

- NARRATIVE HISTORY -

THIRD BATTALION 275th INFANTRY

- BATTALION STAFF -

Lt Col CLIFFORD E. DYKES - Commanding Officer

Major HUNTER A. COPELAND - Executive Officer

1st Lt EDWARD W. MOELLER - S-1

1st Lt LIONEL J. FOURRIER - S-2

Capt FLORENTINE J. BROWN - S-3

1st Lt LEO A. DANA - S-4



AUTHORS NOTES AND DISCLAIMER

While on occupation duty during the summer and early fall of the year 1945, Lt. Col. Clifford E. Dykes, C. O., directed S/Sgt. Robert W. Roti, S-3 Operations Sgt. and Sgt. Gaylord L. Reaser, Communications Sgt. to write a narrative history of the 3rd Bn. 275th Inf. Regt. of the 70th Infantry Division.

The writings were from the memory of these two men, thereby there may be some minor errors in some of the exact dates of each action or movement of the troops, however these are minor in nature and unintentional. These two men were always operating & performing their duties within the Battalion Headquarters during all of the conflicts so they had first hand experience of what transpired between upper and lower echelons. S/Sgt Roti was present at all of the meetings with the S-3 Officer and the various commanders, while Sgt Reaser was supervising all incoming and outgoing messages. The operations and situation maps were maintained by Roti who worked closely with the S-3 at all times..

We hope this history of a brave young Infantry Battalion of approximately 1000 or so men colorfully describes the woes, hardships and suffering that the front line troops endure.

These men were just part of the force that stopped Hitler's last frantic effort to encircle the troops in Belgium who were fighting the Battle of The Bulge.

Respectfully submitted:

S/Sgt Robert W. Roti
Sgt Gaylord L. Reaser (Now Deceased)
RWR

Enclosures:

1. Face Sheet.
2. Authors Notes & Disclaimer.
3. Narrative History.
4. Roster of KIA's by Company.
5. Roster of Awards Issued.

As if indicative of tradition of our forefathers who migrated westward, blazing the Oregon Trail and reflecting that colorful phase of American History, a cadre of U. S. Army Officers gathered together at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, the origin of the trail, and laid the groundwork for the formation of a new Infantry Division, and assisted in its activation at Camp Adair, Oregon, the near-terminus of the Trail that opened the progress westward.

On June 15, 1943, the day the people of the state of Oregon celebrated the Centennial of the Trail, and the date later set aside by the War Department as Infantry Day, the 70th Division was officially activated, with a picked cadre from the 91st Division, then undergoing training at Camp White, Oregon, as the nucleus. With specific reference to the pioneers who marked this Trail, the name Trailblazer was adopted.

This cadre group of officers and non-commissioned officers from the Fir Tree Division—emblematically their insignia—instilled the spirit of their battle cry "Powder River, Let 'er Buck," made famous in World War I.

Though it wasn't long before we had our own tradition, and not one of us will again hear "Oh Susannah" without giving thought to the colors as that is our theme song, adopted because it was the song the first trailblazers sang in opening the old Oregon Trail when they arrived out there in the Cascade Mountains over a hundred years ago.

Mid-August found the first fillers coming into the unit and by September 15 the division was full strength. On this day—Organization Day—a formal was held at Bradley Bowl with Gov. Snell extending his welcome to Oregon and providing the kickoff address as the basic training period got underway.

Swinging into this period of training, the Third Battalion, 275th Infantry was under the command of Lt Col J. E. MILLER, with the following officers comprising the Staff: Capt C. R. KRAMER, Executive Officer; Capt WILLIAM F. RILEY, S-1; Lt CLARK E. LIBBEE, S-2; Lt WALTER H. HARTMAN, S-3; Lt WALTER HURD, S-4.

After thirteen weeks of basic training, Corps tests and concurrent training were conducted for six days testing all subjects and types of training covered in that period of time. Corps teams consisting of officers and enlisted men conducted these tests which proved the efficiency of units down to the individual soldier. This Battalion was given a superior rating which proved the excellent quality of training and leadership provided for the basics.

The Battalion was now prepared to begin the tactical phase of training and plans were already prepared for a fourteen week Unit Training Program. This period of more advanced training consisted of platoon, company and battalion field exercises. According to the high rating given by Corps, Battalion Combat Firing Problems were executed as if by veteran troops.

The quality of the training provided was reflected when the entire division was called on to provide replacements in late January, in March and again in April for combat units both in the ETO and the Pacific.

In this complete turnover of men the various other branches of the Army supplied fillers for the Infantry. These men, after four weeks of Infantry basic at Provisional Replacement Training Centers, were assigned to various units, and once again the Division was up to near-strength.

Mansuvers were planned only to be discarded as the command received orders to move to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. On July 26, 1944 the last elements departed by rail and four days later the complete organization was together at its new training ground. While at this station Major General Allison J. Barnett assumed command after two years of combat experience in the Pacific.

Here, the various units carried through on a series of Regimental Combat Team exercises and firing problems until November, when as a result of eighteen months intensive training, the Division was beckoned for overseas service.

On November 18, 1944 this unit entrained for Port of Embarkation at Camp Miles Standish, Mass. After two weeks of POE instruction and training, and

issue of articles necessary for operations in the ETO, we sailed from Boston Harbor December 6 aboard the S S West Point, arriving at Marseilles, France on December 15.

Here on this beautiful December afternoon everything seemed so serene, so much so as the quiet, uneventful days afforded us for the Atlantic crossing, but the sights that befell us in this vast French harbor brought to the majority of us, our first visions of the hellish destruction of war.

Due to the condition of the harbor it was impossible to dock the S S West Point and the big ship was unloaded by means of barges. At this point the first casualty of the Division, and, incidentally our Battalion was sustained when Capt Ralph Rockwood, commanding Company K, broke his leg while jumping from one of the landing barges to touch French soil for the first time.

The men and material were shuttled by truck convoy to the Command Post No.2 of the Delta Base Section near Marseilles where a vast bivouac area was established and which in the short space of a few days became a quagmire caused by a sudden rigorous change to a rainy and cold brand of weather.

Here, the three infantry regiments of the division organized as a Task Force under the Assistant Division Commander, Brigadier General Thomas W. Herren and known as Task Force Herren, completed their preparatory duties and were ready for their first assignment. Administrative details were brought up to date, and organizational equipment, including motorized equipment, 57-mm AT guns and 105-mm cannons were received, fulfilling T/E. Training plans were instituted with the stress coming on military courtesy and discipline.

Meanwhile, orders had been received from the 7th Army for movement to the combat area. On December 18, 1944 an advance party, consisting of the General Staff Sections and their aides departed for Saverne, France, arriving two days later. A conference with the 7th Army clarified the assignment of Task Force Herren and placed it under the command of VI Corps. The following day a recon-

naissance was made of the town of Bischwiller, and on December 22, 1944 the Task Force Command Post was established in that city.

Orders were received at Command Post No. 2 to stand in readiness, and regimental quartering groups were dispatched forward of the troops who were undergoing final inspections and orientation. In the early morning hours of December 23d, the last elements of the 275th Regiment broke camp and departed from CP No. 2, the remainder of the troops having left the previous day by rail, riding the unforgettable 40 and 8 freight cars.

In the next three days that followed, possibly every man that made the arduous three-day motor march nearly across France in a northeasterly direction was destined for one of life's dramatic changes. Though not knowing their destination, every man was fully aware that the unit had been committed, and in the not too distant future would have its place in the European Conflict.

Perhaps it was the bitter-cold, biting wind that seemed to make the trip endless; or two nights in a motor convoy on the cold, windswept, war-torn plains of France when it seemed as if dawn would never come; maybe it was preparing oneself, mindfully, for the things to come as the vast picture of wars hell grew worse mile after mile trying all the while to visualize the type or kind of action employed by your comrades many long days ago over this very same terrain; or quite possibly it was the spending of the third night, December 25, in a former French army billets that was blown to hell, in Saverne, France. December 25—Christmas—on our way to take part in our first inning of this game of destroy, or be destroyed, ruffling the spirit and discordant passions of men in violation of our true American virtue of uniting our voices in sounding aloud the spirit of the heaven-born anthem, "Peace on Earth, good will toward men."

The motor convoy rolled into Gries, France on December 26 and here, once again, in an old brick factory as the assembly area, the Third Battalion was assembled. The troops that had traveled by train arrived the previous day.

The next two days afforded complete reorganization, checking of equipment and supplies, and orientation. On December 28 the Third Battalion moved into their assigned defensive positions, occupying a portion of the west bank of the Rhine River located in the upper reaches of the Vosges Mountains between Strasbourg and ^{HAGUENAU} Haguenau.

On this day the first Battalion Command Post was established at la Wentzenau, France under Major William K. Shepherd, Battalion Commander; Major Robert F. O'Donnell, (Now Lt Col), Executive Officer; Capt Hunter A. Copeland, (Now Major), S-1; 1st Lt John Klipa, S-2; Capt Harry W. Severence, (Now Major), S-3; and 1st Lt Clayton R. Rugg, S-4.

In a somewhat stabilized situation, the Battalion organized a defensive position carrying on active patrols, otherwise all was quiet. The weather was extremely cold and snow fell intermittently. However, this "Watch on the Rhine" from defensive positions was short-lived as the pressing need of troops in the northern sectors for reinforcements interrupted the plans. The enemy, through increased activity in the XV and VI Corps areas, was attempting to relieve his forces pinched in the Bastogne pocket and strong attacks were in evidence in the ^{HAGUENAU} Bitche-Haguenau sector. There was the Haguenau Forest, eighteen miles long and six miles wide, densely covering a region of the Vosges. And Bitche—a name that was soon to emblematically bespeak itself to every dough in this Battalion—a communication hub for this whole sector of Germany consisting of a cluster of the Strongest Maginot forts. German SS Mountain troops supported by strong armor and heavy artillery began wide infiltrations.

On December 30 we were relieved by elements of the 42nd Division and the 275th Infantry was ordered to assemble at Neiderbronn under command of the 45th Division.

Withdrawing from la Wentzenau on December 30th, the Third Battalion proceeded by motor convoy to Schirrhein where it remained overnight. At 1830 on the night

of December 31st a quartering and reconnaissance party consisting of the Battalion Co., S-2, S-3, Communications Officer, three rifle company commanders, and one heavy weapons company commander, departed for Philippsbourg, France, arriving at the 62nd Armored Infantry Battalion Command Post, the unit to be relieved by our Battalion, at approximately 2100.

Immediately upon arriving, the two staffs went into a conference, generally briefing the situation, making a map reconnaissance of positions and planning operations.

These were interrupted briefly, by a telephone message from one of the units occupying a front-line position providing the information that a "Jerry" patrol of twelve men dressed in white camouflage suits, and accompanied by a dog, had infiltrated through the lines. In the early morning hours further information came back regarding the firing on this patrol and the capture of one man who was later brought back for interrogation.

In the cold, gray streaks of dawn that seemed to come just a bit earlier because of the deep snow that lay like a blanket over the Hardt Mountains, that never-to-be forgotten New Years morning, the four company commanders took off for a ground reconnaissance of the positions to which their respective companies were to be committed.

Capt Florentine J. Brown, (then 1st Lt), K Company Commander; Capt John P. Major, L Company Commander; and Capt Garnet W. Oliver, M Company Commander, returned at approximately 0930, just in time to be on the receiving end of a few rounds of "Jerry" artillery, one of them scoring a direct hit on a three-quarter ton medical truck, which was parked next door to the Command Post.

Capt Major, L Company Commander, who had just returned from his reconnaissance was standing across the street talking to Major Severance (then Capt), Battalion S-3, was struck in the leg by a shell fragment of this same burst, and thus became the Battalions first battle casualty. Major Severance was more fortunate, and received only a slight scratch.

The companies were led up from the town of Schirrhein by motor convoy under the command of Major O'Donnell, (now Lt Col), Battalion Executive Officer, to an assembly area a short distance south of Philippsbourg. Later that morning the Battalion was marched up and deployed on the high ground immediately to the south of Philippsbourg, Lt Howard W. White having assumed command of Company L, and Lt David E. Turner of Company I in the absence of Capt Long who had not been heard from since making his first reconnaissance.

When he appeared at a temporary CP established approximately one mile south of Philippsbourg, Capt Long revealed for the first time his inability to withdraw from the front line position he had reconnoitered because of repeated attacks thrown by the Germans.

About mid-afternoon a VI Corps liason officer contacted the Battalion S-3 and gave him the location of friendly troops on the right and left flanks, and what was expected of the enemy, and issued the order to attack at once.

The Second Battalion of the 275th Infantry had taken up positions near Baerenthal which lies approximately two and one-half miles to the west and on our left, while the First Battalion was held in reserve.

Companies I and K were ordered to move out and contact the enemy to the north of Philippsbourg and Company L was given the mission of making physical contact with the Second Battalion, 275th Infantry.

This was the day for which all the men were trained after many long arduous hours of moulding a man into a combat soldier, skilled in his part he would play individually or as a member of a combat team. No longer was this the attack phase of a Battalion combat firing problem at "Prune Ridge" in the State of Oregon, nor of "Mary's Peak" in the State of Missouri. No, this was it—"the real McCoy".

That night the Bitche-Philippsbourg road was covered by a heavy snowfall that afforded the enemy excellent observation. Down this road tactfully marched Company I followed immediately by Company K.

In the short distance of less than a mile, two columns of men deployed on

either side of the road, suddenly received a barking order: "Halt!"

Maybe it was the soft-spoken "A" in the command, perhaps it was that seventh-sense that causes one to react when they are cautious, but quite probably it was just a plain case of out-guessing "Jerry" on the part of the I Company Commander, Capt William T. Long, who seemingly suspecting an ambush, simultaneously shouted his command, "Hit the dirt!" just ahead of the staccato bark of two German machine guns spraying the road and ditches with deadly cross-fire.

The advantage of that split-second of time enabled the troops to dive into the ditches on either side of the road for some protection from the withering fire. Withdrawing from under the very muzzle of the machine guns to the protection of some woods, the company was reassembled and established a perimeter of defense on a high hill immediately to the rear.

Capt Brown (then Lt), K Company Commander, realizing I Company's situation, dispersed his company in the protective cover of the woods and set up their perimeter of defense on the commanding high ground immediately to the rear of Company I where in the course of the night both companies successfully beat off incessant enemy attacks.

At 0330 both companies received orders from the Battalion Commander to withdraw to Philippsbourg, Company I returning at 0630. Company K was still receiving continued attacks and were unable to return until 1140 when they met I Company on the road who had already received orders to set up a defense on the high ground just north of town. Company K was ordered to push out to the north edge and secure the town, with Company M in direct support.

In the course of the next three days every man in the Battalion was destined for a place in that living hell, where time had no essence and except for the records, seemed like an eternity.

Starting with active engagements with enemy patrols and harrassing shelling, it seemed to be the feeling-out process for the big push to come because of reports of increased enemy activity in towns to the north.

The Germans, having assembled three Infantry Battalions, supported by armor, jumped off in counterattacks repeatedly, all along the front of the Philippsbourg defile. Company L, defending the high ground on the left and to the west of the town were cut off, and after repeated attempts at trying to close the gap, were forced to fight their way back where they established temporary contact with the 2nd Battalion who were on their left flank.

Companies I, K and M were subjected to terrific barrages that were completely blanketing Philippsbourg where the Battalion Command Post was established. Company I, smarting from the sting she had received in the ambush was fighting desperately to stave off the frontal assault in her sector until she was completely encircled and cut off.

Enemy tanks were sighted, moving up the Bitcha road. Our 57-mm anti-Tank guns had taken up secure positions that commanded the Baeranthall-Philippsbourg road junction and in the sudden blasting, fury of hell that roared in with these big guns exchanging blow for blow, the A-T guns were knocked out, but not until they had accounted for two Jerry tanks.

Two Heavy machine gun platoons and a platoon of 81-mm mortars were overrun by the tanks cutting in behind Companies I and L, moving to the edge of Philippsbourg.

By this time, the incessant shelling the Germans had been plastering on the town was steadily taking its tolls, and as the casualties began to mount every available dough was moving up to attempt to halt the enemy, who was advancing into town.

Communication was almost impossible as the shells netted their toll of line as fast as they could be laid. Every available man was used to maintain wire communication for the feverishly working Forward Observers calling artillery fire missions. Perhaps it would last only five, ten, or fifteen minutes, but in the vain hope that it would be just long enough for some effective fire. Company K had moved back and had taken up defense in the town.

There was evidence of the sudden urge in the fighting fury of every man as two American tanks rolled up the road to the south edge of town. This was to be short-

lived however, as the "Jerries" had moved a self-propelled 88 supported by a Mark IV tank, to the north edge of town, taking up position in the street intersection barely 200 yards away.

As the number one tank crawled around the curve leading into town and moved up to where it was just parallel with the Battalion CP, the first shot fired by the 88 drilled it through and through.

The second tank withdrew around the curve as the situation seemed futile since the Germans commanded the street through town. Then occurred two instances as great a showing of sheer guts and courage as was ever displayed.

Out of the burning tank popped one of the occupants who dove headlong for the M Company CP, lying just to the left of the tank. The tank was fast becoming a fire-trap when the space of a few short minutes there appeared a figure of a man, groping, almost feebly for anything for a support with which to lift himself from a vehicle that was fast becoming a death trap because of its full load of ammunition.

With only his head visible from the turret, bobbing and weaving from side to side, and his slow, feeble attempts at trying to withdraw himself from the tank made it obvious that he was badly wounded.

It was seemingly apparent of his consciousness that it was but a matter of minutes before the ammunition would be touched-off. ~~The~~ ^{In} one big, final surge he pulled himself waist-high out of the tank, but he didn't command the strength to draw himself free. One man who had witnessed his desperate plight and vain attempts braved a hail of machine gun and small arms fire to drag him free of the tank and into the Battalion CP. Here ^{he} ~~he~~ reported that the third occupant of the tank was killed outright. The second instance was that of the tankman who had dashed into the M Company CP. seemingly hell-bent on but one mission--that of getting the next best weapon he knew and settling a score with the one that got his buddy. Spotting a bazooka and several rounds of ammunition, he slowly and methodically removed one round from its case, placed it in the bazooka, and made the necessary adjustments. walking coolly to the middle of the street that seemed to be covered by a sheet of

steel from the small arms and machine gun fire and ignoring the pencil-like streaks of tracer ammunition forming a crazy-quilt pattern all around him, he fired point blank from a kneeling position.

Dashing back to the protective cover of the side of the building, he reloaded and took up position for firing again. After repeated attempts of forming a one-man bazooka team he succeeded in his mission-- The score: 10 rounds of Bazooka ammunition; 1 88-mm self-propelled gun.

In a swift succession of events that followed things seemed hopelessly lost for the Third Battalion. The "Jerries" had infiltrated into the northern end of town and were occupying many of the buildings. From the left flank toward the L Company sector masses of enemy were streaming out of the woods on the high ground, fanning out to occupy buildings while some cut across the open ground to set up machine gun positions to our left and rear, practically surrounding the town. A Mark IV tank had moved into the north edge of town blazing away at building after building, finally taking up a position behind one within 50 yards of the Battalion CP.

Then the inevitable seemed to happen. That terrific swishing of heavy shells filled the air, but this time it sounded pretty, if one can call it that. Pretty, yes, because it was ours!

The 275th Cannon Company F O worked feverishly, and had been able to adjust fire. Fire that counted, and began taking its' tolls. The "Jerries" were stopped, briefly, as some elements from the First Battalion were sent down for relief.

The following day the enemy again attacked with armor and infantry, and with such force that to defend Philippsbourg seemed impossible, and once again the situation was critical.

Then with almost the same breath that gave the command, "Prepare to withdraw from the CP," came the order to "Hold Up." There again came the clanging sound of tanks, rolling up the road, and halting momentarily at the south edge of town.

Lt Col Malloy, Executive Officer, 275th Infantry, had just arrived and noting the situation, rallied together the scattered forces, reorganized and commanding

five nearby tanks to join him, he advanced with his forces up the streets of Philippsbourg, cleaning out the town. It was here Lt Col Malloy suffered a broken ankle in the action and had to be evacuated. Philippsbourg had been secured.

Secured? Yes, briefly. As we later learned, while in another sector, the Germans had pushed through there again in the big breakthrough.

Her name cannot be mentioned to any participant without him vividly picturing her lying in the narrow valley, blown to hell in the blow for blow exchange with the enemy. A picture of death and destruction, of wounded and dead that seemed to be strewn everywhere; of numerous heroic deeds of valor; of the place in the heart of every dough that he holds for the Medics in their heroic work of caring for the wounded; of how they worked untold hours, constantly subjecting themselves to fire and shelling without the slightest regard for their own safety; evacuating the wounded; and the streaming hordes of "Jerry" prisoners, SS Troopers, Panzers, Grenadiers, Wehrmacht, and even Luftwaffe—that came in staring, wide-eyed and half crazed, mumbling for mercy and yelling "Neinshutzen." At first it was small groups of a half-dozen^N or so and steadily mounted to upwards of a hundred when their numbers in the Battalion area had mounted until it seemed perilous to have them around.

A defense was set-up for the Philippsbourg defile commanding the high ground on either side, with the Battalion Command Post, located in a sawmill about two miles to the south, and a forward unit operating about mid-way to the town. Then scattered reports began coming in of lost units.

We learned that Company I had set up a perimeter of defense on the high ground just east of town, and had bravely and successfully defended this commanding terrain. Company I had battled their way back, carrying and aiding all of their wounded, and successfully rejoined the Battalion.

When the Battalion assembled at the new area a check of the companies revealed that the Battalion was at approximately half-strength, with I, L, and M Companies being the hardest hit, with many of the casualties resulting from frozen feet and trench foot. Thus was our first week of real combat—our "Baptism of Fire." Quite

a spanking? Yes! But, not until we had kicked hell out of three German Battalions—two from the 59th Volksgrenadier, one 6th SS Mountain Division—and 100 special trained assault troops, and armored units of the 22nd SS Panzer Division.

From this position, the Battalion, less Company L, went into a Regimental Reserve Line until January 10th when they were alerted and moved up to positions on the MLR with L Company. Here the situation remained quite stable, with patrols having frequent brushes with enemy, plus the task of dodging several artillery barrages per day.

On January 13th we changed sectors, having been relieved by the 36th Combat Engineers. We moved by truck convoy to a defense position on the Maginot Line near Woerth, France. The Battalion Command Post was established in Marriensbronn Chateau, situated on the high slopes behind this huge line of fortification.

The stay here was of short duration as that night we were alerted to be ready to move the following morning. This time being relieved by the 103d Infantry Division.

After a convoy trip of approximately 100 miles in near-zero temperatures we arrived at Diebling, France. This produced a drastic change in types of terrain as this was situated in the rolling plains of the Lorraine.

This was a particularly quiet sector, and it afforded the first real opportunity to reorganize and re-equip the Battalion. With the Battalion Command Post located in Diebling, Company L organized and maintained positions in Bushbach, lying approximately five kilometers to the north. Company I went into position around Kadenbronn thus setting up a front of about 2500 yards. Company M supported this defense with HMGs and 81-mm Mortars. Company K was in reserve, and Company K and M maintained their CPs in Diebling.

Reinforcements began coming into the Battalion, and before long they were once again built up to full strength.

Except for extensive patrol action, slight shiftings of boundaries and areas, and occasional mortar and artillery fire on front line positions, the sector remained quiet;

Later, a carefully planned Regimental raid called for Company I to take the town

of Lixing. Company K was given the mission of taking the Brandenbusch Woods, which commanded the high ground across the Saar River, directly west of the city of Grosbliederstroff, and Company L held the MLR.

The two companies jumped off on the early morning raid on the 6th of February, Company K successfully accomplishing their mission with the loss of only two casualties and a score of approximately fifty dead Krauts. Company I met with stubborn resistance, and after sustaining heavy losses was unable to accomplish its' mission.

Later, a shifting of the Regimental sector carried the Battalion over into the vicinity of Nousweiller, where they remained for approximately a week.

It was in the Command Post here, that the carefully planned operations of an attack; vitally important in the Seventh Army operations, were performed. An attack that was to last for seven days, and carry us to the very dragons teeth of the Siegfried Line, and the thickest belt of defense on the whole of the western German border.

At 2200 on February 16th, the Battalion, supported by the 883d Field Artillery Battalion, jumped off in an attack that was coordinated with the whole Seventh Army front. The Brandenbusch Woods was the initial Battalion objective. Encountering only small arms fire and suffering extremely light casualties, Companies I, K, and L pulled up into the Brandenbusch, pushed on, and dug-in.

With the three companies forming a skirmish line they swept through the woods with little difficulty, took several enemy positions, and the rate of casualties suffered was practically nil.

By afternoon of the 18th they had pushed through to the edge of the woods near the town of Etzling, France. After a terrific artillery TOT was laid on the town, companies I and L moved in for the assault, using marching fire. Slight enemy resistance was encountered, but superior fire by our men soon overcame it as they moved into the town in exactly nineteen minutes. In the course of the next half hour it had been secured and outposted. In this action the enemy suffered severe losses in men killed and captured, while our own losses were very light.

Shortly after dawn the following morning, the Germans interrupted a planned attack by throwing in a terrific mortar and artillery barrage followed by a strong counterattack.

This counterattack was supported by self-propelled 88's, and "ack-ack" guns which were used in point-blank fire upon the town.

The previous night the entire Battalion had moved down the established a Command Post in Etzling. Once again every available man was called on to take up positions in the trenches north of town.

Taking advantage of difficult visibility in dawn's early hours, the Germans advanced under a heavy barrage until they seemed to be at the very edge of our own defense positions.

As work passed down the line of trenches that the Krauts were coming the Doughs sprang into action, meeting the "Jerries" hideous yelling attacks with ~~st~~ tremendous blanket of fire as they poured "ack-ack" and 75's, used as flat-trajectory weapons, over the tops of the trenches.

The onslaught was slowed down, and the FO's called for ^{FIRE} ~~the~~ direction, and the first volley's, because of the closeness of the attack, were falling within fifty yards of our own lines. The ^{Excellent} ~~work~~ job performed by the artillery stopped the enemy cold, continuing to cut them to pieces as various concentrations were directed on units observed making tactical withdrawals

On the following morning, February 22nd, a concerted Battalion drive was started for Spicheren heights, a Corps objective, and as we later learned, one for the Germans to hold at all costs. It commanded the high ground overlooking the Lorraine industrial city of Saarbrucken; it was the outer-ring of the Siegfried line; it was the border of Germany.

Company I was to hold the high ground north of Etzling and overlooking Spichern. Companies K and L, supported by Company M, moved east towards Alsting which had been cleared by elements of the First Battalion. From here they pushed north where their objective was to by-pass Spichern in a flanking move through the Gifert-Wald.

The ensuing battle for this important bit of terrain was one of the bitterest, hard-fought engagements encountered by this Battalion. One in which situations changed so fast that at times it seemed as they were in danger of being overrun, one that called for on-the-spot decisions that sometimes seemed almost suicidal; one that saw

comrade after comrade fall under the withering fire; one that saw the seemingly impossible things happen such as catching the "Jerries" buttoned-up in their pillboxes; the one that carried the Battalion to it's objective first!

Companies K and L were soon encountered by strong enemy forces supported by two tanks and one half-track. Our own supporting tanks were unable to move up and engage them because they were out of ammunition. Direct fire was placed upon L Company, K Company having been echeloned to their left rear. Within an hour and a half L Company suffered thirty-six casualties in killed, wounded or missing, including their Company Commander, 1st Lt Howard W. White, and the Battalion Commander, Major John M. Duffie, plus two Company Officers. This left them with only one Officer, Lt James L. Beebe, who took command. Withdrawing to a more favorable defensive position, approximately 300 yards away, they held their ground and began ^{digging} ~~digging~~ in.

Company K was having her trouble too, being subjected to heavy shelling and fire. One of the rounds wounded the radio operator, and knocked out the radio. Rallying himself until he made repairs, he called and made contact with Company L, who reported they were being overrun and wanted artillery fire. Two batteries were fired.

The situation for L Company seemed hopelessly lost as the K Company Commander called for one round of smoke and adjusted artillery, and both units were attempting a withdrawal for a better defense.

At this point the order was given to hold the ground at all costs, and the Battalion S-3, Capt Garnet W. Oliver, who was with Company K, began adjusting and plotting defensive fires, as the Artillery FO's radios of both units had been knocked out by enemy shells.

As the situation seemed to grow worse by the minute, it was decided to join the remnants of Company L with K. A call for anti-mechanized ammunition and weapons was sent when the enemy attacked with tanks. Firing and refiring of the prepared concentrations stemmed the tide of the Germans and a withdrawal was made to a more favorable position.

Company I, commanding the ground south of Spichern called for artillery, and after a TOT barrage that pounded the town unmercifully, at approximately 1400, a

patrol of 7 men led by 1st Lt Joseph K. Donahue (now Capt), and 1st Lt Moeller (now Battalion 3-1), walked in and took over the town, capturing twenty-five prisoners, including some wounded and medics from the enemy's aid station. Some of the Krauts had occupied a church steeple for observation, but the result of six direct hits of artillery proved to be enough for them.

After cleaning out the town, they returned to their Company and suggested a holding force for the town, but a relief was effectuated, and they were pulled back for hot chow and a little rest. The town was later occupied by the relieving unit.

During the night an estimated enemy force of about 200 men launched an attack in the K and L Sector, moving in under a heavy barrage that fell about 100 yards short. Fire was adjusted for supporting artillery and a terrific barrage was concentrated upon them. They suffered heavy casualties and what few "Jerries" that managed to survive this were either killed by small arms fire or fled toward their lines. The Battalion CP moved to Spichern the night of 21 February.

On the morning of February 21, the day the Battalion reached its objective, Company I moved out in the direction northeast from Alsting to form a juncture with K and L who had been given the plan of attack for that day.

After a fifteen minute artillery TOT the companies moved out towards the final objective, the Pfaffenwald. Supporting tanks were wheeled up and anti-tank guns took new positions. At this point the Battalion strength was only about one-third.

Companies I, K, and L formed a skirmish line for the attack, the K Company Commander adjusting the artillery fire. He called for smoke to provide protection for the clearing between the two wooded sections but it proved ineffective. With hardly brief hesitation they bounded across the open space into a part of the woods that held a series of fortified positions.

Frequent artillery concentrations, point blank fire at pillboxes, and an attack that came off so fast, caught the "Jerries" buttoned-up. Sometimes it was a case of moving so fast that a quiet, inactive emplacement would later be found full of "Jerries" wanting to come out but knowing not what to do. This was the outpost line

of resistance for the Siegfried line—the impregnable defense—our objective and we commanded it.

It was hallowed ground for the Germans. Near a large pillbox a wooden plaque bore the inscription "Here Stood Adolf Hitler, Christmas 1939."

It has been revealed that when hostilities began between France and Germany, Nazi troops pushed over this area to occupy the high ground just north of Spichern just over the French border. Here Hitler made his only appearance on the Lorraine front, taking advantage of the "phony war" to make an inspection of German troops there. Nazi propagandists whipped up the incident, consecrating the ground and organizing pilgrimages of their own to the spot where Hitler stood, viewing the land he was soon to conquer.

But today a new path leads past that plaque. It leads over the border that hadn't been crossed by any troops since 1815. It isn't hallowed anymore. It was just a corner of woods to be fought over, fiercely for a while, then forgotten.

These positions commanded the heights overlooking Saarbrücken—the "Queen City" of the Saar basin. We now occupied land within Germany.

The following two days were spent improving positions of defense all along these heights and carrying on extensive patrol action. Spichern was subjected to heavy shellings and at one time forced the Battalion CP to move to a more secure position.

Until the 21 March plans and operations were carefully prepared for the assault into Saarbrücken. The 63rd Division on our right was pushing up along the Saar River. Elements of the Third Army were stabbing down from the west throwing her in a pincers and on that day the full scale attack jumped off and rolled in to take Saarbrücken without a shot being fired.

This proved to be the last bit of action for the Battalion as the vast pincers had closed on the Germans and they were fast leaving the Saar area. Since this time we have been moving about fulfilling assignments of occupation and guarding.

Moving from Saarbrücken the 25 March we were assigned the following German areas: Zieselberg, 25 March; Monsheim, 1 April; Coblenz, 6 April; Frankfurt, 14 April;

(it was here at Frankfurt A/M that we guarded a sector that was to be occupied by Gen. Eisenhower and used as SHAEF for headquarters); Bad Nauheim, 3 May; and lastly the town of Hofheim in the Bad Ems sector, our present assignment.

Written and Submitted by:

S/Sgt Robert W. Roti and

Sgt Gaylord L. Reaser

KILLED IN ACTION
-Company I-

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>
Fulcher Lee Roy G	S/Sgt
Soheigh Carl A	S/Sgt
Enochs John	T/Sgt
Clark Louis A Sr	Sgt
Erker Bill L	Pfc
Shaffer, Clifford L	S/Sgt
Wietrzychowski, Jos A	Pfc
Brady, Thos F	Tec 5
Gelbke, Wm E.	Pfc
Chrusciel, Victor	Pvt
Harrison, Jos J	Pvt
Soderlind, Wm H	Bvt
Stenulson, Irwin M	Pvt
Garrett, Guy W	Pvt
Strandberg, Geo F	Pvt
Swagel, Jos A	Pvt
Taskey, Irving R	Pvt
Golden, Edmond E	Pvt
Stallings, Jas H	Pvt
West, Durward L	Pvt
Hagley, Shelby	Pvt
Pool, Thos M Jr	Pvt
McLeron, Robert R	Tec 5
Boeve, Håmer E	Pfc
Neller, Virgil E	Pfc
Williams, Lindsay B Jr	Pfc
Dailey, Theodore R	S/Sgt
Simard, Rosario A	Pfc

-Company K-

Reardon, John H Jr	Pfc
Buncic, Geo J	Tec 4 (Med Det)
Epstein, Irwin	Pfc (med Det)
Peterson, Elmer T	T/Sgt
Crain, Rice E	Sgt
Schoen, Leonard W	Pfc
Sanchez, Rafael	Pfc
Schlichting, Clarence C	Pfc
Papke, Walter	Pfc
Larrabee, Paul	Pfc
Kale, Chas F	Sgt

KILLED IN ACTION

-Company L-

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>
White, Howard W	1st Lt
Chesser, Wm E	2nd Lt
Gidley, Jas D	Sgt
Johnson, Ernest D	Sgt
Steinle, Carl D	Sgt
Dews, Buford L	Pfc
Hendon, Wm H (Herndon)	Pfc
Loth, Loren H	Sgt
Marrriott, Dorsey C	Pfc
Norris, Jack M	Pfc
O'Barr, Donald R	Pfc
Oliver, Earl E Jr	Pfc
White, Robert B	Pfc
Nicholas, Wm	Pvt
Scoville, Donald A	Pfc
Hamlin, Leo E	Pvt
Adams, Albert J	Pvt
Bland, Paul E	Pvt
Freeman, Robert D	Pvt
Einhorn, Irving	Pvt
Simons, Edric A	Sgt

-Company M-

Zahora, Wm	2nd Lt
Loeffler, Dale E	Pfc
Kulaca, Wm C	Pfc

-HQ CO 3rd BN-

Menendez, Alfredo O	Pfc
Viqueire, Claudio R	Pvt

- SILVER STAR -

<u>RANK</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>DATE AWARDED</u>	<u>COMPANY</u>
2nd Lt.	Brons, Bernard (MIA)	28 Feb '45	K
PFC	Schoen, Leonard W. (posthum)	28 Feb '45	K
PFC	Middleton, Willard	28 Feb '45	K
Capt.	Donahue, Jos K.	5 Mar '45	I
Sgt	McDowell, Marion G.	16 Mar '45	L
1st Lt.	Heck, Theodore G.	17 Mar '45	K
Sgt	Rankin, John F.	17 Mar '45	L
S/Sgt	Fulcher, Le Roy G. (posthum)	23 Mar '45	I
Pvt	Ulrich, Alfred G.	23 Mar '45	I
S/Sgt	Maynard, Charles E.	28 Mar '45	K
PFC	Wandling, Ernest J.	12 Apr '45	K
S/Sgt	Fletcher, Kenneth A.	21 Apr '45	K
Sgt	Hutchinson, John V.	12 Apr '45	L
PFC	Huffman, Donald F.	12 Apr '45	L
S/Sgt	Hendrick, Harry R. Jr.	30 Apr '45	K
S/Sgt	Koerbar, John S.	2 May '45	K
1st Lt.	White, Howard W. (Posthum)	Unknown	L

- Bronze Star -

Capt.	Long, William T.	25 Jan '45	K (Then
S/Sgt	Kashevaroff, Jack	10 Feb '45	K
PFC	Whitely, Kenneth E. Jr.	10 Feb '45	K
Sgt	Hicks, Jewel V.	14 Feb '45	K
2nd Lt.	Fischer, Edward J.	20 Feb '45	K
2nd Lt.	Yanechko, Zigmund C.	20 Feb '45	K
T/Sgt	Haase, William F. Jr.	20 Feb '45	K
T/Sgt	Porter, Charles	20 Feb '45	K
Sgt	Hall, Harold B.	20 Feb '45	K
PFC	Walters, Hiram C.	20 Feb '45	K
Sgt	West, Henry C.	20 Feb '45	K
T/5	McCoy, James R.	20 Feb '45	I
T/3	Kenyon, William W. (Med. Det.)	20 Feb '45	K
T/4	Buncic, George J. (Posthum Med)	5 Mar '45	K
S/sgt	Franklin, Jim C.	11 Mar '45	K
Capt.	Brown, Florentine J.	17 Mar '45	K
PFC	Epstein, Irwin (Posthum Med.)	23 Mar '45	K
T/sgt	Shirley, Harvey	23 Mar '45	I
T/Sgt	Skeen, John V.	23 Mar '45	I
T/Sgt	Field, David	23 Mar '45	I
S/Sgt	Meraz, Delfino	23 Mar '45	I
S/Sgt	Velenzuela, J. Y.	23 Mar '45	I
S/Sgt	Shaffer, Cliff L. (Posthum)	23 Mar '45	I
Sgt	Chesna, Julius	23 Mar '45	I
Sgt	Stender, C. F.	23 Mar '45	I
Sgt	Mc Keen, E. W.	23 Mar '45	I
T/5	Ceier, William	23 Mar '45	I
PFC	Swagel, Jos. A. (Posthum)	23 Mar '45	I
PFC	Reed, J. L.	23 Mar '45	I
PFC	Worce, Donald M.	23 Mar '45	T
Cpl	Blankenship, James	30 Jan '45	M
PFC	Durrett, Robert L.	20 Mar '45	N
PFC	Kelley, R. D.	30 Mar '45	I
S/Sgt	Dye, William C.	16 Apr '45	K
Sgt	Mc Lees, John D.	16 Apr '45	K
T/5	Cherry, Joe W.	23 Apr '45	K
S/Sgt	Holand, Owen W.	24 May '45	K

- COMBAT AWARDS - (Continued)
- BRONZE STAR -

<u>RANK</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>DATE AWARDED</u>	<u>COMPANY</u>
Sgt	Pierson, Claude G.	24 May '45	K
Capt	Branford, Cecil F.	11 June '45	K
1st Lt.	Moeller, Edward W. Jr.	Unknown	Hq
Sgt	Spradling, Clinton G.	Unknown	Hq
T/4	Meyers, Robert W.	Unknown	Hq
PFC	Hunter, John G. Jr.	Unknown	Hq
S/Sgt	Blessington, John J.	17 July '45	Hq
S/Sgt	Roti, Robert W.	17 July '45	Hq

- BRITISH MILITARY CROSS -

Capt	Donahaue, Jos K.	April '45	I
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Listed below are the number of men in each of the respective Companies of the 3rd Battalion, 275th Infantry Regiment, that have been awarded the Purple Heart for wounds received in action against the enemy while gallantly fighting with this organization.

<u>COMPANY</u>	<u>NUMBER AWARDED</u>	<u>OAK-LEAF CLUSTERS</u>
I	86	3
K	49	1
L	44	1
M	18	1
Hq	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN