

Winter Campaign

A history of Company I
of the 274th Regiment of the
70th Infantry Division from
17 Nov 44 until 25 March 45

Written by

Sgt. Dan Yarus

Pvt. Kevin Corrigan

Sgt. Robert Bailey

Pfc. Raymond Cearly

Pfc. Myron Murray

Supervised by

Lt. William Sullivan

Foreword

This book doesn't attempt to give the whole story of the Winter Campaign on the Western Front. It doesn't even give the whole story of one company. However, we hope it includes the main points of the period it covers and gives the reader some idea of the spirit of the men who did the fighting and the dying.

It covers from 17 Nov. 44 when we left Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri until we went off the line at Quiershied in the Saar Basin on 25 March 45.

There was an extreme shortage of Infantrymen at the time we left the States and to make up for this some Divisions such as the 42nd, 63rd, and 70th sent their Infantry regiments overseas first. In the case of our Regiment after we dropped our shipping no. (1508-F) we became known as Task Force Herren. In Jan 45, the field artillery and other units of the Division followed us over and in February we once again operated as a full Division and our combat team was again made up of the 274th and 882nd Field Artillery. We also dropped our tempory APO no. 17814 and used 461 as we had in the States.

At the time we entered combat in Alsace Lorraine Herr Himmler had a dream of a reconquest of Alsace and Lorraine with a great ff offensive.

Due to the situation in the Belgian Bulge to the North and conditions on the Eastern Front it became impossible for this grand offensive to take on the proportions Himmler had hoped for. However, constant pressure was maintained against us in the snow covered Vosges and until February we were on the defensive in this sector.

During most of our time as Task Force Herren we were with the Sixth Corps consisting of the famed 3rd, 36th, and 45th Divisions. We fought side by side with them and used their artillery.

Many of the towns we were in, such as Bischweiler, Herrlesheim and of course Niederbronn were later over-run.

Much of our movement in the early stages was made necessary by units to our flanks giving way to German tank-supported infantry and the consequent necessity to shorten our lines.

The next phase of Item Company's combat will no doubt take place in the Orient. We hope to print that story in Japan as we did this one in Germany

The AUTHORS

Phase One

Into the Unknown

The band was playing its last piece now, and the company was still standing by the side of the road. Across the street the Second Battalion area was deserted. The first two Battalions had already left and the Third was next to go.

The afternoon before the whole Regiment had been addressed by the Divisional Commander, Gen. Barnett, also by Gen. Herren, and Col. Conley, the Regimental Commander. We were told that the 274th was the vanguard of the Division and Gen. Herren, the Assistant C. G. of the Division was to command us.

It was quite dark when the band finished the "serenade", then they marched away. We turned back to the company area and the fires we had built. It was the middle of November and turning cold. We had cleaned the barracks in the afternoon and were waiting around in the company area to leave. We were split up into train car groups and each group was assigned a car commander.

Ist Sgt. Joe Kiefer then called the roll and we marched off to area "C" which was next to Service Club number 4. We had completed the first leg of our hop overseas. We piled our duffle bags here and had until 2330hrs. before our train pulled out for points East. No one was supposed to know our destination but most of us were pretty sure that we were going to Boston, Massachusetts. We had three hours to kill so my buddy and I decided on going to the movies. The rest of the men either went to the show or to the Service Club. We stopped off at the Service Club for a coke and found most of the company lined up waiting to get a snack. Later I found out that Capt. Edwin B. Keith, our company commander paid the entire bill for what the men ordered. That was typical of the things he did for the company. The movie we saw was "Laura," with Ella Raines. At about 2345hrs. the trucks rolled up to where the duffle bags were and we were counted off and entrucked. After a short trip we arrived at the railhead where the train was already waiting. When we were all loaded on, we were given instructions as to what we could and couldn't do, and buddied up six men to a compartment. After finally getting situated we climbed into our bunks, and the train

slowly pulled out of Fort Leonard Wood. As I lay up there in my bunk I began to think Ft. Wood wasn't too bad after all, despite the long hikes in the blazing sun and of the bivouacs in the rain. The train was now silent, each man in his bunk alone with his thoughts. The whistle blew and that's all I remember.

The next morning about 0700 hours when I awoke I discovered that all the further we we had got during the night was St. Louis. We rambled onward through valleys and cities looking at the country side and taking in as much as possible. We crossed the mighty Mississippi and rolled on through Southern Illinois. In our particular compartment were Pvts. Gamble, Homer, Johnson, and Kesterson. We were guessing at our probable route the East coast. After passing through Springfield, ILL. We stopped at Bloomington and it looked like the boys were right when they said we'd hit Chicago. We got off at Bloomington and double timed around the block and back to the station. Half the town turned out to watch us. Some waved handkerchiefs at us while others threw kisses and the gang yelled and howled like a bunch of kids. At the station we had coffee and doughnuts. We entrained and continued North until we hit Chicago. We stopped off at the stock yards and sat there for five hours waiting to get going again. We figured they were waiting for an open track or a new engine. The guys who hailed from Chicago almost went AWOL. Here they were in their own home town and they couldn't even make a phone call. It was hard to take, but T. S. It was about 1700 hours when we finally pulled out of Chicago. We crossed Northern Indiana and Ohio and when we got up the next morning we were in Buffalo, N. Y. We didn't get to see much of Buffalo, because of the thick smoke that blanketed the city. It seemed that every fair sized city we hit there was always someone who hailed from there. From Buffalo we turned South and traveled through Western N. Y. state and stopped off at Bath, N. Y. and took another one of those fast marches. It was a beautiful town and typical upper N. Y. State with the village green and white churches. The whole town turned out again to watch us. We kept going South until we pulled into Elmira. It was here that Lt. Mester was stricken with acute appendicitis. He was taken off the train and rushed to the hospital. We haven't heard from him since. We didn't realize then he was to be the first of many we were never to hear of again. From Elmira we turned East and traveled through Albaney and then into Camp Myles Standish. We arrived there about 0030 hours on 20 Nov. 45.

Before we had detrained there was a loud speaker blaring outside. It was a very impersonal voice and seemed to mean business. When we got onto the platform it was dark and the lights seemed to hang in air, and the loud speaker's voice seemed to come from all directions. "You are now at the staging area of the Boston Port. You are at a secret address. You will write no letters, make no telephone calls or send no telegrams until you are so instructed. Officers! You will send all TAT

equipment directly to the Port Transportation Officer." He went on with other instructions and we all prepared to start up a gangplank at that very moment.

However, when the voice finished with us we marched about a mile to our barracks. They were dirty and crowded, and were sad in comparison to Ft. Wood. But we figured (and rightly) that from now on living quarters were going to get progressively worse, so with only the usual amount of bitching we got our blankets out and went to sleep.

Our time at Myles Standish was always filled up doing something. We were issued shoe pacs and other items of winter clothing. Rumors were thick and with winter clothing came the rumor that we were going to invade Norway.

We were explained censorship, instructed in how to abandon ship, told what to do if we were captured, and were prepared in every way for the crossing and given a few combat tips for good measure. If we weren't seeing a Training Film we were getting shots. Everyone was busy trying to tell where we were despite censorship, and the censors were kept busy taking out references to "Cape Cod Architecture," and "you know what kind of Baked beans."

We had a pretty sad Thanksgiving Dinner off tin trays. At night there were movies to go to, but the mile long lines discouraged most of us. After we had been there a while we were given passes to Boston. At Myles Standish we ceased to be the 274th Infantry and became 1508-F. We watched the 76th Division pull out and knew we would be next. Then on the night of the 29th we lined up outside our barracks and our helmets were chalked with our group shipping number. I'll never forget the sound of the chalk grinding against my steel helmet. It seemed to break all my ties with everything that had gone before.

The next day in a driving rain we lined up, then boarded the train that was to take us to the dock. It was about a two hour ride. As we passed factories on the way the girls waved at us and that seemed to make it all the worse. George Manuel was up at the window clawing at it and drooling at the mouth. Lord knows what the girls thought. After our last close look at America we pulled onto the pier. We were rather disappointed to find a band sitting down when we detrained. They played popular tunes which didn't seem to fit the occasion either.

Once we were detrained at the docks things began to work with machine-like precision. We were all lined up according to the white chalk number on our helmets. The band played swing music while some old Red Cross bag passed out some cold bitter coffee and stale doughnuts. Some John on limited service called us off by group first, and then each individual name as we walked onto the gangplank. I don't know where all the girls were who were supposed to kiss us goodbye like you see in the movies, but we went on board without them. The band played while Joe Previti walked up the gangplank to be first man on board. I could

already see visions of hundreds of submarines all around our ship and then me trying to out swim a whale. Once on board ship we wound up stairs and through long corridors. It wasn't long before we were completely and thoroughly confused, however, we were soon shown our quarters consisting of canvas cots strung from the floor to the ceiling on "B" deck below the Promenade deck. After picking our bunks we made as much room in the isle as possible, but what with duffle bags and coats to hang on a water pipe there was but a few scant feet between bunk and Bulkhead. We watched while the rest of the Regiment and the TAT equipment was being loaded on board. We had late chow that night and then went to bed with thoughts of how we would be at sea by morning.

The next morning, however, we were still securley tied to the pier. We were all up early and as we saw that we were still in the harbor, we began wondering when we would sail. About 0830 hours the ship stirred and slowly started to move away from the dock. It became quite windy when we got out into the harbor and headed for the high seas.

It was the first of December and we were all expecting the worst for a North Atlantic crossing. That is, if we did cross the North Atlantic. The second day out it was still rough and windy with an overcast sky, but the third day broke clear and calm. The sun was a welcome sight, and from the deep blue water and the sponge gliding by we realized we were in the Gulf Stream.

The first day out of Boston we had had a destroyer escort, but this had left us during the night and we were now cutting through the blue water unescorted. Once at sea I don't think anyone was much afraid of submarines.

After being at sea for a couple of days we began to find our way around our new home and learn some things about our ship. At the forward end of "B" deck was a nameplate and the date when it was built. Built at Quincy Massachusetts in 1932 the S. S. Mariposa had been a luxury liner in the Matson Line Fleet. The crew members who were now either in the Merchant Marine or were Navy gunners told us of how beautiful she was in peace time, but now that the Military was using it, it was converted to a troop carrier. On "A" deck was a beautiful large dance floor with a stand for a band. The chandeliers and fixtures were really beautiful and in peace time it must have been very pleasant. One cook remarked how she used to haul from 600 to 800 people during her pleasure cruises and now she was loaded down with nearly 3000 besides her large crew. All of our days at sea were nice, although the wind was high at times. Boys on the forward deck would sometimes catch an ice cold salt spray when she would dig into an extra large wave. Every other day we would have an fire drill and every hand must be on deck for this. Some had K.P. while on board for being caught smoking in quarters. It was only allowed on deck. The kitchen was very large and even had its own bakery and butcher shop. Our dining room

was also very large and it could be seen that it had been elaborate at one time. We had to stand to eat to make room to feed so many men at one time. The decks were lettered from A to E. The mess hall being below on "E" deck we would go to chow according to decks starting at "A" and coming down for two meals a day. The loud speaker system announced when the mess hall was ready for each deck in turn.

A card with our deck letter had to be tied to our shirt front so no one man could eat twice or with another deck. We wore our life jackets at all times. At four bells each afternoon we had to black out our section of the deck and turn on dim blue lights that made our hole look like a dungeon. Anyone wanting to read or write would have to go out into the halls which were always so crowded we had to step over a man every other step to get to the rear of the ship or go out on deck. We stood out on deck most nights until quite late and a few times even took out blankets and stayed out all night.

On the morning of the eighth day a pair of destroyers came out to meet us and made several large circles around us and signaled us until identification was certain. We watched the Navy men work on the blinker signal and marveled at how rapidly they could receive and send.

One destroyer left us after awhile and the other took the lead. I guess every passenger on board was on deck to watch until they had seen all they wanted and then went below again. We sighted land that afternoon. We could see land on either side of us. Spain on our left and Africa to our right. Any one who hadn't come out before, did now. Each one trying to see all he could through the crowd that lined every inch of the rail.

A Consolidated Liberator also came out to meet us and circled around us several times, staying out of gun range until signals were exchanged and each was certain of the other's identification.

Once a French two place observation plane came and roared over us and we could see the rear observer half standing in his cockpit waving wildly at us and we did the same in return.

With the destroyer in the lead we could soon plainly see the Rock of Gibraltar. Like everyone who had gone through the straits we looked for the Prudential Insurance Company's sign. Some picked up ancient chateaus along the hill sides and pictured themselves sunning on shore with some nice French girl drinking champagne. While entering the Mediterranean we watched the water change from blue to green as we began to see other ships on the water close to us. We passed a Spanish freighter and one small fishing boat close enough for us to wave. We sailed all that night and came into the port of Marseille in the morning. Here we anchored and waited to disembark all day. We had plenty of time to look over the smashed docks and sunken ships whose dead smoke stacks barely stuck out of the water. Finally late in the afternoon the ship pulled into the docks and while the lower decks unloaded

amidst the ruins, we threw things to civilian laborers who would all run and grab at once nearly coming several times, to grips over a cigarette or a piece of candy. Once the lower decks were cleared, those of us up top began to move slowly down the long hallways, each man dragging his duffle bag along behind him. Finally banging it down the stairs we shouldered them at the doorway to the gang plank and moved out into a covered over space of ground like a ware house. We dropped our bags here and moved about 2 miles down to the edge of town to a large parking lot. We waited by an enclosure full of men who we were told were German prisoners and we weren't to bother them for fear of hurting them or arousing their anger — we were told by a platoon leader:

We waited by the enclosure for some two hours while the trucks took one load of men away. Some Anti-Aircraft guns went off while we waited and we wondered if they were shooting at an enemy plane although we couldn't hear any. Finally the trucks returned and we were sorted out and piled in standing up, because all the space was needed. We had a hell of a cold ride and it was on this ride I began to understand why I'd taken out ten grand worth of insurance. I wondered how long it would be before my wife began to receive payment after our truck crashed.

We were taken to a large plateau known as CP-2. It was dark but some put up tents and went to sleep on the hardest ground I've ever lost a night's sleep on. Those were unfortunate who didn't pitch a tent because it rained pretty hard during the night. The next day we put up our tents in an orderly fashion and learned that also at the same staging area were the 63rd and 42nd Divisions. The 100th had left sometime before. During the days that followed we trained and sweated and got rained on, wrote letters, ate, and slept. Once we went on a sight seeing tour to a nearby town. Some boys went A. W. O. Loose to Marseille a few times to see if they could find if all the stories they had heard about the abundance of women who were so friendly for so little money were true. (They were)

After 10 days at CP-2 on the evening of 21 December we struck our tents and prepared to leave at midnight. We entrucked on schedule and went to a deserted railroad siding a few miles away. We were then divided into groups of about 25 which were each assigned freight cars. By the time all the men and their duffle bags were aboard there wasn't an extra inch of room. We weren't too put out about the crowded conditions as it made it a little warmer. The next day most of the cars equipped themselves with a make-shift stove. In our car we cut a five gallon gasoline can in half and used one half as the base and the other half as the stove proper.

We were very fortunate and found a pipe by the side of the tracks that fit the can perfectly. We hacked a hole in the roof for the pipe and we were in business. We got coal from passing trains. We had been

issued mountain cook stoves, and between these and our central heating units we had all our 10 in 1 rations hot. Relieving ourselves was accomplished by hanging out the door on the move and ye olde squat by the tracks when we were stopped.

We traveled North from Marseille through Avignon, Valence Lyon, Dijon, and Epinal. All along the route there was beaucoup German equipment that had been knocked out by the sweep of the 7th Army, when the Infantry had to use moving vans and anything they could to keep up with the retreating Germans. There was a solid trail of K ration boxes along the tracks where others had gone before us. However, on the third day the knocked out equipment in such quantity and the old ration trail began to thin out. Early in the afternoon of the 24th we got to Sarrebourg. It had been only recently captured by the 26th Division and we knew we couldn't go much farther.

There was some doubt as to whether it would be advisable to take the train any closer to the front. After some delay we left for Brumath in Alsace which was as far as the tracks had been repaired and as far as any trains could run. It was dusk when our train ride came to an end.

Phase Two

Initiation To Combat

It was about 1930 hours then we detrained at Brumath, France after traveling about 500 miles in one of the famous forty and eight box cars, many of which our fathers used before us. I must admit that we were all pretty petered out and our morale wasn't any to good. We lined up next to the train with our duffle bags and waited for the next thing to happen. Capt. Keith, our CO, came over and told all the platoon leaders and sergeants to pass the information down to the men as to what we were to do and what was in store for us. We were warned that the enemy lines were not far away and that we were in range of enemy artillery fire. That didn't mean much to us then and I assure you if we knew then what we know now about artillery we would have been more careful, and perhaps not have lit so many cigarettes. After standing around for an hour or so we started off to our destination on foot. We didn't mind the walking too much, because we were told we would have a roof over our heads that night, after sleeping in pup tents for two weeks at CP2 that was something. We hiked through the small blacked out town of Brumath as darkness approached. We could see the French Flags hanging from the buildings and the people peering out of the windows at us. There was certain scent of mystery in the night air. Most of us were wearing our overcoats because of the cold nights in the box car, and all of us had on our full field packs. We cleared the town and started out into the open country following a hard dirt road. We had our ten yards interval just like we learned back in basic training. Here it was Christmas Eve, the night that everyone wants to be home with his loved ones sitting around the fire making pop corn or something, and what were doing, hiking with a full field pack and overcoat-destination unknown. Occasionally there was a flare shot off in the sky to our front and then a thunder of guns in the distance. It was a beautiful night and the moon hung in the sky like a huge light. The air was damp with coldness as we approached the next village. In almost no time we were in it and it was just like the last town. Flags on the buildings and people in the windows talking with one another in low voices. In about five minutes we were on the open road again. After a short while we took a break. Some of the men took off their overcoats

and others just bitched like mad. Then someone remarked, "I guess those poor bastards up there are catching hell."

Someone else answered, "Don't worry too much about those poor bastards; you'll be one of them pretty soon."

We started out again in what seemed like a couple of minutes. A bunch of the men started to lag behind and it looked like before we arrived at our destination half the company would be falling out. Soon Arthur O'Rourke fell out. There were rumors that German Paratroopers had landed in the area that night. As O'Rourke couldn't be found we all felt sure the Germans had picked him up and taken him back across the river as an Intelligence prisoner. There wasn't any conversation except maybe a little swearing now and then. It seemed like we would never get to where we were going. We passed forests and the fellas around us wished we would stop and bivouac there, because we were ready to give out. We passed a couple of graves where some dead Germans had been buried. About forty-five minutes later we entered another town and we thought that at last we had reached our destination. We entered the town and took another break. We layed right down in the streets too tired to move another inch. We layed there for a couple of minutes and some of the fellas were sound asleep. Laying there all sweated up made goose pimples come out all over me as I felt the cold night air creeping over me. In ten minutes we were up and on our way again and in a short time we entered the town of Bischweiler, our destination.

We then moved to our quarters, which turned out to be a slightly damaged, but still recognizable court house. The rooms were in fair shape and they had all been swept clear of rubble, but we were too tired to either notice or care. In an incredibly short time we were all asleep and I don't think there was ever a single, mumbled, "Merry Christmas!"

The next morning we busied ourselves opening our presents, variously marked "First half, Rations Ten in One, Menu No. Four" and so on. After breakfast we eagerly waited around for Christmas Dinner which was to consist of "one canned Egg Unit" per man and one Partial Dinner Unit. It was a far fling from roast duck or turkey, but it was something to eat. A real Christmas spirit was injected by a little six year old girl who for candy and sugar sang, "Oh Tannenbaum" for us. She was so cute we bridged her to sing more, so she did a fine job of "Lili Marlen." The best and most lusty of all were her renditions of "Die Horst-Wessel-Lied" (The brownshirts Marching Song) and "Deutschland über alles".

That afternoon we wandered about the town feeling quite like something out of newsreels with our rifles and helmets in these strange surroundings. But after we found the local beer joint we began to feel and less strange.

It was here in Bischweiler — we couldn't remember that name at first — that we got our first ammo.

The supply and kitchen elements had come from Marseille by truck convoy, so the first couple of days was a welter of confusion getting everything organized.

When we got that first ammo and it was black tipped AP (armor piercing) we realized it was for the "real thing." There was a kind of a thrill in the realization that the days of dry runs and some officer having to say, "the situation is now tactical", were over. Along with the thrill there was as certain apprehension; the unknown. We didn't know what was in store for us, but we did know those shiny, new bullets were given to us to kill men.

After two days the company moved to Herrlesheim near the Rhine, however a guard consisting of about a squad from both the First and Second Platoons was left to guard the Service Company at the railroad station. S/Sgt. Bob Basgall was in charge Sgt. Joe Kennison was his assistant. The Second Platoon was represented by the greater part of its famous third squad of which Basgall was at that time assistant. George Manuel and Amby Marengi were scouts, so to them fell the task of finding food. But they also received the able assistance of "Polack" Krasinsky. First a box of rations was "found" and then the Regimental ration breakdown on the station platform presented green pastures. If eggs were needed then two would be taken from each company (except of course "I") tooth paste from "B", shaving cream from "L" and so on. However Service Company left but the guard stayed. It then turned to the generosity of Mess Sgt. Joe Previti's Kitchen which had remained in Bischweiler.

Finally someone realized there was a guard left in Bischweiler guarding a service company that was no longer there, so after two days the lost guard was sent to Herrlesheim with the rest of the Company.

Herrlesheim was a beautiful little town of about fifteen hundred people situated three kilometers from the west bank of the Rhine. The people were very friendly and were glad the Americans had come. The Company was spread out over two blocks, but we had communication with them over sound power phones. We arrived at midnight in Herrlesheim and we were taken to our quarters by Sgt. Jensen, who came up earlier as a quartering party. Everything went smoothly and in about twenty-five minutes the entire company was in houses. The next morning when I awoke I found Capt. Keith, Lt. Doane (Ex. O.) and S/Sgt. Farmer dishing out chow, which consisted mostly of "ten in ones". It seemed funny to see the Company staff dishing out chow and we kidded them about it constantly.

December twenty-eighth marked the beginning for Item Company of a new type of exotic life. At last, the fiends who had opened barracks windows wide during a gale in the States could now be satisfied, for foxholes offered them unlimited quantities of fresh air. The next day Lt. William Beck, platoon leader of the Second Platoon sent two squads up on the line to fill a mile and a half gap between front line

units. We dug in along a road just a few hundred yards on the French side of the Rhine River. For the six hours that we spent up there in fox-holes, which seemed like ages, the things that stand clearest in my mind were the bitter cold and the uncertainty as to what our future held. It was just getting dark when we saw Lt. Harold Wilson, platoon leader of the Third Platoon, coming up with two of his squads to relieve us.

T/Sgt. Harold Schindler recalling his first night on the Rhine said: "Mines and trip flares were scattered over the ground to our front. Many flares went off supposedly by rabbits tripping the wires. A German pillbox, which was near a mined bridge, was to our left front, two-hundred yards out alongside of a road. A full moon was out and we could see hundreds of yards — like daylight — almost. I saw a rabbit on my first watch. Our artillery was intermittently firing across the Rhine."

Our job was to keep enemy patrols from coming across, to locate our heavy weapons and troop movements. None came through or near us.

On one watch an enemy plane came from our lines somewhere in the rear and received an enormous amount of fire from our Anti-Aircraft guns, and from many heavy machine guns all along the front line as it was traveling parallel to the line. The plane's motor sounded very different from any of our own types. Many flares were fired to illuminate the plane for the gunners.

After midnight a British Beaufighter zoomed just overhead, possibly two hundred yards off the ground. It blinked its recognition lights and headed for the German lines across the river.

In the pill-box which was constructed of two feet of concrete, a layer of old R R rails and another three feet of concrete, a Capt. and a T/Sgt. from another outfit were seriously injured when a booby trap went off as they entered the pill-box. The Sgt. lost the sight of one eye on this particular episode. The next day the company was alerted and we loaded on 2½ ton trucks and returned to the town of Bischweiler.

The company soon settled down. Upstairs the weapons boys, as was their usual custom, were shaving each other and washing their "unmentionables". Meanwhile, downstairs the famous third squad of the Second Platoon, then led by S/Sgt. Lee F. Mudd, was busy nailing down its blankets to ensure being covered all night and to discourage the boys who were making up their blanket shortages. The next morning the company was alerted and moved by vehicle to the town of Stattmetten which was located ten miles north of Herrlesheim on the Rhine. The Third Platoon was on the left in the vicinity of Fort Lewis the First Platoon occupied the right flank position outside of Stattmetten, while the Second Platoon held the center of the line for about one day until they were pulled back into battalion reserve at Soufflenheim about eight miles away.

Lt. Harold (Little Boy Blue) Wilson set up two squads of third platoon riflemen and a section of machine guns in a graveyard to make a last ditch stand. Though no Heinies appeared no one claims to have enjoyed the night in the graveyard, especially S/Sgt. "Bones" Ludwig who contracted a maladie new to us then, but which followed and annoyed us all through combat. The civilian name for this disease is dysentery though the Army name is much more appropriate. S/Sgt. Ludwig attributed his ruined "long johns" to cold "C" rations and strongly urged his squad henceforth to build a fire to heat rations.

January first and the New Year brought to us a realization that our enemy was real and was cunning. We were spending New Year's Eve in foxholes near the Rhine with the German MLR across the river. Though no one ever saw it apparently a German patrol crossed the river for New Year's Day we were missing two fine men, Pfc. McConnell and Pfc. Guhrke the first men taken prisoner from the regiment. The only trace we had from them was an empty foxhole, their rifles and several blankets. On the fourth night we received orders to send one squad to Arnheim, as the enemy was supposedly moving across in a big armored drive.

Meanwhile the Weapons Platoon under Lt. Wemple had a job to handle. Our drivers, Robert E. Buhl, and John F. Bills, had complained of drawing fire from a large barn that looked out on an open stretch of the road. Lt. Wemple led his mortar section out to fire on the barn some one thousand yards away. Our mission was to draw fire. After firing several rounds from each gun and scoring several good hits we decided that the enemy must only visit the barn at intervals coming from across the river in small boats. We brought the jeep with the fifty caliber machine gun up to within good firing range and sprayed the barn thoroughly. Still there was no return fire so we "took ten."

At this time the First Platoon under T/Sgt. Beaton was in Stattmatten with the Co. C. P. They held the line from the right flank of the Second Platoon to the unit on their right. On January second we were alerted and were told to be ready to move at any time. The Third Platoon withdrew from Ft. Louis leaving a small holding force and one machine gun to cover the withdrawal.

The next morning at six thirty, after the supply and baggage were loaded and the company ate a hurried breakfast, which consisted of powdered eggs, we loaded on two and one half ton ducks and moved out generally in a Northwesterly direction.

The fact that we were in ducks had us believing that we were going to be the first assault troops to cross the Rhine. The ducks were terribly crowded, (but we were used to crowded conditions from way back) but this time, more so than ever. A few even sat on the hoists, part of a derrick that the ducks were equipped with. There was no relief during the trip and no cover from the wind. It was a pleasure to go through a town and slow down so we could breath a little easier.

Rolling along in our exceptionally smooth riding ducks the boys, as usual began to exchange stories and generally shoot the breeze. Pfc. Robert Bailey got a big laugh when he told how he and Pfc. Harley stopped one "German patrol". He said, "When we were given our post on guard at Fort Louis Harley and I were informed that anything that moved to the front was enemy and it was probable that the enemy would have patrols. We had spent close to half an hour in silence when Lt. Wilson snuck up on us to check the guard. He was a almost shot because Harley had his finger on the trigger and the safety clicked off. The silence was intent until the lieutenant spoke, we recognized his voice immediately and breathed a long sigh of relief. He passed to continue his checking the guard and Harley told me how close he'd come to shooting him.

"A short while passed when I saw two lone figures walking across the field some two hundred yards to our front. The moonlight showed them up clearly. I'd only begun to say should we fire?, when Harley let go. Five rounds brought frantic yells from our target. 'Hold your fire, we're Americans. Who is that firing over there Bailey? Who fired those rounds?' Again we immediately recognized the high pitched voice of our old buddy, Lt. Little Boy Blue Wilson. 'We did Sir,' I answered. After it was all over no one said anything except what lousey shots we were."

We were looking forward to staying in houses, but to our dismay we rolled to a halt just to the left of a woods near Ingweiler in Alasce. Then we "deducked" and moved to our bivouac area in the woods. We dug our holes, and despite the fact they filled with water we bedded down to try and get as much sleep as possible. As we lay there we reviewed the period that had gone before us. We hadn't closed with the enemy, but we did have our introduction to the vaunted Wehrmacht. As we dropped off to sleep we were still wondering what the future held for us.

Phase Three

Winter Defense

The next morning we had not yet occupied our positions on the line, however we had outposted our bivouac area. About 0830 Capt. Kieth had been ordered to make a reconnaissance to the right of our bivouac area where we were to assume our front line positions. For this reconnaissance he gathered his platoon leaders, Lt. Wilson, Lt. Beck, Lt. Wemple and T Sgt. Beaton, plus Sgt. Yarus, Pfc. Lloyd Kesterson and Pfc. William Johnson. The reconnoitered area proved to be a happy hunting ground so the officers, and EM accompanying them decided to try their hand. Five deer ran from left to right at close range and all their weapons went off for a complete miss, total score zero. As the recon party left the woods and started up the main road to make a further reconnaissance Lt. Wilson glanced at some two and a half ton trucks that came sliding by, but a second glance was necessary to confirm his vision as the trucks were loaded with his Third Platoon. He stood there wide eyed and open mouthed and screeched in his high pitched voice, "There goes my platoon — where they are going?" We hitched a ride back to our area on a two and a half to find out what was up. Lt. Doane related to us that the Germans were supposed to have broken through East of Rothbach and we were sending one Platoon to help "L" Co and that the rest of the company was to follow immediately. This new threat had rendered our reconnaissance useless, except perhaps, in getting a few shots at the deer. The rest of the company soon entrucked and took off for the hills just East of Rothbach. A defensive position was set up here with the Second Platoon on the right and the First on the left.

Meanwhile, the Third Platoon was furnishing "L" Company with security while they dug in. Everything was going well until a group of fourteen Jerries decided to interfere with our operations. Unfortunately these fourteen men really goofed up the detail as they came in with their hands overhead giving the cry "Kamerad" which later became familiar to us. Yes, as we look back we know that we made a bad mistake. We spent the remaining hour before darkness in "searching" our first prisoners.

Darkness came quickly and there we were without holes. Our mission was only to provide security and according to the plan it was time for us to leave, but Lt. Wilson realized that "L" Co. was in a tough spot, and being the real soldier that he was he told us that we would stick it out all night, blankets or no blankets, chow or no chow. After all it wouldn't be too bad, L Co. would share their blankets with us, so we contented ourselves as best we could with this promise.

Our perimeter of defense was set up, all we needed now was a blanket or so and we could settle down for a happy night. Then the real news came. L Co.'s blankets had been stolen by a Heinie patrol, but this was only the beginning — we were in the wrong area, about seven-hundred yards too far advanced and on top of this, irony was added to the situation as hot chow had been brought to us and we had no mess gears. We were bubbling over with joy.

The American soldier is noted for his ingenuity, so we set about to remedy the situation. Everyone ate chow, though it took two hours as only one cup could be found and it was necessary to pass this from one man to another. Pfc. George Cintas, S/Sgt. Tinney, and Lt. Wilson decided to beat the cold so they polished three overcoats off some dead Heines that were lying in a nearby cave. So, the long night commenced.

At 2300 hours Capt. Murphy came up to our position to lead the withdrawal. He had appealed to the tanks to come up to provide security while we withdrew, but they refused as it was too dangerous a mission. They did, however, throw in a terrific barrage on the Heinie positions on the opposite hill to make sure that they wouldn't follow us. Under this fire we made a successful withdrawal. The rest of the night we spent in relative safety, sleeping beside our friendly looking tanks.

On the morning of the sixth about 0530, Mess Sgt. Joe Previti pulled up to the draw with morning chow. First Sgt. Joe Kiefer, Sgt. Jimmy Farmer, and Sgt. Dan Yarus were already down there waiting for the platoons to come down from their positions for chow. We were standing around by a small fire when all of a sudden there was a whistling noise in the air which grew louder by the second. The next thing I knew Kiefer, Farmer and Yarus were under the two and a halfs and Previti was still standing by the fire heartily laughing. He couldn't get over how funny we looked with six legs sticking out at one end. He said that it was our own artillery. Just as he said that the whistling started again only louder and this time we all dove for the truck. The round landed up in the draw. We all laughed after that and Kiefer said, "Why did you hide Joe, that was one of ours." This was the first time that our Co. was subject to artillery fire.

At this time the Weapons Platoon was located on a hill just outside of Rothbach on the left flank and to the rear of the Company. The snow was thick and we made our rolls early in the morning. A few hundred yards away down in town two MP's had a fire built and a more welcome sight I've never seen. We had swell noon meal (K Ration) there with the MP's and that day S'Sgt. Gorden Mann, Mortar Section Sgt, at the time,

made signs with an F. F. I. man and got us the hayloft of a barn to sleep in. It was one flight up a ladder and convenient except that nature called often due to the barrels of coffee we made during the day.

That afternoon we counted some five hundred Flying Forts and mentioned that some town was going to catch "Holy Hell". Soon the sound of far off exploding bombs came rolling over the hills to us. This was the first time we had ever seen concussion waves, caused from bombing. They resemble heat waves only travel parallel to the ground and more rapidly. Some questions were asked concerning the vapor trails left by the bombers. Here and there through out the squadron could be seen a pursuit job doing escort work, buzzing like a fly around a slow moving cow.

The previous afternoon (while the Third Platoon was with L Co) the Second Platoon had taken its position on the right of the company front. The platoon was assigned its positions just at dusk. All the men were too tired to dig in, so they just lay their shelter halves down and went to sleep with a few blankets. However the hill was so damn steep it was impossible to stay in the "sack". Of course it was impossible to sleep parallel to the hill or you would immediately roll down the sonofabitch (that was the consensus of opinion regarding our mountain redoubt). So everybody went to sleep with their heads uphill. The next morning, to the pleasant sound of 88's the men awoke and found themselves about six feet below where they started. However, the blankets had done better and stayed where they started. The result was the entire First and Second Platoons were frozen stiff and quite peed off at being awakened so rudely. The only person who was warm was Ralph Cordello, who had tied himself to a tree to ensure staying under the blankets all night.

At this time the Second Platoon was engaged in patrol activity to the front.

The night of the seventh, I Co was to move to our left front to cover the withdrawal of L Co of the Third Bn. About 2000 hours that evening Lt (the Brow) Doane started to lead the company across a valley to our left. We were about 200 yards across the floor of the valley when some one yelled over that the valley was mined. Everyone froze in place. After waiting around a while we continued across the valley with a guide to a road along the base of the hills on the other side. We swung right up onto the road and moved forward about a mile until we ran into a couple of light tanks from the 14th Armored Division (with whom we were working during this period). We stopped here with the tanks and were told to watch our black out discipline as one Lt. from "M" Company had already been picked off by sniper fire.

We didn't quite know what "covering L Co's retreat" involved so after the black slippery march to the tanks we just huddled together under blankets or what ever shelter there was and tried to keep warm. After a couple of freezing hours we came back the same way we had come up. The tanks came with us to use us as protection. After about a

mile we swung off the road and went back across the valley. The poor tanker almost cried when we left him all alone on the road. But we were too tired to care much about him; all we wanted to do was get some place to sleep. We got our wish. We went right back up the same hill we'd just come off, however, it was no easy task to find the recently deserted positions. In fact it was damn near impossible. The snow was so thick and slippery it was all that the men could do to climb the hill which was a least 40 degrees. Even when they did succeed in making the hill it was too dark in the thick woods to find their holes. After futile searching the nearly exhausted men gave up the search and grouped together in strong points and some slept on the snow while others guarded.

On 9 Jan. 45 we were relieved by elements of the 2nd Bn, 274th Inf. and we proceeded by foot Zinswiller a distance of ten kilometers. It was a blinding snow storm when we arrived at Zinswiller. The Co was broken down into Platoons and quartered in buildings, the Second and Third bedded down in a bomb damaged theater. The Weapons were quartered in a barn along with the First. The night was uneventful except that Pvt Kevin Corrigan did a fine job entertaining the boys that night by falling off the stage onto his face several times in the pitch darkness. The other men showed their appreciation to the impromptu "soldier show" by such yells as "Damn you Corrigan, shut the hell up and go to bed!" Especially appreciative was Pfc. Tulles on to whom Corrigan landed one time. His lauds and compliments are unprintable.

The next morning Capt. Keith, Sgt Yarus and peep driver Jr. Buhl went on a reconnaissance to a hill overlooking the town of Niederbronn, which was known as Winterburg. "It was about five miles up to the top and we had to use first and second gear all the way up," related Jt. Buhl. The snow was about two feet deep and of the drifts were six to eight feet deep. We reached the top of the hill and met Col. Landstrom our Bn. Commander, and it was here that we received the order to take over the position of the 276th Rgt. The trail that we took up was very narrow and just wide enough for one peep. At some places it was a sheer drop of 2000 ft. It was a beautiful hill with huge evergreens covered with snow and it made a beautiful picture to paint, but like so many beautiful scenes in war they are a living Hell for the doughboy.

The Co marched into Niederbronn from Zinswiller about noon before climbing the hill to relieve elements of the 276th. The kitchen was set up and the noon chow was served. The majority of us were pooped out. After chow the company started the long grind of hiking to the top of the hill. The bottom half of the packs were dropped at the foot of the hill to allow less weight for the upward grind. "That without a doubt was the worst four hours I've ever spent," related Pfc. West. By the time the company reached the positions some of the men were still struggling to reach the top. Buhl and Bills went down the hill in their peeps to pick up some of the men who climbed on the hood and in the trailers and on the fenders to get a ride up. Toward evening we took up the

positions of the 276th, with our Third Platoon on the right, First on the left and the Second Platoon in reserve.

Our first five days on Winterburg consisted mostly of patrol activity, observation and ducking from enemy mortar fire. The platoons were all wired in by phones which went out often due to direct hits on the wires. This kept Dave Gamble, Hershberger and Joe Harlan pretty busy as wiremen.

The men improved the foxholes and put covers on them. Some were large enough to put a table in. The main and most important item we were confronted with was the supply difficulty; $2\frac{1}{2}$ ton trucks were unable to get up the hill and thus the peeps were kept on the go all day long hauling food, water, ammo, and clothing. The supply end of the Co was kept up by the vigilance of S/Sgt. Farmer and T/5 Fessler. We always had ammo and rations.

On Saturday, 13 January, Lt. Beck, 2nd platoon leader, received instructions to take his platoon on a reconnaissance patrol. Our mission was to investigate enemy activities on a mountain top approximately one mile to our left front. We started out at 1000 hours. The formation used was platoon column with the first squad followed by the second and third. The first squad acted as the point with its scouts out. First scout was Koch, and the second scout was Portuese with Lt. Beck approximately 40 yards behind. Following a fire break as a guide, we started out, stopping many times for the scouts to search out several foxholes and dugouts along the way. Arriving at the base of the mountain before the enemy MLR, the first scout halted the patrol and advanced cautiously up the hill with the second scout covering him. He signaled back for the second scout and the patrol leader to come up to him, while the rest of the patrol remained in a pine woods nearby. Jerry was not too far away, up a steep hill covered with small firs. Lt. Beck and Koch using their binoculars, searched out the hill for enemy activity. Not being able to see anything, Lt. Beck took four men to accompany him to search out the top of the mountain: Koch, Portuese, Frank Paris and La Fleur. The rest of the patrol was to remain in position and act as a covering force in case of trouble. The five men started out in a diamond formation with Koch leading. The going was slow and tiresome up the mountain through the small fir trees. When they were half way they halted for a few minutes to rest and catch their breath. As they had received their PX rations that same morning they decided to eat the chocolate, so in case of capture the Germans wouldn't get any of it. After the break they continued on up to the top. Lt. Beck and Koch crawled over the top and looked around. Seeing well beaten and freshly used trails in the snow, they knew that there was enemy in the near vicinity. The other three men crawled over the edge in time to see a German soldier in his foxhole outpost. He surrendered immediately when he saw the M 1's of the group being leveled at his head. After a quick search of the prisoner Lt. Beck, Portuese, and Koch heard voices of approaching Germans and they

immediately spread out to give protection to the others who were guarding the prisoner. After a brief but furious fire fight the patrol withdrew, leaving four dead and two wounded Heinies. Our withdrawal was the same as the approach. After our return to the rest of the patrol, we took up position as Koch, La Fleur and Paris started back with the prisoner. Sgt. Renning, first squad leader, was placing his men into position, when a bullet hit a few feet in front of him. He started to change his position immediately, but as he started to get down, he was shot through the back, the bullet barely missing his spine. He received first aid from our medic, Costello. Lt. Beck called Portuese and Cockrell to make a temporary litter from their rifles and field jackets to evacuate Renning. One at a time the men left their positions to act as cover men for him as he was being carried to a place of safety. A couple of men were sent ahead to get a jeep to evacuate him to the Battalion Aid Station. After carrying him almost 2 miles the patrol was met by the jeep which took him to the Aid Station. A different route had to be used in returning because of enemy mortar fire and the patrol returned to their holes. In the meantime the prisoner was being hustled back to the Co. C. P. Going was slow and tiresome work after running down the one mountain, and the path used in coming down had been filled in with snow, so a new one had to be made. Several times one of the captors would slip and slide down the hill again. The prisoner, who was very happy to be out of the war, would help them up again. After several breaks the four made it into the CP, and the Kraut was questioned and taken to Battalion. The patrol had succeeded in both locating the enemy's positions and capturing a valuable prisoner for S-2.

During our stay atop Winterburg we spent several cold and miserable days amidst this beautiful scenery. We had a severe water shortage and made coffee from melted snow. Some of the boys because of thirst ate snow from the trees and next day several had sore throats and lost their voices.

Pfc. John Walsh of the Third Platoon reported that his bed partner Tyler Runkle was continually on the alert, in fact he was so much on the alert that every night he would take his full field pack, gas mask, rifle belt, and rifle in his hole with him. Pfc. Walsh appreciated this vigilance but wanted a little room in which to sleep. Sgt. Myers, not knowing the exact enemy situation, took his grease gun loaded and unlocked into the sack with him. In the middle of the night he rolled over accidentally firing his grease gun and shot off his finger. He was evacuated immediately.

Our morale got a boost the 14th of Jan. when we received our first PX rations which consisted of delicacies such as cold beer (so cold that it was frozen) chocolates, pretzles, peanuts and cookies. Little did we realize what was in store for us on the next day.

Phase Four

Mountain Attack

On the morning of 15 January as we lay in our foxholes the order came down that we were going to attack. "Attack," that word was even then full of meaning for us as we knew that it was the key to every successful army; but the multitude of emotions — fear, daring, pride, sorrow — that are embraced in their highest and most livid form by this word were yet to be experienced. Platoon messengers were sent out to inform each platoon to awaken everyone and inform them to prepare their equipment for an attack which was to start early in the morning.

With fingers numbed by the cold we rolled our blanket rolls and packed our packs, which were dumped at our Company C. P. The company assembled at the C. P. and a K ration was given to each man.

Meanwhile, Capt. Keith was making a reconnaissance with his platoon leaders. I Co. was to go through L Co's area and attack. To explain the feeling of every man upon hearing this is well nigh impossible but we will take it for granted that each one felt nearly the same as his fox hole buddy. After preparing ourselves as best we knew how we lined up in the road and waited to hear the order of march and H-Hour. We hadn't waited long when the word was passed up that it would be First Platoon, Weapons and Third with Second in support. As we were lined up the First Platoon had to go through the Weapons and as Weapons followed they also went through the Third which caught on to the column in silence. A murmer ran from one end of the column to the other as we crunched along in the fresh fallen snow. H-Hour was to be 0615 hours. When we had begun to move it was still dark and the stars shone brightly, but now as the darkness changed to grey dawn, the horizon was tinted with the slightest of pink. We had moved around the road until we were on the opposite side of the hill from where we had lived and it was full morning now. The jeeps came up with the machine guns, mortars and ammo. They pulled to a halt and the squads one at a time loaded up with equipment. Armando Novelli, his Italian eyes laughing remarked that the time had come when we would see

how good we were with the mortars. There was little talking except from a few about one ammo bag being missing. In a few minutes a murmer ran from rear to front again. The word was passed up that H-Hour would be moved up to 0845. In another hundred yards we moved away from our wagon trail and down into woods. The hill was steep and slippery.

In the meantime Capt. Keith was making a further reconnaissance with Lt. Hathaway who was then attached to I Co. as a forward Artillery observer. We continued on down the slope when suddenly the quiet rang out with a burst of machine gun fire. We hit the ground and waited. We waited in the dim light and the quietness crept over us again as the snow drifted softly to the ground. "This was the first time that we were ever under small arms fire," related Pfc. William Johnson of Company Headquarters. Our fingers were numb as they festered on our triggers and the cold of the ground crept over us. In ten minutes we withdrew and little did the Germans know that we would return shortly with a company to dig them out of their holes.

As Capt. Keith returned up the trail he was met by Lt. Doane. He told him that the company was in the forward assembly area some 200 yds to the rear. The platoon leaders returned to their platoons to orient them. Capt. Keith gave the situation to Lt. Doane and mentioned "I will be directly behind the two leading platoons if you need me, Mark."

As the front of the column moved out and reached the valley a short burst of machine gun fire broke the still silent air that hung over us making our slightest move audible. The battle was on!

While the First and Third Platoons with the Weapons support started the assault the Second was supposed to lay down a base of fire. However, it was soon evident that it was impossible to use such a large group for this purpose in the woods. Also the nature of the attack carried out with walking or assault fire made a separate base of fire unnecessary.

It was in these early stages that some rather effective harassing fire was being received from a German sniper. Then the call went out for an American sniper to eliminate him. Robert Brosom of the Second Squad of the Second Platoon responded immediately. He carried an 03 A3 Springfield sniper rifle with a telescopic sight. He went forward and while trying to get into the most advantageous position he exposed himself. Just as he got into position he was spotted by the enemy sniper and before he was able to get away the shot that would have killed the German, he received a perfect shot squarely between the eyes. It was a duel of sniper against sniper and the advantage of the defense told the final story.

But the German was soon to pay the price he had asked. The Second Squad (Brosom's) then went into the attack with the First Platoon and Robert Lusk with deadly automatic rifle fire and Chas. Hill avenged

their friend's death. The German sniper was slumped in a foxhole dead not five minutes after he killed Brosom.

The violence of our attack soon took effect on the Germans. The wall of fire over their positions created panic in each one of them. Marengi spotted one and he dared a look at the wave of death that was sweeping irresistibly toward him. Marengi dropped him back into his hole very quickly—and dead. Another jumped out of his hole and bolted toward the Americans. He ran through the men in mad panic and refused to stop. He was soon riddled by Lusk's automatic rifle. Before he fell at least twenty different weapons savagely opened up on him.

The position of the Third Platoon in the assault was on the left flank of the company. Third Platoon lead scout, Pfc. Ferner, was the first man in the company to meet resistance. When he encountered the fast firing burst from a German machine gun he hurried back to Lt. Wilson, who, coolly remembering his lessons at OCS had S/Sgt. Ludwig's squad deploy as a base of fire while Sgt. Tinney was to take a group around the enemy right flank position. The base of fire was deployed at the bottom of the hill but could not fire any closer than ten feet over their heads so they moved forward to a better point where they could place effective fire on the positions, regardless of the fact that they thus became vulnerable. This group crawled to within thirty yards of the positions to a slight raise in the land that protected anyone who would stay below it. It also kept us from gaining the initiative of fire. Pfc. Powell, a BAR man boldly crawled over the knoll and opened up his weapon. He vied for the initiative of fire but lost as a Heinie machine gun put almost ten slugs into his head. T/5 Anderson of the Weapons Platoon decided to make another attempt, only with a light thirty cal. machine gun. He too stuck his head above the knoll, but this action was coordinated with several other riflemen so with their combined efforts they were able to wrest the initiative of fire from the Heinies and keep them in their holes, thus silencing the deadly fire of the enemy gun. In this base of fire Pfc. Tyler Runkle was the first man hit. Shrapnel got him in the lip and the leg. Pfc. Landrey was killed by a concussion grenade. Shrapnel got Pfc. Kenneth Tromley in the lip and Pfc. Garrett in the leg. We were suffering from these casualties inflicted by mortars and 88's. Some of us feared that we might even be forced to withdraw and face bitter defeat on our first attempt. In this part of the assault the situation was grim. We realized then that any victory must be a victory drenched in blood.

Meanwhile the flanking element, S/Sgt. Tinney and Pfc. Maurice Gilbert, were meeting with more success. Tinney crept cautiously to within seven yards of the extreme right flank hole without being discovered. Tinney was just getting in a position to shoot when he was discovered. The three startled Heinies made a fatal mistake — they ducked into their holes. One of them realized that it would mean death by grenades to remain defenselessly in their holes so he heaved three

potatoe mashers at Tinney. Two failed to go off and the third left Tinney uninjured. The Heinie knew it was then or never so he popped his head out of the hole, planning to open up his burp gun, but he only got as far as raising his head out of the hole when he was hit between the eyes by Tinney's M1 at a range of seven yards. The other two tried the same trick with the same results. This was the turning point of the whole attack. With resistance wiped out in these positions a gap was opened in the enemy line through which Cpl. Layne, Lt. Wilson, T/Sgt. Schindler, Pfc. Gilbert, and Pfc. Nipple went through, putting them to the rear of the main enemy positions.

The Jerries, realizing that the end had come began to fill the air with their famous battle cry "Kamerad!" Three stubborn Krauts refused to come out of their holes and refused to fight. Since no one wanted the job of persuading them as there was a machine gun set up in front of their hole, Lt. Wilson walked up to them and with the aid of his carbine invited them to join the rest of the prisoners. When the invitation was put in this way they accepted.

A machine gun nest was in direct fire line with the 1st Plt. (Uncle) Louis Regnier set his machine gun in action and began making life miserable for the Krauts in the holes. He directed fire for T/5 Anderson, his gunner. Over on the right another machine gun burst into action. This would be Sgt. Smith and his gunner Pfc. Duane Hyde under the cross fire the Germans soon wilted and took to the forest to the rear. Riflemen and BAR men took up the chase and made hasty work of those who thought they would get away by running. Meanwhile T/Sgt. Marshall was making war over on the left flank with a grease gun that had been anxious to give a try. One German with a burp gun caught Sgt. Marshall as he was rising to fire and a few minutes later the Sgt. lay dead. Sgt. Regnier had one stubborn German in a hole who would neither give up nor fight, so the Sgt. killed him in his hole. We pulled the dead Krauts out so we could use the holes ourselves for now the hill was all cleared and the artillery was coming in on us. The riflemen had done a wonderful job and were already reorganized and in position for counter-attack. The machine guns were set up in holes on the right front and ready to go, but the forest ahead made poor vision. From the front holes they could see only some 20 to 30 yards in daylight. From a hole nearby I could hear the Captains radio man Pfc. Al Homer sending out the message "Green Six, Green Six, this is Green Baker. Mission Accomplished, Enemy artillery coming in very heavy". When he said heavy he wasn't fooling. There was hardly a second that the air wasn't filled with the deafening scream of the well known 88's. Mortar fire accompanied the artillery and made a move from the hole hazardous. Motar fire is silent until its upon you — then its too late. We all stayed in our holes and prayed between shovel fulls of dirt, we were bettering our holes every bit we could. Finally with the ceasing of artillery fire we began to breath a little easier and even went to the extent to eat some crackers of K rations that we

had carried along. Personally I didn't feel much like eating crackers. I was afraid I would miss some little sound that would let us know of a counter-attack.

Just after the First Platoon crossed the valley our three scouts, Pfc's Torson, Case and Ackerstrom drew fire from the enemy, while returning the fire the platoon formed a skirmish line and was pinned down. Platoon Sgt. Beaton was hit trying to move forward, a nearly fatal wound in the chest. Credit to our platoon medic T/4 Earlinson for instant first aid. Only a minute later Torson was also hit and given first aid by T/Sgt. Gordon Mann of Weapons, a few minutes later Sgt. Morgan was also hit (apparently by this same troublesome enemy) in the ankle. The first platoon was now in the hands of S/Sgt. Jenson while the enemy relaxed his vigil for an instant to reload his weapons Sgt. Jenson gave the word, that began a thunderous assault.

As the platoon moved forward Sgt. Jenson and Pfc. Huggler came upon the hole that had delt the deadly fire and found six Germans that at this point ceased to resist and were taken prisoner. Sgt. McNeely, Pfc. Bain and Pfc. Wilt came upon a machine gun nest and the enemy seeing it was useless gave up and joined their buddies.

Pfc. Wilt related. "I had become separated from Bain and Mc Neely and had gone some twenty yards when I spotted two Heinies with Burp guns. Upon seeing me making ready to fire they surrendered. Pfc Rando killed another German who was dumbfounded and didn't know enough to keep his head down. He was killed instantly from a bullet in the head." Later Sgt. Jenson was hit and Sgt. Mc Neely took over the platoon.

In the meantime Capt. Keith kept sending messages to battalion pleading for reinforcements, but for some reason or other we never did receive any riflemen, but we did get a heavy machine gun section down from M Co.

The first squad of the Second Platoon had helped some in the assault and was assigned to protect the right flank of our new position. The German 88's came in before the holes were fully dug. Pvt. La Fleur and Hobbs were hit badly but Pvt Tulles had his right arm almost completely blown off. After the shell landed some asked if anyone was hit. Tulles smiled and answered "I guess I am, my right arm is almost half blown off." The 2nd Platoon guide, S/Sgt. Bill Sullivan, was helping evacuate the wounded but was hit in the leg and had to be evacuated himself. That meant a cluster for his Purple Heart, since he was wounded once before. During the lull the whole picture could be made perfectly of how our flanks had been protected during the whole battle.

During the main assault the Third Squad of the Second Platoon, led by S/Sgt. Lee F. Mudd was brought to the left rear of the Third Platoon to protect this exposed flank. When men would try to surrender the woods would echo with the cry, "Kill the sonsofbitchs!" Shoot'em! Immediately one could sense the change that had come over these men. From normal humans they had been changed into brutal, cold blooded killers.

The squad waited and watched. Then Lieut. Wilson came down to Mudd. He told him to take his squad about a hundred yards to the Northwest, where there we would run into a road with some positions by it. He said, "Sgt. Tinney shot some Germans up there. Just pull them out of the holes and jump into them." In spite of all the confusion he was very calm, collected and cool. I was surprised to find such a reaction from this seemingly mild mannered, timid little man, or more aptly boy. He was only 21, and looked about 18 with pink cheeks and disarming blue eyes. He was the farthest thing from the conception of a tough, rugged infantryman. He looked completely out of place in this scene of death, but acted anything but out of place. Our ideas of "Little Boy Blue" were beginning to change. He surprised everyone, except, probably, himself.

We went to where he told us and found the Germans in their holes. The one in the first hole was nosed forward against the front of the hole with one very neat hole in his head. Tinney had done a good job on them. However, there was still a little bit of life in the man in the third hole. Although he was more dead than alive he was still groaning. To shut him up and be sure he wasn't going to bother us Mudd put two rounds through his head and blew about half of it off. Just as we were getting them out their holes the 88's started in. Out they went, into them we went. We were expecting a counter-attack so as soon as a shell would go off we would stand back up in the holes so no one could rush us while we were huddled in the holes. The barrage was heavy and it kept us busy ducking into these crowded holes and trying to keep watch besides. For some reason Robert Catron insisted on standing high in the hole to watch the woods. The shells kept coming in faster and faster and Catron didn't get down fast enough on one very close hit. Shrapnel hit him hard behind the arm by the shoulder blade. He screamed out in pain, then collapsed into S/Sgt. Bob Basgall's arms-dead. They lifted him out of the hole and we continued to duck. Then we heard a rustling in the woods. A few shots went over us. We were looking uphill, but because of our low line of vision and the way the hill leveled off we could only see about 20 yards to the North and Northwest and because of the thick underbrush in the woods we couldn't see any farther than that to the West along the road. This meant Jerry could crawl almost up to us and within easy grenade range before we could see him. The rest of the company was away to the East of us down the road about 250 yards. They were busy clearing out the last krauts and reorganizing.

The squad was alone for the present and all huddled into the three holes on the North side of the road. The shelling had let down and the rustling in the woods continued. With our poor observation and crowded conditions our situation was extremely poor so at this time Sgt. Mudd sent the AR man Ralph Cordello and his assistant John Martinez across the road to cover the road and to back us up. He also sent one rifleman Adams plus Basgall the assistant Squad

Leader. Just when Cordello got the AR set up he spotted three Krauts coming down the road. He got them in his sights and opened up. The frozen AR fired one shot then jammed. The Heinies then jumped off the road joined their buddies in the woods. About this time Lt. Wilson paying no attention to the artillery or rifle fire came down to find out who had been hit and to check on the situation. With him was the medic T/5 Costello who had answered the call for "medic" as soon as he could. He was terribly busy that day and was covering the whole company instead of just his own Second Platoon. They both saw there was nothing to be done for Catron so Costello left to help the others back with the rest of the company. Wilson saw how desperate our situation was so he hopped into the first hole with Mudd and myself. I had policed up a Kraut burp gun to save our ammo and Wilson grabbed this right up and started letting go single shots at anything he saw move. He didn't fire automatic, because the characteristic sound of this weapon might make the others think we were Krauts. I wondered what sort of man this was who got himself into the worst spot in the company and with another platoon besides. But he jumped right into it and started pecking away. I thought he was crazy for doing it, but I was filled with admiration and respect for him. With an officer there, we all felt much better, not as though no one gave much of a damn about us. We all started firing as low as we could to keep Jerry down and make him think we saw him. Across the road someone spotted one careless Kraut and got him. He howled for about a minute then remained quiet. In this war of nerves where we couldn't see the enemy but just hear him and duck away from his bullets, it was music to our ears to hear one get it.

Wilson said, "Now we'll just dig and fight here, these positions need improving." He was very right, but it was the last thing anyone thought of doing. Digging while we were being fired at. But that was Wilson, always calm and thinking about the future. There was another hole only about two yards from ours so each of us took turns digging toward it, while they did the same.

Then S/Sgt. Ray Toot came down, the road with John Elder, his gunner, and the rest of his machine gun squad. A more welcome sight was never seen. They set up right behind us and we really felt good. Then came Mannah from heaven: Artillery. It came fast and furious and any Krauts that weren't discouraged by our rifle fire were certainly put out of the mood for anything by the artillery. It was wonderful. That ended the proposed counter-attack.

Then we set out to fix our holes. We took a little time off to feast. Lt. Wilson, Mudd and I split up a dinner K ration I had. It was the middle of the afternoon and it was the first bite we had had since our K ration breakfast early that morning; so it tasted good, despite the fact it was a K ration.

Toward evening we got the two holes joined and we put a roof over them. We had been warned to do this by the Artillery FO to protect us against our own tree bursts as well as Jerry's. About dusk two Krauts

came down the road to give themselves up. They had been in a position about 75 yds away and in a position from which they could probably have killed or wounded most of us around by the first holes, but they choose to make sure of living and surrender. They had blanket rolls with them and as I covered them, I was about to let them through with them, but Lt. Wilson made them drop the blanket rolls immediately. That night when we didn't get our own blanket rolls Lt. Wilson's foresight again payed off. Despite the fact he had been hit in the leg that day, he insisted on staying in that hole all night and standing his guard with the others. The battle in the forest of Niederbronn besides proving the worth of the company, also proved that Lt. Wilson was probably the greatest man in the company, and an officer in the highest traditions of the Army.

Early in the morning on the first day after the attack Lt. Wilson and Sgt. Tinney started on a reconnaissance to see how much of the area we controlled. As they were walking leisurely down the trail they stopped abruptly about fifty yards from our last positions for there were two Krauts peacefully eating chow in a hole just off the trail. Sgt. Tinney raised his rifle coolly and fired a shot catching one kraut in the head. Before the other one had a chance to get in his hole Tinney had a bead on him. He slowly pulled in his trigger slack, the hammer went forward, but instead of the expected explosion there was only a metallic click. By this time the Kraut had jumped into his hole. Wilson and Tinney knew that the Kraut would soon have reinforcements so they made a fifty yard dash back to safety. Tinney came in a length ahead as Wilson had shrapnel in his leg which made him limp but Tinney's knee had come out of place.

This news made some of us a bit uneasy. Why would the Heinies have positions only fifty yards from us? This question prayed on our minds. The answers our minds would give us were all counterattack, so we tried to forget about it.

The morning of the second day at 0715 just when dawn was breaking, the vanguard of what we thought was to be more Krauts came at us. Pfc.'s Zeller, Palermo and Belnap were in one hole with Pfc. McKeen in a hole about three feet away. Their position was on the left flank of the company. Pfc. Zeller tells the story: "Our holes were so close together that we decided to stand guard together-combining the men so that each man would get a little more sleep. At this time Pfc. McKeen was on guard so everyone in our hole was sound asleep. I was awakened suddenly by Palermo who kicked me in the ribs. 'Heinies, Heinies!' he said on pointed to a gap between the shelter half and the top of our hole. There protruding through the hole was an arm holding a potato masher grenade. Palermo had been hit on the head by the grenade, in fact that's what woke him up. The arm was slowly withdrawn. He couldn't drop a concussion grenade in from the position he was in for it explodes on contact and would have blown back into his face. He was walking around to the front of the hole to toss the

grenade in the opening. We didn't even have time to think. Palermo grabbed a grenade that we had sitting near the front of the hole. I did the same. We pulled the pins and heaved them just outside the hole. I guess we must have wounded the Kraut. He heaved his grenade at us but missed our foxhole, then took off." He passed about 20 yards from the hole where Pfc. Murray was standing guard. In the dusk Murray, could just make out his outline. He fired 3 shots at the silhouette which was running towards the enemy lines. A few seconds after the Kraut had disappeared a German machine gun opened up with tracers over our heads. After a few minutes of machine gun fire everything became quiet and we tried to forget the incident. The rest of the night passed peacefully with quiet again. When dawn finally broke we went out to a spot on the Kraut's line of retreat. There was a German helmet, rifle and a pool of blood. Then we thought of McKeen. We went over to his hole. No one was there. He had been captured.

On our second day on the hill and after several cold meals of K Rations it was decided that what we needed to help our morale was a hot meal and so the kitchen was notified to prepare one. Right out here where the 88's were numerous and not long between. Sgt. Bailey related, "I was at the rear supply area trying to dry my feet and had just finished putting my boots back on when the jeep pulled up with Sgt. Previti, T/S Okura, Pfc. Davis and the chow. They needed a hand and since I was on my way back anyway, I grabbed a chow can. We took the trail that was under enemy observation and on the long trek down, a few rounds sailed down in the valley to our left and crashed into the tree-tops. We would hit the ground every time a round went off and it made it a hell of a haul with this hinderance."

"I was just behind Jr. Buhl who was carrying a bread box and once on the brink of the hill he stopped to watch some enemy troops on the hill to our right front and we knew a little later they had been watching our proceedings too. I warned Jr. to keep moving and we went on down to the left of the fork in the trail. Here we set up the chow line and I remember well just what the cooks brought us that day. Some good roast beef and potatoes with string beans. Then as a treat they made a large quantity of fudge that really tasted swell.

"They set up the chow line and began feeding. It was coming off fine and they had fed about half the men when all of a sudden Jerry threw in three rounds of 88's. The chow flew as men ran for holes and dove in everywhere. The cooks didn't know where to go and they hit the ground where they were. Sgt. Raymond Toot dived in my hole and spoiled all the chow except for the candy. The three rounds had done their damage though and soon we heard calls from someone down the trail. Pfc. John Elders ran up to our hole and told us that Uncle Lou (Regnier) had been hit bad. Two more men of Lou's squad were also hit from those three rounds. Pfc. Duane Hyde had been hit in the foot, he was uncle Lou's first gunner, and Pfc. Achterling had also been hit."

"The mail had come down with the chow and I was trying to read all my letters from my wife before a round came in my hole and finished me. They called for help on the litters that were to take these three men back up and I ran from the hole, but others were already there so I went back and ate my fudge. When I got back I noticed that not a sign of the cooks or their equipment could be seen. They had cleaned up their cans and had taken off."

T/Sgt. Schindler, when he was questioned told us his thoughts about Niederbronn "You see, just being in a fox hole that is already frozen solid on all sides, or eating 'K' and 'C' rations from day to day, isn't so awfully bad-but there are other things that make it worse."

"Up on the hills-where snow is a couple of feet deep all around your hole and spread out in every direction — where you don't dare light a cigarette at night for fear of it being seen — or light a fire even in the day time unless you've got wood that's perfectly dry and only then in your fox hole for fear of it smoking and the Jerries seeing the smoke. You've just got to get those feet and socks dry some way, or suffer from trench foot which may result in having to have your feet amputated ... where you don't dare get out of your hole at night for any purpose-because your men have orders to shoot anything that moves ... and it may be you! They cannot tell in the dark."

"It's awful being where you don't dare stamp your feet in your hole at night ... even though they are numb and your boots are frozen ... because a Jerry may have crawled up within yards of your hole with a grenade, waiting to throw it at the slightest sound or movement."

"This biggest strain is while you're standing guard in your hole while two of your buddies sleep. You've got one hour of guard and two in which to sleep-then you're on again. Each minute of that hour seems like an hour in itself. Men crack under the strain. Eventually it's almost dawn ... what you've been praying for for hours. Then somewhere off to your right, about fifty yards, a burp gun is fired along with a few German rifles. Then ... all's quiet ... quiet until an 88 or mortar shell drops not too far from your hole ... maybe only yards away ... sometimes even feet."

You pray to God that next one will not drop in it.

After daylight you go from hole to hole talking to your boys-for it helps them and you, too. My God .. you find one of the holes empty ... the men gone .. rifles and equipment where they left it. There are German boot tracks heading toward the German line only one hundred yards to your front. If you follow the tracks, slugs from a machine-gun will penetrate the brush. Then and there you vow that you'll avenge them."

Phase Five

Sweating It Out

For two days before we left Niederbronn we had been hearing rumors that we were to leave the hill and that reinforcements would take over for us. On the 20th of January we were told that relief would come during the afternoon and we would withdraw our company. We waited the whole afternoon and everyone was in a state of anxiety because it would be wonderful to leave that place that had brought death and suffering to our buddies, where every hour of every day we sweated out the counter-attack that was sure to come at any time. Rumors flew of reinforcements at the enemy positions and this only made us feel more certain that a counter-attack would knock us from our positions. We were so few in number and so worn out from days and nights of constant alert. That night we resigned ourselves to the fact that the relief wasn't going to come at least for another day and took up our watch as alert as ever. They were sure to come the next day, we told each other.

On the 21st, late in the afternoon we began hauling our bedrolls and equipment up to the rear supply area. Still no relief. We were going to withdraw and leave the hill to the enemy after all our hard fighting and suffering from cold. The thing was, we were going to leave the hill and that was all that really mattered. After all the equipment had been made ready to go we were told that there must be a delaying action party left there while the rest withdrew. This party was to consist of one third of the company, its being so small that the party was only a very small number. The men's hearts sank at thoughts of what could happen to so few men by an attacking enemy. The entire delaying action only consisted of a number somewhere close to twenty. The rest left, and back up at the rear supply area we formed up and began the long march. It was dark now, and as we trudged along through the snow the jeeps would run up and down the road between the columns hauling the supply down the hill. After we had gone a half an hour we cut off onto another trail and used this road so we wouldn't block traffic. The wind was sharp and cold and fine snow blew in our faces. It was a wierd looking sight of dark forms moving

down the steep trail with hoods over their heads and snow covered every crease in their clothes. Even with all the clothes we wore the wind cut through our fur lined jackets and to the skin and we shivered and sweated at the same time. Far off on top of the hill we could hear the scream of a jeep engine straining under its heavy load and plowing through deep snow. Men slipped and fell and crawled and groaned and got up to try and run so the column wouldn't be split up too much. It must have been some two hours later when we began to see shadows down the hill to our right. The shadows grew and took shape and could finally be made out as houses. We knew now that we were at the bottom. It was a treacherous trail we had come down and we were glad to be at its end.

We took the road left at the bottom and walked into town. Lt. Wemple told us we would move the Company into a large factory and wait for transportation to Weiterswiller. The guides were at the entrance to the factory and guided us to where we could wait. The men found straw and wood and soon had several fires going inside the building even though the roof was of glass and not blacked out we had to have fires. These were the first decent fires we'd seen since the morning we had made our attack. We stripped off our jackets and began drying out as best we could. We burned large wood mold forms that the factory had used in the manufacture of ammunition and smoked cigarettes by the pack. Someone told us that if the trucks didn't arrive in another fifteen minutes we must begin to march and they would probably catch us somewhere along the line. We'd heard that before too. The story was that the Germans were going to close up to the rear of us some fifteen miles and we would be trapped if we stayed there. It was necessary to move out as soon as possible but the weather was bad and something had gone wrong the trucks should have been here long ago. Twenty minutes went by, the order of march was given and we moved out. Equipment began to fall by the roadside. Some of the boys had recieved boxes and packages while upon the hill and though they hated to do it the load must now be lightened. When we first moved out we had a faint hope that maybe the trucks would come and we wouldn't have to walk all the way, but after thirty minutes and then an hour went by, we lost all hope and equipment began to fall by the road side.

The road was hellish and slippery. First it would be clear and then it would all of a sudden be a hell of a blizzard and always cold even though we walked fairly fast. We took breaks on roadsides and in towns we smoked always. Tanks, trucks, halftracks and I guess every vehicle the Army had, passed us sometime during the night. They could move so fast and so easily and we were so slow and tired. At times we wondered if it was all worth it and maybe it would be just as well if we were captured or even killed at least there would be an end to all this misery. Never before had I known what punishment a human could take. If we made this we could do anything.

We must have gone about fourteen miles when a convoy of trucks moved down the road and stopped beside us. It couldn't believe at first that we were to ride the rest of the way but sure enough they told us to get aboard. After I'd thrown my pack down inside the truck and sat down in some corner that was the last I remember except it seemed that someone gave me a hell of a shove to make more room once, but I was too tired to care. I don't know how long I had slept when the trucks came to halt.

The holding party didn't leave the dreaded hill until 6:00 that morning after an undescribably frightful and cold wait. Finally we left the hill in groups of three or four. After assembling where the rear CP had been, we started down the now deserted and deathly quiet road. We kept slipping and falling on the hard ice and we were so tired it was almost too much of an effort to get up again. But we did, only to fall again minutes later. This march down the hill took hours and it all seemed like a nightmare. The completely exhausted feeling, the continual falling and the slow monotonous progress down, down, down.

Finally we reached the town of Niederbronn. It was quiet and deserted in the predawn darkness. There were about twenty of us and there was one truck for us. We pulled ourselves into it and left. The last men off the hill and out of the town.

Before I fell into an exhausted sleep I looked over these men who had lived through Niederbronn. They were so tired they were like a truck load of sick men. Toot said, "Now I realize what they mean when they say you can't tell the people at home about over here."

"That's right," answered Gary. "They probably wouldn't believe you anyway."

"It's not so much that they wouldn't believe you," said Woody. "They just could never understand what it really is over here."

We arrived at Weitersweiler while it was still dark and very cold. At about 0400 the Third Platoon was assigned to an old farm house and a barn. Most of the men followed Lt. Wilson's example and went to sleep as soon as they could. The other Platoons had a beer hall and several houses.

None of us slept very much that night as we were too cold and tired. When we got up in the morning and crawled out of our barn we found a clear cold Sunday morning. Many of the civilians were going to church but the Sabbath didn't mean much to us for our joints were aching and sore. Our feet were raw from the long march of the previous night and it was a real effort to move around.

The kitchen served us an enormous meal in the center of the main street and it seemed as though every civilian in the town turned out to wish us a good appetite. (A common courtesy with the French and Germans.) None of us felt guilty as we gorged ourselves in front of these people. Our aches and pains made us feel that we deserved the food.

The Third Platoon proceeded to find better quarters for its sixteen remaining men. We found two very gracious families who would share their houses with us. It was really wonderful, we were in warm houses, we could wash and even sit on upholstered furniture. Though we felt strange and out of place in these relatively luxurious surroundings we were completely happy. The people who let us enjoy their comforts seemed to us to be the grandest people in all France. Later in the afternoon we were ordered to re-equip ourselves from a large barn down at one end of the town. The barn was very large and the floor was covered with every piece of equipment known to the Infantry. We believed this must be equipment that was either left on the hill or else lost on the long march along the night before. Everyone went around trying to find needed items and it reminded you of a bunch of a fat old ladys at a rumage sale. After this no two soldiers were equipped the same but all were satisfied.

The remainder of the day we spent in nursing our aches and pains and caring for our sore muscles. We all went to bed early and enjoyed the first peaceful uninterrupted sleep in many days . . .

The next day about noon Capt. Keith went with Col. Landstrom to make a reconnaissance of a new area which we were to take over. The word started spreading that we were going to be on the move again shortly. We didn't know exactly where we were off to, but we figured we were going to relieve some front line unit again, which later turned out to be true. After a hot noon meal we entrucked, 28 men per truck, and we were off again chasing Krauts. It was a beautiful Monday afternoon with sun shining high, and the air was crisp and spattered with bits of snow. We passed through La-Petite Perre and the people in the streets stopped and waved as us as the convoy rolled by. Thirty minutes later we rolled into Wingen and we knew we were getting near to our objective because there were signs all over indictating 274 CP. this way, ammo dump 300 yds that way and many others. After detrucking the column marched up the main road for about a mile moving off to the right and in 20 minutes we met the quartering party. Here we were oriented as to what the big picture consisted of. We were relieving elements of the 45th division who had been up there for about a week. We were to be in a defensive position and hold the high ground. We then climbed the steep hill that led to our positions. I Company was to occupy the left flank of the battalion front with K Company on the right and in reserve. During the first few hours after our arrival at the positions we were busy placing men in holes as we had a very large area to cover and had heard rumors that there were enemy patrols active in the area. We busied ourselves with eating C Rations that we had carried along with us from the bivouac area that morning. It was growing dark now and the boys were tired so we set up a guard immediatly. It was rather snafu, because we found three men in our hole and each with only a pistol. "That was better because it would mean no one could get within pistol range of our hole.

I can say that now that we are away from there", related Cpl. Novelli. We were really in a safe positions though, because a machine gun position was only a short fifty yards to our right and Pfc's Ryan, Gary, and Boatwright were in that hole. We had great confidence in our machine gunners by now after showing their grit in the battles we looked back on now. We stood guard that night in one hour shifts and, slept two in between. I don't believe we were really very worried about enemy patrols that night, because in between shifts the boys slept well.

With the break of day Sgt. Kiefer moved the mortar section to the rear about one hundred yards and the men worked hard all that day digging mortar positions and covering them with the logs from trees they had cut down for mast clearance. Late in the afternoon the mortar section fired six rounds per gun and fired the same every half hour covering a draw to the front that might be occupied by enemy. This should hinder any action to our front.

The chow was good here and Joe Previti did a wonderful job with what he had to do it with. The mail came in often and this was a real treat since we didn't get much while we were at Niederbronn. Although these were still foxholes in the woods we were living our asses off. As a matter of fact the only disturbance we had here was every now and then a mortar round would land in the vicinity. Although the snow fell often it wasn't too cold.

The First Platoon relieved the other outfit about 2300 and set up the guard. No sooner than the other outfit pulled out we were subjected to heavy mortar fire, but no one was hurt. The next day we withdrew to a better position and there we remained until we were relieved. During our stay, there was not much action. We lived in fox holes and for the most part it snowed continuously. I don't think a shot was fired although we were sniped at continuously. We went out to look for snipers, but usually we couldn't find a thing. Finally after a week of sweating it out we were relieved. I say sweating it out, because whenever an outfit is on the line it never knows when the enemy is going to attack. We did have good observation and we felt we could repulse an attack of perhaps company strength however we got a bit of a scare one day when we got a report that two enemy tanks were in B company's area. As individuals we felt rather helpless against tanks, but the rifle grenadiers and boozokamen religiously primed their weapons. The knowledge that there were two tanks and a T. D. some 350 yds. to the right of the company CP gave more confidence than any number of rifle gernandes could. An attack never materialized.

"One day as I was sitting in my hole", related Pvt. Kevin Corrigan, "I noticed a couple G. I's standing next to my hole. Then much to my displeasure they opened up a radio. We always suspected the Germans were able to pick out the position of a radio. I have no idea if they could or not, but I shied away from them anyway, but there was nothing I could do in this situation. I knew if Jerry did fire on

this radio it would come right down on top of my hole, but I decided to be pleasant anyway."

"What the hell do you guys want?", I shouted. One of them spoke, but to the radio, not to me. "Gimme another smoke. Right five-zero, repeat range". When I saw what they were up to I said rather stupidly I suppose, "Oh, artillery eh?" "Of course," the flunke with the radio said, and gave me a look, which I think he reserved especially for stupid infantrymen and idiots. I ignored this base heel and trying to sound as though I were "in the know" I said, "What are you firing HE or WP?" "Pamphlets," came the answer. "Oh, Jesus" I thought to myself. "Now we'll get artillery for sure". I snarled at the pair and buried myself in my hole the rest of the afternoon.

The Co. sustained one casualty while in this position. Ralph Cordello, AR man of the third squad 2nd platoon dove into his fox-hole about dusk one evening when some artillery started coming in and got a deep gash in his leg from a jutting root. He had to be evacuated immediatly. Cordello was a crack AR man and a great loss to the company.

"They're here!" I looked out of the hole to see about 5 guys besides Mudd who had just yelled. We'd been waiting all afternoon for relief and it had finally come. It was just about dark and you could hardly see these men. "What outfit are you guys from?" Adams asked one of them. "35th divison," answered a G. I. "35th? What army?" "Why the third of course. What army are you guys from?" "The 7th", Mudd replied. Almost simultaneously both groups said. "What in the hell goes on here." The fact that we were being relieved by a division out of another army rather mystified us. We never knew there we were going next when we Manuel and Marengi set out for the creek as soon as L Co's OP was about. We had relieved the 180th Infantry 45th divison on these hills, and before this we were always working with some 7th army division such as the 36th or the 42nd or the 14th armored or some division we felt we knew, but the 35th was a stranger to us. "Where did you guys come from", Adams asked? "Up by Saarburg", one answered. "How was it"? Mudd asked the one who had just spoken. "Boy, it was really rough", he answered. As he spoke there was a certain tone in his voice which indicated he was trying to impress us. Just as we were about to leave one of the men came over to us and said. "I'm the squad leader. Don't mind these guys, they just came over. I'm the only original man left in my squad and these new guys try to act like a big deal." That's okay fella it doesn't make a damn to us. With that we left for the company CP and as we went along we picked up the rest of the platoon. When we got back by the company Lt. Doane told us we were going to march a mile and a half and then entruck. After a long wait in the cold night we finally started out. As we got to the bottom of the hill there was a sharp steep curve to the left with a tank sitting by it. The tanker said to me. "Watch yourself there, it's pretty slippery"

less on his own trying to find the best places to walk to keep from slipping. We were well dispersed because of artillery so each man was more or less the danger of that little patch of road, and it meant quite a bit to us to avoid one painful fall; I felt very grateful to him. I wish I could have let him know how much this little bit of trouble he was going to mean, but I was already well past him before I had a chance to say anything. I felt he must realize how much it meant to us because of the fact he took the trouble to tell us. It's funny how much little things like that mean to you when life is such a monotony of suffering. After marching well over a mile and a half we realized that again the old story that we would entruck was a lie. We had become used to dissappointments so we steeled ourselves for a march of almost any length. We had also heard we would stay in houses that night but we suspected that this was also a lie.

At this time we all had packs because we were ordered to get one at the barn at Weitersweiler. They were the new type and we suspected they had been designed by some German agent to break down the morale as well as the back of the American soldier. At least they succeeded in doing a fair job of both. They made a march of over a mile an ordeal and the snow and ice didn't make things any easier. After about an hour every step became a battle of your body against your will. Your shoulders and legs screamed. We can't go any farther! but there was a steady drone of your will power which answered, keep going, and we always kept going somehow. We marched down the mountains across a valley and started up the other side, or rather stumbled up. Finally we stopped along the trail with woods on both sides. Then the order came down to spend the night there. Some of the men got a few pine bows and we cleared the snow away, laid our shelter halves down and tried to get some rest. Just before we arrived here we were all issued sleeping bags which were something new to us, and we were anxious to try them out. The next morning I found that I would as soon have blankets as the bag was cold and I felt hemmed in. If we had to get up in a hurry for something we would certainly be in a hell of a fix. At any rate I didn't sleep worth a damn and my bed partner Jr. Buhl was very disgusted with me and asked me several times if I had never used a sleeping bag before where upon I would loudly answer "Hell No". The next morning only after shaking several layers of snow from over me I rose and was about ready to put on my boots, but it was no use because they were frozen stiff and the tops were flat where I had used them as a pillow. Several of the boys had started small fires and I walk in my stocking feet to the closest one and thawed my boots out enough to put them on.

After this little ordeal I proceeded to roll up Juniors 40 or 50 blankets that he had policed up, heaven only knows where, and threw the roll on the pile where the rest of them were. Jr. had gone with Capt.

Keith and Sgt. Yarus on a recon flight to Lichtenberg. We made breakfast of K rations and those who managed to steal a couple of extra boxes had a little more to eat than the others. We called them chicken shits if they didn't readily agree to share the loot. For the remainder of the morning we spent trying to enlarge the fires and keep warm between kindling hunting trips.

About 1130 the jeep came up with the rations and chow and most of all the mail. We had a swell meal which consisted of chicken (I got the neck as usual) mashed spuds, pears and butterscotch pudding. Mess Sgt Joe Previti was very jolly and it was good to hear him yell greetings to all the guys and ask how they were making out. Whenever he did this we always knew he had some sort of rumor up his sleeve as to where our next move would take us. After chow we washed our mess gears with melted snow and read our mail and some tried to dry there socks over the failing fires.

Lichtenberg was a quaint little town and as soon as the company arrived we took over front line positions as we've done in all the previous places. What we were wondering about was when in the Hell were we going to get relieved for a change and get back to some sort of rest camp. We were in a defensive position and we took from the left flank of the town to the center of town and from there a tank unit took the line from the center over to a huge castle which guarded the approaches on the right. The company took eight hour watches and when we weren't on guard we were back in the houses drying our clothes and grabbing a bite to eat. On one occasion we went up on the right flank where the tankmen had an OP in the castle tower. The castle was a huge affair built by the Norman conquerors and circling it was a mammoth moat about fifty feet wide and twenty feet deep with iron spikes coming up from the bottom to insure death to anyone trying to escape or enter.

It was while we were here at Lichtenberg that we had a few changes in our company staff. Lt. Doan left the Company as Ex. Officer to resume the duties of Bn. S-1. This brought Lt. Wilson in from the Third Platoon to become Ex Officer. T/Sgt. Schindler was sent back to the rear to be commissioned and this action left the Third Platoon weak in leaders. S Sgt. Layne was made platoon Sgt. and between him and an occasional visit from Lt. Wilson the platoon continued to function as a fighting unit.

Some of the boys were eager to look over the place as it was the first real house we moved into for quarters. It could easily be seen the people living in the place had moved out in a hurry as food could be found set on the tables ready to eat. In the morning we received hot chow which was a big help and we were pretty well settled and got the score on things by then. Things were pretty quiet until several artillery and mortar shells fell all over town. Besides our guard we went to one

end of town to dig defensive positions that afternoon and had hardly started until Jerry threw a load of mortar shells at us. Many were very near misses so we dug our holes quickly and moved back to our quarters. No one was hit. We could obviously be seen easily here by the Germans. The next day we dug another line of defense at another part of town for security in case of an attack. After several days we were all convinced we were having a pretty good deal and having a pretty good set up. We were getting hot chow every day which really meant a lot and the warm fires in the house were a relief after guard duty. Some of the men were desperately longing for pancakes for some time so they decided, this was the chance to do something about it. The next day Joe Previti came through with some batter for the gang and after a little work I can say we had a 'fine bunch of flapjacks, which we all eagerly devoured. Some said they could eat them until they were sick, and some of them did. Pancakes and coffee was a meal we really yearned for then, and it really hit the spot.

One night while we were at Lichtenberg word came down from Regt. that the Second Platoon would have to send out a patrol that night. Lt. Beck picked out men from each the first and second squads and three men from the third. He also wanted Tilley the platoon guide to go along as asst. patrol leader. At the time some of the men were on guard while others were asleep. The men he picked were therefore taken off guard or awakened then the men assembled at the platoon CP. Lt. Beck introduced the men to a chap called "Lucky" who was in the I and R platoon from regiment. He was to go along on the patrol too. It seemed this was Lucky's job; just going out on patrols. Beck then oriented the men. He said the mission was to reconnoiter the enemy positions to the front of L company and if possible get an enemy information prisoner. We knew the position of an enemy motor position and perhaps the prisoner could be picked up near this position. However, the main thing was to discover the main line of enemy resistance and the location of any alternate defense the same night on the same mission because they were unable to reach the enemy positions because of an impassible river. About 2300 hrs. the ten men including the I & R man mounted jeeps and drove to L company's CP. The patrol was to pass through L company's positions so they offered to supply logs to cross the river. This caused some delay but after a while the logs appeared. When they arrived at L company's MLR, Lt. Beck sent the scouts to look the creek over and see if it was possible to cross. It was an extremely bright moon light night with snow about 2 to 3 feet deep. Because of the bright moonlight it was possible to remain at L Company's forward positions and watch the scout's progress. The scouts, Manuel and Marengi set out for the creek as soon as L Co. OP was reached. They had to go down an extremely steep hill of about 80 yards, which was lightly wooded. They next crossed a rather large road. In front of them was a large open field some 150 yds, wide which was a large river bed. They came up to the bank which was rather bushy and

about seven feet deep. Again they had to slide on their butts as they had done on the large hill in front of L Co. They crossed the clearing until they came to the river proper. At that point it was too wide to cross so they went down stream to find a possible place to jump it. They found the spot about 4 to 5 feet wide and jumped the creek that L Co's patrol had reported "impassible." The scouts crossed the rest of the clearing and another road and concealed themselves in the edge of the woods on the opposite slope. The patrol had watched the scouts and noticed the crossing place. The men then set out and crossed the stream one at a time. The whole patrol reassembled with the scouts in the woods. Here Lt. Beck had a conference with his men. He said he thought the Krauts were probably about 200 yds. from where they were. He again emphasized the importance of silence and for God's sake don't cough! (One man, Paris had been left behind at L Co's CP, because he had a cough.) Lt. Beck consulted his compass and map and in a diamond formation they set out through the light woods toward a fire break.

In the formation Manuel and Marengi were in front as scouts, followed by Lt. Beck and Sgt. Tilley. Koch and Portuese were on the right as flank security. Left flank men were Krasinsky and Da Vee while Lucky (the I&R man) and Hill guarded the rear.

When the patrol found the fire break they had traveled some 75 yds. Again they changed their course and guided along the fire break. Naturally progress was slow to insure silence, and the scouts stopped often to listen. After some 200 yds. the woods thinned out so the patrol leader stopped the patrol and sent the left flank men out to see if they were near a road, because according to his map there should be one not far away. Polack Krasinsky and Da Vee found the road and also found it well beaten down with German foot tracks. They went up and down the trail about 25 yds. and Polack wanted to follow it up, however, they decided to report to Lt. Beck first. As soon as they got back Tilley wanted to go back. "Your not going to take my place!" Polack said. Da Vee let Tilley go in his place, so Tilley and Polack went back to the trail. As they followed it they came upon freshly dug, but unoccupied holes. The information they had set out for was starting to be discovered. They now knew the location of alternate German defenses. The time Lt. Beck had allotted them run out so they returned to the patrol with their information. Lt. Beck, again oriented, moved the patrol forward.

The patrol had moved some 150 yds. when the scouts heard a cough. They silently cursed someone in the patrol, but when they had taken another couple of steps they froze, realizing the cough had come from their right front. It must be a German. Manuel spotted his head and shoulders. He was in a hole about 60 yds away. He pointed him out to Marengi who went back and told Lt. Beck. "Should we try to take him?" asked Marengi. "Give it a try, but don't get yourselves in trouble" Beck told him. Before he had the scouts leave Lt. Beck scouted

about 50yds. On each side of the patrol in front the German positions. He returned to the patrol and took the left flank men over to the left in front of a light machine gun position. They couldn't see anyone in the position but Lt. Beck said, "If by any chance they don't have a machine gun there, they're dumb as hell" and no one suspected Germans of being dumb. The right flank men took up positions behind a bush about 30 yds. from the German the scouts had spotted. Then Manuel and Marengi set out to try and get the Kraut. They moved around his hole to the left and approached to about 15yds. from the rear, but the space between them and Heinie was too open to cross so Manuel was going to find a better spot to approach the hole from. Just as he started to move the intense silence was broken. "Halt!" The German must have heard something. Then he said "Demi Tasse", that must have been the pass word. Manuel and Marengi had nothing to say so Jerry fired. "Take off Marengi," Manuel said. As soon as Marengi started to move the German fired again. Then Manuel took off and returned to the Patrol. "Where is Marengi?" Manuel asked. He had told him to leave, but the patrol said he had never returned. They figured he must have been killed or captured. They waited for about five minutes in hopes they he would return. Finally Lt. Beck didn't dare wait any longer as the Krauts would return with a patrol to investigate the noise. The Kraut had fired four or five times more, but he couldn't see anything.

Just about then Lt. Beck, who was suffering from the GI's at the time said he had "to go" right then of all times! The men formed a sort of horseshoe around him and he relieved himself. I often wondered what the krauts thought the next morning when they saw the pile right in front of their positions After this the patrol withdrew by the same route they had come.

As they were returning Koch was right after Manuel to jump the creek. Just after he jumped he looked back as Polack threw his rifle in front of himself, jumped and landed right in the middle of the stream in the water up to his waste. Before this Koch had slipped coming down the hill from the German positions and broke a couple of ribs. The patrol then scrambled up the steep hill in front of L Co. only to meet Marengi.

Despite the fact everyone had given him up and Manuel and Polack had already decided how to split up his PX ration the next day (Manuel was to get the cigarettes, and Polack the chocolate). He was still very much alive.

When the Germans had started firing he took off, but ran so fast he wasn't sure he was going in the right direction. He felt he was running deeper into the Kraut lines, however he came across his old tracks and went back to L Co's CP. Here he found everyone asleep so he waited until the rest of the patrol got back. The entire patrol then went back

to the Company CP and reported there findings to Capt. Keith. The entire patrol was gone well over four hours, and for the next hour or so they were smoking cigarettes by the pack.

The men were completely wet from all the snow, quite cold and pissed off because they had stood out like a sore thumbs against the white snow with the dark green uniforms. "Why in the hell don't we have white hoods and uniforms like the Krauts?", everyone kept asking.

Everyone laughed about Lt. Beck having to relieve himself right there with the Germans, and it was then that Polack told of what his GI's did to him. He was lying behind a tree in front of the LMG position when that irrepressible urge came over him, however, he couldn't move for fear of not only revealing himself but the whole patrol, and a machine gun firing at them was the last thing anyone wanted. Polack just lay there and out it came. It was funny afterwards, but at the time Polack was in no mood to laugh. Between that and falling in the river Polack was only to glad to ride back into Lichtenberg and call it a night. The next day Koch had to be evacuated because of the ribs he had broken the night before. Basium also left the platoon at Lichtenberg, because of appendicitis.

Our morale was really knocked for a loop when we got the word that we were to leave Lichtenberg. We really had been living swell for a change. After every tour of guard we would have coffee and toast and always plenty to eat!

We formed on the road and waited a little while, for it wasn't quite dark enough yet. Finally we moved out and down the road behind town. On either side we could see that the road had been shelled quite frequently and the Krauts were on the ball as far this target was concerned. We didn't know where we were going, but we were on our way. It had snowed heavily while we were in Lichtenberg and the road was in a hell of a shape as usual, and there was always a jeep going one way or another to make us move off the road and off into the deep snow. We must have gone some two hours when we realized we were getting close to the place we had bivouaced on our way to Lichtenberg. No it couldn't be true. We weren't going to stay here another night were we? This was a simple question and soon answered; yes! we were to bivouac here for the remainder of the night and in the morning after chow we would board trucks and take off. It was one of those cold nights and it was hard to believe we could bed down here and actually keep warm, but we had done it before so we can do it again they told us. We were awakened while it was still dark and after rolling our rolls we moved on down the road where we were supposed to have chow. Some hot coffee would sure taste good. We soon came in sight of some trucks and could see evident flashes that told us the cooks were beginning to light the stoves. We dispersed and waited. It was starting to grow light now and we were as cold as could be. Someone started a small fire, but

it was immediatly ordered out. Then we noticed that the stoves we were watching had been put out and were being loaded back on the trucks. Now what the hell? we waited about a half hour and finally moved out onto the road again and down to where the trucks were waiting. These we boarded and sat waiting until they moved out. Only then did we feel as though maybe we would get somewhere but we didn't know where. One of the fellas in our truck poured his helmet about half full of gasoline and lit it, then held the frozen part of his feet up to the hot blaze. This ruins the helmet but what the hell, frost would ruin the feet too, so lots of guys did it. We must have been riding about two hours when we pulled to a halt in the center of a small town. We detrucked and stood in the road waiting for headquarters to find us a place to go and get out of the weather. As usual it was a snafu deal and we stood on the road about an hour. There was a beer hall on one side and several of the boys crowded inside and hugged a large stove that threw little heat. Finally some bird dog from Co. Hdqrs. came and assigned us to our billets.

The Weapons Platoon was placed in a house with an upstairs that looked like a barracks and which had no fire. The guy told us he had no wood, but the boys went out after some and returned shortly with it by the arm load. We got a roaring fire going in no time at all and we dried out the inner soles from our shoe pacs and warmed our frozen hands. In a little while chow was ready and we hurried down and got our mess gears filled with breakfast and lunch together. We were starved. After chow we sat around and made ourselves comfortable, but something was stirring and we know we would be on the move soon again

Phase Six

Exit Task Force Herren

After a long truck ride and the hike that followed we finally came down a long hill and looked down upon the small town of St. Louis. We entered the town and for the first night we were put up in a huge abandoned glass factory. The building was very dirty and cold because of the windows that were missing as a result of the artillery. We sealed them up the best we could with cardboard from our ten in one rations and proceeded to bed down for the night. The following morning after a hot meal we found some better quarters in some house, but we were rather crowded. The civilians apparently didn't have too much to eat and living in the same quarters they looked forward to our chow coming at every meal. When we had some food left over we would give it to them and they made good use of it.

Our mission in St. Louis was to guard all the bridges in the vicinity and establish road blocks on all roads leading into the town. Also there were several mine fields in the area that were to be guarded by the company. The platoons stayed in town only long enough to get well settled and then prepared to move out to our outposts surrounding the town. The Weapons Platoon was sorted out in squads and placed in the most suitable quarters to be found near the guard positions. We heard later that each squad was well satisfied and had a good deal, and only one of our posts was not situated in a house, but the boys didn't complain so we figured they must have made out fairly well. Most of the boys talked of how the people had fed them between meals and it was about the time of the month when the officers class 6 (whiskey) ration was due, so they were sweating it out.

The road blocks were already to be blown and on the bridges the charges were all set to go. It was here that we were in battalion reserve and attached to the 100th Division. We spent a week at our outposts and were then relieved by K company. We returned to St. Louis and began having classes and marches in the mornings and then in the afternoons there were shows and once the Red Cross showed up with coffee and doughnuts. The girls were a pleasant sight and very cheerful. St. Louis was built around the large crystal factory and most of the buildings had been built for the workers. One Frenchman, a barber, where we lived, had been an employee here and had a catalogue of the

many products the factory had produced in peace time. This factory we found out was the famous St. Louis crystalleries, the largest crystal works in the world and as we passed through its spacious halls we saw many beautiful pieces of work. They had made everything imaginable that could be made from crystal.

At this time Lt. Westbrook, formerly a sergeant in K Co. joined our Co. as Platoon leader of the Third Platoon. This brought our officers up to five. We were still short an officer for the First Platoon, however, the next day that position was filled by Lt. Don Meyers, also a former NCO from the Bn. and this brought us up to our TO officers strength.

The next day after the company spent its first night in St. Louis at the crystal factory, the 2nd platoon was ordered to march to the town of Lemburg a few kilometers to the north. Lt. Beck found a CP in a small house behind the church and the three squads crowded in. The 398th Inf. of the 100th Division was in the town and we knew we were to help them in some way. About nightfall Lt. Beck set out to see if he could find Major somebody who could tell him what to do. It was a cold night with deep snow and the men had no desire to set out into the night and set up an OP or anything else.

We all sat around a stove and tried to forget we might have to go out on the line at any minute. About midnight we heard the front door open and we knew Lt. Beck had returned. He went into the room where his CP was and we all sat silent in the other room awaiting what we thought was our doom. The suspense mounted and finally we sent someone into the CP to find out what the story was. He returned a few minutes later and said Lt. Beck had searched all over but could find no one who knew where we should go. However, he had run into an officer with some liquor and apparently they had drowned their sorrows together because Lt. Beck was half crooked. Just about that time I heard water dripping. I couldn't figure out what it was, then someone said it was thawing. I couldn't believe this as I didn't suspect the thaw for at least another month. I went out to make sure and there before me I saw the snow, slowly melting. It was one of the most wonderful things I have ever seen. It meant the end of the dreaded and hated snow. As we talked it over later the sound of dripping water in Lemburg heralding the thaw was one of the best sounds we have ever heard.

The next day after the company spent its first night in St. Louis and thanks to the improved weather Lt. Beck was able to find where we were supposed to go. Each squad was to guard an underpass the 100th Division Engineers had set charges on to blow, in case we had to retreat. They had also set charges connected by primer cord in all the trees along the roads to cause blocks. The 2nd squad went into a house on the line with B Company of the 398th. They watched the underpass on the railroad from an upstairs window. The Germans were on the other side of the RR embankment so they couldn't go to the underpass itself. One night a sentry came running into the house to report he had seen a German come through the underpass and stand there with his hands up. They

all ran out and yelled at the German. Finally they fired two magazines from an AR into him. The next morning they found out they had fired into two trees. To make sure Da Vee went out with two other Sgts. from B Co. There were no Germans, but the trees were quite full of holes. Basgall said that was typical of the 100th men. He said they couldn't sit in a room five minutes before they thought they heard someone outside. The first squad, which was then led by Wilkie, found themselves the possessors of a large hole from which to guard their underpass on the highway. The squad had only five men in it and they improved the hole with excelsior which Junior Buhl brought them from St. Louis and a stove they policed up and settled down to keep house. The third squad which was the largest at that time with seven men had, a road block at a RR underpass about a mile west of the town. As the line ran along the East side of town this made the third squad rear echelon, about a mile and a half from the line. They stayed in a restaurant and had a fine kitchen to prepare their 10 in 1 rations in. After about a week of the road blocks at Lemberg the platoon moved back with the rest of the Company at St. Louis where we stayed with families and generally lived our ass off.

On Feb. 10th we packed up and took off from the town of St. Louis. We were told we would board trucks after we were just outside of town. a good story anyway. "It was good for the men's morale." It was one of those nice spring days though, the kind that used to make you feel you would like to go for a walk in the country, but not with everything you owned piled up on your back like an ass. The hill going out of town was a long and tiresome one but along toward noon we could finally look up and see the rolling terrain ahead instead of the now clouding sky. We took a break at the top and razzed the artillery which was dug in here for awhile. "Combat men, that was good.. The closest they ever got to combat was about four miles. Kitchen trucks in the area and a stove in every tent, sounded like a Hoover speech. What a life." We were about to have a war of our own right there. When the break was over and we left them moaning something about the "lousey bums in the Infantry!" The sky was thickly clouded by now and a mixed snow and rain began to fall. The wind grew stronger and finally we found ourselves in a hell of a blizzard. The men put up their parka hoods and trugged on. "Yeah we would board trucks just outside, of town, like hell we would." I gathered the boys were kinda. P. O. d. We passed through Montbronn and the people would stick their heads out the windows and stare like animals in a cage. After awhile the storm blew over and we came to the place where the trucks should have been. Snafu! They handed out some ancient C Rations, like we used to have on maneuvers back home and we made heat from our heat blocks and ate a very lousey meal. Until the trucks came we sat around on the cold ground and tried to keep warm. The afternoon was getting old when they finally arrived and we boarded and took off in an orderly fashion. It was dark now and most of the boys slept a little, their heads

bobbing up and down as we jolted over the bumpy roads. On rides like these the boys talked little and smoked heavily; trying to knock themselves to slumber it seemed.

When the advanced party reached Buschbach we found out that we were still in a defensive position. We relieved Baker Co. of the 276th Infantry. They got pretty well chewed up while they were in these positions. It seems that they made an attack and succeeded in taking their objective only after a bitter struggle. After taking the hill the Germans moved two rifle platoons in behind them and two 88's and opened fire. B Co. had to withdraw or be wiped out. When I Co. moved into position, L Co. was on the left and Easy Co. was on the right, with King Co. back in reserve. We were pretty worried about the krauts that were to our front, because of the beating they had handed Baker.

When the rest of the Co. had come to Buschbach one of our trucks slid off into a ditch and couldn't get out so we were soon walking the rest of the way. The night was very black and it was all you could do to make out the man to the front. We were halted once at a bridge and then continued on our way. To enter a town in the middle of the night while it is very dark is distracting and puzzeling to say the least. We were to proceed to the C P and here we would find a guide who would show us where our quarters would be while we were here. We found the CP and a noncom took the platoons around to their respective quarters. During the long walk we were getting well turned around and there were murmurs of, "where in the hell is this jerk taking us?" and "why in hell don't he get oriented before he goes exploring?" It did seem as though we were lost as we went along stumbling over wires and mines in the road. Finally at our quarters which were over crowded we slept on a kitchen floor near a door which led to a barn below. The smell of cow manure was strong and though it was cold we slept well because, as usual we were tired.

A few days later one of the cows had a calf and there was a continual bawling during the night. I wanted to watch the calf being born, because it would be the first one I had ever seen, so I went down into the barn with the young 4 F who lived there. I was prepared to see a gruesome sight when he decided we had better go across the street and get another farmer to aid in the operation or what ever you do when a cow is having young. We found the neighbor nearly ready for bed but upon asking him, he started dressing right away. By the time we got back into the barn the calf was already born and lying on the straw looking at us like he had been there for months. He was a cute little fellow and I thought at the time what a swell steak he would be in a couple of days. Just enough for one GI. Pfc. Boatwright related later that the calf had been named Abraham Lincoln because of its beng born on the 12th February. In the town of Buschbach we were only about three thousand yards away from another town occupied by the enemy and the company's outpost of machine guns was nearly half way there down in a valley where they could cover a long uphill slope with grazing fire. Here

we were very short of men even with the few new replacements that had come in. There were mortar men on the machine guns standing guard tours for them during the night and the remainder of the mortar men dug positions to fire on the draw and road leading to the town. About the only excitement we had during our stay in Buschbach was a burp gunner who would fire about one clip at two different times during the night. Aiming always at our machine gun positions but always too high. The tracers would make their long arc up into the night and down again to land somewhere over on a hill to our left. The mortar section set up three flares around the positions they had dug and were prepared to meet any enemy patrols in the area, but the next day our own men set them all off even though we had given them warning and pointed out where they were. The first one to be set off was by Pfc. Demby who "wasn't sure where they were and knew he could see the wire before he walked into it" — he thought. The next one was set off by Sgt. Derr who didn't know where they were and the last was set off by a group of men running a problem one day under the direction of Lt. Wilson who didn't know it was there. After this we took the others out in dispair—it was no use.

When the 3rd Platoon arrived they were shown an outpost which they took over immediately plus some other positions. They were also to have a roving patrol in the town.

The first night no one got much sleep for the outfit, we were relieving didn't leave until morning. However, if you weren't on post there wasn't much of a place to sleep anyway. The next morning we got hot chow and were zeroed in on the place. All during the winter the rumor kept cropping up that we were going to be pulled off the line and go to the rear and that there the division would be organized as a whole. Until we got to Buschbach the 274 (like the other two Regiments) had been on its own, attached to different divisions. And now the long awaited organizing of all the elements of the division was taking place on the line. Our hope of getting off the line for a while and going to the rear to form up was blasted very neatly. We found out that the 70th was the left flank division of the 7th Army and that we had all three of our regiments on line with us, in the center, the 276th on the left and the 275th on the right. Task Force Herren was no more.

The Third Platoon handled the outpost and it was about 1400 yds. In front of the company overlooking the towns of Behren and Kerbach both of which were in enemy hands. We were careful when going to and from these positions, because we could easily be seen by the enemy due to the open ground we had to go across. We had good observation from this high ground and could see Behren and the surrounding terrain very well especially with our field glasses. We had three positions here and communication with the rest of the company so we reported in all the activity in the area. The weather was cold and rainy almost all the time and the six hour reliefs went very slowly, most of

the time and it was really nice to get back to town for some warm chow and something to drink. We had stoves in our quarters and we dried out our clothes as soon as possible.

Every night we sent out a patrol to the town of Behren about 2 kilometers to the north of Buschbach. The patrol would investigate the situation in the town and the surrounding country and bring back an information prisoner if one was needed. The patrols were variously led by Lt. Westbrook, Sgt Palmer, Sgt Layne, Sgt Detlison, and I believe almost every squad leader had the opportunity to lead at least one patrol during our stay. These patrols did a fine job usually getting the information they set out for. This information was essential for the attack that was to follow.

While we were in these positions we were confronted with a very clever enemy. Every night he would bring a burp gun in about 500 yds, of our OP and open fire, in the meantime they would send about three or four men to within 50yds. of our MLR and here they would wait, hoping we would return the fire of the burp gun so that they could pick out our gun positions and knock them out either with artillery or mortar fire. We fired at these men who dared come up so close, but always with rifle fire, not to disclose our automatic weapons positions. On these patrols that we dispatched every night we learned from the civilians that the main German line was in the hills to the rear of Behren and that the town of Behren was free of soliders, except at night when they would send out 20 men patrols.

One day Lt. Ortago from Regimental Cannon Co. used our OP to direct fire on some woods, which were believed to be occupied by Krauts. He threw in a couple of WP shells and to our surprise we saw Krauts taking off in every direction. It seems that we caught a Co. in bivouac and better yet, caught them off guard. He threw shells at this position until there ceased to be any activity. "On one occasion while at the OP a bullet came whizzing over my head," related Pfc. Cearly. "I dove for the rock pile which was about 20 feet away and I said to Pfc. Bailey, 'What the hell goes on here?' and Bailey replied, 'Beats the hell out of me, But I don't think it was Krauts shooting from behind us.' Further investigation proved that some of our own men believing we were Krauts opened up on us. "It's a good thing that they only opened up with rifle fire instead of machine gun, or we would have been dead ducks."

On the night of 15. Feb 1st Sgt. Kiefer asked the Captain if it would be all right if he took a patrol out toward Behren that night. After Capt. Keith gave the OK he wanted two men to go so Pfc's Hershberger and Harlan volunteered. Kiefer borrowed a tommy gun from the Weapons Platoon and the other two men were armed with grease guns and they set out for the town of Behren. All the men on the line were warned to be on the lookout for these three men. After passing the outpost they started out across the open plain. They planned on being gone about two hours and the men were told not to fire if they

saw the three man patrol. Their mission was to find enemy positions that were dug in around a road junction and if possible to capture a Kraut. It was a foggy, rainy night, visibility zero. You couldn't see your hand in front of your face. They followed the road down to within 100yds of the road junction and ran across a road block made of fallen branches across the road. They climbed over the branches, because they were afraid the ground on either side of the road was mined. Sgt. Kiefer went over first and took about three steps when he ran into a mine. Luckily it didn't go off and he warned the other two men to stay where they were. After crawling out of the branches they crawled around the mine field on their hands and knees to a place where they thought it was safe to stand up. They proceeded on to the road junction and found the positions that they were looking for. They waited in these holes for about 20 minutes hoping that some one would come and they would capture them but nothing came of it.

They started back the same way they had come. About half way back to our lines they heard someone whispering. The men dropped to their knees and listened. They waited for about five minutes and the whispering continued. "Who's there!" bellowed Sgt. Kiefer and his question was promptly answered by rifle fire which penetrated Harlan's cartridge belt, but luckily missed him. Sgt. Kiefer then opened up with his Tommy gun and sprayed the area where the noises were coming from. They figured that they had met an enemy patrol which was on its way back to its own lines. Suddenly he heard a voice yell out, "What's up Murphy, are you hit?" Sgt. Kiefer hearing the men speak English, again said, "Who is that?" One man replied, "we're from Easy Company and I got some men hit." The three men ran only 20 ft. to the supposed enemy patrol and started giving the men first aid. Two men were hit bad and the other just grazed. One of the men from Easy went back after a doctor. The men were evacuated and Sgt. Kiefer and his men returned to the Co. CP. It was a hectic night for those three men. Harlan was really shaky when he was grazed by that bullet through his cartridge belt. Sgt. Kiefer blamed himself for the mishap but it wasn't his fault. He asked who was there and nobody answered but only fired at him. Anyone would have done the same thing. The next day the two men who were badly wounded died. After consulting a map we found what the trouble was. It so happened that the boundry between Item Co and Easy ran through the road junction that our patrol had set out for. Easy Co. sent out a patrol also and the two patrols met and the mishap took place. The boundries were changed the next day and from then on all patrols were coordinated and all the companies on the line were notified as to what company was sending out a patrol, what their mission was and how long they would be gone. It was a high price to pay before someone finally woke up to the fact that patrols have to be very carefully coordinated and controlled.

Phase Seven

The Big Push

The British and Canadians were pushing, the other three armies were back on the offensive but the Seventh Army had been stopped since December. All Winter it had been, "holding on, shortning the line, getting pushed off, small gains, patrol activity, pulling back, a battalion cut off and isolated, etc." Now the snow was gone, our divisions were organized and our supply was built up. The others were moving and it was our turn. On 17 Feb the 7th Army pushed off on a drive that was going to try to end the war before the Summer was over.

But that was the "big picture", we didn't know much nor care much about it. We were worrying about the Germans dug in North of Behren.

On the 16th Feb. things began happening at I company's CP. It looked more like an insurance office than a place where plans were being made to kill Germans. Col. Landstrom came up several times that day with Capt. Myler his S-3 and various other staff officers. They had maps of every scale spread out on the table with overlays and colored pencils. There were officers there from Cannon Co. from the 882nd F.A. and Anti-tank company. All that day they planned an attack which was to take place soon. The word got out and everyone was whispering, "Have you heard?" "yeah, tomorrow or the next day I guess." General Herren came up to the CP and talked things over. After Capt. Keith oriented his officers as to what was coming off the big picture came into view. Our mission was to attack the enemy on the other side of Behren and to take the high ground they were holding. The division objective was the high ground overlooking Saarbrücken. We were to attack the next morning at 0730 after a 15 minute artillery preparation which was to be layed down by our own 882nd F. A. King company was going to occupy Behren and the next morning we would pass through King company and attack. Love company was to be on our left and Charlie on our right. The men were issued extra ammo and K rations and told to get some rest. We all crawled into our sacks, but it's pretty hard to sleep much the night before an attack. The old

men think, "I wonder if my turn is coming up tomorrow? If I do get it, I hope it's not bad." The new men are too confused to think anything. They just wonder. Everyone has an indescribable quiver in his chest and hands. The night before is worse in many ways than the actual attack. It's not fun, it's not thrilling, it's just lousey.

The morning of 17 Feb the company was awakened at 0130. It was pitch dark as the platoons marched to the company CP before pushing off. We had scarcely left our quarters when the first barrage of 88's started falling in the vicinity of the CP, but fortunately none of them had our number. After milling around the CP with the usual confusion the company crossed the LD and started to Behren 3 kilometers away. K company had secured the battalion LD at Behren and I company was to pass through K company and cross the LD and go into the attack. The morning was very foggy and every heart beat a little faster as we walked through the streets of Behren and saw the dead horses and cows lying around and had that familiar sweet stench all around us. There was a queer feeling to it all and no one doubted that before long things would pop.

During the march from Buschbach to Behren four men from the 2nd platoon, Mudd, Manuel, Martiniez, and Corrigan were pulled out of the column to guard the rear of the Bn. We waited by the side of the road for Mike Company (which was the last Company) to pass us. They were strewn out and every time we would start out some more would come trailing down the road, straining under the heavy load of their 81 mortars and heavy machine guns; They were having a tough time keeping up the pace of the riflemen in the lead. Finally, we fell in behind some mortar men. We followed them into Behren. When we hit the town we curved around to the right and they stopped. We stopped. Nothing happened, so Mudd went up and other than the mortar section no one was to be seen. "Where's the Battalion?" he asked. One of them answered, he didn't know. He said they were supposed to set up their mortars someplace around here, and he said they had left the remainder of the Bn. some five minutes before. Behind us was Jr. Buhl in his jeep. He was carrying some long poles to use as a foot bridge to cross a tank trap. We went back and asked him if he knew where everybody was. "Hell No!" he said. "I've just been following you guys." We then found out that the mortar section didn't quite know where they were, but they did know they weren't supposed to be with the Bn. So here we were four riflemen guarding a Bn, whose whereabouts was unknown.

Then Col. Landstrom, the Bn Commander came down the road with Lt. Zucker his S-2 (Intelligence Officer). Here, we thought, were the boys who would know where everybody was if anybody did. The Col. told us just where to find the Bn. He even offered to go part way. So we set off, but after awhile it was obvious we weren't headed anyplace in particular.

We stopped and from the conversation between the Col. and his S-2 it became evident they were just about as lost as we were. So now instead of four riflemen, a mortar section, one jeep and driver being lost, the commander and his intelligence officer were lost too. As we were walking along one road all of a sudden a voice rang out from our left. "Halt! Who's there?" We told him and he said. "Jesus you guys scared me! I'm from K Company and you guys are the first Americans I've seen." We left him, wondering if that meant he had seen a lot of Krauts or what. Well at any rate he hadn't seen I Company. We wandered a while more, checking with the North Star every now and then just for the hell of it. After about three-quarters of an hour of this we found the battalion sitting beside a road leading out of Behren.

The First Platoon was the point of the battalion as we were the leading platoon of the company in a formation of platoons in echelon to the right rear. The platoon's route took it over ground which afforded little or no cover or concealment, in fact, it was a wheat field which was just coming out of the ground. The first squad was on the left, the second on the right, the third in support. We soon turned off the main road and crossed a large open field to our right. The company was a long double file going down a trail through a big field. It was still dark and the fog was thick. We should be near the enemy now. We were too far off on our right. A machine gun opened up on our right and luckily the burst was high. We hugged the dirt immediately and waited. The next burst was a little better aimed and just barely cleared the men lying on the ridge beside the trail. The riflemen were soon at work. An effort was made to out flank the position while our machine guns opened up to draw fire. We must have lain there for nearly an hour when the kraut firing finally ceased. From the woods came a voice in fair English, "Americans, Americans, We will give you ten minutes to lay down your arms and surrender, otherwise you will all die." He gave us this angle with some variations twice over and no sooner had he finished than someone fired a clip of AR ammo and hit his target. The machine guns and riflemen moved up slowly toward the edge of the woods dodging machine gun fire and Panzerfaust rockets. The krauts had wire strung through the woods and once Sgt. Anderson saw a young kid peek out from behind a tree near the wire with a burp gun and Sgt. Andy's perfect aim dropped him immediately. The mortar section was dropping rounds in the woods under the direction of Sgt. Kiefer. One wise officer was laughing when he came out of the trench with two men and surrendered, but the boys soon squelched him.

After a heavy artillery barrage the Third Platoon moved forward with our leader Lt. Westbrook. As we reached the knoll of a hill where there was barbed wire entanglements, there was much confusion on our left flank because of the enemy fire that platoon was drawing. Lt. Westbrook called over Pfc. Murray, who was close by with the Walkie-

Talkie, to contact the platoon on our left flank to find out the situation. After trying to do so without results, he handed the radio to the Lt. who also found it was snafued. Lt. Westbrook finding the radio of no use took off to the left to find out the situation for himself. The fog was now lifting and we could easily see the men over there were becoming disorganized and confused from the enemy's fire which had pinned them down. All this time we were moving forward through the barbed-wire to a trench near the edge of the woods. One after another we moved forward jumping into the trench and and sinking up to our knees in a soft gooeey mud, which made it almost impossible to move about. It was wet and cold and we had no desire to stay in there too long because Jerry would start getting his Arty in on us, so we were ready to move out anytime. Then Westbrook returned and was deciding on our next move. Our own artillery was dropping in very close to us and things weren't very comfortable. Lt. Westbrook called up our FO to lift his fire and after much confusion on that snafued radio I believe he finally did some good. "What are we waiting on!", yelled Lt. Wilson who just came up from our rear. "Let's move out!", and he took off into the woods with us right behind him. Some of the men had a hard time getting out of the trench for the mud seemed to have cemented them in. When they put their hands on the edge of the trench to get out it would crumble underneath their weight. But in a short while we were all moving forward through the woods firing and yelling, for Lt. Wilson had given us the spirit we needed for the assault.

What had happened was, we had run into this German machine gun fire before dawn while we were still in the approach march. We had not yet deployed for an attack and we were immediately pinned down. The First Platoon because of its position at the head of the company, was sustaining heavy casualties. When it was light an hour later we were still pinned down. The Third Platoon had moved up to the right flank of the first, but the lack of communication and control added to the effective German fire, which found us in bad shape and not prepared to attack. Before dawn we had moved up close to them and no doubt surprised them, yet they had caught us flat footed. We had lost the element of surprise, and now we were stopped. Sgt. Williams was killed and so were O'Rourke and Bain in the First Platoon. Artillery hit Sgt. Wilkie, sqd ldr of the 1st sqd of the Second Platoon and Paris took over the squad. Harold White of the 1st was trying to negotiate the machine gun nest but a mortar shell hit him. Lt. Myers the 1st Plt ldr was hit. The whole company was laying on a wheat field, pinned down by the MG fire and their artillery and mortars were working us over. What the machine guns weren't chewing up, the 88's were taking care of. Then the false report that we were to pull back started to spread. Thing looked bad and it looked like they were getting worse. It seemed like Jerry was holding all the cards.

With dawn a heavy fog became evident and so did Lt. Wilson. Things were in bad shape so he was taking charge. He got Mudd and

most of the 3rd sqd of the 2nd plt and sent them over to the left flank as security. He made sure of his right flank and placed the mortars and Sgt. Kiefer got them into action. In order to do this Wilson had to run all over the place. As usual he didn't pay any attention to the machine gun or artillery fire. Pfc. Milton Gross was his messenger that day and said, "This was my first attack and I didn't know what the score was and I was plenty scared. I just followed Lt. Wilson and that's a big job. All hell was breaking loose around us and he didn't pay any attention to it. He went all over the company and why both of us weren't killed I'll never know. He went to the rear and gathered up everyone who was lost and sent them up to their platoons. He was always moving, but he always had time to say some little thing or try to help the many wounded. He kept on telling everybody what to do and where to go and said, "we're going to attack!" We were running from the Second Platoon to the Third and a stream of tracers seemed to block the way, but he just kept running and jumped right over the stream of machine gun fire. I must have been crazy that morning, because I jumped over after him. I don't think I'd ever do a thing like that in my right mind. No one would, except Lt. Wilson. He had a job to do and no Kraut machine guns or 88's were going to stop him. He was all over that morning."

As soon as Wilson had his flanks secure and his mortars delivering their support and told every one what they were going to do there was no stopping him, or the company. With Lt. Wilson there we knew we were going forward and knew we weren't going to be stopped. We had gotten pretty pissed off lying there taking it from Jerry and we meant to kick hell out of him. Lt. Wilson said "Let's move out!" (as though we were going to make a hike) and everyone was behind him moving and laying down a terrific amount of fire. As Wilson started to move forward the shrapnel from a Kraut Panzerfaust rocket hit him in the face and in the leg. It didn't kill him so it didn't stop him. He wiped the blood away from his eyes and kept yelling, "Let's keep going!" And we kept moving. Some Krauts were killed other surrendered and we kept moving through the woods. We were moving fast and there was no stopping us. By 1100 hours we had reached our objective and we held up to give the units on our flanks time to catch up. We had taken our objective for the first day so now we started to dig in for a counter-attack, and get some protection from the artillery that was already starting to come in. Our attack was costly but we succeeded in breaking a line which had remained unchanged since December. I Co. had the toughest objective in the Regt and we had taken it sooner than any other company in the Regt. We found out later that we had led the division that day, but the main factor in our success at Behren (as at Niederbronn) was Lt. Wilson.

After the prisoners had been taken out we lost no time in finding and improving positions along the edge of the woods. The boys found Kraut shovels and picks and were soon busy. Late in the afternoon the

fog began to clear and we could see where we stood. To our front and off to the left was a very large ditch dug by slave labor we guessed for a tank trap. A woods ran parallel to our front on the far side of a draw and we suspected this was where the enemy had withdrawn to. We would have to be careful in moving about so we wouldn't draw fire from the dreaded enemy artillery. Far off to our left flank we could see other units fighting the way up to even up the line in the monstrous move of a division striving toward a goal. As the afternoon drew on and it began to grow dark the unit on our right was drawing up beside us under terrific fire. Those boys were really catching hell. The artillery was zeroed in now and progress was slow for them. It was nightfall by the time they finally achieved the goal but the artillery was still coming in heavy. Close to our position a personnel trench wound from out across the field and into the woods just in front of us. Afraid the krauts might send a few men in on patrol we put several branches in the trench just at the entrance to the woods, to discourage anyone who would crawl up too close without being heard. We stayed on the alert all night, afraid just that would happen. We stood guard with Sgt. Bailey's tommy gun just in case. The enemy threw in heavily concentrated artillery that night. When dawn came we breathed a sigh of relief and began exploring a little going around to see how the rest of the boys were making out and looking over all the equipment that the enemy had left.

Among the remains were numerous articles of food, like some sickly looking yellow cheese. We must have caught them at chow time for there were several mess gears filled or partly filled with what looked like potatoes with beet juice poured over them and pieces of bread that were dark brown in color and soggy. We had heard over and over that one reason the krauts gave up like they did was for lack of food, but there seemed to be plenty of what they had, but it was hardly fit to eat. Machine guns, ammo, bazookas, and plenty of hand grenades made up the rest of the things we looked over. We didn't touch any of it though, for fear they might have left some booby traps for us. Pfc. Harley found what looked like a time bomb and was rather wary of it until he finally found out it was a flashlight with a green, red, and blue disk attached for signalling. Harley was the only one who had nerve enough to find out what it was.

During the night one barrage caught Costello the Second Platoon medic. He was the most outstanding medic in the company and in every attack succeeded in covering the whole company. His work at Niederbronn will never be forgotten. That very morning at Behren he had completely disregarded the heavy German machine gun fire to help the wounded in the First Platoon. He and Frank Paris had crawled out to them through the MG fire, paying no attention to it. Everyone wondered why Costello never got a Silver Star or some other sign of appreciation for his consistently heroic action. That evening the artillery had about blown his arm off and it made him madder than hell. He

hated Germans anyway, but the idea that they had the nerve to wound him personally really got him hot. He shook his fist in the direction of the Germans and yelled, "Goddam you Kraut bastards! You dirty sons of bitches!" Besides the loss of personal friend, we were all especially sorry to see Costello get it, because we knew when our turn came he would have been there on the spot, probably with some wise remark. We knew we could always count on Costello, but like so many others he was gone, and there was nothing we could do about it.

When Costello was hit it had been an extremely heavy concentration and Lewie Sarvas 2nd pl. messenger was caught right in the middle of it. The shock effect on him was great and he had to be evacuated. However, he was back on the line within a week.

That morning King Company pulled up on our right flank and shoved off to pursue Jerry with Love on the left. We stayed where we were in reserve. About two hours later we got word that King and Love had gone some 1500 yards with light opposition and we were to move up behind them. We left the woods in a single file and crossed a huge open spot following a tank trap. There we were, the whole company crossing an open spot where a couple of 88's could have knocked us all out. We sweated out the 1000 yards and arrived at a bridge which had just been constructed by the engineers. We crossed the bridge and proceeded moving up behind K and L companies. It was pouring rain and we trudged through the mud. We finally came up behind the leading elements. Capt. Keith went forward to find out the big picture. It seemed that we had reached the high ground overlooking Forbach. Item was on the left and the Bn. was in a defensive position. The company dug in on the high ground overlooking the outskirts of town. The ASP was to the left rear about 400 yards. By now the, terrific mental and physical strain of combat was beginning to take its toll. Among others, John Martinez had to be evacuated because of combat fatigue and given a rest. He was one of the old men, and had seen every minute of action and sweated out all the others. It tells on you, day after day.

One of the things we saw moving up to the rear of the battalion was an AT gun just at the entrance to the woods. We found later that it was a German 75 mm. The shells laying on the ground were very long and looked like they could do a good job on a tank. We passed several emplacements that the Heinies had used as quarters during their stay in this woods. After about a half an hour we took a break by the side of the trail and the word was passed back to guard the flanks. We could hear small arms fire not far to our front so we knew why. Some Stars and Stripes were passed out and we read the latest news about the rear echelon while we waited. When the break was over we moved down the road just a little ways and here the officers took off to look for positions. Lt. Wemple returned about an hour later and told us to dig in about ten feet from where we stood. We had no large tools for

digging and had a pretty rough time getting some holes dug before dark. We chopped down some trees with hand axes to cover our holes with logs. It was dark when we finished and we crawled into the hole only to find it was slowly filling up with water. "Oh well, what the hell; we won't melt" said Pfc. Boatwright. Later on we were told that the bed rolls were down at the ASP and we could get them if we wanted Sgt. Harn and Novelli went down and got a couple for our hole and it helped a little. Still later, Sgt Mann came down and told us that the chow was here and to send a couple of men down after it. It was dark as hell and the racket we made couldn't be helped. Boy, it was terrible. After the mortar section had eaten we were to carry the chow down to the machine gunners positions about 700 yards down the hill to the left.

We could follow the communications wire down to the positions because it was too dark to see where we were going. About the time we were going to leave. Robert Akors and Novelli came out of the woods, they had been tracing the wire down because the sound power phones weren't working. They captured four prisoners on the way back. Akors said he heard them talking in the woods. At the same time Pfc. Cearly, Sgt. Larson, and Pfc. Bailey of the Third Platoon who were in their hole near by heard the krauts talking and some movement in the woods. They opened up on them and the krauts yelled their usual song. "Kamerad!" They ran up to where they were and the krauts threw down their rifles and put their hands up. One of them had been hit badly in the thigh and was laying on the ground moaning. Lt. Westbrook came down soon afterwards to see what the trouble was and later helped Sgt. Larson carry the wounded Heinie back to a medic. Akors took the other three back about the same time. We took the chow down through the woods about as quiet as a bull in a China closet. We were halted several times on the way, but we made it o.k. anyway. Sgt. Smith was pretty mad about having to have his men carry the chow cans back after they had finished eating. He didn't think it was worth it. We came back and spent the rest of the night on guard from our holes.

About noon of the 19th the Second Platoon got orders that it was to move out. We were to occupy the first houses in Forbach on the right, or north side of the road while simultaneously the right flank company of the 276th was to handle the other side of the road. That day Lt. Beck and Marengi came back from Paris where they had been on pass. Because of this the second had been without a platoon leader for the attack at Behren. That afternoon, after we had worked all day to improve our holes, we assembled at the CP and had our last minute briefing. We were to have both the mortar and machine gun sections of the Weapons Platoon as support. We set out late in the afternoon with the third squad leading, followed by the 2nd and 1st. The Weapons Platoon went around to the West while we went around to the East. We forgot all about them and forgot we had any support at all. We

moved slowly with the scouts. Marengi and Krasinsky, well out in front. We went around the valley. The sun was getting low in the sky and it looked like it might be dark by the time we got there. We were sure Jerry would give us a tough fight for these houses to keep us from getting a foot hold in the city. We finally worked our way around the valley and started West along the road the houses was on. This road was about 20 yards below the crest of the hill and we kept right flank security by the crest so Jerry couldn't surprise us by coming over the hill. We spotted the house when we came to within about 70 yards of it. We moved cautiously down the road. One or two men moved at a time while the rest of the platoon watched the house to see some sign of the enemy. The house was a large three story affair, however about 20 yards this side of this house was another small house, and some other small buildings. Among these was a small barn and a chicken house. We moved to within about 10 yards of the small house surprised not to have received fire by now. Then the 1st and 2nd scouts dashed from their cover to the back of the small house. The 3rd squad's leader followed with Lt. Beck. The second scout went in to clear the small house and Marengi went into the chicken house close behind a grenade. He saw something move out of the corner of his eye. He swung around and fired from the hip. The rest of the platoon upon hearing this activity thought the 3rd squad was running into trouble and wondered why a machine gun didn't open up on us from the large house. However, Marengi had fired at a chicken. The squad moved through and cleared the barn. Men were left in the chicken house and the barn to cover the house and to the right where across a flat of about 50 yards was a lone church. Tilley, who had taken charge of the platoon at Behren in Lt. Beck's absence, went to the door of the main house and was about to put a grenade through it when civilians came pouring out, scared half to death and yelling that there were no Germans. The scouts cleared the house and made damn sure there were no Germans. However, we had run a perfect problem. The first squad went over and cleared and occupied the church to the north of the house the 3rd had occupied. This house was actually a restaurant in its better days. The second squad, still led by Basgall, went down the hill and occupied a large house about 150 yards below the restaurant. Much to our surprise we gained our objective without a single casualty. The men were very anxious to take these houses as it meant a house instead of a hole to sleep in. The first squad found some rooms in the church and settled down there. The 1st squad was then led by Frank Paris as Wilkie had been hit at Behren. Woodey and Wooten from the 1st squad had also been hurt at Behren. At the restaurant the third squad found the basement occupied by two families. On one side was an old lady and her daughter and grand-daughter. While on the other side was a couple with their 22 year old daughter and small son. That evening Weapons came up and we settled down for the night. Weapons took part of the basement while the 3rd squad went upstairs.

With only two girls in the house there weren't enough for everybody so we passed them around.

When Weapons came up we were rather surprised to see them, because we had forgotten they were supporting us. They told us they had had the house covered all the time and it made us feel better to know we would have had their welcome support had we run into anything. The mortar and machine gun sections had been waiting in a draw and along the side of a hill to see if we would draw fire. If we did draw fire from the house (or any place else) the mortars would lay in a barrage and the machine guns would deliver covering fire. However, Jerry must have spotted them because he laid an artillery barrage in on them. As usual the Krauts were close within a few rounds and the mortar section took cover in the cellar of a nearby house. The machine gun section wasn't close enough to make the house so all they could do was lie there and sweat it out. The artillery got two men. John Elder and Walberg and they were evacuated immediately. When the barrage finally lifted both sections went back to the positions in the woods. When the houses were cleared with no opposition Weapons came down to help us occupy them.

What with offering both shelter and girls we agreed with the Weapons boys that the restaurant had many good points!!!!

Phase Eight

Overlooking Sorbach

Pulling our guard on the outside of the building during the first night, we had men in pairs on all four sides. All was going well until along about one o'clock in the morning when Rengerine and Benncomo were on the left front corner of the large restaurant, an 88 came sailing in and the boys hit the dirt. The shrapnel from this round hit Benncomo in the shoulder and in the meantime Rengerine was heading along the side of the wall when another one came and hit just beside where he was running this almost tearing his leg off above the knee. He was quiet until taken care of by a medic. He even laughed and said something about it being all over for him now. Rengerine and Benncomo were quickly evacuated. After that and from then on we pulled our guard from windows and doorways that offered views of the same area. In our quarters in the basement was an old woman and her daughter who did all they could to make us comfortable while we were there. The old lady made us sourkraut one day that gave us all the G.I.'s, but I'm sure she didn't know it would have that effect. We set up the mortar section to the rear of the restaurant and zeroed in on the side of the hill down towards town. The next day at noon the remainder of the Co. was alerted and we were told we were going to move the rest of the company down into the edge of town with the 2nd platoon. The company moved out in a single file and off the road. We got down about half way when the Germans started shelling us with mortars, which landed right in our midst. Sgt. Kiefer got it in the legs, Pfc. Eagle got it in the thigh, and Pfc. Carl Marshall got hit in the leg. The krauts must have had perfect observation because these rounds were right in on us. We came up the road where we saw two tanks which were in support of battalion. We continued on to the restaurant and the Third Platoon and machine gun section continued on down to the edge of the woods.

Our artillery had been coming in heavy in the town and ceased firing after some smoke shells were exploded to cover our attack. At least I guessed this, but there were so few of them they dispersed providing very poor cover from the enemy. The third Platoon moved down to the edge of the woods with a machine gun section behind them. We could

see the ground between us and the town was a large open plain without any cover from enemy fire and artillery. All during our movement up to where we now were, the krauts were throwing 88's at us. We had taken a little cover in a trench which was near the edge of the woods for the Krauts artillery was dropping in close. The third squad was moved up to the edge of the woods to be the base of fire while the other two squads moved out to take the first houses in the town. A machine gun section was called up to go with them as support. Sgt. Palmer who was leader of the third squad gave us the order to fire and the 1st squad led by Sgt. Clelland took off across the field on the left side of the road going into town to take their objectives, which were the houses on the left. At the same time the 2nd squad, led by Sgt. Barritt, took off on the right side of the road for their objective which was the houses on the right. Lt. Westbrook and platoon Sgt. Layne were with them close behind the first scouts Pfc. Weaver and Pfc. Vagahn and Pfc. Armenderiz who were out in front. Sgt. Layne had gotten only 50 yards when an enemy machine gun tore across his legs and cut him down. We believed this machine gun fire came from a large wooden tower on our left front, but were never sure. We were firing and running in short bursts and hitting the ground, preferably in shell holes if there were any close by. The field was full of them from the artillery fire we were drawing. We encountered much sniper fire and bursts from that machine gun during our attack. The fog which had settled down had helped us a lot or we would have been easy targets for the enemy. The poor smoke screen had disappeared and it began raining. At the sound of an incoming 88 Sgt. Barritt hit the ground with the rest of the men, but the concussion from the shell got him in the stomach. Pfc. Watkins received a bullet through his sweater near his stomach and he couldn't believe he wasn't hit, Sgt. Barritt's squad entered the first house to clear it and found several civilians in the cellar very much afraid at first when they arrived. Pfc. Armandariz who thought he heard enemy activity in a chicken house threw in a grenade. Afterwards he found it to be only some chickens fluttering about amidst the noise of battle. Sgt. Clelland hearing someone in the cellar of the first house on the left side of the street threw a grenade in a window. After the explosion some civilians came running out and two were nicked with a couple of fragments. Clelland and his men cleared the house and occupied it. Six enemy soldiers ran out of a house on the right down the street, and Andy quickly put his machine gun in action and killed four on the run and Sgt. Clelland picked off one with his rifle. The third squad was up with the rest of the platoon at the time as they had moved out of the woods as soon as the other two squads had reached the first house. They provided cover for the other squads and helped occupy the houses, keeping always on the alert, for most anything could happen. We were ready to fire on a kraut coming towards us from the other end of the street, but when he got closer we recognized him as a medic pulling a four wheeled cart to police up the dead I guess. He inspected the krauts in the street and finding them dead came up to give himself up. We had taken our ob-

jective which were the three houses on the right and the one house on the left. We were all placed in positions in and around the houses and set up a defense.

The first and second squads set up a defense in the houses on the right side of the street and the third squad was in the house on the left which was made the platoon CP. A telephone was put in and we had contact with the company CP. We had captured quite a few prisoners that day and sent them back to company that night. Among them were some German medics and noncoms. There was also a German soldier who was a protestant chaplain. It had rained most of the day and night and we had a fire in the house to dry out our clothes. Most of us didn't have anything to eat for we had eaten the K-ration we were given that afternoon before the attack. Some of us had some old coffee and boullion which we brewed up for a stimulant. We even had a hard time doing that for most of us were out of water and there was very little in a can which the civilians had in the house. They told us they had to go a long ways for water and it was hard to get with the fighting going on. We lived in the cellar of this house with the civilians in a couple of small rooms which were very crowded. Most of the time we had no place to sleep and had to wait for an enemy spot in order to lay down for a couple of hours. We had half of the machine gun section with one machine gun on the left side of the street in the house with us, and we really were crowded. The machine gun was set up in the street by the corner of the house covering the street. The other half of the section had their machine gun set up in a house on the right side of the street covering the sector to our right front. That night M-company brought up a section of heavy machine guns to help us. They set up one gun on each side of the street and we felt we had a pretty good defense. We had Sgt. Barritt who was hurt during the attack on one of the beds until he was evacuated that evening. We lost communications with the company that night and Pfc. Murray and Sgt. Anderson went out to check the wire for a break.

They found the wire had been hit with a shell and after fixing the break returned safely to our outpost.

During the time the Platoon held the outpost it was necessary for some other Platoon still up on top of the hill to haul chow down to these men.

On the way down to the outpost we had a fair route down the path and straight across the field. The houses usually could be made out even though it would be a pretty dark night. At the foot of the hill were some French troops in trenches who where supposed to guard the entrance to the woods but on the many nights we went back and forth with the chow and we were seldom halted and we could always hear them talking as we went by.

On one occasion when Akors was in charge of the group going out with chow a couple of flares went up behind them and the men being new at this

sort of thing simply fled in every direction. I can't imagine where they thought they would go, they just took off. Akors finally wound up at the outpost with one can and two men besides himself. With this they arrived at the outpost later than usual and the men out there were more hungry than ever. Now Akors would have to take some men and go out and see if he could find the rest of his men. He finally got them all rounded up and got the men on the outpost fed. By the time he got back to the resturant it was very late and a bad time of the night to be running around.

We made this trip several nights and this was the only mishap we ever had. Once when M company was coming across the field a flare went up and caught them all in the middle of the field. The men were bringing down heavy machine guns and we could see them plain as day even though they were some two hundreds yards away.

Out on the outpost there was an old women who kept telling us the people in the other end of town wanted to know why we didn't come on over. They said there were very few Germans in town. Old Mom, we called her, even wanted me to dress up like a civilian and go with her to market and see how many there were. I was tempted to do it when I began seeing vision of myself before a firing squad, so I changed my mind.

"During our stay at the resturant one evening," related Pfc. Barcelles, "we were shaken by a terrific explosion which seemed to come from the vicinity of our ASP. We looked out through the window and we saw rocks and dirt flying in all directions. We thought the krauts were throwing in some 240's at us, but later we found out what happened. Pfc. Rice, while standing guard at the ASP one night when he heard some noises coming from a culvert that went under the highway. He yelled to the occupants to come out but no one answered. The next evening at this time he heard it again and threw in a hand grenade which when thrown in, must have ignited a demolition charge that the krauts had placed in it. It blew the road to pieces, but no one was hurt. The engineers were soon there and repaired it in no time at all."

"I was standing guard one day," related Pvt. Corrigan, "on the north door of the resturant when Lt. Schindler, who had just come back to the company as 1st platoon leader, came running by and asked if I had seen some kids monkeying around. I said I hadn't seen them and we both took off to see if we could find them. He had received a report in the Co. CP that there were some civilians in there area. We went over to the church and then down the hill to the trail near the base. We went along the trail and ran into about ten kids ranging in ages from about 10 to 16. We approached them with our rifles at short guard which brought laughter from them. We questioned them as to what they were doing. After talking to them for awhile we realized these kids had been all over town and were full of information about the enemy at that time.

Taking advantage of the value these kids could be, we sent part of them over to Forbach to see what the enemy had on the Third Platoon street. We realized these kids could walk around any place and the

Germans wouldn't bother them in the least. We then took what seemed the leader of the band, his right hand man and another kid who seemed to be about the smartest in the group. The latter we gave a quick lesson in map reading and sent them out to get as much information as they could. They showed us among other things the position of an AA unit near a church. After about an hour we started back. On the way back some thunderbolts started attacking the city. Some of them came over the hill and opened up their machine guns just as they were over us. Although of course the bullets were striking in the town it still succeeded in scaring both of us. I thought at the time how effective it must be against the Germans. We were watching the raid and then we saw them bomb and strafe the very spot the kids had told us and AA gun was located. After this we had more respect for their information. We told the kids to find out as much as they could and we would meet them the next afternoon. They were on time the next day with the number of troops in the different areas of the town, some machine gun locations, the position of their road blocks, and some 88 positions. We got this all down on the map. Then they told us about a pillbox that was manned by only three men (an officer, a non-com, and a private). They took us through the woods to a place where we could observe the pillbox across a clearing about 400 yards away through the glasses. We could see one Kraut standing behind the bunker looking up into the woods. We stayed there for quite a while and he stayed there all the time. It looked like he was on guard so we didn't think we should try to get behind the box, despite the fact the kids assured us they could get us up to the pillbox from behind, through the woods. Then we got a kid who hung around the pillbox to bum smokes from the Germans. We got a description of the box and the names of the occupants in case we might want to trick them at night. The next afternoon Sgt. Robertson, (platoon sgt. of the first) came with us. The pillbox was about 1000 yards to the North of our defenses by the church. After about 400 yards of woods there was a clearing of about 150 yards. Here on the side of the hill were some caves. About four civilian families lived in them. After the first clearing there was another stretch of woods about 350 yards, then another clearing about 200 yards across, another 100 yards of woods then a fire break about 50 yards wide. In the woods on the other side of the fire break was the occupied pillbox.

This afternoon we thought we might try to get the Krauts in the pillbox to surrender. While we were talking it over with Frederick and Rene, (the leaders of the gang), a crippled man came up to us by the name of Matz. Whenever we would stay someplace for a while the kids from town and a few others would come to look us over and we would have to chase them away. This Matz said, he would help us get the pillbox. He wanted a pistol so he could go into the bunker and shoot the German inside while we could spring out of the woods and take the men who were in a trench with two machine guns, but if we ran

into any trouble we didn't think the three of us would be enough, so we decided on a different plan.

Robbie wrote a surrender note and Matz was to take this to the pillbox, then tell them there were Americans all through the woods and that they were armed with flame throwers, bazookas, rifle grenades, ect. So Matz took the note and set out. We watched his limping progress from the edge of the woods. As we watched him I couldn't help thinking how really brave these people were. They had lived under the Nazi's long enough to realize how big the risks were they were taking, and what would happen to them if they were caught. There was no "combat pay" for these people, no medals or citations; yet into it they went.

He went over and came right back with the report that the Germans weren't there. It appeared they were just occupying the thing in the daytime and leaving it at dusk.

Our surrender plan failed, but we knew how we could get them now. Just get there before they got there in the morning.

We took Frederick home with us and that night Schindler and I went out with him. Schindler carried a Thompson sub-machine gun and I carried a grease gun. Whenever we went out at night we carried automatic weapons so we could have all the fire power possible to use in a hurry. We shed our wind breaker pants as they made too much noise rubbing together. We also set our steel helmets aside and wore just the wool knit caps.

While we were going over in the daytime we also went over at night to pick up any activity we could. One night we took a 536 (handie talkie) radio at the order of Battalion to report any noise as it happened. We took the radio but it would have been suicide to open it up at night. The noise from it would have given us away immediately.

We always had to worry about running into a Jerry patrol, having the civilians betray us, (we were really at their mercy), or being spotted on one of the clearings.

All the targets we were able to locate we gave immediately to Lt. Smith the FO from the 882nd FA. He was always quick to take care of them. It was gratifying to see such immediate results for our efforts.

After a few days and nights of these patrols Battalion decided we should destroy the pillbox. They told us to get about 10 men, (or as many as we needed), and they would send down three engineers from the 270th (Division) Engineer Battalion. Robertson said he could get the men from the first platoon. He knew he could get good men and he knew they would volunteer.

I didn't dare try to get anyone from the 2nd as Lt. Beck seemed rather put out because I was going on the patrols, so I didn't think it would be good tact to ask for some more men. The men Robertson picked were all old experienced men. We knew they could be relied on.

From the information we had that they occupied the pillbox only in the day time we decided to occupy the box ourselves before dawn and

be waiting for them when they arrived. We could then kill or capture them, blow the bunker and get the hell out, maybe.

The engineers arrived the night before and caught some sleep. We moved out about two and a half hours before dawn. Schindler and I were in the front and Robbie and the Engineers brought up the rear. We hadn't seen Frederick in a day or so and weren't too sure of getting through the little known trails to the rear of the pillbox. We moved as far as the civilian caves and stopped the patrol. Schindler and I went in and woke the people up. These people had gotten rather used to seeing us. Whenever we went out and wanted one of the kids, we stopped in the caves and had someone go over to town and get him. We were the first Americans they had seen and they thought we would free them very soon however we explained to them it might be some time. By the time we stopped there this morning they were quite used to us. We told them that at last the time had come when we would deal out some punishment, but that was most important to have Frederick with us. Of course it was still night and if anyone went over they would be violating the German curfew. Besides the Germans were getting suspicious that some "Amies", (their nickname for Americans) had been in the area the last few days.

We were in the cave which had the appearance of a mine shaft and they burnt pine slivers for light. It was a strange conference in this wierd half lit cave trying to convince a man to risk his life so we could have a guide who might mean the men's lives. At last he decided to go. We had the men concealed in case this man decided to let the Germans know we were there. Schindler and I waited in the cave with the wife. After more than a half an hour there was still no sign of her husband and she started to worry. She went to the entrance and I went with her to try and keep her confidence, (which I was rapidly losing). Every five or ten minutes she would send her son up to see there was any sign of him, but it did no good. Then I noted that the first traces of dawn were appearing in the East. I mentally tried to hold back the light. It would soon be too late. We had to move under the cover of darkness. We couldn't wait much longer. I didn't know what to say to the woman. The men were getting restless, but finally he returned. We checked to see no one was following him, (we couldn't afford to take too many chances). There was no one, and worst of all he didn't bring Frederick with him. He said he could not find him. There was nothing else to do we moved out without him. We went down by the railroad track, (which was just across the street from the houses in hopes we might see him. Then we heard loud foot steps clacking along the sidewalk. We thought it was probably a couple of Krauts with their hob-nailed boots, and concealed ourselves. Across the tracks and the road we could see the two figures moving, but in dim foggy light I couldn't make out who they were. Then Schindler got up and cautiously went toward them. The foot steps stopped. In a few minutes Schindler returned smiling with Frederick and the cripple Matz. Confidence swelled again

within me. They had been laying low and they said they didn't know of any change in the situation. They were quite glad to see so many of us. They had before seen only two or three of us and eleven looked in comparison, like quite a few.

Realizing the situation might have changed and not wanting to walk into anything we could avoid we told Matz to go to the front of the bunker and whistle if everything was clear. If, however, they were in the woods and tell us what the situation was so we could change our plans accordingly..

We took Frederick with us and moved out again. We had to move fast to take advantage of the rapidly dwindling darkness. We crossed the second clearing went through the woods crossed the fire break and came up to a double apron barbed wire fence. We again asked him if he was sure it wasn't mined. He assured us it wasn't and we climbed over it. We next crossed a trench that led us through the woods and stopped. He pointed out a rise about 15 yards away and said the pillbox was built in there. We waited and heard nothing from Matz. We told Frederick to go around front and see what the trouble was. He had no sooner left us than we heard a hollow voice -- someone talking in the pillbox. By now it was quite light. We heard the voice again. It was a German. Then suddenly a machine gun broke loose to our rear. From its rapid rate of fire we knew it was Jerry.

At this time we were facing west toward the pillbox. Behind us was the hill. At the top of it was part of our regiment. To the South was the fire break and 1000 yards away our lines while to the north there were more German occupied woods.

The machine gun started firing again. What in the hell was going on? We looked at each other for an answer none of us knew. Then about 15 yards to our north we both saw him at the same time. It was a German walking toward the pillbox with Burp-Gun in a position ready to fire. He seemed to be looking around as he walked. I raised my rifle to fire, but then I thought -- what if I missed with the first shot. He could just swing around to his left and spray the hell out of all of us. Schindler had a Tommy Gun and I said, "you'd better get him with the tommy". Just as he was ready to let go the Kraut disappeared behind some more pines. He hadn't seen us. I looked at Schindler and he was as white as I realized I must have been. The answer to what the machine gun fire was seemed obvious. They had somehow discovered we were in the woods and they were going through the woods flushing them with automatic fire. Schindler said, "Christ! What a hell of a situation." We both felt quite guilty. We had started the whole thing and now we had all the others in it.

We moved back to the trench and bullets were starting to crack over our heads. They must be closing in. Then we realized American machine guns were firing and it was the bullets from these that were going over us. We thought it must be that the Americans were attacking. This made us feel better for a moment but then we thought if that was the case the

Krauts would probably retire to the trench we were in. That wouldn't be too good - - just a handful of us to meet them. We also realized that if it were an American attack artillery would start falling in on us. We all knew that the only thing worse than German artillery was American. If they started shelling they would plaster the area.

We knew we couldn't go north because that would take us deeper in Jerry territory. We couldn't go west as that would take us to the pillbox. We couldn't go east up the hill as we would run into the Germans firing up the hill. We didn't think we could go north over the barbed wire and across the fire break because it was now daylight, and they would certainly have at least a section of machine guns which could fire a killing zone up the fire break. We seemed hemmed in from four sides and we knew we couldn't stay there because either the Germans would pull back into us or our own artillery would get us. There seemed to be no answer. We had brought nine men right into their graves or at best a Heinie PW cage. We were all white. I looked at the other men and they all knew how bad things were. I thanked God Robbie had picked good men. We still had one advantage - - the krauts didn't know we were there. There if anyplace a man would have broken down which would have ruined any slight chance we had.

Robbie, Schindler, and I talked it over and there seemed to be no way out. This was the end!!!

I thought to myself, "I'll be dead or a prisoner within an hour, that is for sure." Yet I couldn't quite accept the fact. I knew it, but I couldn't believe it.

Again we talked over the plight and had everyone keep his eyes peeled. We didn't want some Heinie walking up and raking us in the trench like fish in a barrel. The more we talked, the more hopeless it seemed.

Finally we decided to move. The best choice seemed to be across the fire break the way we had come. Of course we were sure it was well covered with machine guns, and we thought that perhaps some of us might make it. Robertson said, "I'll go first. If they don't open up on me well know it's okay." He then climbed out of the trench and started for the clearing. By the time he got to the barbed wire we had started the others moving and had the engineers throw the shape charge away. We were sorry to part with it, as were the engineers who had to lug it all the way. But it was out of the question to try to run for your life with a heavy, bulky charge. I watched Robbie hesitate, but for an instant and then take off across the fire break on the dead run. I waited for a machine gun to open up and prayed that one wouldn't. He got half way across and still nothing happened. By then the next man was starting across. Although I knew he was moving fast, it seemed to take him forever to get across. Actually for us there were no seconds or minutes involved. It was one of those things in war that isn't actually time at all. It is some kind of void without time. Your life hangs in delicate balance dependant for a brief period on your enemy, and it isn't measured by time, but by life.

He finally got across and no machine gun had opened up. The others also crossed then Schindler and I crossed. Despite the fact they hadn't opened up I still couldn't believe they didn't have this clearing so close to their pillbox covered. As I got near the other side I saw one of the men smile at me. It was the first smile any of us had for quite a while and it meant one thing only, we were alive!!! When the chips are down in war only one thing counts - - life. We weren't thinking of home or worrying about a USO show that morning. We were trying to live and we had.

As we got into the woods there was Frederick and Matz's younger brother. Despite the danger they hadn't deserted us. They started to tell us the pillbox was occupied but we told them we already knew. They guided us across the next clearing. We dashed across it with half expectant glances to the right, but again we received no fire. When we got into the next woods we went over close to the railroad track by the edge of the woods to find out what had happened to Matz. Then we heard some commotion on the road and someone hollered. HALT! Then a shot rang out. We didn't know what was wrong, but decided we had better get back. We told Frederick to get Matz and bring him back to the restaurant. We then left. We crossed through the woods and the next clearing and here I stayed behind to await Frederick and Matz. In about fifteen minutes Frederick came down the trail but there was no Matz. Frederick said Matz had been shot and was taken prisoner by two H men. There would be no casualty listed in the morning report yet here was a man who was wounded for the cause and would now surely be killed for his espionage activity.

Frederick said the town was alive with Germans. They must have moved in during the night.

When I got up to the CP we found out the story. During the night Jerry had moved in a fresh division - - - the 557th Inf., and with the 1127th Regt. had counter attacked Easy company of our regiment at 0600. Now we realized what had happened. We had gotten behind the wave of the counter-attacking forces.

During the day the counter-attack was meeting with success. They had succeeded in driving Easy company back and the entire regimental line was in danger of cracking.

Baker Company of the 1st battalion was sent to the 2nd. A special company, Jig, was formed from all the replacements that had come into the regiment and were not yet assigned. Our Second Platoon was also sent to the 2nd Battalion. If the Division was to continue its push the counter-attack, which was still driving Easy company from its positions, must be stopped.

Phase Nine

Street fighting in Styring

About 1100 hrs. when the counter attack against Easy was well under way Lt. Beck's 2nd platoon was alerted and moved out through K co's area. When they arrived at Easy company they were told that some men were cut off and that they were to attack a position with about 12 men and a machine gun. Lt. Beck made his plan for attack. The first and third squads were to lay down an assault base of fire while Basgall's second squad was to flank around to the right.

Like all attacks it sounded good, but flaws soon appeared. The first: As soon as they started to move three machine guns from the "one machine gun" position opened up.

Lt. Beck got up and ran forward and hit the ground behind a bush. He then looked around and found he was alone. The others hadn't gotten off at the same time. Then he heard some Germans mumbling on the other side of the bush. Some others started whispering to his right and left. Just then a potatoe masher followed by another came sailing over the bush. They exploded without hurting him but he decided it was just about time to get the hell out. He sprayed the bushes with his Tommy gun and got back to the platoon. They all started forward again but again they were met by withering fire. The third squad was in the center advancing along a road. The second scout "Polack Krasinsky", was scouting ahead and hit the ground only to land on a shoe mine designed to blow a leg off, but it was equally effective in the stomach. The medic went up to him and the Henies started to fire on him. Tilley disregarding the heavy machine gun fire ran over to try and protect the medic and see if he could be of any help. Just as he knelt down he was shot in the head and died instantly. However, Krasinsky still had some life in him despite the fact his whole stomach was laid open.

Finally someone got a red cross flag down to the place where the medic and Krasinsky were. They waved the flag and the Germans stopped firing on them. This enabled them to evacuate Krasinsky, but it was too late. He died before they got him to the aid station.

They made another attempt to go forward only to be stopped by murderous enemy fire. So they layed on the exposed slope unable to move. The Krauts raked the area continually. This went on for two hours. The men could hear the grass but two or three inches above their heads being cut by the machine gun fire. Then as they were frozen to the ground they heard the rumble of a tank. They thought Jerry was going to try and repulse them with armor. Then as the rumble grew louder they realized it was coming from behind them. It must be an American. They looked around and it was a tank coming down the road with all of B company. As it drew abreast of them the platoon rose up and along with B company started forward laying down a terrific concentration of fire. There were so many men they were elbowing each other for room. Every thing, BAR's, light machine guns, Tommy and grease guns, and M1's, all added to the yelling and the tank must have been quite impressive. The Heines just took off and left everything.

Mudd (then third squad leader) tells about part of it, "God it was terrific. They were like wild men all screaming and firing as fast as they could. A couple Krauts were in a sort of log cabin, and an AR man and some riflemen were trying to crowd each other out to get these Krauts. Of course all of them were shootin, hell out of the cabin. The AR man beat them to the cabin and did perhaps too good a job on the Heines inside."

DaVee (asst. Sqd. leader of the 2nd sqd.) was following up a bit behind the first wave and saw one "dead" Kraut lying on the ground with a burp gun still clutched in his hands. Then after most of the men were by him he raised up his head, but not for long. DeVee put two shots into his head to make sure he was really dead.

Along with B company came the order to take no prisoners. Amby Marengi saw two starting to get out of a hole with their hands up but pumped a shot in both of their heads.

The Germans were fresh and had plenty of fight. One prisoner started to slug it out with his guard someone with a BAR was in no mood for that sort of thing so he emptied about half a magazine into him.

Finally, when they reached the formed front line of Easy company and relieved the men who were cut off and they had succeeded in knocking the Germans from their newly won gains, there was no immediate threat to the regimental line.

Someone in the 2nd platoon found a roster the Germans had and there were 64 Krauts in the position they originally started to attack with one machine gun and 12 men.

That evening Lt. Beck returned to where Tilley had been killed. Lt. Beck (like everyone in the platoon who knew Tilley) was shocked by his death. He came to attention by Tilley's body and with tears in his eyes executed the best salute I've ever seen an officer render. He then did an about face and left.

That day the platoon had lost not only Tilley and Krasinsky, but one of our new men named Estep. Then people talk about Americans

not being able to hate! The infantryman most assuredly hates and with good reason!

That night the platoon took up positions and during the night had to change to fill a gap in the lines. The next day they assumed new positions to prepare for a new counter-attack that was to take place at 1600. While they were digging, they were under persistent mortar fire. One shell landed close to the hole Basgall and Hill were digging. Hill was wounded and evacuated. Basgall got some shrapnel in the face and chest but refused to be taken out and remained with his men.

About 1300 that afternoon the platoon was relieved and returned to the Restaurant. During the 2nd's absence from the company Lt. Butler brought his A&P platoon to the company to take their places. Now with the return of the 2nd, the A&P platoon relieved.

With Tilley gone, Mudd became platoon guide and Manuel took his place as third squad leader. He made Brancieri his assistant, a fairly new man to the company, who had proved himself in the attack at Behren and again in the counter-attack.

Meanwhile over in Forbach at the Third Platoon OP we received light artillery fire from the Germans every day and some of the rounds were very close to our platoon CP. Many hit close to our back yard, but no one was hurt except for Pfc. Watkins. One night while he was standing guard in one of the houses on the right side of the street an 88 dropped in and threw him about 25 feet. He received a piece of shrapnel in the hand and a piece in the leg, and came to the platoon CP for treatment. Lt. Westbrook bandaged the wounds and gave him first aid before he sent him back to company to be evacuated. He mentioned to Pfc. Cearley not to forget to mail the package of souvenirs he had given him that day to mail home for him. I guess he must have prized them greatly, and I saw to it they got mailed the next day.

Almost every day we managed to get a prisoner or two for the first few days. We had one German boy who could speak English, help us out a lot by telling us where some German tanks and positions were. Some of the information we found to be helpful.

Things were quiet the second night we were there until about five in the morning when a machine gun sprayed the street and the sides of the houses we were living in. The guard at the time returned some lead back down the street although he didn't know where the gun was located. We were all out of bed and on the alert then as it was just breaking dawn, and we were expecting a possible attack from the Germans. After daylight arrived and time passed we were relieved that everything was alright, and the enemy hadn't given us any trouble.

Almost every night we heard the rumbling of some wagons going up and down the main street of town, which ran from left to right as we faced the enemy. Our street ran about 1000 yards and crossed this main street. We couldn't see the corner where these two streets met even in the daylight, for there was a curve in our street before it met the main street. About every night we would also hear a motorcycle

going like blazes down the main street. We had our artillery zeroed in on this spot where the two streets met, for when we heard some activity in these places we could have them drop a few rounds in, which they did many times. One night when Pfc. Cearley of the Third Platoon and Pfc. West of the machine gun section were on guard they encountered an unusual experience. Through the noise in the night I could hear a rumbling noise like a motor in the distance. Before I could say anything, Pfc. West tapped me on the shoulder and said very excitedly, "Do you hear that?" "Yes, sounds like a motor and it isn't one of our vehicles," I replied. The sound was coming from the direction of the main street and began growing louder. We could now tell from the sound of the motor straining and growling, and the clanking of the treads it was a tank going along the main street, and coming closer. I said to West, "It would be T.S. if we encountered some tanks and us with not even a measly Bazooka." At this remark West seemed to turn pale in the face. I could tell he was thinking about the situation and might tell me what he thought he might do if it did come up the street. I said to West, "keep on that machine gun and I'll report this in to the CP." I went around to the back of the house and got Lt. Westbrook who came out and heard the same thing we did. He called the artillery who in a few minutes dropped in some rounds on the street where the sound was coming from. The sound grew pretty loud as it came to the intersection, but we were all relieved when it and passed by and faded into the distance. After this experience we had two Bazookas sent out in the morning.

As the days passed the dead Germans in the street began giving off a strong odor which wasn't very appetizing. We soon became used to the smell and we hardly noticed it after a few days.

In our stay at the outpost we had a patrol sent out every night down the street to the intersection and vicinity. Some of these patrols were led by Lt. Westbrook, Sgt. Larson, and Sgt. Clelland. We received information from the German boy, who we had been talking with often about the enemy, that the machine gun fire we had encountered came from a machine gun position in the yard of a house near the intersection. This house the krauts were living in was on the right side of the street near the intersection so they didn't have but a short distance to their quarters and their machine gun nest. They could probably pick up our movements and noise very easily at night if we weren't careful. One night Lt. Westbrook, Sgt. Anderson of the machine gun section, and Pfc. Detlefson went on a patrol to try and find that machine gun nest. Lt. Westbrook had our artillery fire no missions until the patrol was finished. Anyway he told them not to! Lt. Westbrook led the patrol under the cover of darkness down the street keeping close to the buildings. They got as far as the curve in the street, which was near their objective, when an artillery round dropped close in front of Westbrook. Then another dropped behind Detlefson who was in the rear. The men were wondering what the hell was going on for it was our own artillery. Not waiting for another round, Westbrook said to the other two men, "Lets get the hell out of here

quick." About that time a shell hit the high tension wires above their heads throwing shrapnel all around them. They made a quick about face and headed for the CP with the rounds dropping in close behind them. When they reached the CP they all gave a sigh of relief for they thought their goose was cooked. They told of how many times they thought of those good old steel helmets they didn't have that night when they reached up and found only a wool knit cap there. Westbrook called up the FO who replied, "We are zeroing in on a new target." I wasn't sure what the target was, but they almost hit our men and the houses we were living in that night.

One evening about dusk a tank of ours rolled up to some houses on our left front and opened up with about three belts of machine gun tracers. The lit up the houses like a christmas tree and they finished it off with three rounds from their 90mm gun. They captured about six krauts who came running out of the house when the firing had ceased. These krauts had been giving us a little trouble with sniper fire the previous days.

Three consecutive days some P-47's came and did some bombing and strafing in the town. We would all watch them dive down and light up the houses with their 50 caliber tracers and incendiaries and drop their bombs on their targets.

We had been occupying our outpost eleven days when we got the order we were to attack in the morning. Our machine gun section moved back to join the rest of their men, and that night the heavy machine guns moved up to our outpost. The heavies had spent only a couple of nights with us when we first occupied the outpost and then moved back, now they had to move up with us again.

The next morning we ate a breakfast of K-Rations and checked our ammunition and equipment so as to be ready to move on a minutes notice. Capt. Keith, Sgt. Yarus, and some more men from the company CP came down that morning to our CP and Capt. Keith talked over the situation with Lt. Westbrook and we all got a slant on what was in store for us. The men from company headquarters had two 300 radios with them to keep contact with all the companys in the Battalion and the tanks. The FO from cannon company was also there that morning. We had heard something about some French soldiers who might help us in the attack. We were waiting to move out when several of our men spotted a large number of men coming across the field behind us. The men recognized them to be Frenchmen. They came across the field running and hitting the ground, and two of the men had a large box of machine gun ammo which seemed to be holding them down for it was of great size and weight. There were about 90 of them and they covered the whole field in places. When they arrived at the outpost they came to halt. We all observed their uniforms and weapons for they consisted of most everything. Their uniforms were partly American, French, and what else I don't know. Most of the men wore the French type helmet, but many were fully dressed in American O.D.'s. They had American, French and German rifles and some wore pistols. One I saw had a British sten gun. Any-

way they looked ready and seemed eager to go. As soon as Capt. Keith talked with their French Lt. in charge they moved out. Some of them proceeded on each side of the houses and part of them down the street. Some of them stayed in fox-hole positions we had dug around the houses. By this time our artillery was throwing in some support for us in the section of town we were going to take.

On the evening of 2 March all the platoons leaders were assembled at the company CP, and told the company's mission and were given their platoon missions, and the plan of the attack that was to take place the following morning. They were given very complete overlays of their areas. Thanks to Lt. Schindler's patrols we knew the exact positions of all the enemy pill boxes and their direction of fire. Sgt. Robertson was given the order to take three men from the First Platoon, one machine gun section, and fifteen French soldiers and set up several strong points in the little town of Sophie to secure the company's left flank in case of a counter-attack.

On the morning of 3 March Robertson's detail was awakened at 0330. It was a beautiful morning and a big bright moon shone which wasn't too good for our job of securing the houses. Every man had that empty feeling in the pit of his stomach when they saw the open field. Sgt. Robertson had made several patrols to the town a few nights before and knew the route. It was 0430 when we started out. We passed through our lines and the barbed wire and trip flares about 20yds in front of the positions. We came to a narrow path and walked down it in a single file. It wasn't long until we hit the open ground and here we assumed a crouched position and moved with caution the rest of the way. Reaching the tank ditch that ran parallel to the town, we crossed it and entered the first houses. Rob placed two riflemen and one BAR to cover the street while the rest of the men moved across the back yards. The men were quite nervous and naturally when they were trying to be quiet they only made more noise by stumbling over rocks and cans and rubbish in the rear of the houses. The men covering their movements fully expected trouble at any moment. The French soldiers got separated from us and it was necessary for Rob to take two men and start looking for them. After looking for about twenty minutes we found the Frenchmen standing by a house talking like mad and arguing over something or other. Finally after coralling everyone we all took off for the house we were going to use to set up our strong points as planned. We were set up in three houses. The machine gun section with riflemen were in one, and the French in another. Pfc's Barrow, Allen, and Gross were in the third. While standing guard in the houses we didn't have much action although we did get a few good shots at two Krauts who tried to sneak into the pillbox to our right front.

Although everyone had been awakened early it wasn't until about 0900 hours that the remaining body of the company left the restaurant. As the Third Platoon was going to attack from their outpost, the first, 2nd, and Weapons were to carry the main assault. The order of march was the 2nd

platoon first, then the 1st followed by Weapons. We left the restaurant by the same road the Second Platoon had approached it from almost two weeks before.

It was a bright, early spring morning, but any gaiety that comes with spring was absent. Lt. Wilson was company executive officer, but as soon as we started marching he went right to the head of the column with Lt. Beck. We went up the road until we got to L company's area and then went through them to the top of the hill overlooking Styring and Sophie. The Second Platoon, which was to go first formed into three squad columns in line at the crest of the hill. The third squad was on the right, the 2nd in the center with the first squad on the left. The platoon had about three bazookas, rifle grenades and a flame thrower, and each man had a white phosphorous grenade. We also had one squad of engineers attached to us. We were to have 3 in. direct fire from the TD's. As we were waiting to start down the hill we got our first barrage. It surprised us and came in fast and heavy. Manuel the 3rd. squad leader looked over to me and said, "A hell of a way to start the new men off into combat."

I didn't get a chance to see if any one was hit before we started down the hill Lt. Wilson told Lt. Beck he would go down to the bottom of the hill with him, but that he would have to return after that.

We started down and stopped about half way. Lt. Beck was using his scouts to their full advantage. When we were stopped a very concentrated mortar barrage came in on us. Then up the hill to our right flank K Co. opened fire on us. Everyone was low and they didn't hit anyone, however it was very harrasing. Lt. Wilson said, "Beck, this is costing us lives, we'd better keep moving". Just about then another heavy mortar barrage came in. You cant hear a motar shell coming in so before you know it about five shells have exploded all around you. As we lay there they exploded all over us and no one could see how he escaped being hit. This second concentration was more effective than the first Lt. Beck was a direct hit and his WP grenade which was hooked to his jacket went off. There wasn' much left of him. Frank Paris was hit in the leg. Brancieri put a bandage on his leg and left him there as Lt. Wilson had us move on. Paris was killed a few minutes later by artillery. When we went a little farther we came onto the same fire break that we thought cut us off the morning of Schindler's patrol. Again I couldn't believe it wasn't covered by machine guns. Marengi, the third squad's first scout took off across it and again I was surprised and relieved to find it was not covered. Marengi cut the barbed wire and Wilson went across behind Donovan the second scout. The rest of the squad and platoon followed. We had moved fast for about 300 yards and the artillery and mortar fire was heavy behind us. As I heard this I realized that Wilson's decision to keep moving was now starting to save lives.

With the barbed wire gapped, the platoon went through and then each squad swung around into line and started down through the woods in a skirmish line.

However behind us the Weapons was catching the artillery designed for us that we were missing.

Sgt. Bailey, mortar sqd. leader tells of the first phase of the attack with the Weapons platoon; "It seemed as though we were out for a Sunday morning walk, a beautiful shining morning even the birds were singing. The war seemed a thousand miles away. We entered the woods and said a few hello's to some Frenchmen who were there in their usual rear echloh positions and someone mentioned about wondering why they never made an attack. This question was never answered and we still wonder why. We moved slowly through the woods and finally halted at the point where we would move off into the attack. L company was throwing mortar shells down on the enemy now and the engineers came up with their shape charges. Harlan and Adams both Wilson's messengers were hit, as was Lewie Sarvas 2nd Plt. messenger. Jessop, 2nd Plt. Sgt. was hit in the foot and later got it again in the leg.

There were several pillboxes to be blown but they were a long way off yet. To our front was the long steep hill which was thickly wooded and as we moved out the enemy artillery began to come in on us. We slipped and slid and fell and dove for holes everywhere when the rounds came in. Already the casualties who could were beginning to walk back holding a bloody arm or a worse wound and calling for a medic. Once, while we halted momentarily a raft of rounds came in and caused us to have several casualties. Lt. Wemple was hit in the ribs and was lying waiting for a medic when Pfc. Ryan can over to him and helped him out by getting his equipment off to give him first aid. Sgt. Raymond Toot was also hit here and hit pretty bad and while he was being taken care of another boy died also from a shrapnel wound. Sgt. Toot evacuated and died on his way to way to the aid station. The shrapnel had hit him high on the inside of the leg. Lying close to a large tree and wondering if the next round would be for me I saw Sgt. Harn picked up and thrown down again by an exploding 88 that dug holes all around him and either dug deep into the ground or went sailing off to snipe a twig from a tree. A small piece dug into his leg and while he went to the nearest foxhole to see how bad it was, we moved out again. The mortar and artillery rounds were coming in as fast as they could throw them, now, and we wondered how long they could keep it up. We moved on down anyway and riflemen were beginning to fire. We must be in contact with the enemy now and the machine gun section was busy. We could hear long bursts from our lights and BAR'S and answering bursts from Burp guns, enemy rifles, and machine guns. The mortar section was used for flank guard until Lt. Wilson sent Sgt. McNeely and a squad to take care of it. We had grown pretty much disorganized and now the Engineers where at a loss to know where to go and just lay in wait. The shape charges were dangerous and if one should ever be hit it would probably clean out an area of about 100 yards."

The woods were thick with small fir trees about 6 feet high besides the usual high pines. The effect was a solid woods. This made contact and control an almost impossible problem. The only way a semblance of

control was possible was through constant yelling. The First Platoon followed in similar skirmish line. We went through the woods sometimes having to go backwards to get through the undergrowth. We came up on a few holes in the ground which resembled man holes and must have been tunnel exits. We dropped grenades in them and continued moving. As we approached the pillboxes we started receiving fire. We had to move slower now and the first platoon came up into us. This increased the disorganization. However we kept moving but now on our stomachs. Finally we got to a clearing which was nothing but solid barbed wire. We crawled up to it and Lt. Wilson told us to lay down a base of fire. From where I was I could see the flash of one machine gun about 30 yards to my right front and another off to my left. As soon as one of these guns would open up, we would all open up on them. Everyone was yelling. "Pour it on them!" Let's show 'em there's some doughboys up here!"

The effect of the accurate rifle fire or the yelling, (I don't know which), soon silenced the machine guns. I don't know if we had killed them or not but, if they weren't dead they were too scared to fire.

All during the time we were firing Lt. Wilson was encouraging us on and having others crawl up and join the firing line. However, because of the jungle of barbed wire which was undoubtedly thickly mined Wilson decided not to attack at the particular spot. He said, "All right men, we'll just go around to the right. Now everybody up and let's go." It didn't sound like the combat leader barking orders. Lt. Wilson had met a situation, done all that could be done, and had now made a decision and was acting on it. So in his calm little voice he was telling us about it. We pulled back into the woods and started around to the right. We had ceased to be two platoons. Part of the men were still in the woods and Sgt. McNeely took charge of them and as Wilson wanted he started them off to the right. We had now become two groups, one under McNeely and the other led by Wilson. We went through the woods to the right until Wilson was satisfied we had gone far enough. Then he said, "Now we'll go right out of these woods and into the clearing". Just keep walking until we were fired on. We formed another skirmish line and headed toward the edge of the woods; as soon as we got into the clearing the machine guns opened up us and every one hit the ground. Wilson said, "that's alright men, we'll just keep going. We'll cross this in short rushes. Now let's go. Everybody up and short rushes". We started moving in short rushes with Lt. Wilson standing behind us urging us on. "That's it!" Take about ten steps and hit the ground again. Then he saw a rush by one soldier that didn't quite satisfy him. He yelled, "You there soldier. That wasn't a rush — that was just a flop. Now you get up and give me a good rush." It was the most amazing thing I've ever seen. He was standing up walking through the "problem" with us telling just how to do it like an umpire on manoeuvres in the States. Like so many other times, I don't know how he escaped being killed. But that was Wilson, standing up in front of enemy fire as though it couldn't hurt him and running an attack like

a problem and organizing confusion. Across the clearing parallel to the railroad was a tank trap, so Lt. Wilson said, "Alright let's keep right on to that tank ditch. Let's see who's going to be the first man to the tank ditch."

When I got to the tank ditch I was surprised by its depth. It must have been 12 feet deep. McNeely on our right had already gotten his men into it. A few of us were in it when Lt. Wilson came sailing in. As soon as he was in it he said, "Now, let's get right out of here. You men get together and just dig yourselves right up out of here."

Before we had gotten in we had spotted one machine gun in the house directly in front of us. It was in a basement window. We poured rifle fire through the window and then started bouncing it off the edges. The volume of fire coming through the window must have been effective because when we got out of the tank trap we were getting no fire from the window. We crossed the tracks and still delivered fire into it. Then something white cautiously appeared in the window. Someone laughed, "Those Krauts want to surrender." We were ready to move in on them but Wilson said, "Corrigan, you yell over and tell those men to come right out here and we won't hurt them" I yelled across the street and the first one came running over. He was a corporal and was sweating and trembling. I asked him where the others were. He said they were too afraid to come out. I told him to yell over and tell them to get the hell out in a hurry. Every one was getting impatient and wanted to dig them out but Wilson was willing to take them alive if possible. The corporal yelled to his buddies again and they came over. These three were the most scared men I've ever seen. It demonstrated the effect of our rifle fire.

At that time Lt. Schindler had Mort firing at some Krauts about 300 yards down the railroad track. He had a grease gun and couldn't hit them himself. He called me over and suggested that I try and hit them. Mort had already knocked one off. By this time Wilson had already gone into the house. Manuel and Marengi were with him and Doyle who was from the 3rd platoon but had joined the 2nd the night before when he couldn't get back with his own platoon. Wilson yelled over and told me to come over to the house. I ran across the street and went through the window. Then Wilson said, "We're being fired on from the next room. I want you to yell in and tell them to come out." I found no one was in the room and then we realized that the fire was coming from outside over by the pillboxes which we had by-passed. As we were standing there McNeely came over and as he was coming through the window two shots hit him in the head and he dropped to the floor, his feet still on the sill. We thought he was dead and started to leave him. Then he started gasping and coughing the blood that was coming out of his nose and mouth, and starting to roll back into his half open eyes. We put his feet on the floor and Wilson said, "That's alright Sgt. We'll fix you right up." We dragged him into the middle of the room and made him fairly comfortable and thought he would soon die. The reason Wilson had wanted to take this

house was so we could use the basement as protection against artillery. Wilson said, "Now Corrigan, We'll go down and clear out that basement." It was then I noticed that his forehead was bloody and there was a hole through his helmet. He had been hit that morning, but he had been hit before and never let that bother him. We went to the cellar stairs and I asked him if I should drop a couple of grenades down before us. "No, we don't want to mess it up, we'll just go right down there." So down the stairs he went and luckily there was no one there. By the time we got back up we had another wounded man. One of the engineers had been shot in the hip and back coming through the window. Of the twelve engineers who started out with us at the top of the hill only three got down to the bottom. The one who was wounded, another who had his rifle shot out of his hands, and the third was the squad leader.

The sniper by the pillbox must have been using a machine carbine (MP 43 or "Bürp gun") because the shots always came in two's. He had the window which we had to enter zeroed in and lead was becoming too effective, so Wilson got two men, Brancieri and Donovan and took them up stairs to see if they could get him. Wilson went over to the window and started yelling to the men who were staring to dig in by the railroad track. He was telling them to come over at five minute intervals. Just then he stepped back from the window, "My god I'm hit." "Now that's all right." Then he must have felt himself start to fade. "Slap my face", he told them. He could realize he was going but he wouldn't accept the fact. They slapped his face but of course it was no good. He fell to the floor and doubled up his legs and kicked a heavy oak table over and across the room. That was all, he was dead.

Brancieri came down in the basement and told me about it. I went up and there he lay. I opened his shirt and he had two holes just above his heart. There was no blood on the outside, he must have bled internally. I realized that sooner or later he would have to be killed but now that it had come none of us were prepared to accept it. I took some codes and overlays out of his pockets and I looked at his AGO card. He was 21 and as he lay there he didn't look anywhere near that, his hair cut high and no beard at all. He was just a kid, yet he had proved himself to be the driving factor of the whole company. Of all the brave men we had — he was the bravest — the only real hero I've ever known. He was everything that could be expected of an Officer and soldier. But now he was dead.

After Wilson died, Schindler took charge, but the leader was dead and our spirit died with him. We set up a defense in the house. About five that afternoon K company came down the hill on our right. Until then we had been cut off. One man had been killed trying to get a message out. With K company that night we split all the houses in the neighborhood and put all our prisoners (which we couldn't evacuate) together in the basement of one house.

That night a squad of Krauts came up to our house and started tossing grenades in the windows. We couldn't use rifles on them as it was too

dark so we just started throwing our grenades out on them. Ours did a better job. We killed two and I don't know how many we wounded. At any rate they pulled off in a few minutes and had inflicted no casualties on us.

It wasn't until early that morning that McNeely and the wounded engineer were evacuated, some 15 hours after they had been hit.

At the foot of the hill and after the first pill box was taken, the co. was disorganized. We had some of the second platoon and first in houses across the tracks and one pill box on this side away from town. It was dark now and L Co. had made their CP. in the pill box and everyone crowded into it to make use of the bunks that were there. Some men were detailed to go back up and haul down some rations and take the prisoners back with them. This was about a three hour job up through the forest where you couldn't see your hand in front of your face. Communications had been out for sometime and finally when they did find the break the order came down for L Co to move across the tracks into some houses where upon some of the riflemen got ammo and took off immediately, we set up a guard outside the box and waited for the boys to return with the rations. Pfc. Velinsky who could speak about umsteen different languages had been having an affair with one Kraut across the tracks in a pillbox that employed thirteen men. He talked with the Kraut about surrendering while it was still light, but there was an officer amongst them who would shoot any of them who dared give up. Shortly they were seen coming across the tracks toward the CP with their hands over their heads the officer included. As soon as the pill box was empty we moved some men over there to occupy it. Some of L Co's men were also there and it too was crowded as hell. The men were so tired that it was hard to get any of them to stand guard. Daylight finally broke and the third platoon was on the left flank working on the street clearing out houses with the aid of three tanks. One Anti tank gun was firing from the top of the hill at a resisting pill box and soon dug a large hole in it. The rounds were coming directly over us and we could see the red hot projectile when it would strike and then go sailing off into space. Enemy artillery came in once in a while and now and then the screaming meemies would go off and scare the hell out of everyone.

We occupied these positions until late that night when orders came down that we must move up and contact K Co. Here we would occupy some houses that they had taken up near Styring Wendel. It was pitch dark when we took off across the tracks to contact the rest of the co. in another pill box area. One of the fellas on the way over was caught in some barb wire coming down the embankment from the railroad track and needed some first aid. When all were finally ready, we moved out toward the little town. Another of those black nights and we had to hold on to each others belts so we wouldn't get separated. We moved down to the tracks and to a road block and we had to go through three ditches to get around. Equipment rattled and banged and although we

were trying to be quiet we made more noise than a crowd at a Dodger game: As the head of the column moved around the far corner of the block and started to climb up out of the ditch we faced some houses just 15 yds. across the street. Capt. Keith and Sgt. Anderson were at the head of the column and as they hit the road someone fired from the houses. We saw the flash but no one was hit. Andy said they were probably those damn Frenchmen and took off to investigate. He returned in a few minutes and told us that he couldn't find a soul there. Still a little nervous we moved out again down the tracks and then up on the road. We moved slowly as we were supposed to contact K co. but we couldn't seem to find any of them. We halted and then moved off the road and rested. Capt. Keith and Andy took off to see if they could contact K Co. While they were gone the searchlights came on and as I looked down the line I could see the entire Co. stretched out in a single line lying along a wooden fence. We talked in low tones and wondered where in the hell the enemy artillery was and why it hadn't come in on us. Somewhere not far away a tank moved down the road and we wondered if it was a German. Finally the Capt. and Andy returned and took us into the houses we had been waiting in front of. In a few minutes Sgt. Mudd came down in the cellar and took ten men to help occupy some more houses. Soon the entire Co. was in houses and with the men standing guard at the doorways and windows we soon had a little strong point and the men who weren't on guard tried to get a little rest. During the night we could hear rifle shots off in the distance and grenades exploding. Morning brought artillery along with it and we stayed in the cellars most of the day. In the afternoon we moved across the street and occupied some more houses. Nearby was an American tank that had it's radio going full blast and was drawing all the artillery the enemy had to throw at them it seemed of the lot there were two duds that struck the corner of our building and fell to the ground. No one would go near it and the only way we could look at it was to peek around the corner ready to duck in case it should go off. That night we were beginning to grow hungry and wondered when we would get some chow again. Almost everyone was out of K's. That night as we layed in some dark corner of a coal bin or in an empty wine cellar I heard some one yell "Ok you guys lets get our doughnuts while there hot. At first I thought I was dreaming but when I bit into my first one I know that I wasn't. I was lying on a shelf, that in previous days had been used for fruit jars, wondering why some of these lazy bastards didn't build a fire when I heard some one mention doughnuts. I was so hungry my belly was rubbing on my back bone and I was in no mood for jokes, but sure as hell someone crammed about three into my mouth all at once. What with coughing and choking I barly got to taste those but there were plenty so I ate all I could and then a few more for good measure.

We couldn't imagine where they had come from, but all that mattered was, we were eating them. The story was told later of how Sgt. Previti had asked if he should prepare a hot meal for the men that night. He

was told that it was no use because it would be impossible to get it down to where the men were. Joe decided he get something down that night so with his cooks he started making some of those super doughnuts that the boys in the kitchen are famous for. Transportation was the next question so Joe went to Lt. Butler Bn S-4 and asked for a peep, but he said no, so Joe still presistant in his cause called service co. and told the story to Capt. Sission. All the peeps were out hauling ammo and other things so Capt. Sission gave him his peep. T/S Stucker volunteered to go along with Joe and together they started out. During the trip down the artillery came in heavy and blocked the road just in front of them, with the upper half of a tree. Joe and Stucker cleared the road and they took off again hoping they were going in the right direction and to this day not knowing how they found us. The doughnuts were delivered and everyone felt much better. Each man had his fill for there were plenty for everyone. The following day we moved again up into another section of down. In our new houses we slept on some good beds and a little Frenchmen that was living there gave us all haircuts. He was a pretty good barber and once in awhile a round would come in and we would all hit the floor. The Frenchman wanted to go to the basement, but we made him stay until he finished all of us and he cried a little and then went back to work.....

Phase Ten

Stone Wall

On the outskirts of the town of Styring Wendel and toward the front line there was a large factory and we had heard many stories of how people lived down in the shafts of the mine under the factory. The numbers were up in the thousand anyway and as the story went they were all starving and half of them were sick. On our second morning in Styring we were to attack this factory which was well fortified. Some T.D. outfit that was attached to us had been firing at it once in awhile and knocked down a chimney that could have been an O.P. directing enemy artillery fire. At any rate the morning we moved out in the attack we followed L Company up through the town and about a half mile from the end we halted on the road and the company went into some houses and cellars. We were told we would only be there a few minutes but a couple of hours later we began to think that was an outright base lie. If all the men were as crowded as we were in the houses they could hardly sit down. We heard guns going off outside as we opened up our K ration and the story came down that L company was pinned down and a lieutenant came down in our basement to get our mortar ammo to use in trying to get the men out. The story was that the entire factory was surrounded by a wall that was fifteen feet high and eight feet thick. The area outside of this wall was all heavily mined for about a hundred yards. We moved some tanks up there and they sat there and blasted the wall until they had a hole in it and then one man from L ran up and jumped through the hole. He was hit by about four machine guns all at once and finally the tank commander came back and told that it was useless this way. They could put tanks hub to hub all around the wall but it would do no good. The Krauts had passages leading out into the forest to the rear and were so far under that our artillery had no effect on them. The tank commander said what we really needed was some air corps in there with some delayed action five hundred pounders to do away with the upper structure and then our artillery could do some good in the shafts. As it was every time our heavy artillery would cease firing the Krauts would let go with Burp guns and machine guns just to let us know that everything was all right and still intact and as a warning to us. It was late at night when L company finally got back out again and their casualties weren't too heavy. Finally late in the afternoon some rations and ammo came down and we moved into different houses where we set up positions and waited.

During our stay at Styring Wendel we generally tried the most rest we could while we were there and we made out pretty good outside of guard duty. We had to haul chow during the late evenings and on some of these nights some Krauts opened up and made our jaunt a little exciting. However, no one was ever hurt on these trips and we continued every night for a little over a week. A few of the nights while we were there a young French girl sang some French and German songs for us. She was a cute kid about 16 and although some nights her audience was not the best she always kept right on singing until her mother called her. I believe a few times some of the boys must have had a gleam in their eyes because her mother would take her by the arm and take her down in the cellar where they lived with a few other families. She was built nice for a girl so young, and I can't say it was the boy's fault.

One day the third squad of the Second Platoon was sitting around the kitchen of our house across the railroad tracks in Styring. We were in the most northern street in town about six to seven hundred yards south of the dreaded factory. Next door M company had a section of heavy 30 machine guns. Jerry sent enough mortars and 88's down to let us know we were still at war, while a few patrols wandered around lost at night, however we had a pretty good house and life wasn't too bad.

Well, as I was saying, we were sitting in the kitchen one day and a young woman came storming in. "There's a German in my house." Well?, we asked. "He wants to surrender," she told us. "Send him down" we said. She didn't like our lack of enthusiasm. It finally developed this Kraut had been in her house some days. He was supposed to be separated from his outfit.

The street we were on ran slightly north of east and her house was about five hundred yards up the street. We were on the right flank and no one had been up the street that way and we didn't know what the situation was. Besides, we were comfortable and weren't much interested in one Kraut. However, the woman kept after us and after a while we felt it was our duty to get this guy; to keep the dignity of United States Army or something. We made sure where he was. We told her if this was a trap we would blow her and her whole house sky high.

Brancieri, Donovan, and I went down onto the railroad and went to a place about opposite where we thought the house was. We were a little worried that K company, South of the railroad might open up on us. Nothing happened and we climbed the embankment. Some guy appeared at the door and smiled at us and said the German would be out in a minute. I told him to come over to us. He hesitated but with our three MI's leveled at him he trotted over. We thought if this was a trap we'd shoot this civilian. In a couple of minutes the Kraut appeared and the whole family was at the door to see him off. Everybody was smiles and they acted as though they were seeing their own son off. He started across the street and someone came running out of the house to give him something he had forgotten. The whole scene was very touching.

When the Kraut came to us we released the civilian. The Heinie seemed quite happy. You could see his attitude: "I'm just about to get out of the war. It's all over for me now." He was a bit too cheerful so Donovan grabbed him by the collar and gave him a heave down the embankment. He landed in some mud and his smiles started to vanish. We marched him along the railroad tracks and gave him a shove as we went. He wasn't quite so cheerful now. When we got back to the house where we were staying, we took his bread and gave it to a little Frenchman who lived in the basement. One of the fellas took the Kraut's watch and he was about ready to cry. Someone gave him a jab in the stomach so he decided to forget a little thing like a watch. A couple of guys took him back to the CP and by then he wasn't nearly as cocky as he had been at first.

But we were still pissed off at the people who had been so nice to this Kraut, so we decided to run them in. We went up and got the whole family and marched them down the street. The old lady had lost all her smiles and was putting on a beautiful show of tears. The guy we had held as hostage was trying to tell us that he was the Burgomeister of Styring Wendel and we couldn't do this to him. However as we marched them down the street at the point of an MI these arguments sounded rather silly. After that we could still say, "no one messes around with the click."

The morning L Company had made the attack on the factory we took cover in two houses next to the railroad tracks. It was pretty crowded here, but we didn't expect to stay long as we were looking forward to having some foxholes soon. At this time Lt. Westbrook came in and said he had to send a patrol out to contact George Company which was located on the other side of town. They were dug in foxholes in the woods on the south side of the factory. Westbrook told Sgt. Larson who was using the 3rd squad for these patrols to send out some men immediately. Sgt. Larson took Pfc.'s Cearley, Baird, and Groft and took off for George Company. Larson was given a map and was told to make an overlay of our route to George Company's positions and bring it back for Battalion. We left the house and proceeded down the railroad tracks trying always to make ourselves as inconspicuous as possible because Jerry had excellent observation on the tracks from the factory. We received some sniper and mortar fire. We saw a dead Kraut laying on the tracks who was really shot up. His helmet was full of brains and laying behind him. When we reached the underpass of the street we were going to follow the woods when the Krauts began throwing in plenty of artillery. We took cover beneath this underpass for a little while until the artillery let up and continued on. The woods George Company was in were partly torn up from the Kraut artillery. They had been receiving quite a lot of resistance from the enemy and were held up for a while in these woods. We contacted Sgt. Detlefsen, assistant squad leader of the third squad, and the half of the squad he had with him. They were located in two foxholes on the edge of the hill near some of George Company's positions. Despite the fact it was rather cold and they

were eating Krations (old type at that), Sgt. Detlefsen seemed a little pleased with the foxhole he was sharing with Pfc. Bailey and Sgt. Palmer. It wasn't the hole itself they were pleased with, but the mattress they had gotten out of a house near the edge of the woods the night before to sleep on. Pfc.'s Webster, Wesseldyke, and Nisson were in another hole near by. They told us George Company had been getting plenty of trouble from the enemy, but were expecting to move on up farther soon. Detlefsen told us that if the company moved out before we contacted them again they would be located somewhere in the vicinity of the crossroads, which were about 500 yards up from where they were now. Larson told Detlefsen he would probably bring his half of the squad out to relieve them that evening and they could go back to the houses for a while. The rest of the platoon back in the houses was eating hot chow while the men on these contact patrols were eating K and C rations, and we really felt like we were being cheated. We tried to arrange it so all of us could get a warm meal occasionally. We went back to the houses the same way we had come and a few Kraut mortar rounds dropped near us on the way. When we had almost reached the houses where we were staying, in came four or five rounds of Heinie artillery. We all ducked behind a barrier over a doorway on a house near by until the firing ceased. A medic came running up to see if any of us had been hit, and we yelled we were all right before he reached us. He was called into the house near by where Sgt. Gonzales had been hit in the shoulder with a piece of shrapnel from the shelling we had just received. The medic dressed the wound and evacuated him as soon as possible. While we were on patrol some of our men spotted a German medic at the railroad tracks and brought him in. He spoke with tears in his eyes, and said his fellow soldiers had run off and left him. To the boys he just looked like a sad sack, and they got a kick out of the old line he handed them about not eating for about a week. Whenever we captured any prisoners they usually would hand us this line the first thing expecting us to lead them to the nearest chow line and throw a party for them I guess..

That evening Larson's half of the squad were given three K rations apiece and they took off to relieve the contact patrol with George Company.

During our stay at Styring two officers joined the Company Lt. Speaker, who previously had seen action in the Pacific, took over the Second Platoon. Lt. Gustly, who was formerly an officer in M Company took over the Weapons.

Finally after about ten days of good rest, the First Platoon took off and were ordered to move on out until they met resistance. They moved out in the morning and we didn't hear from them until late afternoon. Lt. Schindler had sent two men back to give us the low down on where they were and what the enemy situation was. The company prepared to move out that same night and go to where Lt. Schindler had stopped. It was twilight when we moved out of town and by the time we reached the factory it was dark. White toilet tissue marked the

route cleared of mines and we stuck close to it as possible. The engineers were along with us clearing the mines as we went along. The night was black as we trampled over the ruins of the buildings around the factory. The road led into the woods and then out again into the clear. Trees were blown along the road and at times our progress was slow. We must have walked for some two hours when the column halted and we found we were in contact with Lt. Schindler. Here we waited for nearly half an hour right on the road and every second we all expected the artillery would come in at any time. We were in a bad spot to be stopped and while we waited the minutes seemed like hours. The woods on our right were thick and black and for all we knew there may have been a Kraut behind every tree. Finally the head of the column moved out into the field on our left from the road. We could see a large house and barn far over across the field to our left and we wondered if it had been investigated when the front of the column moved out. We headed for this and found it was not as far as it had looked in the dark. The Capt. moved the company into the building and here we split up into groups to go to different parts of the house. We were led down long passage ways and over hay mounds and cow dung and it all seemed like being in the house of horror at an amusement park. Finally we got settled down and although it was cold most of the boys slept, others just smoked and ate K-ration candy bars.

"I always liked to stay close to my buddy, Pfc. Akors cause he always had a pocket full of chocolate at the right time and I was usually hungry. Akors was never nervous and it made the guys feel good just to talk to him a few minutes now and then," related Sgt. Bailey.

After an hour or so in the barn we moved out again. This time our objective was to be Schoneken, a small town only a few kilometers down the road. The way out from the barn was a zig-zagging course around mine fields and finally out onto the road again.

Lt. Westbrook was to go to Schoneken first as a sort of patrol to discover the best route for the company to follow and to get some estimate of the defenses they would encounter. For this task he set out with one squad. When he was almost there he came upon some barbed wire and halted the men suspecting something out of the ordinary might lay ahead. He got down on his hands and knees and crawled under the wire and started feeling around with his hands. It was pitch dark and suddenly his hand touched a boxlike object. "Mines," he said. His hesitation at the barbed wire had been justified; they had run onto a mine field. He continued, feeling as he went. Everytime he would come to a mine he would feel around it, remove the detonator and then dispose of the explosive charge and the box. They were "shoe" or "foot" mines; anti-personnel, designed to blow off the foot or the leg of anyone who stepped on them. It wa a ticklish business this, crawling through an enemy mine field at night deactivating mines as you went. The rest of the squad, also on their hands and knees, followed him through this dramatic crossing.

Foot by foot, feel by feel, mine by mine they finally made it. The continued on into town and found Jerry had deserted it. Then Westbrook said he would need a good man to go back and guide the rest of the company up. He asked Bob Doyle if he was willing to go back. "Why hell yes!" he answered, his voice disguising the natural fear any man would have had to pick his way back through a mine field at night. You see, bravery isn't lack of fear, it's the control and overcoming of fear.

Walsh volunteered to go back with Doyle, so the two of them set out. When they got to the field they made a guess as to where Westbrook had crossed and started the blind groping and feeling. But now it was necessary to mark a path, so as they proceeded they would leave trails of tooth powder in alternating lines on either side of them. Doyle, after coming upon one mine disposed of the detonator and stuck it inside of his fir-jacket. Before they got across, the tooth powder-despite their conservation gave out. They crossed the rest of the way and went back to the company still in the barn and reported to the company commander. They told him that Lt. Westbrook had entered Schoneken without opposition and of the minefield that lay between them. Then Doyle pulled out the mine he had picked up. Everyone around them sort of jumped back, and despite his assurances it was deactivated and quite safe they didn't like it around.

No one thought the partial tooth powder trail was enough to guide the whole company through, so the Captain asked Doyle if he could mark a clearer lane. Yes, he said, if he could have some Engineer tape. But there was none around so Yarus, the Commo Sgt., asked if a roll of toilet paper he had could be of any help. Well-it would have to do. Doyle went back to the mine field and Gilbert went with him this time, Walsh staying behind to guide the rest of the company. Doyle tied the toilet paper to the wire and laid it out as he felt through the field again. He finally picked up his earlier powder trail and marked off the rest of the field, and tied the paper to the wire on the opposite side. As he went along he had laid the toilet paper to his left, so now anyone who stayed on the right side of the paper was safe. Walsh soon brought the rest of the company down. The entire company crossed the field and despite the darkness, because of the intrepid action on the part of four men and especially Westbrook and Doyle, no casualties were suffered. Then the company went on into Schoneken.

We waited on the road in the middle of town for about an hour when the order came down that seeing we had met no resistance we may as well keep on going. We took off again and we moved out the far end of town it was beginning to grow light. A fog was settling down and we couldn't see very far ahead. We passed the usual town road blocks and moved out onto the highway to the next town. About half way between the two towns and in the crotch of a tree a microphone was found by Lt. Schindler. This was a listening device set up there by the enemy so

they could tell when we approached the town. They took care of it and we moved on again. We reached the town of Krughütte. WE WERE IN GERMANY!!! We halted at the cross roads while the men went to clear some houses for us. First Company Hdqs. set one house aside which they would occupy and the Third Platoon moved into the first two houses on the left. These were taken with no trouble. Down the road a piece Lt. Gustly and Sgt. Smith entered a house and although the house was empty on their way out they saw two Krauts coming up the sidewalk to the house with their rifles at sling arms. As it was Lt. Gustly and Sgt. Smith had their rifles at ready and upon speaking to the Krauts, one made a break for it and the two carbines went off at once. The Kraut was hit but kept going and dodging in yards and over fences and finally got away. In an another house one of our machine gunners T/4 Van Holdt an even tempered and calm a man as I've ever known, while watching out a basement window saw a Kraut Captain strolling down the road going out of town as if he still didn't know we were there. Marengi hollered halt at him and as the Kraut went for his Burp gun which was at sling arms, Van Holdt seeing he was going to be nasty about the thing let go with his M-1 and hit Herr Hauptmann in the leg. He lay here in the front yard for about two hours before he finally died and we ribbed Van Holdt about seeing this dead man in a night mare. The boys all called him killer for a long time afterward. After moving into three or four houses we finally got settled down and ate some rations. We built fires and cleaned the joint to make it fit to live in. The Kraut barracks that we moved into were dirty and in no condition to live in the way it was when we found it. There was garbage from weeks before still lying on the floor in dirty dishes. The boys soon slept as we'd come a long way the night before. We all had a good nap and felt ready to pull our guard that night. The rations came up and we ate a good meal. When the food could in anyway be had, we got it. We pulled two hour shifts on guard that night. The next day we washed up and shaved and a bunch of the boys went out to clean houses at the far end of town. We could see them running down the road running into houses through the windows and breaking down doors. We would hear shots go off and expected to see someone come out with a prisoner or yelling like Tarzan when victorious in battle but it would always be some guy shooting open a door whether inside or out. Looting went hand in hand with the clearing of houses. Until they reached the last two houses on either side of the street they met no enemy, but here on entering these last two they entered a back window and here facing out the wrong way was a machine gun with a couple of Krauts on guard. These two put up no resistance as it would have been fatal anyway and then the boys went to the basement to further search the house. Here were three more members of the super race sitting around a little floor stove brewing a pot of coffee made of some kind of burnt grain. These also surrendered peacably. At the same time in the last houses on the other side of the road the same thing was going on. The boys came out all smiles for they were loaded down with prizes they had

looted from these Krauts. Among these were Burp guns, machine guns, machine pistols, pistols, and several watches. Some of them they had taken even before they got the prisoners out of the houses then to do a more thorough job they stood them in an alley and gave them a good going over. The total take was about ten prisoners which was a good score besides the many prizes.

The Second Platoon had its busy time too clearing houses and taking advantage of the fact the Germans didn't know we were within five miles of them. It was pretty funny seeing them walking down the streets into the muzzles of our guns. We were taking a goodly toll of prisoners and having a few laughs to boot. The expressions on their faces as they were halted by Americans was quite rare. It was almost like being stopped by an armed German in your own home town. Some of them froze. Others started to bring their weapons to bare and met with the same fate the Captain who Marengi stopped. Eagan a slow Oklahoma farm boy gave one Kraut the scare of his life. In his slow Oklahoma accent he drawled out to one Heinie who was tripping along the street in a care-free manner, "Put your gawd damned hands on your head." They brought him into the house and then he broke down into tears. He had been in the Luftwaffe and was only recently transferred to the Infantry and now this had to happen. The boys relieved him of his pistol and camera and then Eagan who had captured him in the first place rather timidly asked if he might have the Heinies watch. They gave him the watch (which was broken) and sent the Kraut tearfully away to the PW cage. A little later Eagan was staring off into the distance slowly pointed across a clearing and drawled, "Up yonder go a couple a Krauts." Everyone snapped around in time to see a pair of Heinies rapidly disappearing. About everyone opened up their weapons, but it was too late.

During the day clearing some houses Da Vee entered a room in one house in time to see just an arm slowly closing a door. He let go one round which brought cries from the possessor of the arm, but it turned out to be Salisbury one of the men in Da Vees squad. He had luckily hit him in the knee so it wasn't too serious.

Also during the day Presley and Renaut came upon a recently deserted machine gun nest with a brand new MG42. Presley thought this piece of enemy ordnance in such good condition might be of some value so he lugged it all the way back to the company CP. He presented the prize to Capt. Keith who after looking it over admitted it was a fine machine gun and said, "It's too bad you didn't bring the bolt." The smile disappeared from Presley's face and he returned to the platoon with more reason than ever not to like Germans. "What a foul trick!" he moaned. "What rats those Krauts are"

All in all we considered Krughütte, our first town in Germany, quite a success.

S/S Sullivan, who left the company at Styryng to received a field commission, returned to the company as a 2nd Lt. and took over Ex. officer now that Lt. Wilson was gone.

About noon the second day we left Krughütte to continue pressing the attack. It was a beautiful sunny day and it seemed a shame to go out and stir up trouble on such a nice day but we started marching. First Platoon and MG section first followed by the Second, Third, and the mortars.

We moved along at a fairly good clip but with moderate caution. The territory we covered was open and seemed to be a suburban district. Like Krughütte all the houses were deserted and we had yet to see a German civilian. Intersections were carefully scouted and then we would move fast (sometimes at double time) to the next place that looked doubtful.

We were surprised to meet no resistance, but were wary of some trick. Once along the way we came upon leaflets scattered all over the ground. One side was black with a gold star. On the other side was a picture of a mother at her soldier son's grave and said in English something like. "The U. S. Congress has authorized a free trip after the war for gold star mothers to visit their son's graves. Don't make your mother a gold star mother!" The boys looked them over then laughed and tossed them away. If we ran into Jerry we would see whose mothers sons would be killed.

We were aiming for the Saar River and we began to think we might get up to it that day if the only thing to stop us were some stupid pamphlets. But we still couldn't quite believe there were no Krauts to stop us from desecrating so much holy soil in one day. As we moved through these ghost towns we felt people were spying at us from every empty window.

We finally reached the town of Offenhausen on the south bank of the Saar, southwest of Saarbrücken. We moved along the most northern street in town which ran along the hill that sloped down to the river five hundred yards below us. The First Platoon had gone as far as the railroad tracks at the bottom of the hill near the river. The whole company stopped and went into houses. The First Platoon was on the left flank at the bottom of the hill and the other three platoons spread along the hill top street houses.

We had reached our objective. We were poised on the southern bank of the Saar river. The next step would be the crossing of the river and the capture of Saarbrücken. However that sounded easier than it looked. Across the river in plain view were the well planned and formidable looking pillboxes of the vaunted Siegfried Line. We had reached the main defenses of "Fortress Germany." We had seen many German maps and they all showed the West wall to be the thickest through this area South of Saarbrücken. Penetrating miles of pillboxes wasn't a pleasant thought, so we turned our minds away from the next phase and decided to cross that bridge when we came to it.

As soon as we took our houses the Third Platoon went out to clear our entire area South of the river. They set out and cleaned block after block of houses. They went back and cleared a factory we had by-passed

the day before. They didn't find any Germans in possession of any of the territory, but from time to time they would receive sniper and mortar fire. They couldn't find out where the fire was originating from, and couldn't find any Krauts so we decided that we were in full possession and control of the southern bank.

After clearing what seemed like every house in Germany the whole Third Platoon grouped together in a back yard. As soon as they made a beautiful concentrated target Jerry threw in artillery. Why no one was hit is one of those lucky mysteries. The same reason any Infantryman is still alive. Once going along, a large shell landed right next to Gilbert. When it hit it sent a gyser of dirt into the air, but the shell itself didn't go off after it hit the first time, skipped and kept going; a dud. Had it exploded - - Well

The Second Platoon started a series of contact patrols over to Kico. They were down stream, almost a mile to our right. It was a rather uneasy trip through the deserted streets at night. One night when we were going over with Manuel our fears seemed fulfilled. In the gap we could hear someone digging in. We thought Jerry had discovered this gap and had come across during the night. We crept up on them to get some estimate of their disposition and strength. They had even brought artillery across! We could see them digging a field piece. As we got closer we could hear them talking. "Aw! Sonafbitch. Bringing a man out in the middle of the night." "What music to our ears!" They were Americans. It was a TD outfit emplacing their 3 inch guns.

On our first day along the Saar we had approached it from the rear and found the town clear of enemy. The Weapons Platoon moved along the road closest to the river and set up our mortars and machine guns. We came into one house in the mortar section and found the upstairs window to be a perfect "Observation Post." Some of the boys standing on the front steps of the house looking out into the field across the Saar. At first we couldn't believe our eyes but then we were so sure, right there coming down the hill were six Krauts and three little wagons with high sides on them hauling chow and water. They hadn't seen us yet and in a few minutes of watching we began to see all kinds of activity right there in front of us. They were so close that with our glasses it seemed you could almost touch them. Some John went riding up the road on a nice shiny motorcycle and he was dressed in his fine officers clothes even to the extravagant cap of the German officer. Pfc.'s Melvin Shelly and Harry Wyman who always had itchy trigger fingers opened up with their M1's. They couldn't suppress the desire any longer. They shot at the Krauts hauling the chow, they shot at guys going from houses to pillbox, and vice-versa they shot at guys in a truck going down a road that ran parallel to the river and only about a hundred yards on the other side. It was believed they didn't hit anyone but they sure made it hot for awhile. The men who had been hauling the chow all flopped down beside the wagons and waited a few minutes before all but one of them ran

a few yards into a trench that led out of sight behind the hill. The one Kraut stayed all afternoon.

Our OP turned out to be very useful, for from here we directed artillery and mortar fire on many positions and pillboxes we spotted during our stay. When we would see a bunch of men going to chow, or any at all in a group, we would give them a few rounds from our mortars. Although we had all been told to keep away from the windows as much as possible and positively off the road in front of our houses there were a couple of boys who put a little to much trust in the blindness of the Krauts. Walking down the road close to the OP these two men Sgt. Clelland and Pfc. Nipple were hit when a kraut machine gun opened up down the river. "One day while I was sitting up in the OP writing a letter to my wife and watching the enemy activity three or four of the Krauts jumped into a wagon way up on top of the hill and rolled down going like hell. They were all laughing and having a hell of a time. Just then I noticed a hole appear in the top right corner of the window and I thought to myself they can't do that, when two more holes appeared. This time a little lower about two feet above my head. Thinking I'd better leave while I was still able, I proceeded to crawl out on my hands and knees while still more rounds came in. I got out O.K.

We spent a little over a week there and every day of it was exciting while we watched the houses being burned down by artillery and sweated out crossing the Saar!!!

Phase Eleven

The Last River

As the days progressed we knew the hour of our river crossing was approaching. TD and AA units were attached to us. Our Division Recon Troop had tried to draw fire, as all the platoons had done. Officers from the division and attached units came up and looked across the river. All anyone could see was a solid line of pillboxes. Everyone shook his head thought it looked pretty tough, and no one knew that better than the doughboys who, when after everyone else had done his job, would have to break the line.

The Company CP was doing a land office business. There were phones from the Cannon company, the Anti-Tank company, a direct line from the 882nd to the FO, another from Battalion, a line from the ASP. It was impossible to tell which was ringing and they were all busy.

The afternoon of the 19th the preparation really began. About 1630 the artillery began throwing Phosphorous across the river, the TD's started firing direct fire with their 3 inch guns and the M51 multiple, 50 calibre AA mounts started spraying the whole area. It was a wonderful show and we all had 4.40 seats. We all stood up and cheered and tried to get a close up of it through the glasses. We were trying to see everything at once, but they were working it all over and there was too much to see. The M51's were firing incendiary cartridges as well as AP and tracer. The incendiaries started a large fire in a warehouse just across the river. When the 3 inch TD's would hit a pillbox they weren't cracking the boxes. However, we felt the concussion must be terrific inside. The barrage let up after about a half hour and except for the warehouse fire, everything was about the same and it still looked as it had before.

We still weren't sure when we would cross, then word came down that one squad of the second platoon would have to cross during the night and secure two pillboxes and wait on the other side for the rest of the company which was going to cross sometime before dawn. The job was assigned to the old third squad. There were now no traces of the afternoon's enthusiasm. It looked like suicide. The men began getting rid of all excess clothing and weight. Who knew, we might have to

swim. Everyone got rid of his packs and windbreaker pants, fur jackets and shoe pacs. The time had come to part with our heavy winter equipment. Then we waited, praying that we wouldn't have to cross first alone. Crossing with the rest of the company looked tame in comparison. We stayed awake ready to go at anytime. A few attempts were made to start light conversations, but everyone was thinking about one squad crossing and taking a pillbox then staying on the other side. As the night dragged on we still waited in silence and prayed.

Meanwhile the TD's who had been firing at the pillboxes in the afternoon left and were relieved by another outfit. The new TD's didn't have the pillboxes zeroed in so they might just as well not have been there. So our Weapons Platoon took its machine guns and fired full belts of tracers at the pillboxes while the mortars fired parachute flares. In this manner the TD's were able to zero in during the night and every thing was ready.

About 0130 the third squad's patrol was called off. H-Hour was to be 0430. The preparation was to begin at H minus 30.

We were split into nine men groups for the assault boat crossing. About 0330, one man from each group was sent to the CP to contact the two engineers who would come in the boats with us, when we crossed. It was a dark morning and everyone spoke in whispers at the CP. The guides picked up the engineers who had the oars and we started down the street. As we went, each guide picked up the eight men in his group. Finally everyone in the company had picked up their engineers and we were going down the hill toward the river.

For some reason, "men who go down to the sea in ships", kept running through my mind.

The engineers said they would have us across the river in less than a minute, and that made us feel better. We finally got down to the railroad track and the boats were on the back slope of the railroad embankment. We got to our boats and waited. It was just a couple of minutes before 0400.

At this time we knew that while our Army had been driving North the 3rd was driving east. Sooner or later these pillboxes would be cut off from behind, and we wanted to wait another day or two. By then we thought Jerry would have to pull out. As it was we knew he was still there.

At 0400 on schedule, hell broke loose. First we heard the familiar sound of old "whispering death", going over us. The artillery was on the way. A moment later the whole opposite side of the river was lit up. Phosphorous shells exploded all over at once. The TD's let go with the three inchers. They made a white flash, which contrasted beautifully with the red of the exploding phosphorous. At the same time the .50 calibre AA guns opened up. At first we were all on the road watching the show, but our own shrapnel starting hitting amongst us, so we moved into the gulley where the boats were. Once more our confidence

swelled. We were all enthusiastic about the preparation. "Boy, this is wonderful, isn't it?" The engineers who were making their first crossing couldn't see our enthusiasm. "My God! What's wonderful about this?" they asked. They didn't understand the appreciation the Infantryman has for his supporting weapons.

Then it was time to start toward the river. We picked up our boats (which were surprisingly heavy) and climbed up on the RR embankment, down the other side and moved across the flat. It was muddy and farther than we thought. The artillery and TD's lifted their fire just as we picked the boats up; but the 50 cal. AA guns continued their firing. This was a new idea and a rare case; using the M-51 in direct ground support. We reached the river and turned the boats over. Everything was still quiet except for our hearts and the machine guns. We got into the boats, three men on each side and three men in the center to hold the rifles while the men on the sides were rowing. The engineers pushed us off and we started across. This was the crucial stage in the operation. We were defenseless for all practical purposes while we were in the boats. All the boats were launched successfully and the 45 second trip that seemed like hours started. In mid-stream we still didn't receive any fire from the pillboxes. We were fearfully awaiting the familiar sound of a German machine gun. Just a few more yards now and we would be across. "Please God! Don't let them fire". Then our boat scraped bottom we were across. We got out as fast as possible, fully expecting to hit mines, but these were absent too. It seemed too good to be true. We climbed up the bank through thick barb wire and tried to establish control immediately. Soon the squads and platoons were again organized and just about then K Co. completed their crossing and started up but we were well enough organized not to mix up. The platoons moved along the bank toward the pill boxes they were assigned. I passed one that had been badly hit by the TD's, but it was still intact. We surrounded the pill-boxes, but still no fire. Was it a trick? we wondered. We knew they were still there the night before. Finally the First Platoon captured two men in one of the boxes. They said they had been left and that the rest of the pillboxes were evacuated at 0330. It was about 0445 and still dark. Could it be possible that we had missed them by only an hour?

The Third Platoon cleared its pillboxes and moved into town. We were to drive East along the river toward the main part of Saarbrücken with the Third on the left moving through town. They got into town and started East. The 50's were still firing and when we first got up there we thought the incendiaries which splattered on the buildings were Kraut rockets. Not long after we started moving Pfc. Wessedyke was hit by some of our own 50's. He was dragged behind a building, but it was too late. He had been hit in the chest, and he died a few minutes later.

Down by the bank the 2nd. Platoon had cleared the two pillboxes it had been assigned and encountered no resistance. It was starting to get light and the M51 fire was lifted. Then the order came down to continue clearing pillboxes to the East.

There were trenches between the boxes and we moved along them. The boxes were about 40 yards apart and we cleared one after another.

The Third Platoon was still moving in town and the Second was clearing the first line of boxes at the top of the river bank, while the 1st Platoon was in the center clearing the supporting line of boxes about 50 to 75 yards behind the 1st line.

The first boxes we got were 25, 26 and 27. As the morning progressed we just kept moving East clearing pill boxes and more pill boxes. Inside the heavy machine guns were all loaded and ready to go. They had beaucoup ammo and food. We looked through the observation slits and every inch of the flat by the river was covered. How they could have slaughtered us if they had stayed!

As we kept going the men lost their caution and began to pick up souvenirs and blankets. Lee Doyle killed a couple of rabbits, and everybody seemed to be carrying something. One man would have a party dagger, another a Sam Brown belt with a glistening saber hanging from it. After a while we took on the appearance of a musical comedy army. The 3rd squad of the 2nd even stopped by one pillbox they had just cleared and with Field Marshals' batons and Luftwaffe hats they unfurled a large Nazi flag and Brancieri took their picture with a camera he had captured.

By noon we had cleared all the way to pill box number 72. We ate Kraut rations and chocolate which they had left in their flight, but we had been moving fast since early morning and the men were quite tired. We were so far ahead of schedule we had to hold up and decide upon our next move. We moved away from the river bank and its endless pillboxes. In the city the destruction was complete. We realized that Saarbrücken as a city no longer existed. Almost by a miracle we found a very few houses that weren't completely full of rubble. The men fell to floors and what few beds there were and were asleep in a matter of minutes.

In three or four hours we were awakened and prepared to move out again. It was about 1600 hrs. when the whole company assembled, some what refreshed by the rest. Now we were ready to start chasing Jerry. While we rested in the gutter on the main drag of Saarbrücken a few men were coming from the mine just down the road from where we stopped. They carried lanterns and lunch boxes, and some of them gave the boys their lanterns to help keep them calm. The civilians were really scared and gave us only cautious glances for fear of arousing our enmity. They were plainly confused and did not know how to react. In a short while we moved on slowly and all along the way the boys would climb in windows and break down doors to enter buildings. All pictures of German Military High Command and Der Führer were taken from the walls and smashed. This was not an order, but it seemed as though the boys would have these and all memories of them forever stamped out.

The town was completely smashed and fires were still burning in some places. Still we had met no resistance and we kept moving on out to the outskirts which was also completely destroyed. Moving steadily we stopped only momentarily here and there while houses were cleared by the riflemen scouting ahead. We moved out onto the open highway with I company as the point, and most of us felt almost sure that we would meet resistance somewhere along the line. Finding we may have to go all day long some of the boys in the mortar section began picking up wagons along the way. Pfc. Shelly with his buddy Wyman started it and soon the rest of the mortar section and then all the machine gun section had a wagon for each squad. These were also used for all sorts of souvenirs picked up by the boys along the way. The woods were thick and would have been good for defensive positions had the enemy wished to hold up our advance. Passing through small towns along the road we saw very few people, but those who came out were all smiles and would have us believe we were welcome. The day had grown long by now, and it was hot as we moved steadily along. The boys were hungry but we had a long way to go before we would get anything to eat. We covered some ten miles during that day and met no resistance. As we entered the town of Fishbach we realized we had lost contact and were now doing no good. To make the rout of the enemy complete we must keep right on their heels so they would have no time to reform. Contact lost, we stopped in Fishbach and were told here we would entruck at three thirty in the morning and take up the pursuit again. We moved into houses and along until nine or ten o'clock the boys all slept. Some were too tired to get up and eat when the chow came, but most of us ate like gourmands until every insert pan was clean. The trucks hadn't shown up by the next morning and we took up the march on foot again. During the morning we moved up the town of Quierschied. It was here we made contact with rear elements of the 65th Division which was the right flank division of the Third Army. The 63rd Division on our right flank had moved parallel to us and raced to the town of Neunkirchen to our Northeast and made a junction with the 4th Armored Division thus connecting the Third and Seventh Armies. By this maneuver the 7th Army was pinched off the line when the 63rd turned to drive East with the Third Army. The German rout in the Saar-Mozelle Triangle had been more rapid and complete than we had hoped.

Our point was in the northern part of Quierschied. Our spearhead had penetrated the kitchens of the 65th Division. We pulled back into the Southern part of town and once more we were forward instead of rear. Everything to the North of us was clear, but through Fishbach ran the second main belt of pillboxes. They were amazingly thick through the woods and we sent out motor patrols to see if we had by-passed any rear guard elements. It became evident after a while it was impossible to clear all the pillboxes; there were just too many. It became evident that the Krauts had deserted the whole area.

On one patrol Southwest of Fishbach they ran onto a Russian prison camp. The prisoners were in such terrible condition they didn't quit, realize that they were liberated. The filth and health of these men were beyond description. They were hardly able to move. Some of the boys gave them some cigarettes which they seemed happy to get. When they tried to smoke them it was too much for them. They were so weak and it had been so long since they had smoked, they coughed and got sick from them.

The Third Platoon had been the first ones into Quierschched and Lt. Westbrook managed to capture the Gestapo Chief (in full uniform) as soon as he got there. Between Fishbach and Quierschied we captured a hospital. It was a miners hospital, but had about 20 Heine soldiers they hadn't had time to evacuate. The Second Platoon guarded this from the start.

After about three days in Quierschched we pulled back into the suburb East of Fishbach, by the name of Camphausen.

In three days the front moved away from us. We were in a peaceful little town and the sounds of war were lost before they ever got to us. After 90 continuous days on the line we were able to sit back and not hear artillery and for the first time we were able to relax and not fear that the next minute or hour we would be caught in what would be our last counter-attack or artillery barrage.

There were only about twenty of the men present who had made the march into Bischweiler on Christmas Eve of the year before. Some of those absent would return, others would never return.



Glossary

AA	Anti aircraft
AP	Anti-personnel or armor piercing
A & P	Ammunition and Pioneer (a plt in Bn hq)
ASP	Ammunition supply point
AT	Anti-tank
BAR or AR	Browning automatic rifle
Bazooka	AT rocket launcher
Bn	Battalion (4 companies)
CG	Commanding General
CO	Commanding Officer
Co	Company (4 platoons, about 187 men)
CP	Command Post (a hq)
Div	Division (3 Inf. Rgts, 4 FA Bn's 1 Cavalry Troop and other units, totalling 15 000 men in all)
Divarty	Divisional artillery
FA	Field Artillery
FO	Forward observer (officer who directs FA fire)
FPL	Final protective line (a planned line of MG fire in a defensive position)
GI	Government Issue (any piece of standard army equipment, including the basic soldier)
GI's	Mild dysentery
Grease gun	An inexpensive sub-machine gun
HE	High explosive
Hq or Hqrs	Headquarters
IP	Initial point
I & R	Intelligence and Reconnaissance a plt in Rgtl hq)
LD	Line of departure
ldr	leader
MG and LMG	Machine gun and light (air cooled) MG
MLR	Main line of resistance
M r	Standard army rifle (the semi-automatic Garand)
o3	Springfield rifle (model of 1903)
ptl	platoon (3 sqds)
Regt. or Rgt.	Regiment (3 battalions)
Rgtl.	Regimental

afu An expression used by American soldiers which means not going smoothly.

sqd squad (12 men)

SP Self propelled

S-2 Intelligence officer in a Bn or Rgtl staff

S-3 Operations officer in a Bn or Rgtl staff

TAT To accompany troops

TD Tank Destroyer

TO Tables of Organization

Tommy gun Thompson sub-machine gun

WP White Phosphorus

60 and 81 60 and 81 millimeter (mm) mortars

105 and 155 105 and 155 mm Howitzers (artillery pieces)

Item, etc. Able, Baker, Charlie, Dog, Easy, Fox, George, How, Item, King, Love and Mike are the representation of letters from the Army's phonetic alphabet. I Company is therefore Item Company. From A through M (excluding J) are the companies of an Infantry regiment.

GERMAN REFERENCES

Burp gun Machine carbine or MP 43. An extremely fast firing sub-MG

Egg egg shaped concussion hand grenade

Machine pistol Schmeisser MP 40, a sub-machine gun

MG 4 & MG 42 Two types of air cooled machine guns. Extremely fast firing

Potatoe masher Concussion type grenade, larger than the egg

scrcemin' meemie Nebelwerfer. A multiple barreled rocket launcher that emits a terrible sound when fired

88 88 mm artillery piece. Fires flat trajectory and is extremely accurate

98 or Kar. 98 Standard army rifle. Bolt action, similar to our M1

44 SS. Elite Guard, used as shock Troops. Noted for their fanaticism.

DEDICATION

We humbly dedicate this story of our company to the men in it who were killed. Without their ultimate sacrifice this story could never have been so successfully completed. The first evidence that they have not died in vain is that their story is being printed in the land they and all the others like them did so much to conquer.

	Date killed
Pfc. Elmer O. Brosam	15 Jan. 45
T/Sgt. Leonard L. Marshall	15 Jan. 45
Pfc. Glenn S. Powell	16 Jan. 45
Pfc. Elie M. Landry	16 Jan. 45
Pfc. William I. Catron	16 Jan. 45
S/S. Bruce J. Williams	17 Feb. 45
Pfc. John W. Bain	17 Feb. 45
Pvt. Athur E. O'Rourke	17 Feb. 45
Pvt. Roger D. Towne	19 Feb. 45
S/S. James G. Tilley	24 Feb. 45
Pvt. Emil E. Estep	24 Feb. 45
Pvt. Adolph S. Krasinski	25 Feb. 45
S/S. Raymond C. Toot	3 Mar. 45
T/5 Eulas R. Slayter	3 Mar. 45
Pvt. Donald Lippard	3 Mar. 45
2nd Lt. William Beck III	3 Mar. 45
1st Lt. Harold D. Wilson	3 Mar. 45
Sgt. Frank R. Paris	3 Mar. 45
Pfc. Henry E. Wesseldyke	20 Mar. 45