behind it. Several small localities, like Kerkrade, which the Allies have not as yet attacked, were held lightly in a force corresponding to that of an observation line.

"But now, the situation has begun to change. The last reserves of manpower, produced by total mobilization, are streaming into the western front. The events at Kerkrade would seem to suggest the manner in which the Germans intended to employ these last reserves. First of all, they will be used to more adequately hold the Siegfried Line.

"Next, they can be expected to reoccupy in force all forward positions not yet taken by us, whether or not these lie within the boundaries of the Reich. They will then evacuate these forward positions of all civilians, because it offers them the following advantages:

"(1) It eliminates espionage on the part of the Allied sympathizers.

"(2) It gives them more liberty in employing all natural obstacles, structures, buildings, etc., for defense; in fact, to give additional depth to the front of the Siegfried Line.

"(3) It enables them to sow additional minefields, install boobytraps, delayed-action mines, etc., undetected and it creates difficulties for the Allies by obliging them to care for evacuees who clog the roads, require food and refuge, etc.

"On the other hand, the present German troop movements, concentrating on a peripheric defense, offer advantages from the Allied point of view. They create excellent targets for saturation and dive bombing after which a quick breakthrough would bring our troops deep into enemy territory where little resistance could be expected from the enemy.

"But the above is only a short-range picture. Given a little time, the Nazis may be able to bring up a sufficient number of green troops to man the Siegfried Line and its outposts almost exclusively with them, and so release from the fixed positions a considerable part of their more seasoned troops. Undoubtedly, the Nazis would use these more seasoned troops to build up a mobile strategic reserve behind the Siegfried Line to give depth and flexibility to the Western Front and give them strong counterattack forces. If we permit this to happen, our task of defeating Germany will become more difficult than it is at present."

On the 30th of September, the 1st Battalion of the 116th Infantry began a reconnaissance in preparation to relieve the 125th Cavalry Squadron on our right flank and thereby protect the right flank of the Corps. When the relief was completed, this battalion together with one company of tank destroyers, became attached to the 120th Infantry Regiment. Plans were being perfected for a big attack on the Siegfried Line. Our troops, located in the vicinity of Terwinselen, Hopel, Spekholzerheide and Imstenraede (all southeast of Heerlen, Holland), were facing the Germans garrisoning the Siegfried Line and its approaches north of Aachen in the vicinity of Kerkrade, Holland, Horbach, Germany and Bocholtz, Holland. We were awaiting the signal to open the final *Battle of Germany*.



OCTOBER

On the 1st of October, the 120th Infantry Regiment was located southeast of Heerlen, Holland, in the vicinity of Terwinselen, Hopel, Spekholzerheide and Imstenraede. It was facing the Siegfried Line and its approaches north of Aachen, Germany. The enemy line extended through Kerkrade, Holland, to Horbach, Germany, and Bochkholtz, Holland.

FACING THE SIEGFRIED LINE

The 30th Division, with the 29th Division operating on its left and the VII Corps on its right, was in contact against a major defensive position except in the southern portion around the city of Kerkrade. The enemy had had at least two weeks in which to construct field fortifications to supplement the permanent emplacements of the Siegfried Line, to sow extensive minefields, to regroup and reorganize his troops, to bring up and dispose artillery, to establish supply lines, to inject *Schutzstaffeln* (SS) troops in small numbers to stiffen resistance, and otherwise to strengthen his positions. Much of this period was one of limited visibility which permitted the enemy to improve his positions without observation or interference, and he took advantage of his opportunities.

All evidence indicated that the Siegfried Line in our sector was the line to be held at all costs. If it were to be breached by our forces the protection for the great industrial cities of the Rhine and Ruhr valleys would be lost, with consequent dire results for the German cause.

Captured enemy documents indicated that the Germans planned to take refuge inside the pillboxes from our mortar and artillery fire, but would augment the observation and fire of the pillboxes by additional observation, automatic fire, and rifle fire from prepared positions in the vicinity. The enemy intended to place mortar fire on areas to the front of each pillbox, and machine guns would lay down final-protective-line fire, even though blanketed with smoke. Any initial penetration of the line would be met by a strong counterattack.

Pursuant to orders received on the 1st of October, the 120th Infantry Combat Team, less the 3d Battalion and plus the 1st Battalion of the 116th Infantry, prepared itself to protect the right flank of the Corps. The plan for breaching the Siegfried Line concerned this Regiment as follows:

The 1st Battalion¹ was to stage a feint attack in the

vicinity of Horbach and another toward a section of Kerkrade, known as Nieuwstraat, on order. Then, upon order, it was to occupy Nieuwstraat and Kerkrade with a company in each and protect the right and rear of the remainder of the Regiment as it passed through the gap in the Siegfried Line created by the 117th and the 119th Infantry Regiments in the vicinity of Rimbarg, Holland, and Ubach, Germany. It was to remain on its objective until relieved.

The 2d Battalion² was to be prepared to attack to the east and seize control of the northern districts of Kerkrade and, upon order, to follow the 3d Battalion through the gap in the line.

Company "F"³ was to move at H-hour to the vicinity of Bautsch, Holland, and then rejoin the 2d Battalion as it moved to pass through the gap in the line.

The 3d Battalion, if it was not used as Division reserve, was to revert to Regimental control on order, pass through the gap in the line behind the 119th Infantry Regiment, then turn south and seize the town of Bardenberg, Germany. When this occurred, it was to have one antitank platoon and one company of tank destroyers (less one platoon) attached.

The 1st Battalion of the 116th Infantry Regiment, attached, was to continue to protect the right flank of the Corps, along the line Horbach, Orabach and Harles.

Cannon Company was to support the feint attack by the 1st Battalion and then be prepared to follow the 3d Battalion through the gap in the Siegfried Line. Antitank Company, less two platoons, was to protect the rear of the Regimental zone. The remaining units of the 823d Tank Destroyer Battalion (less one company) were also to protect the rear installations of the Regiment.

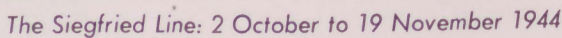
That night a patrol from the 2d Battalion succeeded in reaching the vicinity of Kloosterbosch, Holland, without contacting the enemy, while a patrol from the 1st Battalion of the 116th Infantry reached an area immediately east of Lemiers, Holland, and found individual enemy emplacements unoccupied. At this time the Regimental Command Post was located in Bautsch, Holland.

On the morning of October 2d, Company "B" commenced its advance toward Horbach, while Company "C" advanced toward Kerkrade. These feint attacks were successfully carried out. The desired effect of confusing the enemy was accomplished, aiding the

¹Attached: one antitank platoon, one company of tank destroyers (less one platoon).

²Attached: one antitank platoon, one company of tank destroyers (less one platoon). Minus: Company "F."

³Attached: one platoon of tank destroyers.





Rough fighting began again at the Siegfried Line

friendly troops to the north in their drive which was to carry them successfully through the Siegfried Line near Ubach, Germany.

On this day a civilian picked up by the 1st Battalion stated that he wished to visit his mother who lived in Spekholzerheide, Holland, near by. He claimed to be a member of the Dutch Resistance Movement. Investigation by the CIC revealed that this man was wanted by the local Dutch administrators for second degree murder, and that he had a brother who was a member of the Nazi SS.

The necessity of exercising extreme care to divulge no military information to civilians directly or indirectly is illustrated by an occurrence which took place that day. In the morning two girls went to the 3d Battalion area to say goodbye to some of our soldiers. Upon interrogation they said that information of the battalion's expected departure had been given them by two other girls who were Nazi sympathizers living in Benzenrade. Investigation by the CIC disclosed that at 0800 a soldier stopped to talk to a woman in Benzenrade. Since the soldier could not speak Dutch and the woman could not speak English, he finally said, "Au revoir. We are off to Germany." From that, and the fact that the woman saw a few trucks passing near by, she assumed that the American soldiers were leaving. She told her daughter, and the daughter, in turn, spread the word.

An order to attack and seize the northern district

of Kerkrade and the suburb of Nieuwstraat, received at 2100 on October 2d, was cancelled on October 3d. However, the Regiment⁴ was to hold itself ready to attack on two hours' notice.

Meanwhile, at 0940 on October 3d, a 60mm mortar section and five rifle squads from Company "C" had secured both ends of the underpass tunnel located on the western outskirts of Kerkrade. Here they found a partially destroyed German machine gun and other evidence that the enemy had been occupying the position.

At 0305 on October 4th, a platoon from Company "A" succeeded in reaching a crossroads located approximately one-half mile south of the underpass which had been seized by elements of Company "C" and which was located to the north of that point.

In the morning orders were received from Division to attack at 1300 according to the plan previously devised.

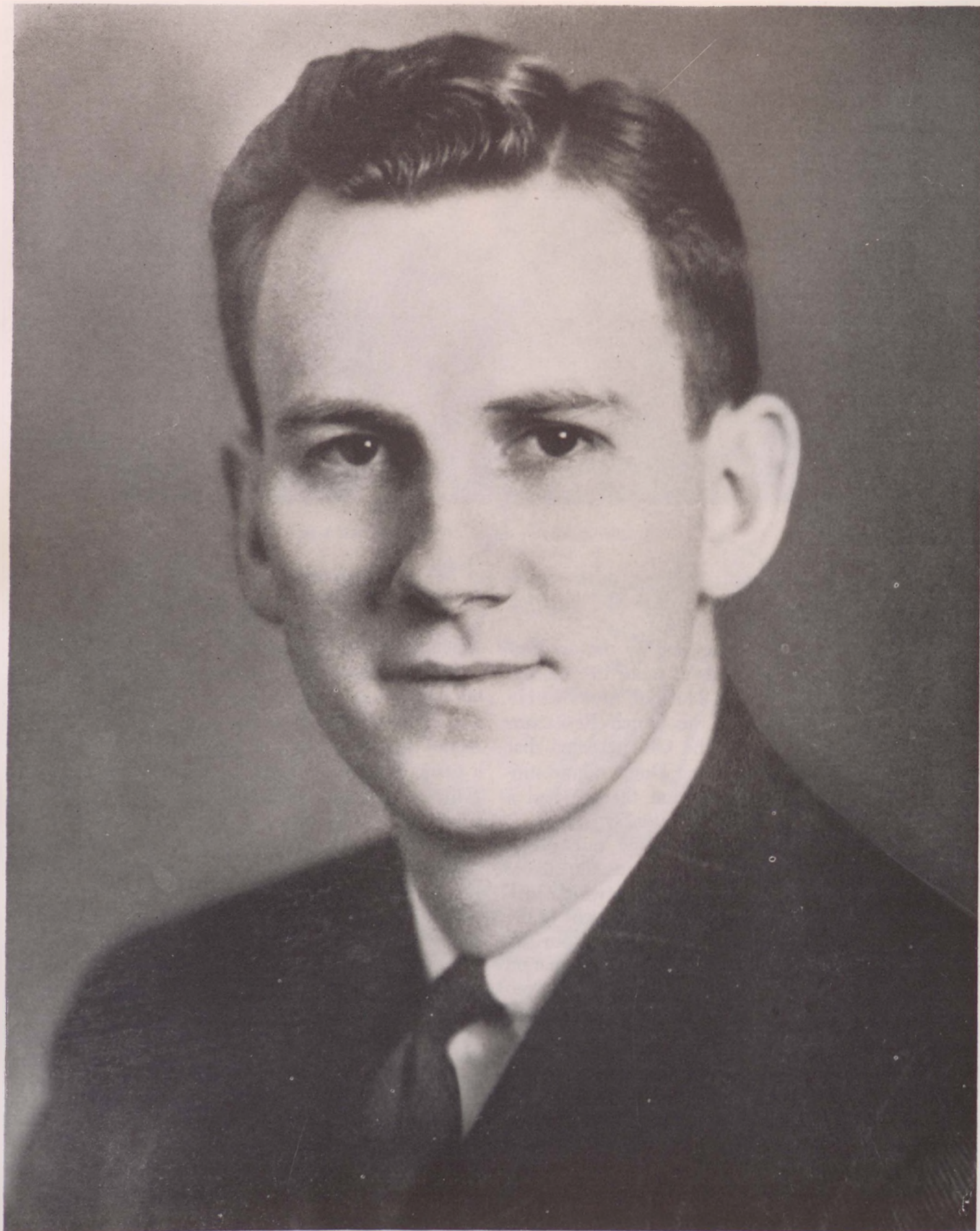
Accordingly, the 1st Battalion⁵ advanced toward Nieuwstraat. Ten minutes later they ran into stiff resistance in the form of heavy small-arms fire from the outskirts of the town to their front.

The 2d Battalion,⁶ advancing into Kerkrade, was

⁴Attached: Company "D," 743d Tank Battalion; 823d Tank Destroyer Battalion (less one company); 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry (attached one company of the 821st Tank Destroyer Battalion).

⁵Attached: one platoon, Antitank Company; Company "B," 823d Tank Destroyer Battalion (less one platoon); one platoon, Company "C," 105th Engineer Battalion.

⁶Attached: one platoon, Antitank Company; Company "C," 823d Tank Destroyer Battalion (less one platoon); one platoon, Company "D," 105th Engineer Battalion.



Lieutenant Colonel Paul W. McCollum

subjected to considerable artillery fire. At times, this fire fell in concentrations of twenty rounds in a period of two minutes.

PIERCING THE SIEGFRIED LINE

At 1300 on the 5th of October the 3d Battalion was attached to the 119th Infantry, and given the mission of filling the gap between the two assault battalions of that regiment. To do this it was necessary for the 3d Battalion to cross the Wurm River into Germany and clean out the pocket between the two units so that contact between them could be established. At 1333 the battalion moved across the Wurm River in the vicinity of Rimbürg, Holland. The crossing was made under heavy enemy artillery fire. Only two bridges, separated by three miles, were available in this area, and one was being used by the 117th Infantry. Because these were the only means for crossing the Wurm, and both vehicular and foot traffic was exceedingly heavy, the enemy was well zeroed-in on both of them. A footbridge, located only a few hundred yards from the one used by the 3d Battalion, had been hit and damaged several times during the day, so that it could not be used by our troops.

After crossing the river the battalion advanced eastward through the woods. Company "I" contacted the battalion on the right, and Companies "K" and "L," advancing abreast, proceeded toward the final objective. By 1800 contact had been established with both battalions of the 119th Infantry, and the objective was reached. Three pillboxes had been encountered during the drive on the objective, but these had been effectively reduced with the aid of tanks, many prisoners being taken. During the late afternoon hours, Lt Col Paul W. McCollum, who had led the 3d Battalion since its landing in Normandy, crossed the Wurm River from his command post in Rimbürg to check the companies' positions and to direct the movement of supplies and ammunition to the front. After making certain that the battalion's position was secure, he started to return to his command post. At this time the enemy was still directing heavy artillery fire on the crossing site and, as Lt Col McCollum approached the bridge, a particularly heavy concentration fell in the area, killing him and so stunning the members of his party that his death was not immediately known. Late that night several search parties were sent to the area before his body could be found.

Maj Howard W. Greer, the battalion executive officer, assumed command of the battalion and devoted

the entire night to making plans and preparations for the attack scheduled for the following day. Throughout the night the enemy continued to pound the crossing site with artillery. At 0730 on the 6th of October the battalion was counterattacked by a force of approximately a hundred enemy infantrymen. The attack was repulsed, and by 0900 the battalion succeeded in pushing over the open fields west of Herbach to positions close to Merkstei Hofstadt.

Men of the Medical Detachment attached to our Regiment had the highest possible standards of bravery and attention to duty as exemplified by T/5 Clyde E. Justice, aid man with Company "M." On the northern outskirts of Herbach, two of our soldiers had been struck and were lying in a slit trench which was exposed to enemy fire. Another soldier, while attempting to reach these two men, was shot. T/5 Justice determined to administer first aid. In full view of the enemy, he crawled 30 yards from his own slit trench to where the wounded men lay. Although he was wearing a Red Cross brassard, heavy enemy small-arms fire fell all around him. When he reached the slit trench, he immediately began to administer first aid to the men, lying beside the parapet despite continued sniper fire, because it was too crowded in the hole itself. He found one critically wounded, and despite all possible efforts, was unable to save his life. T/5 Justice then turned his attention to the other. His skilled help enabled this second soldier to live.

Resuming the attack at 0700, on October 5th, the Regiment quickly seized its assigned objectives. With the 2d Battalion securely in place, at 0830 Company "F" was ordered to place a strong roadblock on the road junction in the southern outskirts of Eigelshoven, Holland, in order to protect lines of communication. A new Regimental Command Post was opened at 0915 at Terwinselen, near the Staatsmijn Wilhelmina.

At the end of the day the Regiment had occupied all of Kerkrade and vicinity, organized the ground so as best to engage targets of opportunity along the Siegfried Line, and had established observation posts. As a result it was able to place harassing fire on the enemy and interdict the routes of approach and withdrawal which he might seek to use, thereby assisting the friendly forces which were heavily engaged by the enemy to the north. These preparations were greatly expedited by the capture of a German prisoner by troops of Company "B." The prisoner disclosed detailed information concerning enemy installations and fortifications between Kerkrade and Zopp.

The enemy had organized the defense of Kerkrade



We mauled Merkstein

by a series of strongpoints, making full use of the protection afforded by houses and dug-in emplacements prepared over a long period of time. The enemy fought from house to house, necessitating the cleaning up of each individual building by small detachments. He had placed a number of Teller mines throughout the area. He used only small-arms fire with moderate artillery and mortar fire until the cessation of the action taking place on the Division's north flank; then he was able to concentrate a large amount of artillery against our men.

In using the houses for defense, the enemy frequently placed his guns on the top floor or the roof, which afforded him nearly perfect observation and fields of fire. The most effective means found to meet this opposition was to place artillery fire on the houses, which forced the enemy to abandon the top floors and enabled our infantry to move in.

Statements made by prisoners indicated that the enemy morale was low. Some said that they were forced to fight by *Schutzstaffeln* troops who threatened to send their families to concentration camps if they surrendered or retreated.

On October 6th the Regiment was holding a defensive position from Eigelshoven to Nieuwstraat. Throughout the day observation of the enemy forces was maintained. As a result, many artillery missions were placed on enemy forces which were attacking units of the 119th Infantry Regiment, to which this Regiment's 3d Battalion had been attached. During this minor action, Col Hammond D. Birks received orders to report to the 9th Infantry Division as Assistant Division Commander. Col Branner P. Purdue succeeded Col Birks.

At 1400 on this day word was received that the Regiment would be relieved by the 116th Infantry and would move to an assembly area in the vicinity of Waubach, Holland, north of Eigelshoven. A new Regimental Command Post was established in Waubach at 1830. By 0125, October 7th, the Regiment had closed into the area, where it remained until late in the afternoon. Then, at 1700, the Command Post was moved to Ubach, Germany, and the 1st and 2d Battalions closed into that vicinity by 1800. Preparations were immediately made for an attack scheduled for 0700 on October 8th.

S/Sgt Robert E. Smith and Pfc Henry F. Price will long remember Kerkrade, or rather Haanrade which is near by. It seems that their unit was being subjected to sniper fire while attempting to set up a defensive position in Kerkrade. Smith and Price decided to do something about it. And they found plenty to do for a two-man patrol armed only with M-1s.

When they reached the town of Haanrade, a civilian approached them and said that he knew a house in which eight German soldiers were staying. He led them to the house; then beat a hasty retreat.

S/Sgt Smith posted Pfc Price in a position where he could cover the front of the house, and then entered the building. He found himself in a hallway and, seeing a door, he cautiously approached it. When he was in position he kicked it open quickly. Four surprised Germans took one look at S/Sgt Smith's M-1 and threw up their hands in surrender.

Placing his prisoners in the hands of Pfc Price, S/Sgt Smith once again returned to the house and proceeded down the narrow hallway. Suddenly, at the far end of the hall, a German soldier came charging up from the basement, his burp gun firing wildly. There was no time to aim carefully. S/Sgt Smith killed the Nazi with a shot through the throat, firing his M-1 from the hip. Three more German soldiers immediately appeared from the basement, and S/Sgt Smith, holding his ground and still firing from the hip, eliminated all three.

Meanwhile, the prisoners outside the house had heard the noise of firing and decided to take advantage of the excitement and escape. Pfc Price killed one of them as he ran down the street. Two others started to go back into the house and were killed in the cross fire of the two M-1s. The fourth man, seeing the futility of any escape, threw himself to the ground as a token of complete surrender.

Gathering all the military papers they could find in the building, our men started to return to more friend-

ly territory with their prisoner. While doing so they were suddenly fired upon by a German machine gun. By this time their prisoner had really had enough and quickly told them of a route which would safely bypass the gun. When the group reached our lines the prisoner was turned over to the IPW team, and the Regimental S-2 was supplied with information which proved to be of great value.

It should be noted that in the first part of the operation of attacking the Siegfried Line, this Regiment was in Division reserve and aided the penetration by making feint attacks and by seizing the populated area west of the Wurm River (Kerkrade, etc.), and immediately south of the point of actual penetration. When the line was finally broken this Regiment followed the path made by the 117th and 119th Infantry Regiments, passing through the line in the vicinity of Rimbürg, Holland, and Ubbach, Germany. After going through the gap, the Regiment turned south to assist in rolling up the enemy positions.

On the 7th of October, while still attached to the 119th Infantry, the 3d Battalion, with the 1st Battalion, 119th Infantry, on its right, jumped off in an attack on the ground between Herzogenrath and Alsdorf. Company "L" cleaned out Herbach, and Company "I" overcame enemy resistance in Merkstein Pletschard. This was the first experience the battalion had with town fighting in Germany, and it was here that the battalion initiated its policy of burning down houses used by the enemy as strongpoints.

Before noon the battalion reached Zu Merkstein, where it was halted briefly by heavy small-arms fire from one of the slag piles in the area. By 1315 Merkstein itself was reached and, after an air strike on the area between Merkstein and Herzogenrath, a drive was made across 3000 yards of open terrain east of Herzogenrath into the settlements of Noppenberg and Bierstrasse. Although the attack was made while its left flank was exposed, the objective was taken by midafternoon. Later in the day Company "I" cleaned out the woods farther south and to the east of Herzogenrath, and defenses were organized at this position.

On the 7th of October, the day after T/5 Clyde E. Justice disregarded heavy enemy fire to save a wounded soldier, another aid man reached the peak of courage. Pfc Owens L. Kirk, attached to Company "I," was this brave man. A wounded scout was lying helpless to the front. An aid man who started toward the scout was instantly killed. Although he knew he was facing nearly certain death, Pfc Kirk arose from his position and, unmindful of the repeated warnings



GI Joe is tougher than the pillbox

given him not to go forward, dashed into the intense enemy fire which was falling all around him. He crawled a distance of about 150 yards through the thickest of this fire to the wounded scout. Reaching the scout, he began to administer first aid to him while still on the open field, in direct view of the enemy and with no possible cover. While dressing the wound, he himself was severely struck in the stomach. He nevertheless, continued to render aid to the other soldier. He then remained with the wounded man until nightfall, still disregarding his own injury. Pfc Kirk died the next day. Again it can be said, "He gave his life in order that another might live." No man can have greater courage than did Pfc Owens L. Kirk.

During the three-day period since the jump-off across the Wurm River, the 3d Battalion had advanced 6000 yards against heavy artillery, automatic and small-arms fire, fighting over all types of terrain, including woods, towns and open ground. Although casualties were light, the battalion captured 406 prisoners, including a lieutenant colonel and his staff.

In mopping up the enemy's positions to the south, it was found that the pillboxes and other fixed fortifications in the Regiment's area did not constitute the main obstacle in our path, nor did the enemy defense seem to be based on them.

The only group of pillboxes encountered was located between Noppenberg and Nordstern. Only light resistance was encountered from machine guns and small arms. Pillboxes were used mostly for observation posts and as a place of refuge from aerial bombardment and artillery fire. One hundred and fifty prisoners were taken in this area. Many of these hid in cellars and were not captured until later in the evening.

There were seven pillboxes for small arms and machine guns. These were placed near the crest of a hill, on the forward slope. Each pillbox had two compartments with three or more firing holes, one of which, at least, was for a machine gun. The field of fire from these apertures was found to be very limited. However, the pillboxes were located close to each other, providing interlocking fire.

An antitank ditch, located on high ground, had been recently dug for protection of the pillboxes.

The thickness of the iron-reinforced cement walls of the small-arms pillboxes was approximately 3½ feet; the tops were about 5½ feet thick.

Four additional pillboxes were located on the reverse slope of the hill, all facing west. They permitted traversing of a gun for about 120 degrees, and were capable of accommodating 105mm howitzers. Periscopes were installed, but the view from them was extremely limited due to the size of the hill to the front. In addition to the main gun compartment there were three other compartments in each pillbox. To the right there was one presumably for ammunition. It was connected by a chute with the main gun compartment, but it had a separate entrance from the outside. To the left there were two rooms to accommodate the crew.

The thickness of the cement walls of these larger pillboxes was approximately four feet, with eight-foot tops, reinforced with steel bars and plates.

BIRK

With the objective of seizing high ground in the vicinity of Birk and Euchen, the Regiment launched an attack on October 8th. At 0700 the 2d Battalion crossed the Line of Departure, and at 0825 the 1st Battalion, following the 2d, moved obliquely to its zone to the right (west) of the 2d Battalion. This maneuver was made in order to by-pass the woods and low ground south of Noppenberg. Each battalion had attached one platoon of Antitank Company; one platoon of light tanks, and one platoon of medium tanks, 743d Tank Battalion. The 1st Battalion reported that the majority of the artillery fire received was in heavy

battery concentrations together with rapid-fire single shots from 88mm antiaircraft guns.

By 2200 on October 8th the 1st Battalion had reached a point west of Duffesheide, including the vicinity of Reifeld. The 2d Battalion was astride the main highway east of Duffesheide and between that town and Ofden.

The enemy 75mm antitank guns were remarkably accurate and powerful. One of these guns knocked out two of our tanks and placed a direct hit on a pillbox, all with three shots and at a range of approximately 1000 meters. An indication of the effect direct fire of this type has on the occupants of pillboxes is revealed by eight of our men who were occupying the pillbox at the time it was hit. Although the projectile did not penetrate into the fortification, they were injured by flying pieces of concrete and they described the concussion as "terrific."

In the vicinity of Reifeld, Company "A" had succeeded in capturing a hill some 400 yards to the west of the town. The enemy had this hill covered with heavy small-arms fire, most of which was coming from machine guns. So well deployed were the Germans that they were able to place flanking fire on the position as well as frontal fire. This made any movement by our men extremely hazardous.

Since our troops were unable to advance in the face of this fire, two Sherman tanks were moved up to the crest of the hill. The tank men opened up on the enemy positions with their machine guns and fired a few rounds of 75mm ammunition in an endeavor to force the enemy to retire. A few moments later, a concealed German antitank gun fired upon them. The first tank was hit squarely and immediately burst into flames. The second tank, although it succeeded in moving below the crest of the hill, also received a direct hit which knocked the turret hatch cover off.

The crew members of the first tank were in dire peril. Three were able to get out of the turret, although one of them fell head first from the top of the tank to the ground and broke his neck. The driver had been killed when the tank was hit. The assistant driver could be seen struggling to escape the flaming death trap, although seriously wounded. His clothing was on fire, and it was obvious that he was unable to lift himself through the front hatch.

His cries of anguish and pain, heard above the din of battle, reached the ears of T/Sgt Thomas W. Fogli, Cpl Loman Hartline and Pfc Michel Mercurio. These men ran forward through the intense enemy fire, climbed on top of the tank and succeeded in pulling



Colonel Branner P. Purdue

the man out. Using a blanket which they had brought with them, they smothered the fire on the tanker's clothing. With the injured man begging his rescuers to shoot him and put him out of his misery, they carried him back with them almost to safety. Then a shell struck a pillbox near by and the resulting explosion threw them to the ground. Fortunately none of the men was wounded and, under cover of smoke which had been laid down to conceal their actions, they finally succeeded in reaching the rear of the pillbox. Here litter bearers carried the wounded man back to an aid station. As for T/Sgt Fogli, Cpl Hartline and Pfc Mercurio . . . they went back to the business of fighting Germans.

Under the cover of fog, the 1st and 2d Battalions continued their advance to their objectives at 0700 on October 9th. The enemy was apparently taken by surprise. Our men continued to advance until almost 1100, meeting only light artillery and small-arms fire. By that time the fog had lifted sufficiently to allow the enemy to observe and determine our positions accurately. The 2d Battalion reached a good defensive position northwest of Euchen, but the 1st Battalion, moving toward the vicinity of Birk, was meeting strong resistance from high ground. Without any noticeable artillery preparation, at 1300 the enemy counterattacked to the northwest with infantry, supported by about ten tanks, approaching from the vicinity of Euchen. This attack was met with heavy infantry, artillery and other supporting fires in front of the 2d Battalion's position. By 1500 this attack had turned and moved against the 1st Battalion where it was again met by strong artillery and cannon fire. As a result, the enemy tanks were retiring to Euchen by 1845, leaving seven of their number on the field of battle.

In the meantime, at 1410 on the 9th of October, orders were received from Division to commit the 3d Battalion through the zone of action of the 117th Infantry Regiment on our left, and then swing it into our zone. At 1515 the battalion, less Company "I," which had been left to defend the woods east of Herzogenrath, moved to Kol-Kellersberg. Company "L" led, followed by Company "K."

Advancing through Zopp and around the slag pile south of Alsdorf, the battalion moved on to the high ground where the residential district was located. Information had been received that the town had been cleared by the 117th Infantry earlier that day. Halfway through the town, however, part of the lead company, with Colonel B. P. Purdue, Maj Greer and Capt

Hill, the Battalion S-3, was cut off from the rear elements by an enemy force which inflicted twenty casualties and knocked out two light tanks. The command group and two platoons organized an all-around defense and soon succeeded in reestablishing contact with the 117th Infantry.

During the ensuing two days the 3d Battalion regrouped and organized defensive positions between the 117th Infantry and the 2d Battalion, 120th Infantry. While attempting to contact the 2d Battalion, Lt James Bickley and one platoon of Company "K" were ordered to proceed to a railroad junction in the vicinity of Euchen to meet elements of the 2d Battalion. The information that the 2d Battalion had withdrawn from this area did not reach Lt Bickley before he set out, with the result that he led his platoon into an enemy ambush. Although the men were taken entirely by surprise, Lt Bickley succeeded in withdrawing his platoon so skillfully that only one casualty was suffered.

The 2d Battalion meanwhile had continued to drive forward always toward Euchen, and in the foggy morning had come to the town outskirts, reaching the railroad tracks which ran along its western edge. There the assault companies, "E" and "F," met strong machine-gun fire and the minute the troops were pinned down, the Germans drove some tanks along the railroad embankment and from defiladed positions fired round after round into the lead elements. Mortar fire spread havoc among the helpless troops. Capt Ralph A. Kerley, commanding Company "E," realized that the tanks had to be silenced if the infantrymen, hugging the exposed ground, were to be successfully extricated from the precarious position. Daringly he called for friendly artillery fire upon the railroad tank positions, even though these fires were dangerously close to his own men. When it began falling there was some confusion among the enemy troops, and Capt Kerley directed the withdrawal of the companies to better defensive ground around Schleibach which they had been ordered to hold.

Soon after our troops had organized the ground for defense, halftracks were observed advancing from Euchen by the frontliners of Companies "E" and "F." Germans jumped from them and started for the 2d Battalion line, but were fired at, scattered, and withdrew toward Euchen. That night the Germans tried to wrest back the ground taken by the 2d Battalion, but Lt John Jacobs, observer from the 230th Field Artillery Battalion, brought rains of protective artillery fire around the positions and the Germans

retreated in turmoil. They were about to lose even more vital ground yet, had they only known.

Meanwhile the 1st Battalion was unable to advance south of the vicinity of Esel because of the heavy and accurate fires coming from the objective, the high ground at Birk. To complicate the situation, the battalion commander, Major Harold S. Griffith, Jr, suddenly became ill and had to be evacuated. Capt Chris McCullough, the executive officer, had recently returned to the Regiment after recovering from wounds and therefore barely knew the officers of the battalion. Faced with the tough situation of having to suddenly command a battalion, the personnel of which he did not know well, Capt McCullough immediately demonstrated great bravery and leadership. Seeing that a continuation of the frontal attack south against Birk was hopeless, permission was obtained to move through the zone of the 119th Infantry Regiment to attack the objective from the west. Accordingly Companies "A" and "B," reinforced by elements of Company "D," moved to the eastern edge of Bardenberg while Company "C," reinforced, held the ground gained immediately south of Esel. Companies "A" and "B" launched their attack from Bardenberg to Birk toward the end of daylight. By a tragic coincidence when the attack was launched, an enemy armored counterattack was moving from concealed ground south of Birk on Bardenberg, with the apparent mission of counterattacking part of the 119th Infantry Regiment. The enemy armor caught our unprotected troops in open ground on their right (south) flank. The surprise and ferocity of this armored counterattack resulted in our suffering heavy casualties, particularly in Company "A." As the result, the members of both companies were driven in confusion back to the vicinity of Esel.

At about midnight, Colonel Purdue arrived at the 1st Battalion Command Post, having been temporarily cut off from the Regiment by the enemy counterattack in the southern edge of Alsdorf. There he learned for the first time the details of the catastrophe suffered by Companies "A" and "B." Officers and men of the battalion were exhausted and despondent, having fought hard for two days only to fail in capturing the all-important objective. Realizing that a continuation of daylight action probably would again result in failure, Colonel Purdue decided upon a night attack. Because the battalion never had made a night attack in force, it was necessary for the Regimental Commander to plan and explain in detail how the attack was to be executed.

Intermittent artillery fires were placed upon Birk as



Schleibach was tough for us—tougher for the Germans

heavily as the availability of ammunition permitted. These fires fell soon after midnight of October 9-10 until 0430. As was hoped and halfway expected, nearly all of the enemy garrison at Birk relaxed and went to sleep soon after the cessation of the artillery fires. At 0530 on the 10th of October, the 1st Battalion again attacked Birk, this time from a line of departure between Esel and Bardenberg. The attack was a sneak without preparatory fires. Advancing through a before-dawn fog, our troops caught most of the enemy asleep. Silently taking care of the one German sentinel encountered, the 1st Battalion quickly overran Birk. Approximately fifty prisoners were taken while the remainder of the garrison escaped to the south. Daylight found the battalion in complete possession of the objective, and only then was Birk's importance realized because the imperfect map failed to show that the high ground there was the key point of the entire 4000 meters of front between Bardenberg and Alsdorf. Thus ended one of the most remarkable feats of the Regiment's history—the tired, partially defeated 1st Battalion refused to quit and, without night fighting experience, skillfully seized a hill which later events proved to be a critical defensive position from which a very large enemy counterattacking force was defeated.

Several times during the day tanks supported by infantry advanced toward our lines, but artillery, cannon, tank-destroyer and machine-gun fire broke up these reconnaissances-in-force each time. In all, fourteen enemy tanks were destroyed during the day. One of these was knocked out by T/Sgt Fogli of Company "A" with a captured German antitank gun fired at a range of 200 yards. Company "H" mortarmen threw out a smoke round to facilitate registering in



No welcoming crowds in Bardenberg

upon an advancing tank, and by luck it hit the turret squarely. The tank withdrew but was later observed to be enveloped in flame.

On the night of the 10th the enemy struck again at the 2d Battalion lines. At approximately 2230 the area became alive. Patrols were engaged and there were sharp clashes. When enemy troops were discovered advancing in force, artillery and all other available weapons roared. The enemy was repelled again.

In the meantime, the counterattacking Germans, which had struck our 1st Battalion during the late afternoon of the 9th, had captured Bardenberg. The enemy's occupation of this town cut off in Wurselen a reinforced battalion of the 119th Infantry Regiment. Our 3d Battalion, less Company "K," was ordered to attack Bardenberg from the north, thereby relieving the nearly completely surrounded elements of the 119th Infantry. Company "K" was retained in Regimental reserve while Company "F" occupied Ofden, the town which the 3d Battalion had been garrisoning. Company "F" completed this relief of the 3d Battalion at 0130 on the 11th of October. Weeks later, a member of the 3d Battalion received a clipping from his home-town paper which told that, "Ofden was the most-shelled one-street town in Germany." He could vouch for the veracity of the statement.

Following a terrific artillery preparation, one of the largest which had supported the Regiment up to this time, the 3d Battalion attacked Bardenberg at 0900 on the 11th. Supported by a company of tanks, the troops assaulted the town. Immediately after gaining a foothold our men were engaged in fierce house-to-house fighting.

During the early stages of the attack, Company "I" was advancing through its sector near the southern end of the town when it was halted by heavy machine-

gun fire coming from a house located at a road intersection. The enemy machine gunners had excellent fields of fire and observation on all the approaches to the house. Moreover, behind the gun were enemy armored vehicles which were firing on another sector of the town.

To overcome the machine gun and reach the armored vehicles, Capt Charles R. Shaw, Command-



Technical Sergeant Fogli knocked out a German tank with a captured gun



Seldom did our men at Birk dare leave their foxholes

ing Officer of Company "I," decided to send one squad up one road, while another squad diverted the gunner's attention by advancing down another road. As the two squads approached the enemy gun along these two avenues of approach, the Germans fired a hail of bullets which halted both groups.

At this time S/Sgt Jack J. Pendleton, leader of one of the squads, saw that immediate action was necessary. Telling the other members of his squad to remain where they were, he started to crawl toward the enemy gun. When he was within approximately fifty yards of it, the enemy gunner turned the fire on him, wounding him in the leg. Although painfully crippled, S/Sgt Pendleton continued to crawl

toward the gun. While he was doing this, the other squad, temporarily freed of the machine-gun fire, started advancing toward the enemy position. While the gunner continued to fire upon him, S/Sgt Pendleton slowly crawled toward the gun, firing his M-1 rifle as he advanced. He was within approximately five yards of the emplacement when he was hit and killed by a burst of machine-gun fire.

In the meantime, by drawing fire upon himself, S/Sgt Pendleton enabled the other squad to move to a point where it could knock out the enemy gun. With this resistance overcome, the company was able to advance through its sector and knock out many of the armored vehicles which had been protected by the machine gun.

S/Sgt Pendleton was a brave man. He gave his life in order that others might live and, as the result of his superb courage, he was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously.

In the center of Bardenberg, the battalion was halted by enemy tanks. For a fleeting moment it looked as if the attack would bog down. Acting with great skill and courage Major Greer, who was personally leading his troops, opened bazooka fire on two enemy tanks when they were only about thirty yards from him. He succeeded in knocking out the tanks, and his troops, heartened by the gallant spirit of their commander, surged forward with renewed energy and rapidly cleared the town.

Just before dark the fighting became sharpest, but by late evening the entire town was retaken and cleared of the enemy, and contact was reestablished with the cut-off battalion of the 119th Infantry. During the course of the attack, although suffering only moderate casualties, the battalion took one hundred prisoners, four tanks and twelve halftracks, and killed thirty of the enemy. A battalion of the 119th Infantry



Lieutenant Colonel Howard W. Greer

relieved the 3d Battalion, which withdrew to positions north of Bardenberg, supporting the defense in depth.

Enemy action against the 1st and 2d Battalions this day continued to consist of numerous small thrusts at our lines with infantry and tanks, apparently with the design of reconnoitering our situation and determining the best spot at which to attack. All of these attacks were successfully repulsed. That night, the enemy moved against the 2d Battalion positions with armor, but was stopped. The attack was turned into the positions of friendly troops on the left where some penetrations were made.

In the morning the Regimental Command Post was moved from Merkstein to Zopp, which is located on the main highway connecting Herzogenrath with Alsdorf.

On October 12th the Regimental disposition revealed the 1st Battalion holding Birk and the high ground immediately to the south and the 2d Battalion located on the high ground northwest of Euchen. On this day came the enemy's strongest bid for a comeback. Firing a terrific artillery concentration on our positions, the enemy launched an attack against the 2d Battalion at 0700 and against the 1st Battalion at 0730. During the preparatory fire which the enemy directed on the 1st Battalion, the members of two entire artillery forward observer groups were either killed or wounded. Capt Michael S. Bouchlas, the battalion artillery liaison officer, crossed open, fire-swept terrain to observe and adjust the fire of friendly artillery units. Within an hour and a half the enemy's artillery had inflicted fifty-three casualties upon the 1st Battalion, including five officers, of whom two were company commanders. Nevertheless, the men were set and waiting for the enemy when the concentrations were lifted. Fortunately, Capt Bouchlas succeeded in directing the fire of the entire Corps artillery quickly and effectively on the attacking Germans.

Unable to reach the 2d Battalion positions because of the intense fire, the attack swung toward the 1st Battalion, advancing against the right flank (Company "C") and against the left flank (Company "A"). The 506th *Panzer Grenadier* Battalion led the attack, followed by the *Panzer Grenadier* Battalion of the 108th *Panzer* Brigade. Tanks did succeed in advancing to within 150 yards of our positions, and it is known that one company of fourteen Mark VI tanks and two companies of mixed Mark IV and V tanks were involved. By 1030 the attack had been completely repulsed with severe losses to the enemy. It was reported that eight tanks were knocked out. Later

interrogation of prisoners of war revealed that it was the first case of a Mark VI tank of his unit being knocked out by gunfire.

In defeating the fierce counterattack which was the heaviest against the Division during the penetration of the Siegfried Line and the strongest we met during the war excepting at Mortain, the troops of the 1st Battalion and of Antitank Company reached the ultimate in courage. The firing of a carefully camouflaged machine gun or antitank gun caused disclosure of the gun's position. Disclosure resulted in receiving immediate and fearfully accurate tank fire from close ranges. Our gun crews were literally blown out of their holes by the power of the heavy 88mm shells which tore into the perfectly constructed positions. Yet guns opened fire as needed, the crews well realizing that disclosure of position meant that they too faced nearly certain death. Many brave men fought and died that morning of October the 12th.

Meanwhile, on the same day, the 3d Battalion, less Company "K," was again attached to the 119th Infantry with the mission of attacking southeast of Bardenberg toward the western part of Wurselen. Overcoming heavy artillery and persistent small-arms fire, Company "I," with Company "L" on its left, reached the main highway to Alsdorf, where the battalion consolidated and established contact with the 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry, on the left, and the 119th Infantry on the right.

On the following day the 3d Battalion was relieved from attachment to the 119th Infantry and was attached to the 116th Infantry of the 29th Division, this latter regiment being attached to our Division. During the ensuing two days, until the 15th of October, the battalion remained in position on the Alsdorf highway, bounding North Wurselen. The enemy had excellent observation on the battalion's entire sector and, launching the heaviest artillery concentrations encountered by the battalion during its entire period of combat, the enemy methodically destroyed building after building, forcing the men to remain in their foxholes. From fifteen to twenty casualties were inflicted each day by this heavy artillery fire.

From October 13th through October 15th, the Regiment continued to occupy and actively defend its positions.

The 3d Battalion received orders to attack Wurselen on the 15th of October. This action was part of a larger attack made by the 116th Infantry Regiment to which it should be remembered our 3d Battalion was then attached. The Germans defended Wurselen with



Wurselen looked like some of the Normandy villages

a strong and stubborn force, taking maximum advantage of the natural strength of houses for defensive fighting. The attack failed; twelve of our men, including two officers, were killed.

The mission of the Division at this time was to close the Aachen gap, thereby preventing the garrison of that city from escaping. The main effort to accomplish this mission was being made on the Division's right. In order to mislead the enemy as to the point of the main effort our Regiment, together with the 117th Infantry to our left, was directed to make strong and spectacular feints.

At 0700 on October 16, our artillery placed heavy concentrations of high explosives and smoke on Euchen. Company "H" assisted by laying down a

smoke screen east of the town. Company "G" brought direct fire upon the enemy positions with all of its weapons. At 0715 Company "G" ceased firing and Company "H" took up where they left off, continuing to fire until 0730. At the conclusion of the firing, the forward elements of the 2d Battalion suffered what they described as the most severe artillery and mortar concentrations they had experienced since landing in Normandy on June 13th. This heavy enemy fire lasted until 1100. The enemy, no doubt, believed that they had been successful in quelling a big attack on our part.

Prior to the feint, observation posts were alerted to record the times and impact areas of the enemy's counterfires. By means of these and subsequent ob-

servations, accurate information of the enemy's fire plan was obtained. This information later proved of great value because, weeks later when we resumed our large-scale offensive, our troops were able to safely bypass most of these impact areas. Those that could not be bypassed were crossed so rapidly that the troops had cleared before the enemy brought down his defensive fires.

At 1300 two platoons of Company "K" jumped off with a company of the 117th Infantry on their left, moving toward a railroad located some 300 yards to their front. The 2d Battalion supported this attack by fire. After reaching the objective at 1345, they were ordered to withdraw slowly at 1515 and to occupy their original positions. This maneuver distracted and contained the enemy, allowing the 119th Infantry, on the Regiment's right, to attack to the south successfully and come closer to effecting a linkup with elements of the 1st Division which were attacking from the south.

Holding the line from October 17th through the 31st, the Regiment continued in the active defense of its sector. The enemy continued to place artillery into our positions which, at times, was unquestionably heavy. His air activity continued to be limited to a small number of aircraft, usually one or two which dropped quantities of small antipersonnel bombs during the hours of darkness. These aircraft usually appeared just as dusk arrived and continued to operate for an hour or two thereafter. On three occasions the enemy bombed his own troops in Euchen.

On the 17th of October Company "F" relieved Company "K" in the front lines at 1907.

Two enemy on motorcycles ran through the outposts of the 1st Battalion at 1900 and were captured when their vehicles stalled. They had been out foraging for food. Good communications from one company to another kept the entire battalion informed as to the whereabouts of the motorcycles, thereby making their capture possible.

On a Sunday morning two Germans, dressed as priests, were brought to the 1st Battalion Command Post because they had been observed moving around behind our lines. After explaining that they were going to church in Bardenberg they were released. Several hours later 1st Sgt Ernest F. Sharpe of Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, thought over the incident and decided to go to Bardenberg to investigate the two clergymen. Once again they were picked up, and IPW investigators, upon interrogating them, learned that one was a German battalion commander and the

other was a company commander of the German garrison in Aachen. Both Germans were taken prisoner.

On October 20th our artillery placed smoke in front of our positions to identify targets for friendly air crews. The enemy, in turn, placed a smoke screen behind the forward elements of our 2d Battalion in an ineffective attempt to draw down our own aerial bombardment on our troops.

On the night of October 20th a patrol from the 1st Battalion, led by Lt Archie J. Piscitello, was sent southeast of Birk. Armed with German automatic weapons, it fired at random toward the enemy positions. There was no immediate result, but after the patrol had returned to our lines the enemy fired a machine gun and laid down mortar fire into the area where the patrol had been. The men reported that they had had trouble operating the German weapons. Frequent stoppages resulted in loss of fire power and time.

Almost every night patrols were dispatched from the battalions. Even on the brightest evenings groups of dark figures would make their way through the draws, or perhaps across the beet fields, toward the enemy lines around Euchen. Company "B's" Lt Greer A. Uteley led many patrols during this period; he frequently complimented the men he led, and observed that they were extraordinarily combat-wise, that experience had made them exceptionally proficient in the life-and-death game of scouting enemy defenses.

Meanwhile, from the 16th to the 20th of October, the 3d Battalion, still attached to the 116th Infantry, maintained its defensive positions along the Alsdorf highway. Throughout the five-day period enemy artillery and mortar fire was consistently heavy, and the Germans attempted two counterattacks, during which twelve of our men were killed and forty-two wounded. These thrusts were stopped by artillery, mortar and small-arms fire.

Information was received at 1200 on October 22d that the XIX Corps had been transferred to the Ninth Army and that, as a result, this Regiment was no longer a part of the First Army.

At 0745 on the 21st of October, while attached to the 116th Infantry on its right, the 3d Battalion staged an attack on Wurselen, which was intended to divert enemy reserves from the main effort farther south to close the so-called Aachen "gap" between the 30th Division and the 1st Division and thus encircle the city. Company "K," which was in Regimental reserve, at the same time attacked the town of Euchen in a sector 3000 yards north from Ofden in another diversionary mission.

Company "I" and Company "L" initially made rapid progress, and both companies entered Wurselen about 500 yards beyond the Alsdorf highway. The unit on the right, however, which was to attack at the same time, was unable to advance so rapidly, and at 1414 after a 200-round artillery preparation, a counterattacking force of fifty infantry of the 116th *Panzer* Division cut off one platoon from the rest of the company. It became obvious that these men would be unable to prevent the enemy from overrunning their positions and thereby threaten the whole battalion's effort. Realizing this, Lt Francis L. Herbert, platoon leader, radioed the commanding officer of Company "I" and asked that a prearranged artillery concentration be placed on the position, although he knew that the platoon would be well within range of this fire. The request was granted, the mission was fired, and the enemy counterattack was stopped at this point. Lt Herbert was able to return with fourteen of his men, although twenty men were lost during the action.

In commenting on the bitter hand-to-hand fighting in which Company "I" had engaged, Capt Hill, Battalion S-3, who had observed the encounter, remarked, "This was the first time I saw our troops engaged in bayonet fighting with the enemy, and it was one of the hottest fights I ever saw." The men succeeded in disengaging themselves and withdrew in good order, once again taking up positions on the Alsdorf highway. The cost of the attack was heavy. The 3d Battalion lost approximately sixty men including killed, wounded and missing. However, the feint attack had been a success. In the evening, the announcement was made of the linkup of the 30th and 1st Divisions, and the encirclement of Aachen, "City of the Kaisers," was completed.

In order to strengthen the defensive positions of the 3d Battalion, Company "B" of the 99th Infantry Battalion (Separate) was attached to our battalion. In a feat of reorganization accomplished under direct tank fire and heavy artillery, all three companies were tightly consolidated by nightfall.

It was reported on this day that a sample poll had been taken in the recently "liberated" German town of Herzogenrath to determine how the civilian Jerries felt about the arrival of our troops. Result: all expressed bitterness towards the SS and SA; out of ninety persons interrogated, eighty-one welcomed the American occupation—so they *said*.

Following a policy of giving the men relief from front-line duty, on the 22d of October Company "A" replaced Company "B," which was sent to a rear train-



They were fighting the men of the Regiment an hour before

ing area. On the following day, Company "B" was again sent into position in place of Company "A," while Company "C" replaced Company "K" on the line. Company "E" was replaced by Company "K" on October 24th, and the 3d Battalion was relieved from the control of the 116th Infantry and for twenty-four hours (October 24th) was attached to the 119th Infantry, after which it reverted to Division reserve. It later (on the 27th of October) moved to a recreation area in the vicinity of Kerkrade. On the last day of the month, the 2d Battalion, 406th Infantry, relieved our 1st Battalion.

Orders having been received for the relief of the 1st Battalion by the 2d Battalion, 402d Infantry Regiment, on October 27th, the latter's staff made a reconnaissance of the 1st Battalion positions in preparation to relieve our men on the next day. This was accomplished by 1948 on October 28th, with our 1st Battalion going to the rear for rest and reorganization.

On the night of October 29th Lord Haw Haw, the Nazi news commentator, came up with the exclusive story of the war. In his most confidential manner, he said that an American division, known as "Old Hickory," had been completely wiped out north of Aachen, and had to be withdrawn and reorganized.

Word was received on October 30th that diphtheria existed in German-held Wurselen, and all of our men were cautioned to take care in contacting civilians.

At the end of the month the program of giving our men as much rest as possible was continuing. For the first time since landing in France the front-line troops were given an opportunity to leave their positions and return to an "honest" rest area, where the likeli-

hood of existing under combat conditions was remote. During the period from October 24th through the 31st, eleven officers and 101 enlisted men were sent to Paris, where they enjoyed two days leave. From October 25th through the 31st, eighty enlisted men were sent to Valkenburg, between Heerlen and Maastricht, Holland. Four officers and forty enlisted men were issued passes and transported to Heerlen during the two-day period of October 30th and 31st.

When our men were not enjoying the pleasures of the rest areas or actually in the front lines, they continued to train. Together with the cleaning of weapons, the men were instructed in the use of German weapons, map reading, and camouflage discipline. A concerted effort was made to familiarize each man with every weapon. Orientation lectures were given and the lessons learned from past combat experiences were brought to the attention of our men.

The month of October saw the 120th Infantry Regiment actively contribute to the first large victory to be won on German soil. Although the enemy fanatically defended his Siegfried Line positions in our sector, this desperate resistance did not prevent our men from sealing off the city of Aachen. As a result, at the end of the month American troops had punched a hole in the Siegfried Line and were poised, awaiting orders to set in motion an attack to the east which would mean the final capitulation of our foe.

TWO PERSONAL LOSSES

And yet, along with its October victories, the Regiment had taken two great losses. Old men of the Regiment will never forget that during that month Colonel Hammond D. Birks, Regimental commander, and Lt Col Paul W. McCollum, Commanding Officer of the 3d Battalion, left the 120th.

The son of a Chicago businessman, Colonel Birks had been commissioned in 1917, and as captain had commanded a 5th Division company on the line in World War I. He served as a staff officer in the States till 1928, when he took command of a company in the 35th Infantry in Hawaii. There, being an ardent athlete, he coached basketball. He returned to the States in 1932, and after an assignment as staff officer for a short while again, he became professor of Military Science and Tactics at the University of Minnesota. In 1937 he was made battalion commander in the 21st Infantry, then in Hawaii; here he coached baseball. Two years later he organized and commanded for a year the Reception Center at Fort Custer, Michigan. After a year as G-3 for the XI Corps he came to the

120th Regiment at Fort Jackson, in South Carolina.

If Colonel Birks' philosophy could be summed up in three words, it would certainly be, "Always a Winner." From the beginning it was clear that his regiment was going to be a winning organization. He had been a successful coach, for he was an enthusiastic believer in athletics. He made sure that the teams he coached and the teams of units he commanded, particularly of the 120th, were topnotch. Under his active guidance the Regiment had even in garrison achieved the reputation of being "Always a Winner." The championship on the playing fields carried over into inspections and maneuvers. No untried outfit was better prepared for combat than the 120th when it came overseas in February 1944.

In combat the 120th was still topnotch, and the man responsible was still Colonel Birks. In every action, no matter how dangerous or how desperate, the Regimental CP was close behind the front lines, so close that once, at Mortain, it had to move to the rear to avoid excessive casualties.

But Colonel Birks did not stay long in his CP. He moved among the men of his outfit; he led them usually in body as well as on paper; and he knew them each and every one. And most of all, because the 120th Infantry Regiment was what he wanted it to be—"Always a Winner"—he took pride in it. Great pride.

Few men ever served Colonel Birks as well as he served his men. When he left the 120th to become Assistant Division Commander of the 9th Infantry Division, his soldiers knew he would do well and wished him luck. But they would miss him.

Throughout the campaign in France Colonel Birks had been especially proud of his 3d Battalion; since it was led by so inspiring and energetic a man as Lt Col McCollum, it was no wonder.

Lt Col McCollum was a native of Concord, North Carolina. He attended North Carolina State College and received from there his Reserve commission in 1934. After graduation he became in time assistant superintendent in a Cannon Mills Plant in Concord. In 1940 he transferred from the Army Reserve Corps to the National Guard so that two years later when the 30th Division mobilized, he was a first lieutenant in the 120th's Company "E," made up for the most part of Concord men. Rising rapidly to company commander and then 1st Battalion Executive Officer, he was given command of the 3d Battalion in May, 1944.

A classmate at college, and assistant Regimental S-1, CWO J. B. Liles had to say of him: "Always quiet, always easygoing and conservative; never ruffled,

never anything but as a matter of course. When the going was rough, and things were noisy, there you found him—looking around.”

“Mac was more than a name,” said Colonel Birks. “After going through all the narrow escapes that he went through, all of us began to think him immune. If you remember, he was wounded once before and could have been evacuated, but did not even miss a day, but carried the lead around in his leg up until the time he was killed. He was certainly a fine example to all of us in every respect. He had great courage and was able to think on his feet, calmly and coolly at all times. And I have heard him speak on the radio many times directing his companies when I could hear the fire all around him over the radio. He always had a smooth working battalion.” Lt Col McCollum was an unflinchingly aggressive fighter through and through. His death from enemy artillery on the 5th of October shocked the Regiment and caused grief to every man who knew him.

Two great men passed from the 120th in October. But they will not be forgotten. Because of their good



Hayloft in Schleibach

work, men will attack harder and defend more stubbornly. Because of their work, the men who knew and worked under them will take greatest pride in the 120th, the Regiment that is “Always a Winner.”



NOVEMBER

On the 1st of November, 1944, the 120th Infantry Regiment was in a defensive position which it had occupied and actively defended since the 10th of October. The right boundary of our position was located north of Wurselen on the main highway running from Wurselen to Alsdorf. The left boundary was located between Ofden and Alsdorf, Germany. The towns that our forward elements occupied were Birk, Pfaffenholz and Schleibach. The Regimental Command Post was located in Zopp. The 119th Infantry Regiment was occupying a defensive position on our right while the 117th Infantry Regiment, also in a defensive position, was on our left.

During the period from the 1st to the 16th of November there was no action of any great proportion by our forces or by the enemy. Regimental activity during this time consisted of constantly improving our defensive positions. Strict camouflage discipline was maintained. Foxholes were deepened and greater protection was obtained also by increasing the thickness of covers. In addition to these acts of a purely defensive nature, constant patrol activity was maintained to determine the strength of the enemy and to note any changes that might have taken place in the enemy front lines.

The 1st and 3d Battalions of our Regiment occupied the forward positions of our line from the 1st to the 3d of November. The enemy continued to harass our positions with artillery and mortar fire, although it was not intense. Enemy patrols were also operating in our area, one being contacted by the 3d Battalion which it dispersed by killing one man and wounding another.

RECREATION BEHIND THE LINES

Continuing the active defense of our Regimental sector the 2d Battalion, which had been in the rear area for rest and reorganization, relieved the 3d Battalion on the 4th of November. The 3d Battalion was placed in Division reserve. The enemy continued to harass our positions with artillery and mortar fire, but it was sporadic in nature and was not intense. The 1st and 2d Battalions continued to hold their defensive positions for the next two days. While still in a defensive position, no opportunity for improving our positions was overlooked. Aggressive patrolling was continued. During the night of the 6th of November one of our patrols succeeded in gaining information in regard to enemy positions. Information gained from interrogation of civilians who came through our

lines from enemy territory seemed to indicate that the enemy line to our front was thinly held, but that it contained a number of "strongpoints" which covered routes we would be apt to use in attacking.

The 1st Battalion was relieved by the 3d Battalion on the 6th, the relief being completed at 1915. The 1st Battalion moved to the Division Recreation area in the vicinity of Kerkrade.

The 2d and 3d Battalions actively defended their positions in the line from the 7th to the 10th of November. The enemy continued to harass our positions with artillery, mortar and small-arms fire. Our patrols were active during this period and succeeded in gaining information relative to the "dug-in" positions of the enemy to our front. It was found that the holes were unoccupied during the day, but that these positions were manned at night.

Our 3d Battalion was relieved by the 3d Battalion of the 335th Infantry Regiment on the 10th of November. For this relief this battalion was attached to the 120th Infantry Regiment but was attached to the 119th Infantry Regiment effective at 0300 on the 11th. The relieving battalion had completed the physical occupation of our forward line by 1900. This left only our 2d Battalion in the line at this time. The other two battalions were placed in the reserve area to enable them to carry out plans and preparations for the coming operations. The 3d Battalion was in the area near Merkstein and the 1st Battalion had its company "C" in Zopp. Companies "A" and "B" were infiltrated into positions in the 2d Battalion area on the front lines so that they would be in position for the attack, which was scheduled originally for the 11th of November, weather permitting.

During the period from the 11th to the 15th of November the Regiment awaited weather suitable for the attack. Preparations were improved for the coming operation by reconnaissances, patrolling and a complete and thorough orientation of all the men. Weather conditions were such as to keep activity of our forces and those of the enemy at a minimum.

On the 14th of November the enemy evidently attempted to strengthen his positions to our front as a group of approximately thirty-five men was observed digging in during the daylight hours. Artillery fire was placed on them with good results; about half of the enemy observed became casualties.

The final days before the attack of the 16th of November found most of the men ready to jump off again, despite their dread of advancing over open ground



There wasn't much left of Euchen

against well-prepared defenses. To the veterans of Normandy, Northern France, Belgium and Holland, the war in Germany thus far had had a foreboding aspect. In the first place, it was anticlimactic. The cheers, the cries of "*alles kaput*," and the proffered and accepted handouts as the troops pushed across the continent were things of the past. The war had seemed won then, but now they all knew that the enemy had somehow gained a breather, that he was fighting desperately to make the most of his final chance, and that he was still powerful.

This was not like much of the fighting in France

where the enemy conserved his shells. Here, during the month of static defense, the enemy showed his wares. For the first time, the Germans seemed to equal our artillery and mortar concentrations. It was a new experience, continually to wonder, as you stepped out of a doorway or a foxhole, if a shell would come in at that moment. It happened so often that it was wise to think twice about undertaking even the most common, or essential, errands. More and more men came to live in basements and learned to appreciate these solid German structures, even if they were filled with junk and smelled to heaven. Men in the foxholes on



Start of "The Perfect Infantry Attack"

the front line were forced to stay in their holes all day, being relieved at night under cover of darkness by a new crew which held the position until just before daybreak. As a result sanitary standards hit a new low. The K-ration box proved its worth time and again. It not only contained most of the food available during those days, but it heated the coffee (often made from rain water because cans for fresh water were not plentiful) and caught the urine of men in the foxholes who could not get out during the day to relieve themselves in a normal way.

The mud, rain, and cold added to the miseries of war, but all of this could have been endured with little thought if there had been any reason to believe that the enemy was whipped. But this he certainly was not. More than one veteran, as he lay in a basement or sweated it out in a foxhole, wondered how much farther his luck would carry him. It was without question a depressing period for our troops. The only way out was to attack, to move forward, to drive even deeper into the unknown fortress of Germany.

THE PERFECT INFANTRY ATTACK

Days of planning, preparation, patrolling, training and reconnaissance paid big dividends on the 16th of November and succeeding days. The 30th Division, with the 29th Division operating on its left and the VII Corps on its right, jumped off in an attack that was destined to make tactical military history. The 120th Infantry Regiment, reinforced,¹ had the mission of seizing the town of Euchen, Germany, which was the enemy strongpoint in our sector. A network of roads and also a railroad track running through the town gave the enemy a commanding position which

seriously hampered our attack to the east. This railroad track, which ran in a northeasterly direction parallel to our front line, constituted a serious obstacle since it was constructed of alternate cuts and fills.

The 1st Battalion had the mission of attacking at 1300, neutralizing objectives to its front which included its portion of the railroad embankment and also a commanding position of the Germans on a hill to our front. The battalion jumped off in the attack at the appointed time, the troops advancing under a screen of artillery fire which was laid down by the 230th Field Artillery Battalion, reinforced. Also lending volume to the supporting fire were the 60mm mortars of the 3d Battalion and Company "H's" 81mms, fired in battery throughout the 1st Battalion advance, then shifted to the right when the attackers reached Euchen.

The advance was made according to a field manual writer's dream as a constant stream of fire was placed on the enemy's strongpoint in Euchen while the infantry was attacking. When our forces reached the railroad embankment the artillery fire lifted and there our men were, looking right down the throats of the Germans.

To say that the enemy was surprised is a master piece of understatement. Our troops were on their objective before the first hour was up, and they proceeded to mop up the position. One of the enemy's strongpoints within the town was a railroad station which was well fortified, but our troops succeeded in taking thirty-one prisoners, including one officer, from this position. An enemy 75mm gun had time to fire only two shots before its position was overrun. A total of 164 prisoners was taken from the Euchen defense area. The rapid initial advance of our attacking elements not only enabled us to seize our objective quickly but kept the casualty rate to a low figure.

Another indication of the speed of our advance is the fact that while incoming artillery and mortar fire was increased during the time of our attack, it fell for the most part on areas which we had occupied previous to our jump-off. The chances are that the Germans were so surprised that the only thing they could do was to fire on our old positions although our severe artillery and mortar fire undoubtedly cut their communications from their forward observers to their guns.

Coordination was the explanation for the success of the attack. In turn, this coordination was in large measure the result of days of planning by the Regimental commander and subordinate leaders. The en-

¹Attached: Company "B," 743d Tank Battalion; Company "B," 823d Tank Destroyer Battalion.

tire 1st Battalion had been assembled in the courtyard of the rest area "monastery" at Kerkrade several days prior to the attack to hear an orientation talk delivered by Major Williamson, battalion commander. He likened the terrain over which they were to advance to the flat, tarvia courtyard on which they were standing. He then told the men that several fake attacks showed that it took the enemy twelve to fifteen minutes to react with artillery and mortar fire. The question was: "Can you advance in a fast walk, not a run, over that 900 yards of ground within twelve minutes?" Major Williamson received his answer on the 16th. They could and did, despite enemy machine-gun fire which swept the route of advance.

Of further assistance to the men of the 1st Battalion in this attack were the tracings from aerial photographs made by S/Sgt Joseph Bleier and his operations section. These drawings of the Euchen area were distributed to all leaders including squad leaders. As a result, the location of each house, orchard, and hedgerow was memorized before the battalion made the attack.

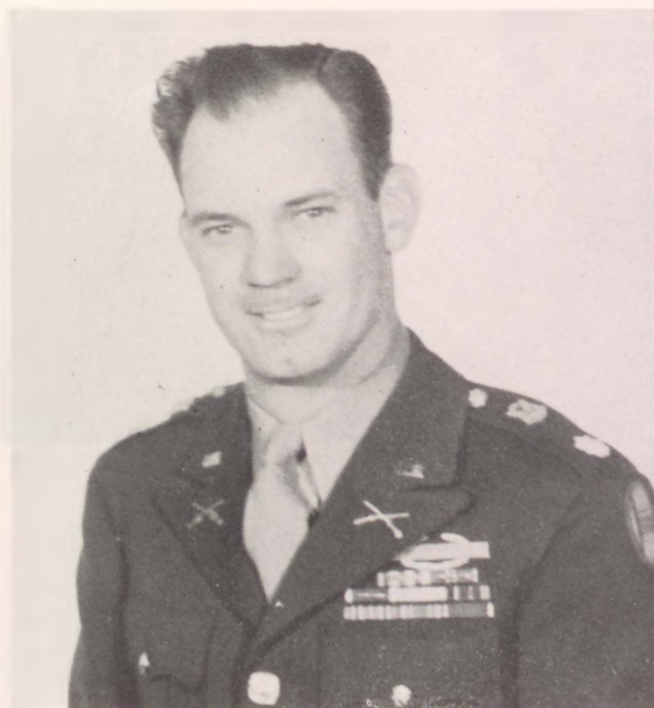
Company "F" of the 2d Battalion attacked fifteen minutes later than the 1st Battalion, according to plan, but when it reached its section of the railroad embankment the two assault platoons were met by withering fire from enemy automatic weapons. After attacking all day without taking the objective, it became apparent that this was defended more strongly than Intelligence reports had indicated. Accordingly, it was decided to by-pass it and attack from the flank on the following day. This attack did succeed in drawing part of the enemy fire that might have been placed on the 1st Battalion as it advanced.

The Air Forces gave considerable support to our attacking units by well-prepared air strikes which preceded our attack.

Correspondents briefed at higher headquarters after the attack on the first day were told that the 30th Division had executed the "Perfect Infantry Attack."

One of the reasons our attack on Euchen on the 16th was so successful was due to the aggressive spirit of the assaulting units. Two of the men who played a major role in this action were 2d Lt Robert L. Minyard and S/Sgt Thomas E. Stewart, Jr. Both Lt Minyard and S/Sgt Stewart realized the extreme urgency of allowing nothing to halt our infantry as they pushed across the 900 yards of unprotected ground. Lt Minyard's platoon led across the field with S/Sgt Stewart's squad one of two in the vanguard.

The platoon had crossed the railroad track and was still in open country approaching the objective



Lieutenant Colonel Ellis W. Williamson

when two enemy machine guns with supporting riflemen opened fire from a wooded draw about 200 yards to the left running parallel to the line of advance. Grazing fire from the machine guns forced some of our men to hit the ground. Both Lt Minyard and S/Sgt Stewart, who had been exhorting and leading the men forward, knew that to be pinned down now might give the enemy the time he needed to engage the company with mortar and artillery fire. Neither of these leaders hesitated in the advance and continued to urge the men forward. S/Sgt Stewart was mortally hit by an enemy bullet and fell to the ground. As he lay dying on the field, his last act was to continue waving the men forward.

Lt Minyard and the rest of the men continued to move forward and were able to get on the objective soon enough to avoid an intense enemy artillery and mortar barrage. The inspiring leadership of both of these men played a vital part in making our attack successful and as a result saved the lives of many of our men.

Being able to think fast always pays off in combat and sometimes the ability to talk fast also pays off. Sgt George J. Baldone and Sgt Walter W. Lippert found that to be true during the attack on Euchen. Company "C" was part of the attacking echelon striking for the right flank of the town. Pinned down



Some of the prisoners were quite young

by extremely heavy automatic small-arms fire, some men of the company took refuge in a near-by farmhouse. In this farmhouse were some Germans, prisoners who had been captured a few minutes previously. Included in the group was a medic who seemed concerned about something. Sgt Lippert, who speaks German, talked to the medic and learned that he was anxious to return to a wounded man whom he had left in a house about 300 yards up the street. The medic offered to induce his comrades to surrender if Sergeants Baldone and Lippert would accompany him on the mission.

Although enemy fire continued spasmodically, the two men boldly elected to take the chance since they realized that success in thus easily capturing the stubbornly defended area would avoid the cost of many casualties among our troops. The trio had walked about twenty-five yards when the German machine gun just off the street began firing at them. Both Sgt Lippert and the medic called out in German for the fire to cease, which it did. Reaching the house, after passing several buildings and entrenchments in which German infantrymen were observed, they met a German sublieutenant who was in charge. Pressed to surrender, he refused vehemently. Sgt Baldone requested Sgt Lippert to tell him that the Germans were surrounded, but the sublieutenant asked why he should give up.

Sergeant Lippert then asked the sublieutenant if he had ever received letters from his friends or relatives in our prison camps. He said he had. Sgt Lippert asked if those letters did not state that they were being well treated. The sublieutenant admitted this, and apparently convinced, threw his weapon down and commanded the rest of his men to do likewise. As they marched the group back, other Germans fell

into the procession from the positions along the road so that in the end about thirty of the enemy were taken and the strongpoint was reduced.

Of all the units which engaged in this day's action, Lt Thomas Tetreault's platoon of Company "C" was probably the busiest. After assisting in the attack on Euchen, this platoon went on a long patrol to the left flank of the battalion and then made another attack to take objective "X-ray," a piece of high wooded ground about 200 yards southeast of Euchen. All of these missions were completed within twelve hours.

BROICHWEIDEN

On the 17th of November the mission of the 120th Infantry Regiment² was to advance to the southeast and seize the towns of Linden and Neusen, Germany. The 2d Battalion was given the mission of taking the town of Neusen. According to plan it jumped off at 0700 from a Line of Departure in the vicinity of Euchen. A primary objective was designated which was the small town of Broicherhauschen. Our rapid advance on this position again caught the enemy by surprise, and our troops quickly captured the hamlet. After rapid reorganization, the battalion, with Company "E" on the left and Company "G" on the right, moved forward from Broicherhauschen in the attack on Neusen and succeeded in taking its objective in a very short time. After reaching the objective the troops were subjected to an intense enemy artillery barrage, but consolidation and reorganization were done quickly, which made casualties negligible. It had been noticed in two different actions by this battalion that the enemy throws five amber flares at the time our attackers are discovered.

In this same action 1st Sgt Hard J. Woody was acting in the capacity of platoon leader in Company "G." When the company left the Line of Departure, it immediately encountered a concentrated mortar barrage. First Sgt Woody led his platoon forward through the barrage, refusing to let his men become pinned down.

Had 1st Sgt Woody lived, he soon would have been a lieutenant. Because of 1st Sgt Woody's skill and bravery, the Regimental Commander had recommended him for battlefield promotion. Nine casualties were inflicted on his platoon, but advancing rapidly his unit overran the German mortar positions. In the confusion, the rest of the company did not reach these forward positions, but 1st Sgt Woody realized that the attack would have to continue. Personally leading his

²Attached: Company "B," 743d Tank Battalion; Company "B," 823d Tank Destroyer Battalion.

men Woody moved forward in the attack on Neusen.

An enemy machine gun placed a deadly stream of fire on the men. First Sgt Woody dispersed his platoon and prepared to attack the gun position, first advancing his men in short rushes, cutting from one side of the road to the other to get closer to the gun. First Sgt Woody, with no thought of his own safety, ran up the road in an effort to reach the foremost elements of his platoon. It was during this courageous action that he was mortally wounded in the chest by a burst from the machine gun which also wounded a man following him. Though seriously wounded, he insisted the other man be evacuated first. In this gallant action 1st Sgt Woody denied himself the immediate medical attention that might have saved his life. He died before medical aid men returned to evacuate him, but his aggressive and superb leadership had taken his platoon forward so rapidly that they overran the enemy defenses, prevented them from reorganizing, and made possible the advance of the whole company.

Our other objective for this day's operation was the town of Linden which was located southwest of Neusen. Both of these towns were on the Weiden-Hogen-Aldenhoven road which the enemy was trying desperately to hold as it was a vital link in their defense. They moved the 1st Battalion, 8th *Panzer Grenadier* Regiment, up from the Wurselen area to defend the territory around Linden.

Our 3d Battalion which had been in Regimental reserve up to this point jumped off in the attack at 0700 and caught the enemy by surprise. In fact, our advance was so rapid that we were on their position before they had time to prepare an adequate defense; and their resistance consisted mainly of small-arms fire from buildings and cellars. Although we were on the position forty minutes after the jump-off, it did not mean that the Germans were convinced that we were there to stay. In fact, so determined were they to regain this position, they launched a counter-attack at 1115 against the town. This attack was made with seven tanks supported by infantry. The tanks apparently came from the area of Eschweiler and turned north to attack our defenses in Linden.

Our forces refused to give up the town and by well-placed artillery and antitank fires they succeeded in routing the enemy attack. One of the German tanks was knocked out with a bazooka and the rest of the tanks were driven off. The battalion continued to clean up the town of Linden, and at 1700 it secured its positions for the night. A total of 326 PWs were



Artillery forward observers fought with us

taken during the operation and interrogation of the men that we had captured showed that our operations during the past two days were a complete surprise to the enemy.

On November 11th the 3d Battalion resumed the attack at 0700. It was strictly house-to-house fighting; the enemy resisted the advance doggedly and taking one house was a noteworthy gain. It was necessary to grab the prisoners out of cellars and buildings. An indication of the stubborn attitude of the enemy was the fact that we succeeded in gaining only 500 yards on this date.

It was very evident that the enemy by now was ready to meet our further advances, and he used his mortars to lay in a very heavy barrage of fire on the attacking battalion. We were successful though in taking a total of 106 prisoners during our operation of this date. One of the prisoners taken during this period was the commanding officer of the 9th Company, 8th *Panzer Grenadier* Regiment. He said that the men surrendering with him were the last handful of men that he had; this company can then be added to the long list of those destroyed by this Regiment. Perhaps more would have been added had we not been very short of artillery ammunition. Observers were helpless when, on the 18th, they saw enemy retreating eastward toward Eschweiler in large numbers.



It was not all town fighting

During this attack Company "I" was held up in its advance by a machine gun strategically located on the main street of the town. It was decided to move a tank up into a position where it could knock out the gun. The tank could not move beyond the forward elements, however, because of a series of mines stretched across the street. Sgt Isidore Eisenberg, quickly sizing up the situation, took a long pole with a hook on the end and used it to remove four of the mines. He did this by reaching out from the cover of a building and dragging the mines to him. After he had removed four mines he realized it would be impossible to reach two additional mines because his pole was too short. Although he realized that to expose himself would mean that he would be under direct enemy fire, he stepped out into the middle of the street and removed one of the mines. He then went out into the street a second time, still in direct view of the gunner, and removed the other one. Were it not for his action the company would have suffered heavier casualties in accomplishing its mission.

Also in this same attack Pvt William C. Robertson noticed two German soldiers entering a house about a hundred yards to his front. While exposed to heavy machine-gun fire, he carefully made his way to the house, taking advantage of what cover the surrounding buildings offered him. Upon reaching the build-

ing the Germans had entered he fired several shots through the door with his M-1 rifle and demanded that the Germans surrender. After several minutes and without firing another shot, fifty-two Germans emerged from the house and surrendered to him. Pvt Robertson then guarded his prisoners for about half an hour until assistance arrived.

During the 18th of November the 2d Battalion remained in Neusen stretching its right flank to maintain contact with the 3d Battalion as it moved towards Vorweiden.

On the 17th and 18th, the 1st Battalion remained in its position in Euchen. During this time, it had the mission of cleaning up any enemy resistance left in our area which might have been by-passed by our rapid advance on Neusen and Linden. A patrol of fourteen men investigated the wooded area northwest of Neusen and picked up two prisoners. Led by Lt Archie J. Piscitello, one rifle platoon, reinforced with a section of light machine guns and a mortar squad, cleaned out the area north of Euchen and picked up a couple of stragglers. Information concerning mine-fields in that area was obtained.

Continuing our drive toward the town of Vorweiden, the 3d Battalion resumed the attack on the 19th of November. Our continuous pressure on the enemy positions in that sector forced him to withdraw his forces during the night of the 18th, and he left only a skeleton force in Vorweiden to delay our advance. Because of this action the battalion was able to advance into Vorweiden with only small-arms fire to harass its advance. By 1045 on the 19th they were on the objective and had made contact with the 119th Infantry Regiment, which was operating on our right flank. Our advance was so rapid that it was unnecessary to fire captured 12cm mortars which we had planned to use in this attack.

During this drive toward Vorweiden S/Sgt Edward J. Anenen and his squad were ordered to secure a dugout on the flank of some houses which the company was to take. On the previous day, machine-gun fire had been coming from this dugout, preventing the company from advancing on the houses. S/Sgt Anenen had led his squad about a hundred yards along open terrain toward the objective, when it was pinned down by machine-gun fire coming from a house about 200 yards away. The men had no possible cover and could neither advance nor move back without being hit by the gun. S/Sgt Anenen with complete disregard for his own personal safety dashed back about a hundred yards to the jumping-off point

where he was able to secure supporting fire and cover the withdrawal of his men. Several minutes after the squad moved back, the area which it had occupied was hit directly by mortar fire.

That afternoon the squad, supported by two tanks, again attacked in this area. Advancing a short distance in front of his squad as scout, S/Sgt Anenen spotted a machine gun located in a house about fifty yards in front of him and had the information sent back to his platoon. A few minutes later he was lightly wounded by this gun, but because of the information he secured concerning its position another squad was able to knock it out shortly thereafter by approaching it from another direction.

On the 18th of November, Regiment was ordered to support by fire the attack of the 117th Infantry Regiment on St. Joris, which was scheduled for dawn the following day. In order to accomplish this mission most effectively and with the most surprise to the enemy, an unusual plan was used. The best positions for machine-gun supporting fires lay in an open beet field to the south of Neusen. During the night two heavy machine-gun platoons of Company "D," reinforced with two rifle platoons, moved approximately 500 yards south of the town and immediately to the left (west) flank of the enemy in St. Joris. By dawn, our troops were dug in and camouflaged perfectly. In order to further strengthen the supporting direct fires, tanks and tank destroyers were sneaked into firing positions near the east edge of Neusen. For indirect fire, mortars were set up between Broicherhof and Broich. In addition to our own, use was made of German mortars and several thousand rounds of ammunition which had been captured a few days before. At 0800 on the 19th, St. Joris erupted. Our artillery and mortar concentrations were heavy. The surprise fire from the tanks and tank destroyers and, above all, from the machine guns in an apparently unoccupied field was terrific. Elements of the 117th Infantry Regiment, under cover of these fires, captured St. Joris with very few casualties. Friends from our sister regiment reported that these supporting fires had knocked the Germans groggy.

Thus we were able to report on the 19th of November that all our assigned missions had been completed. We had driven to the VII Corps boundary line, destroying all resistance.

On the 20th of November the 3d Battalion was relieved by the 3d Battalion of the 335th Infantry. The 1st Battalion was moved to the vicinity of Warden while the 2d Battalion occupied its position in Neusen and the 3d Battalion was withdrawn to Linden. Hot

meals were served to the men and every effort was made to make their living conditions as comfortable as possible. On this date plans and preparations were also made for our continued attack to the east. Reconnaissances were made in the vicinity of the area of the next operation. For the first time we had the newest models of the formidable German Mark VI (Royal Tiger) tank in our possession and therefore experiments were conducted with the rocket launcher³ to determine the most vulnerable spot on the Mark VI tank, and it was found that the rocket would penetrate the turret at any point except the front part. It would not penetrate any other part of the tank. This information was passed on to all units.

DRIVE TO THE INDE

On the 21st of November the Regiment⁴ began a series of attacks which was to carry it to the Inde River deeper in Germany. Plans called for carefully coordinated maneuvering and also good control of supporting fire.

The Regimental Command Post moved to Mariendorf at 0730 on the 21st. The 3d Battalion also moved into the town to be in readiness for commitment during the prospective drive.

With the 413th Infantry Regiment, 104th Infantry Division, operating on our right and the 175th Infantry Regiment, 29th Infantry Division on the left, the 2d Battalion opened the attack on the morning of the 21st of November, with the mission of taking Lurken, Germany. In preparation for this attack the battalion moved from its position in Neusen to Kinzweiler. This territory had previously been taken by the 117th Infantry Regiment which supported our attack by fire.

At 0800, the 2d Battalion started its attack and closed in quickly on the town after the artillery and other supporting fires had lifted. Enemy resistance was not too strong, consisting mainly of small-arms fire, and we were able to gain control of the town by 0830. Included in this same mission was the commanding ground located just east of the town, because control of this terrain was necessary for future operations. The battalion succeeded in taking this terrain also. By 0935 we controlled both the town and this terrain and had begun to consolidate our position.

With this town in our hands, it was then possible to proceed to the next mission, which was to attack and seize the towns of Laurensberg, Langweiler and Obermerz. Accordingly two companies, "A" and "C,"

³Launcher, Rocket Antitank, 2.36", known as the "bazooka."

⁴Attached: 743d Tank Battalion and Company "B," 823d Tank Destroyer Battalion.



Rain

had moved from their assembly area southwest of Warden to Kinzweiler, arriving there at 0830. From this point they moved to Lurken which the 2d Battalion had already seized and consolidated. Elements of the 1st Battalion as they moved up behind the 2d Battalion encountered some pockets of resistance in the town, but quickly mopped up and moved through.

While the 1st Battalion Command Group was moving forward to direct the attack, one of its most valuable staff members, Capt D. Wilbur Williams, was lost when he was seriously wounded by enemy artillery fire. Capt Williams had been with the 1st Battalion since its days at Camp Blanding.

The attack on Laurensberg was scheduled for 0945, and Company "A" and Company "C" crossed the Line of Departure on time, despite having had to make their way through an enemy minefield. Advancing under an artillery barrage, they were able to reach the town of Laurensberg without too much difficulty and at 1045 they were on the objective and mopping up.

At the same time these two companies attacked, Company "B" jumped off to take the town of Langweiler. In order to protect the left flank of the battalion in their drive on Laurensberg, this company attacked from the northeast corner of Warden and succeeded in taking the town of Langweiler at the same time

that Laurensberg was taken. Resistance in the initial attack was not too great and most of the time was spent in mopping operations.

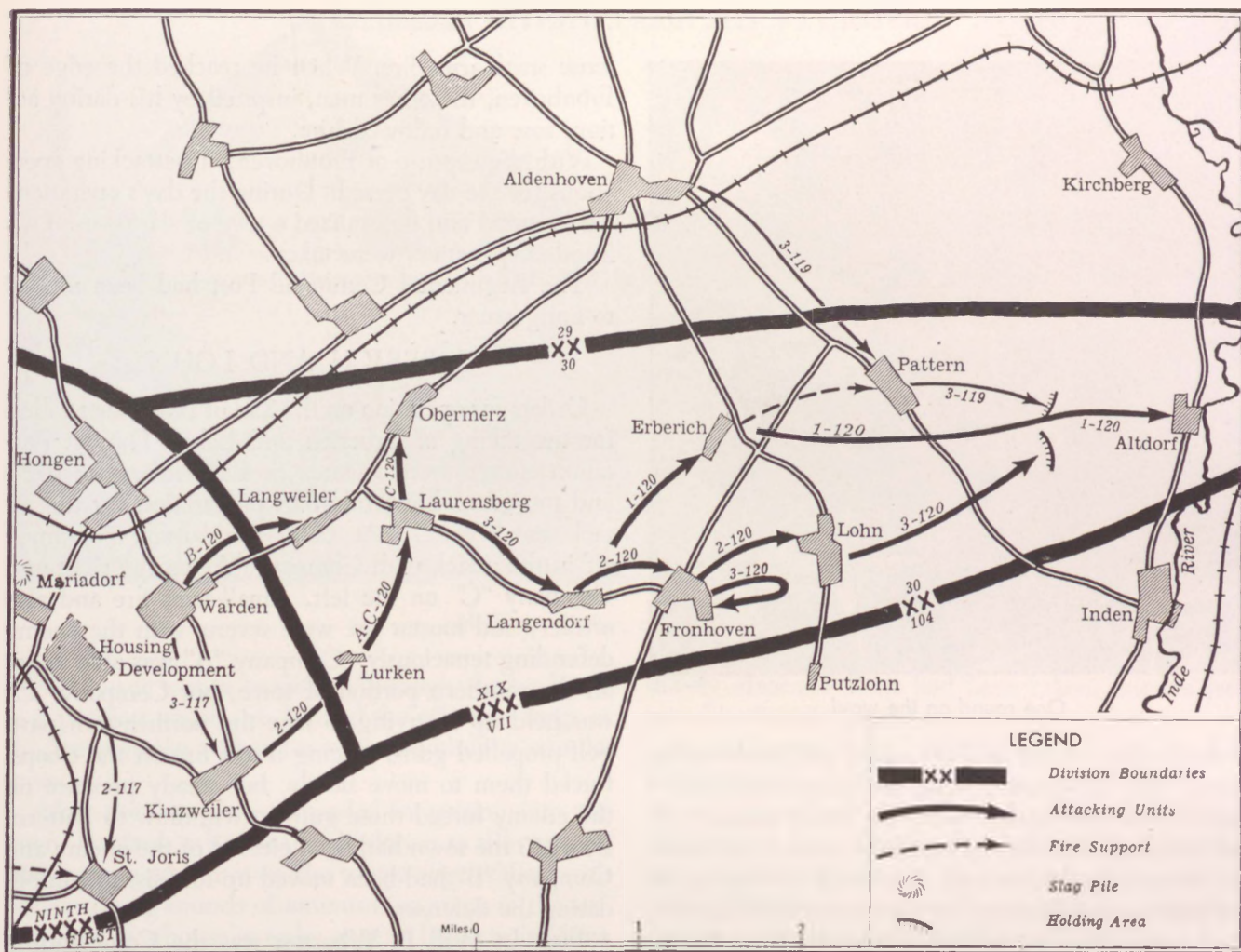
T/Sgt Batiste L. Bayhille was a platoon sergeant in Company "B" when it attacked the town of Langweiler. No effective opposition was met until the attacking elements reached the southwestern outskirts of the town. At this point machine-gun fire was encountered coming down the main street of the town at about a range of 300 yards. An intense artillery and mortar barrage also caught the men and as a result of both types of fire, the company sustained fifteen casualties.

The 3d Platoon, which had in the meantime crossed the road leading into the town, suffered thirteen casualties including the platoon leader, platoon guide and one squad leader. T/Sgt Bayhille of this platoon was also wounded when flying shrapnel struck him in the right shoulder. As a veteran of many battles since landing in France, T/Sgt Bayhille realized the importance of maintaining the momentum of the attack. Seeing the disorganization of the platoon and the lack of a leader, he disregarded the pain of his wound to rally his men. He then urged and led them in an aggressive and successful attack through the village and to the objective on the opposite outskirts. Although wounded, he added to the fire power of his platoon by firing his own weapon although it pained him greatly to put the weapon to his shoulder. His superb heroism greatly inspired the badly shaken platoon and enabled it to gain its objective.

After reorganization in Laurensberg, Company "C" of the 1st Battalion, with tank support, continued the attack to take Obermerz. With continuous pressure exerted on the enemy the company was able to drive into Obermerz and consolidate its position by 1330.

The 3d Battalion had plans completed for the attack on Langendorf which was another one of our objectives for this day. After prepared artillery fires, the battalion jumped off in the attack at 1310 from the vicinity of Laurensberg. By now the enemy had succeeded in regrouping his forces and stiffer resistance was met. Nevertheless, the battalion continued in its drive and was successful in getting on its objective by 1500 and proceeded to consolidate its position. Despite the all-destructive artillery concentrations which struck the battalion before it could dig itself in, comparatively few casualties were sustained.

When Langendorf was falling it appeared as if our Regiment had made a breakthrough. Although Langendorf was the last objective scheduled for seizure dur-



From the Siegfried Line to the Roer River

ing the day, the Regimental Commander decided to attack Fronhaven immediately in order to exploit our successes. Accordingly, the 2d Battalion with no prior warning was ordered to make a forced march across muddy, plowed fields from Lurken to Langendorf. After the battalion had reached the near edge of this latter town and when officers and noncommissioned officers were reconnoitering in the vicinity of the Line of Departure on the far (east) edge, it became apparent that the enemy defenses were in great depth and that no breakthrough had been made. Fairly intense machine-gun fire and intermittent artillery concentrations interfered with the reconnaissance. Nevertheless, plans for the attack were continued.

At about 1350 Company "F" on the right and Company "G" on the left were on the Line of Departure. Just as the attack was being started, the enemy retaliated with very heavy concentrations of artillery. This enemy fire broke up the attack before it could be launched. Immediately a new Line of Departure,

forward of the old, was designated. Members of Companies "F" and "G" infiltrated through continuing heavy artillery fires to this new line. At 1650 the attack on Fronhoven began with Companies "F" and "G" attacking abreast. When the battalion attacked, the enemy increased his fire terrifically, and it seemed as if we would be unable to advance. It was getting late in the day and due to the fighting in the morning and the forced march to the Line of Departure, the men were tired, very tired, nearly exhausted.

Colonel B. P. Purdue, Commanding Officer of the Regiment, sensing the situation, personally took charge of the attack. When the rifle companies moved out, he saw it would be necessary for the tanks to advance in support of the advancing troops. These tanks had been assigned a base-of-fire mission. Under heavy artillery and mortar fire Colonel Purdue went over to the tank commander, explained the situation hurriedly, and ordered the tanks to move out, which they did in almost record time. Colonel Purdue then took charge



One round on the way!

of the leading elements of the attack and the battalion moved into the town driving the enemy still farther east. It was getting dark when the attack jumped off, and when the battalion entered the town it was dark, but nevertheless the troops continued to mop up on the position and Colonel Purdue stayed with the men until he saw that the town was securely in our hands.

Other individual actions led to the capture of Fronhoven. Lt Col James W. Cantey, Commanding Officer of the 2d Battalion, also led one of the attacking companies. The commander of Company "G" was killed at the start of the attack and Lt Col Cantey made his way to the head of the company. Taking command, he urged the men forward in the attack. Still under heavy fire, the company under the Lieutenant Colonel's command moved swiftly across the open ground and successfully took its assigned objective. First Lt Robert S. Warnick, acting as mortar observer, realizing that the attack was bogging down, also helped to keep the momentum of the attack going by personally exhorting the men to drive on in spite of the heavy incoming fires.

S/Sgt John D. Lewis, forward observer for a 60mm mortar section, also realized that the attack was bogging down and that if the troops did not advance they would be subjected to a heavy artillery barrage. He worked his way to the front of the attacking column, firing as he advanced. He then exhorted the men to follow him and advanced across the field under in-

tense small-arms fire. When he reached the edge of Fronhoven, the other men, inspired by his daring action, rose and followed him.

With the capture of Fronhoven, our attacking operations for the day ceased. During the day's operation, we captured and neutralized a total of six towns. Two hundred prisoners were taken.

The Regimental Command Post had been moved to Langweiler.

ERBERICH AND LOHN

Orders for operation on the 22d of November called for the taking of Erberich and Lohn. The 1st Battalion started from its area in Laurensberg at 0730 and moved to Langendorf in preparation for the attack on Erberich. At 0800 the battalion jumped off in the attack with Company "A" on the right and Company "C" on the left. Small-arms fire and also artillery and mortar fire were severe, with the enemy defending tenaciously. Company "A" was able to get on the southern portion of town, but Company "C" was held up in trying to take the northeastern part. Self-propelled guns, placing direct fire on the troops, forced them to move slowly, but steady pressure on the enemy forced these guns to withdraw to Pattern. By 1240 the town had been cleared of the enemy and Company "B" had been moved up to assist in consolidating the defenses.

First Lt Will B. Wharton was the Commanding Officer of Company "A" when it attacked Erberich. The leading platoon of the company had reached the crest of a slight swell in the ground about 500 yards from the town when it was pinned down by machine-gun fire from the left and direct tank fire from the right. Realizing that to remain in the open field long would mean heavy casualties if German mortars and artillery zeroed in on them, Lt Wharton jumped to his feet in the face of the direct fire and began to rally his men for the final push. At this moment a shell landed a few yards away from him, knocked him down, and bruised his chest badly. Insisting on continuing the advance with his men, Lt Wharton, with the assistance of two of his men, walked as best he could into the town. There he remained until a defensive line was established and made secure. Against his will he was then evacuated to the rear.

In this same action, Sgt Glenn L. Abbott succeeded in routing enemy tanks by his courage and daring. When the company became pinned down by direct fire, Sgt Abbott remained on the alert to determine where the fire was coming from. Spotting the tank,



Mud, destruction, and—more mud

he fired at it with a bazooka. Although the tank was in a position which was beyond the effective range of this weapon, Sgt Abbott forced it to withdraw into the town.

After the company succeeded in getting into the town, the tank, which had withdrawn to the opposite side, continued to fire on the troops. Sgt Abbott with his remaining rounds of ammunition went to the second story of a house in order to get a better point from which to fire. Spotting the tank, he proceeded to fire the two rounds but did not succeed in hitting the tank. He then started back to secure more ammunition. He no sooner had left the building than the tank fired six rounds of HE ammunition into his former position.

After blasting a few more houses and before Sgt Abbott could get back with the ammunition, the tank withdrew, thus allowing our men to consolidate their positions. Before it withdrew, however, it blasted a small brick house on the northern outskirts of the town, killing Lt Frederick E. Lambert, veteran Company "C" platoon leader, who was in the building firing his rifle from one of the windows in an effort to button up the tank.

The problem of supplying the 1st Battalion in Erberich became acute when it was found that ordinary vehicles could not traverse the muddy field to the southeast of the village without getting stuck and, consequently, becoming prey for direct-fire weapons in the vicinity of Lohn. T/5 Philip Dolan, driving for Lt Col Ellis W. Williamson, 1st Battalion commander, attempted to cross the open ground imme-

diately after the town had been taken, but his jeep mired in the soft ground.

A tank opened fire at him, but luckily the first round missed. T/5 Dolan jumped out of the vehicle just as the second round scored a direct hit, setting the jeep on fire. Despite the continuing enemy fire and the blazing vehicle, he succeeded in retrieving some valuable communications equipment and then carried it forward to the Battalion CP on foot.

Despite the fact that five vehicles were knocked out by enemy fire in this field during the next hour, Pfc Max E. Hambleton, one of Company "D's" drivers, volunteered to pilot an M-29 Weasel over the treacherous ground to serve the battalion's needs. During the next thirty-six hours he raced back and forth across the exposed ground almost continuously, bringing up supplies and evacuating wounded in his "Weasel." Although he was fired at many times by enemy artillery he refused relief during this period, insisting upon assuming the burden alone and foregoing sleep and food to do so.

Further conception of the intensity and accuracy of the enemy direct tank fire can be gained from considering the facts that at least two men were killed by direct hits from the shell-fire of enemy tankers, and that three out of five light tanks which were supporting Company "A" were knocked out.

Six hours after the 1st Battalion Command Post had been established in a house in Erberich, five Germans were discovered in a hayloft overhead. Digging them out of the hay one man of the 230th Field Artil-



Every church steeple blasted, every town wrecked

lery liaison party who discovered them netted three German pistols in the deal.

The mission of taking Lohn was given to the 3d Battalion which jumped off from Fronhoven. It was evident from the start of the attack that the Germans did not intend to give up this town without a struggle. Even the elements were on the side of the Germans, for it was a cold, wet, rainy day.

During the night of the 21st-22d of November, the enemy had brought up the 246th Replacement Battalion of 300 men to bolster the garrison at Lohn.

The attack began at 0800 with Companies "I" and "L" abreast. A withering hail of small-arms fire from automatic weapons was encountered as soon as the two companies attacked. In addition, antitank guns and tanks were in excellent positions with excellent fields of fire on our advancing troops. Artillery and mortar fire was extremely heavy. The terrain was such as to give the enemy an excellent view of our advance as well as enabling him to place direct fire on our troops. It was soon discovered that the field through which the battalion was passing was mined. Also, the ground was so soft and muddy that it was impossible to move tanks across it.

Because of these two factors, the riflemen had to go into the town alone. Company "L" was pinned down by extremely heavy machine-gun fire and was unable to advance, but Company "I" was able to get into the town and continued to fight it out with the enemy. Company "K" was sent in for reinforcement and a defense was established with Company "L" on the right and Company "K" on the left.

A second attempt was made to get tanks and tank

destroyers into the town to aid in knocking out the tanks that were placing direct fire on our troops, but after the loss of two medium tanks and one tank destroyer, it was found that it was impossible to move any of these vehicles forward. This fire came from strong enemy positions in Pattern and Putzlohn with tanks firing directly upon the men. With stronger opposition developing in the town, plus the direct tank fire, and our inability to reinforce the troops with tanks or antitank weapons, the order was given to infiltrate back to the 2d Battalion position in Fronhoven. This order was given at 1600, and the battalion was able to return to the 2d Battalion position by 2015.

One of the reasons that we received such a terrific amount of direct fire during our attack against Lohn was the fact that our right flank was exposed. This ground, which was in the zone of action of the First Army, was held by the Germans, thus enabling them to place flanking fire on our troops as they advanced. The strongest fires that we encountered during this attack came from this locality.

During the course of the day's fighting we were able to knock out six enemy tanks. Company "A," 823d Tank Destroyer Battalion, succeeded in destroying four tanks plus two "Beetles" (radio-controlled tanks). The men of Company "I" also knocked out two enemy tanks. Total number of prisoners taken during the day's operation was ninety-eight.

The artillery observers of the 230th Field Artillery Battalion, which always supported the Regiment, were real soldiers. 2d Lt Donald V. Mills was one of these fighting men. Upon reaching Lohn, he established his observation post on the third floor of a building in order to obtain the requisite observation for the maximum artillery support of the attack. Enemy tanks and infantry were in the street below and enemy infantry were in adjoining buildings. While observing and directing artillery fire, Lt Mills was seen by the nearby enemy and his position was thereupon taken under fire by hostile tanks and mortars. He remained in this extremely hazardous position throughout the action. However, he did order the other members of his part to a lower floor. On occasion, Lt Mills fired upon enemy so close to his position that short rounds of his own fires hit the building in which he was stationed. Even after the enemy wounded him painfully Lt Mills continued to direct fire. His skill and bravery brought down heavy and accurate supporting fires under which our infantrymen made their successful withdrawal. He himself was one of the last to leave Lohn.

Lt Col Howard W. Greer, commanding officer of the 3d Battalion, aided materially in the Lohn attack by his personal efforts. The advancing companies were being held up by direct tank fire. Lt Col Greer, who was directing operations from an observation post in the loft of a barn in Fronhoven, with Capt Hill, his S-3, and Capt Richard Trauth, his artillery officer, sighted the tanks. Although the enemy opened fire on the barn, scoring several direct hits and knocking off the shingles, Lt Col Greer stayed in the Observation Post and directed artillery fire on the tanks. He then came down from the loft and personally directed towed tank-destroyer guns into a position to engage the tanks. After they were on the target, he went back into his position in the loft of the barn, where he remained until the enemy tanks withdrew. Although the battalion was unable to take its objective that day it inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy.

The action of Capt Charles R. Shaw, commanding officer of Company "I," also contributed greatly to our attack on Lohn. Company "L" which was attacking on the right was pinned down by extremely heavy small-arms, machine-gun and direct tank fire. Capt Shaw, realizing that to advance would mean that both his flanks would be exposed, nevertheless decided to continue the attack. Personally leading his company, he so inspired the men that they reached the near edge of the town, their objective and held the position until reinforcements could arrive. This was done in spite of the extremely heavy fire that the company encountered.

Another example of aggressive leadership was shown by 1st Lt Francis L. Herbert who, advancing at the head of his platoon, shot and killed three German snipers from a distance of about 150 yards before he himself was wounded in the shoulder. Despite his wounds he immediately fired on and killed the sniper who had hit him. He then continued to lead his platoon forward, advancing with his men about a hundred yards before he was so weakened by his wound that he fell to the ground. Although he could no longer advance with them and was forced to lie in a prone position, Lt Herbert continued to issue orders to his men, directing the movement of his platoon into the outlying buildings of Lohn. By keeping control of his platoon despite his painful wound, he prevented his men from bogging down in the attack and remaining in the open field where they would have been subjected to heavy artillery fire.

After Company "K," led by Capt Joseph C. Reaser, entered the town to reinforce the defense already set



One way of getting out of the mud

up, it was subjected to intense enemy fire. A short time later it was decided to withdraw our forces in the town. By this time Company "K" had suffered several casualties so that in planning the withdrawal, Capt Reaser was confronted with the problem of evacuating his wounded as well as withdrawing the remainder of his company. He supervised and successfully completed the withdrawal of his company to a point 800 yards to the rear with a minimum number of casualties.

Upon completing this withdrawal, he decided to remain behind and personally direct the evacuation of his wounded men. Although subjected to intense artillery and mortar fire and in direct view of an enemy tank which fired on his position continuously, Capt Reaser successfully evacuated all his wounded men to a position of safety where they could be given medical treatment.

Three members of a machine-gun section, S/Sgt Clyde A. Thomas, Sgt Dominick S. Fanaticce, and Pfc Walter R. Yates, were supporting Company "I" in its advance on Lohn. When the company became pinned down by fire, these three machine gunners, acting on their own initiative, made their way through the riflemen and drove on into the town. Seeing their fearless action, the riflemen rose and followed them.

After entering the town, they proceeded to clean

out the houses. An enemy tank moved up and began firing at the buildings they were clearing. Although they knew they would draw fire, these three men fired on the tank and it was forced to withdraw. When the company was ordered to withdraw, these same men volunteered to cover the movement, staying in Lohn until the last man had left.

SEIZURE OF LOHN

During the night of the 22d-23d of November, final plans were completed for again attacking Lohn. The 2d Battalion was to jump off from Fronhoven at 0700 on the morning of the 23d.

During the night previous to the attack a constant stream of artillery fire was directed on our positions. At 0700 when Company "E" and Company "F" were starting to jump off, the enemy threw over the heaviest artillery concentration this Regiment had encountered. It struck Company "E," completely disorganizing it. Therefore, the company was forced to move out late. It did move out, despite fearful casualties, with twenty men, and with Company "F" succeeded in getting on the objective by 0915. Company "G" and Company "L," which was attached to the 2d Battalion for this operation, were sent in to reinforce the position.

The 1st Battalion supported the attack of the 2d Battalion by firing on Lohn from its positions in Erberich.

The enemy still continued to attack our positions in Lohn by fire, and a steady stream of both direct and indirect fire was placed on the town. At 1112 the enemy, determined to retake the position, launched a quick-striking counterattack with ten tanks and one hundred infantrymen. With well-placed artillery fire and all other available weapons, the attack was repulsed with heavy casualties to the enemy. The 230th Field Artillery Battalion succeeded in knocking out two of the tanks and the 823d Tank Destroyer Battalion destroyed two more.

With this attack stopped, our position in Lohn was secure and consolidation of the objective was completed. The 2d Battalion had an estimated forty to fifty enemy dead on their position. The total number of PWs captured by the Regiment during this period was seventy-two. The 3d Battalion took over the 2d Battalion's position in Fronhoven after the 2d Battalion attacked Lohn.

Had it not been for a number of individual acts of courage and heroism, the attack on Lohn would not have been successful. Following are accounts of

some of these acts which contributed directly to the taking and subsequent holding of Lohn.

As has been stated, when the troops started to cross the Line of Departure, the enemy laid down a terrifying artillery barrage squarely in the center of the advancing columns. This fire was so concentrated and heavy that it killed or wounded thirty-nine officers and enlisted men in some three minutes in Company "E" alone. This naturally caused extreme disorganization. The battalion commander had sent 1st Lt William Barenkamp, the Battalion S-2, up to check on the organization of the movement and to see that the battalion crossed the Line of Departure on time. When the artillery struck, the men scattered for cover. Lt Barenkamp unhesitatingly volunteered to assist the company commander in reorganizing the remaining men of the company to continue the attack. There were only twenty men left. With that small group, the company commander jumped off across the open terrain towards the objective in the face of heavy artillery and direct enemy machine-gun fire. Lt Barenkamp followed in the rear.

Halfway across the open field the company commander was killed by machine-gun fire. The men hesitated when they saw their leader felled by this accurate fire. Lt Barenkamp, realizing the seriousness of the situation, and on his own initiative, went to the head of the troops in the face of the withering fire, took command and led them on to succeed in accomplishing their mission in the town.

He immediately organized the company objective for the defense and set up a roadblock on the enemy's main line of communication. These defenses had scarcely been organized when the enemy counter-attacked. With this small group of men and a few more from other companies who succeeded in reaching the objective, the counterattack was beaten back by bitter determination and dogged fighting. Due to the aggressive initiative and gallantry displayed by Lt Barenkamp in taking command of a seemingly hopeless situation in the face of direct and deadly enemy fire, that part of the objective assigned to Company "E" was taken and held.

The company commander whom Lt Barenkamp was assisting was 1st Lt Donald W. Colvin, commanding officer of Company "E," who, exposing himself continuously to the murderous fire, sought to rally his men for the attack. Several times after assembling a part of his company, shells landed upon them wounding several of the group. Each time seeing two or three of their number hit by the flying shrapnel, the



Good old wall—for beyond it was the enemy

men instinctively sought shelter. It was under the most trying and difficult circumstances that Lt Colvin assisted by Lt Barenkamp labored to assemble and reorganize the company.

In spite of these adverse conditions, Lt Colvin made a rapid reorganization and prepared to make the attack as planned. When his company was ready, he radioed his battalion commander that he had only twenty men and that he was moving into the attack regardless of circumstances. At approximately 0715 the twenty men of Company "E" with Lt Colvin leading crossed the Line of Departure in the face of hostile artillery, mortar and machine-gun fire. As it has been told, Lt Colvin was killed a few minutes later. Again the Regiment lost a fine officer.

Lt John M. Jacobsen, commanding officer of Company "F," realizing the necessity of his company attacking in coordination with Company "E," moved to the head of his troops and urged his men forward into the attack. Although enemy artillery fire continued in its intensity and the enemy had now opened up with machine-gun and small-arms fire, Lt Jacobsen remained at the head of his troops, vigorously maintaining the momentum of the attack while constantly exposed to enemy fire. Although the company had suffered fifty casualties, the courage on the part of the company commander and his coolness under fire, with utter disregard for himself, so inspired his men that they attacked with renewed vigor and determination. Under the superb leadership of Lt Jacobsen, Company "F" moved swiftly forward and seized its objective, inflicting approximately fifty casualties on the enemy and taking many prisoners.

S/Sgt George Pete, of Company "F," was hit by

fragments from an artillery shell after he had advanced a short distance toward the objective. Despite his painful wound and on his own initiative, in the absence of his squad leader who had been wounded, he reorganized the four remaining men of his section and led them to the objective while exposed to direct fire from an enemy tank. He moved his section to the extreme left flank, carrying a machine gun and four boxes of ammunition with him, which was the basic load of three men. After organizing his men in defensive position while subjected to intense artillery and small-arms fire, he remained there despite the fact that he and his men were the only ones manning the line in that area. When the enemy counter-attacked, S/Sgt Pete's gun aided greatly in repelling this attack.

The tanks which had moved in with the infantry were blocked on the outside of the town by enemy minefields. Orders were immediately sent back for the supporting engineer platoon to remove the mines. This engineer platoon was on another mission, and the Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon was called on to accomplish the task. Since the Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon had lost both its platoon leader and platoon sergeant and three other men, Capt Willie B. Irby, commanding officer of the 2d Battalion Headquarters Company, voluntarily set out with the few remaining pioneers to accomplish this mission.

Capt Irby led them across the flat, open terrain under mortar and small-arms fire and directed tank fire. Upon reaching the minefield, they methodically cleared a path so the tanks could advance. While working in this exposed position, Capt Irby saw several of the enemy attempting to get in a position

where they could fire on his men. He shot and killed one and forced the others to withdraw back into the town. Then returning to the job of removing mines, he helped the men complete their mission. Because of this inspired leadership, the mines were removed, thus allowing the tanks to advance in support of the infantry.

Company "G," in reserve at the beginning and during the attack, was ordered forward as soon as the lead companies reached the town. As Company "G" pushed forward over the open terrain the leading riflemen, slowed down by the intense artillery fire, showed signs of weakening and possibly stopping. Pfc Polowchak, Company "G" runner, on his own initiative made his way to the front of the column and assuming the duties of first scout, led the column forward with new vigor. Inspired by Pfc Polowchak's courageous action, other riflemen left their covered positions and pushed on with the column into the town, which was under heavy artillery fire.

Later in the morning, at approximately 1000 hours, after his company had taken its objective, Pfc Polowchak, again on his own initiative, began searching for remaining enemy in the sniper-infested buildings of Lohn. He heard a noise in a cellar. Suspecting it to have been made by enemy and determined to investigate, he threw open the door to the cellar, pointed his carbine down into the darkness and ordered the occupants to come out. When no one appeared, he pulled the trigger of his carbine which did not fire, the magazine having been emptied. At the click of the trigger, however, eleven frightened Germans filed up the stairs with their hands over their heads. Pfc Polowchak captured seven more prisoners that morning, making a total of eighteen to his credit, over half the total amount taken by his company that day.

As Company "G" moved into the town of Lohn, hostile artillery and small-arms fire forced the men to take cover in near-by houses. T/Sgt Lee R. Kirby, acting platoon leader of the 4th Platoon, refused to let himself become pinned down by the enemy fire. Calling to his men who had taken cover, he told them he was going to clean out the town and anyone who wanted to help could follow him. Then without once looking back, he walked down the street toward the enemy. This bold action of T/Sgt Kirby gave the men the courage they needed. As he proceeded down the left side of the street, very quickly they left their covered positions and followed him in the attack. The platoon pushed through the town rapidly, clearing the houses of enemy as they went, and sent twenty-

five prisoners to the rear. The force of this attack caused the enemy to withdraw toward the east. T/Sgt Kirby was the first of his platoon to reach this eastern side of the town. The retreating Germans made an opportune target for the machine-gun section of T/Sgt Kirby's platoon and, under his direction, the section went into action to deliver effective fire on the retreating Nazis.

Sgt Ralph M. Chafin, of Company "G," advancing before his squad, led his men to the objective and then aggressively and fearlessly continued to put the enemy to rout. His platoon, now depleted to seventeen men, supported by one machine gun and two BARs, one of which Sgt Chafin manned, fought its way to the west edge of the town where it set up its defensive positions. When the enemy counterattacked, the platoon's lone machine gun had a stoppage, thus reducing the platoon's fire power to a dangerously low level.

Within a short time, the enemy had infiltrated to within twenty yards of the platoon's position, and the situation was becoming extremely critical. The enemy was now so close that they threw hand grenades in an effort to drive back our troops. At this point with complete disregard for his own personal safety, Sgt Chafin stepped into the middle of the street along which the enemy was approaching and emptied his BAR into the attacking force, causing the Germans to turn and run. In doing this, Sgt Chafin exposed himself to the direct fire of an enemy tank which was covering the road as well as a hail of automatic fire which the enemy was employing. Due largely to his courageous action, this part of the dangerous counterattack was successfully repulsed.

Advancing before his men, T/Sgt Howard E. Deadmon of Company "G" successfully led his depleted platoon through the intense artillery and machine-gun fire to the objective. Upon reaching Lohn he and his men assisted in driving out enemy tanks and supporting infantry. After placing his men in defensive positions T/Sgt Deadmon saw the German counterattacking force. The platoon's supply of ammunition was almost exhausted in the initial attack. Realizing the need for ammunition T/Sgt Deadmon made his way through intense artillery fire to his Company Command Post about 600 yards away. There he procured as many bandoliers of ammunition as he could carry and returned over the same hazardous route to his platoon.

The enemy approached the platoon's position but was turned back by intense small-arms fire from the

platoon. T/Sgt Deadmon fearlessly exposing himself to the enemy's fire, personally accounted for several dead Germans, and his leadership and display of great personal bravery were determining factors in stopping this attack in our area.

In view of the heavy casualties encountered and the threat of the enemy counterattack, Company "L" was ordered to move up and support the 2d Battalion. Enemy artillery barrages were falling constantly as Company "L" approached from the west of Lohn. Capt Joseph E. Brown, Battalion S-3, met the company as it entered the town. Realizing the necessity of placing the company into position immediately, Capt Brown led the men through the heavy shelling to the eastern side of the town. Here he personally placed each platoon where it was able to employ its weapons to the maximum effect.

During the counterattack Capt Brown constantly exposed himself to enemy small-arms and direct tank fires as he moved from one position to another in an effort to determine the strength of the enemy. Through this action, he was able to keep constantly informed on the strength and direction of the enemy thrust and to make a shift in our own strength if necessary. Because of Capt Brown's skill in placing the troops, they were able to bring the full force of their fire power on the attacking enemy.

On the 23d the 1st Battalion also supported the attack of a battalion of the 119th Infantry Regiment when it took the town of Pattern. According to plan, the 1st Battalion opened with extremely heavy fire on the enemy positions. The purpose of this fire was to divert the attention of the enemy to the south and southwest making him think that an attack was coming from that direction. At the same time, the 119th Infantry was to attack from Aldenhoven which is northwest of the town of Pattern.

At 1245 the 1st Battalion opened up with mortar, machine-gun, tank, antitank and tank-destroyer fire on the enemy position. At the same time the 119th Infantry Regiment started its attack. So effective was our fire that the enemy was completely fooled as to the direction of the attack and the attacking troops were on top of them before they knew what was happening. The battalion of our sister regiment succeeded in knocking out three tanks and capturing some sixty prisoners.

At the end of the day's fighting on the 23d the 1st Battalion occupied a defensive position in Erberich, the 2d Battalion was in Lohn, while the 3d Battalion held Fronhoven.



Biggest thrill: letters and packages

On the 24th of November the battalions remained in the same positions while the divisions on our right and left drew abreast. Constant improvements in all of the defensive positions were made. Incoming fires dropped off considerably. In order to insure a good coordination with other units, contact was maintained with the 119th Infantry Regiment to our left front and the 104th Division on our right. This was done at night by means of patrols which contacted patrols from these other units at stated hours during the night.

Despite the tactical situation a good Thanksgiving dinner was served each man in the 1st Battalion, even though in some cases the food had to be hand-carried to the men in their fighting position.

The Regiment continued to hold its defensive position on the 25th and 26th of November, 1944. Enemy action continued to be light, consisting mainly of harassing artillery fire. Contact with units on our right and left was maintained by use of patrols. The defensive positions were improved and all equipment was cleaned. Men were taken to the rear for baths, and the last truckload of the evening was hit by long-range German artillery near Zopp, Germany, killing four of our men and wounding ten.

Company "L" reverted to the 3d Battalion at 0800.

The 1st Battalion discovered foodstuffs buried behind false walls in a cellar in one of the buildings in Erberich. While this in itself does not constitute any enemy action against us, it is well to bear in

mind that weapons can be hidden in the same manner.

OPERATION AGAINST ALTDORF

Continuing the drive to the east the Regiment was given the mission of taking the town of Altdorf on the 27th of November. This town, located on the banks of the Inde River, was situated in a position that made it a very difficult objective to take. The condition of the terrain north of the town was such that to attack from that flank was impossible. The enemy controlled the territory to the south of the town, so that the only possible way to attack the enemy was in frontal assault over flat, open terrain.

For this operation it was necessary to gain control of commanding ground located approximately 1000 yards west and a little south of the town. The mission of taking this ground was given to Company "K" of our 3d Battalion. This rifle company was reinforced by two platoons of heavy machine guns, one platoon of tank destroyers, and a platoon of antitank guns. Because of the excellent observation that the enemy had on the route to this position, it was necessary to move in under cover of darkness. Company "K" started at 0300 on the 27th, and was in position by 0630. The only resistance met on this move was a small amount of small-arms fire which did not materially delay the advance. In addition to supporting the attack on Altdorf this group had the mission of supporting, by fire, the attack of the 115th Infantry Regiment, 29th Infantry Division, at Kirchberg.

A forward Regimental Command Post was opened in the town of Pattern at 0820.

The 3d Battalion of the 119th Infantry Regiment, which had been attached to our Regiment for this operation, was given the mission of taking Altdorf. It attacked at 1130 on the 27th. Again the terrain made operations very difficult as the area through which the battalion had to attack was flat and open. Rains of the past few days had made the ground so soft and muddy that it was impossible to use tanks for supporting fires. The battalion was able to advance to a point approximately 800 yards west of Altdorf, but here the direct fire of the enemy forced it to stop and take up a defensive position. Any attempt to maneuver the men was quickly observed by the enemy who placed a steady stream of fire on anybody or anything that tried to move. Vehicles that tried to assist in the attack bogged down in the mud. During the late afternoon it was realized that no further advance could be made; the end of the day found our troops occupying this commanding ground which was

held during the night in preparation for an attack the next morning. Although the 3d Battalion of the 119th Infantry Regiment was not successful in taking the town of Altdorf in this attack, excellent information was secured in regard to the positions of the enemy. This information aided us greatly in our operation the following morning.

Because of the excellent fields of fire that the enemy had and his ability to spot even our smallest move, it was found that the only solution to the problem of taking the town was to attack under cover of darkness.

The 1st Battalion of our Regiment was given the mission of attacking at 0430 through the positions that we already occupied. It being the policy of this Regiment to make plans to handle all possible situations that might arise, the 1st Battalion had, four days previous to this, been ordered to prepare plans for a night attack on Altdorf; thus they were fully prepared to attack when called on.

In preparation for this attack the 1st Battalion moved east from Erberich at 0230 on the 28th of November to the jump-off point which was our defensive position west of Altdorf. This movement was characterized by a very high degree of discipline, morale and planning; the entire battalion with attachments traversed one and a half miles of unmarked terrain in the darkness and succeeded in slipping into position silently, and well-organized for the assault. At 0430 the attack began with Company "B" on the left, Company "C" on the right, and Company "A" to the right rear. In order to employ the element of surprise to the utmost, there were no artillery fires on the objective. Each attacking company was in four columns preceded by two squads deployed as skirmishers. Our troops had hoped to get within hand-grenade range before being discovered, but friendly artillery time-fire which was supporting an attack of the division to our right illuminated our men as they came over this open ground. In spite of the most careful plans that had been made for this operation, this was one contingency that had not been foreseen. The moon also came out from behind the clouds and the two sources of light silhouetted our men against the skyline, affording the enemy excellent observation of our movements.

As soon as the presence of our troops was discovered the enemy started to fire his Final Protective Line fires with machine guns. At least eight guns opened up on our troops as they advanced. In spite of the extremely heavy fires that the battalion encountered, it pushed forward. Advancing in the face of these

heavy fires was extremely hazardous. Our troops had been discovered beyond effective rifle grenade range. Never did men show greater courage. They crawled down the hill toward the guns, working their way forward under the cones of incessant fire. After crawling to within rifle grenade range of the enemy, the forward troops killed some and caused the others to flee by a concentration of grenades which was fired for nearly ten minutes. Later a captured German officer told an interrogator that our advance under this machine-gun fire was amazing because they (the Germans) had believed their position to be impregnable against a frontal attack.

Before the attack the men had been briefed thoroughly as to their mission and also as to the position each man was to occupy when he reached the town. Driving on into the town, the assault echelon quickly forced its way to assigned positions at the far end of town to prepare for defense. Support echelons proceeded to destroy by-passed pockets of resistance. In the town itself seven enemy tanks and a personnel carrier were operating. The tanks were going up and down the streets firing as they went and the infantrymen were attacking them with the antitank weapons available to riflemen. Refusing to give up the town after they had once taken it, our men fought on and succeeded in forcing the tanks to run. One of the tanks was knocked out and destroyed, and hits were scored on others, undoubtedly causing casualties among the crew members. The personnel carrier was quickly disposed of. Within an hour and a half of the time that the battalion was on its objective, it was possible to bring up tanks, tank destroyers, and antitank guns in order to consolidate the positions. After the enemy tanks had been driven out, the cleaning-up of the town took place and continued until 1400. The enemy commenced to lay in heavy barrages of mortar and artillery fire; these fires increased considerably during the day and night, consisting of almost every known type of German fire. It should be noted here that the rocket launcher used during this operation was for the most part ineffective against the tanks which were encountered as several direct hits were scored without stopping them. When all other means had failed, Capt Murray S. Pulver, commander of Company "B," fired a yellow smoke grenade at one of the tanks and blinded its vision. It is thought that this same tank is the one which ran into a house and crashed through the floor into the basement.

Evacuation and supply of this battalion in Altdorf was a difficult task as it was impossible to bring up



Thanksgiving dinner. Top: Staff Sergeant Robert Guest, Staff Sergeant Robert Hoffman, Lieutenant John Hurley, Lieutenant Richard Newman, Lieutenant Matt LaVail. Center: Lieutenant Harry Peters and Staff Sergeant William Veteto. Bottom: Captain Charles Pritchard, Lieutenant Ray King, Staff Sergeant Richard Ziegler, Major Ralph Kerley.

any of the vehicles normally used in supply. This difficulty was somewhat overcome by the use of M-29 carriers as this vehicle with its full track could traverse the soft and muddy ground. The route of approach to the town was covered by enemy fire, and because

of the exposed position of the route he was able to shell it accurately. In spite of these bad conditions the battalion was able to evacuate twenty-six of our men who had been wounded. It also evacuated thirteen Germans wounded besides carrying on the normal operation of supply.

After the 1st Battalion had passed through the 3d Battalion of the 119th Infantry Regiment, the latter attacked to our left and seized the territory north of Altdorf, thus protecting our flank. Company "I," 120th Infantry Regiment, relieved Company "K" of the same battalion and continued to hold the high ground west of Altdorf.

Extensive planning and preparation had been made for this attack and the speed and success of the attack bear witness to this fact. As for the doughboy who carried out the orders, it is again impossible to adequately describe the job that he did. He moved in under cover of darkness and tackled the enemy on his home grounds, captured seventy-four prisoners and inflicted an additional estimated sixty casualties on them. Many more of the enemy escaped in the dark. Not only did our riflemen accomplish this by closing with the enemy and whipping him decisively, but armed only with the weapons that an infantryman can carry he drove the supporting tanks out of the area and across the Inde River.

Lt Col Ellis W. Williamson followed Company "B," one of the attacking companies, in order to supervise closely this attack on Altdorf. In spite of the intense small-arms and artillery fire which the battalion encountered when it was detected, Lt Col Williamson kept the advance going by his personal leadership. After reaching the objective, he personally supervised the clearing out of the town. In the darkness it was an extremely difficult job. His courage and aggressiveness in thus closely supervising this difficult operation assured its success, enabling the battalion to take its objective with a minimum of casualties.

One of the reasons that the tanks were driven out of Altdorf was the action of Pfc William J. Henderson. With the seven tanks driving up and down the streets firing as they went, Pfc Henderson decided to do something about it. He first encountered a tank as it advanced slowly up one of the principal streets of the town. Standing in the street and firing alone, he succeeded in hitting the turret of the vehicle, which stopped momentarily after being struck. Making no effort to return the fire, the tank made a withdrawal out of the town and across the river. Undoubtedly one or more of the tank crew were killed or wounded.

Pfc Henderson heard another tank approaching. This tank was using a spotlight to illuminate the streets and buildings, then machine gunning any targets that appeared. Pfc Henderson remained in the street and, although picked up by the spotlight in his exposed position, he fired a round at the turret. Although the tank was not disabled the spotlight was knocked out and the tank withdrew. Later, while the men were preparing their defensive positions, tanks were again heard—five German tanks moving in a column. Pfc Henderson fired one round at the leading tank and also one at the fifth vehicle as it brought up the rear. Although none of the tanks were disabled, the action of Pfc Henderson no doubt played a major role in forcing the tanks to withdraw.

First Lt Don W. Soper, antitank officer with the 1st Battalion, was given the mission of moving his antitank weapons into the town as soon as possible after the early morning attack to help in the holding of the town. He was instructed to move in behind other supporting units. Lt Soper, desirous of giving support as quickly as possible, made a personal reconnaissance on foot across the flat terrain and into the town. There he learned of the seven enemy tanks that were roaming up and down the streets, shooting wildly. He immediately returned to his unit and led it to proceed into Altdorf. By-passing other units, Lt Soper brought his guns into the town and helped consolidate the gains of the battalion.

The difficulty of getting tanks into the town was largely due to the condition of the ground and also to the fact that it was a night operation. First Lt Jean M. Ubbes, tank platoon leader, made a personal reconnaissance of the ground shortly after the attack was launched. After gaining the information that he sought, Lt Ubbes returned to his tanks and personally led them over the open terrain to the town. Although the noise of the moving tanks drew more enemy artillery fire, he remained on foot, exposed to this fire, and succeeded in bringing his tanks up in support of the infantry. The enemy tanks had left before our tanks arrived, but our tanks convinced quite a few Germans that it was useless to continue the fight.

Sgt Parker Jesse, wire chief in the 1st Battalion, followed closely behind the Battalion Command Group in the attack but, due to the speed of the advance and the darkness, he and his wire team, which was laying wire as it moved ahead, lost contact and veered off to the right. Coming upon a group which he thought was the rear of our attacking echelon, Sgt Jesse was greatly surprised to see the dark objects to

his front evolve into an enemy tank with supporting infantry. He knew that to run or hit the ground would be fatal, so he spread his crew out and advanced toward the enemy. The Germans, apparently thinking they were being attacked by a much larger force, retreated to join their own unit. While it was retiring the tank passed between the Battalion Command Group and the attacking riflemen. From that night on a bazooka became part of the required equipment of the Command Group.

First Lt Charles P. Crepeau, S-2 of the 1st Battalion, carried out his duties under the most trying conditions. Enemy fire was so intense that orders had been given that all men would remain in their foxholes or under cover at all times. Lt Crepeau nevertheless exposed himself to this fire continuously in order to gain the most information possible about the enemy activities. Although stunned by enemy shells, one of which killed a man an arm's length away, he stayed in the fight for thirty-six hours carrying out his duties. Although in a dazed condition he refused to be evacuated until his work was completed, after which he collapsed and was evacuated in semiconscious condition.

While the defensive positions around Altdorf were being established Capt Floyd B. Spurlock, commander of Company "C," came across a large group of men who did not appear to know where their assigned defensive positions were. Upon investigation Capt Spurlock learned that the men constituted an entire reinforced rifle company from another division which was attacking Inden, to the south of Altdorf. Because of the intensity of enemy shelling this company could not leave Altdorf until the following night. Just after it had left, another lost company from the same unit entered Altdorf and availed itself of the extra housing facilities for the next twenty-four hours before moving south under cover of darkness to participate in the battle for Inden.

One of the problems that existed after the capture of Altdorf was maintaining communication between the various elements. Pvt John F. Duffy, radio operator, was responsible for keeping contact under very trying conditions. For the first thirty-six hours wire communication could not be maintained due to the heavy enemy fire. Pvt Duffy, who was operating his radio in the Battalion Command Post, voluntarily moved from the basement of the building to the ground floor in order to maintain contact. Heavy shelling continued and numerous shells hit the Command Post but Pvt Duffy stayed in his perilous location, thus enabling the battalion to keep contact with all units.



The Germans used big mortars against us

As has been stated, supply and evacuation was a very difficult problem. The only type of vehicle that could make the trip, without becoming mired in the mud, was the full-tracked vehicle M-29. Pfc Jack R. Smith, Pfc Max E. Hambleton and Pfc Harrison L. Flint were the drivers of these vehicles that made the trips between Pattern and Altdorf. Under constant artillery, mortar and direct fire, these men worked tirelessly and without regard for their own safety for a 24-hour period after the battalion was on its objective. Because of their action, it was possible to evacuate the wounded quickly thus saving many lives.

At the end of the day's operation, the 2d Battalion continued to hold Lohn. The 3d Battalion remained in its position at Fronhoven. The 1st Battalion had completed the organization of its defense in Altdorf, and physical contact was made with the 115th Infantry Regiment on our left through the 3d Battalion, 119th Infantry Regiment, and contact was made on our right with the 104th Division.

On the 29th of November the Regiment remained in its positions of the previous day. The 17th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron was attached to our Regiment effective 0900 on the 28th of November, and relieved the 3d Battalion, 119th Infantry Regiment, on the 29th, the occupation of the position being completed at 2040. At 2054, the 3d Battalion, 119th Infantry Regiment, was released from attachment to our Regiment. Company "L" relieved Company "I" and maintained the same defensive position west of Altdorf.

The 2d Battalion mortars aided the attack of

the 104th Division on Inden by firing smoke and later reports showed that the screen was effective.

The enemy continued to harass our positions with artillery and mortar fire, the greatest concentrations being in the town of Altdorf. Several rounds of delayed-action shells penetrated buildings before exploding.

Four American planes bombed our positions and friendly units in the vicinity of Langendorf, inflicting several casualties. The first attack came at 1600. Although identifications consisting of panels, smoke signals and pyrotechnics were displayed, the planes returned at 1615 and bombed us again.

On the 30th of November the 1st Battalion was still in position in Altdorf, but relief was started late that night and completed early the next morning, and the battalion was moved to an assembly area in Erberich. The 17th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron took over the Altdorf and our Company "L" positions and continued to defend the sector we had occupied. The 2d Battalion remained in position in Lohn and the 3d Battalion remained in the town of Fronhoven.

Enemy fires during the day consisted mainly of harassing artillery and mortar fire with Altdorf receiving the most attention. Contact with units on our flanks was maintained by means of patrols. Other patrols

were active along the banks of the Inde River on both sides and information concerning enemy positions was gained. Units in the rear areas conducted woods fighting and other training.

Thus, the 120th Infantry Regiment completed one of the most successful months of fighting up to this time. Although the actual advance of our troops did not start until the 16th of the month, from that time to the end of the month we had succeeded in driving ten miles into enemy territory. Starting from a defensive position which ran approximately along a line from a position north of Wurselen to Ofden, Germany, we had hammered our way to the banks of the Inde River, forcing the enemy to cross to the east of that stream.

The enemy defenses consisted mainly of a series of well-fortified towns and it was necessary to neutralize each one before driving on to the next. Fire and movement, on a battalion scale, was the key to the success of the attacks. Resistance stiffened day by day the closer we got to the Inde River but the enemy was unable to contain our advance. During the course of our advance we captured fifteen towns, the climax of the drive being the capture of the enemy stronghold of Altdorf on the banks of the Inde River.



DECEMBER

December, 1944, began with bright prospects, and many men in the 120th Infantry could envision German surrender before the end of the year. Our forces had breached the Siegfried Line, and with the constant pressure of the Russians on the east boundaries of the Reich, many GIs felt that Germany must be on the verge of collapse. For those who coddled themselves into believing this, the month was to be one of cruel disappointment and rough living.

The Regimental CP had been established since the taking of Erberich in November in a chateau-like farmhouse which had belonged to some wealthy citizen of Langweiler, Germany. The battalions were assembled in towns in the vicinity: the 1st at Erberich, the 2d at Lohn and the 3d at Broichweiden. There the troops had set up in houses and were recuperating from the successful drive from Birk to the banks of the Inde River, culminated by the spectacular and successful night attack on Altdorf. The Regiment's forward positions in the vicinity of Altdorf were occupied by the 17th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, attached, which completed its occupation by 0042 on the first day of the month.

The Division Recreation Area at Kerkrade, formerly the Rolduc School, known as "The Monastery," with its Red Cross coffee and doughnuts, its GI and USO shows, and its passes to Kerkrade, provided a welcome rest for the deserving men of the 120th this month. The 3d Battalion moved there on the 2d of December for two days, while the 2d Battalion moved back from Lohn to Broichweiden. Two days later the 2d Battalion was trucked to "The Monastery," and the 1st Battalion moved to Broichweiden, while the 3d Battalion replaced the 1st at Erberich. Another rotation on the 4th of December shifted the 2d Battalion back to Broichweiden, the 1st to the Recreation Area. Two days later the 1st returned to Broichweiden.

TRAINING IN THE COMBAT AREA

The battalions which were not in the Recreation Area conducted a daily training schedule, and from the 6th to the 12th of December all the troops had regular periods of instruction and practical work. The Regiment had found in the recent campaign that tank-infantry teams could do extraordinarily successful work. Accordingly, much time was given to training the infantrymen to ride the M-4s and to dismount in time to give the maximum in all-around protection. Account also was taken of the fact that in the defense of his country the German had consistently set up his

lines in and around towns and villages, like Euchen and Lohn. Troops were, therefore, taught the lessons learned through battle experience in those places. And finally, a third stress was laid on night tactics; the operation at Altdorf had proved that the 120th could make night attack spell ruin for the Krauts.

Training also included woods fighting, although the Regiment little realized at the time how important this form of battle was to be in its later operations. All weapons were fired, from the pistol to the 57mm AT gun. Athletics were organized, and church services were held.

ATTACK ON VIEHHOFEN

At 0240 on the 13th of December Company "L," commanded by 1st Lt George R. Reeves, began a small campaign of its own. It moved from Erberich to a position a half mile southeast of Altdorf and across the Inde; there it went into position facing the northeast while the 414th Infantry Regiment attacked the town of Schophoven. Company "L" protected the left flank of the attacking forces until Schophoven fell to the 414th in the afternoon.

Viehhofen was a hamlet due west of Schophoven, and was known to contain a small force of enemy. The Germans had organized their defense to oppose an attack from the west, from the north of Altdorf across the river. At 1830 Company "L," with its Line of Departure already across the Inde, rose from the south to surprise the enemy on his weak left flank. With no difficulty, Lt Reeves and his company captured the town, the ground around it, and sixteen soldiers of the *Wehrmacht*.

Five Company "L" men were wounded during the attack. It was impossible to use vehicles in crossing the open ground, but the imperative need to have aid for the men was recognized. Men in the Weapons Platoon volunteered to carry the wounded across the muddy ground to Inden and grabbed up doors, in lieu of litters, on which to place the casualties. The three miles to Inden took time and selfless effort, but in the end, five lives were saved.

The night before the attack a listening post had been set up between Altdorf and Viehhofen. T/Sgt John Rescigno accompanied the men of the post on their way from Erberich through Inden; there an incoming shell wounded him severely in the leg. Crippled and in pain, he continued with his mission and dispatched the men to their post at the proper time, as directed. He joined his company in the attack and,



Lieutenant Colonel Cantey describes his battalion's part of "The Perfect Infantry Attack" to General Simpson and other senior officers of Ninth Army

after the objective had been taken, helped evacuate the wounded. Only then did he submit himself to be cared for by the medics. Of such devotion to duty is the success of the 120th, or any regiment, made.

Viehhofen lay between the Inde and Roer rivers. Before the fall of Viehhofen, Altdorf was exposed and under observation from the high ground east of the Inde. Now Viehhofen lay exposed to enemy troops on the high ground east of the Roer. The waters of the river became no-man's land and were to remain so for months to come, until the Roer Line was stormed, like the Siegfried Line before it. Company "L" and later "I" and "K" were shelled consistently in Viehhofen, so much, in fact, that unit movement had to be postponed at times. The 3d Battalion companies were, for some days, the only 120th Infantry units on the front lines.

The day after the attack Company "I" relieved Company "L," which returned to Erberich. And on the following day, Company "K" took over the positions of Company "I," which joined the remainder of the battalion. These companies maintained constant patrol liaison with the 17th Reconnaissance Squadron in Altdorf, and the 414th Infantry at Schophoven. The constant rains during this period made quagmires of the fields and turned pathways into streams. Communication and transportation were major problems. In the meantime, from the 13th to the 16th of De-

cember, the battalions continued training, including a review of map-reading, mine-laying, and weapons technique.

So sound tactically had been the operations of the 30th Infantry Division that Lieutenant General Simpson, commanding the Ninth Army, directed that our troops prepare demonstrations of what they had accomplished. The 120th Infantry Regiment had the lion's share of this honor. On the 13th and 14th of December demonstrations were conducted showing how we had supported the 117th Infantry attack upon St. Joris and how we had maneuvered to seize Lurken, Langweiler, Laurensberg, and Obermerz by flank attacks. Observers included General Simpson and nearly all senior commanders of Ninth Army units. The 2d Battalion journal records the distinguished assemblage in an entry at 1505, the 14th: "Lt Gen Simpson, three Corps commanders, six Division commanders and a total of about eighty officers were present at our demonstration." All commented favorably.

COUNTEROFFENSIVE

News reached the Regiment on the 16th of December that the German High Command had that day launched a large-scale offensive to our south, and that it was using paratroopers up and down the front. Patrols were dispatched at once from all battalions to keep an eye out for enemy parachute troops, and the

Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon had the mission of scouting the Birk-Euchen-Broichweiden area. Between Bardenberg and Birk, enemy soldiers were thought to have landed by night, and to be lurking in fields and harassing traffic. Rear echelons were out in force, and a few prisoners were rounded up.

Men of the 120th Infantry will remember Sunday, the 17th of December. They will remember returning from the religious services in the little church and chapel of Broichweiden, thinking how near over the war seemed, planning for as merry a Christmas season as possible in the devastated German country town. Company commanders had already cleared out day-rooms and platoons had cut their own Christmas trees.

Suddenly, about noon, the entire Regiment was alerted. With misgiving, troops received hasty orders to be ready to leave by 1600; hurriedly, the men rolled their packs. Company "K" had been relieved from its positions in Viehhofen at 1100 that morning by the 17th Reconnaissance Squadron, and at noon had just reached Kohlsheide, close to Kerkrade, where the men had been promised they would have two weeks' recuperation period. Unloading had not been completed nor had billets been assigned when the disappointing word came: "Prepare to move." The 17th Reconnaissance Squadron was relieved from attachment to the 120th Infantry and attached to the 29th Division.

Word came that the entire 30th Division was on the move; our Regiment was to join the convoy behind the other two. Darkness came and the men grabbed what sleep they could before climbing the organic and Quartermaster vehicles which were to take them—where?

The real story reached the men much later and sifted down slowly. In brief, it was as follows:

With typical German strategy, the *Wehrmacht* had struck in a least suspected and lightly defended area: the Ardennes. It was here that in 1940 they had attacked through Belgium to France, with Paris their target. Now they were trying again to cross the shadowy Ardennes. They had a new target: Antwerp; and a new object: to split the Allied Armies and isolate the troops in the North. This was their immediate object; but more important in the Nazi mind was the breaking up of an Anglo-American winter drive in this sector which would certainly be coordinated with the Russian winter offensive. They succeeded in delaying our drive into Germany, but they were to pay an expensive price.

Von Rundstedt chose the approximate boundary between two American Corps, the V and the VIII, for his main strike, and wedged his way through St. Vith toward Bastogne. Once his spearhead had blasted its way almost to St. Hubert he apparently planned to knock out both flanks and widen his breakthrough. Here is where the 120th entered the picture.

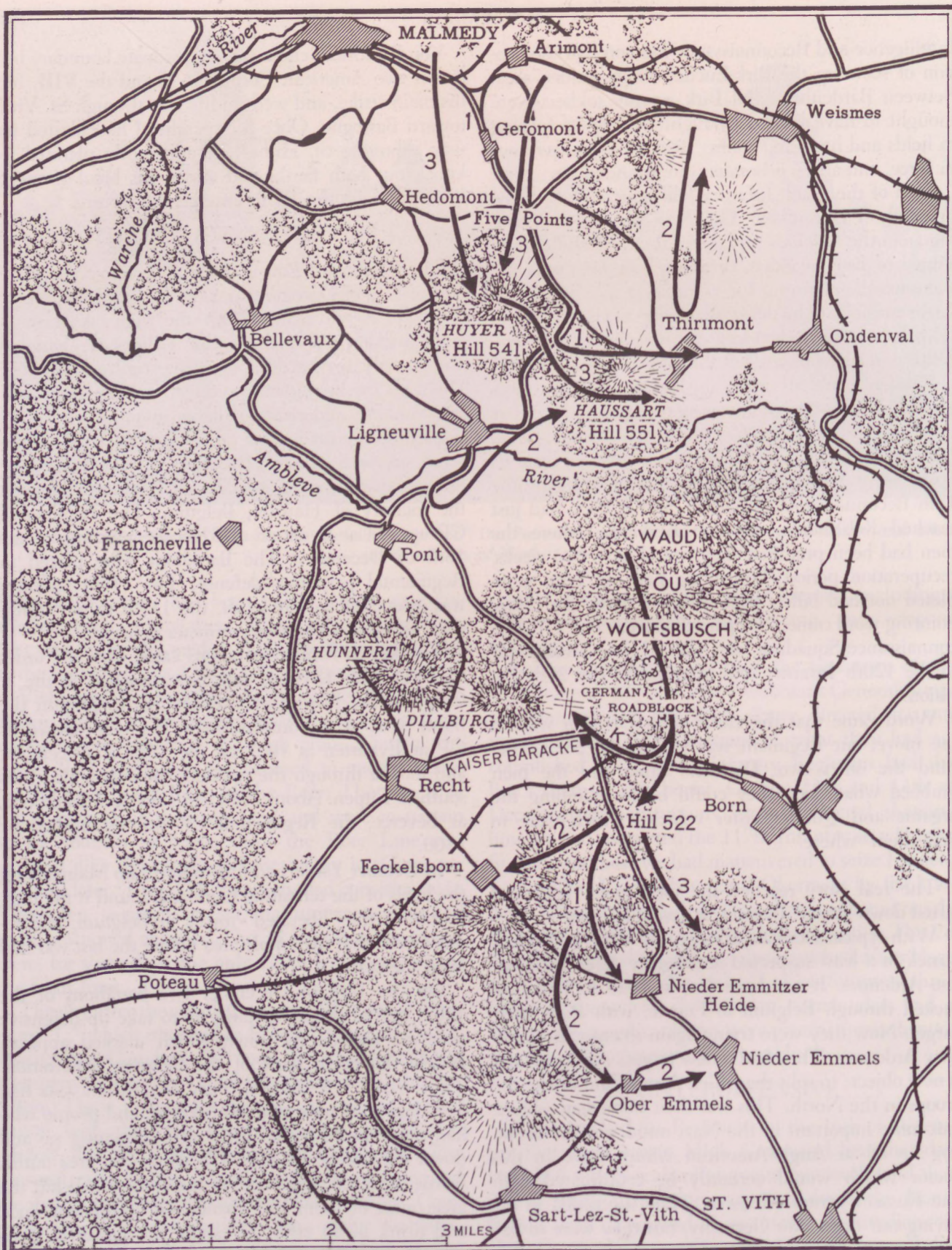
MOVEMENT TO BELGIUM

The Command Post at Langweiler closed at 2230 on the 17th of December and the Regimental Convoy departed at midnight. Down the highway through Broichweiden to Aachen, the Kaiser-city, battered and ghostly in the dead of night, trailed the entire Division. Enemy aircraft were active; men were alert for bombing and strafing; flares in rapid succession lighted up the roads from all sides; ack-ack guns sputtered on both flanks. The convoy was unharmed, however, and moved steadily forward to an area in the vicinity of Hausset, Belgium. The Regimental CP opened at Eynatten at 0105 the morning of the 18th of December. The Battalions were placed in Regimental perimeter defense. The 117th Infantry was assembled to our south, the 119th to our southwest; forming a Division perimeter defense.

The key to future operations came with the order that the 30th Division was now attached to the V Corps in the First Army, which was to contain the north flank of the breakthrough. Regiment closed its CP at Eynatten at 1027 on the 18th of December, and moved through the wooded, snow-sprinkled hills south of Eupen. About 2000 yards north of Malmedy, at Beverce, the Regimental CP was established by 1300.

In October Yanks had first moved into Malmedy on the heels of the retreating Germans, found it the most hostile of the "liberated" towns in Belgium, and remembered that the whole area before the last war had been German.

On the 18th of December two battalions of the 120th moved through Malmedy to take up defensive positions outside the town which marked approximately the north flank of the German penetration. They found it a colorful, busy city, where GIs had once had recreation and amusement, and people who had never heard a shot fired were hastening up and down the streets. By now, US Army rear-area outfits whose signs still remained on the corners had left the area; most of them had abandoned equipment, food and drink in an effort to escape the powerful Nazi counter-drive.



Malmédy to the Vicinity of St. Vith

The 1st Battalion took the Regiment's left flank on the heights in the vicinity of Chodes, where its CP was located. Two companies, "A" and "C," were positioned to defend the town on a line parallel to the mountain crest road which, farther west, ran down into Malmedy; the position also encompassed the hamlets of Beussire and G'Doumont. Originally in reserve, Company "B" was later detached from the 1st and attached to the 3d Battalion, which had meanwhile deployed itself to protect the south and southwest of Malmedy, including a large portion of the highway leading to Stavelot, as yet in enemy hands. This latter town was later wrested from the Germans with extreme difficulty by the 117th Infantry.

The 2d Battalion remained at Beverce in Division reserve, setting up roadblocks and planning front-line reinforcement in case of a German attack. Company "G" moved to Francorchamps to set up additional defense around Division Headquarters.

As the men dug in on the heights above the town, they laughed about one of Goebbels' master propaganda tales, broadcast by "Axis Sally" from Berlin during the Division's journey to Belgium. On the way to halt the German drive was, as "Sally" called it, "the 30th Division, Roosevelt's elite SS troops."

DEFENSE

The 3d Battalion, 117th Infantry Regiment, had established some defense lines around Malmedy early on the 18th of December. The next day, however, Company "I" relieved the battalion of the 117th, and the 120th¹ assumed responsibility for the defense of the Malmedy sector.

Control of the road nets was an important factor in the defense of this area. The *Wehrmacht* had been successful in its drive because, though tanks had been canalized by the wet weather, armor had been able to crash through all blocks.

Defense was the order of the day. Positions were dug deeper and camouflaged more skillfully. The 1st Battalion sent a patrol east, which contacted the 16th Infantry Regiment, 1st Division, at Weismes (Waimes) at 1528; a one-squad contact outpost was established at once.

Combat patrols moved to the southeast but did not contact the enemy.

The 99th Infantry Battalion became attached to the Regiment and at once took positions around Beverce,



Because each has a Purple Heart, they know how to dig deep: Privates First Class William Young, Allie Aldred, and Frederick Woodson

with one company defending a bridge one-half mile southwest of the village, and another protecting the crossroads at Monbijou, southeast of Malmedy. The 30th Reconnaissance Troop, also attached, patrolled the road running west from Malmedy and south to Thioux. Other attachments were the 526th Armored Infantry Battalion in positions along the road running parallel to the main highway southwest of Malmedy, and the 291st Engineer Battalion, manning roadblocks throughout the Regimental area.

Tuesday, the 19th of December, was cold and wet, and soldiers of the Regiment were noting that civilians in the area spoke fluent German and had sons in the German army. Warning came from higher headquarters to trust no strangers, particularly civilians, since friendly elements had been fired on when they entered Malmedy. Suspicion was not to end with civilians, either, since three Germans had already been captured in American uniform, and 150 were reported to be operating similarly disguised behind our lines. And along with these disconcerting facts came notice that a strong attack was to be expected at any time. Sensing trouble ahead the troops were alert and suspicious.

Patrols were aggressive but found the enemy defending only key routes and strongpoints; it looked as though the main power was being withheld for an attack against us.

The following day at 1330 the 1st Battalion moved from Chodes to the heights southwest of Weismes. This operation brought our lines closer to those of the 16th Infantry, and extended the Regimental area to the advantageous hills of Chivre-Mont and Arimont. One company, "A," defended the 1st Battalion front, while Company "C" maintained contact with the 16th Infantry; Company "B" was relieved of attach-

¹Attached: 30th Reconnaissance Troop, 99th Infantry Battalion (Separate), 526th Armored Infantry Battalion (less one company), 291st Engineer Combat Battalion (Minus), 823d Tank Destroyer Battalion. Minus: 2d Battalion (in Division reserve).



We also used AA weapons against the panzers

ment to the 3d Battalion, reverted to 1st Battalion control, and took over defense of the roadblock at Monbijou. Company "B," 99th Infantry Battalion, was then released from this defense, attached to the 3d Battalion, and assumed the former positions of Company "B," 120th Infantry, along the highway southwest of Malmedy. The 3d Battalion took over most of the 291st Engineer Battalion roadblocks.

The 30th Division was transferred from the V to the VIII Corps on this date.

Pressure on the Regiment increased gradually, and light concentrations of artillery and mortar began landing in our area.

In the late evening of the 20th of December, Intelligence notified the front-line troops that enemy forces would probably hit our lines about 0300 the next morning. Almost on the hour a strong German motorized patrol ran into 1st Battalion defenses along the main road into Weismes; a halftrack bounced on several of our mines across the road, sent equipment (much of it captured from Americans) flying into the high oaks on either side of the road, and left several Germans burned hopelessly, one screaming intermittently all night. Other infantry beside the 'track were shot at and shelled; many surrendered. One prisoner had been a ballet manager and had taken his troupe to America before the war. In perfect English, he explained that America could never win the war, "for Germany has so many new secret weapons!"

In the early daylight, the enemy performed another typical trick. During the night, three Germans had driven a captured US M-8 scout car toward the crossroads in front of Company "A's" positions. There, another of our mines had knocked a wheel off the M-8, and the Germans had remained all night in a house near the crossroads. The next morning they found a jeep left by a TD outpost near the house; perceiving

a comrade burned and only semiconscious on the road a few yards in front of our lines, they mounted the vehicle and rode boldly in front of our riflemen to where the wounded man lay. The jeep was challenged by the roadblock. The driver answered in thickly accented English, "You are crazy!" Hurriedly he picked up the moaning body and started to turn the jeep around. With rifle grenades, bazooka, and M-1, the doughboys of Company "A" blasted him. Two men were killed instantly; the other two were wounded and captured. With such unbelievable boldness and unflinching courage did the Nazi mind plan to befuddle the enemy and rule the world!

Again at 0430 the enemy struck, this time on the right flank, defended by the 3d Battalion. Two companies of infantry with ten tanks moved against the positions beside the main highway running into Malmedy, apparently to seize the Malmedy-Stavelot road. Two outposts had been overrun when the enemy hit the paper mill.

Near where the road crosses the Warche River a mile and a half southwest of Malmedy stood the paper mill. The road junction there was a strongpoint of the 3d Platoon of Company "K." Here, not far from the Company CP, the force of tanks with infantry paused, and while one tank maneuvered and attacked, the others gave supporting fire. After six hours of fighting, men of the strongpoint, still holding the tanks at bay, repositioned itself in and around the paper mill fifty yards away from their original holes.

In crossing the treacherous river one man was hit by rifle enemy fire and his leg was broken. Pfc Leo Miller dragged him over the slippery stones under fire to the safety of the building.

Pfc Francis S. Currey, BAR-man, had been firing energetically, but when he found a bazooka in the mill he picked it up eagerly and sought ammunition for it. The TD halftrack across the road was known to hold some; and so with only one purpose, he rushed across the exposed roadway to procure the rockets. He returned with the rounds, and from an advantageous, though exposed, position loaded for another man, Pfc Adam Lucero, who blasted the turret of a tank and knocked it out. Currey and Lucero tried to fire on other tanks from a second-story window across the street from the mill but they were spotted after a short round.

Currey took a bazooka out alone, and while Lucero covered him from the window he fired on a house which the enemy had captured and around which they had grouped their tanks. The TD halftrack was

not far away from him; Currey made a dash for it and pulled some AT rifle grenades from it. From a flank position he then fired all the grenades and damaged three tanks. The halftrack was still inviting to Currey and again he ran to it, turned the .50-caliber machine gun against the enemy, and fired. The position was not advantageous, however. He saw a machine gun that better suited his purposes and made a 30-yard dash to a .30-caliber near the bridge. It was jammed but Currey removed a ruptured cartridge and started a protective rain of bullets which permitted some TD men trapped in holes close to the German tanks to return to safety without drawing fire.

There were other great deeds that morning. The machine-gun platoon of Company "M" led by 1st Lt Kenneth R. Nelson received the full fury of the attack. Concealed by fog, enemy tanks and infantry, covering their advance with heavy fires, at times fought their way to within 20 yards of the platoon's guns. Men of the platoon stubbornly returned this fire with machine guns, carbines, and fragmentation and white-phosphorous grenades with such effectiveness that one onslaught after another was repelled. Lt Nelson time and time again went from one position to another, constantly exposing himself to the enemy's murderous fire, for the purpose of coordinating the platoon's defensive fires. Lt Nelson thus exposed himself for several hours from 0430 to about 1000, when he was wounded seriously. He refused to be evacuated, continuing to direct his platoon from the building to which he had been carried. There he died—a brave man. T/Sgt John Van Der Kamp, platoon sergeant, replaced Lt Nelson in the dangerous mission of coordinating the defense immediately after the lieutenant was struck. Shortly thereafter, T/Sgt Van Der Kamp too was wounded but he continued his hazardous duties until the enemy's attack was completely repulsed. 1st Lt Arnold L. Snyder, mortar observer, in addition to carrying out his usual fire-control duties, secured a bazooka to bring effective fire upon the enemy from a dangerously exposed position.

The enemy's attack, though vicious, was stupid. Our lines east of Malmedy were formed in the shape of a "U." On the left of this "U" was the 99th Infantry Battalion. At the base was Company "K." Elements of the 117th Infantry Regiment were on the right side of the "U." The enemy attacked through the darkness down the center across the open fields. With the arrival of dawn he had pushed forward within the "U," being concealed by fog which limited visibility to less than fifty yards. Suddenly, at about 1030, the fog



Private First Class Currey used all these weapons at the paper mill

lifted and there were the Germans where Americans like to see them—in the open. Fearfully devastating direct fires struck the Germans from three sides. Mortar and artillery observers brought down heavy concentrations where the Germans were most congregated. The proximity fuse was used for the first time by artillery supporting our Regiment. Germans ran and screamed like crazed men—few escaped.

The next day, news flashes over the air told that Malmedy had been retaken by the Allies. Members of the 120th grinned, for though the artillery was still falling intermittently in the town, they knew "Jerry" had never taken, nor even come close to taking, Malmedy.

At last the enemy had met the Regiment in this sector, but as yet he had made not a dent in our defenses. The troops were uneasy, however, as they dug a little deeper, connected foxholes with trenches, and put more dirt on their hole covers. More reports reached the men about untrustworthy civilians; one woman was rumored to walk ahead of enemy vehicles and patrols, shooting a burp gun to indicate that it was safe for them to advance. For the doughboys digging on the bald hills it was a matter of watching and waiting—and keeping warm. Snow fell on the 27th of December and several succeeding days so that the entire area became blanketed in white. The foxholers had to take turns warming in the nearest available houses which, particularly on Chivre-Mont (Company "A"), were not very near.



Malmedy before the bombing

A task force was committed on the 21st of December in the vicinity of Burnenville, west of Malmedy. The 99th Infantry Battalion, with one company of light tanks and Company "B" of the 740th Tank Battalion, cleaned out the area and prepared to repel an attack in that sector.

"AMERICAN" PATROLS

Some soldiers suspect that the enemy drinks himself to intoxication before suicide attack or patrol. Early in the morning of the 22d of December and again on the 23d, incidents occurred which were wild enough almost to support that belief. They show the Germans' persistent attempt to bluff and outtalk our doughboys. They found, incidentally, that they couldn't.

Pfc William J. Henderson and Pfc Simon A. Denaro, of Company "B," were on a roadblock assignment along the Malmedy road 300 yards north of Geromont at 0230 on the 22d of December. Visibility was poor, but through the mist the two men on guard perceived the bright lights of an American halftrack advancing from the south towards a minefield one hundred yards in front of the lines. Behind the half-track the men could hear a noisy column of tanks, armored cars and more halftracks. Suddenly the column halted; the enemy could be seen around the vehicles, some removing the mines from the road.

Crawling out of his hole for a better field of fire, Denaro triggered several bursts on his BAR. From the column came voices protesting in English that they were friendly troops, and that if they weren't American, why would they have their headlights on? Denaro fired a few more bursts. "Come on down here," he heard them yell back. "We have some pretty frauleins!" Denaro was not tempted. Then he began to receive return fire. Our lines were alerted and mortar

flares were sent up. Henderson, bazooka man, crept up beside Denaro and fired on the halftrack, which he disabled, and on other vehicles. By this time our mortars and artillery were zeroed in on the column, and the enemy retreated.

Thick snow had fallen the morning of the same day, when just before noon the enemy sought to test our dispositions again. Two American jeeps, containing Germans, drove hastily to the roadblock on the crossroads in front of Company "A." An antitank gun prepared to fire, but hesitated because several civilians were noted running near the house and the road. The jeeps took note of the roadblock, turned around and escaped before the antitankers could pull the trigger.

A little more than a half hour later, riflemen and antitank men noticed some men in American uniforms creeping toward them on their left flank. Observing German equipment, machine guns, mortars and bazookas, our troops turned on the strangers with rifle fire. At the head of the German patrol of about twenty men was a vociferous noncom, who yelled energetically and shouted orders at his men. The patrol returned our fire, and shot bazookas into antitank trucks near the guns. Pfc Roy C. Johnk, cannoneer in an antitank-gun crew, turned to a near-by .50-caliber, switched its direction of fire upon the enemy and, though he had had little experience with the gun could, by directing short bursts at each advancing enemy, cause such consternation that the patrol lost heart. After only ten minutes from the time they were first seen they had withdrawn into the wood and off to the left flank of the battalion.

Word of the skirmish reached Lt Col Ellis W. Williamson, 1st Battalion commander, and in the confusion and haste of the message to him, the patrol was exaggerated to a "battalion." Eager to see the situation for himself, Lt Col Williamson rode in all speed to



. . . and after

Company "A" and went to the scene of action. The men were shaken; some were wounded. With an assurance that staggered observers, he hastily organized a ten-man patrol of the antitank men and a lieutenant standing close by. The men rallied, and formed a skirmish line which moved through the woods over the route of the departing patrol until Lt Col Williamson felt the men were in danger of their own artillery. No German remained. There were only blood tracks which merged; and tracks, too, of seemingly dragged heels. Apparently the patrol had suffered numerous casualties.

Lt Col Williamson returned with the men and checked the story of the "battalion." He warned those concerned that reports should always be checked. "Jerry's" tactics in the assault are ever to terrify his opponents with tremendous volumes of fire, to create an appearance of having more men than he does have.

Meanwhile, to keep the enemy out of town at all costs, three bridges south and southwest of Malmedy were destroyed.

Night brought darkness and cover for the men who were perfecting the Regiment's² defensive setup.

The Engineers laid deliberate minefields, while riflemen and men of the Battalion Ammunition and Pioneer Platoons, directed Lt Salvatore Petinga and Richard J. Lewman, dug and buried them, occasionally under direct enemy fire. Concertina wire was strung between the forward lines and the minefields.

On the 23d of December the enemy was little in evidence; the 1st Battalion reported a patrol had observed ten Germans in the area to the battalion's front.

Early in the morning the enemy tried once more a ruse destined to failure. Seven Germans in stolen

American uniforms and with American and British equipment planned to get through our lines to spot our military installations and return. At 0200, supplied with maps, brass knuckles, and hand grenades, they approached a crossroad 1000 yards north of Gero-mont. They were halted by a member of Company "B," S/Sgt Daniel Barbuzzi, then on his way from his company CP to his platoon area. Coolly their leader replied that they were artillery observers. The speech was slightly accented, and none of the men had a radio. The guard was suspicious. Armed only with a pistol and hand grenades, Barbuzzi yelled loud enough to alert his comrades, "Move, and I'll mow you down." When some of the Germans stirred uneasily towards the ditch beside the road, he fired two rounds from the .45.

Soon American soldiers had taken the patrol prisoner, and the men, young and in tiptop shape, were found to be members of the 150th Panzer Brigade, reportedly attached to the 1st SS "Adolf Hitler" Division, an old opponent from Mortain. Information received later from First Army indicated that all seven spies were tried and executed. Barbuzzi's T/E weapon was the M-1 rifle, and perhaps he regretted a little that he hadn't been carrying it that night. But he took good care of his pistol after that.

By now our Army realized that the counteroffensive was Hitler's do-or-die bid for comeback, and with Hitler anything was possible. Accordingly, from Division came the instructions for the Regiment to carry gas masks at all times, and to practice wearing them daily.

BOMBING OF MALMEDY

The 23d of December was the first day of three on which friendly aircraft four times bombed the town of Malmedy, which it presumably supposed to be in enemy hands. Civilian property was lost, and some

²Attached: (to and including the 27th of December) 30th Reconnaissance Troop; 99th Infantry Battalion (Separate); 526th Armored Infantry Battalion (less one company); 291st Engineer Combat Battalion (Minus); 823d Tank Destroyer Battalion; 1 company of medium tanks, 740th Tank Battalion.



Our men extricated the survivors

casualties resulted among the townspeople, whose confusion at this sudden attention from American planes was only slightly less than that of our own forces. One man in the Regiment was injured, two were missing.

This proved to be only a mild sample of what was to come the next day. Christmas Eve day was bright, and the valley of Malmedy looked like a Christmas card. Two hours after noon the buzz of planes was heard. At 1430, eighteen B-24s dropped bombs which neatly leveled the main square and the central part of the town. Some of the front-line positions were also bombed and strafed, but no real damage was caused outside of the once busy and unharmed Army rest area. Various company and platoon CPs in town, including that of AT Company, were hit directly, and left many soldiers buried beneath the debris. Fire consumed many of the buildings and whole blocks lay in heaps of rubble. There were many Army deaths and civilians casualties were huge. Army aid men were busy caring for the Belgian wounded, as well as our own soldiers. The dead were laid row on row in the school playground, and covered with any available material.

There was a lot of work for the soldiers in Malmedy

on Christmas Eve. Digging people out from under was a delicate but difficult job, and it took far into the cold night.

Sgt Frank Palco, aid man with Company "M," was approached by a young girl in distress. She took him to an air-raid shelter which had suffered a direct hit and urged him to rescue three women who had been crushed by the fallen supports in such a way that their legs were lacerated and pinned painfully to the ground. Palco had no surgical tools, but he pulled out his GI scissors and performed one of the crudest—yet most effective—amputations in history. Two of the women survived through the excruciating torture without benefit of anaesthetic. Palco later disclaimed any desire to become a surgeon after the war.

The 3d Battalion suffered most of all, for its companies were located all through the town with its kitchens established in the heart of the building area. Within a few minutes, the kitchens of both Company "L" and Company "K" were destroyed with their complete staffs, and that of Company "M" seriously damaged. Most of the burden of rescue fell upon the Battalion Headquarters Company, whose platoons went into immediate action, putting out fires, digging out people, clearing paths. The 1st Battalion sent medical aid at once.

While our troops were busy giving all possible aid, our Air Forces bombed us a second time that day. Fortunately, the damage was slight.

Lt Col Greer, the Battalion commander, was energetic and with his staff reorganized and stabilized the panic-stricken people. During the evening hours every man did his utmost in the face of the totally unnecessary catastrophe; the wretched town, once so picturesque and lovely, was now a beehive of half-angry, half-dazed, but very busy men. Among those who gave unselfish aid to the civilians were Lt O'Shea of Company "I," T/4 Burner of Battalion Headquarters Company, and Pfc Conroy, also of Headquarters Company. Lt Col Peter O. Ward, Regimental Executive Officer, was among the most active. The 291st Engineer Battalion did miraculous work in opening vital roads and extinguishing fires which threatened to destroy the town. Soldiers remember civilians staring at the sky that evening. "American planes?" they murmur in a still-shaken, mystified voice. Few of the soldiers could find it in themselves to answer. They could only look away. They were mystified themselves.

Christmas brought another light air raid. Again there were civilian casualties, but only one man in the Regiment was reported injured.

2D BATTALION'S CHRISTMAS OPERATION

Meanwhile, on the 23d of December, the 2d Battalion was attached to the 117th Infantry Regiment. Company "E" was at once reattached to "Lovely Ladies" task force, the 33d Armored Infantry, which attacked from the Bois de Lancré, two miles west of Stavelot, south to the high ground between Petit-Coo and Ster. Company "E" met considerable difficulty, and Company "F" was ordered to the assistance of the force and committed east of Company "E" in the vicinity of Ster. No artillery preparation was fired for either of these attacks. The enemy resisted boldly and with heavy fire.

Two machine gunners of Company "H," Pfc Andrew S. Melendrez and Pfc John D. Boutin, both in support of Company "E," observed that the riflemen were pinned down by heavy small arms. They edged and crawled to a forward flank, set up their machine gun and sprayed the enemy positions. As a result, the enemy abandoned their posts, and Company "E" was able to advance to its objective.

Company "F" found its advance halted at 1400 by a strongpoint on its right flank. A squad led by S/Sgt Thomas Munoz, volunteering to investigate the obstacle, moved around to the right, where they found the enemy in a house on the outskirts of Petit-Coo. While his squad deployed, Munoz rushed the house, knocked the door in, fired on six retreating Germans and killed three. Others were doubtless wounded. The strongpoint was reduced, the right flank secured. The objective fell to Company "F."

On 23 December there was enacted the most remarkable individual exploit of the Regiment's history. It cannot be said that it was the bravest deed because time and time again men of the Regiment reached the ultimate of courage. But no one exceeded the great courage shown by S/Sgt Paul L. Bolden and, above all, no other soldier accomplished a mission of such great difficulty. Elements of Company "E" were pinned down by extremely heavy automatic and small-arms fire from a house 200 yards to their front in Petit-Coo. S/Sgt Bolden told the platoon leader that he could take out the enemy, thereby saving lives that might be lost if a squad or larger unit assaulted the house. Accompanied by T/Sgt Russell L. Snoad, he crawled toward the enemy. Reaching a position near the house, S/Sgt Bolden charged, covered by his comrade. The enemy replied with intense fire, and killed T/Sgt Snoad, who bravely was firing into the Germans from an exposed position. S/Sgt Bolden in rapid

succession hurled fragmentation and white-phosphorus grenades into the building, rushed to the door, kicked it open and cut loose with his submachine gun. He was struck solidly, not glancingly, by four bullets in his shoulder, chest and stomach. Miraculously keeping his feet, he withdrew a short ways to shelter and waited for the surviving Germans to come out and surrender. When none appeared to give themselves up, despite his ebbing strength, he again charged the house, firing as he advanced. No Germans remained alive and when our troops arrived they counted thirty-five enemy dead, all or most of whom having been killed by S/Sgt Bolden. S/Sgt Bolden recovered completely from his wounds, which undoubtedly would have killed a lesser man, and later President Truman awarded him the Congressional Medal of Honor at the White House.

The Regiment lost an outstanding leader when T/Sgt Snoad gave his life to assistant S/Sgt Bolden. Courageous, self-sacrificing, a superb soldier, a real man was T/Sgt Russell L. Snoad.

On the following day, the 2d Battalion plus Company "L," 117th Infantry, was ordered to attack toward the north banks of the Ambleve River from a Line of Departure extending 1000 yards east of Petit-Coo. Attached to the 117th Infantry, Company "G" was also to participate in the attack, but from another direction. The enemy was still clinging to the high ground on the north banks of the Ambleve River which swerved to make an arrowhead in the vicinity of Trois Ponts, two miles south of Petit-Coo. In an effort to drive the enemy from the banks and the arrowhead north of the Ambleve, American troops were to drive south from the area around Petit-Coo, which had been seized by Companies "E" and "F" the day before, and also to push to the west from Parfondruy, a small town a mile west of Stavelot. In thus driving in from all sides, the 30th Division hoped to push the enemy back from the north tips of its "bulge."

Company "G's" mission was to drive west from Parfondruy, and to meet the remainder of the battalion (and Company "L," 117th Infantry) in order to tie in on the left (east) flank of the objective. On Christmas Day, at about 1000, Company "G" struck across the open ground lying parallel to the river. There the enemy brought down torrents of artillery, mortar and automatic fire. Furthermore, an American armored artillery battalion, firing short, placed a heavy concentration on the company. Casualties sustained reached an overwhelming figure, and the company reeled back slightly, established an east-west line with its left flank



We caught Germans wearing U.S. Army uniforms

touching Parfondruy, and dug in for the night. Aid men tended the casualties in a house near the Parfondruy road, but were unable to evacuate the seriously wounded because of the intense fire between the house and the town. Members of the mortar section volunteered to help the men out, and successfully carried the wounded to safety. Company "G" was ordered to withdraw the following day to Parfondruy.

Company "G" was not the only unit to suffer the first day of the attack. From low ground into the woods upon the heights overlooking the Ambleve, Company "F" and Company "L," 117th Infantry, slugged forward. The snow sifted down occasionally, and the air was biting. After encountering heavy fire, they dug in only halfway to the objective by nightfall.

The day after Christmas, the 2d Battalion of the 119th Infantry was attached to our 2d Battalion. Its companies attacked through the companies on the line to take the high ground swiftly. The enemy had withdrawn during the night, and by early morning, 30th Division troops could see the river from the northern heights. Companies "G" and "F" of the 119th defended a line embracing the arrowhead near Trois Ponts and the ground around the woods, Coreux. That same afternoon, Company "G," 120th Infantry, followed a long route from Parfondruy to replace Company "G" of the 119th in its positions on the point near Trois Ponts. Company "F," 117th Infantry, was attached to the 2d Battalion and relieved Company "F," 119th Infantry. Company "F," 120th Infantry, took positions along the east banks of the Ambleve be-

tween Petit-Coo and Trois Ponts, and Company "E" held ground to the left (east) of Company "G" along the river.

During the next two days the 2d Battalion troops had an opportunity to see evidence of German savagery—they saw old Belgian farmers who had been shot in cold blood. One pregnant woman had been shot in the back; the bullet, tearing a hole in her abdomen, had thrown the unborn child to the ground. Children had been peppered with automatic fire. The Nazis had spared no one in their ferocious drive, no doubt believing that if it succeeded no one would care about the slaughter; if it failed the slaughterers were doomed anyway.³

On the 28th of December, the 2d Battalion was relieved of attachment to the 117th Infantry. That regiment took over positions along the river bank, and the 2d Battalion returned to Francorchamps in Division reserve.

CHRISTMAS, 1944

It wasn't the Christmas some of the men had looked forward to back in Germany, but there were some features which marked it a special day. For instance the 1st Battalion kitchens produced a luscious turkey dinner, and men were transported to houses where it could be eaten in comparative warmth and comfort. The 2d Battalion had its big meal on the 26th; the 3d had to wait several days before the bombed-out kitchens could be replaced. The Regimental commander sent each man a "stocking from Santa," tied with a red ribbon, and containing a pack of chewing gum, four bars of candy and a gray wool sock, which made a pair along with the one that held it. Warmth was the greatest concern of every man, and the socks and candy gave a lot of it. Of course in the mountains Christmas trees could be had for the cutting. Troops decorated these trees with antiradar foil dropped by airplanes.

Even if it was not the holiday the men had hoped for, a certain Christmas spirit could not be extinguished. Perhaps the faces of the little children on that terrible day before when bombs were raining on the town, made Lt Col Greer offer his "Santa Claus" suggestion. Or perhaps it was the memory of the Yuletide he had known back home. At any rate, he told his men about the Children's Hospital in Malmedy and remarked how good it would be for the men to give the contents of their stockings and some of the fruit and nuts that had been sent them from home to the little child-

³American newspapers of 15 May 1946 carried an account of the trial in Europe of the perpetrators of these outrages.

dren who would have no gifts. And his idea caught like wild fire. All the members of the Battalion and many in the other battalions sent in their "stockings" for the donation. The 230th Field Artillery Battalion would not consider being left out, and sent a half load in a 1½-ton truck, filled with Christmas goodies. Finally, Lt Col Greer took two ¾-ton trucks, fully loaded, to the children in the Malmedy Hospital.

The 3d Battalion Journal remarks at 2030 on Christmas night:

"Lt Col Greer returned from being Santa Claus. . . . Some one had a Christmas anyway. . . . (He) should be congratulated for the merciful thought that started the avalanche, particularly after the three days just gone through, which would and did remove all semblance of mercy from many of our hearts and thoughts. Col Greer returned . . . with a sparkle in his eyes that could have been a tear of happiness. He drew a picture of joy and thankfulness."

One man was to write of that memorable Christmas day: "Everyone seemed happier after the episode—in spite of the awful licking they had taken. GI Joe had done it again."

During this period enemy action was light. Artillery and mortar fire was sporadic and only harassing in nature.

Defense means constant improvement of positions, and troops spent Christmas week perfecting their personal and collective installations. Patrol activity continued; contact was maintained with adjacent units. Up to this time, the 1st Battalion alone had laid 7000 antitank mines, and stretched barbed wire by the truckload along the bushy fields sloping down from the heights around Malmedy.

RAIDS

Hedomont was a tiny Belgian community extending along the crest of a hill 2000 yards south of Malmedy. For Company "C," 99th Infantry Battalion, the village was the target for a raid on the 27th of December. Supported by heavy weapons of the 1st Battalion from their positions on Chivre-Mont, by Company "B," 99th Infantry Battalion, from the heights southeast of Malmedy, and by the 230th Field Artillery, Company "C" attacked at 1600. The company entered the town quickly because it encountered only light mortar fire.

"Jerry" counterattacked as usual. But Company "C" had withdrawn, bringing back prisoners, the cap-



An illustration of why we made our own camouflage uniforms

ture of whom was the mission for the raid. Observers picked up the counterattacking forces, and artillery Time-on-Target concentrations along with machine-gun and mortar fire from the 1st Battalion accounted for a large tally of enemy casualties. We often have wondered how the Krauts felt when they learned they lost all those men counterattacking an empty town.

On the 28th of December, the 3d Battalion moved some elements into positions south of the highway running east from Malmedy. Company "B," which had occupied this area, now shifted into locations in rear of Company "A," to give defense in greater depth. The 2d Battalion, still in Division reserve, moved at 1315 to Xhoffraix.

To "feel out" the enemy, as well as to harass him, raids are good tactics. Hedmont had been first on the list. Otainmont was next.

At 1630 on the 29th of December, Company "B," 99th Infantry Battalion, opened the "attack" on Otainmont. Supporting fire from the 1st and 3d Battalions was directed at Hedmont so that the enemy would be deceived about the target of the strike. An hour and twenty-five minutes later, Company "B" returned with the report that it had encountered no Germans.

Additional minefields and concertina were laid during the last two days of the month. Positions had been constantly improved, and by now made a formidable defense line around the ruined Malmedy. Friendly

planes finished up the year with a final light bombing on the 30th of December, causing three civilian and two soldier deaths, and three soldiers injured.

So, in the black of night, as snow was falling, 1944 was gone forever. Eventful, if not happy, for American soldiers, it had seen the 120th Infantry leave the United States in February, spend three and a half months in England, and land in France on the 12th

of June; it had seen the Regiment distinguish itself at St. Jean de Daye, St. Lo, Mortain, Birk, Altdorf, and now Malmedy; it had seen the Regiment take each objective and hold it at all costs.

The last month of this year had been one of its most eventful. It left the 120th Infantry Regiment on the north flank of the German counteroffensive, holding tenaciously and well.



JANUARY

Like the New Year's Eve that preceded it, New Year's Day, 1945, was no more noisy or festive for the 120th Infantry Regiment than the previous week had been. In foxhole strongpoints which formed a semicircle, starting at a location about 1500 yards southwest and extending approximately 4000 yards southeast of Malmedy, Belgium, troops thought the snow was colder than usual. The turkey dinner served at noon tasted good, but otherwise there was still watch to be stood, weapons to be cleaned, and gloves to be thawed out, before 1730 when the sun set. On our left were elements of the 1st Division, on our right the 119th Infantry Regiment. The Regimental Command Post was still at Beverce.

RAIDS AND PATROLS

The enemy to our front was quiet; he did not make himself obvious, nor did he throw any but harassing fire into our area. Though he seemed eager to keep us worried he remained ever cautious and made no show of power.

Higher headquarters needed more information regarding the unit opposing us. It also wanted to test the defensive power set up against it. With the double mission, then, of worrying "Jerry" and of capturing prisoners of war, a series of combat patrols pricked enemy lines during the first two weeks of the month. Information these gathered was to be used as a basis for an offensive to reduce the German salient, already being hacked in its western extremities.

Three hours into the new year two platoons of Company "B" set out across the snow to capture German prisoners and to investigate a strongpoint in a house 200 yards southwest of the road junction at Baugnez, in front of Company "A." When the main body of the raiding party had reached the road junction which came to be called "Five Points" for the number of roads which converged there, the ten-man point had been turned south toward the house. The point came to within thirty-five yards of it when it was fired upon. Capt Pulver recognized two machine guns, one firing from the house, the other from a point 200 yards west of it. He dispatched one platoon to flank the house from the left, and held the remainder of the men to keep the attention of the enemy by fire. Noting more movement the enemy poured automatic fire and rifle grenades on the patrol; the patrol leader was killed. While the platoon flanking the enemy on his right was passing through the fields southwest of Baugnez, some of the men stumbled over uneven humps in the ground.

The "uneven humps" were investigated, and by the light of a bright moon were discovered to be the bodies of approximately fifty American soldiers. They lay in groups, on top of one another and in disorder. Some were shot in the head. A few of the patrollers remembered stories of men in a Field Artillery Observation Battalion who were captured and murdered in a field near Malmedy. This, then, was the site of the infamous massacre, details of which were later described in *Yank*. At a later date, the information was confirmed; when the field came into American hands picture recordings were made of the horrifying evidence of German cruelty there.¹

The platoon continued on its mission. Moving to the woods next to the house, they surprised and captured a German prisoner, a slim 120-pound superman who looked about thirteen years old. (A battalion commander later wondered if he wasn't "so small that he should be thrown back.") Word was sent to the patrol leader who, then knowing that the patrol's mission had been accomplished, withdrew the party back to our lines.

One man in the patrol chose to stay behind. Within fifty yards of enemy gunners he lay in the deep snow all night. He made slight movements of his hands and feet to keep from freezing; but knowing the enemy would be alert to movement for some time after the patrol had been stirring, he waited till daylight before starting to creep.

He made his way, almost numb, to the man whom he had stayed behind to save, a man who had been hit seriously by machine-gun fire and had fallen into a ditch. He tore his snow suit to make bandages and applied them hastily to the man's back. Snipers noted the movement by then, and started to fire occasionally in his direction. He dragged the man over the snow to the Five Corners, where he found a wheelbarrow. He placed the wounded man inside and wheeled it toward his own lines by a covered route. He tried to solicit help from civilians; one gave him cognac, but all feared German reprisals and turned him away. He reached at last a Company "A" outpost, and procured aid there. The wounded man was saved. The man who brought him to safety was his assistant squad leader, Sgt Herman A. Fischer.

On New Year's Day, 1945, the Luftwaffe assembled to strike what they hoped to be a decisive blow against American and British airfields. Apparently "Fatso" Goering, lover of good drink himself, thought that our

¹The German unit which murdered the civilians in and near Petit-Coo also committed this atrocity. See the preceding footnote.



The massacre at Five Points

flyers would be suffering from New Year's hangovers. The Luftwaffe, according to reports later received, did execute some damage on Allied aircraft but American and British fighter pilots, alert and ready, shot down many of the German planes. As a result, the Germans suffered far more damage than they inflicted. A squadron or so of German fighters flew low over the Regimental area, apparently lost and looking for landmarks. Our infantrymen manning caliber .50 guns accounted for three. Two were seen falling in flames after having made their way back over the German lines while a third crashed on the edge of the ravine opposite the Regimental Command Post.

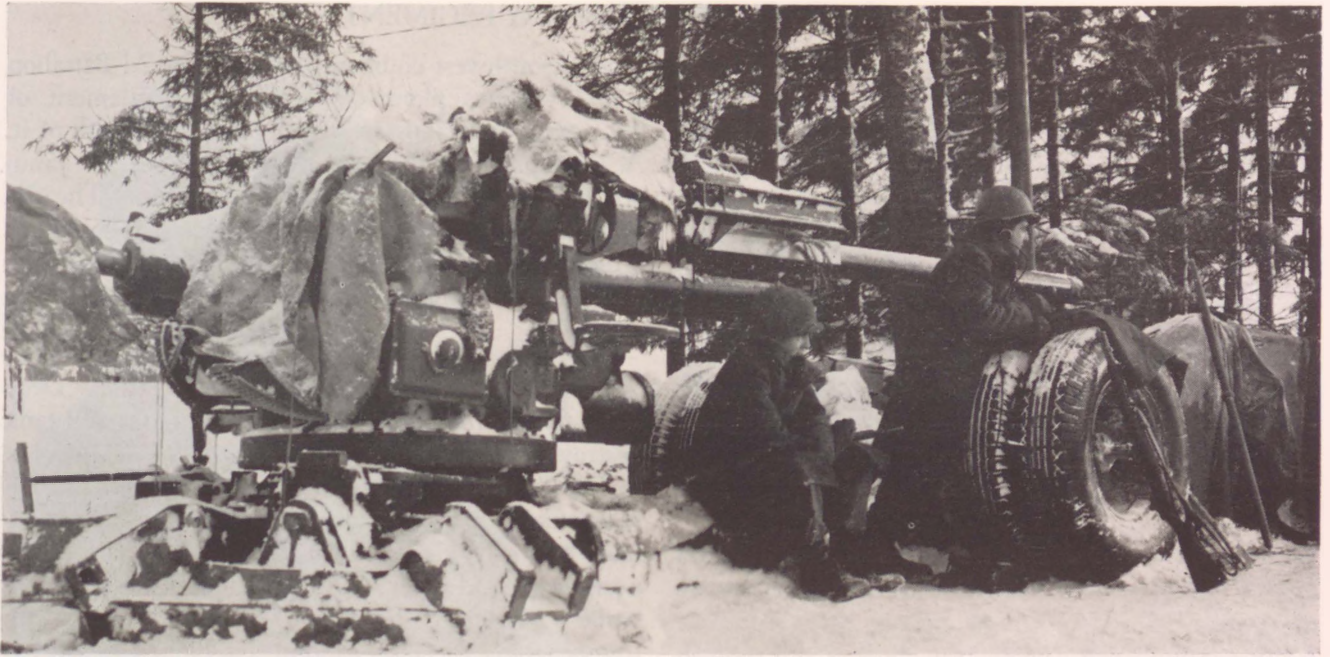
OTAIMONT AND HUYER

On the 2d of January two raiding parties were planned. Company "I" was briefed on attacking strategic ground 500 yards southeast of Otaimont from the north through our lines. It was to take prisoners and withdraw on order to our regular positions. Meanwhile, Company "B," 526th Armored Infantry Battalion, was to drive through Hedomont and Baugez for Huyer, the high ground 1500 yards southwest

of Baugez. It was to be supported by fire from the 1st Battalion, and also to be prepared to withdraw on order.

At 0830 on the 3d of January both companies moved out on schedule. The day was foggy, snow fell for almost an hour, and observation for supporting fire was almost impossible. Company "I" met a force of only about thirty men, who offered little resistance. It appeared that the raid would be a fast, snappy affair; the 3d Platoon, leading on the left, had already pushed beyond the town and along a hedge into a wooded area. Then suddenly events took a change for the worse, and appearing apparently from nowhere the enemy inflicted seven casualties upon the 3d Platoon. Actually, the new snow had sided with the Germans and had camouflaged their defensive position. The 3d Platoon had walked on top of them before realizing it.

But the tankers were speeding into the town, and after some had reached the woods, they helped flush out the enemy. The tanks had to keep shifting position lest German bazooka teams slip up on them, as they frequently tried to do.



Antiaircraft artillery was moved in to strengthen our defense against the panzers

Gradually the enemy mortar and artillery fire on Otamont increased in intensity, and throughout the day was so strong that Company "I" men suffered seven casualties from mortar fire alone. The 1st Platoon lost its leader, and its sergeant and acting runner assumed the leadership during the fight. Capt Charles R. Shaw, commanding the company, says of that platoon runner that he "ran it like a veteran, placing the squads in position and supervising their digging-in. All day he continually checked with the company CP and his squads." Company "I" soon came to know this remarkable runner. His name was Sgt Ramon R. Zepeda.

During the severest time of the fight S/Sgt Charles L. Tate of Company "I" saw a wounded comrade, suffering from shock of his wounds, dazedly wandering around in an area being sprayed by intense enemy small-arms fire. Disregarding the danger to his life, S/Sgt Tate rushed a distance of 20 yards to the wounded man to assist him to cover. While helping his comrade to safety, S/Sgt Tate was killed. Thus died a brave soldier. There is no greater courage than that of giving one's life to save another.

Company "I" had taken three prisoners when at 1930, according to plan, it was ordered to withdraw.

Resistance proved stiffer against Company "B" of the 526th Armored Infantry, however. They reached Hedomont, but just beyond the town met withering machine-gun fire which made it clear that the Germans intended to hold Huyer at any cost. Artillery

was light until about 1630. When Company "B" withdrew at that time, enemy fires increased considerably.

FOXHOLE LIFE, 1945

The next week saw our defenses ever improving. Reconnaissance patrols explored the wooded areas of the front and located enemy islands of defense.

The men in foxholes were living crudely, and there was no small danger of trench foot and frozen hands and ears, as well as common colds. Doughboys were therefore rotated to near-by houses where they might warm up, wash, massage their feet, have haircuts, and eat. Squad leaders led men in daily walks within the area to exercise their feet and keep the men active.

Feet are the most sensitive parts of the body to cold, and standing stationary guard for a prolonged period was an uncomfortable and dreaded duty for the men of the 120th Infantry in the cold January snow. Colonel Purdue designed "booties," simple moccasins made of three thicknesses of blanket cloth. T/5 Morris Pinter, Regimental tailor, perfected the design. These booties were worn under overshoes in lieu of shoes and proved of great value in adding to the comfort and preserving the health of the men. Major John J. Eberhardt and Captain Robert McClain worked incessantly for nearly three weeks procuring the large number of American and captured German blankets required for the project. Furthermore, Captain Mc-



All travelers were checked because the Germans tried to send spies into our area

Clain accomplished a miracle in finding and prevailing upon a salvage repair unit to do the necessary sewing. Care of the feet was vital in this weather, and the "booties" proved of highest value in adding to the comfort and preserving the health of the men.

The snow had added new problems to tactical operations. Patrols began to improvise snow suits from sheets and old goods in abandoned buildings; almost all the soldiers found material to use as a white cover for their helmets. For transportation of ammunition, sleds and toboggans were found or constructed.

On the 5th of January the 1st Battalion, 119th Infantry, was attached to the 120th Infantry Regiment, and relieved elements of the 99th Infantry Battalion (Separate) in their positions in the vicinity of Beverce. The 99th Infantry Battalion and the 526th Armored Infantry Battalion were released from attachment to our Regiment. Reverting to Regimental control the 2d Battalion took over the positions around Chodes which had been occupied by the 526th Battalion.

On the 8th of January the 2d Battalion relieved the 3d Battalion on the line, while the latter took over the positions at Chodes.

D-DAY IN BELGIUM

Attack plans meanwhile had been drawn up, and D-Day was to be Saturday, the 13th of January. H-hour was 0800. The strategy of the operation was a double strike, one from each flank of the Regimental zone aimed at the enemy's probable strongpoints. From the right flank near Malmedy the 3d Battalion was to move forward to take Huyer, the high

ground southwest of Baugnez, while the 2d Battalion from Weismes planned to take the settlement of Thirimont and Haussart, the high ground south of it. Accordingly, on the night of the 12th of January the 2d Battalion moved to Weismes. The 1st Battalion was to attack through the other battalions after they had secured their objectives; it was prepared to seize Ligneuville.

HUYER

On schedule at 0800 both battalions struck. Deep snow slowed the advancing units, and tanks and tank destroyers were useless.

The 3d Battalion plan was a "pincer" on a small scale. Company "K" with tanks attached was to attack between Hedomont and Geromont from the northwest of Huyer, while Company "L" was to strike south from the vicinity of Five Points, both to meet upon the high ground. Echeloned to the left rear of Company "K," Company "I" would move between the lead companies, clearing out Geromont and by-passed pockets en route. The plan looked perfect. But from the minute the attack began, things did not go well.

The two lead companies met withering small-arms fire. Company "I" moved out, and desiring to gain contact with Company "K," swung more and more to the right. After clearing Geromont, Company "I" continued 300 to 400 yards, still without contacting Company "K." A sudden wall of small-arms resistance met the Company "I" riflemen as they trudged through the knee-deep snow toward Huyer. Members of the lead platoon heard their commander, Lt Andrews, yell "Keep moving!" just before he fell



Booties



The Germans left behind them this booby-trapped American canteen

dead, a victim of enemy automatic fire. Thus began the most furious period of battle that day for Company "I." Clumsy in the deep snow, tired and partially disorganized, the men could not escape the merciless fire of the German weapons.

Companies "K" and "L" were likewise held up and suffering a similar struggle. The casualties sustained by all three companies reached a new high. Company "I" was still unable to contact Company "K" on the right (west), but pushed on alone. Into the Huyer thickets it forged its way, hampered by enemy concealed in the woods on its left flank, cleaning out as large an area as it could and reaching the hilltop at last.

There the men looked around at each other and realized they now made up a force of no more than

a strong platoon. Still undaunted, they pushed forward to take the remainder of the high ground that they found farther to the south overlooking Ligneuville. Suddenly came much firing to Company "I's" right rear and soon the sounds were discovered to emanate from a platoon of Company "K," led by Lt Merle J. Sheen, which was struggling with an enemy force.

The remainder of Company "K" was still battling far behind, and the Company "I" platoon joined with that from Company "K" to continue the drive forward. The two platoons made an advance of 1000 yards, overcoming an enemy patrol and reaching within 500 yards of German artillery pieces.

Then, at 1500, word reached the group that Companies "K" and "L" had gained the main heights of Huyer, and that the remainder of Company "I" was to return there, leaving the Company "K" platoon on outpost.

The 2d Battalion found its assignment tougher. Thirimont and the hill behind it were considered by the enemy to be the key to the area, and he clung to them tenaciously. Artillery, mortar and small-arms fire were deluged upon the attackers. Company "G," with one platoon of Company "H" attached, pushed forward and with supreme effort gained the outskirts of Thirimont. Alone the company fought to the main street in the rural settlement. Company "F" had been assigned to clear the route for armor, since the path which Company "G" guided upon was unsuitable for tanks. But Company "F" met the most petrifying fire and was forced to halt when the casualty toll reached a demoralizing total. All officers with the company except the commander became casualties. Tanks endeavoring to lead the way struck mines.

This left Company "G" in possession of a third of the town without support; it had taken approximately fifty prisoners but its casualties were also numerous.

"We saw some men in white uniforms, like the ones our men were wearing," said Lt Robert S. Warnick, one of Company "G's" officers, "and they came into town over the way Company 'F' was scheduled to use. We shouted to them, and figured that at last we had some reinforcement. But the men in white began shooting at us, and with binoculars we picked up their Jerry uniforms; we had to tighten our defense and keep fighting.

"It wasn't till we tried to send our prisoners back that we realized we were surrounded. The Krauts had

closed around at our rear, and we realized we were cut off in that Godforsaken town. At the same time the men were fighting all over the place, in the houses that were spread far apart, and mostly from room to room. All we could do was hope Company 'E' would break through the Jerry ring and come to our help.

"Just before noon we spotted about a hundred infantrymen counterattacking us, and we had to call for all the artillery we could. We kept fighting without losing ground until evening came on, and we still hadn't received any help. When we spotted more tanks and infantry coming toward us, we drew in our 1st Platoon and tightened up for the defense. About this time we received permission to withdraw;² and the company commander, Lt Charles W. Moncrieff, called the officers together to decide on how we could best extricate ourselves without taking too many casualties in the process. It was at best a ticklish situation.

"The officers met at a house near the main road in town, and it wasn't easy to get there, because the Krauts had the road zeroed-in with automatic fire, and everyone that crossed it had to run to dodge the bursts of fire directed down the street at him. We were all together deciding how to get out of town when the enemy tanks broke through the lines and cut our company in half. They came whipping up the street right at the house where we were. We had to call artillery on the street to keep the tanks at bay. The enemy infantry began to rush the house, but we managed to hold them off. But the tanks kept firing at us in the house all the time.

"Almost half the company was on the other side of the street. It was stupid to try to get to them because the street was held firmly by the enemy, and it would have been hopeless for us to attempt to drive all the tanks off. We decided that it was a case of letting the individuals on the other side of the road act for themselves; by infiltration they might have reached safety. Then we began our own withdrawal, and most of us reached the battalion, although Lt Moncrieff was wounded."

General Hobbs was at the battalion CP and spoke with Lt Moncrieff before he was treated by the medics. Plans were meanwhile being completed for an attack on Thirimont by the 1st Battalion, and the remnants of Company "G" were assigned to help Company "F"

take a strongpoint outside the town at the same time. The strongpoint was a tough objective, particularly for so battered a company as "F," and it was not seized till after the fall of Thirimont. The elements of Companies "G" and "H" left in Thirimont were found later to have been captured.

Meanwhile, after supporting the initial attack by fire, the 1st Battalion was in readiness for an attack on Ligneuville and had moved forward toward Baugnez. Because of the heavy resistance encountered by the others, the 1st Battalion did not continue onward; instead Company "A" outposted Five Points, while Company "B" was positioned in defense of Geromont. At noon the commanding officer, 1st Battalion, was ordered to prepare plans for a night attack on Thirimont, flanking it from the west. Our first, and unsuccessful, attack had been from the north.

The Regimental Command Post had moved from Beverce to Monbijou in the morning and, as evening came, plans were completed for the seizure of Thirimont and Haussart the next day. Because it had ample time to work over the details of the operation, the 1st Battalion made sure that each man was thoroughly oriented and knew his exact duties.

THIRIMONT

At the dark hour after midnight on the 14th of January an advance party from Company "B" moved out from Five Points to establish a block on the Ligneuville road, 1000 yards east of the high ground Huyer. The remainder of the battalion followed when the roadblock was set up, moved 1000 yards south almost to the block, then swung east into the Pange-Stream valley and up the steep banks and winding road into Thirimont. The riflemen of Company "C" led the way. That company was to seize the rear outskirts of the town; then Companies "A" and "B" were to push through and take the remainder of Thirimont.

At 0445 the enemy began to snipe and drop mortar shells, and his opposition increased steadily until in the early dawn the battalion was forced to halt. Snow prevented any armored support, and tanks bogged down in the soft stream bottom. Patrols sent to flank enemy strongpoints were unable to advance. When daylight began to glimmer over the housetops, it became suicidal to attempt to move heavy weapons over the open ground to the support of the battalion, and the plans for Companies "A" and "B" to go through Company "C" were postponed. Company "C" pushed slowly onto its outskirt objective and held its ground along the hedgerows which zigzagged on each side

²Note by the Regimental Commander: In justice to Lt Moncrieff, he never asked for, nor "received permission to," withdraw. The Regimental Commander saw that it would be impossible to reinforce Company "G" except at the cost of excessive casualties. Two of the three radios with Company "G" had cut out, apparently because the extreme cold had damaged the batteries. The third instrument was failing rapidly. The Regimental Commander realized that the surrounded troops would be helpless without means of communication for directing artillery fires and therefore he ordered Lt Moncrieff to withdraw.

of the road. At 1330 came a light counterattack in which thirty infantrymen with one tank were repelled.

Inside the town elements of the 9th Parachute Regiment, 3d Parachute Division, had set up an iron-clad defense, and they fought with a fanaticism of which Hitler must have been proud. As darkness was closing in, about 1730, they counterattacked with one battalion of infantry advancing in waves and supported by one company of tanks. Company "C" in the lead rallied its fire power, and called for artillery. The enemy pushed madly forward to within fifty yards of our hastily dug-in lines along the hedgerows and roadways which make Thirimont a complicated network. There two tanks were knocked out by artillery, and the infantry backed off. Pressing our advantage we forced the enemy to withdraw to the east and pounded him with artillery as he fled!

The 3d Battalion positions on Huyer were taken over by the 117th Infantry at 1030 on the 14th of January.³ Pine-covered and even higher than Huyer, Haussart (Hill 551) was known to be full of snipers who had caused numerous casualties among the troops in Thirimont. It presented a formidable problem but it was the principal key to the entire Ligneuville sector. At 1150 the 3d Battalion crossed the Line of Departure and moved generally parallel to the road from Baugnez, striking Haussart from the northwest. Along the road where destroyed American vehicles were still lying in testimony of the German breakthrough, men met constant harassment by artillery and rocket shells, aimed at the obvious route of advance.

Into the draw of the Pange Stream the troops ran across the open ground and up the hill toward the heights ahead. The enemy was prepared. He had chosen positions for his automatic fire and artillery observation posts which were impossible to detect.

Leading the 3d Battalion in what was to become an historic battle was Company "I," still so sorely in need of replacements that it functioned as a platoon. Behind was to follow Company "K." The lead company gained the second hedgerow on Hill 551 before receiving any opposition.

With the mission of seizing the hill, alone if necessary, and then to give supporting fire to the 1st Battalion in Thirimont, Company "I" swung right (south) and then headed up the hill (northeast), in an effort to strike the enemy from the rear.



³Company "L" was attached to the 117th Infantry until 1600, when it reverted to battalion control.

Our good friends, the artillerymen



Many were wounded at Thirimont

Six months later, a German PW, formerly mortar battalion commander, who was present during the defense of Thirimont told Col Purdue that originally Hill 551 had been but lightly defended by the Germans. But when the Nazis saw the advance of the riflemen on the hill, as they could see every movement for miles around, they ordered a battalion to take positions upon it and hold it at all costs.

All at once, then, when Company "I" was 250 yards from the top of the hill, the enemy, who had gained positions by that time, began to fight back with terrifying intensity. The German superiority in numbers soon began to tell, for though Company "I" struggled bravely on, it could not prevent the enemy from gradually encircling it; almost a battalion was combating a mere platoon.

Company "I" men kept hoping Company "K" would appear to help in the assault. A runner sent to contact Company "K" returned to find that in the meantime Company "I" had been forced to withdraw and leave about a half squad, which had been cut off, either captured or killed.

Company "K" was struggling too. In and around one house, Jerry had set up defenses against which Company "K" advanced over the snow, in the open. The enemy let go with their maximum. A squad leader, who had distinguished himself a month before, at a paper mill near Malmedy, observed where the strongpoint was and with two of his pals ran 200 yards toward the house. The three men ducked into a barn next door for cover. The buddies all came from upper New York State, and they fought with ardent and un-

beatable teamwork. With rifles and hand grenades they tortured the enemy on the ground floor of the house, forcing them at last to go upstairs. Pfc Raymond W. Gould had distinguished himself by leading a squad to knock out a strongpoint on Huyer; now he ran to a back window to catch the Germans by surprise. As he climbed in, however, an enemy observation post near by perceived him and cut him down. Sgt Francis S. Currey and his comrade, Pfc Adam Lucero, did not hesitate a moment; they fired a BAR and threw hand grenades into the upstairs from outside until they were fired on from another enemy position. They went inside and fired through the windows; soon they had forced the enemy upstairs again. The remainder of the squad had come to the barn, meanwhile, and were firing persistently through the walls and windows of the house. For three and a half hours the scrap continued. At 1730, Sgt Currey had his men put hay from the barn in the house and ignite it. Soon the house was aflame and the enemy was forced to withdraw, with losses, into the night. The "pillbox" was reduced, and the two pals responsible were unscathed.

There were many more well-installed strongpoints, however, and though Companies "I" and "K" finally gained contact, darkness found the 3d Battalion digging in 500 yards short of its objective. Patrols were sent out to reconnoiter the areas to the flanks.

The 15th of January saw the battalions resume the attack with a superhuman effort. Just before dawn the enemy directed a two-company attack against the 1st Battalion clinging to the outskirts of Thirimont. Two hours later, Lt Col Ellis W. Williamson, its commander, sent Company "A" on the left and Company "B" on the right to strike the remainder of the town (0815). The enemy called his utmost support and threw all his strength against the attackers.

He was in an unusually advantageous position to do so. Indeed, the whole town was a bastion, a defense town of ideal specifications. Its approximately one hundred houses were for the most part thick-walled stone farmhouses, spaced at distances of from fifty to one hundred yards. Edging forward, the riflemen faced a series of bristling forts, irregularly spaced pillboxes, from whose windows automatic weapons were mutually protecting. Wherever they could, the enemy troops utilized the cellars, and, considering themselves invulnerable, they flayed the advance with persistent fire. Later, men were to say, "The sniper fire both from the house and the hill (Haussart) was terrifying. Men who walked up-



Forty-two German paratroopers held this Thirimont house until it was set afire by a rifle grenade

right for only a second or two would suddenly drop dead. None could trace where the shot came from. There was Capt Pulver (Commanding Officer of Company 'B') who walked around as straight as a flagpole directing tanks and leading them into position; how he escaped being killed is a mystery. Anybody else who stood up for long dropped again for a lot longer."

Had our armor been available at the start of the Thirimont fight, we would have had a much easier task. Snow and mines delayed tank and tank destroyer movements into the town until the night of the 14th-15th. By means of a road-building feat, supporting engineers (Company "C," 105th Combat Engineer Battalion) that night constructed a pathway over which we moved a small amount of armor before the frozen crust broke through completely. The tracked vehicles moved to positions behind the hedgerows or houses and blasted at the pillboxes which caused the most difficulty. The tankers fired on the basement for several minutes, then infantry troops rushed at the house and reduced it. In all cases it was slow going; it was hard persuading the enemy that after his "victory drive toward Liege" he was actually going to be pushed back into Germany again. It was especially hard when the Germans began to bring forward some Mark IV tanks to supplement their pillbox defense. Had it not been for the two platoons from the 743d Tank Battalion and a platoon

from the 823d TDs, the town might never have been taken. The mobile powerhouses were able to engage the tanks so effectively that by noon the 1st Battalion had swept through the town.

Lt John D'Amico reported by 1330 that Company "A" had taken its objective and consolidated its defense. Only a few minutes before the attack the former executive officer had taken over Company "A." The old company commander, Lt Edward W. Hunn, had suffered what he thought was a superficial wound, a scratch on his back; he had fought steadily on until a few moments before the jump-off for the final objective, the eastern outskirts of the town. Then, suddenly, he had collapsed; it was later found that the bullet had pierced the small of his back, ricocheted off his small rib and had rammed itself into his chest just below the heart. The bullet was found to be wooden, a device which the Germans had used during the desperate close combat fighting of the hedgerows. Tired, but sticking to their dug-in outposts on the edge of the town, the men of Lt D'Amico's Company "A" knew the enemy had been desperate and fanatical. But not strong enough.

HAUSSART (HILL 551)

West of Thirimont, however, the battle continued to rage. At 0815 the 3d Battalion had attacked again, and in the afternoon only small, costly progress had been made. Help was requested.



Several men were needed to carry one wounded soldier back to an aid station

In the Command Post of the 2d Battalion, whose Companies "E" and "F" had been withdrawn to Weismes from their dug-in positions before Thirimont, plans had been made to take the high ground "Wolfsbusch," 3000 yards south of Thirimont, and across the Ambleve (Amel) River. Accordingly, at 1315 Company "E," followed by the remainder of the battalion at 1415, left Weismes by truck and detrucked at the road junction 800 yards south of Baugnez. The troops then started for their objective on foot.

At 1600 orders came to Lt Col James W. Cantey, Commanding Officer of the 2d Battalion, to return to help the 3d Battalion. Colonel Purdue had divided

"Haussart" into two areas; the southern portion was to be the 3d Battalion objective, the north half the 2d Battalion's.

The 2d Battalion returned to the initial road junction where it had detrucked, and from a Line of Departure there, attacked, Companies "G" and "F" in the lead. The 3d Battalion pushed with renewed effort at the same time. Light tanks could have speeded the taking of the objective, and continuous effort was made to get them on the high ground. The steep slope was covered with more than two feet of snow, however, and the tanks bogged down again and again.

Late in the morning Company "L" had run into a



Homemade camouflage suits

strongpoint. A platoon led by T/Sgt Monte W. Keener was pinned down by a machine gun whose location was impossible to discern. The men tried to move forward; a squad leader jumped up aggressively and ran a few yards when a sputtering from a hidden gun caused him to fall dead in the snow. Another man had already started forward and had gone about twenty yards when the fire cut him dead, too. Before it could be knocked out so that his platoon could advance, T/Sgt Keener knew that the emplacement had to be found. Decisively he jumped up to make a rush; as he ran he hastily surveyed the terrain, and when the bullets snapped around him he lunged toward where he thought they had originated. He had gone twenty-five yards when he saw the enemy grouped around the death-dealing weapon. He yelled to his men and pointed to the location; then he dropped to his knee and fired his BAR into the nest. His men were moving to knock out the emplacement, when, hit by the machine gun he had discovered, T/Sgt Keener fell forward on his face.

Lt William H. Callaway had brought his own platoon up on the right of T/Sgt Keener's. Having seen T/Sgt Keener, and taking in the situation at a glance, he organized his own platoon for a flanking raid on the nest, grabbed what he could of the adjacent platoon, and sweeping around fifty yards to the enemy's right he assaulted the emplacement and destroyed it, taking a toll of fifteen dead and five captured Germans.

Continuing to lead the two platoons, Lt Callaway dispersed his men in a wooded area near the crest of Haussart. Though Company "L" was trying to move forward, he knew that if his men left their positions the infiltrating enemy who were sniping at them and the enemy who was delivering the flanking fire pinning down Company "L" would gain an advantage and the hill would have to be taken again. He realized that while his men held the ground, someone would have to annihilate the enemy positions.

Still struggling uphill, the tanks were gaining the high ground an open field away from Lt Callaway.



The regimental command post moved to a hotel in Ligneuville

Though one man had been killed and another wounded taking the exposed short cut, he dashed across a field and down a path to meet the tanks and bring them forward. Up the hill he led them 600 yards to a point near enemy strongpoints. Once the tanks had gained vantage points near the crest of the hill the enemy was easily beaten. Lt Callaway used a tank to evacuate nine wounded men of his platoon. He had had a full day.

Capt George R. Reeves of Company "L" was another hero of the day. He had exposed himself to direct artillery fire on positions which were holding up his company. A sniper sighted him, and he felt a sharp crack at his hip, but on inspection found a bullet had pierced his clothing, his wallet and field glasses without even scratching him. Capt Reeves continued to go from group to group, reinitiating the attack, still ignoring the many bullets which peppered the ground and trees all around him. Company "L" seized its part of the objective despite very heavy casualties as the result of Capt Reeves' superb bravery and leadership.

Captain "Indian Joe" Reaser was wounded during the attack on Hill 551. His executive, 1st Lt. Glyn L. Persons, proved himself an able successor when he personally led the company in the attack upon the strongly held enemy positions. After capturing the initial objective, he directed the movement of his men across an open field. Here, he was seriously wounded by an

enemy shell which killed his radio operator standing next to him. Realizing that the field could not be crossed, he ordered his men to move to cover from which they could later continue the attack. Remaining in a semi-exposed position, he directed the removal of eight wounded men from the area, refusing evacuation for himself until all of his wounded men had been returned to safety. Furthermore, he continued to skilfully direct his company by shouting carefully thought-out orders. Not wanting to expose his men to additional danger, he ordered them not to come after him until nightfall, electing to remain in the deep snow during daylight. He saved the lives of many of his men.

T/4 Frank E. Palco, Jr., aid man attached to Company "M," also saved many lives on that day, the 15th of January. With intense sniper fire directed at him, T/4 Palco, responding to a wounded man's call for help, crawled 125 yards to reach him. Dragging the wounded man to safety, he made him as comfortable as possible and returned to his Company Command Post to get assistance. Tanks were then sent to evacuate wounded in the area, and T/4 Palco led one of them to the wounded man, directing his evacuation. When Lt Persons was wounded, he and another soldier carried the officer to partial shelter, the best available. There he gave Lt Persons first aid, and also treated the wound of the man assisting him who was



The deep snow obstructed movement

hit by sniper fire as they were taking the officer to cover. He later discovered a man lying in an exposed position who had been wounded the day before. T/4 Palco carried this man to the rear and evacuated him. In addition, he treated 12 other wounded men and evacuated them from the area subjected to enemy fire. Such was the caliber of the soldiers of the Regimental Medical Detachment.

By night the objective had fallen into our hands. Eighty-seven prisoners of war were taken, although most of the enemy had fought ferociously until killed. Three consecutive days of fighting had brought a long casualty list to the 120th Infantry Regiment, too. It paused for a day to reorganize and consolidate its gains. Patrols cleared the area south of Haussart to the river.

General Hobbs, the Division commander, entered the 3d Battalion CP on the day after the fight. He was speaking with Colonel Purdue about the bitterness of the battle. The Germans had outdone themselves in organizing clever, deceptive, powerful defenses on the ground. The Germans had fought viciously for each inch. But the men of the 30th Division, of the 120th Infantry, had overcome the terrible obstacles. Not easily, no. But with a fortitude and persistence that did honor to every man associated with the unit. Briskly the General complimented Lt Col Greer. Hill 551 perhaps was as hard a battle as was fought in this war, in the Pacific, or the European Theater. Men agreed on that.

Meanwhile the 119th Infantry Regiment had seized Ligneuville, and "Wolfsbusch" to the southeast. On the 17th of January at 1630 the Regimental Command Post moved into a once luxurious resort hotel in Ligneuville. A half hour later the 2d Battalion had relieved the 3d Battalion of the 119th Infantry on the high ground, Wolfsbusch. At this time the 30th Reconnaissance Troop was attached to the 120th.

The 3d Battalion took over the former positions of the 2d Battalion and with the 1st Battalion remained in the vicinity of Thirimont. The 1st Battalion sent a reconnaissance patrol to determine with what strength the enemy held Hill 522, another key to the area 2500 yards east of Recht, on the St. Vith road. Led by Lt Robert MacCulley of Company "C," the patrol delved far into enemy territory and observed enemy strongpoints in strategic locations. Moments were tense when an enemy group was observed to have infiltrated to the rear of the patrol, perhaps to cut it off. But stealthily the patrol withdrew through thickets covered with snow and returned successfully to supply vital information to the battalion.

OBJECTIVE "QUEEN"

On the 18th of January the 120th Infantry struck again. The objective was the high wood, Hill 522, but Regimental Headquarters passed down the code word for the objective, which was "Queen." From the 2d Battalion front on Wolfsbusch, the 1st Battalion attacked south over a route well-reconnoitered by Lt MacCulley's patrol the day before. It moved through the thick pine forest to the high ground and encountered little opposition. It captured two enemy patrols without disclosing its formation or committing a large number of men. By 1330 men had dug in, and though they received intermittent tank fire which caused tree-bursts, no casualties were suffered.

The enemy is known to counterattack with persistence and regularity. This occasion was particularly humiliating to the enemy, and he made his counterattacks especially frequent and vicious. In the following days he tried desperately with this strategy to eject our troops.

Three and a half hours after the 1st Battalion had moved onto its objective it was struck by a force of five tanks and one hundred infantry. The tanks were



We sure needed the tankdozers

canalized, however, by snow and woods, and two were speedily put out of action by bazookas. The infantry withdrew.

They returned, however, later in the evening. A block established by the 1st Battalion on the road running north into Kaiserbaracke destroyed two more tanks and an assault gun. Again the Germans withdrew. But this time they left behind forty prisoners and thirty-five killed. Our victory, however, cost the life of a brave soldier, S/Sgt Frederick O. Sawyer of Company "C." While engaged in the battle with the counterattacking enemy tanks, S/Sgt Sawyer assisted another man in knocking out an approaching tank. He later deliberately fired upon a second tank to divert the attention of its crew from his squad which the tank had pinned down with its machine-gun fire. He gave orders to his men to seek cover and, while firing upon the tank, was killed by its machine gun fire. In intentionally exposing himself, S/Sgt Sawyer paid the supreme sacrifice to enable his squad to withdraw, regroup, and attack again to force the tank's withdrawal.

So objective "Queen" was secured and held. To the men of the 1st Battalion who were there, there must always be some touch of cold and hunger in the word. They knew objective "Queen" by name, and had not

lived in the frozen woods long before they came to hate its atmosphere. The main road was the only quick route over which to bring supplies, but until it was opened, until the enemy had been driven from his stubborn roadblocks, food and clothing had to be brought over a devious, forested route which was long and could take only small vehicles like M-29 "weasels." Without blankets men found the nights endless and sleepless; with only meager "K" rations, the days were tiresome and nerve-racking. Occasionally rocket fire would set the woods echoing. The men crept miserably in the frigid foxholes and stamped icy feet against the ground.

The battalion Command Post was only a little larger than a foxhole itself, dug-in on the reverse slopes of Hill 522. The battalion commander remembers the night after the objective was seized, when as he was trying to doze, a husky rifleman planted a heavy GI shoe in the CP hole and yelled lustily at the men inside, "Where the hell is the CP?" The battalion commander couldn't answer; he was too busy struggling with both frozen hands to keep the GI boot from crushing his face, where it had been placed. Every now and then the snow sifted down in flurries. That was Objective "Queen."

The 3d Battalion meanwhile moved to Hill 522 to reinforce the defense of the 1st Battalion.

The key to success in this area at this season was the maintenance of communication, supply, and evacuation routes. Particularly with flanks and rear exposed, the S-4 assignment was doubly difficult. No vehicles could go without convoy. Wet weather and shell fire constantly hampered telephone wires, and the wooded, hilly terrain made radio a troublesome method of keeping contact.

To keep supply lines open, the 2d Battalion, still holding Wolfsbusch, sent elements to protect the vulnerable main road leading to the forward battalions. The 30th Reconnaissance Troop kept contact meanwhile with the 23d Infantry Regiment⁴ on our left.

The Germans, too, had realized the importance of roads in preserving a strong defense. Three of their blocks had to be by-passed in the initial stages of the attack on Hill 522. One was at the railroad crossing north of the hill, one at Kaiserbaracke, and another at a dirt crossroad 500 yards due north of Kaiserbaracke. The latter was in the zone of the 117th Infantry and had held up that regiment for two days. On the 19th of January, Company "K" of our Regiment was given the difficult mission of making a night attack through unreconnoitered woods in order to assist the 117th Infantry. Led by that indomitable fighter Captain "Indian Joe" Reaser, Company "K" was brilliantly successful. At the railroad crossing Company "K" was able to break up the enemy block and destroy a Mark IV and an assault gun. At Kaiserbaracke our pressure forced four assault guns and a staff car to attempt to make a getaway to the south. Elements of Company "C" and of the Antitank Platoon, 1st Battalion, deployed on both sides of the escape route, destroyed all five vehicles.

This was Captain Reaser's last operation. He entered the fight suffering from a wound received a few days earlier and again he was wounded, fortunately not seriously. He remained with his company until the mission was completed. But the wound ultimately caused "Indian Joe" to be evacuated. Thus the Regiment lost one of its outstanding company commanders.

Our troops destroyed many pieces of enemy armor during this operation. Seven tanks or assault guns, two halftrack personnel carriers, and one staff car lay wrecked between Kaiserbaracke and Hill 522. Several other uncounted German tanks were found



One of the many we knocked out on the 19th of January

destroyed throughout the timber. In the wooded terrain and foggy weather long fields of fire did not exist; the tanks had to be attacked from close quarters. Rifle grenades and particularly bazookas proved invaluable and accounted for most of the destroyed enemy vehicles.

FECKELSBORN

Patrols on the 18th of January had ascertained that enemy infantry were well-entrenched around Feckelsborn, a tiny settlement on the Recht road west of the St. Vith highway. Relieved by the 1st Battalion, 119th Infantry, the 2d Battalion, 120th Infantry, moved into the attack at 1400, the 19th, from the area of the 1st Battalion on Hill 522 along a ridge extending southwest into the hamlet. Brilliantly led by Lt Col James W. Cantey, who kept the troops organized in the face of an initial artillery barrage falling on them, the advancing battalion met only light resistance and had consolidated the gain by 1700. Of the eighteen prisoners captured, some indicated that they had expected an attack from the west and had been taken by surprise on their right flank.

On Hill 522, the night of the 19th-20th was the coldest and stormiest yet, the riflemen decided. Nothing seemed to be able to function in the numbing cold. The radios went dead, telephone lines were out, and no vehicles could come near. The German artillery alone functioned better than ever, and like the snow and wind, continued all night, though not altogether so consistently.

The supply problem was acute. At 1100 on the

⁴The 1st Infantry Division was operating on our left. The 23d Infantry Regiment, of the 2d Infantry Division, was attached to the 1st at this time.



We used all possible camouflage

morning of the 20th, a savior appeared in the form of Maj Chris McCullough, 1st Battalion executive officer, who, with a hand-carrying party, had brought food and blankets to the 1st and 3d Battalions. In the 3d Battalion forward CP he found Lt Col Greer, Capt Trauth, Artillery Officer, Lt Jack W. Gollust, Communications Officer, and T/Sgt Peters, bitterly cold and miserable after the night's tortures.

Supplies were never more welcome. Throughout the entire drive, of course, bringing forward food and clothing was a pressing and ever-looming problem. Company and battalion executives slaved—and had to change plans many times. Frequently the men had to do without. The suffering made commanders wince. The first sergeants were frequently company heroes. Belin, Shtundel and Seamans in the 3d Battalion were called “towers of strength” by the doughboys. Clelan L. Belin, of Company “I,” had even on Huyer brought forward faithfully all he could in an M-29 “weasel.” He knew, as Capt Shaw said, that “chow and rolls were a welcome sight because a hole in the snowy, cold ground was no picnic in any man’s language.”

Then on the morning of the 20th came saturation artillery and rocket fire on the 1st and 3d Battalion positions. Ten men in the vicinity of the 3d Battalion CP were wounded, and one was killed. Capt Charles E. Pritchard, 3d Battalion Headquarters Commandant, was wounded in both legs; his driver, Pfc Constantine, was killed.

NIEDER EMMITZER HEIDE

Assigned to the 120th Infantry was Objective “Tare,” the village of Nieder Emmitzer Heide, and

the high ground immediately north of it. A patrol from the 1st Battalion set out at 1830 on the 20th of January and drew fire halfway to the objective. Commanded by Lt Francis E. Smith, the patrol had observed well, and reported installations so accurately that the battalion was able to move where the enemy line was weakest. At 1000 the 1st Battalion, with Companies “A” and “B” leading, maneuvered far to the west of the St. Vith road, by-passed the German line strongpoints and swung in upon the enemy from his rear. The artillery observer with the Battalion brought fire upon a battery of German horse-drawn artillery before the Germans realized that their front lines had been by-passed. By then it was too late for them to resist effectively; they were thrown off balance. Thirteen prisoners were captured, and the enemy was evicted from the ground on the right of the St. Vith road around Nieder Emmitzer Heide.

An hour and forty minutes after the 1st Battalion, the 3d Battalion proceeded over the same route towards Nieder Emmitzer Heide. Then, after pushing up to the 1st Battalion line, it attacked through to seize the ground left of the road on the high ground. Companies “I” and “L” pushed farthest to the east, but the entire battalion was so decimated and exhausted that the men had a slow and difficult fight. The battalion encountered assault guns and infantry, but was able to push on to Objective “T” and consolidate a defense by 1645.

Supply routes again had to be cleared. Company “C,” which had remained on a roadblock on “Hill 522,” was sent to open the road to Nieder Emmitzer Heide. Company “K” assisted. Company “G” relieved Company “C” on the roadblock.

The 30th Reconnaissance Troop relieved the 1st Battalion, 119th Infantry, on “Wolfsbusch” at 0900, and established contact with the 117th Infantry on our right (west).

COUNTERATTACK ON WALD

The night of the 20th-21st of January was long and cold, and the men were tired. At 0400 a German patrol was noted, and three of its members were shot before it could escape. At the first glimmering of dawn enemy artillery increased slightly. B rations were served for breakfast, nevertheless, and feeling secure, some of the troops were trying to keep warm in their blankets, when, at 0915 the enemy made a spectacular appearance.

From the east around Born came two assault guns with 150 infantry; they hit our lines in the vicinity of

where a fire break crossed the main road just north of Nieder Emmitzer Heide. The enemy drove hard for the main road; whether to turn right to tear asunder our line, or to turn left to escape to his own, no one knows. The attack was preceded by artillery, and for a half hour was raging at a furious pace; the lead assault gun hit two 57mm antitank guns at the road bend, smashing their breechblocks, and hitting a jeep close by; it fired on a machine-gun nest of Company "K" and killed all four men therein. And it raced back and forth in the firebreak while the enemy infantry around the tanks scattered and fired small arms into our positions.

Tanks of the 743d Tank Battalion on the main road kept the self-propelled gun from leaving the break. Conspicuously in the center of the fray was Capt George L. Reeves of Company "L," who at the first shots had left his CP dugout and picked up an M-1 rifle near by. Someone discovered later that he killed six of the enemy personally. Once, when the lead self-propelled gun commander raised his hatch cover, Capt Reeves shot him and saw the gun retreat at once rapidly. Fighting not far from Capt Reeves were Lts O'Shea and Doyle of Company "I." Throughout the vicious attack, the three officers bolstered the men, Capt Reeves with the spirit of a man who knows he cannot be hurt. He was to learn later that afternoon, at a much tamer time, that he was all too vulnerable; a surprise rocket barrage caught him as he dashed to warn some of his men to take cover from enemy fire; he was wounded seriously.

In a forward 3d Battalion CP meanwhile, on the east edge of the infamous "Wald," the Germans had taken command. When it had first struck the line, the self-propelled gun had fired into the front-line dugout, killing a radio operator and wounding a member of the Battalion Intelligence Section. After the gun had continued on in a vain attempt to gain the main road, the German infantrymen had moved in and had taken prisoner a radio operator and an officer, Lt James Bickley, Battalion S-2, who once previously had been taken prisoner by the enemy, only to escape after several weeks of captivity behind the enemy lines.

Meanwhile, closer to the road, Companies "K" and "L" were able to pin enemy infantry to the ground. One tank was able to direct frontal fire at the assault guns, keeping them from breaking through. Lt Col Williamson was meanwhile skirting through the woods on the east side of the road to flank the guns; with him he took T/Sgt Thomas Fogli, a veteran of

long standing from Company "A," then in reserve, and eight riflemen of Fogli's platoon. Three tanks moved with the squad and, while protected and directed by the infantrymen, they pulled into position on the German's right flank; in a minute they were firing at the enemy and had destroyed one of the guns, while another turned and fled in the direction from which it had come. Small-arms and tank fires accounted for most of the Germany infantry, who lost twenty-four captured and seventy killed.

COMMUNICATION, SNOW, TROUBLE

Ever since the day of the first attack against Thirimont and Huyer, the wiremen and radiomen had been taking a beating. The 610 and 300 radios strapped to their backs weighed heavier, and with each new hill the burden became more unendurable. At times almost waist-deep, the snow increased even more the difficulty of movement. Then, only a few hours into the attack, the batteries began freezing and became useless. With an ingenuity which had always been a recognized characteristic of "GI Joe," radiomen contrived a "blanket" for their instruments, a woolen covering made from socks and old clothes; slipped around the piece, it diminished the danger of freezing and solved to some extent the radio problem. Struggling along close by the riflemen, the radiomen could be heard shouting in tight, frozen voices, "Sugar Able this is Baker Mike. . . ."

Not far behind the radios came three tired figures with a reel of wire. Twisting around the trees, they trudged, stopping every now and then to make sure of their direction. The road to St. Vith would have been an easy route for wire, but the road was usually held by the enemy long after the woods on either side had been taken. Every once in a while, as they plunged through the drifts toward the front-line companies, a barrage of rocket fire, or heavy artillery, would shatter the trees. Sometimes the wiremen had to trace their way back then, to mend a break. Many times they had to help a wounded comrade to the aid station.

It was a 24-hour job for every wire team in the Regiment. When the fatiguing ordeal of establishing the lines was done, it was only a short time before the call came for men to repair the wires. It snowed most of the time, and just to find the wire presented a problem. But if you followed along with the wire in your hand, through the tortuous pathways of the Wald, you usually found the break in the line, or the company, if you were looking for a company.



Our last objective in the Ardennes

In fact, following the wire was usually the best way to find a unit in these same-looking woods, especially when the map locations were slightly inaccurate and when there was nothing but trees from which to gauge location on the ground. Once the wiremen were lost trying to locate Company "L," and when they radioed the company to send a guide to the battalion CP, Capt Reeves, the commander, sent men who one after the other became lost. The situation looked hopeless for a long time, but the wiremen finally discovered that they had come within fifty feet of the company without knowing it, so snowed under and hidden were the dugouts. Sometimes radio relay stations had to be used between battalion CPs and OPs. In chilly foxholes the radiomen nestled down, and passed the message from one station to the next. Provided, that is, that the cold and thick woods did not make hearing impossible.

All night long on the 20th-21st, the wiremen of the 3d Battalion Headquarters Company had worked through the woods, following the route of the battalion to Nieder Emmitzer Heide. At 0100 they still had 300-400 yards to go, but found themselves out of wire. "We had gone four miles to cover a two-mile distance," said Lt Jack W. Gollust, Communications Officer, "but since the road wasn't open, we had to take the long way. In our situation, there was nothing to do but go back to the CP over the four-mile route and bring up more wire. When we got back, we found the road was open." By early morning, the wire had been laid along the highway to the front-line companies.

But with the opening of the St. Vith road came

the tanks and TDs to take up defensive positions. Tracked vehicles have always spelled doom for wires, and hundreds were gnawed apart in the firebreaks and on the main road. Soon calls were coming in for line repairmen, and they set out through the snow, feeling their way along the wire. That morning (the 21st) the counterattack struck as they were working just behind the MLR. But in the middle of the fight, communications were established. Soon the good news was to come over the copper that the enemy had been repelled. "Trouble?" asked Lt. Gollust, "We had hell!"

TWO EMMELS

Two objectives south of Nieder Emmitzer Heide remained to be taken. The 2d Battalion moved forward on the 22d of January from Feckelsborn. Company "F" attacked Ober Emmels, a village which dominated the western half of the objective. Company "E" moved through Company "F" to take Nieder Emmels, the eastern, northern portion. Resistance was light since friendly troops were putting pressure on the southern tip of Nieder Emmels. Five enemy tanks were knocked out or captured, however; in one the motor was still running long after the town had been taken. Inside, riflemen found the tank driver frozen to his controls—dead. One hundred eighty-one prisoners were captured in the day's action.

Prisoners of war stated that they were overwhelmed by the speed with which our forces surrounded them. It is more than likely, however, that the enemy felt a constantly growing pressure, too, and sensing our relentless progress, did not care to stop it. Sometimes the progress did not seem to be relentless. The supply



We fought through snow and over hills

routes always seemed endless, and the enemy had fought so fanatically that every man must have wondered if the advance were worth our losses. But the 120th Infantry had come through the ordeal with every mission accomplished, and if anyone had the ambition, he could have wandered among the camouflaged, white foxholes and seen, here and there, a bearded smile from the man on guard, or could hear, now and then, a rough laugh from a doughboy crouched over his K-ration-box fire. At any rate, even though the cost had been high, the 120th had been too much for the enemy to handle.

The seizure of these last objectives made possible the recapture of St. Vith by the 7th Armored Division, which had been the last American forces in the town at the time of the German breakthrough. Elements of that division attacked through the 30th Division lines in the Nieder-Emmels region on the 23d of January.

At 2230 the 3d Battalion relieved the 2d Battalion of Ober Emmels; the latter moved back to its former area at Feckelsborn. The following morning the 1st Battalion replaced the 3d Battalion, which moved back to Malmedy.

The 30th Reconnaissance Troop had been relieved of attachment to the 120th Infantry at 1730 on the 22d of January, and was attached to the 117th.

The next three days gave the Regiment a chance to rest and reorganize following the bitter campaign. Men warmed up in the shelter of a Belgian home for the first time in a week. Reinforcements joined the outfit. Light training included: battle orientation discussion, combat tips from veteran soldiers, first-aid instruction, and winter combat hygiene.

Care and cleaning of equipment naturally took first attention in training. All weapons were brought up to A-1 shape.

TRAINING DAYS

On the 27th of January the Command Post of the 120th Infantry moved from Ligneuville to Sart, Belgium, and was in operation at 1115. From Nieder Emmels the 1st Battalion moved to Verleumont; from Feckelsborn the 2d Battalion moved to Sart, and the 3d Battalion moved from Malmedy to Halt. Antitank Company assembled in an area at Provedroux. On the following day Cannon Company, with the 230th Field Artillery, moved into Salmchateau.

On the 28th of the month training began. Billets were cleaned and church services were held. Weapons were cleaned and checked.

The last three days of January were given to training, firing of weapons, and recreation. One noncom from each platoon attended Regimental Gas School



We returned to the old, familiar battle-scarred towns

on the 29th. The 1st and 2d Battalions saw a film on "Germany: Non-Fraternization."

Part of the 1st and 3d Battalions had baths in Stavelot. All battalions were familiarized with the new M-24 light tank. Improvised snow suits, woolen "booties," and Quartermaster arctic clothing were fitted and distributed.

At the end of January the German salient in Bel-

gium, which had ended hopes for peace in 1944 and had startled once-complacent optimists in noncombat zones, had been reduced to a "bubble." Von Rundstedt's counterattack was already mentioned in papers as a "fizzle," and compared to the dying convulsions of Ludendorff in the last war.

The 120th Infantry will long remember the "Bulge" in Belgium. The doughboys may not remember the spectacular success they had in overcoming some of Hitler's few remaining crack paratroopers, nor the brilliant tactics of their commanders, nor the superhuman effort they expended in the worst of circumstances. But they will remember Thirimont and Hausart, and Hill 522, and the counterattack on Wald. Even more will they remember the dull, cold hours of watch, the long, dark days of plodding through snow, and the foxholes they dug in the pine woods and camouflaged over and over again. They will remember the cry of incoming tree-bursts, and sleeplessly bitter nights, and cold K rations.

Later, at a presentation of awards, Maj Gen Leland S. Hobbs, commander of the 30th Division, was heard to say, "In every hot spot, in every heavy encounter since D-day—excluding only D-day itself—you men have been there, and have come through on top."

And so, along with St. Lo and Mortain, the campaign of the Belgian Salient took its place among the most difficult assignments of the Regiment. The doughboys had fought doggedly and yard-by-yard against a stubborn enemy, a cruel climate, and unfavorable terrain. Another tough spot—another victory for the 120th Infantry.



FEBRUARY

On the 1st of February, 1945, the Command Post of the 120th Infantry Regiment was located in Sart, Belgium. The Regiment was in a period of rest and training following the "campaign" of the Belgian Salient, where it had pushed the German lines from Malmedy to Nieder Emmels. The Antitank Company was in Provedroux; Cannon Company was with the 230th Field Artillery Battalion in Salmchateau.

The 1st Battalion was billeted in houses in Verleumont, the 2d Battalion at Grand-Sart, and the 3d Battalion at Halt. All battalions were receiving reinforcements, and extensive training was conducted, covering group tactics and weapons technique.

The deep snow which the Regiment had come to know so well in Belgium had begun to thaw out, so that training in the battalion area was carried out in slush. Word came that the Germans had been pushed back beyond the lines through which they had effected their terrifying but abortive penetration. Plans for continuation of the fall offensive in Germany, disrupted by Von Rundstedt's counterdrive, were to be resumed; the Division was to return to Germany; by the third day of the month march tables were completed. Secrecy was to veil the entire movement to the new location; accordingly bumper identifications were painted out and shoulder patches were removed.

It was without sorrow that the men who had fought through the cold and wilderness of the Ardennes left the winter and the mountains behind; as the men rolled their packs, spring had already warmed the countryside.

On the early morning of the 3d of February, at 0345, the Regimental Command Post at Sart closed, and with bright lights the first vehicles in the Regimental convoy crossed the Initial Point at Salmchateau at 0400. Well-packed in the trucks and clutching their weapons and rolls, the troops rolled through Verviers, Eupen, and Aachen, to territory increasingly familiar to them. At Aachen blackout lights only could be used, and men of the Regiment began to realize that they were once again close to combat, and that, at the root of all the secrecy of the movement, a new mission was in store for them.

By 0800 the forward elements of the Regiment had reached the vicinity of Broichweiden, Germany, a town which the 2d and 3d Battalions had seized in mid-November. In the center of this town the Regimental Command Post was established shortly after 0800. Also in Broichweiden in an area where it had expected to spend Christmas week, the 1st Battalion

was installed by 0950, followed an hour later by the 2d Battalion which settled in an adjacent area in the same community. The 3d Battalion reported that it had moved into an assembly area 1000 yards north of Zopp by 1150.

The old, familiar, battle-scarred quarters needed considerable renovation, and the soldiers went about this with enthusiasm, glad to be free of snow-covered foxholes. The weather was drizzly and dark, reminiscent of the fall rains of the Birk-Euchen-Altdorf days. When it was announced that the 30th Division was once again in the Ninth Army, the conversion to the "old days" was complete.

NEW PROSPECTS ON THE ROER

During the four days of training after the 4th of February it became increasingly apparent that the 120th Infantry would soon be headed across the Roer River, where the lines had been stabilized since early December. It became apparent, too, that our Regiment would play an important part in crossing that river, last natural barrier before the Rhine.

In November the 1st Battalion had taken Altdorf on the Inde River, which was a tributary of the Roer; south of Altdorf on the Inde was the town of Inden; between Inden and the Roer was Pier. Both this village and Inden were to be key points, focal bases of operations, for the future crossing.

On the morning of the 6th of February, Lts James J. Butler and Michael A. Esquivel of the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon were oriented by the S-2, Major Ezekiel L. Glazier, on taking patrols to explore the banks of the Roer in the vicinity of Pier in attempt to find a suitable crossing site for the Regiment. Six patrols of three men each set out at 2200, each with an area to cover and with the mission of crossing, if possible, and investigating the opposite bank. Engineers accompanied three of the patrols.

At 0620 the next morning the last of the six patrols returned to the Regimental Command Post drenched, and shortly thereafter the S-2 reported to the G-2 the following information: "One patrol got across. It saw nothing, although it covered the entire area—and had a 'swimming' good time!" The patrol had searched the woods on the east side of the Roer. It found that although the river was generally only 35 to 45 yards wide, it presented a real barrier because of the swift current. The soft mud bottom, too, was hard to negotiate, and though the men were equipped with chest-high rubber boots they sunk deep. One man,



Practicing river crossing on the Inde

Pfc Robert V. Phipps, wearing GI galoshes, reached the far side more easily than the others.

INDEN, FORWARD ASSEMBLY AREA

The troops were not surprised, then, to learn on the 7th of February that they were to move forward under cover of darkness. Regimental Headquarters and the 3d Battalion were moving by truck to Inden, and the 1st Battalion to Putzlohn west of Inden. The 2d Battalion was to remain in Broichweiden till next day.

On schedule at 1900 the Regimental Command Post left Broichweiden; by 2010 it had reached its new location. The 3d Battalion had closed in by 2100, the 1st by 2130. Forward elements of both battalions were stationed in much-demolished Pier.

The 2d Battalion was prepared to move to Pier, but the scarcity of quarters brought about a change in plan; instead, it moved at 1800 on the 8th February to Lamersdorf, south of Inden; this town it reached an hour later. Only the mortar platoon of Company "H" and elements of Headquarters Company were garrisoned in Pier.

Plans for the Roer drive were set: H-hour was to be 0530 the next morning (the 9th). Meanwhile, however, two six-man I and R patrols which on the night of the 7th of February had gone to investigate the river banks again reported that the water had risen since the night before, and that none of the men had been able to cross. When the S-2 made inquiry as to the reason for the sudden rise, higher headquarters said it might be the spring thaws. To the south, however, were two dams which controlled the Roer, and at that moment heavy fighting for the possession of the dams was under way.

Had the Schwammenauel and Urftalsperre Dams been blown both at once, the waters of the Roer would have risen to engulf Pier and cover the village of Krauthausen across the waters from Pier. Engineers in the sector of the dams estimated that, if they had not already done so, it would take the Nazis four days to prepare the demolitions to blow both dams. It was therefore a double victory when on the 9th of February American troops (78th Division) fought their way through the town of Schmidt to the high banks of the two dams before the installations could be blasted. Immediate investigation proved that though the dams were saved, the enemy had blown the valve outlets and the conduit from the Urftalsperre. This permitted a flow which caused the river to rise in some places to three times its normal size, though not a third of what it might have been with both dams blown.

Consequently, when patrols from the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon returned early the morning of the 8th of February, it was through no mere whim of nature that it had to report the river's phenomenal rise from knee- to chest-height since the night before. The 2d Battalion sent a patrol with members of the 105th Engineer Battalion on the night of the 8th of February; the engineers were unable to find a suitable crossing site. On the next night, 2d Battalion patrols discovered the Roer had risen another two feet, and noted that water had reached the edge of the Pierer Wald, a wooded area across the river from Pier.

WAITING FOR THE ROER STRIKE

Plans for the river-crossing attack had been decided upon by the night of the 8th of February, but it began to appear that "Jerry" had cleverly managed to delay our operation, at least momentarily. Another patrol on the night of the 10th of February ascertained that the river was still too high to cross easily.

Meanwhile daylight Observation Posts and night Listening Posts were keeping steady tab on the towns of Krauthausen and Selhausen across the Roer from Pier, and Niederzier across the fields beyond. In Schophoven, north of Pier along the Roer, in Merken, due south of Schophoven, and in Pier, were established Regimental OPs, which from church spires carefully observed the enemy's movement. Bicyclists and light vehicles were seen; men were noted entering "haystacks" and running to factories in Krauthausen and back again among the houses. Wide trenches, apparently unoccupied, could be watched, too, along

with wire obstacles damaged by artillery. Attached to the 230th Field Artillery Battalion in Inden, Cannon Company brought fire upon many of the enemy observed.

The period of waiting for the waters of the Roer to go down was not spent in idleness. From the 9th to the 12th of February, while OPs were watching the river and the enemy, the battalions engaged in extensive training with emphasis on river crossing.

G-2 reports indicated that, rather than utilizing the elaborate trenchwork already constructed, the enemy was organizing the defense of built-up areas on the Cologne plain to our front; accordingly town assault and tank coordination instruction was given. The new light tank M-24 was reviewed with the men, and down the ruined streets of Inden, Lamersdorf, and Putzlohn, reinforcements learned with battle veterans the tricks of house-to-house combat.

With infinite care and painstaking effort, since it was to be of key importance, the river-crossing instruction was given on the banks of the Inde River. Where the river makes an S-turn between Inden and Lamersdorf, 3d Battalion selected four sites. At the first, troops learned how to load, launch, and row the rubber assault boats; at the second they were taught how to handle rubber and wooden craft; at the third, they practiced crossing in small boats and establishing local security at once while the rope was being fixed across the water; at the last site, they were instructed in handling large engineer boats. Officers of the Regiment decided on the technique to be used; by paddling to keep the boat's nose facing upstream, the men caused the current to push the boat to the far shore.

Since smooth functioning was vital, men of all battalions were rehearsed frequently on the sequence of duty and maneuver of the boats. The placement of weapons and seating of personnel had to be exact and automatic; the order of crossing within each unit was memorized by each man. Scheduled to lead in the Regimental attack, the 2d Battalion practiced crossing on four different nights as well as almost every day; the 1st Battalion also practiced at night.

In the "Durwiss Pit," a large mine excavation where the Germans had abandoned derricks and engineer equipment, units and individuals of the Regiment fired their weapons. Beside the modern Adolf Hitler Autobahn north of Eschweiler, Antitank Company and tanks used the "Pit" for a range. Mortars were fired in an area between Putzlohn and Lamersdorf.

On the 17th of February the 3d Battalion left Inden

at 1800 and traveled to Kerkrade where for two days it enjoyed a stay at the Division Rest Center. When it returned the evening of the 19th the 2d Battalion moved to the rest area, and stayed till the night of the 21st.

During the period 17th-21st of February there were several other events.

Britain's Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery visited the 30th Division; in honor of the occasion the Regiment spruced up its camouflage.

Sporadic enemy shelling harassed Inden and Pier.

On the night of the 14th of February an enemy plane dropped approximately five bombs in the Inden-Lamersdorf area. One wounded four men engaged in the 1st Battalion practice night river crossing. The same night robot bombs made their first appearance to our knowledge in this sector; they continued the following day and reminded the troops of the robot bomb days and nights near Malmedy.

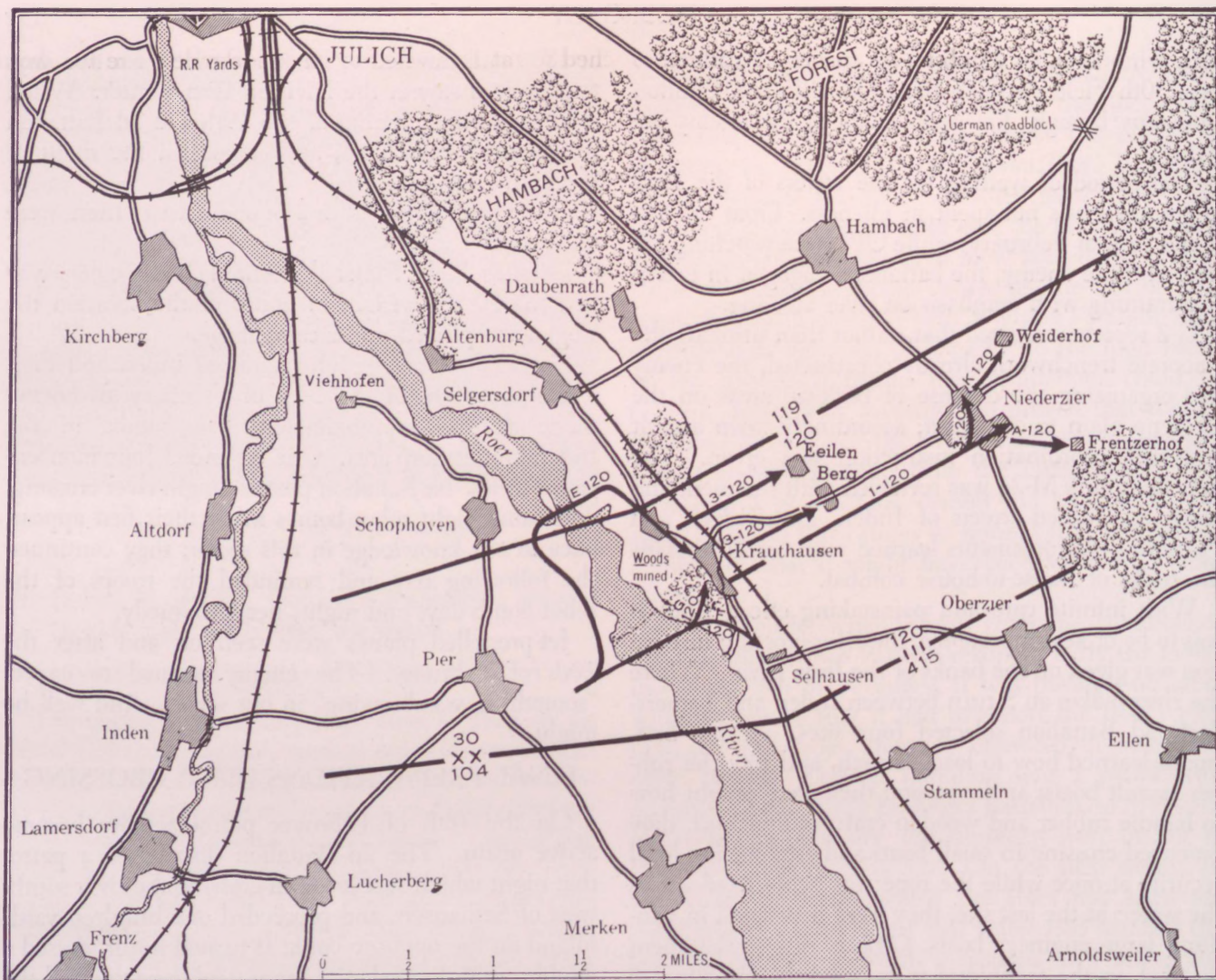
Jet-propelled planes were seen on and after the 20th of February. The enemy seemed to expect "something was brewing" in our sector. And well he might.

FINAL PREPARATIONS FOR A CROSSING

On the 18th of February patrol activity became active again. The 2d Battalion dispatched a patrol that night which succeeded in crossing the river southwest of Selhausen, and proceeded one hundred yards inland on the opposite bank. It turned north, passed a double-apron barbed-wire fence, took care to avoid the complicated but apparently unoccupied system of communication trenches, some of which were caved in. The patrollers were pecked at in one area by a machine gun. At a point 500 yards north of where the patrol had originally crossed it returned to the friendly side and reported by 0200.

The next night and the night after that, patrols made their way to the banks, and tried to cross again, but the current swept the little boats like straws back to the near side, and though engineer men were assisting the infantrymen, no crossing could be made in the Regimental sector.

On the night of the 21st of February four five-man patrols from the 2d Battalion were dispatched again to reconnoiter the terrain across the Roer in our sector, and to locate, each with certain limits, the most expedient crossing location. One patrol failed to cross where the swollen river and swift current overcame all attempts. Another followed a line of telephone poles south of Schophoven toward Krauthausen; it made a



The Roer

muddy path, but the patrol finally maneuvered a small boat to the opposite side and scouted the brush and fields in enemy territory to its front before returning. A third patrol picked up its assault boat from Pier and moved south over the swamps toward Selhausen. Led by Lt Francisco Calabrese, the men, who were from Company "F," chose a spot opposite the southern tip of the Pierer Wald. After crossing they struck another water obstacle, the Muhlenteich Canal. Two of the party reconnoitered north and found a recently constructed wooden footbridge, while another swam across, and made his cautious way toward Selhausen. He discovered a barbed-wire obstacle on the edge of the town before he rejoined the remainder of the patrol. Meanwhile the last patrol had found a crossing in the area of the 119th Infantry on the left (north) and on the enemy side moved south in an endeavor to find from that side a good crossing point. They tried

to return in the 120th Infantry sector at a place where the current was too strong; the boat capsized. One man was lost, while another had to be pulled to shore. Since it was a clear night, the enemy sensed something stirring. The splashing and the paddling drew fire.

Of this nature were the days preceding the long-delayed attack across the Roer. Each scrap of information was utilized in making the final plans. On the 22d of February, while companies were training as usual in the Inden-Lamersdorf vicinity, attack plans were completed.

Initially, after crossing the river, the Regiment was to take four objectives:

- "A"—Krauthausen, opposite Pier, was to be taken by the 2d Battalion, as was
- "B"—Selhausen, south of Krauthausen and Pierer Wald.

"C"—Berg, a tiny community located on the high ground east of Krauthausen, was to be seized by a company of the 3d Battalion, which was to help the 1st Battalion take

"D"—Niederzier, a large town east of Berg.

Plans for crossing the river, an assignment which was by far the most difficult of all, had to be formulated with extreme care, since the Roer in our sector was more swollen and known to have a swifter current than in other areas. The final orders called for: (1) crossing in small assault boats and by a footbridge at a point due east of Pier; (2) if (1) failed, crossing in engineer boats at a site northwest of Selhausen; (3a) if these plans both failed, crossing two companies in amphibious "alligator" LCVPs, at a site near the Pier road, and the remainder at a footbridge in the 119th Infantry sector near a castle-like structure (Mullenmark) south of Schophoven; (3b) if all others failed, crossing the entire Regiment over the footbridge near the "castle." Orders from higher headquarters had dictated that the Alligators were not to be used unless other means failed because these vehicles were to be saved for the Rhine crossing.

Under cover of darkness at 2030 on the 22d of February, the 2d Battalion moved on foot to Pier. The other battalions prepared to go forward, the 3d to Pier following up the 2d, the 1st to replace the 3d at Inden.

D-day was designated to be the 23d of February. H-hour for the attack upon Krauthausen was to be 0330. Before then the river had, of course, to be crossed. The artillery was to fire preparatory concentrations from 0245 till H-hour.

CROSSING THE ROER

It was 2300 when, according to plan, two parties of engineers (Company "C," 105th Engineer Battalion) left Pier toward the banks of the river. One was to attempt the construction of a footbridge about a hundred yards north of the Pier road. It was encountering severe difficulties in the eddies of the swollen river when the project was discovered by the enemy, and shelled. The party abandoned what it deemed a hopeless task.

The other party was to secure a rope across the Roer parallel to and slightly south of the road. The river was a half mile wide at the point, and the banks were treacherous and noisy, flooded and crisscrossed, like the field to the west, with ankle-deep canals. It took the men two hours to gain the opposite side in a boat and to attach the rope.

Shortly before 0100, Company "G" left Pier and moved across the fields to the crossing site. It was clear and bright for nighttime; visibility aided our operations, though it gave the jumpy and expectant enemy an advantage, too. The first large boat was slid into the shining water beside the rope and loaded. It was pulled outward into the current. Progress was slow and treacherous; the boat reached a point just short of the opposite bank, when it capsized and the passengers scrambled to the opposite shore. A second boat maneuvered its way jerkily and very slowly. A third tipped over before it made a good start.

Other elements of Company "G" were, meanwhile, attempting to cross in small assault boats by paddling at a point 200 yards south of the Engineer site. Several boats managed with difficulty to reach the enemy side. The battalion S-3, Capt Joseph E. Brown, moving between the two attempted crossings, kept activity organized and troops dispersed and well-ordered. He sent word to Pier that the small boats could negotiate the river better than the Engineers' rope-drawn craft, and diverse elements of Company "H" and Battalion Headquarters Company scurried to assemble the needed boats, of which sixty-four were available.

Executive officers generally play a passive, rearward role during an attack, but Lt Charles H. Westbrook, of Company "H," was among the most active at 0230 when he learned the assault boats were needed. Organizing the remnants of his company which were not attached to others into carrying parties and impressing them with the urgency of the job, he assembled the boats, carrying the paddles himself, in two trips he led the men with the craft forward to where the assault troops could pick them up. During an enemy barrage en route from Pier he was wounded in the leg; his men were disorganized until he rallied them and continued forward. Later, after he had dressed his wound, he was to play an important part in regulating transportation during the first thirty hours following the river crossing.

The engineers had meanwhile managed to maneuver the large rubber boats across the waters at the site farther south, and the battalion commander shifted some Company "G" troops there to try crossings. Going was difficult, many boats were overturned, and only a platoon succeeded in gaining the opposite bank.

Meanwhile Company "F" had started for the river an hour after Company "G." It moved over a different route 300 yards south and parallel to the Pier road. Alligators had been ordered to try to cross (as according to Plan 3a); it was hoped that they would be



Krauthausen—the scene of bitter fighting the night before this picture was taken

quicker than the small boats used by Company "G." Accordingly, the Alligators, or amtracks, moved out beside Company "F" and continued forward up to and into the waters of the Roer one hundred yards south of the small boat crossing. In a few moments they had gained the opposite shore with ease.

The enemy had not been oblivious to what was happening, and at the boat crossing the clear night had betrayed our troops. Mortar fire began falling in the crossing area and in the fields where Company "G" was waiting to board the boats. Capt Brown ordered the company to seek cover in the German-dug entrenchments there. Our own artillery preparations had by this time been continuing for almost three-quarters of an hour. It was close to H-hour; yet only thirty Company "G" men were across the river.

In the darkness and noise of the devastating barrages being placed on the enemy, and during the constant harassment from enemy mortars and small arms, plans were changed. The battalion was notified Plan 3a would go into effect and Company "F," well briefed, loaded into Alligators and was shuttled across. On the opposite side the platoons organized and moved forward to a Line of Departure to await the attack. When all but the weapons platoon of Company "F" had been transported across, the Alligators began to shuttle Company "G," still waiting in the fields.

The first platoon of Company "F" was organized and moving through the Pierer Wald southwest to the Line of Departure when the first explosion was heard. The troops realized all at once that they had run into antipersonnel mines. Soon more explo-

sions gave notice that the whole woods was planted cleverly with every kind of trip and pressure device. Since many had already become casualties by a chance step which set off a charge, demoralization was imminent. It was a situation which called for real leadership. There was a moment when the men were uncertain whether to step forward, to turn back, or to freeze.

Sgt James C. Yankee found his platoon thoroughly disorganized. He helped to regroup the men, and merged his own squad with another. With spirit and encouragement he led them both forward to the rendezvous point near the LD.

One platoon in the advance lost its platoon leader and then its platoon sergeant. The platoon guide, S/Sgt Floyd M. Montgomery, was fortunately a man whose initiative and bravery were equal to the situation. Although the badly shattered platoon numbered only twenty noncasualties, Montgomery took the reins, rearranged as was necessary, and spurred the men on to the rendezvous point. He led the platoon throughout the attack, proving his ability, readily exposing himself in order to lead his men to their objective.

T/Sgt Elmer Kitchell was struck by the same boobytrap that wounded his platoon leader, but he concealed the fact and led the platoon through the perilous wood and later in the attack. Not far away T/Sgt William A. Smith, from Company Headquarters, voluntarily took command of another platoon which had lost its leader and sergeant, reorganizing it for the attack.

When the 1st Platoon had reached the LD, where the company was to assemble, it found that the 2d platoon was missing. In an effort to hurry the latter group and bring it forward safely, Pfc Marcel G. Belisle, a runner, volunteered to return over the route the 1st had used to guide the missing platoon. He felt his way in the blackness of the woods, avoiding the trip wires and taking care not to stumble against the bushes where shrapnel-filled concrete mines had been attached and camouflaged. He found the other platoon at the river edge of the Wald, and led them without casualties back to the LD.

Soon after the lead elements landed, the Command Group of the company debarked from the Alligator and received word of the boobytraps. The group was naturally eager to get forward as quickly as possible. An assistant squad leader with the group, Sgt Stanley M. Wisotsky, volunteered to act as advance scout through the mined area. He cut trip wires as-



Smoke enveloped our troops



The Roer River footbridge

certained to be attached to pull devices; he marked other mines; and he brought the group forward to the LD area in less than an hour. There, Capt John M. Jacobsen, commanding the company, realized that the delay caused by the mines would necessitate a postponement of the attack. The platoons would have to be coordinated and notified of the new plans. S/Sgt Lawrence Grogan hurried off to deliver the message to some units of the company assembling several hundred yards north of where the captain was making final plans. It was an important and dangerous assignment to maneuver through the woods, but he returned soon and safely.

When the Company Executive Officer, Lt George W. Terry, and his party followed in the rear through the same area, a mine exploded and wounded Pvt Frank H. Vore. Because he had been on a patrol in that area the night before and felt that he was therefore the best qualified to guide the group, Vore volunteered to take the lead in spite of his injury. He brought the party forward to the remainder of the company without additional casualties. Proceeding forward, Lt Terry ran across a large number of lost troops. These he formed in the column. It became necessary many times to hold each trip wire and pass it from hand to hand so that no one might carelessly hit it. Lt Terry brought the last group of Company "F" to the forward assembly area in this manner; there the company prepared for the attack.

Word had by this time reached the battalion commander that numerous casualties were occurring due to the large number of mines. Company "G" was almost completely on the east side of the Roer; the Alligators were returning to shuttle more men across. Lt Col Cantey ordered the crossing of only the number of men necessary to stage the planned attack; he held one squad and the mortar section which would be needlessly exposed in merely trailing the company through the Pierer Wald. He notified Lt Robert L. Moore, assistant Battalion S-3, in Pier, to take Company "E" and the remainder of the battalion there, over the footbridge near Schophoven in the zone of the 119th Infantry Regiment. He himself picked up the remnants of Companies "F" and "G" still on the Pier side and returned through Pier to leave them with Moore, while he went on ahead. Lt Moore managed the different groups skilfully and brought Company "E" to its Line of Departure 500 yards east of the footbridge by 0500.

ATTACK ON KRAUTHAUSEN

The companies were to attack separately when they were ready. Each had a separate objective and each had a separate artillery preparation which it was to call when ready.

Originally the attacks were to start at 0330. Company "E," the first to attack, was not ready till 0500. In view of the fact that the river and sector had been unfavorable, it was a tribute to preplanning and efficient management that the entire battalion was across. The 119th Infantry had already seized its primary objectives, because it had not met the consistent misfortune nor the series of mishaps which slowed the 120th's river-crossing operation.

The enemy was probably surprised when, after the first devastating artillery barrage at 0330, no attack was forthcoming. Perhaps the second preparation at 0500 was less a warning. It was the "real thing" when Capt Walter E. Wert led Company "E" across the Line of Departure perpendicular to the river and 500 yards east of it. The objective was called "Able Easy"—the north half of Krauthausen. After the heavy artillery that had struck it, the enemy was pounded and groggy. The riflemen moved forward aggressively.

As daylight threatened to expose the bridgehead and its activity, generator and chemical smoke, along with artillery-fired smoke-shells, veiled our troops ideally. Many doughboys commented later on how many lives were saved by the smoke.

Meanwhile Company "G" was struggling through

the Pierer Wald, troubled to some extent by the same boobytraps which were inflicting casualties on Company "F." Sgt Stanley A. Parley and S/Sgt John E. Flores, squad leaders in Company "G," guided their platoons without casualties through the Wald, but the other platoon fared less favorably. T/Sgt Vernon E. Roush lost his platoon leader because of an anti-personnel mine. Fortunately, he was able to lead his platoon in veteran style. As the Company made its way to the Line of Departure he was called upon to give flank protection, and to reduce a strongpoint in a house near the canal which flowed through the northwest tip of the town. He deployed his men on the flank, built up a base of fire against the house, and then led another group from his platoon toward it. He was wounded by a machine gun during his maneuver, but he diverted the enemy. Elements of another platoon moved in to seize the house and reduce the obstacle.

"Able Easy" had been taken by 0630 when, having worked its way through the Wald to its LD along the edge of the woods southwest of Krauthausen, Company "G" was ready to attack. Its objective was "Able George," the south half of the town. It moved steadily forward in the assault, meeting spotty stubborn resistance and heavy small arms. After three hours the troops were still dodging snipers on the eastern outskirts. The main road out of the town to the east crossed a north-south railroad track. Close to the road was the railroad station. Here the Nazis organized a strongpoint, and commanded the open ground around it with numbers of machine and Schmeisser burp guns.

Three mortarmen of Company "H," Lt Irvin H. Harris, S/Sgt David C. Shepherd, and Pfc Herman Butcher, attached to Company "G," were attempting to knock out a machine-gun nest not far from the railroad station at about 1000, when nine Germans who had not seen them cut between them and the main body of Company "G" to strike the company on its right flank. The three mortarmen, still unobserved, followed along a hedgerow, behind the enemy to a good firing position. They killed or wounded every member of the flanking party. In the hurry of battle the company little realized how great was the danger that menaced them, or how much they owed to the observer party.

Meanwhile the railroad-station defenders had fired a bazooka on some of our assaulting troops attempting to rescue a wounded Nazi from an exposed position. Organized and led by the commander of Com-



Footbridge over a canal east of the Roer

pany "G," one platoon planned a simultaneous triple assault from different sides of the building. They pushed with coordinated effort into the station and emerged with six prisoners. Inside were Christmas trees and a Yuletide booklet for SS troops with a preface by Himmler. In one corner a German soldier had thrown his half-eaten stew-chow, which had to be foregone for more pressing matters. By 1030 Krauthausen had fallen.

SELHAUSEN

Harassed persistently by boobytraps, Company "F" was the last to reach its LD, the wood line northwest of Selhausen. By 0700, though diminished in personnel to little more than a platoon, it attacked toward the town. All the platoon leaders having become casualties prior to the attack, Capt John M. Jacobsen was forced to make a hasty reorganization. At H-hour he took the lead.

The 2d Platoon was led by T/Sgt Everette Goins, who pushed ahead to arrive close after the lifting of friendly artillery concentrations. A machine gun just west of the main crossroads in town sputtered at the advancing platoon. Some of the men, with Goins leading, rushing forward toward the weapon, firing from hip or shoulder as they assaulted. He closed in upon the nest alone. In a fast exchange of fire, Goins killed all four men in the emplacement, miraculously escaping death or injury.

Limping slightly from a mine wound he had received in the Pierer Wald, Sgt Darrel A. Gaudet, squad leader in the 1st Platoon, was moving into the town with his men when he noticed elements of the 3d Platoon, adjacent to his own, pinned down by machine-gun fire. Acting quickly and on his own

initiative Gaudet detached his squad from the 1st Platoon and led it to positions from which it could support the pinned-down platoon. He exposed himself at times to make sure his men were giving real help; the reinforcements to the troops which had been delayed were so valuable that the 1st Platoon was able to move forward at that time to its objective.

T/Sgt Herbert R. Taylor of Company "H" led the machine-gun section which was supporting Company "F." When his section ran into the mined area and suffered a large percentage of casualties, T/Sgt Taylor immediately directed the evacuation of the wounded and then returned to reorganize the men of his depleted unit, led them through the woods by personally disarming many of the explosives which he found in the darkness. By thus enabling his men to safely advance through the woods, their guns were set up in support of the rifle elements attacking the town. Later, he led his men in clearing the enemy out of the houses of the town, personally killing five Germans.

It was 1035 when Selhausen fell, and Company "F" consolidated its defenses. Objectives "A" and "C" were taken.

The heroism of those soldiers of the 2d Battalion who went through the minefield is beyond description—in fact beyond imagination. Groping through dense woods in complete darkness, wading cold pools formed by the flooded river, these brave men suddenly and without warning struck the mines. The enemy, hearing the explosions, brought down mortar fire. Almost immediately, about fifty casualties resulted. Overcoming fear of the mines, of shelling and, most of all, of the unknown, these superb soldiers slowly made their way toward their objectives, suffering all the time ever increasing casualties. Where else does history record the story of infantry advancing at night through a shelled minefield and into the unknown dangers of dark woods? Those soldiers who did what lesser men never could have accomplished reached the absolute ultimate of unit courage.

SUPPLY

As soon as the objectives had been consolidated, guns, food, and vehicles had to be sent across the river to the troops. Supplies were carried originally on the Alligators. From 1100 on the 23d of February during the day and following night, six Alligators, some of the cargo type, which opened ramplike at one end, and some of the personnel type, equipped with ladders, plied their way back and forth across the river.



Supplies were carried over at first on Alligators

Later, when it was safe to bring vehicles over, the pontoon bridge near Schophoven was also used. Engineer troops completed a bridge near Pier, under cover of smoke. Two days were required for the task.

Ammunition dumps were established by the 2d Battalion on the far side; Sgt Onnie R. Baker, battalion transportation noncom, under heavy fire kept the necessary equipment rolling forward.

The Muhlenteich Canal between the Roer and Krauthausen had to be bridged because the canal constituted an obstacle to the transportation of supplies from the receiving point. About noon of the 23d of February, when the 2d and 3d Battalions were sending in prisoners, Lt John G. Gerl, Assistant Regimental S-3, was in charge of the supply point where the Alligators unloaded in Krauthausen. Born in Germany, Lt Gerl was fluent in the language. Assembling the prisoners near the canal, he explained to them that the sooner the bridge was built the sooner medical supplies could be brought to be used for their wounded comrades. The prisoners set about laying beams in place across the canal with typical Teutonic ardor, and soon it was completed.

The supplies were placed in three battalion piles, so that each headquarters was able to send for ammu-



. . . and then by truck

niton and food as it needed it; thus the piles grew and diminished for a day and a night. The problem was difficult, but it was handled smoothly and without letup.

BERG

The 3d Battalion was following closely behind the 2d, and when Company "E" moved into Krauthausen Companies "I" and "K" were upon its heels. The entire 3d Battalion was assembled in the town by 1130, ready to push ahead through the enemy's broken lines.

At 1148, from the eastern edge of Krauthausen, Companies "I" and "K" moved forward to take Objective "B," the high ground around the tiny settlement labeled "Berg" on the map. On the left (north) side of the main road Company "I" pushed forward through occasional mortar barrages and machine-gun fire.

A platoon under Lt John A. Doyle found in its sector a large structure which later was discovered to have been an artillery Observation Post, equipped with radio, maps and telescopes. The riflemen moved forward toward the building steadily and when they were within fifty yards of it, machine guns fired across their front. At the same time the defenders began to throw grenades from the windows. Though wounded in the groin by one of these, Lt Doyle continued forward into the house with his men; they overwhelmed the enemy, and thirty-eight prisoners were rounded up, twenty of whom Lt Doyle assembled alone. Only after his platoon was dug in on the objective did he submit to medical treatment.

"My left company and left platoon of my right company is on 'Baker,'" reported Lt Col Howard W. Greer to the Regimental Command Post at 1217. Company "K" had one platoon held up by a self-propelled gun. By 1250, however, it had surged to the high ground and was digging in facing the once

prosperous rural town of Niederzier. Eighty prisoners had been taken at Berg.

NIEDERZIER

The 1st Battalion was following behind the other two; at 0600 it had established a CP next to the 3d Battalion in Pier. It remained there during most of the day; at 1730 it moved by the Schophoven road across the footbridge over the Roer and across the Muhlenteich Canal. The troops continued the march through Krauthausen and toward Berg. At 2300 the battalion was ready to move across the Line of Departure through Companies "I" and "K." Following closely behind a withering, brilliant series of high-explosive and white-phosphorus concentrations, Companies "A" and "C" led. They headed due east to take the southern portion of the town. Since this assault was not directed at the north side, Company "A" found the enemy comparatively free to throw as much firepower as they could against the flank of the attacker. To destroy a strongpoint which delayed its advance, Company "A" took one hour and a half.

But actually the advance would have been much slower if the infantry had not kept close behind the artillery; it was so close, in fact, that two enemy pill-boxes, three 75mm guns, and numerous *soldaten*, hiding low during the concentrations, were overrun and captured. The attack was not halted by the drainage canal which bordered the town on the near (west) side. Previously, after careful study of aerial photos, the shrewd battalion commander had decided to carry "bridges" with his troops in case the ditch proved to be a serious obstacle. Riflemen in Companies "A" and "C" struggled over a mile of muddy fields clutching 300 pounds of tough timberwood, and were prepared to set the pieces in place when the time came. The battalion found the bridge in its sector blown and mined, but the foot troops were able to jump across without resort to the timbers.



A 75mm antitank gun near Niederzier. The flat, open ground is the reason for attacking Niederzier at night.

The command post of the enemy's 958th Infantry Regiment was located in Niederzier, according to information obtained from prisoners. Officer candidates, newly released to the front lines from school, reinforced the German regiment. But resistance was by no means fanatical.

Mortar concentrations and machine-gun final protective lines were passed through with few casualties. Southwest of the town a series of trenches formed a strongpoint which was entirely ineffective, and which supplied the battalion with fifteen prisoners.

The 3d Battalion attacked from its Berg area at 0030, first following the route of the 1st Battalion, then turning north to strike the enemy in the flank, to seize the northern half of the town. It also found opposition light, though sniper fire was troublesome and a self-propelled gun in the woods east of town fired a number of rounds into the area.

When some of the Germans were forced from the southern 1st Battalion side of town to the northern portion, they ran from the "kettle" into the "fire" of the 3d Battalion, which at the time was consolidating its defenses around the northeast section of Niederzier. By 0630 troops were well organized in a strong defense around the outskirts. The 3d Battalion had no casualties.

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion had pushed far into the town, and was engaged in cleaning out the houses.

In a courtyard just off a once-blooming little square, part of Company "B" was assembled while leaders were reconnoitering defense positions. Without warning, an explosion occurred in the midst of the group, killing two and wounding twenty-nine. Though his executive officer was killed instantly, Capt Murray S. Pulver, commanding, remained calm and quieted

those men whose ignorance as to the cause of the explosion had brought their excitement to the panic stage. With steadiness and order, he arranged for transportation of the wounded to the aid station. He was hit on the face himself, just below the right eye, but not until all the men had been cared for, and the defense organized, did he have his own wound tended.

Later, the explosion was discovered to have been caused by a bazooka shell—our own—which, left with the pin pulled in the launcher, had been jarred when the man who carried it placed the muzzle end on the ground to rest. The detonation when the shell slid and hit left a tiny crater in the courtyard.

There remained an active section of town to be cleared. When the story of the explosion brought suggestions of boobytraps throughout the area, no one was eager to move through the houses in a hurry. S/Sgt Silas L. Baird, Pfc Giovanni M. Deluca, Pfc Louis C. Forrester, and Pfc Albert D'Onofrio, all of Company "A," took up the mission with speed, however, and moved unhesitatingly toward the houses still known to hide lurking enemy. One German was firing from a house the roof of which was blown off. Perceiving his silhouette against the sky, Sgt Baird and Pfc Deluca both shot at once and killed him. Almost simultaneously another sniper shot one round at an American through a window, but was seen by Pfc Forrester and killed before he could take aim for a second shot. After the consternation caused by the explosion, the boldness of these men rallied the remainder of the company, and soon order was established.

Flushed with victory, 1st Sgt James C. Wray, of Company "D," came up the gray streets with a group of men he had organized shortly before, and reported they had just destroyed a machine gun. Located to the battalion's right rear, the automatic weapon had harassed evacuation of the wounded, and had further endangered the men who were victims of the explosion.

The tree-lined road from Krauthausen to Niederzier was still suspected of being mined when, shortly after 0300, a jeep driven by Pfc Walter W. Cudworth carrying Lt George A. Stewart, 1st Battalion liaison officer, sped into the town. In the enemy's effort to prevent consolidation by our troops, the streets were still subject to consistent shelling, and the two men had scarcely dismounted at the Battalion CP when a barrage in the area flattened all four tires of the vehicle. Not long afterward, a new jeep which Cudworth had acquired received a shelling, and the

driver discovered with disgust that the disaster had occurred again: all four tires were flat.

All aid stations which had moved across the river as soon as possible were kept busy. In Krauthausen Capt Frank Koschir established the 1st Battalion station and worked tirelessly under heavy strain during two nights and a day. The M-29 "weasels" brought the wounded for his care in a steady stream.

IPW reports later indicated that the 958th Regiment, whose CP had been in Niederzier, had begun to move its rear installations out at 1900 the evening before. The enemy staff must still have been in town when our troops were entering.

The successful crossing of the 120th Infantry was made possible by the perfect cooperation given the Regiment by Colonel Russell A. Baker, commanding the 119th Infantry Regiment. During the planning stage Colonels Purdue and Baker had prepared detailed alternate plans whereby either regiment was to use the bridge of the other in the event enemy actions or flood prevented the completion of either one of the bridges. When it became necessary for the 120th to use the 119th bridge, Colonel Baker coordinated the movement for the common good. So skillful was his work that most of six infantry battalions used this bridge without confusion or loss of time, despite the necessity of reserving bridge space from time to time for returning the wounded. Had it not been for Colonel Baker's cooperation, the Regiment would not have been nearly so successful.

WEIDERHOF AND FRENTZERHOF

Enemy in two chateau-farms between Niederzier and the Hambach Forest to the east harassed the town with sporadic fire. At 1515 on the 24th of February the 1st and 3d Battalions each sent a platoon to clear out the strongpoints. Weiderhof was located beside the key-route road—leading to Steinstrass north beside the Hambach Forest. Division planned to pivot its attack at Niederzier, turning its might northward in a flanking sweep toward Garzweiler and Dusseldorf. The 117th Infantry was scheduled to push through the 120th lines in Niederzier to take Steinstrass.

It was, then, vitally important to destroy the strongholds at Weiderhof and Frentzerhof, both of which commanded the highway. From Company "K" a platoon made its way parallel to the road to Weiderhof, encountering only small-arms fire. It effected an easy entrance into the house by 1545 and captured fifteen prisoners therein. At once the platoon established an outpost there.



Armored pillbox in front of Niederzier. Camouflage was removed before taking the photo.

Meanwhile the 3d Platoon from Company "A" had attacked from the southeast section of town toward Frentzerhof 1000 yards away. Accompanying the platoon was Sgt Jesse DeSoto, machine gunner from the Weapons Platoon, to supply supporting fire. About halfway to the objective, the forward elements of the platoon noticed a German, who was later learned to be an officer, brandishing a white flag one hundred yards in front of them. All at once he seemed to change his mind, and ran to a position near by which the men quickly recognized to be a 75mm-gun emplacement. Apparently attempting to fire, he was not quick enough to load and aim alone. Sgt DeSoto had located himself in an advantageous though exposed position, and while the riflemen closed in, peppered the position with automatic fire. The officer was found dead beside the gun; the 75mm was still intact, however. While the platoon continued forward toward its objective, Sgt DeSoto gave supporting fire and was effective in keeping enemy opposition to a minimum.

The men had not left the 75mm gun far behind when they were fired on by three machine guns located on the flanks. S/Sgt Kenneth I. Gleason, platoon guide, was in the lead, and noticing the position of the nearest gun slightly west of the buildings, pushed forward through the high grass until, at close range, he fired an antitank grenade into the installation. Though the other two guns were firing continuously from the woods farther north, Sgt Gleason made a rush across the open ground to the shelter of a barn. Pfc Harry L. Dust, Alfred A. Warren, Robert H. Steeves, and Richard F. Willets, of Company "A," and T/5 Michael C. Prisco and Pfc Charles E. Larson, of the 1st Battalion AT Platoon, were close behind and dashed to the building where Gleason was. A 20mm gun turned upon them suddenly from their

left flank. The buildings of the large farm formed a square, and even in the face of all the fire these had to be searched out. The seven men worked in teams and boldly made their way through the rooms. Three enemy were killed; others were routed and ran back into the Hambach Forest. The 3d Platoon, which dubbed itself the "Assault Platoon," returned to Niederzier with mission accomplished.

The strongpoints were cleared and at 1600 the 117th Infantry, which had pushed up close to our lines, was ready to attack. It moved through the 3d Battalion past Neu Hambach to take Steinstrass after a difficult fight.

At 2100 that night (the 24th) Company "C" dispatched a patrol to search out an area 200 yards deep within the light woods of the Hambach Forest east of Niederzier. Back in two hours and forty minutes, the patrol reported it had seen no enemy.

INTERIM BETWEEN DRIVES

By the morning of the 25th of February, it was believed that the enemy defenses had been breached. Ninth Army plans called for a sweeping push northeast toward the Rhine. The 117th Infantry was pressing the attack on Steinstrass, while the 119th on the left (west) was seizing high ground and built-up areas toward the towns of Hollen and Rodingen. When they were taken, the 120th Infantry was to pass through for continuing the attack north.

Until that time our Regiment had the mission of defending the Division's flank and rear. At 1337 on the 25th of February the Command Post moved from Inden to Niederzier. That morning the 801st Tank Destroyer Battalion replaced the 823d in attachment, and a company of TDs was in turn attached to each battalion of the Regiment, to be used in the defense. The 30th Reconnaissance Troop was also attached to take up defensive positions around Niederzier. The next day (the 26th) both were relieved of attachment.

Investigation of Niederzier, which had been a key point in the enemy defense, led to the discovery of many effective installations which had been utilized by the enemy. A steel pillbox with revolving turret near the main road, dug-in positions equipped with undamaged guns, a fake cannon emplacement, and two extensive minefields over both the Oberzier and Krauthausen roads, were reported. These examples of wasted effort seemed to indicate poor morale, and the prisoners, disheveled and feeble, served to strengthen that impression. When asked why he did not, according to his instructions, hold to the last man,

one bushy-haired German noncom said our infantry had followed the artillery concentrations so closely into Niederzier that there had been no chance to offer even a small-arms fire fight. Most of the PWs were laughing as they filed into the Interrogation Point; they were glad to be leaving the Fatherland and its struggle for *Kultur*.

In order to protect the right flank of the Division, the 3d Battalion was ordered to establish four roadblocks east of the Steinstrass road in the Radinger Wald opposite tiny settlements called Neu Hambach and Winterbach. Company "K" took up the positions at 1405 on the 25th of February after half an hour's maneuver against only scattered individual opposition. A platoon of Company "L" relieved Company "K" later the same day. At 0200 the next day Company "L" passed the four roadblocks to establish four more farther north in the Radinger Wald nearer Steinstrass. In an hour all eight roadblocks were in position covering the right flank of the Division.

SWING TO THE NORTH

The progress of the 117th and 119th Infantry Regiments was rapid, and into their hands had fallen Steinstrass, Lich, Hollen, and Oberempt. At 0800, Col Russell A. Baker, commanding officer of the 119th, explained how successful the flanking strike to the north had been. "Think the Krauts are a bit confused," he said. "We jumped a 'screaming Meemie' outfit, and picked up forty-eight out of fifty-two. They were digging in, facing the opposite direction!"

The fall of Rodingen (Objective "Patty") 500 yards north of Hollen ("Louise") to the 119th Infantry on the morning of the 26th of February was the signal for the 120th to move through on the attack. Objectives to take were:

"Marge," the town of Kalrath due north of Rodingen, and

"Jean," Grottenherten, south and almost contiguous with

"Helen," Kirchherten, both being northeast of Kalrath.

The Regimental commander had completed his plans and at 0900 issued orders for the operation.

The remainder of the morning was a busy one for the entire Regiment. At 1437 the Command Post moved from Niederzier to a lone farmhouse 300 yards southwest of Hollen. The 801st TD Battalion and 30th Reconnaissance Troop were relieved of attachment. Elements of the 744th Light Tank Battalion

and Company "B" of the 823d TD Battalion were attached at 1000.

SEIZURE OF KALRATH

According to order, the 2d Battalion, less Company "F," moved immediately to an assembly area south of the Steinstrass-Julich road and within the Hambach Forest, while the Commanding Officer made his reconnaissance in and around Rodingen. After his return he brought the battalion forward to that town, so that by 1720 it was ready to attack Kalrath. The 1st Battalion with Company "F" left Niederzier at 1630 to enter Rodingen and assemble by 2030.

The 3d Battalion remained in its roadblock positions and in a perimeter defense of Niederzier till 1100 when the 113th Cavalry Group occupied the positions. The battalion moved to an assembly area within the town.

Though it had been prepared to leave earlier, coordination with the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 117th Infantry forced our 2d Battalion to wait till 2030 to push northward to Kalrath. On schedule in the dark of evening Company "G," leading, started forward parallel to the Rodingen-Kalrath road. The enemy's defense had been hastily organized around the town; a few strongpoints with automatic weapons were posted on the flanks.

One of Company "H's" mortar observers, S/Sgt David O. Shepherd, was among the forward troops when a machine gun on the southwest tip of town greeted them with a sudden hail of bullets. One of the riflemen carrying a bazooka was panicky and claimed he did not know how to fire the weapon. Shepherd pulled the bazooka from him and picked up two rounds. After crawling forward to within twenty yards of the enemy machine gun, he took careful aim and fired into the house where it was located. Riflemen farther back followed up with a barrage of white phosphorus rifle grenades which silenced the machine-gun nest.

Once the machine-gun nests on the edge of town had been eliminated, the company gained the buildings easily. Tanks had begun to fire sporadically from the town, and light mortar shells were falling, but in twenty-eight minutes the riflemen had forged their way to the objective. Lt Arthur J. Saalfeld had taken over the company only a few hours before the attack, and two of his platoon leaders were inexperienced, but he remained among the foremost and kept his men moving forward. Inside the town, tanks poked their muzzles around corners of houses and fired;

then they ran. Growing pressure forced them to retreat east toward Grottenherten.

One assault gun with a Mark IV chassis was flanked on the main road before it could pull out. The German tanker was starting his motor when Sgt Darrell E. Fuller and Pfc Carl V. Ivey each made direct hits with white phosphorus grenades. The sudden flame was sucked in by the motor. After an attempt by the tanker to drive away hastily, more hand grenades, and especially the intense heat and smoke, drove the crew out into the eager hands of Company "G."

During the German armored counterattack upon our troops in the streets of Altdorf in November, we had accidentally learned the value of white-phosphorus rifle grenades in combating tanks. As the result, rifle grenadiers and bazookamen were given training in the use of this projectile. With it we never failed to immediately whip enemy tanks which were operating defensively. The white phosphorus enabled our men to approach within easy killing range, or set fire to the tank, or else cause it to flee. Upon at least four occasions fleeing tanks were immobilized by crashing into obstacles. So proficient did our men become in the use of the white-phosphorus grenade that they were disappointed when the tank succeeded in escaping; formerly they had been glad for these tanks to leave.

Enemy mortar shells were still falling in the town, Company "G" doughboys were cleaning out houses along the main street. Crowded in an archway one group was waiting for a fellow group across the street to finish cleaning out its assigned houses, since one had to cover the other searching. In the black of night some of the group saw a form approach with the assurance of one who was among friends. When he gripped at what proved to be a machine pistol at his side the soldiers realized he was attempting to fire at them. With a flick of his finger he could have sprayed them, but he was not quick enough. S/Sgt Minor L. Miller, squad leader, had squeezed off two M-1 rounds from his hip, and the stranger fell dead. He was discovered to be an officer who had apparently recognized the Americans only a few seconds before they recognized him.

Meanwhile Company "H" machine gunners were pushing forward to place their automatic-fire protection at the extremities of the town. Sgt Charles F. Perkins and Cpl John D. Rill selected a spot for their gun to cover a road leading northeast from town; from several houses near them they received harassing fire. On their own initiative they decided to clean out the houses. Accordingly, leaving the remainder of the

crew at the gun, they went through the houses, and before they returned to duty at the roadblock had turned in thirteen prisoners.

Lt Robert E. Curtis was organizing the machine-gun defense of the town; when a sudden, exceptional artillery barrage began falling, he took shelter in a house, and there soon found himself helping the riflemen clean it out. Some of the doughboys had become disorganized in the heavy fire and the darkness. Taking them in hand, Lt. Curtis placed them to form an effective defense line around the area.

T/Sgt Grover C. Cox, also of Company "H," led some of his men to the north tip of Kalrath to establish another roadblock and, when a tank tried to force its way into the town he took one of his guns forward to a better position. From there he was able to disperse the supporting enemy infantry and to apply pressure on the tank itself until it turned and fled.

By 2240 the town was mopped up, and the TDs were en route to strengthen the defense. Behind them came ammunition vehicles of Company "H." The road had been cleared by Engineer mine detectors; it was therefore a shock when two lead TDs ran over mines, later discovered to be plastic.

The explosions brought down enemy artillery, causing one man along the road a serious wound. Having noticed the soldier suffering, T/Sgt Rother P. Morrow, platoon sergeant of the mortar platoon, ran 300 yards to where he saw an unused jeep on the side of the road, drove back, and loaded the wounded man inside. While every one else lay low awaiting a new barrage, Morrow sped hurriedly toward Rodingen and an aid station.

In the confusion caused by the barrage, the Company "E" command group lost radio contact with its battalion. When a Company "H" radio operator, Pfc Morten Melsen, heard that the Company "E" radio channels had been disrupted, he rushed from his position one hundred yards to the road and coming upon the radio operator struggling with his apparatus, he quickly adjusted the channel, so that in the middle of the enemy barrage contact with the battalion was established again.

English flail tanks were sent for to clear the roads. The TDs then passed through and took up positions in the town, which was consolidated by 2300.

The 2d Battalion had also the mission of seizing a small built-up area 500 yards southwest of the 1st Battalion's next objective, "Helen," the town of Kirchherten. Shortly after 0100 a platoon sent from Company "E" to seize the point was almost to it when it

met a strong volume of small-arms and tank fire. The patrol leader called for artillery; while the isolated building-group was being pounded, he received what he believed to be an order to withdraw. The platoon had reached railroad tracks halfway back to Kalrath when it met Lt Col Ellis W. Williamson of the 1st Battalion, who was reconnoitering the area just prior to the attack of his battalion, which was even then heading toward the Line of Departure. Lt Col Williamson told the platoon leader to hold his men near the railroad tracks, since he might be needed to help clear out the buildings before the attack could go forward. The platoon was incorporated into the attack plan, and while the battalion was to by-pass the chateau, the Company "E" men were scheduled to reduce the resistance there.

GROTTENHERTEN AND KIRCHHERTEN

Shortly before 0300 the 1st Battalion with Company "F" attached was forming along the northeastern edge of Kalrath in preparation for the attack. Someone perceived through the darkness approximately thirty figures approaching from enemy lines on the objective. But when a shot from the American side rang out, confusion arose among the strangers. Then it became apparent that they carried no arms, and came probably to surrender. Meanwhile, they had turned terror-stricken and fled singly back across the field to the safety of the German lines. Some said that they were German soldiers who could not wait till morning to give up.

The attack followed a series of artillery concentrations progressively nearer to the objectives. Company "C" moved on the southernmost flank toward Grottenherten ("Jean"), while Companies "A" and "B" pushed toward Kirchherten ("Helen"). From the start tank activity could be heard in and around the two towns. After the attack had begun the platoon from Company "E" searched out the chateau-like structure which it had been sent to seize earlier. Surprisingly enough, the place was found devoid of enemy; the automatic fire was presumed to have come from tanks which had displaced farther east.

It was not till five months later that the real heroes of the chateau were discovered to be men from a company "B" Squad. Close to the Line of Departure, they had decided that they would permit nothing to arrest their advance behind the artillery onto the objective. Fearing that the house might hold them up and might prevent a repetition of the Niederzier triumph, they had moved against the building, and a grenadier had



We always were forced to watch out for mines

fired some phosphorus grenades at the figures inside. One German had been killed, one wounded, in the sally. When the attack time came, they had pushed forward, and they never thought of it again. Besides, the attack had not been as smooth as Niederzier, and they were mixed up in some rough fighting.

Shortly after, while the companies waited close to the town for the lifting of the artillery upon it, two tanks lurking behind haystacks remained unseen. Then suddenly when a building set afire by the artillery and enemy flares exposed the troops thus deployed and motionless, the tanks moved out from their places of concealment, rolled to within 150 yards of the nearest units and, spraying automatic fire, poured bullets into the exposed troops. Company "B" bore the brunt of the armored attack, for it was closer to the tanks and unprotected by a slight draw which Company "A" used. Initially nine men were killed and five wounded. The tank continued to blast at the forward platoons.

S/Sgt Lester A. Carbonneau and S/Sgt William D. Cloud, squad leaders in the lead platoons of Company "B," crawled one hundred yards to the rear toward a haystack, near which they found a member of Company "E." The two sergeants explained the situation, since the 2d Battalion men had thought the fire was from a machine-gun nest.

A bazooka team was summoned from the platoon and the Company "B" squad leaders led the team to flank the tanks from the south. The four men crawled silently forward till they were only fifty yards from the rear end of one of the tanks, and not far from the other. The team fired two quick rounds. One hit the turret of one of the tanks, and helped to alert both to the fact that they were being attacked from the

rear. Both tanks moved out straight forward; they came so close to the prostrate bodies of some of the Company "B" men that the soldiers had to roll away to avoid being crushed. As rifle grenades began to explode close to them, the tanks turned east and escaped around the north tip of the town. Prisoners were taken from entrenchments close to where the tanks had been.

The wounded men had, meanwhile, lain helpless and powerless to escape from the scene of action. Pfc Albert H. Damore had been hit seriously in the left leg, but was able to crawl back to where he could be given first aid. He reached the aid station and was bandaged. Then of his own accord, he returned to the field of action to help evacuate and administer first aid to others. At that moment he was badly needed.

Pfcs Donat J. Lavio and Marion A. Welch were struck with stones from the burst of the tank shells. They had worked their way well forward close to the protective draw toward the town, almost holding their breath lest the tanks spray them as they crawled. They finally reached the buildings on the edge of town, and there found they had to fight their way through the houses. By this time, the tanks had withdrawn and the remainder of the company was reaching Kirchherten. Lavio and Welch continued alongside the others, and though told to go back and take a rest, they forgot their wounds in the excitement and stayed with the assaulters.

Company "A" had reached the town too; S/Sgt Gerard J. Slania, one of the squad leaders, carried a flamethrower, which he had kept close while he crawled inch by inch through the tank fire. He controlled the temptation to throw it away since he felt it would be much needed in the town. After the hard pull with a 68-pound load, he joined his platoon in cleaning out the houses. Later he picked up a German prisoner and strapped the flamethrower to him. The German soldier followed Slania obediently and without question or attempt at trickery. When morning came and the prisoner of war was to be evacuated, he begged to be allowed to stay with Slania and his men. He apparently wanted to join the Americans and carry the flamethrower in all fights thereafter. However, probably he was trying to demonstrate that he was a "good" German who had been forced to fight Americans.

Once these men and other infiltrating parties which had had to crawl most of the way were inside the town, it was quickly and aggressively mopped up. S/Sgt Kenneth I. Gleason, one of Company "A's" pla-

toon guides, had cleared thirty-two houses in one hour and brought four enemy and sixty civilians to be questioned. He had narrowly escaped death when in a cellar he had pulled the trigger of his pistol just as a German soldier on whom he flashed his light was fingering his machine pistol. Gleason had also killed another Nazi when he threw a grenade into the window from which the enemy was firing.

The enemy tanks were by this time making a desperate effort to escape from the town to the north. On the north edge of Kirchherten Company "F" knocked out a Mark IV with bazookas. Two Mark IVs were caught by artillery as they sped toward Garzweiler. With its muzzle facing neatly into a near-by window one Mark IV was found intact and with motor running in an inclosed farmyard. Apparently caught by surprise, the crew had surrendered.

At 0415 the enemy was still making small abortive efforts to gain back the town or a portion thereof. S/Sgt Silas L. Baird, of Company "A," originally with the support elements, had just come forward to organize a block of eleven men along a road going east from town. Enemy movement was soon observed; when tanks and infantry could be sighted, the roadblock defenders poured such a hail of small-arms fire upon them that the formation turned north and was not seen again. When later another group of German infantry came toward the block they were welcomed by a barrage of bullets which caused seven enemy dead, four of whom were ascertained to have been killed by Baird's own submachine or "grease gun."

In the early morning the 1st Battalion commander brought Company "F" from reserve to clean out a northwest section of town. Meanwhile, Company "C" took Grottenherten with ease so that by 0500 with few casualties for the Regiment, the two towns were secured. Not long after dawn at about 0750, however, observers noted what seemed to be a counterattack forming to the northeast.

Company "A" was defending the east approach. When he noticed the movement, Sgt Jesse de Soto, machine-gun squad leader in that company, grabbed his light machine gun. He proceeded to the upstairs window of a house, where he could observe what was happening. He could see two tanks and some infantry moving against his lines. When they came within easy range he fired from the hip upon them in long, persistent bursts. The tanks turned on him; after shells had twice struck the house, he withdrew from his vantage point; he had, however, succeeded in disorganizing the infantry.

Meanwhile, Lt Roy V. Young, Company "A" platoon leader, had discovered the threat from the east and chose a bazooka man with his own last name, Pfc Lloyd W. Young, to help him fire on the tanks. They tried the upstairs of a house, but found it was too far away to be effective. They then crossed the street and went into a yard which was only 200 yards distant from the tanks. Lt Young loaded, while his namesake fired two rounds which missed their target and drew machine-gun fire. Just as the two Youngs turned to retire to the house, Lloyd was hit in the head by machine-gun fire and killed. The tanks were already turning, however; they withdrew hastily with whatever infantry had survived.

The counterattack had failed. By this time the company of light tanks, 744th Light Tank Battalion, and two Platoons of Company "B," 823d TD Battalion, moving over the main Kalrath-Grottenherten road, had taken up positions in the town.

Of the sixty prisoners taken in Kirchherten, some were dressed in brilliant impressive uniforms discovered to be those of the local police. Others said they were members of the Junior *Luftwaffe*; of them the 1st Battalion S-2, Lt Ernest F. Sharpe, reported: "Judging from their age they must have flown kites." The 150th *Panzer Lehr* Division was identified; it was an old opponent from Normandy, apparently meeting with no more success this time than it did the last.

Soon after the objective had been consolidated, rear elements and supporting units were pouring into the town, following close behind the attackers. Company "F" rejoined its parent battalion at 1415 on the 27th of February in Kirchherten. It found the 2d Battalion had not been idle, having moved into the town at 0800 that morning. Coordinated with the 119th Infantry's attack on Hokenholz, the seizure of objective "Sarah," the settlement of Kaishorb northwest of Kirchherten, had been set for the early afternoon.

KAISHORB

After considerable time spent in coordinating supporting fires and briefing units on the plan, Company "E" attacked at 1220. One platoon of light tanks from the 744th Light Tank Battalion, and the two TDs which had not been damaged at Kalrath, were attached to the company. Leapfrogging each other, the tanks followed the advancing infantry at 200-300 yards, while the TDs stayed in the rear to cover the assault, and moved up by echelon. Just before the troops

reached the town, the tanks surged ahead and, since only small-arms opposition was met, it was only thirty-eight minutes from the time of attack to when Kaishorb had fallen. Forty-four prisoners were taken. Another small built-up area named Hahnerhof lay on our left (west) out of our sector. It was not taken, however, until later that afternoon. At 1625, a platoon of Company "E" attacked over 1000 yards to the chateau area which was seized without opposition in twenty minutes, the enemy having fled. After capturing the chateau, the platoon returned to the Regimental zone, rejoining its company at Kaishorb.

The first of the *Volkssturm* captured by our Regiment were taken from "Sarah." One had a long, sad story to tell, and he painted a tragic picture of Germany's convulsive efforts to muster up every scrap of manpower left in the Reich.

GARZWEILER

The 3d Battalion had meanwhile left Niederzier in trucks at the time the 1st Battalion was attacking Kirchherten. After reaching Rodingen at 0330, the men gathered what rest they could there till 1000, when the battalion moved into Kirchherten. Lt Col Greer awaited the word to attack Objective "Nora" (Garzweiler), due north of Kirchherten.

The Regimental Command Post moved from the isolated farmhouse south of Hollen shortly after lunch, and was established in a former restaurant on the main square in Kirchherten.

The weather had been dark since the first days after crossing the river, and the afternoon of the 27th was still overcast. For a Line of Departure the 3d Battalion prepared to use the sloping ground extending east from Kaishorb to Konigshoven, taken shortly before by the 119th Infantry. Company "I" moved into the attack at 1530. Then using two M-10s of Company "B," 823d TD Battalion, and the M-24 light tanks of Company "B," 744th Light Tank Battalion, Company "K" mounted the armor and moved from Kirchherten through muddy fields across the Line of Departure in a giant armored skirmish line. Company "I" led on foot.

Garzweiler, like Niederzier, was apparently to have been a key defense center, for it contained 105mm assault guns, antitank guns, and tanks, and was surrounded by minefields. Nevertheless, after the battalion crossed the Line of Departure at 1530, it met no resistance till it was close to the town. There the troops encountered a volume of small arms mainly from the right flank. Here was an intricate trench system pro-

tected by minefields and concertina wire. Much of the trench system was covered and in places was fortified into improvised pillboxes.

"Marching fire had always been drilled into the men back at Inden and near Zopp," someone who was there told later, "and as soon as the enemy opened fire, not a man hit the ground, except several on the right flank—they were casualties—but immediately opened fire continuing to advance. The training paid off, because the enemy quickly waved a white flag and fifty-one prisoners filed out of the trenches."

One TD was detracked by a mine, but the assault lost no momentum and continued into the town easily. Pvt Francis H. Martin was hit, but his desire to get into the town was so great that no amount of persuasion could turn him back; he followed loyally and helped clean out the houses.

Pfc Walter R. Yates was not confused about the type of gun he was firing. It was unusual to see anyone firing the light machine gun like an M1, but Yates knew what he was doing. A Weapons Platoon man of Company "I," which had taken position on the east edge of Garzweiler after the town had been seized, Yates had seen two Germans running as fast as possible at a distance of about 400 yards due east of his position. Immediately after he had begun firing, the legs of his light machine-gun bipod were sunk deep into the mud and his shots were grazing so low that had there been any grass, it would literally have been shaved off. But Yates rapidly changed his position to correct this fire; flattening out on the ground, he held up the gun barrel with his left hand and after squeezing off two more bursts, saw that he had felled both Germans. The next morning, eager to see whom he had killed so efficiently, he made an inspection of the bodies, and discovered that his victims were no less than a captain and a lieutenant.

Company "L" pushed into Garzweiler behind the other two companies. Pfc Edward R. Kranz and Pfc Kenneth E. Rowley were assigned to cover the road leading northeast from the town while the houses were being cleared. Not long after they had reached their post on the outskirts, they saw an enemy truck heading toward them. The two Company "I" men halted the vehicle and marched the two soldier-occupants into the town to be evacuated through the PW cage. A few minutes later a German command car attempted to pass the two men without stopping. It did not go far; both of the Nazis inside were killed by the rifles of Kranz and Rowley. It was almost 1700 when the two "roadblockers" saw what must have been about



We took lots of prisoners during the Battle of the Roer

a platoon of enemy trying to enter the town. From a near-by house, Kranz and Rowley fired fiercely on the enemy; one German fell dead; shortly after another was wounded, and in a few minutes the enemy had withdrawn. As a two-man roadblock team, Kranz and Rowley proved themselves topnotch.

Of an estimated 350 enemy in the town, 216 gave themselves up. They were old, and welcomed capture in a most un-Nazified manner, brandishing at their captors the safe-conduct certificates, *Passierschein*, fired by Allied artillery. However, it was necessary to knock out two or three tanks, the crews of which wanted to fight. The three 105mm assault guns, three antitank guns in perfect condition with rounds loaded and breeches closed ready to fire, three Mark IVs, and one Mark V completely intact were prize seizures of the day. Garzweiler was consolidated by 1930.

The 1st Battalion with Company "A," 744th Light Tank Battalion, had been ordered to follow up the 3d Battalion, to be called in case of emergency. It halted in a defiladed area 300 yards northeast of "Sarah" till 2000, and then returned to its assembly area in Kirchherten and Grottenherten.

REISDORF AND ST. LEONARD

During the 3d Battalion attack on Garzweiler, Company "L's" assignment had been the reserve. The

morning following the capture of the town it was ordered to take Objective "Fanny," two built-up areas 2500 yards due east of Garzweiler; one, the town of St. Leonard, being two hundred yards south of the other, Reisdorf.

The attack took place at 0700. With two platoons of Company "E," 744th Light Tank Battalion, Company "L" pushed into St. Leonard and Reisdorf so that in less than an hour our infantry and tanks held each settlement. Fifty-eight prisoners were taken, and the list of captured equipment was increased by one 40mm gun and one battery of 88mm guns in good condition. Company "L" remained in defensive positions around the two hamlets.

Division Periodic Report of the 27th of February announced that the enemy's perimeter defense of the Neuss-Munchen-Gladbach area had been breached at Garzweiler, and also in the XIII Corps sector. The Germans, whose average company strength was now reduced to 25-30 men, it continued, would probably attempt a fighting withdrawal.

And so the enemy seemed to be caught on the run. The 120th Infantry had gone more than ten miles since crossing the Roer, but it was prepared to go farther. On the last day of February elements of the 2d Armored Division which had been pushing close behind our forward troops moved through the 120th lines early in the morning—heading northward. The

Regiment was still in contact with the enemy to the east. A 2d Battalion patrol en route to Gustorf on the Erft River was fired on while on reconnaissance 800 yards from the town. Plans were completed for the seizure of Gustorf (Objective "Mary") and Laach (Objective "Ida").

From Belgium to Germany for intensive training; then across the Roer River in a frontal attack, and northward in a flanking, enemy-petrifying flow of power. So, in brief, reads the Regimental history for the shortest month of the year; it was the 120th Infantry's most rapid action in combat.



MARCH

In the Battle of Germany, February had been notable for the crossing of the Roer River. During the last six days of that month, the Allied forces had rushed headlong with accelerating movement almost to the banks of the Rhine. March was to see a repetition of that thrilling triumph on a much grander scale.

As the month began the 120th Infantry was completing the seizure of final objectives in its zone, following the rapid advance from Krauthausen to Garzweiler. The Command Post was located in Kirchherten in a former *Volkssturm* headquarters which even before that had been the leading restaurant in the village. The 1st Battalion had seized the town two days before, and its companies were still assembled in homes there; those of the 2d Battalion had moved into buildings close by.

The 3d Battalion was organized in a perimeter of defense of Garzweiler, which it had seized on the 27th of February, Company "L" was defending two built-up areas. Reisdorf and St. Leonard, 2500 yards to the east, having posted two platoons in each locality. On the last night of February Company "I" sent a patrol to establish a roadblock on the Elsen—Gustorf road. The enemy in Gustorf pounded angrily at the roadblock with artillery during the early morning of March 1st.

SURRENDER OF GUSTORF

Not long after daylight, an Observation Post of Company "L" in Reisdorf noted three white flags waving from civilian dugouts in Gustorf, 2000 yards across the sloping fields. By 0930 all the men in the company could see glistening white cloths fluttering from almost every dwelling. The battalion, and then the Regimental headquarters, were notified. Colonel Purdue ordered a party under a white flag to investigate.

The 3d Battalion planned at once to send its S-2 Sergeant, William P. Veteto, and two members of the Intelligence Section. One, Pfc William Klein, was groomed to represent a captain; the double bars were pinned on the Pfc's shoulders with careful deception.

At 1030, after turning a captured 88mm gun against Gustorf from a hill 200 yards southeast of St. Leonard, Lt John G. Gerl, assistant S-3, had just fired sixteen rounds into the town when he was notified not to fire any more; the surrender party was about to cross the fields into the mystery town, filled in all probability with enemy troops. A five-minute artillery preparation

was fired before the group left, to let the Germans realize it was not for lack of ammunition that our troops wished to spare the town.

Capt Edward M. Hill, Battalion S-3, accompanied the three men from the Battalion Command Post to Reisdorf, whence the road led into Gustorf. At the last minute the S-3 decided to replace one of the Intelligence section men; the real captain took his place beside the false one. Then, taking the white flagstaff, the sergeant started over the dirt road. The three men stayed well dispersed, for they did not trust the enemy to honor the white flag if he did not happen to be in the mood.

Gustorf had a peacetime population of approximately 3000, and since it was located along the Erft River, was of strategic importance. It was surrounded by trenches, and from its houses the enemy observed movement in the area and registered their artillery fire. Though they did not know it, it was fortunate for the three men striding with determination toward Gustorf that the Germans, having decided to abandon the town, were running with equal determination toward the bridge which was the escape route to the east.

At 300 yards from the town, Sgt Veteto pointed to the dugouts along the road. Stopping for a moment, the men called on the civilians to come forward in surrender, but there was no movement in response. After five minutes, the men continued down the slight grade into town. "Captain" Klein was prepared to act as interpreter. The German peasant told them fifty soldiers had just escaped across the Erft. As he spoke, seven of the *Wehrmacht* who had not escaped appeared at the door of one of the houses. They came forward sheepishly and were taken prisoner without further ceremony.

Klein asked if there were any more soldiers in town; he was told that all who had been there were now fleeing across the bridge. In proof of the point, the three Americans could see some from a distance retreating hastily over the river, but as emissaries under truce did not attempt to stop them.

The party was walking down the main street and had gone 400 yards into the town, surrounded by chattering, eager civilians who insisted again and again that the soldiers were all gone. Three more bedraggled Germans in uniform issued forth from a basement, increasing the prisoner ranks to ten.

Satisfied that the town was free of soldiers, the three men turned with their prisoners to head for friendly lines. On the road back they heard a resounding ex-



Major General Leland S. Hobbs, Division Commander

plosion which the soldiers told them was the demolition of the one Erft Bridge in Gustorf; later they were proved correct.

OCCUPATION OF GUSTORF

At noon, Lt Col Greer, Commanding Officer of the 3d Battalion, was ordered to move his unit into Gustorf. Reinforced by a platoon of Company "B," 823d TD Battalion, by Company "B," 744th Light Tank Battalion, and by a platoon from Company "C," 105th Engineer Battalion, the 3d Battalion crossed from Garzweiler into Gustorf. Company "K" took up positions in the north section of town, while Company "L" occupied the southern portion. With the engineer troops, elements of Company "I" endeavored to secure any bridges remaining intact; they found none. The occupation was complete at 1600 on the 1st of March. In the process twenty-nine more prisoners, three machine guns and an ammunition wagon were seized.

Company "I" dispatched a patrol from the 1st Platoon at 1745 to investigate more thoroughly the blown bridge and to attempt to cross the Erft into the suburb of Neuenhausen, which lay directly opposite Gustorf. The patrol was fired on at the site of the destroyed

bridge; the men could not even reach an island formed by a split in the Erft, at a point where the road crossed. They were exposed in every movement and suffered seven casualties from intense artillery, two killed and five wounded. All these men were in the 1st Platoon which was sent to protect the bridge site. The enemy was looking directly down at them from the buildings in Neuenhausen and directed heavy artillery and mortar concentrations upon them. No effort was made to capture Neuenhausen because it was outside the Division zone. Troops of Company "K" went to outpost the hamlet of Laach, 1000 yards north of Gustorf; they met no enemy there and had consolidated positions by 1700. As the enemy retreated, he shelled Gustorf viciously, causing a man to be killed near the 3d Battalion CP.

THE RELIEF OF KAPELLAN

North of the 120th Infantry sector around Garzweiler, the 83d Division was pushing its attack toward Neuss, opposite Dusseldorf. Its 331st Regiment had seized the towns of Noithausen, Orken and the western half of Grevenbroich, where it held defensive positions. At 1525 on the 1st of March, the 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry, was directed to relieve the 3d Battalion, 331st Infantry, in these towns. Trucks carried the companies to their new locations; a platoon of Company "B," 823d TD Battalion, was attached to the battalion and moved with it. By 1915, Company "A" with two tank destroyers had moved into Noithausen, Company "B" into Orken, and Company "C" with two tank destroyers attached, moved into western Grevenbroich.

The morning of its arrival there (the 2d of March), Company "C" sent a patrol to investigate the eastern section of Grevenbroich. The company lines extended up to the river. An equally large city area lay on the other side, and it was this area that the patrol was to "feel out." The river split where the road crossed, and formed an island. From there the patrol received enemy small-arms initially but, edging around houses, it continued and crossed the bridge to the island. There a road junction formed a Y, with the tail extending over the bridge into the east side of town. From the extension of the tail a machine gun sputtered several times at the men. After a few moments this ceased. When the patrol boldly rushed across the bridge the opposition seemed to melt in front of them. The men continued through East Grevenbroich and in the afternoon after searching out the entire town, found it clear.

At 0930 that morning the phone rang in the Regimental Command Post; Division G-3 wanted to speak to Colonel Purdue. When he answered he was told: "In the town at (200813) there is an American command post. To the northeast about a half mile is a crossroad. It has been overrun by seven tanks and some infantry. Pick up a company of tanks from Colonel Duncan, and a company of infantry, and get on up there." "How about using my TDs?" "Use whatever you need. Have Williamson send a patrol to that town and if it's clear, find out what's on the other side. First of all secure the town, and secondly, restore the positions at the crossroad. We'll send another battalion to the town of Elfingen for your reserve." "Have those tanks report to the 1st Battalion." "All right. It will take about forty-five minutes."

Colonel Purdue paused a moment to assimilate the facts. The "American CP" was that of the 331st Infantry, 83d Division, and the town was Hemmerden, only about a mile north of Noithausen, occupied by the 120th Infantry Company "A." Company "I" of the 331st Infantry had taken the village of Kapellan northeast of Hemmerden; it was this company which had received the counterattack when the enemy broke



Brigadier General William K. Harrison, Assistant Division Commander



Brigadier General James M. Lewis, Division Artillery Commander

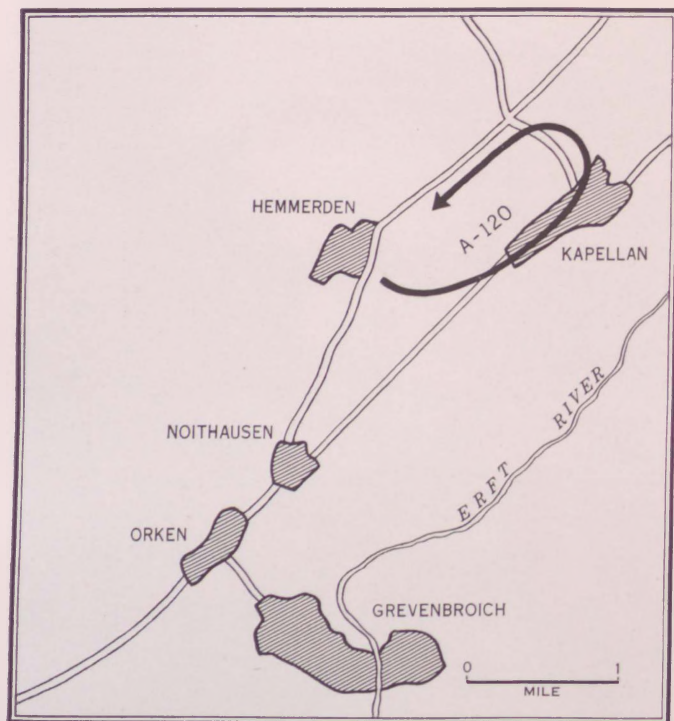
through to the crossroads. Much of this was not learned until later when the Colonel reached Hemmerden.

When Lt Col Williamson received the information he decided to send the nearest Company, "A," to accomplish the task. By 1445 that afternoon the trucks had arrived at Noithausen, and Lt John D'Amico loaded his company hurriedly. Over the main road the company was carried to Hemmerden, which had not yet been attacked by the enemy.

Company "A's" initial mission was to set up a semi-circular defense around the town to prevent an exploitation of the breakthrough. The platoons organized blocks on the roads leading north and east from the town.

Information was scarce at that time; it became known that Company "I," 331st Infantry, had been cut off in Kapellan; that the enemy had pushed all the way through the town and captured a brewery 700 yards northwest of it; that another company of the 331st Infantry attacking north was held up by a roadblock seized from Company "I" half a mile northwest of the brewery.

Lt D'Amico was ordered to clear Kapellan and to



Kapellán

eliminate the roadblock which was delaying the 331st Infantry's attack north. In haste a plan was adopted to attack the south tip of Kapellán from Hemmerden, then head northeast up its drawn out main street, turn west at the north tip, clear the brewery, and finally to strike the enemy holding the crossroads.

Pulled hastily from roadblock assignments the men were ignorant of their new mission, and there was little time to tell them. After brief orientation they were hustled to a Line of Departure at the southeast edge of Hemmerden. At 1515 the signal to advance was given, following a barrage of artillery which wounded two men and caused a wave of uneasiness throughout the company. Lt D'Amico and his platoon leaders rallied the men and steadied them, calmly disregarding flying fragments.

A patrol which had reconnoitered the south tip of Kapellán reached Hemmerden with word that the enemy had prepared a strongpoint in a barn near the first intermediate objective, a crossroads on the southern outskirts. Knowing then that he would hit an enemy position there, Lt D'Amico headed his company toward the south extremity of Kapellán, as planned. One platoon led, with the mission of seizing the barn.

S/Sgt Gerard J. Slania was in that lead platoon at the head of his squad. When he saw the first

machine-gun burst from the vicinity of the crossroads on the intermediate objective, he was slightly more than half way to it. During that first burst one man was killed, another wounded. S/Sgt Slania yelled to his squad to keep coming, and as he advanced, fired a white phosphorus grenade on the emplacement where the machine-gun fire seemed to originate. Other members of the squad quickly brought antitank grenade fire on the enemy. He heard the automatic fire again as he was busy fixing another grenade; when he fired the second time, the result was no response from the enemy. When the smoke cleared, the machine gun was found destroyed. The Germans fled to other emplacements, where they were captured when the platoon moved in to seize the first crossroads. Lt D'Amico left one squad at this south tip of town to protect his rear as he led the remainder of the company up the street to the northeast toward the heart of Kapellán. The barn near the crossroads was vacant.

At first there was no opposition. After the company had crossed a north-south railroad 300 yards from the crossroads already secured, it began to run across elements of Company "I," 331st Infantry, and from them gathered more information. After taking Kapellán, Company "I's" troops had spread out until its defensive line was dangerously thin. One platoon had been assigned to the south portion of town, another defended the north, while the third prepared an outpost around the brewery west of town. The weapons platoon had emplaced mortars behind (west) of the line of houses along the street, but began to receive harassing sniper fire from the woods between the Erft and Kapellán. Men of the platoon of Company "I" said their leader was farther on nearer the principal intersection in town.

As Lt D'Amico approached the 331st Company "I" platoon CP, he saw that the enemy was holding the main crossroads tenaciously. Machine guns and an antitank gun captured from the 331st Infantry were positioned to defend it, and two tanks were firing on the buildings in the center of Kapellán, from an area between the intersection and the brewery to the west. As he watched, one of the enemy tanks hastened past the intersection to the east, headed for Wevelinghoven across the Erft. He took shelter in the Company "I" platoon CP when a thundering heavy mortar concentration by the enemy fell around it.

At about this time a platoon from Company "B," 743d Tank Battalion, started up the street behind the riflemen. Its instructions had been to follow them into town and, after some difficulty in skirting the obstacles



En route to recapture Kapellan

at the southern crossroads, it approached the scene of action. Lt D'Amico sent two of the M-4s to clean out a side street on the right of the main thoroughfare; another he gave the mission of interdicting the principal crossroads; the other two he led around some houses to try to flank the remaining enemy tank. Meanwhile the artillery observer found a post in a house to observe for registration on the route of escape over the Erft.

One squad of Company "A" was trying during this period to destroy the machine-gun nest at the intersection, since it covered the length of the main street with accuracy. S/Sgt Chester L. Goodwin, the squad leader, beckoned to Pfc Harry L. Dust behind him to dodge into a house on the right. Both pushed through the rubble of German homes toward the back yards in order to circle around behind the machine gun. They crawled over a few chicken coops and through the mud toward the house sheltering the enemy nest. When they ran into a six-foot wall, they listened a moment; one hoisted the other up, then clambered over the wall himself. When they hit the ground on

the other side they could see the Germans at a .30-caliber heavy machine gun—an American weapon. They did not wait for the enemy to look around. They killed three almost simultaneously with their rifle fire while the others dodged around another wall and escaped to the east. Goodwin and Dust recaptured a halftrack, an antitank gun, and the machine gun, which had all been seized from the 331st Infantry.

By that time the intersection was almost cleared of the enemy. Suddenly the clatter of a tank was heard, and a Mark IV shot through town and fled eastward to Wevelinghoven. The friendly tanks which Lt D'Amico had led to flank the Mark IV had not been able to leave the protection of the houses without unnecessary risk so bazooka teams had begun to sneak toward it. Possibly seeing himself surrounded and about to be destroyed, the enemy tanker made his decision to whip across the river to safety. When he passed the intersection he was moving so fast that the M-4 covering it had no time to pick him off.

The heart of Kapellan was now in friendly hands. Lt D'Amico told the platoon of Company "I" to cover



Awards were presented during lulls in combat

his rear, and he brought forward the squad from the southern crossroads. Leaving a platoon to block the road to the east and a squad to block one leading northeast, he wheeled the remainder of the company to the northwest. Forming at the edge of town, the troops were readied to take the brewery. Some prisoners gave indications that it would be an enemy strongpoint. The platoon of Company "I," 331st Infantry, which had held it had already been captured, it was learned, like the platoon in the north of Kapellán. The majority of both had been evacuated through German channels.

Pressing 700 yards uphill to the wrecked beer factory, the men closed in to find it deserted. Near the building, a many-passaged air-raid shelter was by no means deserted; in it huddled 250 civilians with six wounded German soldiers and a wounded American.

About 1725 Company "A" was prepared to move parallel to the 331st Infantry's route of advance. But having received word that the enemy had given up this position, largely due to the diversion in Kapellán, the company started back to Hemmerden over the route past the crossroads. A battalion of the 117th Infantry had entered Kapellán to relieve the Company "A" roadblocks, so that the company became a complete unit again. En route it was surprised by fire from the crossroads held by elements of the 331st In-

fantry. Quickly notifying the troops there of the mistake, the company moved through the block, then southeast into Hemmerden. At 2130, the men mounted trucks and were carried back to their area in Noithausen. Company "E" had moved to Hemmerden as reserve; it returned to its assembly area at the same time. Fifteen prisoners had been taken. Later two Mark IV tanks were found disabled by artillery on the Wevelinghoven road near the river. The 83d Division expressed appreciation.

FINAL DAYS OF THE ROER OFFENSIVE

The 2d Battalion moved from Kirchherten on foot the morning of the 2d of March. After pausing at an area near Belmen and Elfen at noon, it moved by early afternoon into an assembly area in Elsen, west of and contiguous to Grevenbroich.

On the same day the 3d Battalion sent another patrol with engineer squads to the banks of the Erft at the point where the main road crosses. While the bridge on the near side of the island formed by the river-split was ascertained to be completely demolished, the far span was only partly destroyed and still passable by vehicles. From its area around Gustorf and Laach, the Battalion maintained contact with adjacent regiments.

Soon after the seizure of Gustorf the Regimental

Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon had established an OP there; across the Erft the enemy was observed constantly during the daylight hours. At 1030 on the 3d of March the OP reported friendly tanks sweeping up from the south near Frimunersdorf. In less than half an hour troops were closing in without a struggle upon the town across the river. By 1230 Neuenhausen across from Gustorf had been taken by allied troops, which thus enabled the 3d Battalion to withdraw from its defensive positions and to assemble in the town. The 120th Infantry was no longer in contact with the enemy.

PAUSE AT ELFGEN

Regimental Headquarters had moved from Kircherten to Elfggen, a mile southeast of Elsen, at 1220 on the 2d of March, being thus centrally located among the battalions: the 1st in Grevenbroich area, the 2d at Elsen and the 3d at Gustorf. For four days the Regiment took a "breather," conducting light training and resting.

On the newly taken ground the troops practiced tank assault tactics, trained in night formations, and learned better the technique of "mouseholing" from house to house. The 2d Battalion units fired 75mm guns captured at Garzweiler, using an excavation pit "range" near Furth close to Elsen.

For the first time the Regiment was faced with severe civilian problems. The sudden sweep of the Allied armies into the Rhineland caught civilians by surprise before they could think of evacuating, if they wanted to do so. Full of questions and requests, they swarmed around our perplexed soldiers. Frequently they made a headache of the problem of billeting, and at Gustorf they had to be evacuated. The CIC detachment was kept busy.

TRIP TO REAR AREA

On the 5th of March plans were completed for movement of the Regiment, in Division convoy, to a new area on the Holland-German border near Sittard, Holland. On the following day units of the 120th sped westward, the organic vehicles completing the move on the 6th, the foot elements in trucks on the 7th of March. The route included famous battle landmarks: Julich, Aachen and Heerlen.

At 1806 on the 7th of March the Regimental Command Post was established at Broeksittard, Holland, while the battalions were assembled in towns in the vicinity: the 1st and 3d at Wehr, Germany; the 2d at Tuddern, Germany. Also located close by were Anti-

tank and Service Companies (Tuddern), Cannon Company and the 230th Field Artillery Battalion (Susterseel, Germany), Company "C," 105th Engineer Battalion, and Company "C," 105th Medical Battalion (Broeksittard).

The following week, up to the 21st of March, all units were engaged in training and recreation. Training included: attack of strongpoints under smoke, bangalore torpedoes, night tactics of the individual soldier, special long-range test firing up to 4500 yards of 81mm mortars, and boobytrap and AP mine detection and disarmament.

THINGS REMEMBERED ABOUT HOLLAND

"While we are accomplishing our mission in training during this period," said Colonel Purdue to the officers, "the men should be encouraged in recreation and social contact." Some of the memories which 120th Infantrymen will cherish in years to come will include:

—The day on pass in Heerlen (or Maastricht, or Sittard), where the Army facilities and Dutch hospitality made a twelve-hour pass seem very, very short.

—The company dances in one of the Dutch hotels in Sittard, each arranged through Lt Don J. D'Auben of Antitank Company and Lt Robert S. Gillette, Athletics Officer.

—The volleyball, softball and baseball games in the fields around the German towns, when companies rivaled each other in athletic prowess.

—The company day-room, scene of "bull sessions" and beer parties. One typical day-room (Company "A's") was decorated with Varga-like art by members of the company; it boasted, too, a radio and maps showing the situation on all fronts. The plush sofa and easy chairs were a welcome contrast to the foxholes, barn floors and trucks to which the riflemen had become accustomed.

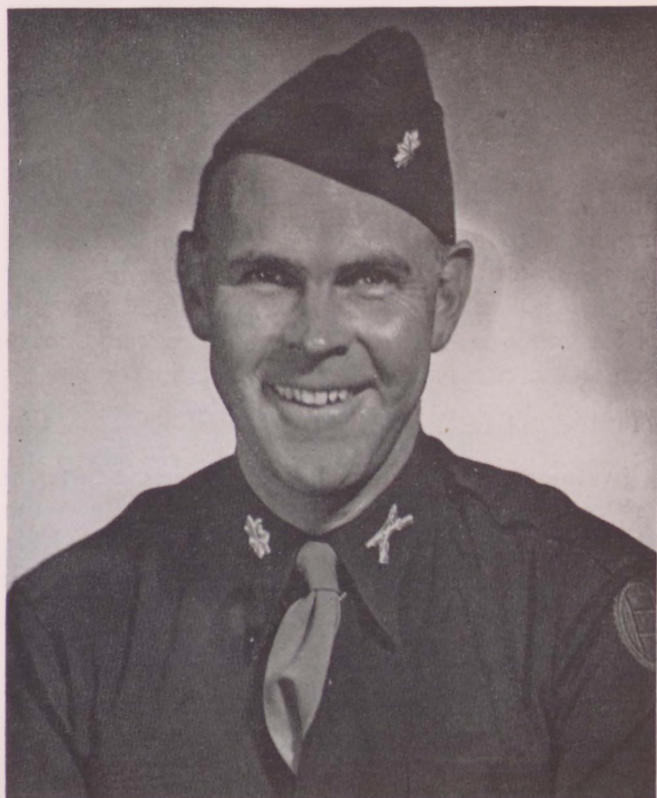
—The dish of ice cream which different company kitchens mixed, carried to Heerlen to have frozen, and served for chow. And

—The first signs of Spring.

PERSONALITIES, NEW AND OLD

During the pause at Broeksittard the Regiment suffered two losses: Lt Col Ward and Lt Col Greer left the 120th Infantry.

Lt Col Peter O. Ward, Regimental Executive Officer, was suddenly ordered on the 8th of March to re-



Lieutenant Colonel Peter O. Ward

port to Headquarters, 9th Infantry Division, located in the Remagen sector to the south. He made a hurried departure on the 9th.

An "old-timer" with the Regiment, Lt Col Ward came to the 120th Infantry in 1942. A graduate of the United States Military Academy in 1931, his previous tours of duty had included three years at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, two years in Hawaii, and a year at Fort Benning, Ga.

From 1942 through maneuvers in Tennessee and the crossing to England, Lt Col Ward commanded the 3d Battalion; under his leadership that battalion had done outstanding work. Always able to make his men give their utmost, he was a natural choice for Executive Officer when Lt Col Garvin B. Farris became ill in England a month before the invasion of the Continent. On going to the 9th Division as regimental commander, Lt Col Ward joined the 120th's former commander, Brig Gen Hammond D. Birks, Assistant 9th Division Commander.

Lt Col Ward was driven to his new post by T/5 William T. Satterwhite. When he took Lt Col Ward over the Remagen Bridge, he made history as the first man of the 120th Infantry to cross the Rhine, taking

the title from Lt James J. Butler, first man of the Regiment into Germany, who led a patrol over the river ten days later.

Ten days after Lt Col Ward's departure Lt Col Joseph E. Reynolds came from the 2d Armored Division as the new Regimental executive. A native of Kentucky and a graduate of the U. S. Military Academy in 1939, Lt Col Reynolds was assigned to the 29th Infantry. For over five years he served with that separate regiment, receiving his majority in December, 1942, and his lieutenant colonelcy less than a year later. With the 29th Infantry he saw service in Iceland and England, and from the 25th of August, 1944, in France. On the 25th of February, 1945, he was assigned to the 41st Armored Infantry of the 2d Armored division; on the 19th of March he left for the 120th Infantry.

On almost the same day as Lt Col Ward made his departure Lt Col Howard W. Greer left the Regiment for a rotation leave to spend thirty days at home in the United States.

In less than a month, Lt Col Greer was to be in Baltimore with his wife. Though from Maryland, he had had much schooling in Florida, having received his commission from the University of Florida in 1939. He came to the 30th Division when it was still at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. At Camp Blanding, he took command of Company "B," and received his captaincy there. He was made Executive Officer of the 3d Battalion after the Regiment arrived in France, and at the death of Lt Col Paul W. McCollum in October, took command of it. With Lt Col Greer went one of the familiar personalities of his headquarters, "Hicky" (short for Old Hickory), the black spaniel which he had brought with him from the Battle of the Bulge.

To replace Lt Col Greer came Maj Chris McCullough, former Executive Officer of the 1st Battalion. Famed for his "twin toothpick" moustache, Major "Mac" proved he was ready to lead the battalion in one of its most crucial assignments. Perhaps he felt at ease in the 3d, since he had made his debut in combat as commander of Company "I." Replacing him in the 1st Battalion for a short time was Capt Delmont K. Byrn, former Company "H" commander. Later, Major Reynold C. Erichson, returned from a 30-day rotation leave in the States, and was assigned to the 1st Battalion as executive.

Colonel Purdue said of his executive officer and departing battalion commander, "When I was in the process of taking the regiment over from Brigadier

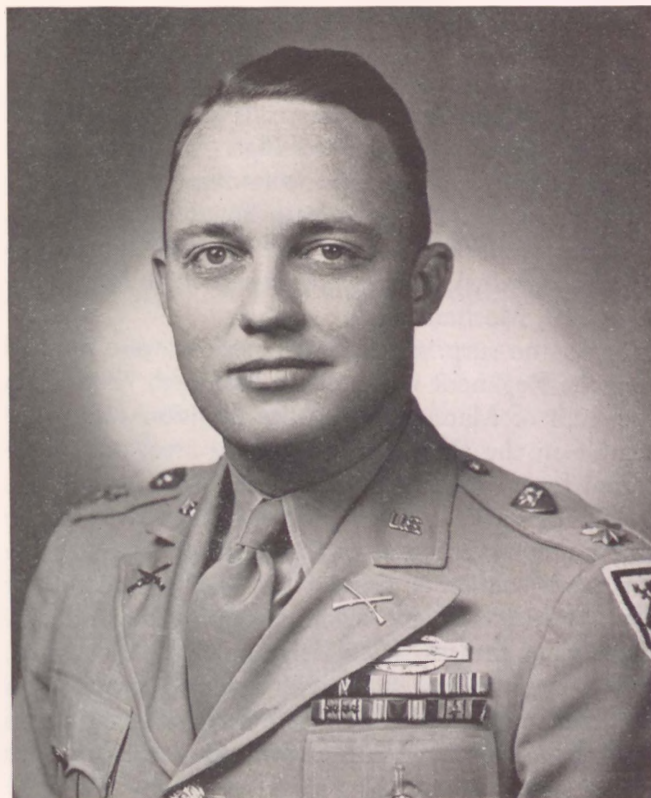
General (then Colonel) Birks, he told me that 'Pete' Ward was his right arm. He understated 'Pete's' capabilities. Calm, smart, hard working, intensely loyal, and possessing a remarkable sense of infectious humor, 'Pete' Ward's value to the regiment cannot be adequately described. As proof of his soldierly qualities he took command of the 47th Infantry Regiment when that regiment was at a low ebb because of casualties. Furthermore, immediately after assuming command, he lost both his executive officer and S-3 as a result of enemy action. Also, that regiment was engaged in one of the most difficult operations of its history—that of the Remagen Bridge. Colonel Ward distinguished himself as a regimental commander, successfully overcoming the many handicaps which he inherited immediately upon assuming command. When he left I felt as if I had lost both my arms and half my head."

"Soldiers do not come any better than Lt Col Howard Greer. Succeeding Lt Col McCollum during a difficult fight, Lt Col Greer brilliantly rolled up that part of the Siegfried Line within his sector. It is remarkable that he could have commanded a battalion so well after having been a battalion executive officer for only a few weeks. His subsequent seizure of Bardenburg was a superb action. His feat of destroying two enemy tanks, for which he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, inspired the men of his battalion to superhuman efforts. Lt Col Greer continued to lead his battalion brilliantly and well in all subsequent actions up to and including the Rohr crossing. To see him leave hurt, but it was only fair that he be sent home on rotation because he had fought in many, many hard battles extending over a period of several months."

NEW OPERATION IN SIGHT

Preparations for a new operation began on the 14th of March, when certain staff officers left Broeksittard to inspect the terrain where the 120th was to operate. Later, Col Purdue flew to the Rhine for reconnaissance. The crossing site lay far to the north over a route through Roermond and Straeling to Rheinberg. In the vicinity of that city, elements of the 75th Division held a line on the west bank of the Rhine River opposite Spellen, Mehrum and Gotterswickerhamm. With its series of dikes on either side of the river, its flat, sandy beaches sloping only gently into the waters, and its grassy fields and dirt roads, this country was carefully studied by the commander and his staff.

Three Observation Posts were chosen and on the



Lieutenant Colonel Joseph E. Reynolds

following day manned by the Regimental I and R Platoon. One was situated in a factory in Ossenbergh three miles north of Rheinberg; another was in a lone tower which had to be entered and left under cover of darkness, 4000 yards east of Ossenbergh between the river and the first dike; and a third was in the upper story of the mansion at Hasselshof, almost in the center of an eastward bulge formed by a loop in the Rhine northeast of Rheinberg. Within a few days the S-2 was well acquainted with the nature of enemy movements in the area which was to be taken.

Not long after, the battalion commanders and their staffs were shown the terrain and each was briefed on his part in the coming action. From maps and visual reconnaissance, sand-table reproductions of the area were constructed in the battalion training sections in Holland; each road and house was accurately located; each group of trees was faithfully reproduced. Company commanders and platoon leaders were oriented; finally, the men themselves were briefed and coached in their collective and individual missions.

The success of the Roer crossing had gained the 30th Division some reputation for this type of operation. Certainly the fact that they had done it once successfully made the men more confident

about a repetition of the feat. But the troops were not perfect, and they rehearsed again the river-crossing technique. On the Maas, near Echt north of Sittard, the battalions rotated turns at training; each practiced day and night crossings. The rifle troops rowed engineer storm boats to familiarize themselves with their function and to learn how to handle them. Antitank units loaded guns and jeeps on the Navy's Landing Craft, Vehicles and Personnel; and on Landing Craft, Mechanized.

It was no surprise, then, when units were notified that the Regiment was to leave its Dutch "home" on the 20th of March. The entire Division was to assemble in the Rheinberg-Ossenberg area, and transferred from the XIX Corps to the XVI Corps.

What surprised the men more was the fact that the trip was to be made at night. Instructions had been for every soldier to remove his Division patch, for every vehicle to have its identification marked out. More than the trip from Belgium to the Roer area, this movement was to be with utmost secrecy. Men of the 75th Division, in whose sector the 30th was assembling, removed all identification markings as well.

Up and down the Rhine front, deception was the key word. Any especially heavy vehicular movement in one sector was well duplicated in all others; any concentration of artillery emplacements in one sector was copied in all others; and all movements were at night, even those of rear echelons. New code names were temporarily put to use. Under such a veil of secrecy, the 120th Infantry prepared to move north.

On the evening of the 20th of March, trucks lined up in the battalion areas, were loaded, and started north by 1850. The Regimental Command Post moved from Broeksittard into the center of Rheinberg, where, as Colfax Nan 53, it occupied once again a cellar. In rear (west) of Regimental Headquarters the battalions assembled in various built-up areas. The 1st Battalion in the vicinity of Kamper, the 2d near Wesselshof, and the 3d in Horstgen. Swarming in the settlements, the civilians were juggled in different houses to accommodate the troops. By 0200 on the 21st of March the 3d Battalion, last in the convoy, had closed into its new area.

During the lull of the next three days the troops remained in their quarters most of the time and were given final orientation. Truckloads of men were shuttled forward to the edge of the Rhine and from covered positions behind the levee were shown the ground over which they were to operate. Landmarks

like the windmill near Gatterswickerhamm and the church steeple by the river were pointed out as appropriate locations for future installations, so that no man would be lost, and could, if the necessity arose in the heat of battle, find headquarters and aid stations.

For the unit commanders and staff officers the final days before the assault were busy. The Regimental attack order had numerous annexes, including supporting-fire plans for the 1st Battalion, for elements of the 291st Infantry (75th Division), and for Company "C," 624th TD Battalion; it included priority lists for command, medical, armored and supply vehicles, and movement plans for the attached units. Each detail had to be coordinated.

PATROLLERS OVER THE RHINE

Deception was part, too, of the front-wide patrolling plan. When patrols were sent to enemy lines in one sector, similar ones were dispatched in all others. When the 30th Division arrived in the area around Rheinberg, patrols from the 75th Division holding the lines had met with ill success; all had failed to cross.

It was with apprehension, then, that Lt James J. Butler led his five-man patrol toward the Rhine at about midnight on the 19th-20th of March. From the I and R Platoon, which had moved to the Rheinberg area before the remainder of the Regiment, the men with Lt Butler, Sgt John E. Miller, Cpl Benjamin W. Hart, Pfc Louis K. Westerfeld, and Pfc Robert V. Phipps, were veterans of Roer patrols. At 0130 when they boarded the assault boat to cross, they found the Rhine broader, but less treacherous, than the swollen Roer. They pushed off the shore nearest Ettroig, a group of farm buildings a mile east of Ossenberg.

The current had swept them 400 yards downstream when ten minutes later they hit the opposite shore. For several minutes all the men waited motionless in the boat, listening for enemy movement. They heard nothing and stepped ashore. One of their missions was to investigate the angle of the slope. It was gentle and rose only slightly to bare, flat ground. Behind them friendly searchlights threw a glow against the sky. Realizing that it was causing them to be silhouetted, they began to crawl inland with an eye for enemy emplacements and minefields.

They made their way for 600 yards without encountering any evidence of enemy. It was growing late by this time; to avoid being exposed by daylight, the patrol had to turn around at 0415 and head back. It returned to the river bank by a different route, one

found to be clear for attacking troops. The men hit the friendly shore farther downstream a mile north of Ossenber; behind them enemy flares lighted the area.

The following night another patrol was to try crossing. Lt Michael A. Esquivel pointed on the map to the town of Mehrum held by the enemy; gathered around him, his men in the I and R Platoon, Cpl William L. Oakley, Pfc Melvin L. Goldblatt, Pfc William M. Jakovac, and Pfc Arne A. Luoma, followed his finger indicating the place they were to cross—due south of Mehrum slightly east of Ettroig.

As scheduled, they crossed at 0240 the morning of the 21st of March, and when they landed, Pfcs Jakovac and Luoma stayed by the boat, while the others started forward to find a route of advance inland. From the stone embankment close to the water the men began working their way forward to a winter levee one hundred yards farther in. They were not as lucky as the patrolmen of the night before. As they came closer to the levee they perceived foxholes and dugouts. They began to crawl when they heard enemy movement. They found the levee was not hard to climb, but Lt Esquivel had to change the route to avoid an enemy outpost. They crept within ten yards of one group of Germans who were talking in whispers.

For a while, the patrollers had to work their way laterally rather than in depth, even then passing within several yards of sentinels in dugouts. Once they were challenged; they did not stir a muscle in reply. Some minutes later they continued. In two and a half hours, they had penetrated 200 yards inland and crossed 400 yards of enemy terrain parallel to the river. They had passed at least four outposts, at least twenty Germans.

Stealthily they crept back to the boat, where the two men on guard said enemy troops had come close to them, too, but that silence had allayed the Germans' suspicions. At 0540, the boat carrying the patrol was darting through the Rhine waters toward friendly lines. They had found another spot where the terrain favored a crossing; it was later used.

Another five-man patrol, led by Lt Butler, also crossed the Rhine the same night. At 0110 it started from the same spot used by the earlier group with the mission of test-climbing the levee walls with full field equipment. The boat was carried too far downstream by the current, however; by the time the men had returned to the place of origin, it was daylight, too late to start again.

As well as the three Regimental Observations Posts, a 2d Battalion post in a dike-dugout near Ettroig supplied the S-2 with much information on the apparent disposition of enemy defenses and individual movements noted. On clear days visibility was up to seven or eight miles. Minefield markings, stakes entwined with barbed wire, deserted barges, and numerous emplacements, were reported during the period.

MINIATURE IN THE RHINE "BIG PICTURE"

The "big picture" at this time showed many divisions lined up on the west side of the Rhine ready to bust the German defenses there and to continue eastward. Farther south several divisions had already crossed the river at Remagen, and were poking at the bridgehead corners, ready to break out.

North of the Rheinberg-Ossenber region were British troops poised for an attack across the river at Wesel; to the south was the 79th Division, scheduled to cross simultaneously with the 30th. The Division attack plans for the 30th had been formulated for a long time: they called for a tri-regimental push, the 119th Infantry on the left (north) flank across from Buderich, the 117th Infantry in the center opposite the defense town of Spellen, the 120th on the Division's right flank, to cross due south of Mehrum and to swing right along the bulge in the river and then to move eastward.

The big initial objectives for the 120th following the crossing were goose-egged on the overlay as "Bette," "Blondie," "Abner," "East and West Lana," "Daisy," and "Ruth." Of these the 2d Battalion was scheduled to take the first four.

They were Mehrum ("Bette"), a front-line defense town, just north of the two levees; Wurm-Gotterswick ("Abner"), a small community 1000 yards north of Mehrum; Schanzenberg ("Blondie"), an elongated town 1000 yards still farther north; and Lohnen and Vorde ("East and West Lana"), two of the largest towns in the vicinity northeast of Mehrum. It was a large territory for one battalion. To hack it off, Company "G" was going to swing around the Momm River line and take Wurm-Gotterswick and Schanzenberg, while Company "F" seized Mehrum. Company "E" was scheduled to seize Lohnen.

The 3d Battalion's objective included Gotterswick-erhamm ("Daisy"), a strong defense town on the dike's edge east of Mehrum, to be taken by Company "K," and Mollen ("Ruth"), east of Gotterswick-erhamm, which was to be seized later by Company "I." The 1st Battalion was to follow the movements of the others,



View from the levee on the west bank of the Rhine

ready to assist or push through on a moment's notice.

The 30th Division G-2 periodic report gave a brief picture of what the Regiment faced in this new, large-scale operation:

" . . . The towns of . . . Mehrum and Lohnen are focal points of CPs and services, organized for defense and constituting a battalion reserve line . . . The principal unit garrisoning the east bank of the Rhine River from Wesel to Mollen is the 180th Division . . .

"Besides losing a great number of trained troops between the Rhine and Roer, (the enemy) lost a great deal of material . . . The defenses facing us today are no more than what he has been able to dig and lay in the short time of two weeks, supplemented by the fixed antiaircraft gun positions, both light and heavy, which surround the Ruhr Valley in abundance, and may be capable of employment in a ground role. Troops facing us across the Rhine are remnants of those who were able to escape over the river, hastily parceled out to their defensive sectors, and being re-organized and reinforced as quickly as replacements could be scraped together from all sources, and transported into the line.

"It is believed, therefore, that the enemy is now disposed in a linear defense with little depth. It is anticipated that a heavy, fast attack across the Rhine River will achieve a breakthrough of his Main Line of Resistance, will reach the double railroad embankments before his forward troops can fall back upon them . . . and break into the open just as did the attack over the Roer River.

"From there on it is expected that resistance will

disintegrate, be characterized by sporadic town and strongpoint defenses, with local counterattacks by piecemeal commitments of very limited reserves. Once into and through the woods on the high ground east of the Autobahn (Staatsforst Wesel), it is believed the enemy will be incapable of continuing a thrust to the interior of Germany . . ."

That, briefly, was the picture. That was a gaze into the crystal, a forecast of the role to be played by the 120th Infantry.

BEFORE H-HOUR

On the night of the 23d of March, the Regimental S-2 and S-3 Office was active in final preparations for what was predicted as the "final push." Optimism was high, and in leisure moments wagers on Germany's defeat within three or four weeks were made. Colonel Purdue reported to General Hobbs, "The Regiment now is at the best combat efficiency of its history." The subsequent brilliant attack proved his report was accurate.

Liaison officers from the subordinate and attached units stood near the operations desk ready to be called on; they included a lieutenant from the 744th Light Tank Battalion, and one from the XXIX Tactical Air Command, to coordinate air strikes with ground attacks. Along with these were liaison personnel from the regularly attached units: 230th Field Artillery Battalion; Company "B," 823d TD Battalion; Company "C," 105th Engineer Battalion; and Company "C," 105th Medical Battalion. They wise-cracked among themselves, but when their various missions were assigned they left hurriedly; they knew the last minutes before H-hour were speeding by; they knew that everything had to be ready by 0200 on the 24th.

Meanwhile, down the dark roads on the outskirts of Rheinberg filed the riflemen and heavy-weapons men en route to the crossing site. Having left its area at 2305, the 2d Battalion was in the lead, and reached the area near Ettroig first, where Company "G" left the remainder of the battalion to organize its separate crossing site due east of Ossenberg. Company "F" formed to lead the assault across the river due south of Mehrum, with Company "E" ready to follow closely. The 3d Battalion left Horstgen at 2200; it had a long march to the vicinity of Rheinberg and on to Ettroig.

At midnight the crossing site was in the process of being organized. Engineer squads were planning bridge construction and approaches for amphibious

vehicles, smoke pots were being laid; guides and non-coms were assigning supply-point areas; vehicles were beginning to arrive. At this time enemy artillery was sporadic; it landed on key crossroads; one jeep suffered a direct hit which caused two casualties.

The men in the battalions were accounted for and grouped near the first dike on the south side. Until H-hour they remained dispersed in rear of the levee and began to dig prone shelters in the fields. Engineer trucks carried storm boats and lifebelts to the levee embankments, there depositing them in rows.

Essential vehicles from the battalions began to assemble in areas near by, ready to act as messengers, to bring smoke pots and other supplies, to evacuate where necessary. Some of the 1st Battalion vehicles pulled into their planned assembly area at 2345 and drivers were dismounting, when all at once a heavy enemy concentration of artillery whistled, then shook the ground in successive concussions. Two men in the group were instantly killed. T/Sgt Donald D. Babcock was in charge. Hurrying from one vehicle to another without concern for his own safety, he told the men to get into the trucks again and follow him to a new area. Since the enemy had probably sensed the movement in this area, Babcock's order made good sense; within fifteen minutes the area was cleared of trucks, and no vehicles were lost.

Meanwhile the units which were to give supporting fire had moved into position. The 1st Battalion had emplaced mortars behind and machine guns on the first levee, where they were adjusted and in readiness. Not far away 57mm antitank guns from the 291st Infantry, 75th Division, were dug in, ready to give direct fire support along with the M-18s of Company "C," 614th TD Battalion, pointing 90mm guns toward Mehrum from points just in rear of the dike. During the two hours before the jump-off, the 1st Battalion alone fired twenty tons of ammunition.

Twelve hundred and fifty pieces of artillery supported the crossing of the 30th Division and the 79th Infantry Division on its right. The ammunition allowance was unlimited. At midnight all guns fired simultaneously. The far bank erupted. For two hours the enemy suffered concentrations the like of which have been seen but few times in all of history. For 120 minutes shells of all calibers from 105mm to the big 8-inch fell upon the krauts at the rate of hundreds per minute. The artillery also greatly assisted in our plans for deception. Concentrations first landed upon the bank, then shifted inland a few hundred yards, only to come down again on the bank. At the same time

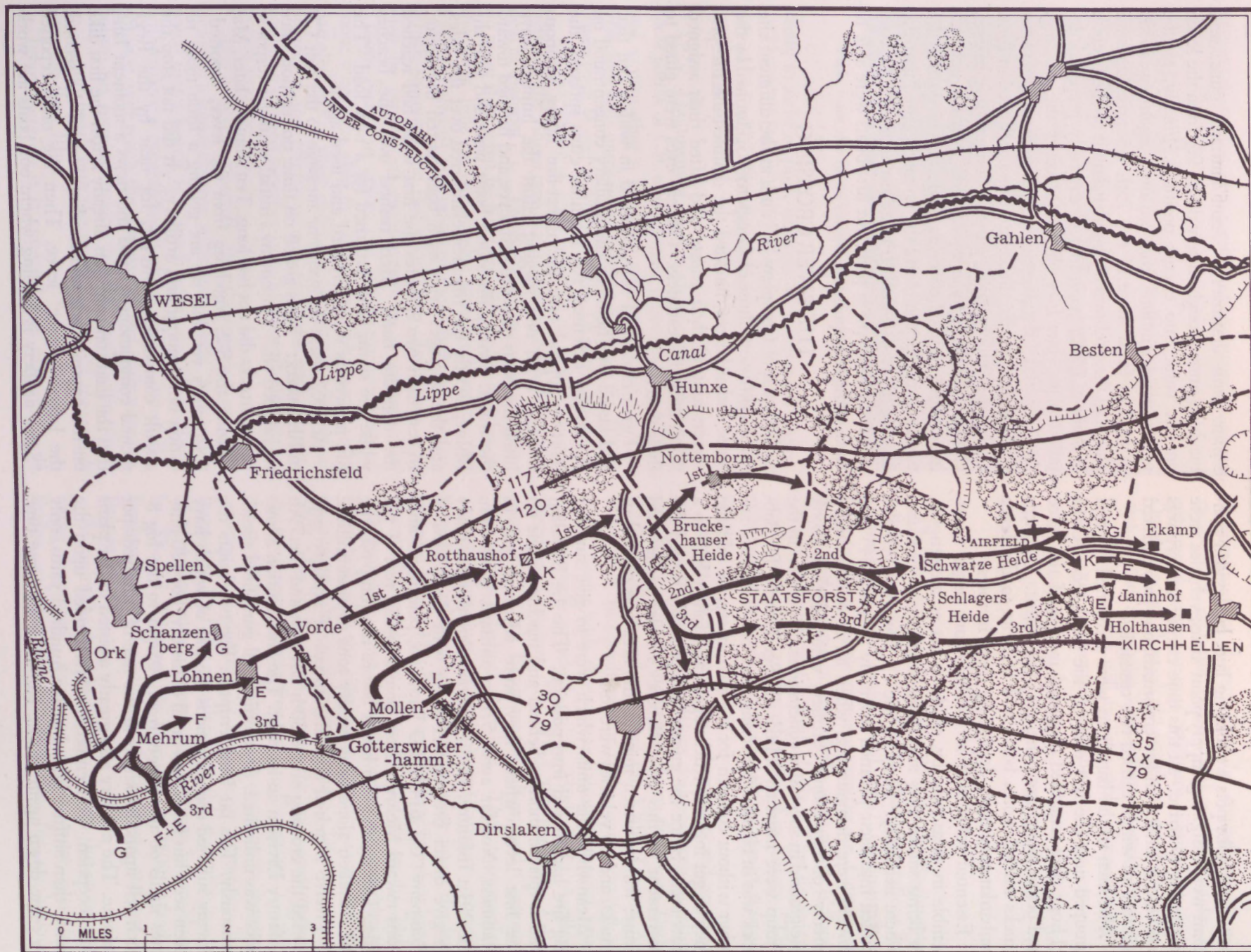
90mm tank destroyers, 57mm antitank guns, and machine guns brought heavy direct fire from the levee on our bank into enemy positions. Finally, terrific mortar concentrations from our own organic weapons as well as from those of the 75th Infantry Division added to the preliminary bombardment of the enemy. Exactly at 0200, according to carefully prepared detailed plans, our fires shifted to cover the crossing. Artillery and mortar concentrations moved inland a few hundred yards, direct fire cannon shifted to form a safe lane. The machine guns, no longer firing tracers, elevated their fire some twenty feet over the enemy's head. Such shifts had been made before during the two-hour preparation, and the enemy learned that the fires might return upon him at any moment. As a result of this deception plan, our first boats were able to land without opposition.

THE RIVER CROSSING

The men of Company "F" and, at the different site to the northwest, those of Company "G," formed by the levee embankment, buckled the double-tube life preservers around their waists, and lifted their assigned storm boats in readiness. Officers' eyes were glued to their watches.

Two o'clock had been ushered in with a din that had lasted two hours as the artillery concentrated on the enemy defenses, the machine guns sprayed, the mortars popped and the direct-fire heavy weapons blasted. With one surging effort the human wave lifted the boats over the first levee and hurried toward the water. Swiftly the storm boats were slid into the Rhine; swiftly the riflemen clambered over the sides, and the engineer with each boat started the motor. In less than two minutes the first wave had reached the opposite bank. Men rushed over the beaches while the storm boats returned for a new load. The life preservers were returned and used again.

At 0202 came the welcome message to the rear CP in Rheinberg: "Boats got off on time; no reaction since we jumped off." The enemy's initial apathy in response to our attacks did not last long. Ten minutes later, Maj Glazier, the S-2, watching from the levee, reported: "No mines yet, but we are getting a little more reaction now, mortar and artillery." It did not stop the assault companies, however, for near by the Regimental commander relayed the news a moment later that the lead company was already across the first dike on the opposite side and heading toward the second, the larger "winter" levee. Then the radio reported "Some artillery is landing where our boats are work-



The Rhine

ing." Company "E" started across fifteen minutes after H-hour.

A prisoner captured later said that the Germans had limited themselves to five rounds of artillery a day, to save a large supply for the day of expected attack. At midnight before H-hour, he lamented, the line to the Observation Post had been severed by shelling. Whether this was true or not the enemy defenses were not as strong as expected. Onto key crossroads and probable landing sites the enemy sent small barrages, for the most part air bursts. They increased in intensity, however, as the day progressed, and from daylight till noon were heavy.

Meanwhile, the boats were causing difficulty. Some had motor troubles and floated helplessly downstream to land some distance from their planned destination. When S/Sgt Sam Javitch in the first wave of Company "F" looked around for his platoon leader, he saw only the black blotch of the lieutenant's boat being swept away, and had to gather the milling platoon at once and form it for the attack. He led the men through some heavy fire that morning.

Company "G" was having still greater difficulties. Confused by the heavy friendly supporting fires and smoke on the river, some engineers steering the boats turned around without knowing it and landed some of the men on the friendly shore; other members of Company "G" were landed only to find that they were on a bar and thus stranded from either shore. Largely because irregular inlets characterized the shore on the enemy side, many of the men who were deposited there were separated and disorganized.

A fine leader, 1st Lt Charles B. Pike, lost his life while attempting to reorganize elements of Company "G." Lt Pike had been hospitalized during the training period prior to the Rhine crossing. Having argued his way out of the hospital he had reported to his company commander, Captain Charles W. Moncrieff, Jr. a few hours before the start of the operation. Captain Moncrieff had told Lt Pike that it was not necessary for him to accompany the company because they had sufficient officers. Lt Pike answered, "You cannot do without me, Monty." At the time Lt Pike was killed he was leading to the company zone men who had been landed downstream from the planned landing area. En route upstream in order to rejoin the company it was necessary to knock out an enemy position. Lt Pike died in driving out this position, but his spirit led the group to the company in time for the men to assist in accomplishing the company's mission.

By 0316 the entire 2d Battalion had crossed, and

the attack upon Mehrum was reported progressing well. The 3d Battalion moved to the first levee ready to follow. LCVPs or Alligators were to help carry the battalion across the river. At that moment the column could not be found. It was to have started up the river at a site farther north, and its arrival had been carefully timed not to betray the assault by the noise of its motors. Some frantic calls were made before, at 0325, it was located, and the LCVP drivers oriented.

Elements of Company "K" and Company "L" mounted the vehicles behind the first levee and were carried 500 yards to the river, where other elements of the battalion were boarding storm boats and assault craft. Directing the crossing on the near shore, Lt Harry R. Peters, 3d Battalion adjutant, kept a steady flow of well-dispersed boats and amphibious vehicles.

When the 3d Battalion began to cross, there were more mixups. Company "K" was landed in far-separated units, and in the shuffle Lt Edwin J. Franklin, Battalion S-2, had to take charge of the rear elements and bring them up to the Line of Departure, where Capt Harold P. Plummer, the company commander, waited with the remainder of the men.

Led by Lt Alvin H. Gordon, the 1st Platoon of Company "L" was delayed when the LCVPs to carry it did not appear at the designated point. After the vehicles had at last been found and the men had mounted, the lead driver did not know where to make the crossing, and Capt Earl F. Wilson had to spend a half hour reconnoitering for the site. Then, after crossing, there was considerable confusion when elements of Company "M" became involved with Company "L" troops. The organization had to be accomplished on the move.

At 0600, when Company "I" was crossing on the LCVPs, one had motor trouble and twenty-five men, a part of two platoons, under the command of Lt John C. DePutron, were ordered to jump overboard and swim to safety. Shortly after the riflemen had done so and were splashing to shore, the LCVP motor began whirring, and the vehicle whipped around to the friendly shore without attempting to pick up the floating men. The Company "I" men lost their personal equipment and were unable to rejoin their company for two days.

To tell of the cause of the poor support given by the Alligator crews is not a pretty story. Many of those men had attempted to fortify their courage from the bottle. Officers of that unit had been shown the route to the loading and embarking point; further-

more, white tape marked that part of the route which was across-country. Despite this prior reconnaissance and marking of the route, the Alligators were over an hour late in reporting to the prescribed loading area. An appreciable number of the members of the various crews were drunk. The resulting delay and confusion seriously interfered with the crossing of the 3d Battalion. However, the Regimental and 3d Battalion commanders, making the best of a deplorable situation, quickly improvised an alternate plan of using boats which had returned from ferrying the 2d Battalion across. The engineers manning these boats, being good soldiers, quickly adapted themselves to the changed plans. As the result the battalion was landed after only a two-hour loss of time.

The 3d Battalion was almost entirely across by 0450. With increasing vigor in a vain attempt to halt the attackers, the enemy began firing heavier artillery, particularly on the north shore. Lt Walter M. Bowers was leading his machine-gun platoon from Company "M" from the landing site past the first dike; they were in closed formation because of the poor visibility. A heavy enemy barrage surprised them, killing two men and wounding nine instantly. Lt Bowers had been struck in the neck himself, but realizing the importance of continued support for the initial drive, he did not stop but took his men forward until the final objective for the day, the Division bridgehead, had been consolidated.

Since 0300 the 1st Battalion had been assembled at Ettroig, waiting to follow the 3d. Its members dug themselves in while the enemy's defensive fires fell in their area. By 0500 they were loaded on LCVPs and storm and assault boats and began the crossing.

By that time vehicles, including a platoon of TDs, were assembling in different areas near Ettroig prepared to cross in support of the foot troops. These had to pass through the marshalling area, where Capt Thomas J. Hooper maintained communication with the engineer officer in charge of the beach. As transportation became available, Capt Hooper sent supply and personnel vehicles to the beach; in charge of the marshalling area, he had to keep constant check on all movement of traffic in the busy area around the crossing site. His job became more complicated as vehicles became more numerous, and in the night with drivers unfamiliar with the roads, he found it necessary to retrieve some that became lost and lead others along the correct route.

In sending vehicles across, a priority list was adhered to strictly. When the vehicles reached the

beach, WOJG Percy E. Dempsey, Assistant S-4, or WOJG Angus T. Smith, Assistant Munitions Officer, were on duty with the beachmaster and saw that they were loaded in order and as rapidly as possible. The incoming artillery, particularly heavy during the early hours of daylight, delayed only momentarily the flow of supplies; the armor was held up, however, while the Navy-operated LCMs were eagerly awaited all morning. These had met with trouble; at 0548 it was learned that at the site in the 117th Infantry sector where the LCMs were being launched, much artillery was playing havoc and had scored direct hits on three of the craft. Later direct fire delayed the LCMs, but three more LCVPs were reported en route upstream for the 120th's use. WO Dempsey and WO Smith meanwhile insured the readiness of first medical, then command and artillery, and finally radio and wire, vehicles, for the LCVPs. Priority on the LCMs was held by the TDs.

Close behind the 3d Battalion companies landing on the far shore was Lt John G. Gerl, Assistant Regimental S-3, who was to take over direction of the landing points south of Mehrum. With him as he went into action were Sgt Theodore Shayer, who organized the movements of vehicles coming and returning over the Rhine; T/4 Louis C. Smith, who followed Lt Gerl faithfully to transmit his radio messages; and Pfc Donald A. Delaney, who, driving an M-29 "weasel," pulled out many vehicles stuck deep in the soggy beach ground. Lt Gerl was both policeman and intelligence section. He had to insure the smooth flow of supplies, particularly ammunition, to the fast-moving front lines; he also had to expedite the speedy evacuation of wounded men and prisoners; and he was invaluable in relaying essential information to the rear command posts. By midday on the 24th of March traffic was well-organized and fast-moving.

The most interested participant of the vast show was Colonel Purdue. From a point of vantage close to a dugout on the first dike, he watched each wave and saw each well-planned detail go into effect. He gave quiet orders, and when some plans did not work out on schedule, he reassured "Jim," "Mac," and "Butch," his battalion commanders. All pertinent information he relayed back to the rear CP.

Beside him, under cover of the dike embankment about daylight were approximately seventy-five officers and men observing the progress of the attack and awaiting orders. A sudden concentration of enemy artillery caught them unawares; Colonel Purdue on

top of the embankment slid partially down the side when a shell landed within two yards of him. Realizing that the enemy had guessed their location, everyone hit the ground. Colonel Purdue stood unharmed and unshaken; he turned to someone beside him: "I'll have to do something about the enemy shelling." Then he turned toward all the group huddled in the area. With firm equanimity which established no small reassurance in the hearts of those who heard him, he ordered them to keep dispersed. Without further ado, he turned to the business of calling for smoke to veil the bridgehead movements and the bridge construction which the engineer troops were to begin at 0600.

Most unfavorable factor in the use of smoke on this occasion was the total absence of wind. Orders were to carry smoke pots to the opposite shore, for use there in case additional smoke were needed.

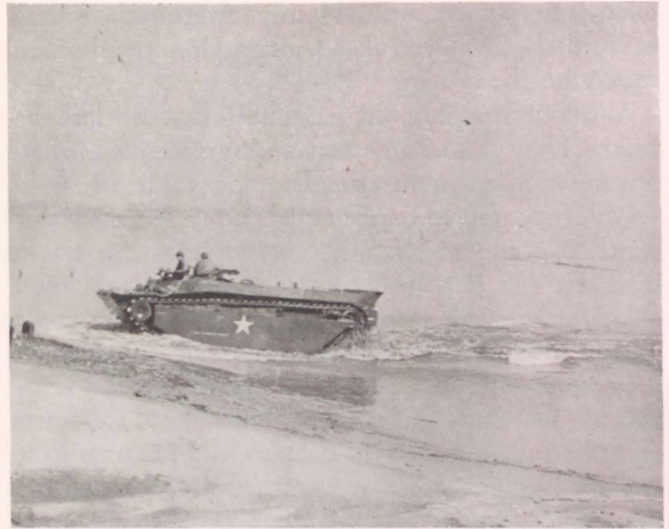
By 0623, smoke was billowing upward; without wind to cause it to spread, it dispersed quickly. The thick concentrations caused anyone caught in them to cough heavily, however, and in spots it became an obstacle for artillery observation. An hour later many men had become sick from it; Lt Gerl at the unloading point was vomiting, and six of his detail had been evacuated for nausea. Despite the illness caused by the smoke, the Regimental Commander ordered it continued because it was better for a few men to be sick than for many to risk being observed and shelled.

Under cover of this smoke, construction of a bridge was begun at 0600 by elements of the 1153d Engineer Group in charge of the beach. Most of the morning enemy artillery fire caused long delays; in the afternoon, rather than work from the near shore, the Engineers floated the support barges to the opposite side of the river and worked toward the Rheinberg side. As twilight began falling, and all through the night, enemy aircraft struck at the bridge and crossing site. Antiaircraft units responded with heavy volumes of fire.

2D BATTALION: MEHRUM

Mehrum was a small town situated snugly behind the "winter" levee in the center of a bulge formed by a loop in the Rhine River south of Wesel. It was a key point in the enemy defense line, and on the dike around it was organized the defenses of the river.

Thirteen minutes after H-hour, the assault troops from Company "F" were across the first dike. A few minutes later the Regimental S-2 reported automatic fire in front of them. Mortar and machine-gun fire



East bank of the Rhine near Mehrum

did not arrest the advance; Capt John M. Jacobsen of Company "F" had organized his men speedily as they debarked, and from a position well forward he urged them to press the attack. They charged spiritedly over the "winter" levee, and taking in at a glance the little town spread out before them, they surged into the outskirts. Miles behind them antiaircraft searchlights were switched on, and from then on "artificial moonlight" illuminated the attack.

Close behind the riflemen came the heavy machine-gun platoon from Company "H," attached to Company "F." T/5 Harold E. Sipes and Pfc Robert R. Reed were carrying one gun. While crossing the first dike, Sipes was slightly wounded, but walked on without remarking about it. They were close to the second dike when they heard automatic fire from an enemy gun ahead. They paused to note that the gun was swinging wildly in free traverse to cut the attackers down. Almost simultaneously they spotted a shell crater fifty yards forward and ran to it. There in the loose dirt around the hole, they set their gun in action and zeroed-in upon the enemy position. In a few minutes, the hostile spray had ceased.

Behind the Company "H" machine-gun platoon came a mortar section from the same company, also attached to Company "F." It reached the Mehrum side of the river some time after the riflemen had pushed forward in the attack; the mortar sergeant, Willmer E. Sellers, had to organize his men alone, and he led them toward the town hurriedly to catch up. As he came over the second levee, he received fire from an automatic weapon which he was quick

enough to spot instantly. Hastily lowering the muzzle of his BAR, he moved ahead, aiming into the nest and squeezing the trigger.

Without stopping, his section followed close behind. They moved in upon an emplacement where seven Germans were crouched low, and when he yelled, they put up their hands readily and came forward as prisoners. S/Sgt. Sellars sent them to the rear. Farther on, the group ran across fifteen more enemy who were disposed of in the same manner. Then, after halting his section, Sellars alone reconnoitered a route into Mehrum, selected a good firing position for support of the troops already in the town, and in a few minutes was back to lead his men to it.

Capt Jacobsen's men were penetrating into all sections of Mehrum by 0230. In phenomenally quick time—less than an hour from the time they had boarded the storm boats—they had taken their objective. At 0247, Company "E" was approaching the edge of Mehrum behind Company "F," and Lt Col Cantey, the 2d Battalion commander, called Maj McCullough to tell him things were going smoothly, that the time was ripe for the 3d Battalion to cross. Transmitting for Lt Col Cantey, Pfc Bernard L. Jones had landed shortly after the assault troops, together they had run and at times even crawled to keep close to the action. Though Lt Col Cantey had told the radio operator that he could wait under cover when the going was rough, Jones stuck close; shortly after 0300 he announced the fall of Mehrum and its consolidation by Companies "F" and "E."

THE "CAMPAIGN" OF COMPANY "G"

Isolated to some extent from the scene of the main action, Company "G" was having numerous difficulties. It was hopelessly separated, part returned on the storm boats to the friendly shore, part stranded on little islands, and that portion reaching the proper destination thoroughly disorganized because of the irregular shoreline and loss of personnel.

On the enemy shore, Capt Charles W. Moncrieff, company commander, was among those who could not be located. Lt Arthur J. Saalfeld, the executive, was among the last to land, but he gathered as many of his men together as possible and with approximately thirty headed for the preplanned assembly area, near where the "winter" levee crossed the Momm River on the Regimental Boundary.

At some distance, a group of twenty other Company "G" men had been landed and without platoon leader or sergeant, both lost en route across, they milled un-

easily waiting for someone to take action. Pfc Earl A. Otto was only a BAR man in one of the platoons, but he knew where the company was to assemble. With all speed, he told the twenty men to follow, and they headed for the dike crossing.

There the two groups met, and with only fifty men the company prepared to move against the initial objective. After serving in so vital a role, Otto reverted to his BAR position. Now solely in charge, Lt Saalfeld knew that, because of the previous delay, speed at that moment was essential.

The first objective was northwest of Mehrum, a bridge over the Momm River; it was labeled "Bill" on the attack overlay. After the company of fifty men had pushed 1500 yards, passing Mehrum on their right, they rushed the Momm bridge by 0530. Though opposition was negligible, there was no indication that it would be so on all the objectives between it and Company "G's" final goal, Schanzenberg. Since Mehrum had already fallen, Lt Saalfeld was eager to move ahead quickly. "Check Point Able 8" was a crossroads 300 yards southeast of the Momm Bridge. Patrols found it defended, and the company moved against it in attack formation.

T/Sgt Harry W. Boures pushed ahead toward the crossroads and was among the first to see a machine gun defending the key point. Firing his BAR from the hip he rushed forward about seventy-five yards and came upon the emplacement. In it were four Germans, by that time quite ready to surrender. By now the troops had closed in upon the area around the crossroads.

The built-up section of Wurm-Gotterswick lay 400 yards to the east; Company "G" did not hesitate before driving on to seize it. Being lightly defended, it fell at 0550. When Lt Col Cantey, who had led his command group from Mehrum, saw that "Abner" (Wurm-Gotterswick) had fallen, he sent for a platoon of Company "E" to occupy it, ready to move into Schanzenberg when it had fallen, and prepared, with the remainder of that company, to continue the attack.

At Wurm-Gotterswick, Capt Moncrieff joined his company, but did not waste time to tell of his difficulty in catching up. Lt Saalfeld was eager to press on to the company's final objective, and volunteered to take forty of the men against Schanzenberg, while ten stayed behind with Capt Moncrieff to hold the area till Company "E" arrived.

Schanzenberg presented more of a problem than the first, smaller objective. It was a town of considerable size, and for forty men, it was a hard "nut." Rifle fire

was persistently strong as the men ducked through the houses and forced their way down the streets. It took almost three hours, but by 0935, Company "G's" final objective for the day, Schanzenberg, was taken.

After Capt Moncrieff with ten men had rejoined Lt Saalfeld in Schanzenberg, they were surprised to see approaching, individually, about ninety men from the Company who had had many never-to-be-told experiences while lost along the Rhine shores.

LAST TIDBIT OF A BIG CHUNK: LOHNEN

Company "E" had moved up on the right beside Company "F" following the seizure of Schanzenberg. Later one platoon left for Wurm-Gotterswick. The entire company followed, and when the town was taken, moved into Schanzenberg. Company "F" formed to follow Company "E" heading north.

At 1205 Company "E" made its initial attack. From Schanzenberg it drove southeast into Lohnen, largest of the towns thus far assaulted. Orchards extended on all sides of the town and made excellent natural camouflage for direct-fire weapons; the enemy utilized the foliage to conceal what few weapons they had. Crossing the field several men were wounded by machine-gun and 75mm fire from a tank.

The reserve platoon was waiting along the LD on the eastern hedges of Schanzenberg when the attacking troops moved across the open. With that platoon, Pfc Alfred L. Annis was carrying a light machine gun when the enemy sprayed automatic and 75mm fire against the attackers. He saw two men wounded by tank fire lying helpless in the field in front of him. After putting his machine gun where someone else could watch it for a moment, he crawled to the men and carried first one and then the other back to a place of cover. Miraculously none of them were hit during the procedure. Shortly thereafter Annis continued on with the reserve troops into the town.

At Lohnen the enemy realized the strongest outer line had been broken through; his secondary was not so strong, and after a brief attempt to hold back the tide, he withdrew. By 1330 the town was occupied by Company "E." Companies "F" and "C" followed Company "E" into the town, and grouped there in houses.

East of Lohnen lay Vorde, and through Vorde ran a north-south railroad track, the first tracks east of the Rhine. To press the enemy as far as possible, Company "E" sent two platoons at 1500 from the east section of Lohnen to push forward to the railroad tracks; by 1640 after encountering only individual isolated



Lieutenant Colonel Chris McCullough

opposition, the platoons had consolidated on the objective.

3D BATTALION: GOTTERSWICKERHAMM

After an initial delay because of the temporary loss of the Alligators, the 3d Battalion had crossed from Ettroig at 0330. Companies "K" and "L" came first, and at 0425 Division was notified that they were both across. Companies "I" and "M" were preparing to follow.

Since Mehrum had already fallen, the 3d Battalion did not have to pause. When the companies landed they formed in column and, with Company "K" in the lead, headed well-dispersed along the east side of the levee toward the formidable defense-line stronghold of Gotterswickerhamm, where high and close to the dike overlooking the river, the center of town commanded all approaches.

At 0440 on the Line of Departure 500 yards west of the objective, Maj McCullough helped organize Com-

pany "K" and gave final instructions. It was 0520 when the company pushed forward. The enemy had harassed its progress en route from the landing site by sporadic artillery fire, and the opposition became tougher as the troops ran against the town itself.

On the western outskirts protecting the road approach were antitank guns which were not disabled until after the lead elements had entered the town. In emplacements crucially located to cover the exposed attack route, machine guns began to open fire against Company "K."

Pfc Austin B. Campbell saw one 150 yards in front of him. Pitting his submachine gun against the enemy's heavier piece, he ran toward it, firing, and found he had cowed seven Germans; they surrendered at once. The 1st Platoon was bottlenecked for some time by another machine-gun nest. Calling five men to follow him the platoon sergeant, T/Sgt Larry D. Owens, circled to the flank within seventy-five yards of the gun. From there the five men saw Owens rush at the emplacement and, firing from the hip, jump into the trench where the startled enemy had ceased firing. His rapid shots caused three to slump down dead; the other Germans quickly put their hands behind their heads—probably because one of those killed was an officer.

Elements of Company "L" were following Company "K." Pfc Dairl L. Campbell was close enough to the foremost troops to have some excitement. When the antitank guns began firing rapidly from their positions near the road leading into town he was hit in the helmet by shrapnel which pierced the steel, but did not scratch his head. Close to the town a barrage forced him to hug the soil. He heard a whistle and then a terrifying quiver of the ground near him. He twisted slightly to look around—a shell had landed almost between his legs, but by good fortune, it was a dud. His luck did not continue all morning, however, for he was later wounded in the hand. Rejoicing that it was not more serious, Campbell continued to fight with his company all day.

At daylight Company "K" had just edged into Gotterswickerham. The enemy fought for each house yard. At 0730 the company was being held up by a strongpoint on higher ground near the town's center; a prisoner claimed that a howitzer, an automatic weapon, and thirty to forty infantry were defending it. Pfc Jethro Waldron knew the technique of flanking. He crawled and rushed alternately to a point seventy-five yards on one side of the area so strongly held, and fifty yards in front of any friendly troops.

Then he aimed and fired his rifle in a series of rapid shots upon the enemy. In the enemy's confusion, Waldron's squad, who had seen him, ran against the position and overcame it. Thirty prisoners filed from shelter; two were officers. Behind them the squad saw a 75mm howitzer, two machine guns, and an anti-aircraft searchlight.

Conspicuously close to the scene of action during the attack on Gotterswickerham was the Battalion Aid Station. Having landed with the riflemen, Capt Allen C. Neiswander, the Battalion Surgeon, was near enough to the line so that the wounded could be administered to at once. He moved into the western outskirts of Gotterswickerham as soon as they were cleared and straightened out available houses to facilitate speedy medical care. Where his Red Cross flag was fastened to the half-destroyed gate many lives were saved.

The battle continued in the town. At 0830, Company "K" was still fighting from house to house. A second-story-window machine-gun nest rained deadly lead upon the soldiers in the street. Pfc George L. Nyland stopped one, however. Two Germans were playing havoc with some of the attacking squads when they saw Nyland dashing toward their house. He had to cross one hundred yards to reach it, but he was fast, and they could not train the gun upon him in time. They must have heard him stomp over the first floor; before they could make a move to escape, he was on the steps and was throwing two grenades which landed close enough for them to know he was in earnest. When he paused they came forward hurriedly, with their hands above their heads.

Prisoners brought word that there were several SS men among the troops in town, and that they were forcing a stiff defense, an iron line to be held at all cost. In the southeast corner of Gotterswickerham a pocket of resistance withstood all assault till mid-morning. Maj McCullough decided to push elements of Company "I" through Company "K." At 0837 after the former company had taken over, it was still meeting heavy resistance, but the SS men were being hard-pressed. When, shortly after, one officer was killed, two others surrendered. Within a quarter of an hour all resistance had subsided.

The 2d Platoon of Company "I" was filing through Gotterswickerham toward the eastern edge. Soldiers eyed each house with suspicion; no one could be sure which had not been well cleaned out. During a brief halt Pfc Louis Rosenfeld dodged into one, opened a basement door and peered in. When he

caught sight of twelve fully-armed enemy inside, he pointed his M-1 and counted them as they sidled guiltily out of the dark cellar passage.

A short time later when some soldiers ahead were crossing an open area, Rosenfeld noted some chickens stirring nervously beside a barn near by. Sensing that they had been agitated by something, probably human, he ran forward a few steps to see six Germans half hiding behind the barn. Though he was in an exposed position, he yelled to them to surrender; when they started to run, he fired a few rounds. The Nazis turned around and gladly gave themselves up.

3D BATTALION: MOLLEN

Without a pause Company "L" moved out toward an intermediate objective between Gotterswickerhamm and the next town, Mollen. It was to seize a road junction linking an inland road with the chief river road, an important location where the enemy chose to make a stand in and around barricaded buildings. The time was 0845 when the lead elements passed a once stylish roadhouse on the dike on the eastern edge of Gotterswickerhamm and forged eastward over uneven ground toward the road junction.

The first opposition came in the form of machine-gun fire from a position well to the west of the junction. When some of his squad were struck by the fire T/5 Frank B. Pelkey, Jr., sensing the enemy's location, started for it. There was a barbed-wire fence in his way, but with his wire cutters he clipped the strands and, followed by his squad, ran across the field beyond. Before the enemy on the machine gun knew what had occurred, Pelkey was upon them and had killed four inside the emplacement. The nest was eliminated.

Squads fighting north of the road junction moved speedily forward in their zone. Capt Edward M. Hardy, Commanding Officer of Regimental Headquarters Company, relayed a message to the Command Post. "He [Maj McCullough] went for the intermediate objective between 'Daisy' and 'Ruth,' and took the north portion with ease." While the 2d Battalion was preparing to strike Lohren, Company "I" moved forward to attack Mollen ("Ruth").

Company "K" followed the other companies and ran across some of the enemy by-passed by the lead elements. Not far from the road junction which Company "L" had already passed, the 1st Platoon of Company "K" was halted by enemy automatic and rifle fire. The foremost men in the platoon crept to within seventy-five yards of the enemy emplacement. Four

men tried to destroy it by rushing or creeping. All were wounded by hand grenades thrown from the enemy trench. Lt Thomas K. Voorhis saw the action that followed. He told of it, "Sgt Donald J. Santella, assistant squad leader, perceiving the enemy troops were holding up the advance, and acting entirely on his own initiative, carefully advanced about fifty yards over open terrain to a position from which he could effectively fire rifle grenades on the defending forces . . . When Sgt Santella reached a woodpile about fifteen yards from the entrenchment he took careful aim and fired a rifle grenade into the trench, killing the officer in charge and wounding five others, one of whom subsequently died of his wounds. During the time Sgt Santella was preparing to fire the enemy threw two hand grenades at him, neither of which wounded him despite the fact that they were thrown from such a short distance and at such a plain target. Immediately after he had fired his grenade Sgt Santella ran from his position and jumped into the entrenchment with such speed that he succeeded in forcing the surrender of the remainder of the enemy force, taking ten prisoners."

Actually Company "L" met its strongest opposition south of the road junction nearer the river, where the Germans had prepared, in all probability, for assault straight from the Rhine. Company "I" had pushed into Mollen before Company "L," led by Capt Earl F. Wilson, could clean out the defenses on the west fringe. He could see some enemy deployed in dugouts and close to barricaded houses.

About 1400 Pfc Philip J. Vitale, of Company "L," forced his way to a position close to one of the houses where the enemy was struggling fanatically. There he fired his rifle steadily at the front door, and with a hail of bullets upon it, and shellburst quakes close by, it fell open. With that obstacle out of his way Vitale rushed at the house and appeared a few minutes later with six prisoners.

The advance was still going slowly when S/Sgt Raymond F. Lewis was hit in the shoulder within twenty-five yards of an enemy machine-gun position. Pressing forward, however, he called his squad to follow; not until the objective was taken did he think about the blood staining his shirt and return to the medics.

The last of the enemy was fleeing to the east at about 1450 when the southern entrance to Mollen finally fell to Company "L." S/Sgt Mike G. Demakos had been foremost in the fight, and after the strong-point had fallen, he took his squad beyond in pursuit



Men of Company "K" rushed forward on armor to exploit the breakthrough

of the enemy. The group kept going until it was 1000 yards in front of the company; enemy stragglers put up no resistance, and in a short time Demakos had taken ten prisoners. With them, the squad returned to the platoon.

Mollen had meanwhile been lightly defended. When the attackers saw a flight of eight Liberator bombers dropping colored parachutes at 1313 on the shore near Gotterswickerhamm, some must have worried that the Germans were using paratroops to drive off the Americans. In actuality, the parachutes carried supplies for friendly parachutists north of Wesel and had been badly aimed.

Capt Charles R. Shaw, veteran commander of Company "I," spurred his men in the speedy seizure of Mollen, which was in his hands by 1430. In half an hour, Company "K" and the Battalion Command Post were moving into Mollen; Lt Harry R. Peters, who had distinguished himself during the attack by leading elements of Company "I" over the railroad trestle on the west side of the town at a time when they were

hesitant to press the attack, helped organize the CP in one of the modest Mollen farmhouses. The battalion had closed into the village area, ready for a new attack by 1530. Company "I" reported contact with the 79th Division on the right at 1500.

3D BATTALION: BRUCKHAUSEN

At 1415 the platoon of M-10s from Company "B," 823d TD Battalion, rolled into the LCMs which had been impatiently awaited since morning. With armor on the way and Mollen being taken rapidly, the Regimental commander, in conference with Maj McCullough, began to plan for an exploitation of the outer defense breakthrough. Company "I" was ordered to dispatch a patrol which would guide down the road eastward and reconnoiter the first crossroads from Mollen. When the patrol had reached the crossroads 300 yards forward they saw no signs of the enemy and continued, still guiding on the road, to the next key point, a railroad crossing 500 yards to the east. There again, no trace of defensive organization

could be found; these facts were reported immediately. Then another patrol was sent out to investigate a large objective farther east, "Mae," a farm-studded, spottily wooded region named Bruckhausen. Throughout the region ran a network of country roads, many tree-lined, and flanked by wide, green, fertile fields, owned by well-to-do farmers of the neighborhood. The patrol ascertained that the enemy did not hold this area in force.

Bruckhausen lay 4000 yards east of Vorde, where the most advanced elements on the Regimental left flank, platoons of Company "E," were. Between Vorde and Bruckhausen lay two objectives north of the road patrolled by the 3d Battalion; both had been originally scheduled to be taken first. The country east of Vorde was open, however, and it was doubtful that the Germans would elect to defend it strongly. After Bruckhausen had been taken, it would be a simple matter to mop up the area thus enveloped.

Maj Eugene H. Thomas, Regimental S-3, reported to Division on the field phone at 1450, "The 3d Battalion went through 'Ruth' (Mollen). They're planning to attack 'Mae' (Bruckhausen) and by-pass most of the 'East Lana,' 'West and East Jean.'" In order to exploit the breakthrough, the Regimental commander revised the assignment of armor; instead of going to the 1st Battalion it was dispatched to the 3d. A platoon of TDs and Company "B" of the 744th Light Tank Battalion arrived in Mollen about 1545. Company "K" mounted the tanks, and at 1600 the armored column moved forward over the long route toward Bruckhausen; it was a wide sweep, a swinging envelopment which was to take the 120th Infantry two to three miles ahead of any troops east of the Rhine in that sector.

As previously reported by the patrols of Company "I," the Germans had had no time to consolidate a strong defense; those in the area were too surprised even to escape. The tanks swarmed into "Mae"; the infantry dismounted and forced the defenders from their holes and corners. In some spots the tanks rode astride enemy trenches and sputtered machine-gun fire into the helpless soldiers inside.

Capt Harold P. Plummer, commanding Company "K," had a right to be flushed with victory. One of his sergeants, Donald M. McLeod, had on his own initiative driven forward with the tanks attached to his platoon. Having observed close to seventy-five enemy on the high ground 1500 yards ahead of "Mae," he knew where to search for them, and when he reached the area, yelling at his men to dismount

and seize the ground, he rushed against the Germans. Capt Plummer had meanwhile learned that T/Sgt McLeod had led the men beyond friendly artillery range, and had to order him back. Forty-one prisoners returned with him, and at least fifteen had been killed or wounded.

The Bruckhausen area was consolidated by 1740; the 3d Battalion moved in its entirety into defensive and assembly areas there. The 120th had taken ground 6.2 miles inland from the Rhine.

The exploitation of the remarkable breakthrough was nearly stopped by fire of friendly artillery. At about 1430 the Regimental Commander notified the Division Artillery Commander not to fire in our zone except on call because patrols were operating forward in order to determine the extent of our breakthrough. This information was relayed to the 79th Division Artillery on our right. At about 1615 the column of Company "K," mounted upon tanks and tank destroyers, was en route to Bruckhausen. Suddenly a terrific concentration of at least four battalions of artillery landed immediately in front of the column. Naturally the column stopped. Colonel Purdue, who was with the advance guard, determined the azimuth to the friendly artillery and was in the process of radioing that it be stopped when the fires suddenly ceased. Seeing a Cub overhead, he had a sudden hunch that the artillery had ceased fire only temporarily in order to better adjust upon the column. He ordered, "Forward at top speed," and this order was quickly transmitted to all tanks and tank destroyers by radio. Immediately after the column cleared that area, the artillery landed where the column had been. The following foot troops were able to detour the impact area. Fortunately the mishap caused only two casualties, each being only slightly wounded. Information learned later indicated that the air observer, from the division to our right, had thought our column to be enemy.

1ST BATTALION: MOP-UP

The 1st Battalion had not played a spectacular part in the action thus far, but had followed doggedly behind the scene of battle ready to be committed at any moment. It crossed the river at 0500 and moved to Mehrum. In a field southwest of the town the companies dug in and remained most of the day until late afternoon. They encountered some small-arms fire from nineteen enemy riflemen who had been bypassed by the 2d Battalion. But in a hasty mop-up Capt Murray S. Pulver's Company "B" eliminated them.

Following the capture by Company "E" of the railroad tracks in Vorde, the 1st Battalion moved into Lohnen in order to be close behind the 2d. It was given the mission of cleaning out the area enveloped by the 3d Battalion sweep. To expedite accomplishing this mission, the Regimental Commander at Bruckhausen caused tanks to fire at random into the bypassed enemy area. This fire, coming from the east, informed the enemy our troops were in his rear. Experience had proven that Germans usually quit when partly surrounded.

At 1800, with Company "C" on the right, Company "B" on the left, the battalion moved on foot through Vorde. Opposition was light, but at once the prisoners began to be assembled. At 1530, 1000 yards east of Vorde, past the railroad crossing, Company "B" swung to face north, in order to protect the exposed battalion and Regimental left flank. Company "A" pushed through beside Company "C," and together they moved into the housing area beside the Dinslaken-Wesel highway. It was the last high ground before Bruckhausen, seized by 2130. Prize catches in the advance were: 114 prisoners, three antitank guns, a halftrack, and a Mark IV. Also overrun were two road junctions where 500-pound bombs had been emplaced, apparently to be used to blast away the road; the Regiment's speed and the enemy's lack of communications had prevented this.

Forty-seven prisoners were taken by Lt William A. Hester of Company "C" and his platoon. The first group of forty-one were knocked out near the railroad crossing when, after receiving small-arms fire, Lt Hester deployed his men along the tracks and peppered the enemy positions with BAR and rifle bullets. After one German had been killed and five wounded, thirty-six others were persuaded that the fight was hopeless and surrendered. Then taking two squads, Lt Hester headed for a group of houses one hundred yards to his right front, and clearing them out in the space of a few minutes, returned with six more prisoners. The platoon was credited with two officers in the haul.

During the night of the 24th-25th of March, the Regimental Command Post left Rheinberg, crossed the river for the most part in alligators and at 0215 reached a new location in Vorde. A skeleton party was left behind until the late morning of the 25th, when it rejoined the forward section.

1ST BATTALION: AUTOBAHN HILL

From the Regimental CP in the early morning of

25th of March went a call requesting an air strike on the next objective, "Helen." "Helen" was a wooded hill overlooking, to the west, some farmhouses, each named after its owner, Campermannshof, Rembergshof, and others; and overlooking to the east a half-completed autobahn, the construction of which had been interrupted by the war. It was a part of the Bruckhausen area, but lay 2000 yards northeast of the section ("Mae") held by the 3d Battalion. The air strike was on its way at daylight, and at 0745, observing the bombing from its positions, the 3d Battalion reported that the air mission was "coming along well."

By 0830, the 1st Battalion had moved up with the 3d; Company "A" on the right and Company "B" on the left were making final adjustments for an attack scheduled for 0900.

Against what was reported to be an ordinary defense the doughboys drove forward under a blanket of varied supporting fire of seven tanks, four TDs, four 105mm assault guns, .50-caliber machine guns from two halftracks, and all organic weapons of the 1st and 3d Battalions. The ridge was smoked continuously for a length of one mile, and smoke covered the exposed flanks.

Thirteen minutes after the jump-off Lt Col Williamson reported, "Things are going along fine. Jumped off on time. We've met small-arms resistance." When the riflemen had advanced 800 yards from the Line of Departure, tanks with mounted infantry raced up to them and passed through to the objective while the men on top fired BARs and machine guns. When they approached the forest a large number of enemy seemed to surge toward them in groups, in files, and as stray individuals, but not counterattacking; all had their hands raised in surrender. They left few behind them to resist. By 1050, the lead companies had cut the autobahn on the eastern extremity of the objective in two places.

During the attack T/Sgt Raymond R. J. O'Connor of Company "A" and S/Sgt Dewey H. Harris set out to investigate a trail which was on the battalion right flank close to the route of advance the troops were to follow. The men had not gone far when, through the trees, they spotted two Germans who, from dug-in positions, could observe the movements of the 120th troops advancing in the open. Harris sank silently to one knee and raised his BAR. The clatter of the automatic fire was probably never heard by the Germans; they slumped forward. Behind the two dead Germans the men could see at a distance a

heavy gun. They continued, however, down the trail, passed an enemy halftrack, and ran into a shack where they routed eight enemy from inside. As they took another trail to head back to the company with the prisoners, they came upon a German tracked vehicle, a sort of "weasel," and saw from close-up the gun they had spotted in the distance before—an 88mm piece. It all proved that the Germans had not given up without a try.

The attack to the autobahn was one of the 1st Battalion's few daylight attacks since the seizure of Erberich, Germany, on the 23d of November. Since Altdorf Lt Col Williamson's men had achieved fame as "night attackers," and were even labeled "'Butch's' Night Raiders." The hours of darkness had become their favorite time of action. Colonel Purdue remarked once that though the first feeling toward attack at night is one of fear—fear especially that the wounded will not be located—the men who had done it would rather attack at night than during daylight, when the enemy is rarely surprised and has good visibility. The crowning triumph in attacks at night by the 1st Battalion, however, was yet to be achieved.

SOUTH BRUCKHAUSER HEIDE

At 1030 the 3d Battalion was following the 1st, ready to strike its new objective, a wooded farm area to the south also bounded on the east by the autobahn. A group from the Battalion Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon was busy all morning. In fact, it had been so since the river crossing; close behind the fight at Götterswickerhamm it had cleared of mines the vital roads leading into the town. On the morning of the 25th T/Sgt Ashley R. Deaton took his men as close as 200 yards from the actual fire fight in order to clear the roads for vehicles moving behind; when he ran across some wounded men, he helped to evacuate them aided by his men, Sgt Rudolph Paukoucek, Sgt Michael N. Jacobs, T/5 Michael N. Kloppenberg, T/5 Keith J. Severin, Pfc Paul G. Lane, Pfc William J. McCauley, and Pfc Edward F. Franczewski. In some cases, they had to give first aid. They did many jobs that morning; farther on they captured six German stragglers. Throughout the advance of the 3d Battalion, these men were close behind, clearing over six miles along the wood-lined roads.

At 1210 Companies "K" on the left, and "L" on the right, were lined on the south edge of the woods which the 1st Battalion had seized during the morning. Capt Edward M. Hill, the S-3, accompanied by Lt Harry Peters, S-1, and Pfc Larry Coughlin, came

toward the troops from the vicinity of the enemy. He had gone forward to investigate an unnamed body of water, which he ascertained was fortunately not large enough to hold up the attack. It was characteristic of Capt Hill's preplanning that he took personal risk to make sure nothing would interfere with the smooth execution of the assault.

The companies started forward over the hilly terrain at 1215. They met little opposition and plodded aggressively. Company "L" drove against the enemy in a brilliant demonstration of marching fire, and early in the attack captured an antitank gun with prime mover, and set an ammunition truck on fire. At 1255 Maj McCullough called Colonel Purdue on the radio: "Curve (3d Battalion) has taken its objective."

"Good going!" responded the Colonel. "Now move two-thirds of your unit east of Objective 'Rose,' setting up your defense to face to the south, southeast and west. You should be prepared in the south and southeast part of 'Rose' for a counterattack. Your mission is right-flank protection for our 'Task Force Hunt' passing through you. One platoon of TDs will be sent to you as quickly as possible."

CLEARING THE STAATSFORST WESEL

Objective "Rose" was high, wooded ground to the east. It lay 1500 yards from the autobahn in the center of the woods called the Staatsforst Wesel. "Task Force Hunt" was the 2d Battalion mounted on the tanks of the 744th Light Tank Battalion and two companies of TDs, 823d Battalion.

With its new mission, the 3d Battalion did not tarry in south Bruckhauser Heide. With Companies "K" and "L" in the lead, the battalion struck out, guiding along a road which crossed the autobahn at right angles, led into the woods, and rose onto high ground. The enemy was initially little in evidence but movement was handicapped by the terrain. Two thousand yards east of the autobahn a trail turned south where the main road headed northeast. The 3d Battalion wheeled to the right, striking down the path to secure the Regimental right flank for the advance of the task force. The 3d Battalion troops were 1000 yards in the lead by this time.

After turning south the troops struck the enemy's first strongpoint. Well-camouflaged in the almost jungle-like undergrowth, a machine gun began to rattle at the advancing squads. By this time the platoon of TDs had joined the companies, and two M-10s were called to the fore to blast out the nest.

Before they moved forward, Pfc Karl G. Rosenquist, Pfc Austin B. Campbell, and Pfc Michael Sammacicia volunteered to accompany the armor, which was more vulnerable than usual in the underbrush. With bazookas they walked beside the two TDs as they ground over the shrubbery and small trees. Though the enemy was dug in, the 3-inch fire was enough to tear their emplacements apart. The advance was continued.

The battalion was forced to make occasional halts in order to bring up the tanks which had difficulty negotiating the forest trails. Still encountering enemy only occasionally, Company "I" moved forward steadily. Lt John A. Doyle took his platoon across an open space and on into the woods again; an M-24 moved into the clearing after him and with no friendly troops visible, the tankers inside concluded the movement in the woods opposite was by enemy forces. Lt Doyle was acute enough to observe the tank's muzzle lowering and being aimed. Sensing the mistake that had been made, he ran fifty yards across open area, climbed quickly on the hull and rapped vigorously at the tank commander's hatch. It took only a few minutes to explain the situation to the tankmen, but it saved many lives.

Later in the afternoon, the lead elements of Company "I" encountered an enemy strongpoint. Lt Ervin M. Bruner did not waste time with elaborate maneuver to overrun it. Calling for a light tank near him to follow, he led it down a path he knew, and pointed to the nest. Though he was exposing himself daringly, his actions had excellent effect. With a few rounds the enemy position was destroyed.

At 1600 the 3d Battalion received devastating artillery fire. Among the high-explosive shells, enemy artillerymen had mixed some incendiaries. When one shell started a fire near the advancing troops, one Company "I" platoon moved away from the blaze into the trail. It had advanced some distance before Pfc Wesley Jenkins noted that one of his pals was left behind. Without hesitation he turned back and retraced his steps through the woods near where it was now burning brightly. A hundred and fifty yards back he found the man he was searching for, who had been overcome by the incendiary fumes. Jenkins hoisted him as best he could upon his shoulders and carried him from the woods to the road, where he was able to recover; that is the way a man proves he is a real buddy. The two moved on in the advance.

By this time the 3d Battalion CP moved to Stall-

berghshof, a farmhouse 500 yards west of the autobahn. Supplies had a long route to come and were badly needed. Constantly active in maintaining a steady flow of ammunition and food was Capt Ralph L. Christy, the Battalion Executive Officer, who throughout the operation had been tireless in keeping contact with adjacent units and learning and satisfying the needs of the men on line. He was headed from the CP to the rear to bring forward other elements of the headquarters still behind when, halfway down a slope, his driver swerved to the outer edge of the road to pass an M-10. Simultaneously two mines were exploded; one under the M-10 did not affect even the tracks; the other blew the back half of the jeep apart, threw Capt Christy in the air, and wounded another man with him. As the medics carried him to the rear in a "weasel," he died.

Capt Christy was an "old man" with the 120th. Originally enlisted with the National Guard of his home state, Pennsylvania, in 1939, he came to Company "B" in December 1942, following OCS. As a platoon leader there, he went through maneuvers and the trip overseas. On the 16th of July, 1944, he was wounded in France. He returned on the 4th of September and was named commander of Company "C"; a month later he became a captain. On the 12th of October he was wounded a second time, and when he returned to the 1st Battalion at Malmedy in December he assumed duties as Company "A" commander. On the 8th of January, after the departure of Maj Ralph E. Kerley for the United States on rotation leave, he was made executive of the 3d Battalion.

Rising to the occasion following his death was Capt Paul R. Tuttle, commander of Headquarters Company, who on his own initiative assumed the duties of the executive in maintaining the supply flow.

In the meantime the 3d Battalion was progressing with increasing difficulty through the wooded area. Moving forward along the road, the task force, too, had met trouble. Because the woods gave concealment to a large number of automatic weapons, the companies of the 3d Battalion withdrew slightly to the main road while in the late afternoon the artillery fired a series of concentrations on areas where the nests seemed to be. During the sunset hours Company "K" on the left and Company "L" on the right pushed southward down the trail again. The resistance had subsided, and the right flank was cleared of enemy. The battalion was then withdrawn to a wooded area north of the main road near the trail

junction for the night, to best protect the Regiment.

2D BATTALION: "TASK FORCE HUNT"

Before noon the Regimental Commander had sensed a thorough breakthrough of the enemy Rhine defense; in preparation for rapid follow-up and continued pursuit he planned a task force, to consist of: the 744th Light Tank Battalion, Companies "B" and "A" (the latter newly attached) of the 823d TD Battalion, and on the armor the infantrymen of the 2d Battalion. Lt Col Richard J. Hunt, commander of the Light Tank Battalion, was in charge of the force. It was to form on the main route of advance just west of the autobahn, move out over the road which the 3d Battalion had taken, and pass through to drive to the east toward the town of Kirchhellen.

Lt Col Cantey readied his battalion. Company "E's" Capt Walter A. Wert had left for rotation leave in the States. To replace him, Lt Col Cantey chose the executive of Company "F," Lt George W. Terry. At 1130, Lt Terry was given command of Company "E" which was the lead company on the tanks. Preparation was made hastily, and as the tanks and TDs formed along the road in the Bruckhausen area, the men of the battalion mounted. Lt Terry climbed on one of the lead tanks.

Immediately after the noon meal in Vorde at 1215, the forward Regimental CP moved to Schwarzhof, a spacious farm on the edge of a field before the high ground ("Martha") which the 3d Battalion had taken that morning. In the courtyard assembled the staff and liaison vehicles; maps were spread out on jeep tops; plans were scribbled in dusty notebooks. The tracked vehicles rolled down the road with the dough-boys perched around the turret. The tankers pulled to the side to await word to move out.

At 1515 the lead tanks started forward from Stallbergshof near the autobahn. At that time the 3d Battalion had met little resistance; the move was to be rapid. After moving 3000 yards up to the south trail being utilized by the 3d Battalion, the tankers could hear fire all around them. A few minutes later machine guns were being fired at them from the woods; an enemy self-propelled gun appeared down the road. Several deafening explosions announced the disabling of the three lead tanks in "Task Force Hunt."

Long absent from the list of crack enemy units in contact with Allied forces was the 116th Panzer Division. Its commitment had been long awaited and expected. G-2 had suspected its presence in Holland as final reserve. When at 1655 a prisoner was



Machine gunners in the Staatsforst Wesel

identified as being from the 60th Regiment of the 116th Division, staff members realized that for a while at least the advance would not be so rapid as expected. Prisoners told how the division had been brought from Holland the day before and was preparing to counterattack and throw back the bridgehead forces.

An air strike had caught their column, however, and broken up the counterattack planned for that morning. The 60th Regiment, in force, was moving into the Staatsforst Wesel as the Task Force began its advance; a meeting engagement was inevitable. It was regiment pitted against regiment. The 60th, plus elements of the 156th Regiment, was forced on the defensive during the head-on collision with the 120th Infantry and its attached tanks. Officers of the 116th Panzer Division believed the high ground which our troops had just captured to be in German hands. As the result, the meeting engagement surprised them. Our soldiers, prepared for an immediate fight, gave the Germans a terrible beating, though not without cost of several good soldiers' lives.

Before the first tanks had been disabled the infantry speedily dismounted and organized to clean out the woods. It was difficult to see the enemy and though the Germans had few tanks, they had much equipment prepared to throw against the attackers. Lt Terry speeded the organization of his platoons and had them formed into assault teams to knock out strongpoints and enemy groups. In the confusion of

machine-gun and heavy direct fire, enemy halftracks could be perceived; some pulled into the shelter of the thickets; others backed off the road into ditches.

Platoon Leader Raymond E. LeVan gave hasty orders to his unit: he assembled some of his men in a house down a trail in the woods. From there he observed an enemy tank, surrounded by a squad of infantry, on the road which stretched forward and around to the right. Pfc Jack Shelton left the cover of the house and ran to the trail to fire his BAR on the infantry; he had fired only a few rounds when the machine gun on the tank responded; he fell to the ground wounded. Pfc Marvin B. Haley saw his "buddy" fall and headed for him; he had to creep and crawl to avoid the same fate as Shelton, for the tank machine gun was still pointed in that direction. After he had reached the wounded man he dragged him fifty yards to the concealment of the woods and administered first aid. It was a close call for Shelton.

The enemy fought savagely, but Company "E" fought as hard. Squads crept up upon enemy vehicles and before nightfall had knocked out five halftracks. Artillery was called and caught the enemy at a disadvantage; many were killed, and when a shell set the woods afire, some were burned in the blaze. Another round landed on an ammunition truck and exploding shells shot wild rockets sporadically in all directions.

The Germans fell back. More prisoners gave themselves up. The commander of the 1st Battalion, 60th Regiment, was captured with his staff. Company "E" brought in forty prisoners during the evening; as night fell the enemy was in full retreat to the east. They had lost, it was later learned, four halftracks with multiple 20mm cannons, an ambulance, a loaded ammunition truck, a searchlight and generator, two 75mm guns, three 105mm field pieces, a truck, and two tracked vehicles.

By 1900 the Regimental Commander was forced to stop the attack because the woods on fire prevented further advance. At sunset the road was still blocked by an ammunition truck exploding. The 2d Battalion took defensive positions in an oval in the western center of the Staatsforst Wesel on objective "Rose."

COMPANY "A": LEFT FLANK PROTECTION

While the 3d Battalion protected the right flank, the 1st Battalion had been ordered to move along the left (north) zone of the Regimental sector. Certain crossroads and key points were to be cleared out en route.

To perform this mission Lt Col Williamson called

upon Captain D'Amico of Company "A." In the mid-afternoon the latter led his unit from its area near the autobahn to head east. Six hundred yards in front of the company was the 3d Platoon; fifty yards ahead of the platoon were the scouts, Pfc George A. Johnson and Albert D'Onofrio. Across the steep slopes and rough underbrush of north Bruckhauser Heide the men guided in extended order toward the first main crossroad near a small community called Nottenborm.

It caused a queer, deep-down feeling to advance through no-man's land without being able to see far ahead, and without knowing what the next step may reveal. With just that feeling, Johnson and D'Onofrio continued on the assigned route. If they thought that by some good fortune the enemy would not be present in that area, they were soon disappointed. They came across a squad of Germans who ran in full flight at their approach, and were at too great a distance to be shot. Later the two men came upon an enemy emplacement where the defenders refused to run; three of them were killed and three captured by the aggressive pair.

Down a gnarled road the 3d Platoon continued its labored advance. Through the trees a house became discernible, and as the lead elements reached it automatic and small-arms fire from the left cut the trees, causing the platoon to hit the ground. Lt Jack R. Henterly ordered his men to make a rush for the house and organized a defense there. One man, Pvt Rosales, was killed as the squads dashed for the building.

The house became a desperate fortress when a counterattacking force of about a hundred Germans was observed forming across the road only about 200 yards away. Lt Chester J. Churns called his Cannon Company fire upon it and dispelled the immediate danger. But at the same time a second threat consisted of numerous machine guns in and around another house 300 yards to the southeast, guns which were cross-firing against the 3d Platoon. A machine-gun section from Company "D" went into action and with tracers set aflame the enemy's house, from which the Germans fled much terrified both by the fire and also by the artillery being called upon them. The rest of the story comes from Lt Henterly and Captain D'Amico:

"S/Sgt Dale Cline then moved his squad down the road and took up positions around the burning house. S/Sgt Trombley moved his squad one hundred yards past the burning house, but was stopped by another strongpoint which consisted of two machine-

gun squads and a rifle squad. Because cover was unavailable and the enemy had good observation and excellent fields of fire, the position became untenable. The platoon withdrew; but later that evening the company commander arranged for two light tanks from the 744th Light Tank Battalion to assist another platoon in knocking out the strongpoint. The tanks were late in arriving; so the company decided to attack without them and in a short time succeeded in capturing the strongpoint. With this point cleared the mission of Company 'A' was complete. Shortly after the company had organized at the crossroads for the night, a patrol from the 2d Battalion made contact. Company "C" faced north; Company "B" extended the line farther west.

In the morning, harassed by sporadic artillery, Company "A" continued toward Museburghath and Hovelsberg. Shortly after 1300 on the 26th of March Capt D'Amico brought his men to the ravine and occupied the hill above it.

Afterwards, to prove the advance to the Hovelsberg was not merely a matter of routine, Walter L. Johnson, lieutenant in Company "A," had the following story to tell:

"The men were stretched out on both sides of the road taking a break while I with a few other men checked some houses about 200 yards to the south of the road. It was about 1000 in the morning (26th) . . . Suddenly all hell broke loose. Direct fire, artillery and mortars, hitting us all at once, quickly killed one man and wounded eight others. Everyone was so stunned and scared that they could only think of hitting the ground and hoping they would get through somehow. With all this stuff coming in and everyone hugging the ground, T/Sgt Alfred E. Bollengier, platoon sergeant (S/Sgt and platoon guide then) kept his wits about him, came up the road and got the men to fall back and bring the wounded men with them to a point farther to the rear about 400 yards where they could get enough defilade to avoid further casualties. Pfc Roy L. Elrod, assistant squad leader (BAR man then), and Pfc Lyse J. Ecker and Clarence H. Wolfe, riflemen, all volunteered to help T/Sgt Bollengier in carrying out one man who was a litter case by putting him on a blanket and bringing him back 400 yards to a point of relative safety. There was another wounded man who was unable to walk and S/Sgt Louis R. Rizzo, platoon guide (squad leader then), S/Sgt Edward R. Wells, squad leader (Cpl and assistant squad leader then), Pfc Cyrus M. Estes, rifleman, and T/5 Leonard Uphaus, ammuni-

tion bearer in the Headquarters Company Antitank Platoon, but who was acting as an assistant bazooka man attached to our platoon in this action, all acting on their own initiative, carried this man out on a poncho. In the meantime 2d Lt Robert M. Wallin, platoon leader now, but who was then an excess officer, walked up from the rear of the column into the beaten zone of the shelling to help in reorganizing the men to assist another wounded man in walking back 450 yards."

2D BATTALION: THE STAATSFORST

At 2155 on the 26th Colonel Purdue told his battalions, "The 2d Battalion will attack tomorrow at 0730 for Objective 'Hulda,' one company from the south, two from the north."

"Hulda" was high ground east of the Staatsforst on the Schmarze Heide, an open plot on both sides of the road leading into Kirchhellen. The plan was for Companies "G" on the left and "E" behind to swing north in the thick woods and hit the enemy on the flank in a southward strike. On the right, meanwhile, Company "F" was to drive east using the Kirchhellen road as a guide, thus to hit the Germans farther south and press them on the opposite flank.

In preparation for the morning's attack both Companies "E" and "F" dispatched patrols to reconnoiter the respective Lines of Departure and zones of advance. The Company "F" men went forward only one hundred yards before an enemy outpost one hundred yards west of the open ground fired upon them; they were forced to withdraw.

At 0100, a patrol whose members were Cpl John J. Oglin, Pfc Walter H. Young, Pfc Robert J. McCarn, and Pfc Richard W. Marquette, from Company "E," swung northwest along the road toward Museburghath, a road which was to serve as Line of Departure the next day.

The patrollers guided upon the trail as they pushed stealthily on. When they came upon a clearing they crept and crawled forward and, from the wood's edge, saw a 105mm self-propelled gun with its muzzle pointed directly down the trail. The men returned as quietly and as quickly as possible. Artillery soon disabled the piece which could have withered our attack in its initial stages.

Another patrol moved west through the Staatsforst to its edge facing the bald fields of the Schmarze Heide. In the distance its members heard armor moving. Without further event the patrol reported back to battalion headquarters at 0500. The sound of armor

suggested heavy weapons moving into position; the real purpose of the enemy armor was not discovered till later.

Lt Col Cantey decided to attack an hour earlier than planned originally, to gain additional surprise. He received last-minute instructions from Colonel Purdue: "‘Fox’ (Company ‘F’) is going to the south; their job is to slip through, not to attack any tanks they meet. If they don’t get through by by-passing, they won’t get through at all." He told the 2d Battalion commander to throw a maximum of power against the enemy defense, "as it can’t be very deep."

At 0630 the 2d Battalion began its attack-maneuver. Company "F" moving south close to the Kirchhellen road made its way without hitting heavy resistance. In the first half hour it overran a Mark V tank, already disabled, one which the night before had slowed our advance through the woods.

At 0717, through an area touching the Regimental boundary, Company "G" moved northeast around the bald Hovelsberg east of Museburgshath. Close behind, Company "E" prepared to send a platoon ahead of Company "G" to move southeast, and strike the enemy from the rear.

Heading toward the woodline bordering the Schmarze Heide the Company "E" platoon moving south and Company "F" moving east had almost joined hands by 0755. Shortly after 0800 the woods up to the open ground Schmarze Heide as far as 500 yards north of the Kirchhellen road fell to the 120th.

After joining with Company "E," Company "F" was given the mission of securing the road junction at the corner of the Schmarze Heide where the Kirchhellen road emerged from the woods. The company was to cross the road and defend against attack from the south or east. At 0830 the 3d Platoon had maneuvered to positions along the woodline facing the east, where it covered the advance of the 1st Platoon driving southeast toward the road junction and a lone house standing in the open some 200 yards from the woods.

It was when Companies "G" and "E" were consolidating, when Company "F" was close to its final objective, that the armor which had been heard so frequently in the early morning made its appearance. The German attack took the form of a task force drive by a company of infantry and three tanks. From Kirchhellen along the main road it struck at the troops at the wood’s edge.

While Companies "G" and "E" were at best half-prepared along the north-south trail on the edge of the

Staatsforst, Company "F" had not yet reached the trail. As the enemy approached the air became alive with 105mm fire and the spray of machine-gun slugs. In particular, the 1st Platoon was caught, exposed in the advance.

In the first hail of enemy fire, the 1st Platoon leader was killed. S/Sgt Sam J. Javitch, who had distinguished himself in the Rhine crossing, went to the head of the group and urged the men on to the objective. They rushed across the road and hastened to positions facing the southeast. In order to delay or stop the advance of the tanks, the Company "F" squads separated the enemy infantry from them with small arms fire.

Carrying a rifle grenade, Pvt Raymond Rottar reached the edge of the woods and, deciding that he did not have an adequate field of fire, made a dash for the lone house in the plot across the trail. He reached it safely but not unobserved. Adjusting the grenade on the muzzle of his M-1, he peered around the corner to find his target. The German tanker was quick, however, and one round landed squarely on the brick beside Rottar’s face; in the gallant attempt to destroy the three tanks he was killed instantly.

The enemy had artillery support, which increased with the approach of the enemy attackers. Not only the woods’ edges, but key crossroads and main routes in the rear areas were hammered. Cannon Company men sustained injuries while, in moving to a new firing site, they were caught on the road. Shelling was the heaviest encountered to that date in the Rhine operation.

At 1000 Company "E" was receiving both tank and artillery fire. S/Sgt Michael King was with the 2d Platoon, which had been sent to reconnoiter a path for vehicles and to make certain it was clear of mines. Two squads were moving on either side of the road. As they came closer to the forward elements of the company, the noise of the enemy attack became increasingly louder. All at once after they had apparently exposed themselves in some way to one of the enemy tanks, the platoon received several rounds of direct fire which ripped through the trees and exploded in the midst of the party. Men on both sides of the trail hit the ground; more rounds crashed. Two men near S/Sgt King were killed; thirteen were wounded. He began to take count of the two squads on his side of the trail. Assuming command, he gave hurried orders for the evacuation of the wounded and reorganized the others so that the party continued along the trail and fulfilled its mission.

Our artillery forward observer soon brought fire on the enemy. It was a godsend to the troops when our rounds began to fall. The tanks halted; the German infantry was confused. After a few hours of resounding battle, during the course of which the 2d Battalion suffered many casualties, the enemy began to slacken his ardor. It was not, however, until afternoon that the tanks withdrew toward Kirchhellen. When the 2d Battalion men tried to follow in pursuit, enemy artillery pinned them down.

The 2d Battalion area had not been entirely cleared, since the map was not accurate and failed to show as much wooded area as actually existed. It was while cleaning out the woods when men of the battalion began realizing the Germans had mined certain roads in the area. Friendly tanks exploded *Teller*-mines on the mud trails. To clear these obstacles involved delay. The road through the Staatsforst from the Regimental Command Post was soft and with the passage of tanks had become more and more torn and distorted. Details went to work with logs to make the road firmer, but Colonel Purdue meanwhile ordered a rerouting of traffic to the main highway north of the road passing the command post in order to avoid maintenance difficulty and prolonged delay.

The forward command-post group moved over the rutted, slashed road to a restaurant at a corner where the mud road met the main paved highway; the rear elements of the command post moved late that night of the 25th to a house, Stallbergshof, on a hill close to the autobahn.

LAST OF THE STAATSFORST WESEL

Still with the mission of protecting the right flank of the Regimental zone of advance, the 3d Battalion pushed forward at 0845 on the morning of the 26th. Leading the other companies, Company "I" guided on a path running parallel to the Kirchhellen highway.

Along the route of advance were some trail junctions considered possible enemy strongpoints. The enemy was lightly distributed in the sector, however, and at 1112 the battalion reported: "Had some trouble with infantry in the woods, but our artillery took care of that."

During the advance by the 3d Battalion on the 26th, the worst aspect was the large number of enemy ammunition dumps which littered the woods where Company "I" led the way. There was ammunition of every variety, 105mm, 155mm, and rockets, piled neatly in different locations. Lt John A. Doyle, leading the foremost platoon of Company "I," noticed that

the piles were wired for demolition, and with his men, began breaking the wires and removing the blasting caps from each stack as they came to it. Sometimes the artillery had already done that for them.

There was an amazing delay when Company "I" troops ran across elements of Company "E," 134th Infantry, 35th Division, on the right (south) that morning. The 35th Division company was out of its zone, and had been sifting through close to the Kirchhellen highway.

When Company "I" drew within 300 yards of the woods' edge, Maj McCullough committed Companies "L" and "K" on the right of Company "I," which had made contact with Company "F" by 1340, and took up left flank protection of the battalion. By 1630 the 3d Battalion had consolidated defensive positions as far as 400 yards south of the Kirchhellen road at the edge of the Staatsforst.

Company "I" dug in quickly, and wisely, since the enemy began shelling the positions viciously, probably with the 128mm antiaircraft guns later found to be some 1000 yards forward. The men were "sweating out" the numerous artillery rounds, any of which might hit ammunition piles throughout the woods. Finally, late that night, the enemy hit one stack and the resultant blast blew off the tops of some of the foxholes and wounded three men. The artillery fire continued; it was considered as unrelenting as the saturation fires which the 3d Battalion endured at Wurselen the previous October.

1ST BATTALION: SCHMARZE HEIDE

The heavy opposition met by the 2d Battalion at the edge of the Staatsforst made it clear that another battalion would have to be pushed through to continue the drive. For this assignment Colonel Purdue decided to use his 1st Battalion.

By 1340 Companies "B" and "C" were assembling near the Hovelsberg which Company "A" had seized shortly before. The plans for moving through the 2d Battalion called originally for an attack at 1345; the counterattack from Kirchhellen and the mined roads forced its postponement until 1700.

When Companies "B" and "C" were moving into the 2d Battalion area on the edge of the Staatsforst they met a withering welcome. A series of concentrations of artillery, even heavier than that which had caught the 2d Battalion in the morning, set the trees ringing with the whirl of fragments and tore branches and roots alike. The men were forced to the ground, and without cover of any kind, or shelter from tree

bursts, numerous casualties were sustained. Moving about among his men, Lt Col Williamson was himself wounded in the hand. Men said later that the shelling was the heaviest they had experienced since Mortain. This display of enemy strength caused the attack to be again postponed to 2030 in order to take advantage of darkness.

The seizure of Objective "June"—the wooded ground east of the Schmarze Heide—meant crossing 4000 yards of wide open country, vulnerable from three sides. Though Colonel Purdue wanted to send the battalion north through the sector of the 117th Infantry, which had slightly outdistanced the 120th when we were delayed by the forest fire, to do so and thus to flank the enemy positions would have taken many hours; because of the time element, a frontal attack had to be made. With the heavy artillery still falling, and with a mounting casualty toll and a long difficult push to make, prospects were dark. Colonel Purdue was admittedly more worried than he had been at any time during the operation.

Tree bursts were still crashing in the 2d Battalion area when Lt Col Williamson called his leaders together to outline his plans. They had to be exact; and they had been worked out with minute care. First, the preparatory fires were to create a real "smoke box"; in successive concentrations from a line midway to the objective the artillery fire was to be poured before the infantry, at the same time that the objective itself was being heavily smoked; meanwhile on each flank the 2d and 3d Battalions' 81mm mortars were prepared to screen the advance with white phosphorus the entire distance from woods to woods.

Much of the success of the attack was to hinge, however, on the plan for evading the heavy artillery which had already wrought so much damage, and which the enemy would doubtless employ to flail the Line of Departure as soon as preparatory fires betrayed the coming attack. Hence the two lead companies made plans to run from the woods' edge, the probable artillery target, as soon as the 120th preparation began, to an area about 500 yards forward of the woods. Company "A," meanwhile, was to remain in assembly at the Hovelsberg, wait fifteen minutes following H-hour, then move as quickly as possible to catch up with Company "C."

There was increasing nuisance when the enemy made small drives at the 2d Battalion lines in the evening before the 1st Battalion attack. At 1830 Pfc George A. Oestreicher, of Company "H," from his ma-

chine-gun post in Company "F's" area, observed a tank close to the lines; the German tanker was peering from an open hatch and preparing to fire against the defensive troops. He closed his trap door quickly, though, when Oestreicher began to splatter the tank with machine-gun fire. As soon as the tank buttoned up some riflemen maneuvered to destroy it with a bazooka or rifle grenade but, realizing his vulnerability when so close and without visibility, the tanker turned and escaped toward his own lines.

Only a half hour before the scheduled attack the enemy threw a combat patrol of approximately twenty men at the Regiment's lines. It struck at Company "E's" left flank, and threatened to wedge itself between Company "E" and the 117th Infantry. Pfc Russel E. Brown and Ray G. Sweet of Company "H" stood in their emplacements and watched the enemy come closer for some minutes. Restraining itchy trigger fingers with difficulty, they waited till the Germans came within 200 yards of their position; then they sprayed the German prowlers liberally with automatic fire. Scattering in all directions, the party was forced to make a hasty withdrawal.

Meanwhile the 1st Battalion companies were making final preparations, and Companies "B" and "C" were forming close to the Line of Departure. Up until a few hours before the jump-off the enemy continued to lay heavy concentrations on the troops. Where Company "B" was forming it was estimated that the Germans were firing fifteen shells a minute into the woods.

The guide of one of the platoons, T/Sgt William R. Murphy, was following behind to keep the men moving. He was still far from the edge of the woods when he ran across eight of his men from different squads who had become lost and did not know, in the excitement and thick woods, what to do. Through the still-persistent shelling, Murphy headed toward the front of the platoon alone and, when he found the leader, explained the situation. Still under heavy fire he received his orders and went back to pick up the men, whom he placed in order for the coming attack.

Faring no better in an adjacent area to the south Company "C" was making last arrangements. The radio was found useless in the thick woods. Substituting for the SCR 300 was T/Sgt Burnice T. Bahr, a member of the headquarters group, who ran among the platoons, allowing neither artillery nor the approaching darkness to slow him.

Up and down the Line of Departure strode ener-

getic Lt Ernest F. Sharpe, 1st Battalion, S-2, delivering extra radios and charging the men with encouragement before their new engagement.

The 3d Battalion was making preparations to fire supporting fire for the attack; along with the smoke plan was a machine-gun mission to interdict the right flank of the zone of advance.

The mortars in the meantime needed ammunition, particularly smoke. Pfc Percy G. J. Boudreaux was driving an M-29 "Weasel" loaded with ammunition; with him were Pfc Levin C. Hitch and Cpl Isidore P. Domenicone. Along the road subject to sporadic shelling, the men continued up close to the mortar positions. When they had stopped, a sudden shell landing close, wounded Boudreaux seriously. Hitch was quick to act; after placing the wounded man as comfortably as possible in the M-29, he rode back in all speed to the nearest aid station. Cpl Domenicone went forward to the mortar positions and with bearers returned to direct the unloading of the ammunition on the M-29 as soon as it had come back. So continued the drama of supply during the crucial hours prior to the attack.

Cpl Paul C. Aldmon, gunner on a Company "C" machine gun, crawled forward of the front lines before the attack began. He had spotted a source of enemy automatic fire just previous to H-hour. With the single purpose of keeping the nest quiet till the 1st Battalion overran it, Aldmon began firing against it, and, knowing how much trouble it might otherwise cost the battalion, neutralized it. At exactly 2030 Companies "C" and "B" began their 600-yard sprint. They moved quickly. The enemy gunner was unable to fire a shot before, as Aldmon planned, he was overrun.

The plan for evading artillery worked without casualty. The lead companies ran energetically for the stretch of open ground; once caught up with the artillery concentrations they stayed close behind during the progress to the objective. Company "A" waited; the enemy threw a heavy hail of artillery and mortar upon the Line of Departure and upon the supporting locations of the 3d Battalion. When the enemy fire ceased the company hustled along the paths, and finally into the open spaces, it dogtrotted to gain the normal interval behind Company "C."

The difficulties confronting the 1st Battalion in making this attack were stupendous. It was known that the enemy occupied the far (east) edge of the flying field and the woods on the right (south). It was believed that small groups of the enemy were in the

woods to the left flank. Therefore, the attack presented the problem of a movement the full length of a two-mile airstrip against an entrenched enemy at the far end, with certain enemy on one flank and probable enemy on the other. Colonel Purdue developed an unusual solution. Lt Col Williamson, with his usual brilliance, perfected certain details of this solution. The two assault rifle companies, "B" on the left and "C" on the right, formed in close formation abreast after running from the woods. A platoon of tank destroyers formed in line for frontal fire while the tanks were in column with their guns rotated for flanking fire. The box-like formation moved straight down the center of the flying field protected from observation by the "U" of smoke placed upon the enemy. The tank destroyers maintained cannon and machine-gun fire into the objective during the approach. The tanks fired only upon enemy which disclosed themselves on the flanks. Fortunately, the smoke kept most of the enemy from observing our approach. Later, when the smoke had lifted, enemy to the south flank brought effective fires against supply and communication vehicles moving forward to join the battalion after the objective was seized.

The armor plan worked equally well. The tanks and tank destroyers drove forward to the flanks of the infantry. On the right a Company "C" officer walked beside the lead tanks, directed the advance, coordinating the tank mission with the infantry mission. Though Lt James L. Mosby, executive of the company, who led the armor, took the chance of being pounded by artillery directed at the tanks, he was as always calm and decisive. In Company "C's" zone two groups of enemy armor were passed; the first was unable to halt the battalion, the second was scattered by the tank fire from the M-24s.

Several trenches of enemy infantry were overrun. Though he had been wounded both in the arm and leg, Pfc Elmer W. Smith of Company "B" came upon and captured three Germans in an entrenchment. Later he helped search a house and produced six prisoners of war. He did not leave his squad that night, but dug in and stood guard as usual. Later he refused to be evacuated.

At 2110 the 1st Battalion was halfway to the objective. Opposition had become negligible. Fifteen minutes later the tanks were moving into the woods and friendly artillery had been lifted. By 2135 the battalion was upon its objective. The smoke was found to have thoroughly baffled the enemy. Civilians stated that when it came, the enemy relaxed, certain that it

indicated no night attack; shortly thereafter the Germans were taken by complete surprise. The smoke on the right flank had, furthermore, completely blinded the crews of four 128mm and eight mobile 20mm guns which did not fire into the attackers, who were only a few hundred yards from them.

Company "B" took up a northeast defense in semi-circle, while south of "B," Company "C" took positions to cover the Kirchhellen road approximately 200 yards on either side of it. Company "A" organized south of the road facing southeast. Thus the 1st Battalion completed its most successful night attack. It had seized an airfield with camouflaged railroad tracks, two boxcars of bombs and ammunition, two 75mm guns with halftracks, and much deserted equipment. It had not lost a single man in the assault. It had broken through the enemy literally "in a cloud of smoke."

Colonel Purdue ordered Lt Col Williamson to be evacuated following the seizure of the objective. Although he had been wounded six times before, this was the first time Lt Col Williamson had left the field, and he was to be absent only thirteen days.

3D BATTALION: SCHLAGERS HEIDE

The 1st Battalion had moved over the Schmarze Heide north of the Kirchhellen road crossing the highway close to its objective. South of the road, ahead of the 3d Battalion Staatsforst positions, lay the Schlagers Heide, extending 4000 yards forward. At the woods east of this ground the attack on the morning of the 27th of March was directed.

At 0600 Company "L" had formed on the right (south) with Company "I" on the left, and keeping as much off the open ground as possible, both pushed forward through the woods south of the Schlagers Heide, with the mission of bringing the 3d Battalion on line with the 1st.

The advance of Company "I" was smooth and quick. By 0843 the company was moving upon the objective and had contacted, at a point about 200 yards south of Kirchhellen, the right flank elements of the 1st Battalion.

Company "L" on the Regimental right flank met considerable artillery fire, which continued through the morning. By 1030, however, the men were up to the east edge of the woods facing Holthausen. During the process of organizing a defense they were harassed by enemy artillery. One self-propelled gun drove close to the woods and was firing rounds into the area when one of the lead platoons was preparing po-

sitions around a house; the men sought shelter hastily.

Perceiving the source of the disruptive fire, Pfc Max W. Leake ran from the house to a point of vantage and fired two antitank rifle grenades in rapid succession. Hoping to move the self-propelled gun to cover, the gunner withdrew partially; Leake had drawn 20mm antiaircraft fire from an enemy position at Holthausen, but he changed position and fired two more grenades, one being white phosphorus. In a few seconds the self-propelled piece, on fire, was enveloped in fumes and billows of smoke.

An observer with Company "L" from the 230th Field Artillery Battalion, Lt Wayne H. Cofer, established his observation post in an obvious but strategic house, shortly after the company had occupied its positions. Soon the house he used was drawing fire, too; nevertheless, before the day was over, he had brought fire upon tanks 1500 yards to the right front and others 800 yards to the left, some of which he had knocked out.

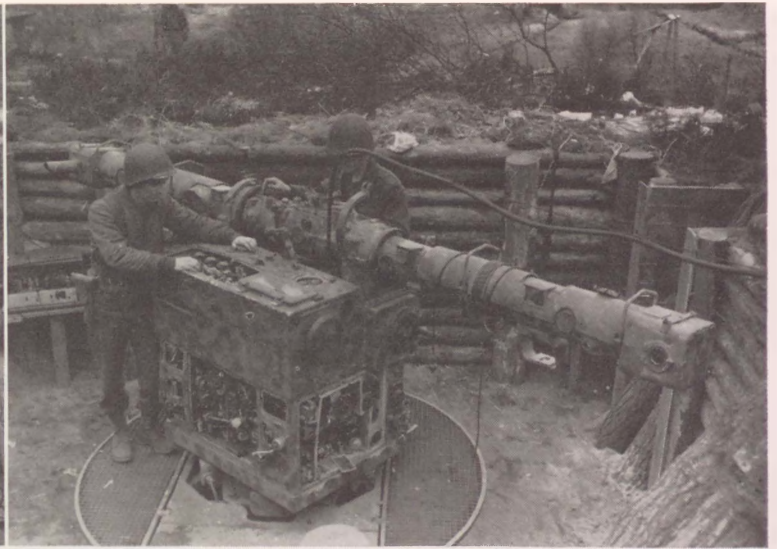
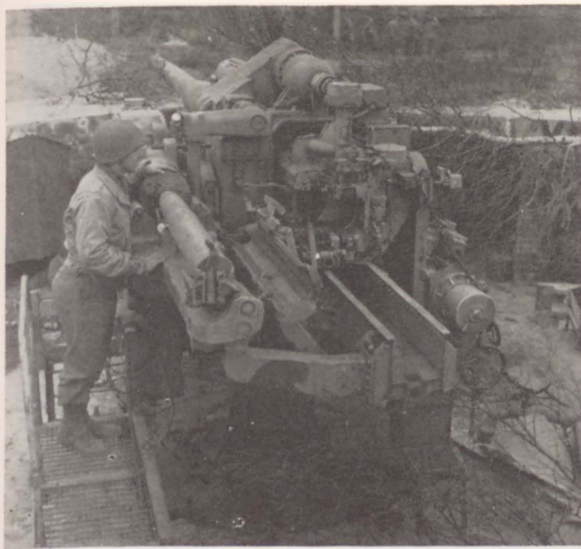
At 1100 the battalion had cleared the woods in its area. In an inventory of captured equipment, a real "take" was reported. Company "I" had seized a block of elaborate, fixed antiaircraft installations, originally used as protection for the airfield seized the night before by the 1st Battalion. Near the dugout barracks were four 128mm guns, intact but for the removal of their firing pins. Twenty-three prisoners were taken as well, with five flakwagons, and a 20mm gun.

2D BATTALION: HOLTHAUSEN

At 0722 a report from the Regimental Command Post in the Staatsforst to the battalions said: "Another intermediate objective added, called 'July.'" The final objective was to have been "Sarah," the high ground around Kirchhellen, but with the German defenses seemingly broken, Corps decided to send the armor through the infantry lines even before Kirchhellen was captured.

"July" was Holthausen, a group of settlements 200 yards west of Kirchhellen. The 2d Battalion, which had made the first attack in the Rhine operation, was ordered to make the last.

It was to be a night attack, and for it, Company "K" was attached to Lt Col Cantey's battalion. The plans called for Company "G" to strike a settlement called Ekamp north of the Kirchhellen road, while Company "F" took Janinhof and Company "E" captured Holthausen south of the road. Company "K" was assigned to follow the other companies and to seize a



Left: Sergeant James Maddrey examines a giant anti-aircraft gun captured by Company "I." Right: Captain Charles Shaw and Sergeant Furman Bishop inspect fire-control instruments of the German anti-aircraft battery.

crossroads between Company "G" and Company "F," and west of the other three objectives.

The Line of Departure was to be the woodline; for Company "G" that northwest of its objective, and in the 1st Battalion area; for the others the forest edge west of their objectives in the 3d Battalion area. In the latter sector, Company "L" and a platoon of Company "I" cleaned out the woods up to the departure point during the afternoon.

Two platoons of Company "A" were sent to the edge of the woods which Company "G" was to use; by 1400 they had secured the ground and organized a defense along the treeline. An hour and a half later the two platoons were disturbed by repercussions of a blow struck farther north by enemy self-propelled guns which crossed from north to south and threatened to move against the Company "A" platoons.

S/Sgt Dewey H. Harris and Pfc Daniel W. Faacks picked up some antitank rifle grenades and from different locations hammered the enemy guns. One of them was forced to withdraw.

The frequent shift in armor, partially seen and partially heard, in the area in front of his lines, caused Lt Roy V. Young to fear another strike by the enemy. Perceiving a lack of counterarmor defense, he sought a tank destroyer. Through the sporadic fire, accompanied faithfully by his radio operator, Pfc Johnny P. Causby, he slopped through a swamp to an M-10 commanded by Lt Eugene Rohatsch, and asked him to bring his weapon up to the line where it would have better observation to knock out armor attacking from the east. Though the marsh threatened to mire

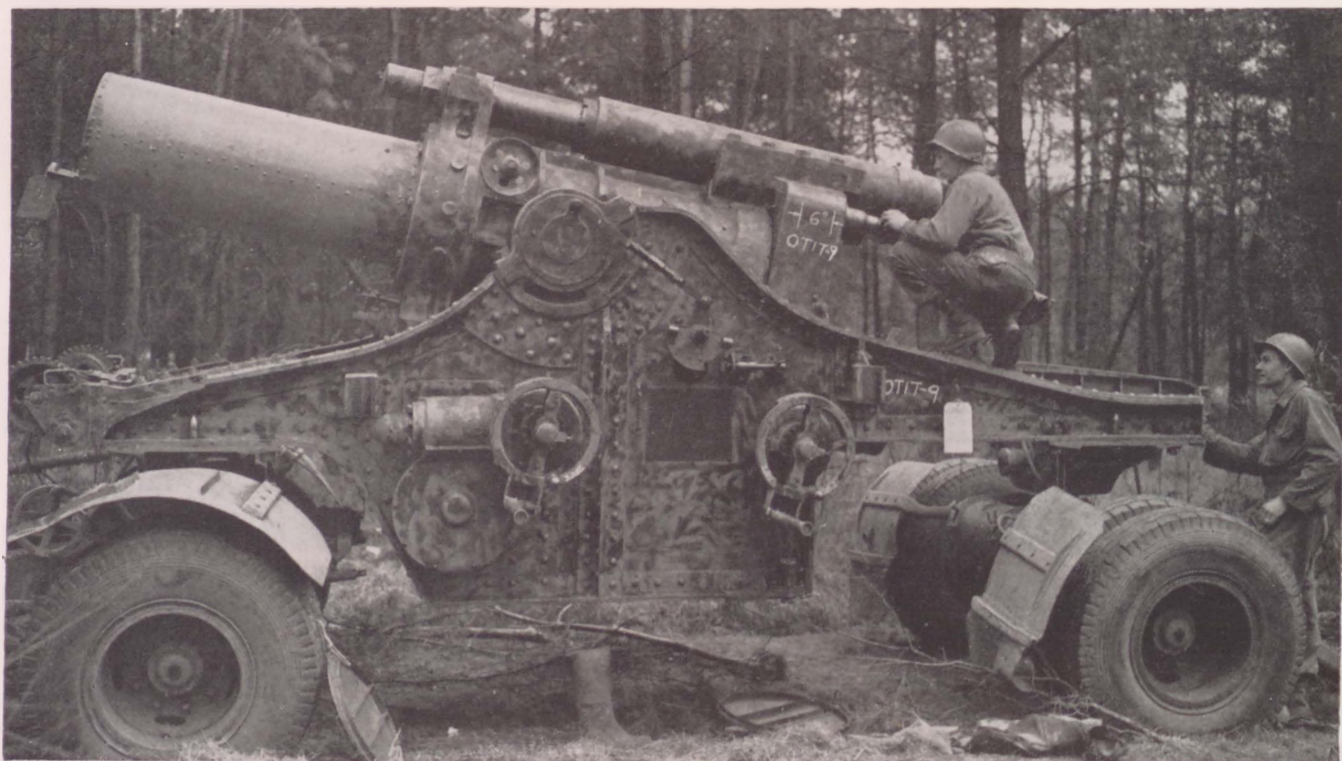
down the destroyer in a vulnerable spot, Lt Rohatsch unhesitatingly primed his motor, raced across the danger space safely, and pulled into position near to, and in hearteningly close support of, the doughboys.

During this period heavy artillery had been falling in this area, so much that Company "A" men later painted a sign and posted it along the Kirchhellen road: "Hot Box Corner—Courtesy of the 1st Platoon, Company 'A,' 120th Infantry." Lt Donald C. Mills, of the 230th Field Artillery Battalion, and his radio operator, T/5 Robert J. Garon, stationed themselves to bring counterbattery on the German guns, and by evening the fire had subsided.

The Schlagers and Schmarze Heide were two fields which became well plowed during the course of the day. Supplies had to be kept flowing forward, however, and among those who made Company "C" riflemen happy was Pfc Ogden S. Sharpe, who drove his cargo carrier, M-29, containing rolls and food supplies to forward positions during enemy artillery barages.

The 2d Battalion moved forward at nightfall. The attack was called for 2100, and in imitation of the success of the night before, artillery and mortars were to smoke the objectives and the flanks; even Company "K's" crossroad objective was to receive smoke from Company "H's" mortars. A platoon of tanks and one of tank destroyers attached to Company "G" were to follow the infantry onto their objectives, as were a platoon of tanks and a section of tank destroyers attached to Company "E," and the same to Company "F."

Although the night was overcast, visibility was good



The Regiment captured a very heavy weapon in the Staatsforst Wesel

when at 2100 the four companies moved forward as scheduled. Company "G" moved through Company "B" and for fifty yards continued without opposition. Then an artillery barrage landed on the attackers, and one man was wounded. Pfc Virgil C. Boyles, medic attached to Company "B," ran to the aid of the wounded man even before the barrage ceased. He administered first aid and brought the man to safety.

The enemy had organized small defensive positions in hedgerows around the farms which dotted the objective. Having been fired on and sensing the location of one of the enemy strongpoints, Pfc Clifton W. Cashion, a machine-gun squad leader from Company "H," alone took the heavy gun, and carried it to an advantageous spot; he placed it in position and began to fire burst after burst against the enemy group. After closing in upon the position, riflemen flushed thirty Germans from it.

Continuing forward two platoons reached the assigned objective, though there was some delay when a third platoon was lost for a short time. Company "F" moved rapidly, however, and by 2210 was on its objective despite casualties from artillery. The 1st Platoon was on the left flank, and when it began to veer too far north, Capt Jacobsen sent S/Sgt Lawrence J. Grogan to warn the platoon of its error and bring it back. Grogan had to cross 500 yards, and at

that time 20mm fire was digging furrows in the slopes; he had to creep and crawl in spots but succeeded eventually in accomplishing his mission.

After the company had reached its objective the tanks had to be led forward, for the roads were muddy and treacherous. Though wounded in the head by a white phosphorus fragment, Pfc Arthur W. Fleischmann walked 500 yards to the rear, met the armor, and brought it forward. Afterward he volunteered to bring litter bearers from the settlement of Haseken to the objective, Janinhof, where some wounded men were still waiting to be evacuated.

Company "K" had moved without opposition into position on the crossroads by 2210.

Meanwhile Company "E" had jumped off on time. Again under a newly appointed commander, since Lt Terry had been made Battalion S-3 when Capt Joseph E. Brown was evacuated, the company was now headed by Lt Guy E. Hogle. He was faced with the stiffest resistance of any of the companies, and had to keep his men rallied during fire from heavy and light artillery, and 20mm antiaircraft ground fire. At 2210 the company was still struggling into Haseken, intermediate objective before Halthaus. An enemy half-track was knocked out by aggressive riflemen, but a Mark IV tank was holding them at bay in the driveway of a large country house. Lt Hogle borrowed an

M-1 and a rifle smoke grenade, and after firing to envelop the tank in white phosphorus fumes, took a bazooka man to a point of vantage on the flank of the tank, and with two rockets disabled it.

At 2230 Lt Hogle held the company on the intermediate objective until the friendly tanks and tank destroyers could be brought up beside the riflemen. Then the men drove on into Halthaus by 0300. During the fight communication between Company "E" and Battalion was broken. In the midst of the fire fight, Lt William P. Barenkamp, Battalion S-2, and Pfc John Karambelsas negotiated the rough terrain to make sure all was going well. They returned unscratched with a favorable report, indeed. Company "E" did not suffer one casualty.

The 2d Battalion had seized all its assigned objectives by 0100, but for a few houses in Company "G's" area. Shortly after 0415 the troops near Ekamp were settled, and positions consolidated.

THE 8TH ARMORED PASSES THROUGH

The enemy became quieter following the seizure of the 2d Battalion objectives. Suddenly about 0530, tanks were heard to the left front of the lines; in the distance riflemen could see movement of vehicles, and hurriedly the field artillery observer called for fires. Pfc James D. Ray, of Company "H," had a hunch the armor was not the enemy's. Jumping from his hole, he ran to a position of better observation, and though he thus exposed himself, was able to see the markings on the vehicles; they were American. He rushed back in time to stop the fire about to be brought on friendly troops. It merited a celebration to know American soldiers had gone that far.

The 8th Armored Division had crossed the Rhine on the 26th of March and crowded the roads behind the 120th, ready to push through on order. The night of the 27th-28th, tanks of that unit lined the roads and filled wooded assembly areas beside the way. At 0600 they were to head eastward through Kirchhellen toward Central Germany.

The armor rolled forward on schedule. Past the 2d Battalion, long columns passed down the highways. In the vicinity of Halthaus, Company "E" men watched two lines of armor pass on either side of them, till they merged into one on a third road leading through Kirchhellen. Between the men and the road junction was approximately 500 yards of down-sloping ground. From this area at first insignificant rifle shots began to be received at about 0730. The soldiers paid little attention until one of them was hit.



Warrant Officer Al Hooper made good use of a captured generator

Realizing that some enemy were still holding positions before Kirchhellen even though the tanks were passing on three sides, S/Sgt David C. Shepherd, mortar observer for Company "H," decided to try to eliminate the tiny pocket. Making hasty plans for a coordinated attack, Shepherd discussed how best to assault the enemy with Sgt Charles D. Lamb, who drove a tank in Company "C," 744th Light Tank Battalion, and with T/Sgt Michael King and Pfc David Owens, of Company "E." It was decided that the tank would move forward after a mortar preparation on the area, and accompanied by two infantrymen as protection, would mop up the resistance. These plans were carried out without a slip. Shepherd timed the barrage perfectly, to cease just previous to the tank's assault. Lamb drove astride the enemy trenches, firing steadily. King and Owens brought back twenty-seven prisoners, and reported the "pocket" successfully mopped up. A few hours later the 120th Infantry was no longer in contact with enemy forces.

PAUSE AFTER THE BREAKTHROUGH

One day after the 8th Armored had passed through the 120th lines, the battalions withdrew from their defensive positions and the men were billeted in houses in the Holthausen area. The 1st sent two companies into Kirchhellen; the 2d occupied the Janinhof

area; the 3d remained in the dugout barracks on the Schlagers Heide; and the Regimental Command Post combined rear and forward in a farmhouse at Ekamp on the 30th of March.

The troops cleaned billets, underwent foot inspections, and rested following the fatiguing operation.

On the 28th it was believed by higher headquarters that the Regiment would follow the 8th Armored; the following day plans were formulated for movement on a four-hour alert. Also reaching headquarters of the Regiment was notification that the 30th Infan-

try Division was now in the XIX Corps, in reserve.

Trucks were made available to the Regiment on the 31st of March, and boundaries for a move to the east were revealed. All vehicles were to be supplied with enough gas for 350 miles; final word was that the 30th Division reinforced and motorized had to be prepared to move on 12-hour notice.

Thus, with a fight of 17½ miles from the Rhine behind us, and a long drive toward Berlin ahead, the month of March ended in high optimism. After so many months of war, German defeat was in sight.



APRIL

For the first day of April the following is an extract from the After-Action report of the 120th Infantry:

"The last two days of March had seen rapid advance by the 8th and 2d Armored Divisions from the area around Kirchhellen, where the 120th Infantry had taken its last objectives on the 28th of March. Plans were formulated for the 30th Division to move behind the 2d Armored, eliminating pockets of resistance which the armor had by-passed. The general sector of advance for the Division was to be contained in: the southern boundary extending approximately in a straight line through Dortmund, south of Soest, Paderborn, Magdeburg, and finally Berlin, and the north boundary, extending a few miles north of Munster, Hannover, Neurupen, and Berlin. The Division was to be motorized.

"On 1 April, the Regiment was located in the Holt-hausen-Kirchhellen area; the Command Post was situated in the farmhouse at Ekamp. After morning preparations had been made for the 'blitz' movement in the wake of the armor, lead vehicles of the Regiment passed the Division Initial Point at 1320; entirely motorized, the remainder of the 120th Combat Team followed.

"In order, 1st, 2d, 3d Battalion, followed by Anti-tank Company, 230th Field Artillery Battalion, Cannon Company, Company "C" of the 105th Medical Battalion, Company "B" of the 823d Tank Destroyer Battalion, and Service Company, the Combat Team sped over the outskirts of the Ruhr Valley to the rolling terrain of central Germany.

"The convoy's route was through Wulfen, Haltern (so close to the Ruhr industrial pocket that it was in constant threat of shelling), Dulmen, and Ludinghausen, to a dispersal point at Ascheburg.

"By 1820 the Regimental Command Post was established with the 3d Battalion at Drensteinfurt, with the 1st and 2d Battalions in the vicinity of Rinkerode.

This new blitz movement brought memories to old-timers of the dash across France from Domfront into Belgium. In the rush only essentials could be carried, and even when CPs moved into spacious farmhouses and mansions, the majority of equipment was left packed on jeeps and trailers.

It was no longer a matter of pushing the enemy foot by foot but rather of keeping close upon his heels. The 2d Armored ahead of our Regiment had occasional contacts with scattered groups of enemy forces, but its main effort was to keep a hot breath upon the necks of the retreating Germans. When the

armor met any strong pocket, the 30th Division was close behind ready to attack and reduce it.

For the men who were mounted on trucks and driving the Regimental vehicles, for the doughboys who were riding through enemy land—not walking and fighting—for every soldier who watched the roads stretching miles and miles ahead through tiny villages, over fertile fields and through green thickets—without a Main Line of Resistance, a Line of Departure, or a no-man's land in sight—it was a thrilling experience. Still it had its uncertainties. No one knew when a peaceful woodline might turn into a bristling strongpoint, or that a blown bridge might indicate a Nazi "fight-to-the-last-man" position.

The 662d Quartermaster Truck Company helped to carry the three battalions up to the Drensteinfurt area. One member of that outfit, who had driven some of the 1st Battalion men, was Negro Pfc Ned Austin. He must have experienced some uncertainty as regards "last-ditch" pockets when, in need of a new tire for his truck, he headed from Rinkerode for Service Company the morning of the 2d of April. He had been speeding down the road for some time when all at once he noticed that he was headed straight for a bridge which had been blown; as he slowed down thirty-five yards in front of it, he began receiving small-arms fire. Two men were in the truck with him, and none lost any time ducking to cover along the ditches beside the road.

Austin had a carbine and began firing. Then one of the men, a cook, was hit and needed immediate first aid. Propping him against his shoulders, Austin half pulled, half lifted the wounded man away from the bridge site. They had gone only about fifty yards when they received more fire, this time from a house at some distance from the road ahead of them. Believing they were entirely and hopelessly surrounded, the cook wanted to surrender. Unwilling to accept his companion's suggestion and taking instead a new direction far to the left of the house, Austin struggled over the fields determined to reach an American installation. He had sensed the right direction, for not far away they found an aid station, and the wounded man was tended to. The third man had meanwhile been wounded, but taking a new route of his own, he found a friendly unit and was saved. The road Austin traversed was actually one which led, not to Service Company, but to the city of Munster, still held by the Germans, and he had been south of it only four miles. Later during that morning a roadblock



The 2d Armored Division rapidly moved ahead

was established to prevent similar cases of ambush.

At noon on the same day the Regiment continued forward. In order, 1st, 3d, 2d Battalions, the convoy sped along a route through Sendenhorst and Vorhelm; and over one of Hitler's German projects—a smooth, well landscaped autobahn—until after it passed Wiederbruck. Then turning right (southeast) it halted in the area around Verl, where all units moved into billets.

The outskirts of the Ruhr Valley were beautiful, particularly to soldiers whose eyes had become accustomed to devastation and destruction. Peaceful and busy towns were a welcome relief after sights like Krauthausen and Kirchherten, Mehrum and Mollen. The green fields and woods were a source of joy to the men who were used to seeing the fields near Niederzier and Kirchhellen and to seeing woods such as the Pierer Wald and the Staatsforst Wesel.

And for the first time increasingly large numbers of liberated workers and foreign prisoners began to flow down the roads where the Regiment advanced.

Some walked with heavy packs and sweating brow; others sat inside or walked beside nag-towed carts, and had perhaps fixed a flag of their country—France, Holland, or Belgium—to the crossbeams of the wagon. Some smiled or waved appreciatively at the soldiers, others were taking “breaks” sprawled beneath the shade of the tree, and, tired after years of forced labor, did not bother to look.

Headed by Capt Albert C. Gerould and Lt Adolph Steiner, the IPW Team took no “breaks.” With endless columns of suspected enemy to interrogate, it remained busy far into the night, questioning all varieties of troops—mostly stragglers—from Home Guard units and signal branches, men on sick leave and in labor camps.

TEUTOBERGER WALD

The 2d Armored was moving rapidly ahead. Formed into different combat commands, each made up of an armored regiment and attachments, it moved along different routes. Halting only on occasion to blast

momentarily at some sniper's nest or building-strong-point, the columns were rarely held up.

Guerrilla troops can defeat and destroy invaders when the latter drive too far inland and away from the protection of organized bases. That is what the Roman armies in 9AD discovered when they thought they had conquered the "Barbarian" land of a German tribe ruled by a chief named Hermann. The "civilized" Romans had already seized most of the land in western Germany, from Dusseldorf to Augustdorf. They had stationed an occupation army there, but the German tribe lured the whole Roman army to the grounds west of the Teutoberger Wald. There in the forests, the Romans were badly beaten at the hands of Hermann and his boys on the high ground.

It was in the dense forest which covers this ridge that Combat Command "A" of the 2d Armored Division struck a real snag on the 3d of April. The roads crossed the ridge at places where there were gaps, and since these were narrow, they were, of course, easily defended. Along the road which leads from a village called Augustdorf, over the ridge into the rich towns of Hiddesen and Detmold, a column of tanks was halted by a roadblock and this time it was no easy task to blast out the defenders; they were well-camouflaged in the woods and they had an advantage over the tanks which were canalized on the roads. Unable to see a target, and totally incapable of maneuver, the armor of Combat Command "A" was stymied. It withdrew and called upon the infantry. Colonel Purdue was notified.

1ST BATTALION: AMBUSH

It was noon when Colonel Purdue learned that the German stand was serious enough to demand real concentration from the infantry. The roadblock which had stopped the 2d Armored tanks was located in one of the highest and widest sections of the Teutoberger Wald; it was the spot which proud Germans had selected for a monument to the invincible Hermann. The advance elements of Combat Command "A" said they had been opposed strongly at a point almost into Hiddesen on the east side of the ridge. Apparently organized in a reverse slope defense, the enemy was estimated to have at least a regiment pitted against the American advance over the Wald at that point.

Back in Verl, the 1st Battalion was alerted at once; shortly after the noon meal it was on its way in Quartermaster trucks to the village of Augustdorf.

When Capt Delmont K. Byrn, acting battalion



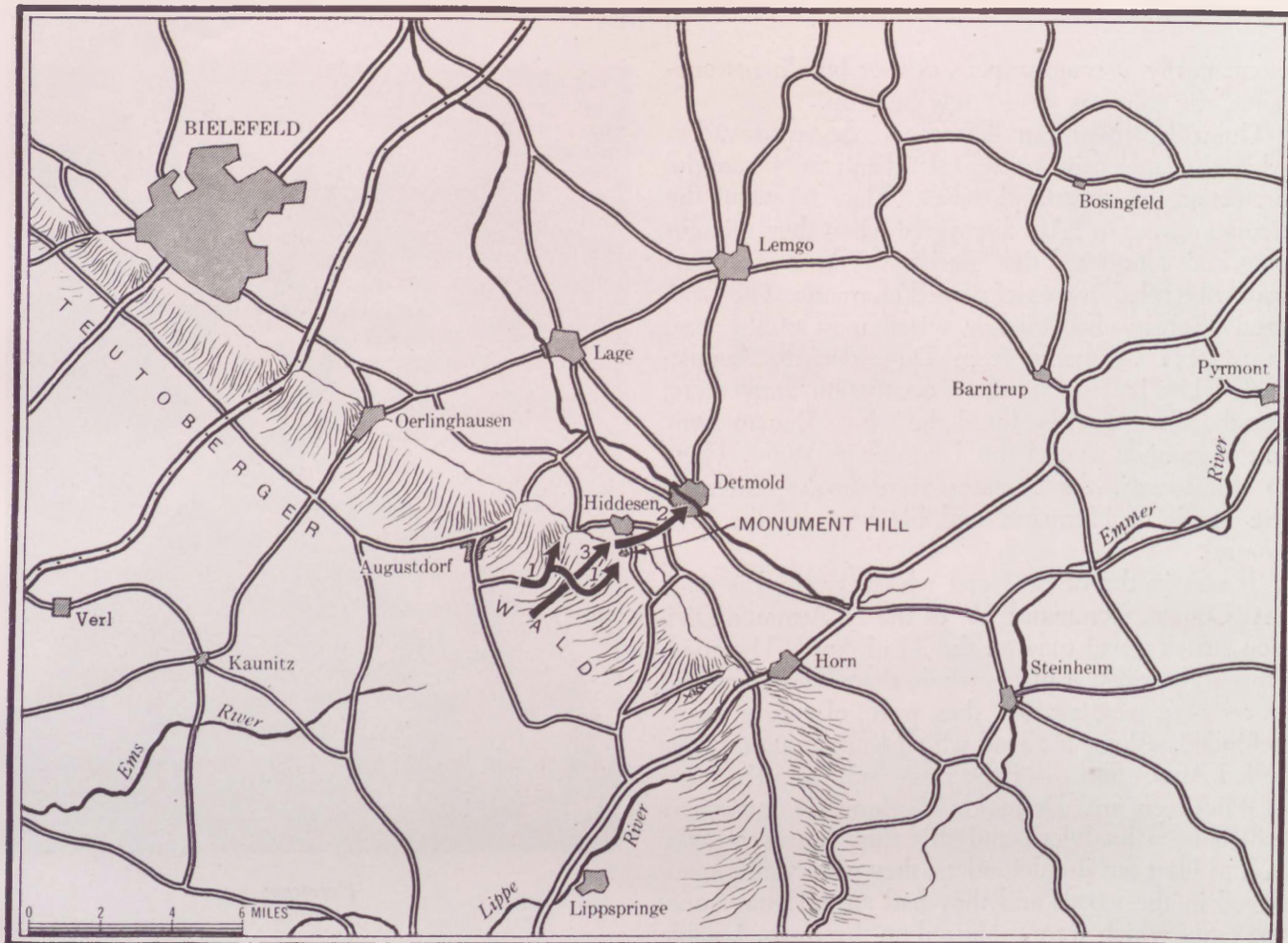
Hermann

commander, arrived, Colonel Purdue had established a forward Command Post along with some officers of the 2d Armored in a chateau at the western base of the ridge. Here it was decided to place the battalion in defense for the night, in a semicircle which half-surrounded Hiddesen, the town on the east slopes. Company "B" would hold the left flank to a tip of high ground on the left (north) side of the Hiddesen road, while Company "C" would take the right flank to an eastern tip on a knoll due east of the town.

Company "A" was to round out the defense in the rear of Companies "B" and "C." The troops were notified and prepared to take up the half-moon defenses with drawn-back center, pivoted on the Augustdorf-Hiddesen road. In the late afternoon Company "B" was almost into position; Company "C" was heading through the brush toward the assigned flank.

Lt William A. Hester led the foremost platoon of Company "C" in attack formation as it pushed through the undergrowth of the Berlebek Forest, part of the Teutoberger Wald. Of the action he tells:

"We were heading north, probing for the enemy which we knew was somewhere near. . . . At 1700



The Teutoburger Wald

as we were descending the opposite slope of the hill, and when we had emerged from the tall trees into a dense, bushy area, mostly small evergreen trees, we were suddenly fired upon by enemy rifles, machine guns, and *panzerfaust*. Our position was unusual in that we were on higher ground than the Germans who had dug-in positions below us about 50 to 75 yards away along the highway, as well as on high ground to the north of the road, yet we were at disadvantage since we could not observe their positions through the dense foliage. On the other hand, the Germans could fire effectively at us simply by shooting into the shrubbery where movement was discerned, knowing full well that we had no cover to avoid being hit."

In the first half hour the going was tough. "The enemy fire was so effective and our positions so exposed that we lost fourteen men in the ensuing thirty minutes of action. Two were killed and twelve wounded. To disengage ourselves we needed covering fire badly."

It was a real ambush, for the positions held by the enemy never had been suspected by the armor which had halted only briefly in this area. While information of the situation was being relayed to the rear the Company "C" platoon was in a critical situation, and some of the desperation is apparent in the tale of heroes which Lt Hester tells:

"S/Sgt Norman E. Skiver, a light-machine-gun section sergeant, called for the machine guns immediately. Pfc Glenn W. Pierson, although he was well aware of the intensity of the enemy fire and could see the men dropping around him, did not hesitate to advance forward through the brush, which was about fifteen yards in depth, in an effort to reach a cleared area where he could bring observed machine-gun fire to bear. Just as he reached the edge of the bushy area and stepped into the clearing, however, he was killed by rifle shots through the head and chest. He fell about seven yards to the rear of S/Sgt Skiver who had moved ahead to select a firing position.

"The fire which had killed Pfc Pierson forced Pfc Joseph P. Linehan, assistant gunner, to hit the ground among the bushes and trees. Seeing that the gunner was killed, however, he got to his feet, dashed through the enemy fire to the gun and made an effort to put it into action. Before he could do so, he was shot through the neck and shoulder.

"Sgt Paul Pudelka, squad leader, who had been at the head of his squad and who had observed the courageous action of the men behind him, crawled back to the gun some ten yards and successfully set the weapon up for action. When he fired a few bursts, though, a bullet knocked his helmet off. I thought he was dead, but aside from being momentarily stunned he was unharmed. Despite the fact that the bullets continued to zip around him Sgt Pudelka held his position by the gun and operated it aggressively until we could get out our troops."

Meanwhile, Lt Hester relates, Sgt Skiver went back to secure his second machine-gun squad, because he thought Sgt Pudelka had been killed. When he reached the shell hole where the 2d Squad had been, he saw two more wounded, Pfc Walton L. Deyette, hit in the leg, and Sgt Bernard L. Beesley, who had gone to rescue him, only to be hit himself. Realizing that the latter was more seriously hurt, S/Sgt Skiver carried him to a pile of logs and gave him first aid.

Immediately after the action began S/Sgt Cecil J. Snow and S/Sgt Cecil N. Permenter, twenty-five yards to the rear, had deployed their squads and set up a cover of fire which along with the light machine gun helped cool the enemy's enthusiasm.

Lt Hester continued: "Most men had only one idea, for which I cannot blame them, and that was to get back to the rear somewhere as quickly as possible and some decent cover. However, I know six men who out of consideration for their fallen comrades risked their chances of getting out unhurt to bring the wounded out. S/Sgt John M. Tharp, Jr., squad leader, saw T/Sgt Yost fall. Yost didn't know that he was dead . . . crawled ten yards through open ground in an effort to reach T/Sgt Yost, only to be wounded as a result. S/Sgt Harold A. Gilley, squad leader, stayed to help with the wounded, and he, too, was shot through both legs. Pfc George W. Hanum, Sgt James P. Maher . . . each got one of the wounded men and assisted him in crawling fifty yards to cover. . . ." Lt Hester told how his runner, Pfc Glenwood Herbert, had constantly exposed himself in an effort to contact his leader and to carry word to secure help or bring information where it was needed.

Word of the conflict had reached the battalion commander in the meantime, and as quickly as possible a platoon from Company "A" was sent to give support to the company which had been trapped in an area reportedly not occupied by enemy. It was decided that Company "C" should withdraw, and that, rather than a semicircle with tips farthest to the east, the night's defensive positions should be an oval on the reverse west slope of the ridge. The platoon from Company "A" moved up on the left rear of Company "C" and dispersed to give a strong base of fire.

It became apparent that, while the enemy had no artillery, he was using an improvised substitute. Holding *panzerfaust* in defilade and at a high angle like a mortar, the Germans fired them singly and in battery. Apparently well supplied, the enemy hardly paused between shots, and with the *panzerfaust*, automatic weapons and small arms, effected an almost impossible barrier in the wooded ridge-gap.

The Company "A" platoon suffered three casualties before it could establish a volume of fire heavy enough to permit the complete withdrawal of Company "C." By 1820, however, the companies were once again organized and had formed defensive lines as planned around the Hiddesen highway on the reverse slope.

With Cannon Company attached, the 230th Field Artillery Battalion had dug in near the chateau-lodge at the ridge-base, ready to support the infantry's Main Line of Resistance. Another platoon of Company "A" had been dispatched earlier to probe enemy defenses in another gap southeast of the main road, and to investigate the hill farther south where the monument to Chief Hermann stood. Nine men led the platoon working its way forward on the right (southeast) of Company "C." At about 1700 a burst of machine-gun fire from their right told them that the enemy was close and had spotted their advance. At that moment the nine men leading had gone forward into high grass ahead of the others who were on higher ground and working through a thick woods. They had not yet reached the bottom of the gap, and the enemy was obviously firing from across the draw at the lead men in the high grass, since those in the woods were still concealed by the foliage. Rifle fire began cracking, and after three men had been wounded, all nine had hit the damp ground and were seeking cover.

Pfc Robert H. Burkhardt could see three German riflemen at a distance of seventy yards bringing enfilade fire upon his buddies. From his prone position with a perfect sight upon them, he began to fire steadily at them. While he was diverting the enemy, the

other men in his group crawled back to the concealment of the woods and to safety. Realizing the hopelessness of trying to continue forward, the platoon sought permission to withdraw, and it was granted. Meanwhile two machine guns on his left and to his front began concentrating on Burkhardt's position. He continued to fire. A few seconds later he was killed by a burst. Pfc Burkhardt's self-sacrifice enabled his comrades to crawl to safety. "He gave his life in order that others might live." He was a brave man.

As the afternoon wore on the German lines became more clearly defined, and soon it was evident that the area around Detmold was not part of a long defense line, but merely a strong pocket; on both sides the armor had pushed through with only minimum harassment.

In the evening a letter of instruction from Division outlined the objectives for an attack to clean out the pocket. While elements of the 2d Armored Division swung around the flanks to encircle the area, the 120th Regiment was to seize the highway gap through the ridge, the high Monument Hill, the rich residential town of Hiddesen, and the city of Detmold beyond. Monument Hill was to be taken first, and from it Hiddesen was to be attacked, while the highway where the roadblock had easy observation an all attackers was to be mopped up later. Due to the previous fast movements we had run out of maps. This made maneuver and coordination difficult. Higher commanders and staff members often led small units.

1ST BATTALION: MONUMENT HILL

Lt Ernest F. Sharpe, 1st Battalion S-2, was with the lead elements, men of a platoon from Company "B," when they started south along the Hiddesen highway at 0730 on the morning of the 4th of April. With the remainder of Company "B" close behind, and Company "A" following in the right rear, the troops were headed south from Hiddesen to reach a road leading eastward which would take them to a Line of Departure due south of Monument Hill. As planned, the companies turned left (east) near the chateau-lodge (Lopshorn), and started along the road through the woods. After a few hundred yards the road dwindled till it became a small, unnegotiable fire break.

Heading the battalion, Lt Sharpe decided to take another road which led partially up the slope of a hill next to Monument Hill on the west. Though it was named Bietstein, the men called it "Hill 393." The new path was a big improvement, and the troops were going quickly toward the LD, when near the

crest of "Hill 393" some men spied enemy movement.

Realizing that to reach Monument Hill this ground would have to be seized, Lt Sharpe and Capt Murray S. Pulver, commanding Company "B," called another platoon up on the line with the first. At 0800 both surged over the hill; the enemy did little resisting, and approximately a platoon was captured.

From the top of "Hill 393," Company "B" men could see the low ground between it and Monument Hill. Almost at the bottom of the draw was a poor, secondary road leading into Hiddesen; beside it were a few shacks. While Company "A" was moving up on the right alongside Company "B" in preparation for an attack across the low road and up toward the monument, enemy movement was spotted near the houses. There was an uneasy shifting of positions, and the companies saw several men dart from cover and start up the sides of "Hill 393." It looked for a few moments as though they were dashing to the American lines to surrender, but suddenly they ducked aside, one by one, seeking cover along the woodland crevices and leafy underbrush.

At 1100 the attack toward Monument Hill began and the assault platoons descended toward the road. They met almost no resistance; the prisoners taken in rapid succession said they had tried to surrender, but that their SS officer had called to them as they made their way toward the Americans that he would shoot them if they did not remain to fight. With characteristic obedience the Germans had remained. At that point, while the prisoners were still talking, from a wooded section of the draw extending away from Hiddesen strong automatic fire began to splatter against the trees. The two companies called for Company "D's" mortar fire.

The mortars of Company "D" were not themselves free of troubles. Emplaced a few hundred yards west of the Hiddesen highway, they were so close to the lines that infiltrating enemy did not have far to go to reach them. At 1030 some Germans had been seen on the outskirts of the woods around the emplacements, and Lt Glen L. Robinson, a section leader of the platoon, asked for volunteers to clean out the woods around them, thus to prevent harassing small arms and possibly bazooka or grenade damage to the weapons. S/Sgts William T. Blackburn and Wilfred R. Doiron, section sergeants, S/Sgt Joseph F. Perry, squad leader, and Pfc Frank Carillo, ammunition bearer, agreed to go with him, and they headed toward where they had seen the Germans lurking among the trees. Continuing along the ridge, Lt Robinson



On tanks into Hiddesen

sent some of the group into a draw beside it. Some of the men saw two Germans running and wounded both; later two more were surprised and taken at different places. One or two escaped toward the German lines.

With their flanks free of enemy, the mortarmen of Company "D" were ready to fire when the call came. They dropped round after round into the enemy machine guns at the head of the draw, and soon the German weapons were silent.

From the road toward the monument, the attack now began its second phase. Company "A" on the right had moved only a short distance when it was assailed by small arms from the area where the automatic fire had originated. After retreating to more covered positions during the mortar barrage, enemy troops had started to fire again, this time with only rifles.

Company "A" had to halt and swing one platoon to the right to knock out the resistance. Meanwhile Company "B" continued toward the hillcrest, unopposed until close to the top, when the enemy began a rifle-fire resistance. Employing marching fire, barrages of rifle grenades fired from the hip, Company "B" swept over the crest and by 1230 had cleaned out the area. As soon as Company "A" had put an end to the flank opposition, it moved up on the right and with Company "B" organized a perimeter defense of the hill.

Captured were more than fifty prisoners, as well as the massive Hermannsdenkmals, a statue and pavilion commemorating the famous action where the Germans had driven out the Italians, unfaithful allies of a more recent date.

3D BATTALION: HIDDESEN

The two remaining objectives were Hiddesen and

Detmold. The 2d and 3d Battalions had mounted trucks near Verl at 0724 on the 4th of April and were carried to assembly areas south and southwest of the Chateau Lopshorn. By 0915 the troops were unloaded and organized; the Regimental Command Post was established in Augustdorf.

Maj McCullough took his battalion at 1132 to a forward area in the draw, west of "Hill 393," in anticipation of the attack upon Hiddesen which he was to take. As soon as the 1st Battalion had secured the monument, he led his troops to the edge of the woods southwest of Hiddesen and north of "Hill 393," from where he could look into the open upon the bright homes and well-tended fields. Company "I" was on the right, Company "L" on the left, while Company "K" followed Company "I."

The jump-off was at 1345, and it looked at the beginning as though it would be a difficult and lengthy battle. *Panzerfaust* were plentiful again, and automatic and small-arms fire was heavy. Then it appeared that while some key points were defended fanatically, others were easily overrun, and the men there were poor, desperately-chosen soldiers, tired and almost useless. Thus the line around the town was severed in many places; the weak links gave away.

In Company "I's" zone Pvt William H. Lewis had not been daunted by the initial outburst and marched with determination toward one of the fanatical outposts. It responded with a heavy volume; he had closed in to within fifty yards when he was killed. He had, however, successfully distracted the infuriated troops inside, and the remainder of the company had broken through the outer defenses and moved in to take the outpost.

Once the outer line had been decisively broken through, resistance seemed to crumble. Company "L"

surged down the streets on the left (north) side of the town, Company "I" was meanwhile circling to join it; by 1645 a perimeter defense had been established.

The enemy was still roaming over the wooded areas and a few snipers were still standing post when Lt Don W. Soper, antitank officer of the 1st Battalion, moved with some of his men down the slopes from Monument Hill toward Hiddesen. He was patrolling a territory which had not yet been cleaned out, and accordingly he was cautious.

Antitank men are not ordinarily assigned to patrol duties, but the 1st Battalion was preparing to move into Hiddesen behind the 3d, and it was essential to know when the town was cleared and what route was the best to use. At the moment there were no riflemen available for the mission, and rising to the emergency, Lt Soper had organized from his platoon a group consisting of T/5 Michael C. Prisco, Pfc Roy C. Johnk, Pfc Joseph N. Picazio, Pfc Carleton E. Summers, Pfc Ben L. Cloft, Pfc Donald D. Darwin, and Pfc Michael P. Sackawicz.

They went about one hundred yards west and one hundred yards north for the most part through woods, and had just reached open ground when Lt Soper saw a lighting glint, as of glasses, and twenty yards away spotted four enemy soldiers who had not yet seen him. He had borrowed a handy BAR; without losing a second, he emptied a clip. The men with him fired too. They killed three men, but having seen some others escape, Lt Soper communicated with the Battalion Executive Officer who ordered him to return, to avoid walking into an ambush; at 1430, after procuring a tank from the 743d Tank Battalion, the patrol continued into Hiddesen.

Upon reaching the first house, the inexperienced patrol fired into it, and then Darwin and Sackawicz rushed in, accompanied by yelling from the others. When the men went toward a second house they saw three Germans running to it from the opposite direction. Johnk and Picazio fired on them, wounding one and killing another. The third German grabbed the wounded and together they reached the shelter of the building where the two antitankers rushed in upon them and took them prisoners. At the next house Lt Soper contacted the 3d Battalion and arrangements for the 1st Battalion movement were completed. It was all a new experience for the antitank men, but it had been highly successful.

The 3d Battalion had captured eighty-six prisoners. Its new mission was to be prepared to help the 2d Bat-

talion, already assembling in Hiddesen, to take the prosperous city of Detmold.

2D BATTALION: DETMOLD

At 1800 the 2d Battalion was making final preparations, but the attack did not begin till three-quarters of an hour later. It was a risky assignment for Lt Col Cantey's men. Detmold was supposed to be the heart of the resistance area, and the route of attack was of necessity over an open slope under perfect observation.

Company "E" guided astride a secondary but direct road across the green fields, while Company "F" on the left (west and north) swung wide, touching the outskirts of the village of Heidenoldendorf, then sweeping down beside Company "E" into the city.

From the exposed ground the expanse of buildings in the valley looked formidable. Actually the troops met nothing; the battalion moved quickly into town. There was danger in being lost in it, for it was too large for a battalion to handle. From civilians it was later learned that the enemy had abandoned plans to defend it because of the large number of hospitals there. On the eastern outskirts a few snipers pot-shot at the squads sifting down the streets. They were quickly silenced. A defense of roadblocks around the center of the city was established, but Lt Col Cantey called plaintively over the phone, "It's too large for a battalion."

And indeed the town contained more than hospitals. The next day investigation proved that around the city were a modern airfield, a motor pool containing many vehicles, an ordnance depot, a small-arms supply point, and numerous items of supply, including liquor and clothing. One building was thought to be a tank officer-candidate school because it was a spacious government institution and there was a tank range not far away. However, nothing could be found to substantiate the suggestion.

In one hospital, American prisoners were being cared for. Colonel Purdue visited them and gave special orders for them to be well taken care of, even assuring them a radio. Later Company "A" was assigned to guard a hospital in the town.

The IPW report told of the motley crew of prisoners taken. Some men said they had been on furlough, but en route back to their outfit, had been held and coordinated into another unit on the spur of the moment by a desperate but iron-willed SS major.

OVERRUNNING THE AMBUSH

Meanwhile at 2000 on the 4th, Company "C,"

which had remained in position near the Hiddesen highway, was prepared to mop up the main road into Hiddesen, and in so doing destroy the roadblock which had caused it grief on the previous evening.

In an effort to destroy the estimated thirty SS men holding the block, the company first called a heavy artillery concentration on the road barrier and vicinity. At the same time the area was blasted for fifteen minutes with 3-inch and .50-caliber fire from the two TDs attached to the 1st Battalion. When the TDs 200 yards south of the road, directed by Lt Mosby, Company "C" executive, had ceased firing, the dough-boys overran the block to find the enemy had all fled but for three dead off the road back from the barrier. Weapons platoon men under Lts Robert MacCulley and Robert Counsellor could claim the honor of driving off the Germans; they had fired over 300 rounds of 60mm mortar ammunition. With Capt William J. Aldridge, the Battalion S-3, mounted on one of the lead vehicles the company rode on TDs and tanks into Hiddesen; there by 2030 it rejoined the remainder of the battalion, which had already taken the path from Monument Hill.

HERMANN, HANG YOUR HEAD

A German history¹ tells about the defense of the Teutoberger Wald back in 9 AD:

"In Germany Quintilius Varus, a 'peacetime' soldier, was in command . . . a man of slow spirit . . . He had been in Africa, Asia and Syria, where there was no more fighting enemy, and he wore himself out holding lavish parades . . .

"The Germans, much hated by Varus, saw through his weakness . . . They flattered him: 'He had brought right and justice in the country for the first time . . . ' And thus Fate overcame him. The man of fate who was to bring about Varus' downfall was called Arminius (Hermann). He had come to know the Roman army service, Roman management, Roman customs. He hated the Romans only more burningly, and meditated the throwing off of the yoke . . . Hermann came to eat at his (Varus') table and spied on him without fear. Varus granted interviews willingly with the man who was meanwhile weaving a net of conspiracy . . . Through the deception of those plotting revolution behind his back, he allowed himself to be lured to a wild territory nearer the Weser . . . In the ravines of the Teutoberger woods from all sides he was attacked with his army of three

legions, six cohorts . . . and three cavalry squadrons. The Germans occupied the dominating heights, and the legions were stuck in the marshy lowlands . . . In three days the tired and discouraged troops collapsed all around. Already wounded, Varus ran himself onto his own sword . . .

"The Battle of the Teutoberger Wald is one of the crucial battles in World History. In it the free will of the Germans triumphed over the wealthy power of an empire which until then had found its boundaries only in the lack of transportation and the invincibility of nature. It is the first decisive battle-victory of the Germans . . ."²

It is of interest to note that the Germans' first hero was a man of supreme deceit, as well as of military prowess. Men of the 120th have seen that the Germans have changed little in the decades since. But no matter how proud the Germans may have been of Hermann and his Teutoberger Wald, the 120th overcame both with comparative ease. Hermann must have wept a tear as the tanks rattled past his hill, and mumbled ceaselessly the death chant of the Germans' race superiority and natural invincibility.

The civilians appeared to be disgruntled about the disgrace too, and the CIC, aided by the IPW, had to answer endless complaints and decide numerous local questions. In the meantime, soldiers found means to celebrate and liquor discovered during the process of sightseeing was welcome—and zealously attacked. The Regimental CP moved from Augustdorf and Lops-horn into a boarding house in Hiddesen at noon of the 5th of April. The units remained in their areas.

INTERIM

There was only a day, the 5th of April, to look over Detmold for on the 6th word had already reached the regiment that the 2d Armored ahead had crossed the Weser River and needed infantry close behind.

The 2d Battalion was to lead. Attached were: Company "C," 743d Tank Battalion; one M-10 platoon of Company "B" and the Reconnaissance Platoon, 823d TD Battalion; and the I&R Platoon of Regimental Headquarters Company. The 2d Armored had by-passed much ground, which became the Regiment's mission to clear. With three main routes to clean out, the 2d Battalion was formed into three task forces; each was composed of a company of infantry and an attached platoon of tanks, an attached section of TDs, and a reconnaissance unit. Company "E"

¹*Deutsche Geschichte* by Richard Suchenwirth (Dollheimer, Leipzig 1941).

²Free translation by Lt J. M. Holden.



Pyrmont

(Task Force "H" for Hooper, in command) was to be preceded by a squad of the I and R Platoon, and its route was the most northern, taking in Kirchdonop; Company "F" (TF "J" for Jacobsen) was to traverse the main route through Grossenmarpe with the Reconnaissance Platoon of Company "B," 823d TD Battalion, while Company "G" (TF "M" for Moncrieff) was to follow an I and R squad over a southern route through Mossenberg. Beginning at Detmold, all planned routes ended at Bad Pyrmont, a pleasant resort town near the Emmer River and the Grohnde Forest.

At 0800 the advance began and the task forces on each flank ("H" and "M") kept as even with the center column as possible. Opposition was negligible. The reconnaissance elements met groups of mongrel soldiers, some begging to surrender, others running, half terror-stricken, half befogged, to the nearest woods for concealment, in some cases only to turn around and wave a white flag vigorously. At dominating or questionable areas the reconnaissance troops dismounted and proceeded on foot through the woods or over the hill.

Progress was rapid so that by 1132 the battalion had reached Pyrmont, where the overlay read "Phase line 'Rat,'" the day's objective. More a mountain resort than Detmold, Pyrmont was also more a hospital town, filled with German invalids and medical staffs. Down its streets walked medical officers as proud as Kaisers and well protected by the Red Cross bands on their arms. Here the battalion awaited orders.

Instructions came in the early afternoon, directing

the battalion to proceed at once to the Weser River for protecting the 2d Armored's bridgehead. The 2d Battalion remounted trucks and continued eastward through the village of Grohnde whose lawns ran down to the waters of the river. Eight miles to the north the 117th Infantry was moving into Hamelin; ten miles to the south the city of Holzminden had been deserted by the *Wehrmacht*.

Across the pontoon bridge only recently completed, the trucks carrying the 2d Battalion rolled toward the rural settlement of Borry four miles away. Here Lt Col Cantey established his CP. Companies established assigned roadblocks in the small neighboring towns of Latferde, Hagen, Frenke, and Brockensen. It was sunny and peaceful and war seemed far away from the valley where men could admire the low hill ranges around them. Civilians were full of complaints, but some of the soldiers observed that the armies sweeping over the countryside could not seem to stop the daily routine, the normal chores of townspeople who popped their heads up the moment the last shell exploded.

At 1130 the same day (6th of April), the remainder of the regiment followed along the main route (Cappel-Grossenmarpe-Hagen) to assemble in areas in the Pyrmont region: the 1st Battalion in the resort town itself, the 3d Battalion at Grohnde, and the Regimental Command Post at Hamelshenburg. By 2000 all units were reported settled. Around Grohnde artillerymen of the 230th Battalion dug emplacements, prepared to defend the bridgehead.

On the 7th the 2d Battalion maintained its positions, and the remainder of the regiment stayed in its area. In the morning one roadblock was moved to a new position south of the regiment's sector until the armor of Combat Command "B," 2d Armored Division, had pushed through it to the east. Then late in the afternoon, at 1910, Company "G" of the 330th Infantry, 83d Division, relieved the 2d Battalion on the bridgehead roadblocks.

Pyrmont was no small problem. Coupled with the numerous stray prisoners who straggled into the PW cage, medical personnel and sick men created the usual constant work for the CIC and interrogation staff. Disgruntled prisoners and invalids told how combat teams had been formed from a group of hospital cases. One officer took charge of thirty-three men, all heart, lung or kidney cases. Armed with seven pistols and two *panzerfaust*, they had set out to defend the *Vaterland*. A thousand men had been ordered to their combat outfits, though doctors pro-

tested that they were not cured. There were still many inmates, however, and though the high-ranking doctors strutting to their wards with pretty nurses seemed to feel that Pymont was an "open" city because of the sick men there, the hospitals caused the regiment almost as much trouble as the *Wehrmacht* itself could have. It was natural that tension should exist since no one knew how legitimately the men were authorized to be in the hospitals or how soon they might rise up to pull some fantastic, werewolf stunt. At the time Radio Berlin was lauding massive damage done to Allied forces in occupied territory. In fact, on the night of the 7th, rumor of a Nazi disturbance caused commanders to be alerted, and a special guard to be posted. Nothing occurred.

Spring had reached the countryside around Pymont. In the historic Schloss von Klenke, a castle almost surrounded by a moat, and decorated with rich paintings and collections of antique war implements, including spears and muskets, the Regimental Command Post had been established after the baroness owner had been informed that she would have to move to another of her houses. With her retinue, which included a girl's reform school group, she hastened off, surprised that we would not live in the same house with civilians where that situation could be avoided. The Regimental staff moved in, marvelling at the great oak fireplaces, the ancient family-tree banner, and the numerous wild-life prints.

Wars do not stop for baronesses or for soldiers living well in castles, however, and movement still eastward started again at 0730 on the 8th of April. The 3d Battalion started toward a ridgeline, "433," approximately 35 miles away. Attached were: Company "B" 743d Tank Battalion; the Regimental I&R Platoon; two M-10 platoons, Company "B," and a reconnaissance platoon, 823d Tank Destroyer Battalion.

Again with three task forces, each formed of a motorized company with attachments, the advance covered two main routes. One, to the north, took the Company "L" force leading over two ridges through Berry and Lauenstein to Hemmendorf and then to Ahrenfeld, all green prosperous towns. Company "I" followed Company "L." Meanwhile Company "K" followed a southern route through Esperde, over the Derith Hill Range, to Salzhemmendorf and then due south to Ockenzen. There were no fights en route; the warm rides were becoming a pleasure. On the eastern section of the ridge "433," Companies "L" and "I" established outposts and roadblock defenses. Platoons had CPs in the little country villages of Levedagsen,

Ahrenfeld, Heinsen, Marienhagen, and Weenzen. Company "I" in Ockensen overran a military clothing storehouse and men there sported crash helmets and flashy belt buckles which, though gaudy, were cheaply made.

At 1000 the remainder of the Combat Team followed the 3d Battalion into the new area. The 2d Battalion had to walk from Borry through Lauenstein to Hemmendorf, where it set up nine roadblocks to cut off the northern approach to the area. The 1st Battalion had left Company "A" guarding a hospital in Detmold and when it moved to new areas in Wal-lensen and Thuste. The Regimental Command Post was established in a hotel restaurant in the center of Salzhemmendorf. Here the regiment remained for two days; processing stragglers, coping with civilians, and, as always, planning.

ADVANCE TOWARD BRUNSWICK

The evening of the 9th of April, Division orders for movement reached the Command Post and two hours later (1900) a quartering party set out for an area in the regimental sector twenty-five miles farther north near Hasede and Gross Forste northeast of Hildesheim. The assembly area there was to extend on both sides of the Zweigcanal Hildesheim, even though the I and R Patrol after reconnaissance said all four bridges in the regimental sector had been blown. Scheduled to precede our advance in this area was an attached troop of the 125th Cavalry Squadron, 113th Cavalry Group.

The next morning at 0700 trucks carrying the 1st Battalion led the regimental column across the IP at Hemmendorf and drove eastward through Benstorf, Elze, Nordstemmen and Rossing. Behind the 1st Battalion came Regimental Headquarters; Antitank and Medical Companies; Company "B" 823d TD Battalion; and Company "B," 743d Tank Battalion. Since few trucks were available the other battalions had to wait till later for transportation forward.

At a road junction between Hasede and Gross Forste, the different units assembled in field and house groups to which the quartering party assigned them. Without a crossing over the Zweigcanal in the regimental zone, the advance was halted while plans for movement forward could be formulated. A temporary Regimental CP was established. In the meantime, after the 1st Battalion troops had dismounted, the trucks returned to Hemmendorf to load and bring forward the 2d Battalion.

In midmorning at the Command Post it was



Canal east of Ufingen

learned that the regiment was to cross the canal over a bridge in the sector of the 117th Infantry to the north. A new route, through Ahrbergen, Sarstedt, Codrington, Algermissen, and Bersum, was mapped at once. The 1st Battalion climbed aboard tanks and TDs and about noon rolled forward, trying to digest a hasty K ration as they rumbled over the country roads. The 2d Battalion in trucks reached the assembly area at that time and joined the end of the column behind the Regimental Headquarters group.

The 1st Battalion had orders to clear the Regimental zone of advance up to Phase-line "Min," an area near the town of Borsum. But early in the afternoon Lt Col Williamson was ordered to continue east past "Min" along a route extending south of Brunswick only twenty-five miles away. En route the battalion passed through Hudessum, Ahstedt, Feldbergen, Steinbruck, Gross and Klein Lafferde, Bodenstedt, and other tiny country settlements common to that section of continental Europe.

Men of the attached cavalry were loath to approach the successive towns in vehicles because of the danger from ambush. However, the situation called for energetic and rapid motorized pursuit; there was not time available for approaching possible enemy positions on foot. There comes a time when field officers must lead in person in order to set an example. As the result, Col Purdue rapidly led the cavalry toward Ufingen. The enemy there was lying in ambush on the edge of town and so the column was greeted with short-range small-arms fire. Fortunately, the enemy's opening rounds missed. The lead elements, headed by the Regimental Commander, quickly deployed to knock out the delaying position.

To Capt Floyd C. Spurlock's Company "C" Lt Col

Williamson assigned the mission of clearing Ufingen of enemy, and in the evening that company advanced against it from the west. In the houses were many snipers and around the buildings were some heavy direct-fire weapons. The infantrymen gained ground slowly but surely, and with few casualties. Far into the night they fought. At 2345 a radio message from the 1st Battalion to Regiment reported that the town was half taken. Shortly thereafter the town fell; the 1st Battalion remained in position for the night.

Early the next morning the enemy began harassing the troops in the town with 88mm antiaircraft and 20mm fire which came from across an unnamed canal on the outskirts of the village to the east. Lt Chester J. Churns with his operator, Cpl Howard L. Meyers, sleepy from steady work late the night before, climbed to an upper story and called fire directions to the cannon company battery for which they observed. Finally the enemy was silenced.

Meanwhile the Regimental Command Post had been established in Vallsted west of Alvesse and the 2d Battalion had moved into Lengede by 2200 of the 10th. Still without trucks, the 3d Battalion remained at Levedagsen.

BRUNSWICK ENCIRCLED

The fighting in Ufingen had just died down when Lt Col Williamson received a Regimental order to establish a bridgehead over the canal on the eastern outskirts of the village near a suburb called Nortenhof. In the dark at 0430 on the 11th of April, two platoons from Company "C" paddled in rubber assault boats to the opposite banks without meeting opposition. They dispersed to designated areas and remained in positions most of the day to protect the



The 3d Battalion on the way to encircle Brunswick (Braunschweig)

crossing site. With the tank and TD companies, Company "B" moved into Ufingen and occupied defensive positions along the west banks of the canal.

Original plans called for the construction of a bridge across the water early in the morning so that the 1st Battalion could continue the attack northeastward, to sweep up on the east side of the city of Brunswick (Braunschweig), at that time under attack by the 117th Infantry. Corps engineers brought up treadway bridge equipment and started construction.

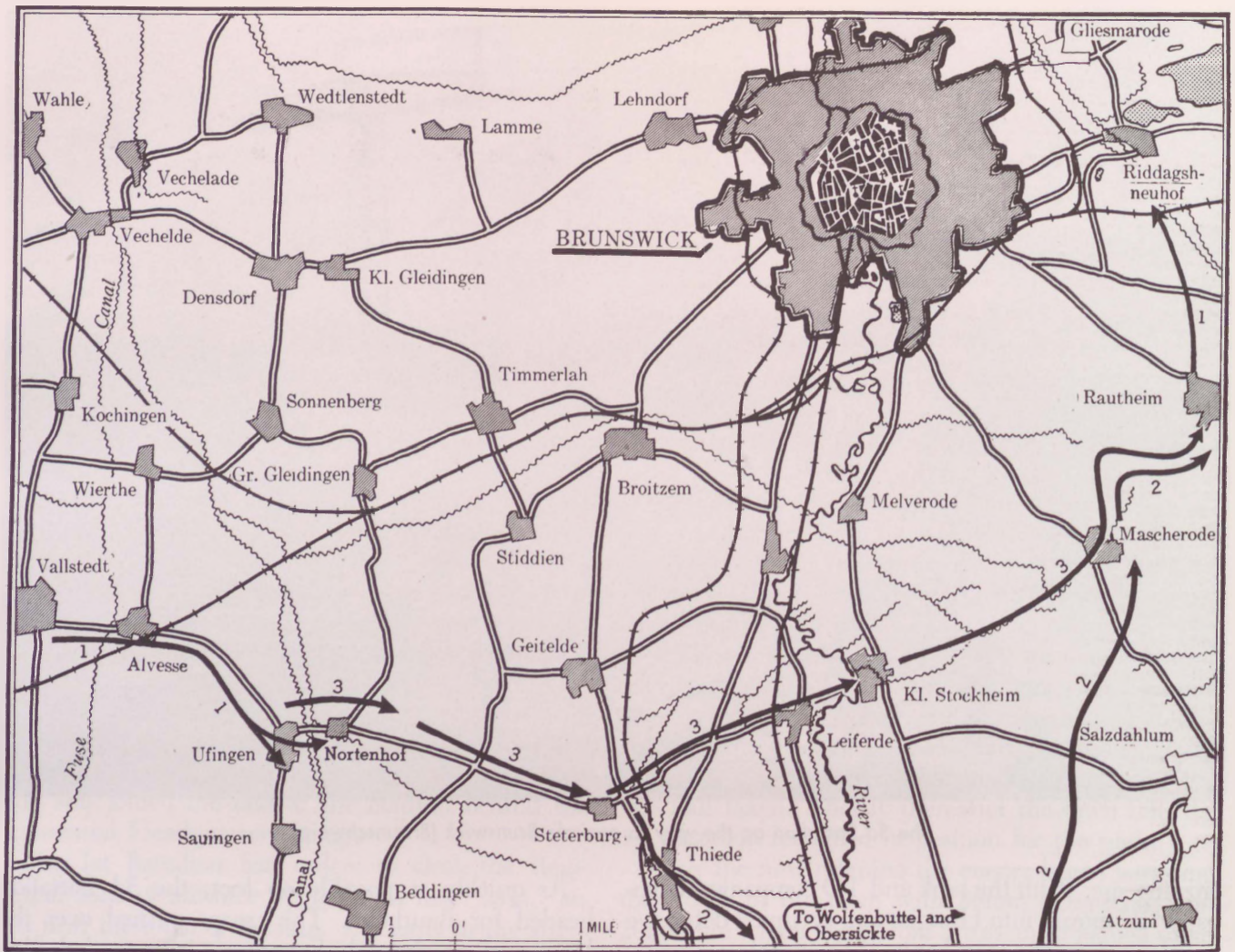
While the span was being completed the 3d Battalion was speeding from Levedagsen in Service Company trucks, and its units were grouped in the early afternoon on the outskirts of Vallsted. The troops did not remain inactive long at the detrucking area; when a lock installation near Nortenhof was found suitable for foot crossing, the battalion was ordered to move to the next objective.

The next objective was "Mae," a goose-egg on the map which included the settlement of Rautheim southeast of Brunswick. In that vicinity, at the Wabe Stream, was a bridge over which ran the main highway to the east. It was a spot where Nazis fleeing toward Berlin might probably be trapped.

As quickly as possible on foot, the 3d Battalion headed for Rautheim. The troops pushed over the locks and on through Steterburg in extended files, encountering only stragglers. By 1400 the battalion had advanced 3000 yards and received instructions to continue. The Oker River running south from Brunswick presented some problems since all bridges but one in the sector had been blown. The one exception was a railroad bridge near Leiferde.

We began a minor conscription program. Men of the 3d Battalion called in an army of Germans, Czechs, Poles and Russians, who grabbed up poles, logs, doors, ladders and odd timber, and constructed within a few minutes a bridge which carried the entire battalion across the Oker. Although Company "I" had tried crossing by wading, it had drawn back with wet feet, realizing the impossibility. At last Company "L" crossed the homemade bridge, followed by Companies "K," "M," and "I."

The battalion commander took his troops into Klein Stockheim, and here began the final phase of the sneak seizure of the objective, a maneuver to surprise and trap the enemy. The movement toward Rautheim began at 1855, with Company "L" in the lead. By



Brunswick (Braunschweig)

2105 it had passed through Mascherode and reached Rautheim. An hour and a half later the vital bridge was seized without a struggle. The main road east was cut by a Company "L" block. It had been a long day's push of ten miles and though the men were dog tired, the sweep was a triumph as the night was to prove.

Maj Gen Leland S. Hobbs had, previous to the 117th Infantry attack, discussed surrender with the commander of the Brunswick garrison, a Lt Gen Karl Veith, reportedly the second highest potentate in the German antiaircraft corps. A temporary truce had been arranged because Lt Gen Veith had requested the parley. Lt John R. Henderson, of the Ninth Army Historical Section, who was at the meeting, said that General Veith, a small wiry Teuton, was neither military prodigy nor veteran tactician, but that because of his rank, had to take charge of the Brunswick defenses. He demanded a truce, to have time to evacuate civilians, but with stolid German

heroism was not willing to surrender the city. "We wish to fight soldier against soldier." General Hobbs made it clear that he was not going to hold up the advance for the evacuation of civilians who should have been removed before, particularly when the time would allow soldiers to strengthen their defense. The two separated and hostilities recommenced.

Observed by men at the bridge held by Company "L" not long after its seizure, a total of twelve vehicles in separate groups sped from the city heading straight for the block. When the sentry's call to halt was ignored, machine-gun and rifle fire sprayed and halted the cars. Company "I" men hurried the occupants out of the vehicles; all were German military men, and many were wounded. In all, about forty-five prisoners were rounded up. One had a slight neck wound; he was dark, small, wiry. Though few of the doughboys knew him, he was the hero of Brunswick, General Veith. His entire staff had been

captured. Later Colonel Purdue interviewed him.

The streaks of dawn were in the sky when the last excitement of the General's visit had died down. Lt Frederick A. Shieferstein, Cannon Company observer with Company "L," had been working most of the night, even to adjusting fire on some vehicles which had not wanted to stop at the roadblock. He knew that the 1st Battalion was scheduled to pass the 3d and move north. But he knew it was no 1st Battalion vehicle which screeched to a halt just east of the bridge. Fifteen German soldiers descended from the truck and, apparently having seen some Americans, ran to a woods close by. Scurrying about there, they seemed to be organizing some kind of delaying defense. Realizing the danger to the 1st Battalion scheduled to pass through, Lt Schieferstein called cannon fire upon the woods. The Germans must have felt at some disadvantage, for they left their positions in all haste.

Actually it was the 2d Battalion, not the 1st Battalion, which had been originally scheduled to pass the 3d Battalion and moved into roadblock positions cutting all the eastern roads from Brunswick. The previous day's events had forced some changes in plan.

Brought from its assembly area at Lengede on the morning of the 11th April by the Service Company trucks just released by the 3d Battalion, the 2d Battalion had then mounted the attached tanks and TDs in an area near Alvesse, waiting until the completion of the engineer bridge to cross and supplement the 3d Battalion's effort.

By 1827 the bridge was ready. By 1925 the battalion was rolling eastward as scheduled. Because the railroad bridge used by the 3d Battalion was reported unnegotiable by vehicles, the acting battalion commander, Capt Phillip M. Chandler, took a different route from that followed by the 3d. The armored column carrying infantry headed southeast through Thiede and Wolfenbittel. A few miles beyond that town it crossed a bridge over the Oker in the sector of the 2d Armored Division. Then the column sped northeast toward Salzdahlum.

Two jeeps were in the lead. At the main road junction in town, where a road to the right (east) led toward Obersicke, direct-fire weapons blasted the jeeps and aimed at the troops who had to dismount at once. Four dug-in enemy tanks along the road to the right were emplaced so as to command approaches from the west. When the lead company, Company "F," tried to use the tanks at its disposal, the vehicles became so mired down that they were useless. Struggling alone

the infantrymen made attempts at flanking attack which failed because the enemy machine guns grazed the ground all around them. No artillery was available. On either side of the road the men of Company "F" had advanced less than 150 yards when half an hour after midnight Capt Jacobsen ordered the advance halted until daylight.

The next morning all evidence of the enemy had disappeared. The battalion then moved north as ordered over the road to Rautheim.

When it became obvious that the 2d Battalion would not reach Rautheim during the night, the Regimental commander ordered the 1st Battalion to entruck and proceed by Quartermaster vehicle to Rautheim, and on to Riddagshen two miles east of Brunswick. The battalion was ordered to assist the 3d Battalion in cutting all roads into the town from the east, thus further isolating the Brunswick garrison.

At 0225 in the morning at the 3d Battalion rear CP west of the Oker River, Lt Col Williamson learned that Lt Ervin Bruner and one of his squads from Company "I" had found a railroad bridge across the Oker 2000 yards downstream from where the 3d Battalion had crossed. Half the squad was still there, protecting it from the enemy. But the bridge was believed to be unsuitable for trucks. Later, engineer squads sent to improve the bridge for vehicular traffic said it could be used at once, however. Accordingly the battalion trucks were jolting over the tracks by 0310. The mile of railroad ties cost the battalion twenty-four tires. Soon after, the troops were in Riddagshen, and Company "B" was sent to the neighboring town of Guesmarade. Before dawn all roads in the network east of Brunswick were effectively blocked.

A hospital containing about a hundred Allied soldiers was discovered. A Scottish soldier said that he had been a prisoner since 1940. One of our men said, "You've been waiting a long while, haven't you?" only to receive the answer, "Yes, we expected you last night."

LAST BLITZ: TO THE ELBE

On the morning of the 12th of April came the order to continue eastward. The "final push," so long spoken of, so long dreamed of, had at last arrived. The 2d Battalion on tanks left Salzdahlum at 0615, and turning right (east) at Rautheim headed toward Cremlingen where at 0630 the 1st Battalion on its Quartermaster trucks joined the column.

Long without Company "A," the 1st Battalion became complete for the first time since Detmold. The



The German civilians didn't like Hitler's order to fight to the last man

company was trucked forward in the morning and was assigned to clean out the Forst Konigslutter, a few miles east of Cremlingen. When the two battalions in column reached the city of Konigslutter, Company "A," having completed its forest mission, tied on to the end.

Leading the 2d Battalion over the main route were two platoons of the 30th Reconnaissance Troop and the Reconnaissance Platoon of Company "B," 823d TD Battalion. At the head of the column, breaking the way, were two jeeps and an M-8, followed by another jeep.

The objective was Uthmoden (Phase-line "John"), within twenty-five miles of the Elbe River. Hence, as rapidly as possible, the column moved through Abbenrode, Bornum and Konigslutter. The route of advance did not lead through Gross Steinum a mile north of the road, but when a column of enemy was seen heading into it, some members of Company "G" with five tanks were sent to capture them. With forty prisoners taken, the Americans were told by the civilians that there were absolutely no more German soldiers in town.

Pfc Cloyd Moore was leading the prisoners out of town when he heard the ping of a rifle, and looking around he saw that the man guarding the rear of the prisoner column had been killed. The prisoners ran for cover, fearing that they might be hit too. Moore saw another group of prisoners being led toward him by a Company "G" soldier, and as he was about to explain the situation to him another shot killed the newcomer. Angrily, Moore brought the prisoners together, and mingling among them so as to be shielded from further fire, he guided them across the open terrain to the remainder of the company on the main road.

When the Regimental commander heard of the civilians' false tale and the insidious sniper, he gave

the order for the TDs along the road to fire into the buildings. The 3-inch guns left their mark of disapproval on the town of sharp-eyed snipers.

The force continued through the town of Supplingenburg to Marienthal. The route on the map led straight through this town to the east, but when the lead vehicle reached the easternmost outskirts, the road was found rutted and unnegotiable. While some jeeps went ahead to investigate the condition of the road, three officers of the 2d Battalion, Capt Slager, artillery liaison officer, Lt Barenkamp, S-2, and Lt Terry, S-3, saw at a distance of some 500 yards a group of antiaircraft installations and Germans moving about them. They took matters into their own hands, and with an interpreter and a white flag advanced to demand a surrender. The area was actually an airfield; one plane was observed abandoned in a bunker. Without attempting to fire the antiaircraft guns, thirty-five Germans gave themselves up.

The road ahead was impassable. The column turned south, crossed an autobahn, reached the outskirts of Helmstedt, and then headed northeast to Walbeck, Hodingen and Flechtingen. It was late (2345) when the 2d Battalion reached Hasselburg and halted for the night. The Regimental Headquarters Group and the 1st Battalion remained mobile on the road near Flechtingen while men slept in the fields close by.

The next day, the 13th of April, saw the 2d Battalion push forward again with Company "E" in the lead behind the reconnaissance elements. The 1st Battalion followed on trucks. According to original plan, the route led northeast from Flechtingen, but again road conditions made it expedient to map a new way. The vehicles rolled through the woods east of Hasselburg, over the Ohre River, into Uthmoden and past Dorst.



Through Bornum as rapidly as possible

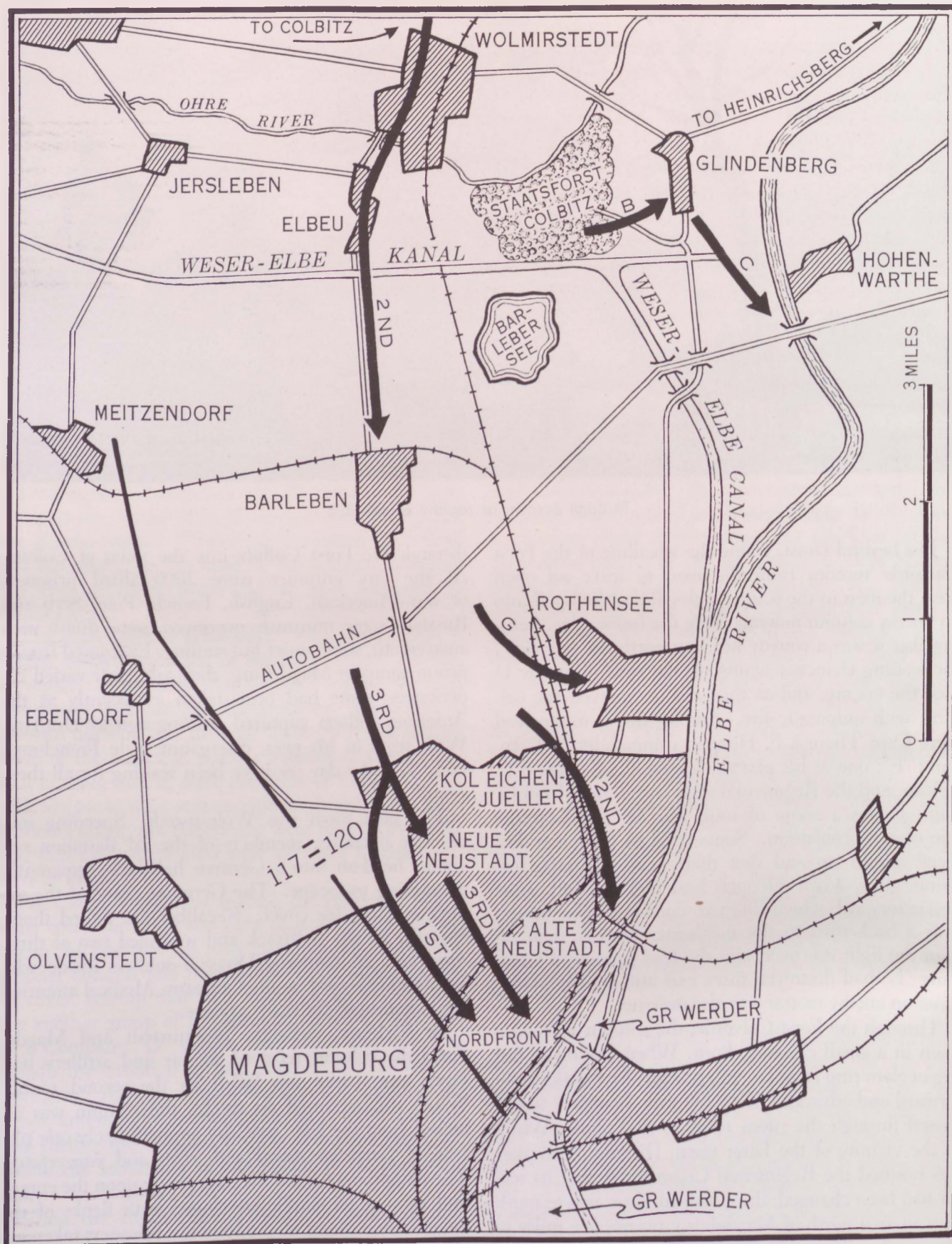
Just beyond Dorst, where the woodline of the Forst Calvorde recedes from the road to leave an open area, the men in the lead vehicles almost bumped into an enemy column moving along the forest edge. Sensing that it was a convoy heading northeast to escape, the leading elements swung off the road in an arc to face the enemy, and as they did so, sprayed the column with automatic fire. Among those in the lead were Capt Thomas F. Hooper, commander of Company "E"; one of his platoon leaders, Lt Raymond E. LeVan, and the Regimental Assistant S-3, Lt John G. Gerl. It was a scene of rout, and for the Germans one of total confusion. Some tried to run away but jeeps caught up and shot them with mounted machine guns. Capt Hooper hastened to lead some tanks forward which blasted enemy trucks fleeing over a back road to the northeast. In less than an hour the fight was over, and the lead platoon of Company "E" had destroyed three cars and twelve trucks. Later an enemy mortar was also overrun.

Through the Forst Calvorde, the column reached a town in a small clearing, Born. When automatic fire began clattering from the village edge, M-4 tanks came forward and advanced firing. Shortly thereafter troops passed through the silent town toward Dolle. While in the vicinity of the latter town, Division headquarters notified the Regimental Commander that its sector had been changed; the 120th Infantry was to move into an area north of Magdeburg, twenty-five miles to the south. The column turned southward, passed

through the Forst Colbitz into the town of Colbitz. At the city entrance were 2000 allied prisoners of war—American, English, French, Pole, Serb and Russian—some raucously overjoyed, some dumb with amazement, some quiet but smiling. Evacuated from a prison camp in Magdeburg, they told their varied experiences; some had been taken as recently as the Ardennes, others captured as long ago as Dunkirk. With tears in his eyes, one gaunt, pale Frenchman said, "It is the day we have been waiting for all these years."

The next town was Wolmirstedt. Speeding into the city outskirts, members of the 2d Battalion ran almost head-on into a German halftrack, apparently attempting to escape. The Germans deserted the vehicle and ran for cover; .50-caliber fire halted them, but also hit the halftrack and wounded two of three American 2d Armored Division soldiers inside who had been captured by the Germans. Medical attention was summoned for them at once.

At Barleben, between Wolmirstedt and Magdeburg, the column received mortar and artillery barrages; one driver was killed by the second round. While still mounted on trucks, the column was attacked from the left (east) by approximately one platoon of Germans armed with rifles and *panzerfaust*. The doughboys turned their firepower upon the enemy and in a quick shuffle enveloped both flanks of the enemy force. Some of the fourteen prisoners taken admitted that their mission had been to destroy as many



Magdeburg and vicinity

American tanks in the town of Barleben as possible.

Realizing that Magdeburg was still held in force by the enemy, the Regimental commander ordered the troops into assembly in Barleben. After being on the road constantly for the preceding two days, except for a four-hour stop at Flectingen which it left at 1130 the 13th, the Command Post was established in a mansion at 1630. The 1st and 2d Battalions moved their companies into billets in the same town. Company "A" was dispatched to Wolmirstedt to establish roadblocks around the city to which Division Headquarters had moved.

During the three preceding days (11th, 12th and 13th of April) the unbelievable total of 3,407 prisoners had been taken by the regiment; 236 had been taken on the 12th near Brunswick by the 3d Battalion which was still in the Rautheim area. All were as usual of makeshift outfits. During the movement the regiment had driven sixty-five miles.

PREFACE TO MAGDEBURG: GLINDENBERG

Though Wolmirstedt and Barleben, within a few miles of the Elbe River, were free of enemy the Germans had by no means deserted the west banks. One place which had to be cleared of enemy was the strung-out town of Glindenberg, two miles due east of Wolmirstedt and of the Staatsforst Colbitz. Others were the high embankments of the Ems-Weser-Elbe Canal, cutting the Barleben-Wolmirstedt road at right angles halfway between the towns and the marshland around it south of Glindenberg. The canal itself was a remarkable feat of engineering, constructed entirely above the ground, permitting 80-foot barges to navigate upon it and tunnels to pass underneath.

In the early evening the 1st Battalion sent a patrol to the northern tip of Glindenberg and found it held by the enemy. Another patrol from Company "C," investigating the southern extension of the town, received machine-gun fire from the canal embankments.

Lt Warren H. Charleston of Company "B" was ordered to lead his platoon into Glindenberg from the south. Since the town appeared small and the enemy was expected to have withdrawn, it was not deemed necessary to send tanks or TDs in support. At dusk, Lt Charleston with his platoon was heading from the canal overpass on the main Magdeburg road south of Elbeu, suburb of Wolmirstedt, toward the Staatsforst Colbitz, when he encountered the Company "C" patrol; it had suffered two casualties and explained that the enemy was strongly entrenched around the canal. After seeing that the wounded were evacuated, Lt

Charleston dispersed his platoon in skirmish line formation and forged through the Staatsforst Colbitz. On the east edge of the woods the platoon faced Glindenberg and began an advance with marching fire against the numerous houses which Lt Charleston at once realized were in greater number than the map indicated.

In the twilight haze he noted all at once that puffs of dust were rising around his platoon members and realized that they were not shooting low but rather were being shot at from the right by machine guns on the canal embankments. Suddenly shouting at the men to fire their rifle grenades at the bank, he led them to a silo and haystack group close by where they had some cover from the fire, fortunately not of grazing but of plunging nature. Then, without wasting a minute he asked the artillery observer for fire upon the enemy positions, even though it was risky to call a shelling at so close range. Before the artillery began falling he dashed from the silo toward the cover of buildings in town and, closely followed by deadly tracers, reached it to observe some of the town defenses.

Once the artillery in neat concentrations had stopped the canal fire, the remainder of the platoon rushed across the open area and concentrated its efforts against Glindenberg. The town was well prepared in its defenses, with doors barricaded and a heavy roadblock of massive beams near the south end. Unwilling to commit his platoon over the barricade into a town where Poles and Russians in the vicinity said there were 500 Germans, he called his company by radio, and requested Capt Pulver to bring the other platoons with tanks and TDs in a strike from the north so as to "pincer" the town. "Roger, and out!"

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Charleston deployed his men in a defensive circle around the south extremity, thus holding the "nip" he had already taken in the town. For three hours Lt Charleston's platoon held its ground. Then in the distance tanks could be heard rolling over the road from Wolmirstedt. The enemy heard it too. PWs later said that 500 Germans in Glindenberg were trying to escape over the Elbe, covered all the while by the automatic fire from the canal. The arrival of the tanks hastened their departure; by 0200 on the 14th of April when Company "B" had moved into the village, the Germans had vanished to the east and northeast. Only one man in Lt Charleston's platoon had been wounded in the seizure of Glindenberg.

The morning of the 14th of April the 1st Battalion

was given an unusual mission; it was the first unit of the 120th Infantry to clear out a principal route advancing east to west. At 0900 a task force consisting of one squad of Company "C" and a platoon of TDs rolled from the canal crossing on the Barleben-Wolmirstedt road toward Paris, this time, rather than Berlin. By-passed enemy troops had been ambushing supply vehicles along this road during the previous two days. The force went only as far as Erxleben. At 1515 it returned, reporting no resistance or obstacles.

During the 14th, the enemy across the Elbe and in Magdeburg shelled Barleben and the area around it sporadically. Cannon Company in position in exposed fields between Barleben and Wolmirstedt, received many concentrations, during one of which an ammunition truck and trailer were hit. Gasoline which spilled from its "Jerricans" threatened to set afire other trucks near it. Lt Merrill D. Dan with Lt Harold Solomon, Pfc Walter K. Stowell, Pfc Charles V. Green, T/4 Harold D. Crabtree, and T/5 James C. Maxey, went about saving the equipment and were quick enough in driving the trucks away so that all eight were saved.

The area south and southeast of Glindenberg was still populated with enemy; from that direction came occasional small-arms fire. At 1530 elements of Company "C" skirmished from the south tip of Glindenberg toward the marshy ground around the canal. From the time they exposed themselves on the bare field 500 yards from the embankments, the men were fired at so strongly that they were ordered to withdraw. Plans were made for a night attack over the same route.

The night was cloudy and suitable to conceal the movement across the open ground. At 2220 two platoons of Company "C" moved out southeast from Glindenberg. The enemy heard the initial stir and in the dark of night let loose with what firepower was at their disposal. From the canal embankments came machine-gun and 20mm antiaircraft ground fire. From the second railroad embankment in the company zone, one running north-south 700 yards southeast of Glindenberg, came rapid rifle and *panzerfaust* fire. S/Sgt Norman E. Skiver pushed to the fore and set his light machine gun in place. Then he traversed it over the railroad tracks ahead and let his finger play on the trigger. The enemy to the front retreated one by one. It was later discovered that S/Sgt Skiver had killed two men and wounded an officer.

But the fight was not over. The exchange of fire

lasted for close to four hours. Along the canal embankment the enemy could not be budged. Led by Lt Frank W. Parent, one platoon was advancing against the embankment defenses which had to be destroyed before the objectives could be reached. From close by a machine gun spotted the attackers and fired at them. After hitting the ground they laid still for five minutes. Then, determined to carry the action forward and sensing the machine-gun position, S/Sgt Eugene R. Maag, one of the lead squad leaders, threw a grenade at the emplacement and, yelling at his men to follow, rushed at it. He had to run up the bank and when he gained the top he saw a man, apparently the gunner, fleeing to the east; lowering his M-1, Sgt Maag fired from the hip, but the German disappeared into the darkness. Lt Parent was close behind. He ordered one squad to set up a base of fire at the embankment, while he led another forward along the canal, cleaning out the area to the east. When the advancing squad reached a railroad tunnel, it heard men inside and, after a white phosphorus grenade had been thrown into it from above, the Germans shouted they wanted to surrender. Then, before anyone could fire further, they disappeared into the dark, escaping through the other, far end of the tunnel. The squad captured many as it continued however. Twenty-six were taken and three killed, and in the early morning seven more gave themselves up.

A medic proved that the tongue was mightier than the sword when, during the course of the evening, he captured two fully armed enemy. Last in an extended column of riflemen moving over the field southeast of Glindenberg, he heard someone call "*Halt!*" in the dark and, peering through the black, recognized two armed Germans insisting that he stop. Able to speak a little German, Pfc Gerard A. Emmons started to explain why his captors were stupid to continue the fight. He told them they were hopelessly surrounded and should give up at once. When he heard his squad calling for him he did not answer because he was afraid the enemy would fire on his comrades. Instead he talked faster and, what was more important, the Germans listened. They consented to follow him. As he led them proudly to his squad, he must have remarked to himself that even in war it pays to have a ready tongue.

One enemy machine-gun nest in a well barricaded underpass along the canal was eradicated when, just prior to the attack, direct fire landed squarely in its midst. If the Germans had asked how it had been so accurately spotted at night, they might have been

told that the nest had been noted during the afternoon skirmish; that a tanker had sighted and clamped his primary weapon on the location and at a designated time before the jump-off had slammed fifteen rounds into the piece!

By 0330 after suffering only one casualty the two platoons of Company "C" had driven 1000 yards to the Elbe banks opposite Hohenwarthen. Fifty-six prisoners were taken.

A third platoon from Company "C" had driven from the canal crossing on the Barleben-Wolmirstedt road along the southern embankment in an easterly direction at 2030. Without meeting opposition it crossed railroad tracks and skirted north of the Barleber See, an artificial lake within 200 yards of the canal. Where the canal branches and one arm turns southeast, on the opposite banks from where the other two platoons were having difficulty, numerous dug-in positions were the source of heavy small-arms fire which delayed the platoon's advance. Moving up by short rushes, the platoon finally succeeded in driving the enemy across the canal-arm into a former shipyard area, lying in the crotch of the canal extensions. After holding the ground all night, the platoon crossed the canal into the shipyards the next morning and discovered the enemy had fled across the river.

With trucks free at last to transport the 3d Battalion, the Regimental Commander had it brought forward from Rautheim to an assembly area in Wolmirstedt at 1515 on the 14th of April. After Company "K" had taken over its roadblocks, Company "A" assembled in Barleben.

Regimental OPs were established during the day (the 14th), one in the attic of the mansion which housed the CP, another in a church in Glindenberg. Members of the I&R Platoon could observe the inner streets of Magdeburg and lowlands across the Elbe, where any action was reported from the OP.

Though the 3d Battalion rehearsed river crossings on the Ohre near Wolmirstedt on the 15th, indications pointed more to a future attack upon Magdeburg rather than an Elbe crossing by the 30th Division. In preparation, all areas up to the city had to be cleaned out. On the 15th of April, Company "F" attacked northeast from Barleben at 1600 and crossed the flat fields to the shipyards occupied by the Company "C" platoon that morning. One Company "F" platoon was chosen to establish four outposts along the Elbe: two along the river opposite Hohenwarthe, one at the railroad canal crossing, and one on a side road.

The next day (16th of April) at 0600 Company "E" dispatched a patrol to investigate Rothensee, a community 1500 yards north of Magdeburg, and across the autobahn from Barleben. Under observation from the Observation Post in Barleben, the village was small but since it commanded the northern approach into the city it was an obvious outpost for the forces in Magdeburg.

Made up of S/Sgt Frederick W. Goods, Sgt Donald F. McClure, Cpl Bill Turanyi, Pfc Joseph M. Cortese and Pvt Cleon Archer, the patrol maneuvered over the fields from the autobahn and came close to the concentration of railroad tracks on the western edge of Rothensee. There the men were pinned down from the fire of machine guns blocking the road into the village. The patrol edged safely away from the block and headed southwest, coming nearer to the northern section of Magdeburg, known as Neue Neustadt. As the men scouted along, trying to observe all evidences of defense, they were again discovered by automatic weapons near the main road entering Magdeburg. Turanyi began to give a steady volley of return fire while the others withdrew to the north and then in turn covered his retreat. They did not return without information, however, having observed bridges intact over the Elbe, barracks, machine guns and railroad passes. On the return trip they were fired on by an automatic weapon on the railroad embankment near Rothensee.

A Company "F" patrol had passed the Company "E" men near the Rothensee roadblock, and had continued south to set up observation posts near Neustadt. But at 1125 word reached it via radio that all hostile activity was to cease during negotiation for surrender. Later, at 1430, the patrollers returned to Barleben.

THE S-2 NEGOTIATES SURRENDER

From G-2 sources and outward indications, such as the word of civilians and of straggling soldiers, it appeared that the enemy was not eager to put up a death struggle for Magdeburg and that, given encouragement, the Germans would welcome peaceful terms and even unconditional surrender.

The Regimental S-2, Maj "Zeke" Glazier, was ordered to negotiate surrender and left the CP with his party in the late morning. The results of his visit he tells about in an annex to his S-2 report on the 16th of April.

"At 1140, 16 April 1945, a party left the Regimental CP, 120th Infantry, in the town of Barleben

for the city of Magdeburg. Party consisted of one M-20 with loudspeaker mounted thereon, one jeep with artillery personnel to lift or place artillery fire, and one jeep from I&R Platoon, 120th Infantry, with 610 radio for communication and messenger service. Party passed last friendly outpost at autobahn southwest of Barleben at 1142 and arrived on outskirts of Magdeburg . . . at 1150. One enemy flare trailing white smoke was fired as vehicles approached city. All vehicles carried white flag.

"On reaching coordinates 667035 (first crossroads in Neue Neustadt) machine-gun fire was received from machine gun in northwest corner of road junction. . . . Fire was not directed at vehicles but alongside as warning to stop. As soon as burst of fire ended, a German NCO raced from his hole to the gunner and reprimanded him for firing upon vehicles carrying a white flag. The NCO was an SS trooper of an unidentified unit. Surrender party halted, contact was made with SS trooper, who though not senior NCO present, appeared to be in charge of troops in this area. Trooper sent for company commander, a first lieutenant, who on finding that we desired to discuss surrender sent for his commander (battalion or regimental, undecided), a major who arrived at 1210. Previously a truce had been declared between our party and the first lieutenant, for one hour to await the arrival of the commander of the troops in this sector, to be followed by a truce of one-half hour to allow the return of our party and the return of all enemy troops to their positions. The major upon his arrival informed us that a general, the commander of all troops in this sector, desired us to come to his command post. Transportation would limit the party to two persons. Lt Gerl, assistant Regimental S-3, and I went forward to discuss terms with the general.

"We were blindfolded and led to a staff car, a small sedan, which took us to the general's command post. We stopped several times en route apparently to check in with command posts or to exchange credentials at roadblocks and arrived at the command post at approximately 1230. We were informed that we would have to wait before the general was ready to see us. It was my opinion that the general was calling higher headquarters to request instructions as to the surrender of the town.

"While waiting for an audience with the general an English-speaking person who identified himself as an officer came up to us and asked that should the general not surrender we might expect two German officers to enter our lines in the vicinity of Barleben

at 2300 the 16th of April, and that our outposts be requested not to fire so that they might surrender. Request was granted. At 1300 we were guided, still blindfolded, into a building, downstairs, and after devious turnings, into a room. Our blindfolds were removed. We were in a cellar lighted by candles, with one table in the center of the room. On the table apparently was a map covered by waxed paper. There was a semicircle of chairs arranged in front of the table behind which sat Colonel Cobalt, Chief of Staff of the organization. On his left was a blonde to act as interpreter, but who acted more as distraction than interpreter. She wore a red wool knit sweater, close fit. What appeared to be a divisional staff, or a responsible facsimile thereof, was assembled for the meeting. Colonel Cobalt asked our mission. We explained that we had come to ask unconditional surrender of the city and troops to prevent further casualties and damage to property. Colonel Cobalt said that his commander, the general, could not discuss the case. We, misunderstanding, said that if the General did not care to discuss the matter with us, that our General would be willing to come forward and discuss the matter with his Commanding General. Colonel Cobalt said that his commander was not empowered to discuss the matter at all. We turned and left.

"We were again blindfolded and proceeded to our starting place. A major who had first escorted us met us again on our return and apparently was sorry surrender had not been arranged. He said that he must obey orders as a soldier, that his opinion as a private individual was of no importance, and that he must do his duty as a soldier. The first lieutenant in our absence had conversed with Lt Schmitz, 30th Division MII Team, and had told him that he would see us again, indicating that his troops would not fight hard on our approach. The attitude of all soldiers, with the exception of the Commanding General and his staff, was that they were willing to surrender and considered the war over but must resist because of orders from higher headquarters. Our treatment was excellent throughout. All officers accorded us the highest respect and apologized for the smallness of the vehicle and bumpiness of the road and the delay occasioned by waits en route. The presence of SS troops in the front line and a snappily clad SS officer on the General Staff indicates that an SS outfit is present, not as a combat formation, but scattered throughout combat units to strengthen their morale. In the front line, Hungarian, SS, *Wehrmacht*, and *Volkssturm* were noted in the same organization indicat-

ing a motley collection of odds and ends banded together into combat teams. The greatest apprehension was occasioned the surrender party by friendly artillery fire which chose the moment of our presence in the city to register, and by P-47s which buzzed the town while we were negotiating. Violation of the truce would have been an element more dangerous than the warning fire received en route."

(The M-29 with loudspeaker was never used, although Lt Gerl had written a speech to induce enemy surrender. There was no opportunity to speak.)

The commandant of Magdeburg who had "not been at liberty to discuss surrender" with Maj Glazier was Lieutenant General Regener, a Nazi military bigwig who had come recently from the city of Kustrin, where he had directed defenses against the Russian advance; he had held out for some time at one of the three last strongholds along the Oder River before the Russians had burst over the barrier and were now beating on the gates of Berlin. Regener was as stolid and stubborn as Prussian generals come, and though the entire city of Magdeburg, and military men including his closest officers, realized the senselessness of trying to withstand the Allied drive, he remained unwilling to surrender.

Some of his subordinates, including his Weapons and Munitions officer, a Capt Gerhardt, said later that they begged him to reconsider. When 3000 refugee children were brought into the city by order of the Party, Regener fumed, but still chose to defend vigorously, even to attempting a counterattack once, which was discouraged when artillery shells damaged some of his vehicles. It was later learned that the officers below him reported they had tried to assassinate him, but found him too well-guarded. Under his command were 1100 men, a motley crew ranging from a few SS troopers to railroad workers and Reich Service youngsters from 15 to 18 years old; these were organized into three battalions under a Col Macholz.

In spite of the fact that Maj Glazier felt that the time was ripe for surrender and requested propaganda pamphlets to be used as final persuasion, it was decided against wasting time with so stubborn an officer as Regener, and plans were made for an afternoon attack on the 17th of April.

LAST BATTLE: MAGDEBURG

The "big picture" involved the 2d Armored Division, whose Combat Command "B" was to contain the south half of the city, while the 30th Division took the north half. General Hobbs planned to use all

three regiments, with the 119th Infantry on the south of the others driving in from the west, the 117th from the northwest, and the 120th from the north.

Maj Glazier outlined the plans briefly at 2310 on the night of the 16th to the liaison officers in the S-2-3 office at Barleben: "For tomorrow's operations, 3d Battalion will attack for Magdeburg; it will follow an air strike. Company 'G' will provide left flank protection and the 1st and 2d Battalions will be grouped and be ready to assist the 3d Battalion. The 1st Battalion will be the unit to assist the 3d if necessary. The 3d will have one company of TDs, one of tanks, and one platoon of engineers." (Assignment later revised.)

The Regimental objective, which was the northeast section of town, included the sections of: Neue Neustadt, Kol Eichenwetter, Alte Neustadt, and Nordfront. The goose-eggs on the map read "Teen," "North Stinky" and "South Stinky," and after that, from a factory district to the river front, phase-lines were to be used in measuring the advance. The principal defenses seemed to be on the outskirts in the form of roadblocks.

At 0625 on the 17th of April Colonel Purdue told Lt Claude F. Curtis, the Division Liaison Officer, that "we will take an intermediate objective ('Harold') approximately 1000 yards southeast of the autobahn on which we will pause for a few minutes. Purpose is final reconnaissance before the attack. Company 'G' had already prepared plans to seize objective 'Teen' in order to protect the left flank of our attacking troops."

At 1510 Company "G" crossed the autobahn embankments and headed for Objective "Teen," the numerous railroad tracks running north-south on the western outskirts of Rothensee, location of roadblocks which harassed the Company "E" patrol the day before. There was little resistance; in a half hour the objective was firmly in hand, the left flank secured.

At the same time a platoon from Company "K" had moved south from the autobahn crossing toward Magdeburg and without opposition continued 1000 yards toward the city to an area which was to be the Line of Departure. Then there was a brief halt while the 3d Battalion, with a platoon of tanks and one of TDs, came forward along the exposed road, and leaders made their final reconnaissance; they could see almost into the center of town down the road from Barleben.

The initial attack for seizing the near edge of Magdeburg had to be made across approximately



Ready to lay smoke on Magdeburg



. . . and the result

1200 yards of level ground completely devoid of vegetation other than low grass. In order to cross this open ground without casualties from machine-gun and observed artillery fires, it was necessary to screen the movement with smoke. However, the closest possible mortar positions were not within these weapons' range of the town. Therefore, 81mm mortars of the regiment were divided into two echelons. The first echelon fired a screen about two-thirds of the way from the Line of Departure to the near edge of the town. Under cover of this screen, the riflemen and the second echelon of mortars moved forward. Upon arriving within range of the near edge of Magdeburg, this second echelon quickly emplaced its mortars and brought down an effective screen upon the objective. This technique of leapfrogging had been practiced during one of our brief training periods. The time spent for this training was invaluable because we were able to gain a toe hold on the city without the loss of a man. The enemy blindly shelled the obvious route of approach but the Regimental plan wisely called for avoiding the obvious.

Unopposed by antiaircraft units which were hopeless and unwilling to make targets of themselves, an air strike on the city by medium bombers had been finished by 1445. The smoke was still curling upwards and a building was flaming against the skyline when the 3d Battalion, with Company "L" on the right of the road and Company "I" on the left, headed into Magdeburg. The enemy was initially quiet, and advance was rapid until the troops approached the first main intersection in Neue Neustadt on the city outskirts. There small-arms bullets began to clatter against the buildings next to them, and occasional *panzerfaust* fire was received. Then, as the men began rushing from cover to cover, 20mm anti-

aircraft guns and other weapons turned upon them.

Sgt Julian A. Trimeyer, of the 1st Platoon of Company "M," attached to Company "L," dodged into a house and set his heavy machine gun in the window to fire down the street. But a sniper perceived his action, and he was wounded by rifle fire through the window. Pfc Louis R. Rangel and Pfc Joseph E. Gauthier of Sgt Trimeyer's squad had seen him enter the house, but could not follow him because heavy fire made the street for some moments a perilous alley of almost sure casualty. The two men decided to "mousehole" their way to the wounded sergeant, and with grenades quickly blasted a hole in the wall between the houses. They crawled through the embrasure and while others helped carry Sgt Trimeyer to comparative safety, the two machine gunners went to work with their weapon and outsniped the sniper who was subsequently killed by one of their bursts.

Advance began to slow considerably. Another roadblock at the next intersection took considerable time to destroy. Looking down the street, forward troops could see 88mm antiaircraft guns located at key street corners and even observed crews and civilians stirring around them. The tanks and TDs near the front tried to edge into alleyways and side streets; some hugging as close as possible to buildings were hit by ricocheting rounds from enemy 88s, and before the day was finished, one TD had been disabled and one tank had lost a track.

Company "L" was held up for some time when its 1st Platoon, under Lt Alvin H. Gordon, forged ahead and was separated by enemy fire and infiltration from the remainder of the company behind. The 2d Platoon endeavored to break through to the 1st, but even with a section of the TDs was halted by an over-



Reserve tank destroyers move into Magdeburg after the edge of the city had been captured

whelming volume of fire from small arms and 50mm guns, strategically located. One squad leader of the 2d Platoon was killed, and two wounded in the fray; Sgt Brigman also had to be evacuated. A great loss was Lt Gordon D. Hicks, who had been with Company "L" since July 18th, long one of the oldest veterans among rifle platoon leaders in the regiment; he was wounded and died the following day.

Noncoms had to be quickly drawn from the 3d Platoon, and Lt Jack T. Storm, executive officer, took command of the 2d Platoon, which struck again to regain contact with the 1st. Following behind, the Weapons Platoon stormed a house at a cost of one killed, one wounded. A TD was disabled by a *panzerfaust*, but all the crew except one were saved. By 2100, however, the 2d Platoon had driven through to the 1st. The 3d Platoon had contacted Company "I."

Ready for quick support, the 1st Battalion followed the 3d, with Company "A" mounted on the tanks of Company "B," 743d Tank Battalion, while Company "B" (1st Battalion) was abreast on the left of the road, and Company "C" in rear. With the 3d Battalion

slowed down and resistance heavier than expected, the Regimental commander ordered the 1st Battalion to move up on the right (west) in the regimental sector and come parallel to the 3d, which as Maj McCullough said later was "pretty well canalized and had to blow its way through buildings." Accordingly Company "A" dismounted from tanks and at the 3d Battalion Line of Departure moved southeast in two columns along different roads about 500 yards apart, the Klein Kannen Steig and the Lerchen Wuhne. Behind each Company "A" column came a reinforced company—Company "C" with two platoons of tanks on the right, Company "B" with one platoon of tanks on the left.

The 2d Platoon of Company "A" was leading the 1st Battalion advance. Lt Walter T. Johnson was at the head of the troops, and about dusk was approaching the Fiebitz Wuhne, which the 3d Battalion farther east had already reached. 3d Battalion men had seen a block there protected by machine gun and *panzerfaust*. Lt Col Williamson found upon investigation that the block consisted of approximately

a dozen wagons piled one on top of the other, obstructing the road from building to building. Lt Johnson took his platoon around the block and returned to report the enemy clear of the area. Two tanks were sent forward to break through the block. But the enemy had played a ruse.

Suddenly a *panzerfaust* explosion rent the air and immediately a second was heard. The lead tank was disabled and Lt Johnson was wounded at the same time. Sgt Harold P. Driscoll, an assistant squad leader, was close behind and having seen what occurred started for the wounded lieutenant. Johnson crawled to a near-by sentrybox and called to the second tank to fire on the point of resistance. Even though a flare was fired, exposing the movement, Driscoll ran forward and reached Lt Johnson. He helped him back to a spot behind a more substantial house where a wounded tanker was also lying.

T/Sgt Rex Edmonds, platoon sergeant, and S/Sgt Edwin R. Wells, squad leader, were with the second squad behind the tanks. After the explosions they came forward to contact their platoon leader, and after finding him wounded, Edmonds returned to bring up some medics. He was on his way back to the wounded officer with two aid men, and Wells had just met him to lead them the rest of the way, when a volley of *panzerfaust* fire landed close to them and enemy soldiers began to throw hand grenades at them. They hit the ground; S/Sgt Wells was wounded.

Two medics, Pfc Herman Gershon and Pfc Herbert F. Schain, realized the difficulty of getting to Johnson through the heavy fire but they had an idea; with a convenient Red Cross flag which they held aloft, they headed across the danger area where Wells had been wounded, all the time shouting in German for the enemy to hold fire. And they made it. The wounded were safely evacuated.

The roadblock was well-positioned, however, and the battalion was still fighting there after 2100. By 2115 an east-west line along the road had been established by both the 1st and 3d Battalions (on Phase-line "Pork"). The two battalions took defensive positions for the night.

Desirous of knowing more about the roadblock facing the battalion Lt Col Williamson sent a patrol from Company "B" to investigate the area around the intersection, to learn where the enemy defenders were stationed or if they had withdrawn. Lt Warren H. Charleston led a ten-man patrol around the right (west) flank some 200 yards from the intersection and crossed the road which was, for that night, no-man's

land. On the other side he came into a long factory and traversed the length of it toward the door which faced south into town. Stealthily the men were emerging into a courtyard when suddenly three *panzerfaust* shots rang out and hit squarely in the middle of the group, four of the resultant nine wounded being litter cases.

Though wounded slightly in the face himself, Lt Charleston grouped those unable to walk inside the factory and posted some of the less-seriously hurt at each door. Then he sent his runner, Pfc Norman J. Jordan, and his platoon sergeant, also wounded in the face, to the rear to procure another squad either to protect the evacuation of casualties or, if necessary, to continue the mission. In a series of four separate trips, Jordan brought eight more men for protection, led forward the medics, told his lieutenant that tanks were coming to blast the house where the *panzerfaust* had originated, and then directed the tanks. When he finally headed back to the Company CP with his platoon leader, he had almost worn a path over the route.

Before he left to report his information to higher headquarters, Lt Charleston stationed two men at each of the four factory doors, to guard the evacuation of the wounded by the medics. Sgt Don K. Seymour and Pfc Leron A. Murphy were posted at the door closest to the house where the *panzerfaust* men had fired, and while the aid men were laboring to adjust and handle the wounded, they kept an eagle eye on the courtyard. Suddenly a new volley of *panzerfaust* was fired at them; it clattered at the window and they fell to the floor. Apparently in an attempt to infiltrate into the factory, Germans were approaching the door.

By this time the medics were carrying out the last of the wounded and had to lift them over a high wall at the other end of the building. Murphy and Seymour with eyes still watching the door began to withdraw toward the exit which led back to friendly lines. In the dark close to them they heard a voice call in a whisper, "Comrade—Paul—Comrade," but rather than start a fire fight which would endanger the wounded, they remained silent and slipped away unobserved. As the medics were lowering the last man down the wall, the two guards close by saw the Germans evacuating one of their men from the house next to the factory.

The roadblock was organized in several houses which like pillboxes were mutually protective and covered most of the streets and yards around them. The tanks were unable to eliminate the roadblock during the night. Meanwhile the enemy tried to infiltrate

through the 3d Battalion lines at 0200, but was repulsed.

THE FALL OF MAGDEBURG

During the evening at higher headquarters changes were made in the Regimental sector, which became 200 yards wider to the west. Because of this, Colonel Purdue decided to commit the 2d Battalion in the eastern zone around the railroad area close to the Elbe, while the 3d and 1st Battalions continued their advance south, pivoting around the 2d Battalion to the east and to the river. Phase lines were to be used to denote the advance.

11-hour was set at 0630. The 2d Battalion's Line of Departure extended northeast in a line from the road held by the 3d Battalion; Companies "E" on the right and "F" on the left had to move past Company "G" on the outskirts of Rothensee to a built-up area called Kol Eichenwetter whose southern boundary was Phase-line "Ham," the LD. Company "E" moved straight to the line the morning of the 18th of April; at 0615 Company "F" hit an enemy strongpoint and was delayed.

In a house one hundred yards to his right front, Cpl Elmer B. Sniff, agent corporal of the 2d Platoon of Company "H," attached to Company "F," saw a machine gun spraying the company. Armed with two hand grenades and a carbine, he started forward, half rushing, half creeping and crawling, and gained an area twenty yards from the house. So close he could see the enemy, to the number of seven inside, he heaved his first grenade at the men by the gun. Almost petrified by the surprise explosion, the Germans started to escape. Sniff threw his second and last grenade, which wounded six and killed one. In a few minutes Company "F" had swept through the house and pushed forward to the Line of Departure.

Company "F" was a quarter of an hour late beginning its attack but it moved ahead fast and was soon abreast of Company "E." By 0922 both were 1500 yards in front of the Line of Departure with twenty-three prisoners and no casualties. The 2d Battalion's zone of advance continued south to a junction of many rails; there its boundary turned southeast to the river. Forward in this zone the two companies swept.

The 3d Battalion had begun its attack at 0630. There was a brief period when the enemy seemed to be making as much noise as possible to harass the advance; a few second-story machine guns and Schmeisser "burp" guns were sprayed wildly. Then the resistance seemed to give way and having pushed

through Company "L's" night defenses, Company "K," abreast with Company "I," forged quickly up to the 88mm guns which had been used the day before. They had been deserted by crews which had either fled across the river or which had to be used in another sector. The battalion reached the Alte Neustadt section and crossed over the railroad tracks; here pivoting around the 2d Battalion, it headed southeast toward the river. Company "I" on the left flank made contact with Company "E" advancing on a parallel line, and using joint CPs the two companies swept over the bomb-flattened city-midsection and at 1130 reached the banks of the Elbe. Company "K" alongside reached the river simultaneously. In all, the battalion had seized 280 prisoners in the easy morning attack.

A railroad bridge led east from Alte Neustadt toward Biederitz and was a possible route of enemy escape. A 2d Battalion patrol reported to the Command Post at 1215 that the Germans had already blown the span.

In the meantime the 1st Battalion had met more resistance. The same roadblock which had disabled a tank and wounded nine patrollers clipped the opening movement of the attack at 0630. Company "B" had moved up on the left and struggled for the first half hour of attack with the group of houses wherein enemy picked at its squads with *panzerfaust* and sniper fire. After gradually strangling off the block-defenders, Company "B" managed to gain a mass surrender from the entire group of Germans and was able to push forward. Responsible for the right half of the battalion zone, Company "A" overran a motor pool on its extreme right (west) and from it captured fifteen trucks and seventy-four prisoners.

Both companies advanced south quickly, past the scattered factories and storehouses, Company "A" reaching an apartment-house district, Company "B" touching finally upon the north-south railroad through town. Here the battalion pivoted east and pulled up on line with the tracks. Along the rails the enemy attempted a feeble defense line which crumbled when the two companies surrounded and overran the few automatic weapons there. East of the tracks was the once stylish Exerzierplatz; from around the small shelters and low walls the troops received a few rounds, but after some exchange of fire 144 Germans surrendered. It was about 1100 at that time, and the Elbe was only 1000 yards away.

Searching the houses and attentive for any last-

stand roadblocks, the battalion moved over the last section of the regimental objective—Nordfront. Shortly after 1230 a Polish prisoner recently liberated within the city by the American forces told Company "B" men he could lead them to the last surviving bridge over the Elbe and could point out the cable leading to the explosive planted by the Germans. Fifteen men volunteered and ran forward of the advancing battalion following the eager Pole. Over a devious route which the Pole must have known well, since thirty enemy were later discovered to have been protecting the area, he led them to houses within one hundred yards of the river. There he signaled that only a few could follow.

S/Sgt William D. Cloud, a platoon guide, Pfc Estal B. Dalton, a BAR man, and Pfc Paul Gravenstein followed him. As they moved forward more cautiously now, the Pole warned them about a German machine gun protecting the bridge twenty yards to the north. Close to the banks he pointed to the cable. Cloud was stepping down to cut it when as if he had stepped on the detonator an explosion blasted and sent remnants of the bridge in different directions; debris, pieces of cement and steel, flew through the air. The men hit the ground; as he lay still, Cloud noted a dugout about thirty yards behind him. When the air cleared he beckoned to his men and they moved toward it. They found inside eighty German soldiers, six machine guns, ten automatic rifles and numerous *panzerfaust*. All were captured.

Meanwhile Company "B" was almost to the river; near by it took a large group of 150 willing prisoners. Near a large church elements of Company "A" came to a halt for a few moments during a quiet advance. Suddenly some shots were fired from a house across the street; one man was wounded seriously and fell to the ground. Four men close by realized that the enemy sniper was located a short distance from them and in an effort to gain cover they headed for an open garage twenty feet away. The man in the lead was too slow and was hit in the nose by the sniper's next bullet. The other three, Sgt Wayne F. Perdue, an assistant squad leader, Pfc Daniel T. Cseak, BAR man, and Pfc William F. Handberg, reached the garage safely and from convenient embrasures took return shots at the enemy riflemen. With no target but the wounded man in the street below them, the snipers took awkward positions to fire at him, but found he had fallen at a point they could not reach. From the garage the three men caused them considerable trouble by harassing their every movement.

In a few minutes a tank was summoned and when within range of the house blasted it and caused the snipers to surrender. After searching the houses, Company "A" soon moved through the area. It found an air-raid shelter close by; at the bottom of the dark stairs were huddled 1,800 terrified civilians. In a few minutes the company reached the river bank. The battalion had taken 433 prisoners, including a regimental commander. By 1400 it was consolidated in a defensive area along the riverfront in its zone.

Rothensee was the only town remaining in the regimental sector which had not been taken. While Company "G" mopped up the open area between Rothensee and Magdeburg's northernmost railroad bridge in the Shutzhafen industrial district, the 2d Battalion Antitank Platoon with a platoon from the Regimental Antitank Company moved through Rothensee and though many military trophies were seized, there was no opposition reported. By 1700 this mission had been completed.

The 1st and 3d Battalions were now holding a line along the Elbe River in the north section of the city. At 1800 the 2d Battalion was ordered to complement this river-defense by outposting the open area from the city north to the waterline east of Glindenberg. Company "G" took the north portion of the battalion sector, from Glindenberg to a point where the Ems-Weser-Elbe Canal forks; the line from there south to the built-up area at the edge of the city proper fell to Company "E." By shortly after dark these movements were completed, and Company "F" had assembled in Barleben.

From the IPW office came the word that prisoners captured that day totalled 790, from miscellaneous units. Also seized was an airplane parts factory and storehouses containing liquor, foodstuffs, and candy. With that good-sized score to its credit, the 120th Regiment completed its last attack in the European Theater of Operations.

Though Magdeburg had fallen, enemy movement could still be heard in the areas across the river. On the night of the 18th-19th of April German patrols were still circulating through the 1st Battalion lines. In Company "A's" area T/5 Joseph A. Saccon saw some figures which he recognized as German darting around the corner of a building. He fired rapidly but too late to have effect on the retreating figures. S/Sgt William R. Trembley, a squad leader, and Pfc George A. Johnson appeared at the house door to investigate the shots. The enemy tried to fire on the three men from around the corner and threw hand grenades, one

a miss and another a dud. Yelling for Saccon to fire at the enemy from a new position he had taken, Trembley and Johnson rushed around the corner of the building but found the enemy patrollers in flight.

In Company "B's" area, a similar patrol of eight men who were headed east, apparently to escape across the Elbe, was spotted by Sgt James G. Graham, assistant squad leader, and later by Sgt Stanley Kurek, light machine-gun squad leader, who from a CP door staged a fire fight with the enemy. Shortly after the firing, all became quiet; the enemy disappeared. The next morning one German soldier was found wounded and another killed in the area.

So ended the Regiment's first taste of large-city fighting, of advance over automatic-weapon-swept streets and of striking roadblock after roadblock of *panzerfaust* or 88mm fire. In it the men learned never to advance upon an intersection frontally; they learned to feel out and flank each possible strongpoint with caution; they learned that tanks should where possible use side streets and protected alleyways, but that they were slow and could not always be had when desired. "Yes, it was our first taste of city fighting," said Lt Col Williamson, and with a chuckle he added, "and I don't like it."

Lt Gen Regener was never found in the city. It was later discovered he had fled at 0200 on the 18th when the 30th Division troops were halfway to the Elbe. By 0700 he was in Konigsborn over twenty miles to the east and was to be awarded the Eichenlaub (Oak Leaf Cluster) to wear on his Rittenkreuz (Iron Cross). On the 20th Regener made a radio address congratulating his troops for the magnificent defense of Magdeburg and lauding the Fuhrer. In a few days his world was to come crashing down about his ears.

LAST DAYS IN COMBAT

The 19th of April, the day following the seizure of Magdeburg, saw a change in dispositions: the 120th Regiment was assigned a sector of defense north from the Rothensee area to a point 1000 yards south of Heinrichberg along the riverline; the 117th was to take over the defense of Magdeburg proper. The relief of the 120th's 1st and 3d Battalions began at 0800 and they moved to positions in the new sector, then occupied by the 2d Battalion which was to assemble in Barleben.

East of central Magdeburg splitting the Elbe into two streams was an island called Werder, covered for the most part by a city park with its auditorium. At

1040, as men of Company "I" were preparing to leave their area in Magdeburg, they observed from the river bank a small boat leaving this island. The crew of five men, with a white flag fluttering overhead, paddled vigorously to the west shore. The Company "I" men came forward as they landed and took them, all Germans, one an officer, to Capt Charles R. Shaw, Company "I" commander. The Germans explained to him that Werder was filled with soldiers eager to surrender and when Capt Shaw told them to produce all their comrades who wanted to give themselves up, the five Germans returned unhesitatingly to the island and had shortly come back with another group. After several boatloads, fifty-six PWs were assembled in the area of Company "I." The 117th Infantry unit replacing Company "I" had now completed the relief, and Capt Shaw's men were leaving. At the time thirty more Germans were on their way across the river to surrender, and the island was bristling with white flags.

The soldiers on Werder had been assigned to blow the bridges and act as a delaying force. The officers captured said they realized the hopelessness of holding out and were happy to surrender. Besides, three hours of firing that morning from 1st and 3d Battalion mortars had withered some of their patriotism. The commanding officer of the Werder garrison had been, surprisingly enough a *Volkssturm* member and, far different from the worn-out specimens encountered so often previously, he was determined to hold his ground at all cost. He was irritated with the spiritless attitude of the officers he commanded, and on the morning of the 19th went to consult with his superiors on the east bank of the river. Profiting from his absence, the officers engineered a mass exodus to the American lines.

Before Company "I" had left, the Germans brought over their company commander and his wife and children; he feared they would suffer typical reprisal measures when the Nazis discovered his treacherous and cowardly desertion. He said that of the ninety German soldiers left to hold the island, almost all had come willingly into American hands.

Meanwhile the 1st Battalion had moved into its new area, with Company "A" in defense of the Rothensee sector, Company "C" on line from a point 200 yards north of Rothensee to the autobahn, and Company "B" assembled in Barleben. The companies relieving the 2d Battalion were in position by 1400; Company "B's" movement was completed at 1815.

Minus Company "L," the 3d Battalion reassembled in Wolmirstedt by 1440; at this time Company "L" with headquarters in Glindenberg took responsibility of the sector from the autobahn north to a point 1000 yards south of Heinrichsberg. Attached to the 120th Infantry on the night of the 18th-19th of April was the 30th Reconnaissance Troop in positions defending the Heinrichsberg area north to the Division boundary, extending from Loitche east to a point on the Elbe due east of Zielitz. By 1600 Companies "E" and "G" had been relieved and were assembled with Company "F" in Barleben. Orders were for the 2d Battalion to make plans for repelling any enemy attack and quelling any disturbance or "werewolf" activity in the rear areas.

Company "K" left Wolmirstedt at 1900 the following day (the 20th) to relieve the 30th Reconnaissance Troop in the Heinrichsberg area; the troop was relieved of attachments to the 120th Infantry at the same time. Two days later elements of the 35th Division moved into Heinrichsberg to take over Company "K's" outposts and some of Company "L's" to the south. Company "K" returned to Wolmirstedt at 1950 on the 22d of April.

The line along the Elbe north of Magdeburg was held in a series of outposts and roadblocks. Remaining in function until the cessation of hostilities in May, the Regimental Observation Posts reported enemy movements, but the exchange of artillery or even small arms was almost nil and the actual fighting so little that on the 23d of April training of a light nature began. Church services started a regular schedule and movies were shown, even to those men in the towns close to the river.

The sporadic contact with the enemy, up until the end of the month, was a form of nervous reaction from the fast-dying German nation. On the 21st of April five men in Company "L's" 3d Platoon had a brief conflict while on all-night duty at an outpost consisting of two machine-gun holes 2000 yards northeast of Glindenberg. At about 2300 Pfc George W. Westervelt was looking toward the Elbe as it glistened in the bright moonlight when he discerned three shadowy figures approaching from the river. Sergeant Abel B. Colombo beside him observed the same action; Westervelt shook Pfc Larry A. Niswonger, who had been napping in one end of the hole. In another hole near by, having also seen the uninvited guests, Pfc Joseph A. Thomas woke Pfc Arthur G. Nadeau. Keyed for anything, all five noted among the three men approaching within fifty yards a sudden movement

which appeared to be an attempt to throw a grenade. Nadeau and Thomas opened fire at once.

Westervelt says, ". . . they continued firing until they had used about fifty rounds in approximately six seconds. This created a terrific commotion on the field in front of us. The Germans shouted and moaned. One of them kept shouting, 'Come to me, St. Peter!' five or six times. The others just moaned and groaned. Pfc Nadeau shouted in German to them to come out, stand up, and hold their hands in the air as a sign of surrender. One replied, 'Come here, American comrades, and help us. We are wounded.' Nadeau insisted that all those who could should come forward. In a few minutes three Jerries emerged."

The Company "L" men found that there were six men in the infiltrating party. Later, Westervelt says, after three other men had been examined and found wounded, the prisoners were taken to the platoon CP and "stated that they were battalion headquarters men who were out to capture our CP and personnel!" The German lieutenant in charge later died where he fell wounded near the emplacements.

Again on the 23d of April Company "L" men fired on another infiltrating group, causing all but one (who was killed) to withdraw. Two days later twenty-nine enemy crossed the Elbe and surrendered to Company "A" north of Rothensee. Displaced persons, Poles, Russians and French laborers imported by the Germans to work on farms and in factories, crossed the Elbe in the evening of the 28th and were sent to the rear by elements of the 3d Battalion opposite Hohenwarthe.

On the 29th, with a white flag, some Company "L" men crossed the river, were shown to a CP near the banks, and arranged for the surrender of four officers and approximately a company of men. As scheduled, at 1030 the next day this enemy group crossed the Elbe with white flags; as agreed, they were promptly escorted to the PW cage.

NEW MISSION: OCCUPATION

The civilians had been a nuisance to troops since the days of the Roer drive. Now, administration of them filled more and more the daily routine of the men of the Regiment.

On the 21st of April the Division Commander ordered units of the 120th Combat Team to take responsibility for patrol and control of certain sub-areas and administration of certain towns. In these places platoons, companies, or small guard details were stationed:

1st Battalion: Hohenwarsleben, Ebendorf, Rothensee.
2d Battalion: Gross Santersleben, Schackensleben, Kortmeisleben, Denstedt, Ackendorf, and Gatenswegen.
3d Battalion: Wolmirstedt, also Klein and Gross Ammensleben, after the 29th April.
Antitank Company: Gersdorf, Hernsdorf.
230th Field Artillery Battalion and Cannon Company: Barleben, and Dahlemwarsleben.
Company "B," 823d TD Battalion: Klein Ammensleben, until the 26th of April.
Company "B," 743d Tank Battalion: Gross Ammensleben, and from the 26th of April, Klein Ammensleben, both till the 29th of April.
Company "C," 105th Engineer Battalion: Meitsendorf.

Company "I" with 30th Reconnaissance Troop (both under Division control from 1445 on the 21st of April): Oschersleben.

The areas were carefully surveyed, and a detailed list of the housing facilities and stored foodstuffs in each town was submitted. A list of "displaced persons" in each area was also compiled and sent to higher headquarters. Key installations were guarded; main roads were patrolled.

So April came to an end. It had been a fast-moving, victorious month; the end of the war seemed near. It had brought spring, literally and figuratively, to the infantrymen of the 120th Regiment, who had been disappointed so frequently while waiting for victory and who had fought so well for it. The end was at last in sight.



MAY AND VICTORY

The story for the month of May is comparatively brief. During the early days German prisoners crossed the Elbe to surrender in large numbers. A running account from the After-Action Reports follows:

"The approach of the Russians toward the east bank of the river caused a larger influx to our lines. The continuous advance was evidenced by the increasing anxiety of the fleeing Germans, and their tales of woe were naturally music to the ears of the infantrymen.

"In all areas troops carried out a program of training and athletics. Schedules included: physical training, close-order drill, orientation and discussion, road marches, and reviews on military discipline and formal guard duty.

"While prisoner interrogation work decreased, civilian and displaced persons administration took the spotlight more and more, and a division directive, dated 28 April, assigned the IPW Team No. 46 (120th Infantry detachment) to Counter-Intelligence duty with the CIC detachment. Displaced persons had to be organized and were evacuated to designated points from whence they would be carried home. Each company had an assigned area for control and patrol, and within these troops were posted as guards on key installations.

"No longer installed with Division Rear, the Personnel Section of the 120th Infantry had moved forward with Regimental Headquarters in Barleben on the 1st May and for the first time the men in the lines saw the men who had been supporting and supplying them these many months.

"In line with the character of the Regiment's operation, for the most part occupational, the S-3 submitted Area Security Periodic Reports, which described the location of troops and security measures being taken.

"The prisoners were surrendering in larger and larger numbers so that processing them became a real problem. Early on the 4th May, battalions were urged to discourage mass surrenders; later the same day an order was issued not to accept any prisoners whatsoever. Constantly active, the CIC detachment submitted reports on suspicious German civilians and prisoners in disguise."

The 4th of May, on the fields near Barleben, General Hobbs presented the Distinguished Unit Citation to the defenders of Mortain for their gallant stand on the hill (314) and at Abbaye Blanche, in August, 1944. Lt Saul Solow, Regimental Adjutant, read the citation. General Hobbs then awarded the blue citation ribbon to each man who had taken part in the action

on the hill, while the remainder of the men, replacements since that action, stood in formation behind the older members. The Division Band added to the pomp of the ceremony with march music until all the ribbons had been presented; then the General addressed the men briefly, followed by a short talk from Colonel Purdue, who praised the men on the work they had done throughout the many campaigns.

Service units of the 120th had been conspicuously outstanding both before and during combat. In charge of communications were Capt Raymond Welch and WOJG Al Z. Hooper, whose crews had done difficult and often gallant work. Capt James Meadors, Motor Maintenance Officer, and his assistant, WOJG Robert J. Wilkins, had a well-trained and industrious section. The supply department, under Maj John J. Eberhardt (since August) and WOJG Percy Dempsey, never failed to procure and deliver all the necessities which keep combat soldiers going, both during the trying months of movement overseas and during the even more rugged months of combat in every kind of weather and terrain. Capt Robert Nichols and WOJG Angus T. Smith were consistently efficient as ammunition officers. Ably assisted by CWO James B. Liles, Capt Arthur T. Neumann directed a Personnel Section and Post Office crew which were among the most capable in the ETO. The Special Service and Awards Section was headed by Capt Harry L. Jackson and Lt Robert S. Gillette.

Both Headquarters and Service Companies, containing the Communications, Transportation, Maintenance, and Supply Sections, followed as closely behind the action as was tactically sound. Capt. Edwin J. Hardy commanded the former, and Capt Robert McClain, who succeeded Capt Layton C. Tiner after Mortain, had the latter. In recognition of their outstanding work, the units were awarded the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque, for "efficiency, energy and discipline in training and overseas movement from 1 January to 29 February, 1944," and a Star for that Plaque because of "efficiency, energy, and devotion to duty from 1 March to 31 August" during movement and combat. Equally efficient was the Medical Detachment, headed by Maj William E. Knaus, whose unit was the recipient of the Plaque for the periods from January to August, 1944.

The Battalion Headquarters Companies each with their lower-echelon service groups also did outstanding work, and were awarded the Plaque and Stars for the same periods. First Battalion Headquarters Commander was Capt Jack W. Starling; those of the



Magdeburg had been heavily bombed



All now is quiet

2d and 3d Battalions were Capts Willie B. Irby and Charles E. Pritchard, respectively.

Though it was not the first contact by the American forces with the Russians, it was an historic occasion for the Regiment when on the 5th of May Maj McCullough took a 3d Battalion group across the Elbe to meet the Russians in that sector. At 0943 that morning members of the Red Army had first been sighted in the area across from Company "L." The first men in the Division to spot the Russians were S/Sgt Hugh S. Jones, Sgt Julius P. Smith, Pfc James F. Powers, and Pfc Clyde E. Eblin. After consulting with Capt Wilson, the company commander, the men made arrangements for a formal meeting of the respective unit commanders.

T/5 Benedict Seidman tells about the meeting he witnessed as follows:

"It was a cloudy day and a light rain was falling intermittently along the Elbe River, but for the group of American doughs of the 30th Infantry Division who were to cross the river to meet Uncle Joe's boys for the first time, the weather had no dampening effect. After waiting impatiently for the Russians to reach the river for the past three weeks, these infantrymen were in high spirits as they sped to a crossing site near the blown autobahn bridge.

"Led by Maj McCullough, enlisted men representing every company in the battalion with the exception of one, members of the battalion staff, and two officers of Company "L," the first company to contact the Red Army soldiers earlier in the day, set out in assault boats from the bridge site to meet the long-awaited Russians.

"Arriving at the east bank of the Elbe River that afternoon at 1500, Maj McCullough and his men were met by a major from a Russian artillery outfit. After brief but hearty introductions, the major ex-

plained that he and his unit had arrived in the area at 0500 that morning. . . .

"Quickly dispensing with formalities, the doughs began to mix with the Russian soldiers, many of whom had been fighting Nazis since 1943, battling them from the gates of Stalingrad through central Russia, Poland and into the Reich itself. A jovial spirit was in the air as soldiers of the two armies inspected each other's equipment and weapons and exchanged stories of their experiences in the war.

"As indication of the jocular mood he was in, the Russian major, a graduate of Moscow's military academy, said when he was asked how long he had waited for the Americans, 'We waited for you in Stalingrad.'

" 'We waited for you in France,' Maj McCullough replied.

"A little while later a lieutenant colonel of a Russian artillery unit arrived. A short, stocky man with graying temples, he was overjoyed to meet the American soldiers whom he greeted effusively. He led the entire group through the near-by town of Hohenwarthe, which had been occupied by Russians. The lieutenant colonel, who was thirty-seven years old, told the Americans that the average age of the Russian soldier was thirty.

"The doughboys seemed particularly impressed by the number of slant-eyed Mongolian troops they met. 'I'm glad I never had to be fighting with one of these boys,' 1st Sergeant John R. Walker said admiringly.

"At about 1630, after a round of salutes and handshakings, the Americans started to leave for their assault boats to return to their side of the river. As they were walking toward the embankment, a Russian full colonel, who was in command of the sector, drove up and called to them. . . .

"Using his hands with characteristic Russian demonstrativeness he said, 'Russian soldiers, American soldiers—a long-awaited dream. We are truly a body of



The 2d Battalion passes in review after being awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation

international soldiers here in this sector of Germany. We have been told how good the American soldiers were, but now we know how good they are.'

"At 1655 the Americans again started for their assault boats and, after another round of salutes and handshakes, took leave for their own side of the Elbe, satisfied that their Russian allies were all they expected them to be."

In Maj McCullough's group were members of his staff: the Executive, Capt Delmont K. Byrn; the S-3, Capt Edward M. Hill; the S-2, Lt Edwin J. Franklin; and the S-1, Lt Harry R. Peters; also present were Capt Earl F. Wilson and Lt Alvin H. Gordon of Company "L," Capt Paul R. Tuttle of Battalion Headquarters Company, T/Sgt David W. Gray, 1st Sgt Walker, 1st Sgt William G. Presnell, T/Sgt James McManaman, T/Sgt Marshall Rogers, T/Sgt Thomas D. Crosby, T/Sgt James W. Porter, and T/Sgt George Sweeting. Also in the party were two stenographers, including T/5 Seidman and T/4 Albert J. Ujcich, and two interpreters, Cpl Maxmillian Jacobovic and Pfc Charles Rubenstein.

Elements of the 1st Battalion saw their first Soviet Union soldiers when a five-man patrol was observed across the river at 1428 the same day (5th of May). At 1725 OPs reported the Russians in large numbers around Biederitz across the river. Shortly thereafter the OPs closed down.

The three battalion commanders during the last of the battles in the European Theater of Operations were: 1st Battalion, Lt Col Ellis W. Williamson; 2d

Battalion, Lt Col James G. Cantey; and 3d Battalion, Lt Col Chris McCullough. No regiment ever had a better trio and few had as good. Furthermore, these three constituted only one of the several outstanding teams of battalion commanders formed continuously from time to time. The life of a battalion commander was rugged, the ever-present danger established for him a probability of lasting a few weeks, or at most months, in battle. The Regimental Commander often spoke glowingly of his "workhorses:"

"Lt Col Williamson always showed true tactical genius. He has an uncanny ability of arriving at the best possible tactical solution. Furthermore, the execution of his plans was always made more nearly perfect by his great personal bravery and remarkable leadership. Possessing unlimited energy, he never stopped working. By his skill, will to work, bravery and leadership, he saved many lives that otherwise would have been lost within his battalion."

"Lt Col Cantey was another unusually strong battalion commander. He has an uncanny ability to foresee possible enemy actions or reactions which might cause casualties among his troops. By anticipating the enemy's capabilities, he always had plans prepared for meeting all possible contingences. Physically strong, having great nervous energy, he too, worked incessantly to save lives—and very successfully. When the going was tough, there one would find Lt. Col Cantey, his bravery enabling him to be where he could best exert his fine leadership regardless of the dangers involved."



We meet the Russians

"Lt Col McCullough well earned command of a battalion. There was no man in the Regiment more brave. No one could equal him in physical strength. Few had his capacity for finding ways to help others. For example, it was impossible for the 2d Battalion to evacuate the many wounded of Company "F" when that company was hard-hit in its attack on Thirimont. Then 1st Battalion Executive Officer, Lt Col McCullough searched for and found the means of evacuating the wounded. They were not of his battalion but, always working for the common good, he was instrumental in having them carried from the snow-covered ground. Lt Col McCullough's subsequent leadership of the 3d Battalion was outstanding. For instance, the breakthrough made by his battalion immediately following the Rhine crossing was the cause of the Regiment's great success that day. Lt Col McCullough is a soldier."

V-E DAY AND AFTER

The 8th of May was officially declared V-E Day, and though the Regiment was preparing to move, celebration was not forgotten, nor were some prayers of thanks. In company day-rooms "old" veterans recalled the Normandy hedgerows, the blitz through France, the rainy Thanksgiving near the Inde River, the snow and cold of the Ardennes, and finally the crashing successes over the Roer and the Rhine. In the Regimental journal on the 7th of May appears the entry:

"Ever since June 14th I have dreamed of the moment when this great entry could be made in the journal of the 120th Infantry Regiment. . . . Lt Simon, the Assistant S-3, is removing the blackouts from the office windows. There is a devilish gleam in his eyes, and a satisfied grin stretches from ear to ear. Our Executive Officer, Lt Col Reynolds; and Maj Thomas, the S-3; have just left for a stomach warmer. And so we begin another day, but it had al-

ready begun differently from all others . . . the war has ended over here. . . . That is what is known as starting the day off right!" The journal clerk was Sgt Grant Weiler.

If peace brought happiness to the men of the 120th, it must have made their Regimental commander supremely proud and joyous. For Colonel Purdue was a man who rejoiced in his men's good fortune and whose constant desire was that they should fare well. He had worked constantly and unselfishly for their victory, and also for their well being. Their day of triumph was certainly his happiest.

"NOTHING'S TOO GOOD"

In the university town of Fayetteville, Arkansas, Branner P. Purdue was bred in an academic atmosphere. His father was a professor at the University of Arkansas, and from him the future Colonel learned the value of steady application and exhausting thoroughness which was to distinguish his later work as regimental commander.

He enlisted in 1918 and served in the United States. He was discharged after the Armistice, only to re-enlist in the Regular Army a short time later. After being sent to the Army of Occupation, he rose to the rank of sergeant. He took competitive examinations for West Point, and in 1925 was graduated as a second lieutenant.

Since his graduation from West Point, Colonel Purdue has served in numerous and varied positions. Like Brig Gen Birks, he was an athletic coach, and he also produced winners. During the first part of the war he was assigned to the Tank Destroyer Board from which he was sent to Libya and Egypt as an observer with the British Eighth Army. Upon returning to the United States he activated and command the 6th Tank Destroyer Group. A few months later he was transferred to the Tank Destroyer School where he was assigned as director of the Department of Tactics.



Germans who were driven out of Czechoslovakia

In addition to his duties as director, he was instrumental in preparing a series of tank destroyer field manuals. Upon completion of the one-year tour, he was assigned as G-3 of the newly activated XXII Corps. Soon thereafter, he was transferred to the 97th Infantry Division, where he commanded the 303d Infantry Regiment. After a short tour with the 303d, Colonel Purdue was sent overseas as a replacement regimental commander, reporting to the 30th Infantry Division on the 20th of August, 1944. As an extra colonel he spent most of his time forward observing action and sometimes assisting junior officers. Colonel Purdue took command of the 120th Infantry Regiment by verbal orders of the Division Commander on the 6th of October, being placed officially in command the following day.

Old-timers remembered how hard it must have been for a commander to take up where Colonel Birks had left off. Although Colonel Birks had expressed every confidence in Colonel Purdue, whom he had known for many years, there were many who felt that no one could replace the popular "Old Man" who had brought the regiment through St. Jean and Mortain. But one battalion commander spoke for many of the men when later he told some reporters visiting the regiment, "It's impossible to say which of our commanders was the greater. Both, as far as I can see, are tops."

From the beginning Colonel Purdue revealed himself a master of tactics. During the assault on the Sieg-

fried Line, when one battalion had failed repeatedly to take its objective and had lost many of its leaders, he designed a plan of attack which was miraculously successful. Later he achieved, during the Roer and Rhine crossings, masterpieces of preplanning, coordination and smoothness of execution.

It was largely because he believed so wholeheartedly in his men and their welfare that he made sure nothing would decrease the efficiency of his operations. It was because he wanted more than anything else to save men's lives that he spent endless hours, working day-in and day-out, upon the plans for attacks. It was because he was so thoroughly convinced that "nothing is too good for my men," that he never spared himself a minute of long, bitter, detailed work, and made constantly sure that nothing could go wrong with his projects. And because he spent many sleepless hours before the H-hour of some big operation, he probably saved as many lives as any man in the Division.

He had planned tirelessly, but he never considered his duty done after he had made plans. Always, especially during the rough times, he was where the action was, up beside his riflemen. He watched every execution intently, and never a detail escaped him. Unbelievably cool in the heat of battle, he was able to make vital decisions and still to keep his sense of humor under the most harrowing circumstances. During the counterattack on "Wald" near St. Vith, he went hurriedly forward to see it for himself, and men will re-

member him ploughing through the snow with Lt Col Greer, missing not one single point in the action that had occurred. His "booties" and his Christmas socks were but small tokens of his thoughtfulness.

"Nothing is too good for my men." V-E Day must have made Colonel Purdue very happy. Thinking back, men in the Regiment must have been thankful on the day of victory that their commander was a man named Branner Pace Purdue.

On the 9th of May, pamphlets written in four languages and prepared by SHAEF were dropped by Army planes, and fluttered down upon the sunny fields around Barleben. They proclaimed to English, French, Germans and Poles that the War in Europe was over.

Most of the 120th Infantry had already left the little town near Magdeburg. Orders had been received, and the battalions were headed for a new region, the beautiful Harz Mountains, renowned in centuries past for its melodious canaries. What Chamber of Commerce ads called the "Gateway to the Harz Mountains" was Wernigerode, quaint and picturesque village where the Regiment established its headquarters on the 9th. The area was refreshingly unscarred by war, and the weather was for a time summerlike; both facts were reflected in high optimism on the part of the troops. While the Regiment moved into



Warrant Officer James B. Liles

the colorful town, the companies spread out into different small villages, each establishing itself opulently in houses and enjoying the luxuries of civilian life—almost. There was still guard duty, military government details, and constant maintenance to do. But, generally speaking, it was a more pleasant life than it had been since long before combat.

There was but one incident which recalled to the men that they were still far from trusted by the conquered civilians. On the 11th of May, two American soldiers from a near-by unit were mysteriously killed and left in the fields near the town of Schierke, where elements of Company "G" were stationed. Armed with twenty-two BARs, members of Company "G" scoured the near-by woods for any trace of "Werewolves." However the guilty were never found. On the other hand, prompt and effective reprisal measures demonstrated to the local Germans that it would be unprofitable for them to continue that type of warfare.

By then the much-discussed "point-system" of demobilization was going into effect, and on the 16th of May, Colonel Purdue gathered together the men who were headed home with the highest number of points in the Regiment and bade them farewell in the square of Wernigerode.



Grand American girls



USS Marine Wolf

Uncertainty as to the future of the Regiment was uppermost in the minds of those who remained behind. Even after the 120th headed south on the 29th of May and settled in the area around Plauen, near the Czecho-Slovak border, no one could guess what new assignment awaited us. The duties were of the occupational order: administration of PW cages, guard, maintenance. The 1st Battalion guarded, fed, and finally discharged almost 50,000 German soldiers. The 3d Battalion had many pleasant experiences as they were nearest the Russians who were always out for a good time. And for recreation there were athletics of every type, including horseback riding, swimming, softball; there were movies in some parts of the Regimental area every night; and educational tourist trips to Buchenwald and to picturesque castles in the vicinity.

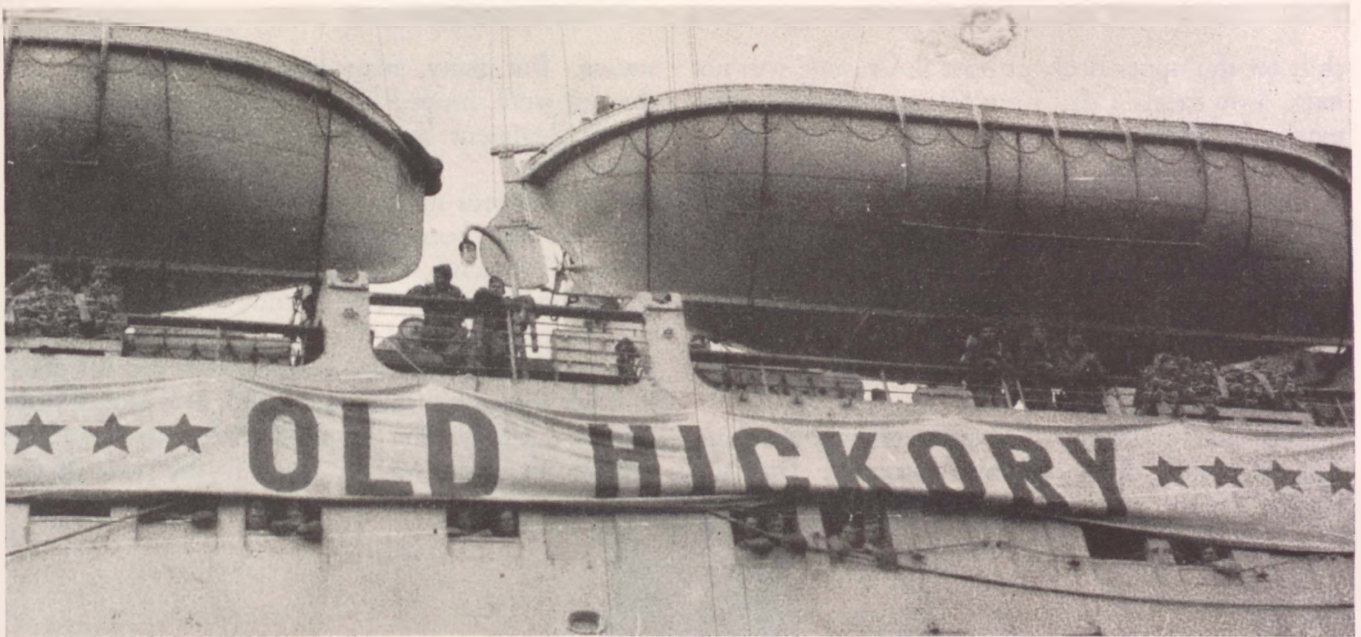
Then, late in June, came word that the 30th Division was scheduled for redeployment to the Pacific through the United States. On the 25th of June, a rainy morning, all men who had 85 points gathered in the theater near the Regimental CP at Treuen. After hearing Colonel Purdue's farewell message, they made their way singly to the trucks which were to take them to the 76th Division, where they would re-

main until transportation was available to carry them to the States and discharge. The same day, they were replaced by low-point men from the 76th Division.

Four days later Colonel Purdue told many officers who also were leaving for the 76th Division, "It is hard to see men go whom you've fought beside in combat, believe me, but I still have every confidence in the Regiment. I know it will carry on the excellent tradition which you have left it."

The following day, the 30th of June, saw the Regimental convoy turn west—homeward bound. The first lap was across most of central Germany, to a small town near Frankfurt am Main, headquarters of General Eisenhower. Where two roads cross in the middle of a large field to make four plots, the battalions pitched their first tents since combat. The men pitched the canvas rows neat and straight, very different from the German homes to which they had become accustomed. The Regimental CP was in a schoolhouse in the neighboring town of Lorsch. Training on a small scale began; some men took trips to famous Heidelberg. The 4th of July was gloomy and cold.

And so it remained on the 6th, when the rifle troops boarded trains on which they crossed the Rhine and the German border into France. The motor elements



We were soon to be home

left a day later, and after being reviewed by General Hobbs at the Rhine, passed through the Siegfried Line and one extension of the Maginot Line. They stopped overnight in an ample bivouac area near Montmedy, France. On the 8th of July both elements reached Camp Oklahoma City, assembly area near Rheims, France.

Three weeks more allowed the Regiment to prepare for overseas movement; some equipment was turned in; much was crated and labeled. Oklahoma City was no "GI paradise," but the USO shows and the coffee and doughnuts were plentiful. For the more sophisticated, passes for Paris were always available; softball was popular.

On the 27th of July, on a grassy field above the camp, T/Sgt Francis S. Currey was honored in a Division ceremony, wherein General Hobbs presented the Company "K" platoon sergeant with the Congressional Medal of Honor. Following the presentation, officers of the Division were briefed by the General on the job which lay ahead.

Spaced at four-hour intervals during the day, trains left St. Erme near Oklahoma City on the 31st of July, carrying the 120th Regiment, a battalion at a time, to the coast of France. Some say the Army is slow, but one battalion of one thousand men was served hot meals in nineteen minutes. The next day the units reached Camp Lucky Strike, near St. Valery-en-Caux, and not far from Dieppe, where some members of the Regiment toured to inspect the intricate pillbox-tunnel network which repelled the British-

Canadian Commando raid during August, 1942.

The Regiment was gathering momentum in its journey, and two days later, trucks carried the men to the battered docks of Le Havre, and there they boarded the *Marine Wolf* which brought them in eight hours to the Southampton piers.

The home of the 120th in England was Tidworth Barracks, near Salisbury. Here on the night of the 3d of August all units arrived, and were billeted in lofty red-brick dormitories. In a few days money had been converted and pubs were filled with 120th doughboys. Old-timers recalled the days at Bognor and Aylesbury; it seemed long ago in many ways.

The 9th-10th of August was designated as pass-day for the whole Regiment, and every man was granted a pass either to London or to the resort town of Bournemouth. The 10th was not only to be an enjoyable day, but also an historic one. Over the wire came the news of Japan's surrender. London seethed with excitement, and men of the 120th rejoiced that they would not have to face Pacific combat.

Four days later the good news was confirmed, so that when on the 16th the Regiment boarded the trains for Southampton, it was in a spirit of high exaltation. Decorated by huge sheets of canvas which sported the "Old Hickory" insignia, the *Queen Mary* swallowed up some 15,000 troops. It was her first trip from Southampton since the day she escaped the port after war with Germany was first declared.

If the trip home was crowded uncomfortably, and if some men were miserable during their 24-hour

shift on the upper deck, at least the voyage was not long. Two meals a day were filling, and there were movies on deck. After sailing early the morning of the 17th, the "*Mary*" reached Pier 99 in New York at 2300 on the 21st.

Early the morning of the 22d of August the troops of the 120th were headed across the Hudson River to New Jersey where a train was to take them to Camp Kilmer; then a day of record-checking and telephoning and orienting. Then—home—it seemed impossible—home for thirty days.

And what's more, it turned out to be forty-five days. The reassembly of the Regiment occurred about the 15th of October at Fort Jackson, S. C., the old home

station. But many, many men were discharged, and the rest were shipped to other outfits. The 120th Infantry Regiment became inactivated on the 23d of November.

"With all our minor troubles," Colonel Birks once said, "we have been successful in everything we have done." "We have taken every objective, and never turned one loose," Colonel Purdue told his men. "You may be proud indeed, for few men can say that of their outfit." All the men in the 120th did not come through the ordeal safe and sound, as Colonel Birks prayed, but those who did return will continue to hold their heads, as he wished, "high in the pride of victory."





KILLED IN ACTION, MISSING IN ACTION, OR DIED OF WOUNDS

Lieutenant Colonel

McCollum, Paul W.

Majors

Bynum, James J.
Lambe, Leland L.

Captains

Bell, Ernest W.
Bunch, Walter A.
Christy, Ralph L.
Hobgood, Robert M.
Lott, James V., Jr.
McKendry, Norman J.
Reines, Herbert S.
Smith, James W.

First Lieutenants

Andrew, Tom F. H.
Angelo, Harry
Brazill, Raymond P.
Brookhart, Paul A.
Byers, Donald E.
Colvin, Donald W.
Cook, John M.
Dewey, Helmer H.
Friesner, Curtis D.
Garner, Thomas R.
Gonder, Fred N.
Grimshaw, Jack S.
Harnden, Carl C.
Hicks, Gordon D.
Kuchenrither, Dan R.
Lambert, Frederick
Lloyd, Edward D.
Murphy, Edward V.
Nelson, Kenneth R.
Osborn, Clifton G.
Pease, Foster S.
Pike, Charles B.
Piscitello, Archie J.
Ponder, Arch R., Jr.
Pullen, Robert L.
Schlemmer, Frederick
Shanks, William P.
Siwek, Saul D.
Smith, Albert
Steiner, Lewis C.
Stewart, John A.
Trippensee, Frank E.
Williams, Clement W.
Ziegler, Leo O.

Second Lieutenants

Ashmore, James L.
Barrett, John H.
Blaufeld, Walter, Jr.
Blowfeld, Walter
Boland, Bernard H.
Duncan, Henry A.
Dupuis, John K.
Dye, Richard S.
Englehart, Thomas C.
Fite, Richard H.
Gerth, Marshall D.
Gores, Leo C.
Greeno, Arthur K.
Hall, Dean F.
Hicks, Karl K.
Huffman, Phillip A.
Kozera, Joseph L.
Lutzkivich, Matthew M.
Malena, Arthur S.
Miller, John M.
Morris, Robert A.
Ose, Keith T.
Shields, Leo W.
Steelman, Leroy H.
Sweeney, Charles E.
Thompson, Peyton W.
Weinstein, Jack

First Sergeants

Anderson, William A.
Brandon, Hugh P.
Hartness, Robert Z.
Messer, Jappie G.
Ruback, Albert J.
Woody, Hard J.

Master Sergeants

Blouse, Anson L.
Ellis, Clarence F.
Pettigrew, Floyd J.

Technical Sergeants

Bakken, Glenn M.
Beadman, Howard E.
Beamon, Jerry H.

Bullard, Calvin T.
Byers, Wilburn A.
Camacho, Henry K.
Clampit, Claud W.
DiPierro, Scipione D.
Evans, John W.
Finkelstein, Sol
Gillam, Everette
Goins, Everette
Grimes, Johnnie G.
Grisson, Earnest W.
Hawley, Grady W.
Hoover, Herbert A.
Howard, Bennie F.
Kalinauskas, Bruno J.
Keener, Monte W.
King, John N., Jr.
Knight, James A.
Lewis, Hinton C.
McCullough, Charles E.
McIver, Thomas M.
Messer, Willie L.
Moore, Hubert A.
Morehead, George C.
Peoples, Allen L.
Phillips, William T.
Rescigno, John
Sletten, Donald H.
Snedgar, William S.
Snoad, Russell N.
Terry, Walter E.
Thompson, Paul M.
Turash, William
Van Buskirk, Fred
Watson, Grover D.
Weavers, Howard F.
Winstead, Ralph L.
Wintier, Antoine E.
Yost, Ernest
Zepeda, Ramon R.
Zuidema, John A.

Staff Sergeants

Abbott, Glenn L.
Allen, Willard L.
Anderson, John A. J.
Arent, Lawrence
Ayers, Lawrence H.
Ayers, Lloyd W.
Baird, Robert J.
Baum, Kenneth R.
Bazaras, Adolph E.
Behr, Alexander M.
Binegar, Daniel L.
Blaud, Anson L.
Bosco, Rosario J.
Bourasso, Wilfred F.
Bowersoy, Harry O.
Bradley, Palmer L.
Bradshaw, Charles
Brown, Kenneth C.
Bruner, William E.
Burkett, Leroy D.
Butler, Harold O.
Callaway, Howard E.
Carter, Dan W.
Champion, Robert V.
Chilton, Jack M.
Clum, Merrell J.
Cochran, Russell L.
Cody, Jesse J.
Cooper, Fred H.
Crisman, Merton B.
Davant, Shelly H.
Degenhardt, Hallis G.
Didelot, Melvin T.
Dowler, Harold D.
Dunn, John E., Sr.
Edwards, Donald L.
Ellis, Clarence A.
Ellison, Milton
Evans, Charles D.
Feimster, Horace W., Jr.
Fisher, John E.
Gainey, John V.
Gallagher, Daniel T.
Garren, Willis, Jr.
Gates, Wilfred O.
Gilson, John J.
Glosson, Elbert L.
Gluhan, Steve L.
Goff, Donald R.
Graves, Joe P.
Greene, James T.
Guidorizzi, John J.
Hansen, Henry E.
Hargrove, Chester L. M.
Harris, William J.
Hedgepath, Percy L.
Hobday, John W.
Hoffer, Marion E.

Hollingsworth, Milton
Hovland, Alfred
Hunter, Robert H.
Jones, Aubrey A.
Jones, Herbert C.
Jones, William E.
Kaliff, Sabba A.
Klenn, Newman C.
Kingery, Dennis R.
Kowalski, Leo J.
Lazenby, William L.
Levine, Hyman
Lewis, Joseph C.
Lewis, Robert F.
Lingo, Donald
Loftis, Belton R.
Lucey, Patrick R.
McCurry, Seth
McKelvy, Edward A.
Mastracci, Frio D.
Matthews, Robert M.
Mena, Lawrence V.
Mew, Charles A.
Moore, Robert L.
Morrison, Robert V.
Murphy, Carl E.
Murphy, John E.
Mannery, Edward J.
Nahr, Robert E.
Niewiedowski, Theodore
O'Connor, Michael P.
Oldham, Robert
Pendleton, Jack J.
Pete, George
Prandle, Elroy F.
Price, William H.
Rhanlt, Edmond J.
Rich, Harold E.
Riley, Francis J.
Ripper, Richard L.
Rolf, Lester M.
Rosenberger, Merlin
Russell, Arlo A.
Rutman, Albert
Ryan, Thomas J.
Sawyer, Frederick O.
Schunk, Paul M.
Sellers, Onais A.
Shea, Bart F.
Shelley, Andrew J.
Shields, Lewis W.
Shrout, John E.
Sisk, John E.
Snow, Cecil J.
Solls, Claro
Stagner, Gene
Stallings, Julius
Stepanek, Frank M.
Stewart, Thomas E.
Strobel, Victor E.
Stump, Warren L.
Tate, Charles L.
Terrell, Cletus W.
Thagard, Robert J.
Thomas, Clarence D.
Thorson, Thor J.
Tomsey, John J.
True, Willis M.
Van Nort, John
Vinson, John M.
Waite, John W.
Warnock, Clowes V.
Weiss, Frank P.
Welch, Francis E.
Whitcher, Daniel A.
Wiederhold, Charles J.
Wise, John G.
Yonski, Frank G.
York, Edward G.

Sergeants

Albert, Sam M.
Antonelli, Raymond L.
Baker, Donald W.
Baker, Samuel W.
Balaska, John M.
Barnea, John
Beadles, William H.
Benner, Ernest P.
Blaida, Henry
Boker, Raymond J.
Buchanan, Joe
Bulson, John C.
Bustin, Nelson H.
Cahill, Edward R.
Chancellor, Bueford L.
Check, George J.
Clark, Georgia H.
Coleman, Charles G.
Conover, Wilbert W.
Conway, Wilford G.

Couey, Percy H.
Crum, Roland R., Jr.
Crumley, Broughton B.
Dalton, Berkley P.
Davis, Mortimer
Davis, Richard C.
Davison, Homer E.
Degenhardt, Hollis G.
Donoway, Loyd J.
Dusano, Clifford G.
Eisenberg, Isidore
Ewert, Rudy G.
Frazier, Downey T.
Giandonato, John N.
Green, William L.
Greenwood, Clifford N.
Hagal, Russel W.
Hague, Russell W.
Hairfield, Edward E.
Harris, Albert A.
Hartman, James H.
Hazlett, Arthur
Hirst, William B.
Holland, Clifford W.
Howard, Julian L.
Hurley, William B.
Ianni, Francis J.
Jacobs, Ronald H.
Jones, Charles I.
Keaster, Finis M., Jr.
Kelly, Carl B.
King, James D.
Laycock, Theodore
Locke, Dean D.
Lomseg, John J.
McClenny, Ellis P., Sr.
Mahoney, Joseph J.
Mankiewicz, Stanley A.
Markle, Neals
Miller, Oliver V.
Mobley, Leonard H.
Mosso, John B.
Nelson, Robert L.
Overman, William R.
Penn, William F.
Pentecost, William T.
Peterman, Robert F.
Peterson, John M.
Pollicino, Joseph J.
Presley, Johnnie R.
Preziose, Michael J.
Rahe, Arnold A.
Rhind, Scott A.
Robidoux, Adjutor
Rolland, William E., Jr.
Russomano, Leon
Sargent, James W.
Schulte, Francis J.
Sessions, Andrew J.
Sherba, Michael
Singer, John C.
Smith, Emmitt
Spidaletto, Joseph J.
Stark, Dennis C.
Strobo, John
Thieman, Lloyd W.
Thorp, William
Thurley, Harry D.
True, Willis M.
Vaticonis, Veto S.
Vincent, James M.
Ward, Dale R.
Weedon, Harold D.
Weyh, Ralph R.
Wise, John C.
Wood, Donald J.
Zimmerman, Alton L.
Zupo, Victor

Technicians Fourth Grade

Edwards, Robert L.
Edwards, Robert T.
Erickson, Ed G.
Fake, Gerald
Lichillo, James
Pettigrew, Samuel G.
Small, Donald J.

Corporals

Arvin, Vernon W.
Behrman, Paul C.
Bunn, Charles E.
Cook, Arnold H.
Dillman, Joseph R.
Eckhoff, Frederick T.
Farlo, James D.
Faulkner, Shelby M.
Foehl, William F.
Giardino, Joseph
Holler, Maxwell L.
Kendall, Daniel M.

Kielbasinski, Thadius I.
 Leo, James S.
 Lyons, James J.
 McGovern, Edward P.
 McIntosh, Warren C.
 Mabry, Benjamin F.
 Mankin, Frank
 Matausch, Constantin
 Milber, William
 Miller, William
 Morgan, Charles E.
 Ollenburg, Philip T.
 Oswalt, Ralph V.
 Pastva, Paul J.
 Perza, Joseph A.
 Pousont, James A.
 Reynolds, Gordon V.
 Schoenwetter, Lyle E.
 Schubert, Walter H.
 Sharp, Ernest G., Jr.
 Smith, Thomas R.
 Snyder, Albert E.
 Ten Cate, Homer E.
 Thagard, Robert J.
 Thomas, Roger W.
 Thompson, Arnold W.
 Toperzer, Robert G.
 Vavoulis, Theodore
 White, Drew B.
 Williams, Houston W.
 Willoughby, Gordon W.
 Wilson, Hayden M.
 Witzman, Jerome T.
 Worley, Edward J.

Technicians Fifth Grade

Abrahamson, Lyle C.
 Barker, Willie
 Boggs, Carl T.
 Bruner, Fred
 Bunn, Charles E.
 Buntyn, James W. T.
 Burruss, Robert T.
 Clark, Bernard W.
 Cleland, Virgle
 Coulliette, Huston G.
 Dotson, John F.
 Fitzgerald, William A.
 Flanagan, Lewis R.
 Good, Irving
 Herl, Orville R.
 Hingston, Robert T.
 Jariett, Marwood A.
 Justice, Clyde E.
 Knapton, Ross C.
 Lowery, William J.
 McClurkan, Paul G.
 McKeon, James B.
 Maginnis, John J.
 Medlin, J. C.
 Myers, Charles A.
 Pearson, Merlyn W.
 Perez, John
 Perry, Colon G.
 Pitts, William O.
 Potts, William O.
 Sauls, John
 Snyder, Walter A.
 Spivey, Jasper C.
 Thomas, Herbert E.
 Turner, Harley H.
 Weathers, Carlos A.
 Wilkinson, John F.

Privates First Class

Abad, Joseph
 Acred, Rabon F.
 Adams, Ruben
 Albin, Giovanni L.
 Alcorn, Austin C.
 Aliperto, Louis M.
 Allen, Joe S.
 Alley, Lewis S.
 Amis, Vernus
 Anderson, Floyd J.
 Anderson, Harold L.
 Annis, Alfred L.
 Avery, Harold E.
 Ayers, Emmet M.
 Backus, Hazil L. F.
 Baer, Aaron
 Baker, Roger G.
 Balick, Nathan
 Ballam, Gordon W.
 Barker, Robert J.
 Barofsky, Melvin
 Batchelor, William J.
 Battistini, Anthony J.
 Bauernhuber, Isadore
 Beall, Howard L.
 Beck, Efrid D.
 Beckett, James
 Bench, Clarence A.

Bennett, Luther M.
 Bennett, Paul M.
 Bialobrzewski, Chester J.
 Bieber, Herbert W.
 Bigotta, John A.
 Black, Boyd M.
 Blackmer, Clair V.
 Blanchfield, John L.
 Bobowiec, Paul P.
 Bobowski, Bennie
 Bohrer, Earl L.
 Bonetti, John W.
 Book, Earle C.
 Bottoms, Edward C.
 Bowers, Edward J.
 Bradford, Travis L.
 Brasel, Allen L.
 Bremer, Leslie E.
 Brissette, Dollard H.
 Britch, George
 Brooks, Robert N.
 Brown, George R.
 Bruce, Hershel V.
 Bryant, Charles A.
 Bryden, Walter
 Bucci, Atigelo R.
 Buckey, Earl C.
 Bud, Joe M.
 Burkeen, Dempsey
 Burkhardt, Robert H.
 Burns, Kennon C.
 Bury, Leonard A.
 Cabral, Manuel
 Cagle, Joe H.
 Caldwell, Jesse R.
 Canavera, John G.
 Carito, Patrick J.
 Carleton, John R.
 Caron, Adelard G.
 Carroll, Leonard E.
 Carver, Emmett W.
 Carver, Edward K.
 Cash, James W.
 Catlett, James R.
 Cennami, Salvatore
 Centers, James
 Chadd, Lawrence E.
 Chadwick, Cecil J., Jr.
 Chapman, Lewis E.
 Chapman, Silas S.
 Chappell, Ira E.
 Cheney, Evans H.
 Chittwood, Raymond H.
 Christopher, Martin, Jr.
 Clark, Edward J.
 Cochran, Albert W.
 Cohey, Joe C. P.
 Coleman, Harry W.
 Colson, Lawrence V.
 Comastri, Dante A.
 Conkin, Earnest
 Connolly, Cletus J.
 Conroy, Stephen L.
 Consiglio, Joseph A.
 Consiglio, Nick
 Constantine, Biton P.
 Coscia, Mario S.
 Cox, Henry J., Jr.
 Cox, Joe W.
 Cox, Wilber
 Cozzens, William I.
 Crawford, Earl W.
 Cricca, Rocci J.
 Crowe, Fred W.
 Cullen, Francis
 Currie, Donald H.
 Cyr, Bernard J.
 Daniels, Francisco P.
 D'anna, Natoli
 Daugherty, Jack B.
 Davis, Earl J.
 De Berardinis, Robert
 Degado, Jose Y.
 DeLuca, Giovanni N.
 Deluca, John J.
 Demars, Alphonse A.
 Dobbs, James O.
 Dolan, Harold L.
 Dominique, Clebert J.
 Doty, John H.
 Douglas, Eldon D.
 Duck, Henry T.
 Duchane, Gustave A.
 Duke, Namon C.
 Dunavent, Eugene
 Dungan, Allen B.
 Dunger, George E.
 Dunn, Lewis W.
 Dupee, Alfred J.
 Eaves, Harold E.
 Edgeworth, Etheridge F.
 Edwards, Henry H.
 Edwards, Norris L.
 Efferen, Howard B.

Eisenberger, John P.
 Elliott, George R.
 Ellis, Dale H.
 Erb, William J.
 Ezzell, Doyle C.
 Fabian, Sheldon B.
 Flanning, Glen B.
 Faust, Jacob
 Fessler, Wayne R.
 Fischer, Robert
 Foltz, Marvin J.
 Friedman, Arnold
 Frisco, Gilbert P.
 Galmer, Dude J.
 Galuppo, Henry S.
 Gammel, Murle
 Garcia, John C.
 Gardner, Robert W.
 Garrett, Howard L.
 Gebo, Lyle M.
 Geise, Joseph L.
 Gerkin, Billy J.
 Gerking, Carl E.
 Gerry, Chester M.
 Gersomovic, John A.
 Gerstein, Albert
 Gibson, George G.
 Gladson, Clyde W.
 Glonke, Bruno E.
 Glumm, Clyde E.
 Goetz, Warren R.
 Golden, Robert W.
 Golimowski, Aldysius A.
 Good, Frederick
 Goodmanson, Merlyn
 Gooze, James R.
 Gordon, Harry L.
 Gordon, Percy H.
 Goshien, Milton H.
 Gouin, Howard S.
 Gould, Raymond W.
 Grahal, Steve S.
 Graham, William C.
 Graves, Johnnie O.
 Greene, Merwyn H.
 Grimaldi, Salvatore M.
 Groce, John T.
 Grogan, Kenneth J.
 Guest, Peter H.
 Gulick, George S.
 Hagner, Warren L.
 Hagney, John J.
 Halbrook, George O.
 Hall, Cleatus E.
 Hall, Robert J.
 Hamilton, Alva D.
 Hancock, James E.
 Hanks, Roger N.
 Hanna, Frank
 Hansen, Elmer
 Hardy, Leopold
 Harper, Norman W.
 Haslam, Robert E.
 Haupt, Howard W.
 Haviland, Barry
 Heagy, Carl R.
 Henning, Vernie L.
 Hermann, Donald H.
 Hise, Charles T.
 Hockridge, Ralph
 Hohn, Charles J.
 Hohn, Hilary P.
 Holum, John R.
 Honeck, Wilbert
 Honeychuck, Bernard A.
 Hornfred, Arthur L.
 Hoover, Charles L.
 Horsley, Floyd W.
 Hospit, Peter J.
 Howe, Earle S.
 Huard, Lawrence J.
 Huerta, Ralph C.
 Hultien, Roy E.
 Hunt, Edward
 Hurley, Frank J.
 Iannuzzo, John
 Irwin, Hubert M.
 Ivy, Jessie E.
 Jakubdzak, Edward J.
 James, Walter E.
 Jamraz, Stanley
 Japs, Howard E.
 Jernigan, Willis W.
 Jones, Jim M.
 Jones, Richard H.
 Jordan, Johnnie E.
 Jorgenson, Melvin R.
 Juedes, Norman C.
 Joseph, Nassia G.
 Kandracs, Michael
 Kegley, Ray S.
 Keith, Jesse J.
 Kelly, Simon A.
 Kinman, R. J., Jr.

Kimmel, Francis C.
 King, Orwell
 Kirk, Owens L.
 Kirkwood, James G.
 Kleczkowski, Stanley J.
 Klotz, Sam
 Knazynski, Casper
 Koperiak, Thaddeus L.
 Kuester, Charles S.
 Kuhn, Donald E.
 Kunkle, Franklin C.
 Labelle, Frank J.
 Lamb, Carl
 Lambe, John H.
 Large, Walter F.
 Lathbury, Forrest B.
 Lawrence, Johnson H.
 Lawson, Lucious R.
 Lea, Grey L.
 Lee, John F.
 Lee, Murray
 Lemon, James A., Jr.
 Levy, John S.
 Lindgren, Robert C.
 Lizer, William F.
 Lockett, William C.
 Long, Benjamin F.
 Lord, Herbert E.
 Loring, Alben W.
 Lucas, George E.
 Lugo, Cleofas V.
 McCall, Mack
 McCleary, Gail R.
 McDeavitt, Albert C.
 McKinney, Jorden J.
 McTigue, Robert M.
 Marconi, Dominic J.
 Markinson, Edward
 Martinez, Jesse C.
 Martinez, Manuel
 Marzano, Frank D.
 Matthews, William
 Medeiros, Charles
 Mercurio, Samuel L.
 Messina, Metrus F.
 Meyer, Richard M.
 Michels, Arthur
 Mikesell, Richard J.
 Miller, Edward G.
 Miller, James D.
 Miller, Milace H.
 Millhorn, James B.
 Mittlell, Norman L.
 Mitten, Robert C.
 Mokdenhaur, Herman J.
 Molinaro, Vincent J.
 Mongeon, Donald A.
 Montalione, Girolomo P.
 Moore, Clayton G.
 Moore, Wayne H.
 Mora, Bernard D.
 Moran, Raymond F.
 Moran, Thomas J.
 Morgan, Carl J.
 Morgan, Vergil V.
 Morris, William H.
 Morton, John
 Mrowca, Joseph T.
 Mrugala, Joseph C.
 Mulvey, John P.
 Muzereus, John
 Neely, Jack
 Neil, Darrel M.
 Nelson, Nels K.
 Ness, Alfred
 New, Robert E.
 Nichols, Marvin D.
 Noel, Roy G.
 Noyes, Edward E.
 Nyberg, Donald E.
 Obal, Edward S.
 Okolo, Joseph J.
 Oreahio, Frank C.
 Ortiz, Joe P.
 Osborn, Albert S.
 Osborne, Marvin S.
 Oshensky, Anthony W.
 Overcashier, William H.
 Padilla, Isabel
 Paglarallo, John
 Paige, Walter H., Jr.
 Painton, Howard M.
 Palermo, Anthony F.
 Palmer, Harry R.
 Paschal, Charles H.
 Pasick, Charles J.
 Pastor, Robert W.
 Patrician, George
 Pauletto, Gino J.
 Pavusko, Joseph
 Peck, Robert J.
 Pennington, Harold W.
 Peplinski, Raymond V.
 Perkes, Theo T.

Perry, Joel B.
 Pete, Joe
 Peters, George A.
 Petrucci, Alessandro
 Piazza, John
 Pieper, Harold A.
 Pierce, Hugh S.
 Person, Glenn W.
 Pilgrim, Floyd H.
 Pinheiro, Daniel D.
 Pinkston, Robert L.
 Proto, Louis M.
 Pruitt, Richard T.
 Pszenny, Henry A.
 Pula, Joseph G.
 Purkey, Clark
 Quici, Ralph
 Rahrig, Melvin H.
 Ramirez, Lucas N.
 Ramirez, Ralph
 Ramsay, Robert, Jr.
 Rapoza, John
 Reigel, Eugene C.
 Renteria, Martin
 Richards, Earl V.
 Richmond, Linzy A.
 Rider, James J.
 Ridgeway, Carl L.
 Risley, Frank
 Ritter, James F.
 Rizo, Santiago
 Robinson, Charles J.
 Robinson, John F.
 Robinson, Leonard M.
 Robinson, Manona T.
 Robinson, W. A.
 Rodriguez, Eldon J.
 Rogers, Harold
 Rolph, Jack W.
 Rosa, Dominic N.
 Rosales, Ben
 Rose, Robert L.
 Rowell, James D.
 Rollo, Umberto J.
 Russell, Luther E.
 Rykala, Frederick
 Sajdak, Stanley J.
 Santangelo, Joseph J.
 Scevola, Richard E.
 Schaw, William E.
 Schmitz, William R.
 Schobl, Leonard C.
 Schott, Melvin J.
 Schreiber, Kenneth J.
 Schultz, Daniel G.
 Schulze, Vernon O.
 Scoggins, Gene B.
 Scott, Robert D.
 Scroggins, Jesse W.
 Sedita, Frank T.
 Sedlock, Paul
 Shafer, Joseph L.
 Shaver, Wilber B.
 Shaw, Warren S.
 Sheldon, Charles D.
 Sherwin, Milton A.
 Shine, Robert J.
 Sickler, Paul J.
 Silvestro, August A.
 Simmons, John R.
 Sims, Glynn
 Sinclair, Jewell P.
 Slater, Fred L.
 Smith, James W.
 Smith, Rex A.
 Snood, Norman A.
 Sobek, Matthew
 Sondel, Henry J.
 Speed, Woodrow
 Sprague, Sterling F.
 Stahnke, Oliver H.
 Staples, Ervin C.
 Steen, Stanley W.
 Sternberg, Clyde F.
 Stevens, Donald G.
 Stiles, Ray F.
 Stimpert, Edward A.
 Stirling, James E.
 Strom, Ralph C.
 St. Peter, Nelson J.
 Strait, Ora E.
 Strout, George R.
 Sullivan, George S.
 Sullivan, Lawrence J.
 Symington, Emerson S.
 Taylor, Clofus
 Thomas, John S.
 Thomas, Julian R.
 Thomas, Roy W.
 Thompson, George A.
 Tinch, John J.
 Tindall, Roy P.
 Todes, Felix A.
 Tracy, James A.

Trentham, Dott
 Tripler, Claude W.
 Tucker, Richard F.
 Turner, Samuel, Jr.
 Upright, Clyde R.
 Uyehly, Steve C.
 Vabolis, Anthony B.
 Veleta, Fred J.
 Vincent, Bennie R.
 Walden, William D.
 Walker, Earl E.
 Walker, Franklin E.
 Walsh, Joseph F.
 Walters, Don C.
 Ward, Maynard E.
 Warlick, Clyde F.
 Warren, James H.
 Watts, Troy
 Weber, Earnest R.
 Webster, Blaine
 Weiner, Melvin
 Wellman, Harold
 West, Harold D.
 Westcott, Earl R.
 Wetmore, Robert A.
 Wilhoit, James C.
 Wilkins, William R.
 Wilkolaski, Frank J.
 Williams, Malcolm A.
 Williams, Orel
 Wilson, James H.
 Winiecki, Norbert H.
 Winstead, John, Jr.
 Winters, Lester J.
 Withers, Roland G.
 Wolfe, James, Jr.
 Womack, John R.
 Wood, Lyle V.
 Wood, William E.
 Woods, Horace J.
 Wurtz, Veryl A.
 Yarbrough, Arlie R.
 Young, Harry
 Young, Lloyd W.
 Zaidins, Edward A.
 Zayance, William J.
 Zepeda, Julio N.
 Zilinek, William
 Zuckerman, Irving
 Zutic, Andrew F.

Privates

Adkisson, Robert G.
 Altman, Norman P.
 Altamari, Michael W.
 Anderson, Floyd F.
 Anderson, France H.
 Anderson, Lloyd G.
 Andrulewicz, Joseph A.
 Appel, Harry E.
 Archie, Clyde L.
 Arenson, Nathan H.
 Austin, Dan
 Austin, Junior D.
 Banevich, Walter E.
 Balk, Henry J.
 Baril, Roland A.
 Barr, Benny J.
 Barton, Arthur P.
 Bazemore, James W.
 Beals, Bruce K.
 Beann, Wayne M.
 Bednar, John E.
 Beidler, Jacob W., Sr.
 Beisler, Theodore G.
 Bell, Wayne R.
 Benore, Louis W.
 Berniger, Julius
 Bertels, Alphonse H.
 Beukena, John L.
 Binford, Joseph B.
 Bingham, John A., Jr.
 Blanton, Donald A.
 Bledsoe, Charles R.
 Boaz, Robert E.
 Bosnak, John E.
 Bottom, Ray W.
 Boughter, Walter L.
 Bowling, Carter
 Boyd, Cecil W.
 Bozzay, Louis S.
 Bradley, Alfred R.
 Bradley, Ruhel W.
 Bragg, Boyd
 Brannan, Silas A.
 Briggs, Raymond M.
 Brock, Norman M.
 Brottmiller, Robert F.
 Brouillard, Arthur H.
 Brouseau, Harry E.
 Caligary, John
 Calvert, Roy L.
 Camp, Elza O.
 Campbell, Kenneth K.
 Capetanakis, Tony A.

Carroll, Bernard V.
 Carroll, Jesse
 Carter, Walton L.
 Casas, Paul W.
 Cassese, Anthony T.
 Catino, Robert E.
 Chandler, Jack E.
 Chiappetta, Gennaro J.
 Chisolm, William F.
 Chrisman, Robert M.
 Clark, Donald L.
 Claypool, James G.
 Coady, Francis X.
 Coalburn, James L.
 Cohen, Abram R.
 Coldicott, Frederick B.
 Combs, Richard D.
 Cooper, David T.
 Copes, Edward W.
 Costa, Joseph
 Cotterell, John W.
 Cox, Charles L.
 Cox, James W.
 Crabtree, Lenvil
 Cross, Kenneth L.
 Cynkar, John J.
 Czechowicz, Julius P.
 Dalaba, Merton J.
 Dale, Clarence E.
 Daley, Richard E.
 Dalton, James M.
 Davis, Sterling J.
 Delisle, George G.
 Del Priore, Lawrence J.
 De Matteo, Vincent J.
 Denson, David C.
 De Vito, Joseph A.
 Diehl, Arthur J.
 DiPietro, Carmen P.
 Dogostino, John J.
 Dolph, Thurston T.
 Dorfman, Bernard
 Douglas, Jesse C.
 Eastham, Hervert V.
 Estevez, Ralph W.
 Eversole, Francis M.
 Farris, Fred C.
 Ferris, Melvin H.
 Gamble, Robert L.
 Gansarski, Adolph B.
 Garcia, Tony M.
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 Gaydos, Vincent L.
 Georgeson, Constantin
 Gibson, James R.
 Gilbreath, George L.
 Ginder, Henry
 Giviani, Michael J.
 Gordan, John T.
 Graves, Charles C.
 Green, Delmar F.
 Griffith, Donald V.
 Griffith, Harold E.
 Gritz, Lawrence W.
 Groff, Benjamin F.
 Grossman, Martin
 Grover, Bion J., Jr.
 Guest, Robert J.
 Hagen, Earl
 Harris, Emmett L.
 Hartman, Elvin E.
 Haskins, John M.
 Haught, Lawrence J.
 Hay, Earl
 Heichel, Dewey R.
 Helie, Homer L.
 Henley, Floyd J.
 Hibbard, Walter, Jr.
 Hines, Rollis J.
 Hoffman, Joseph M.
 Hogan, Lawrence W.
 Hooker, Charles
 Houlihan, Thomas P.
 Howell, Amos
 Howington, James E.
 Huddleston, Glenn
 Hudgins, Curtis L.
 Hugh, Walter A.
 Irwin, Elden C.
 Isaac, Eugene
 Jackson, Lewis W.
 Jarrett, Vennor
 Jennings, Ernest R.
 Jerzembeck, William
 Jessmon, Thomas H.
 Johnson, Leonard D.
 Jones, Coy G.
 Jones, Hugo W.
 Jordan, Martin W.
 Junga, Harold J.
 Kannan, Paul R.
 Karriker, Robert L.
 Kelley, James L.
 Keltner, John R.

Kemp, Elwyn M.
 Kendrick, Forrest L.
 Kenyon, Herbert W.
 Ketterer, Clarence W.
 Kietzman, Joseph R.
 Kimmerer, Clair K.
 Koehn, Alvin W.
 Kroeker, Herbert
 Kulp, George I.
 La Frenier, Joseph R.
 Lander, Harry
 La Padulo, John C.
 Larocca, Stanley V.
 La Roche, John G.
 La Vere, George J.
 Lavimodiere, Rene J.
 Lemire, George E.
 Lemoine, Charles J., Jr.
 Lewis, Paulie J.
 Lewis, William R.
 Lippard, Roy C.
 Lipscomb, Marshal E.
 Lopez, Johnny J.
 Lorence, Joseph M.
 Lunsford, John M.
 Lutean, John J.
 Lyons, Donald E.
 McConnell, Peter S.
 McDaniel, Victor V.
 McGroart, Charles J.
 McKinney, Claude W.
 McNamar, Wilfred L.
 Madden, Francis J.
 Maldonado, Manuel
 Marsh, Hubert C.
 Martin, Solen H.
 Martinez, John R.
 Mason, Jesse A.
 Masterbray, Joe
 Mastronardi, Daniel L.
 Mathis, Leonard C.
 Meils, Marvin D.
 Melvin, Harlan
 Mendenhall, Stanley F.
 Mewborne, Lemuel J.
 Meyer, Rolland R.
 Middei, Carmaine
 Milewski, Stanley
 Miller, Jim K.
 Miller, Paul H.
 Monroe, Charles F.
 Montiel, Gabino
 Moore, Glen D.
 Morrison, Roy E.
 Morse, James J.
 Moser, Jack W.
 Mosquedo, Mario
 Mowery, Jay A.
 Mucci, Vincent J.
 Mull, Harold E.
 Mullinay, Thomas R.
 Murphy, Silby
 Murray, John A.
 Myers, Hugh A.
 Nadeau, Henry G.
 Nehr Korn, Paul K.
 Nelson, Lavern W.
 Nelson, Robert W., Jr.
 Newsome, Lamar H.
 Nodurft, Claud H.
 Nodurft, Ralph F.
 Noe, Floyd L.
 Noteboom, Case
 Oliver, Ollie J.
 Ordonez, Florencio V.
 Otto, Arthur L.
 Painter, Clarence A.
 Panicali, Peter C.
 Papes, Stephen A., Jr.
 Parkinson, Clifford L.
 Pauley, Carl H.
 Pawlik, Frank P.
 Peck, Raymond H.
 Pence, Kenneth W.
 Perkins, Roy O.
 Perkins, Donald G.
 Perrin, John A.
 Peters, William L.
 Petersen, George J.
 Peterson, Allen C.
 Poole, Estel
 Piliert, Carroll E.
 Plocher, Alvin C.
 Pociuasek, Albin J.
 Polding, Robert C.
 Porch, George W., Jr.
 Poulton, James
 Powers, James B.
 Probst, Arthur C.
 Provost, Harold F.
 Raczius, Michael F.
 Rasmussen, Henry
 Rill, Robert A.
 Robertson, William A.

Robey, Oliver A.
 Rochacewitz, Edward W.
 Rohrer, Clarence N.
 Rose, Bernard
 Rosario, Jorge A.
 Ross, Jack E.
 Rottar, Raymond
 Sakkinen, Urho E.
 Sanden, Edgar M.
 Sandrowitz, Sam
 Schell, Allen I.
 Schneider, Richard R.
 Schnessel, Leonard
 Scott, Beverly B.
 Scott, David D.
 Seddon, Robert
 Shaw, Raymond W.
 Shepherd, Eithel A.
 Shimko, Joseph B.
 Short, Elmer
 Simone, Anthony
 Sisak, Michael G.

Slair, Raymond W.
 Sluga, Ralph R.
 Smith, Albert N.
 Smith, Carl A.
 Smith, Miner R.
 Smithson, Robert H.
 Snyder, John R.
 Soben, Frank
 Sorell, Morio
 Spayd, Warren P.
 Stacy, Robert V.
 Stafford, Earl
 Steinman, George
 Stoen, Gordon M.
 Stringer, John E.
 Surgenti, Matthew A.
 Sutton, Charles W.
 Swarm, Kenneth
 Taylor, Louis J.
 Trotter, Carlton W.
 Tuthill, Orville
 Unland, Francis F.

Upchurch, Wilburn K.
 Walker, Freddie L.
 Walthorn, Lawrence M.
 Weeley, Warren J.
 Weinmeister, Edward
 Weisgerber, Edward C.
 Wells, Oakley O.
 Weymouth, Erwin L.
 White, Gale S.
 Wiggin, Everett M.
 Wilkie, Robert D.
 Wilkison, James B.
 Willeat, Clifford A.
 Williams, Donald M.
 Williams, Earl C.
 Williams, Harry J.
 Wolf, Robert R.
 Wolfe, William L.
 Wood, Ben P.
 Wozniak, Frank M.
 Young, Reber A.
 Young, Tom H.

Zech, Bernard A.

Rank Unknown (*Records misplaced or lost in battle*)

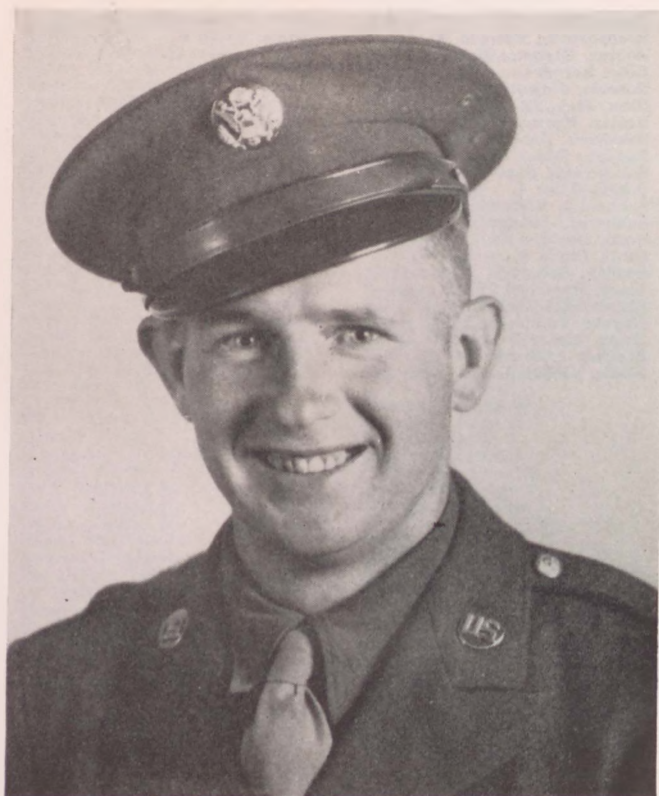
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 Campbell, Joseph E.
 Carrico, Russell
 Cotterell, Joseph
 Garner, Fred N.
 Johnson, Jack B.
 Kelln, Newman C.
 Maksim, Michael
 Nannery, Edward J.
 Parlavecchia, Frank J.
 Paulton, James
 Perez, John
 Phillips, George W.
 Putroff, John M.
 Scherer, Harold
 Scholl, Leonard C., Jr.
 Sisk, Craig
 Stults, Harold O.



THE MEDAL OF HONOR

Awarded in the name of the Congress to each person who, while an officer, noncommissioned officer, or private of the Army, in action involving actual conflict with an enemy, distinguishes himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty.

In order to justify an award of the Medal of Honor, the individual must perform in action a deed of personal bravery or self-sacrifice above and beyond the call of duty, so conspicuous as clearly to distinguish him for gallantry and intrepidity above his comrades, involving risk of life or the performance of more than ordinarily hazardous service, the omission of which would not justly subject him to censure as for shortcoming or failure in the performance of his duty. The recommendations for the decoration will be judged by this standard of extraordinary merit and incontestable proof of the performance of the service will be exacted.



Staff Sergeant Jack J. Pendleton

Staff Sergeant Jack J. Pendleton (Army serial No. 39179563), Company "I," 120th Infantry, United States Army. For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty on 12 October 1944. When Company "I" was advancing on the town of Bardenberg, Germany, they reached a point approximately two-thirds of the distance through the town when they were pinned down by fire from a nest of enemy machine guns. This enemy strongpoint was protected by a lone machine gun strategically placed at an intersection and firing down a street which offered little or no cover or concealment for the advancing troops. The elimination of this protecting machine gun was imperative in order that the stronger position it protected could be neutralized. After repeated and unsuccessful attempts had been made to knock out this position, Sergeant Pendleton volunteered to lead his squad in an attempt to neutralize this strongpoint. Sergeant Pendleton started his squad slowly forward, crawling about 10 yards in front of his men in the advance toward the enemy gun. After advancing approximately 130 yards under the withering fire, Sergeant Pendleton was seriously wounded in the leg by a burst from the gun he was assaulting. Disregarding his grievous wound, he ordered his men to remain where they were and, with a supply of hand grenades, he slowly and painfully worked his way forward alone. With no hope of surviving the veritable hail of machine-gun fire which he deliberately drew onto himself, he succeeded in advancing to within 10 yards of the enemy position when he was instantly killed by a burst from the enemy gun. By deliberately diverting the attention of the German machine gunners upon himself, a second squad was able to advance undetected and, with the help of Sergeant Pendleton's squad, neutralized the lone machine gun while another platoon of his company advanced up the intersecting street and knocked out the machine-gun nest which the first gun had been covering. Sergeant Pendleton's sacrifice enabled the entire company to continue the advance and complete their mission at a critical phase of the action. (General Orders No. 24, War Department, 6 April 1945.)



Technical Sergeant Francis S. Currey

Sergeant *Francis S. Currey* (Army serial No. 12225906), (then Private First Class), Company "K," 120th Infantry, Army of the United States, was an automatic rifleman with the 3d Platoon defending a strongpoint near Malmédy, Belgium, on 21 December 1944, when the enemy launched a powerful attack. Overrunning tank destroyers and antitank guns located near the strongpoint, German tanks advanced to the 3d Platoon's position, and after prolonged fighting forced the withdrawal of this group to a near-by factory. Private *Currey* found a bazooka in the building and crossed a street to secure rockets under intense fire from enemy tanks and hostile infantrymen who had taken up a position at a house a short distance away. In the face of small-arms, machine-gun, and artillery fire, he, with a companion, knocked out a tank with one shot. Moving to another position, he observed three German soldiers in the doorway of an enemy-held house. He killed or wounded all three with his automatic rifle. He emerged from cover and advanced alone to within 50 yards of the house, intent on wrecking it with rockets. Covered by friendly fire, he stood erect and fired a shot which knocked down half of one wall. While in this forward position, he observed five Americans who had been pinned down for hours by fire from the house and three tanks. Realizing that they could not escape until the enemy tank and infantry guns had been silenced, Private *Currey* crossed the street to a vehicle where he procured an armful of antitank grenades. He launched these while under heavy enemy fire, driving the tankmen from their vehicles into the house. He then climbed onto a half-track in full view of the Germans and fired a machine gun at the house. Once again changing his position, he manned another machine gun whose crew had been killed. Under his covering fire the five soldiers were able to retire to safety. Deprived of tanks and with heavy infantry casualties, the enemy was forced to withdraw. Through his extensive knowledge of weapons and by his heroic and repeated braving of murderous enemy fire, Private *Currey* was greatly responsible for inflicting heavy losses in men and matériel on the enemy, for rescuing five comrades, two of whom were wounded, and for stemming an attack which threatened to flank his battalion's position. (*General Orders No. 69, War Department, 17 August 1945.*)



Staff Sergeant Paul L. Bolden

Staff Sergeant *Paul L. Bolden* (Army serial No. 34396135), Company "E," 120th Infantry, Army of the United States, voluntarily attacked a formidable enemy strongpoint in Petit-Coo, Belgium, on 23 December 1944, when his company was pinned down by extremely heavy automatic and small-arms fire coming from a house 200 yards to the front. Mortar and tank-artillery shells pounded the unit when Sergeant *Bolden* and a comrade, on their own initiative, moved forward into a hail of bullets to eliminate the ever-increasing fire from the German position. Crawling ahead to close with what they knew was a powerfully armed, vastly superior force, the pair reached the house and took up assault positions, Sergeant *Bolden* under a window and his comrade across the street where he could deliver covering fire. In rapid succession, Sergeant *Bolden* hurled a fragmentation grenade and a white phosphorus grenade into the building, and then, fully realizing that he faced tremendous odds, rushed to the door, threw it open, and fired into 35 SS troopers who were trying to reorganize themselves after the havoc wrought by the grenade. Twenty Germans died under the fire of his submachine gun before he was struck in the shoulder, chest, and stomach by part of a burst which killed his comrade across the street. He withdrew from the house and waited for the surviving Germans to come out and surrender. When none appeared in the doorway, he summoned his ebbing strength, overcame the extreme pain he suffered, and boldly walked back into the house, firing as he went. He had killed the remaining 15 enemy soldiers when his ammunition ran out. Sergeant *Bolden's* heroic advance against great odds, his fearless assault, and his magnificent display of courage in reentering the building where he had been severely wounded cleared the path for his company and insured the success of its mission. (*General Orders No. 73, War Department, 30 August 1945.*)

DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATIONS

The *2d Battalion, 120th Infantry*, is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy. On 6 August 1944 the *2d Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment*, occupied defensive positions on Hill 314 which commanded major routes of approach and supply. The success of the Allied breakthrough battles in Normandy depended upon retention of this vital terrain feature. Orders directed the battalion to hold the hill at all costs. On 7 August 1944 the Germans launched the first of a series of vicious counterattacks in which they committed large forces of infantry and armor in a desperate and fanatical attempt to split the Allied forces driving into Brittany from those in Normandy. In the initial attack enemy troops reached Mortain and completely surrounded Hill 314, isolating the *2d Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment*. Repeated attacks on the hill were repulsed in bitter fighting. During the siege that followed, enemy pressure was unrelenting, food and ammunition were low, and medical supplies were rapidly exhausted because of the many casualties sustained. Two attempts by aircraft to supply the isolated men resulted in partial success, with the bulk of the supplies falling in enemy-held territory. A desperate attempt was made to provide medical supplies fired from friendly artillery, part of which reached the battalion. Appeals to surrender were rejected. Threatening annihilation, the enemy launched another bitter attack with a large force of tanks, which was successfully repulsed by this heroic battalion but at the cost of numerous casualties. At night, infiltrating enemy attacking under cover of darkness were driven back. During the day, the battalion repulsed numerous enemy penetrations and withstood terrific aerial bombardments, strafing, and intense artillery concentrations. Although the battalion suffered heavy losses and faced an acute shortage of water, food, and medical supplies, it remained steadfast in the defense of Hill 314. The personnel of this battalion held their ground tenaciously and in the face of bitter opposition courageously denied the strategic hill to the enemy. The battalion's losses in this action included 277 killed, wounded, and missing, but numerous casualties and heavy loss of equipment were inflicted upon the enemy. During the entire seven-day period the gallant fighting men of the *2d Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment*, exhibited unwavering fortitude and an indomitable fighting spirit, repulsing one of the most severe and determined counterattacks launched by the Germans in France. By its brave and heroic stand it prevented the enemy from splitting our forces in Normandy from those in Brittany. The unflinching devotion to duty and superb courage displayed by each man of the battalion reflect the highest

traditions of the armed forces. [*General Orders No. 3, War Department, 8 January 1945.*]

Company "K," 120th Infantry Regiment, is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy. On 6 August 1944 *Company "K,"* while attached to the *2d Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment*, occupied defensive positions on Hill 314 which commanded major routes of approach and supply. Possession of this terrain feature was vital to the success of the Allied breakthrough battles out of Normandy. Orders directed the company to hold its defensive position at all costs. On 7 August 1944 the Germans launched the first of a series of vicious counterattacks in which they committed large forces of infantry and armor in a desperate and fanatical attempt to split the Allied forces driving into Brittany from those in Normandy. In the initial attack enemy troops reached Mortain and completely surrounded Hill 314. Repeated attacks on the *Company "K"* sector were repulsed in bitter fighting. During the siege that followed, enemy pressure was unrelenting, food and ammunition were low, and medical supplies were rapidly exhausted because of the many casualties sustained. Two attempts by aircraft to supply the isolated men resulted in partial success, with the bulk of the supplies falling in enemy-held territory. A desperate attempt was made to provide medical supplies fired from friendly artillery, part of which reached the company. Appeals to surrender were rejected. Threatening annihilation, the enemy launched another bitter attack with a large force of tanks, which was successfully repulsed. At night, infiltrating enemy attacking under cover of darkness were driven back. During the day, the company repulsed numerous enemy penetrations in its sector and withstood terrific aerial bombardments, strafing, and intense artillery concentrations, but remained steadfast in its defense. The personnel of this company held their ground tenaciously and in the face of bitter opposition courageously denied its position to the enemy. During the entire seven-day period the gallant fighting men of *Company "K," 120th Infantry Regiment*, exhibited unwavering fortitude and an indomitable fighting spirit, repulsing one of the most severe and determined counterattacks launched by the Germans in France. By its brave and heroic stand it prevented the enemy from splitting our forces in Normandy and those in Brittany. The unflinching devotion to duty and superb courage displayed by each man of the company reflect the highest traditions of the armed forces. [*General Orders No. 3, War Department, 8 January 1945.*]

The *1st Platoon, Antitank Company, 120th Infantry Regiment*, is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy. On 6 August 1944 the *1st Platoon, Antitank Company, 120th Infantry Regiment*, was assigned the mission of placing and defending a roadblock at the convergence of five roads near Abbaye-Blanche, northwest of Mortain, in support of the 2d Battalion which was occupying Hill 314. The mission of this platoon was to deny heavy enemy armor the use of these roads to attack Hill 314. This hill commanded major routes of approach and supply, the possession of which was vital to the success of the Allied breakthrough battles in Normandy. On 7 August 1944 the Germans launched the first of a series of vicious counterattacks in which they committed large forces of infantry and armor in a desperate and fanatical attempt to split the Allied forces driving through Normandy from those in Brittany. In the initial attack enemy troops reached Mortain and completely surrounded Hill 314. During the siege that followed, the *1st Platoon* vigorously repulsed repeated enemy attempts to break through the roadblock with heavy armor. Throughout the entire seven-day period the Germans subjected this stubborn group to devastating attacks in a futile attempt to neutralize the position which was holding up the advance of their armor. Heroically, the platoon assisted in destroying more than 60 tanks and vehicles and effectively blocked the enemy's advance. The personnel of this platoon held their ground tenaciously and, in the face of bitter opposition, courageously denied the use of the strategic road to the enemy. During the entire engagement the gallant men of the platoon exhibited unwavering fortitude and an indomitable fighting spirit in assisting to repulse one of the most severe and determined counterattacks launched by the Germans in France. By their brave and heroic stand the men of this platoon materially assisted in preventing the enemy from splitting our forces in Normandy from those in Brittany. The unflinching devotion to duty and courage displayed by each man of the *1st Platoon, Antitank Company, 120th Infantry Regiment*, reflect the highest traditions of the armed forces. [General Orders No. 3, War Department, 8 January 1945.]

The *2d Platoon, Antitank Company, 120th Infantry Regiment*, is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy. On 6 August 1944 the *2d Platoon, Antitank Company, 120th Infantry Regiment*, was assigned the mission of placing and defending a roadblock at the convergence of five roads near Abbaye-Blanche, northwest of Mortain, in support of the 2d Battalion which was occupying Hill 314. The mission of this platoon was to deny heavy enemy armor the use of these roads to attack Hill 314. This hill commanded major routes of approach and

supply, the possession of which was vital to the success of the Allied breakthrough battles in Normandy. On 7 August 1944 the Germans launched the first of a series of vicious counterattacks in which they committed large forces of infantry and armor in a desperate and fanatical attempt to split the Allied forces driving through Normandy from those in Brittany. In the initial attack, enemy troops reached Mortain and completely surrounded Hill 314. During the siege that followed, the *2d Platoon* vigorously repulsed repeated enemy attempts to break through the roadblock with heavy armor. Throughout the entire seven-day period the Germans subjected this stubborn group to devastating attacks in a futile attempt to neutralize the position which was holding up the advance of their armor. Heroically, the platoon assisted in destroying more than 60 tanks and vehicles and effectively blocked the enemy's advance. The personnel of this platoon held their ground tenaciously and in the face of bitter opposition courageously denied the use of the strategic road to the enemy. During the entire engagement, the gallant men of the platoon exhibited unwavering fortitude and an indomitable fighting spirit in assisting to repulse one of the most severe and determined counterattacks launched by the Germans in France. By their brave and heroic stand the men of this platoon materially assisted in preventing the enemy from splitting our forces in Normandy from those in Brittany. The unflinching devotion to duty and courage displayed by each man of the *2d Platoon, Antitank Company, 120th Infantry Regiment*, reflect the highest traditions of the armed forces. [General Orders No. 3, War Department, 8 January 1945.]

The *1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment*, is cited for outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy from 8 to 12 October 1944, in Germany. This battalion was given the mission of capturing and holding an important enemy-held town located on vitally strategic terrain. Due to the nature of this terrain, the attack was made across an unprotected area within full view of enemy defenses, so that when the objective was reached, the enemy was still able to deliver accurate fire. Despite violent opposition and heavy casualties, the troops fought tenaciously and seized the town. Four counterattacks were launched by the foe in the days following, and numerically superior infantry and armored thrusts were repulsed in bitter fighting. The enemy lost 38 tanks, and 125 troops were captured, in addition to an unknown number of killed and wounded personnel. The heroism exhibited by all members of the *1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment*, reflects great credit on themselves and is in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service. [General Orders No. 11, War Department, 30 January 1946.]

GLOSSARY

AAA	Antiaircraft artillery	LCT	Landing craft, tank
AF	Air Force	LCVP	Landing craft, vehicle and personnel
AP	Antipersonnel	LD	Line of Departure, which is line designated on the ground, such as a road, railroad, etc., which attacking troops cross at a specified time.
AT	Antitank		
BAR	Browning automatic rifle	Med	Medical
Bn	Battalion	MII	Military intelligence interpreter
Burp gun	German machine pistol; a type of light machine gun	MLR	Main line of resistance
CIC	Counterintelligence Corps	mm	Millimeter, 0.0937 of an inch. A 75mm gun is of the approximate size of a 3-inch gun
CO	Commanding officer	M-4	Medium tank
Co	Company	M-8	Armored car
CP	Command post	M-10	3-inch self-propelled tank destroyer
Div	Division	M-18	90mm self-propelled tank destroyer
Eng	Engineer	M-24	Light tank
FA	Field artillery	M-29	Light, tracked cargo vehicle known as a "Weasel"
G-1 (S-1)	Personnel officer or adjutant	OCS	Officer candidate school
G-2 (S-2)	Intelligence officer	PW	Prisoner of war
G-3 (S-3)	Operations officer	Regt	Regiment
G-4 (S-4)	Supply officer	SA or SS	German storm troops
	(The above are staff officers. If "G" they are on a division or higher staff; if "S" on a battalion or regimental staff.)	TD	Tank destroyer
GI	Government issue, or slang for enlisted man	TOT	Time-on-target, which is method of firing many artillery guns at slightly different times in order that the various projectiles land on the target simultaneously.
IP	Initial point. A designated point on the ground which marching units cross at prescribed times for the purpose of coordinating the movement.	T/4, etc.	Technician, 4th grade, etc.
IPW	Interrogation of prisoners of war	USO	United Service Organizations
I&R	Intelligence and reconnaissance	SCR-300	A radio. Army radios are designated by numbers for identifying types.
K ration	Packaged food which can be conveniently carried. Monotonous to eat, but far better than easily carried rations issued by any other army.	SCR-536	A small radio, the "walkie-talkie"
LCI	Landing craft, infantry	2000	8:00 P.M. in the 24-hour time system. 0800 is 8:00 A.M.
LCM	Landing craft, medium		





**BATTLE ROUTE OF THE
120TH INFANTRY REGIMENT 1945**

