



E.T.O. BOOK  
**KING**  
COMPANY

289<sup>TH</sup> INF

75 Division





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# E.T.O. BOOK

K COMPANY  
289 INFANTRY

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Edited By S/SGT John N. Pratt



## Forward

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King Company is proud of its contribution toward bringing the war in Europe to an end. As a unit it is not by any means an old outfit ; but, during its time on the line, it participated in a good deal of rough action. Though some of the men may see other fighting, the battles in which the company has taken part and the men who took part in them form a chapter in the lives of each man. It's not a thoroughly pleasant chapter, but it's one none of us will forget or will want to forget. That's the reason for this book.

Everyone contributed something toward making the company an effective combat unit. Some much—others little. One man who contributed a great deal is Captain Donald Applegate. As the company, new in combat and close to panic, lay along a hedgerow in its withdrawal from Granmenil with enemy fire coming from three sides and with no field of fire or cover, Captain Applegate, then lieutenant and weapons platoon leader, walked up and down the line spiking rumors and keeping the men together until a route of withdrawal had been found. He was in the forefront of all the action in the Bulge, and his calmness in the Colmar Pocket and in the Ruhr carried the company through many a bad day. He holds the Distinguished Service Cross and the Silver Star for his heroism in action and his skillfull handling of the company.

The stories of some of the others and what they did are told in other parts of the book. The stories of every man and what he did cannot be given, and the pictures of every man cannot be included. Many are dead and many more are wounded, but as many as could, be have been included.

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KING COMPANY

IN

COMBAT

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## Combat History of King Company

The war in Europe is over, and now it can all be told—the story of the action-packed months which « K » Company has spent overseas. We can't tell the whole story. Nobody could. But we can give the company picture; so that you can say, « I came in here, » or, « I went out there, » or, « I was in this place then. »

Our POE was Camp Shanks, New York which we left after dark October 22, 1944. Loaded down with all the equipment every soldier brings overseas, we hiked from our barracks to the Camp Shanks Station. There our duffle bags awaited us at our assigned seats on the train. After what we thought was the most cramped ride we had ever taken or ever would, we detrained and carried our duffle bags through the Weehawken Ferry Terminal, past late ferry-riders, who called « good luck » to us, and onto the ferry. What an un-military bunch we were struggling along with all that equipment, trying to follow the right man through the terminal.

When we reached the ferry everyone sat down and rested. Some left their equipment on the seats and went out on deck where a cold, stiff wind was blowing. From the deck could be seen the New York skyline looming in the dark. Soon we could see that we were headed for a ship which was at dock on the other side of the Hudson. You guessed it—the « Franconia ».

We were not allowed on deck until boat drill the next morning; when we got a chance to look around. We were too late to see the Statue of Liberty but could still see the New York skyline. The rest of the convoy could be seen on both sides of us spreading from horizon to horizon. As we came on deck for the first time that morning we wondered how the swaying of the boat would affect us. Most of us made out well, soon discovering that we were much less apt to get giddy on deck than in our compartments.

On November 2, we landed in Liverpool; and, that night, boarded a train which carried us through the trim English countryside and into the steep hills of Wales to Gowerton where we rode omnibusses to Penclawdd. The sun may never set on the British Empire, but that was one place where it seldom shown. The ocean rains and winds from Barry Inlet came in constantly. Remember the passes to Penclawdd, Gowerton, Swansea, and London, the hikes, the guard duty, and how the Welsh valued oranges and candy bars? Remember getting used to English money? We thought that was complicated. We didn't know that we'd be in poker and crap games with six different kinds of money floating around in them. We ate like kings—cinnamon toast and coffee in the barracks during ten-minute breaks in the training schedule.



Finally we fell out in that muddy, slippery drill field one night with our packs, bigger than ever, on our backs, and rode, standing up, in British trucks to the railway station in Swansea where we boarded the train for Southampton. Getting off the train at the destination, we hiked about two miles to the boat terminal carrying everything including duffle bags. At the terminal we got our first glimpse of men, wounded in action, who were returning. It didn't look good. The « Empire Rapier » was waiting for us, and we sailed for Le Havre. The harbor at Le Havre was almost completely wrecked. Warehouses had been reduced to twisted girders. Concrete dust and rubble was everywhere. GI trucks took us to a field outside the town of Freville. There we shot rabbit drank calvados, cognac, and cidre, and drew overshoes, thank God, because the field was soon a quagmire. Most of us got into town at least once, and some of us enjoyed two of the best steak dinners we'd ever eaten complete with French fries and French bread.

The news came down that we were definitely going into combat in a few days. We didn't know it at the time, but Von Rundstedt had just started his Ardennes Counter-offensive.

« Forty and Eights » were waiting for us at a nearby town. The menu consisted of C-rations, and remember those half-hour periodic stops we were supposed to have? Many a man nearly lost his pants chasing that train.

Our destination was Tongeren or Tongres, Belgium depending on what language you speak. Upon arriving there we hiked to a nearby field and built fires. That afternoon we moved to a hay mow where we had hot chow again. Three days later we left in truck convoy. At daybreak the next morning we stiffly got out of the trucks; and, after the usual wait, moved down to the little town of Durbuy near which we set up a secondary line of defense along a high, rocky hill on the Leige side of a small river flowing past Durbuy. After two days in those positions we moved out in Third Armored Division Trucks to an orchard where we ate our Christmas Eve supper—C-rations, made beds of hay, and prepared to spend the night.

At 2300 that night we entrucked again. Most of us slept until we were awakened by our tank destroyers and tanks firing from positions near the road. Since we had been asleep, the explosion of the guns and swish of the shells as they passed over our trucks had us not a little bewildered for a while. At the town of Briscole we detrucked; and, after what seemed like an endless wait, we started up the road. After passing a column of tanks, we reached an area where our artillery was passing over our heads and bursting close to the road on the hillside to our right. The cold, clear night, the quiet forest, the gun flashes in the distance all around us, and the shells twisting down to burst on the hillside all combined to make us very nervous. At length we stopped just before a bend in the road. We all lay down in the ditches to rest. Further, there was no sense in standing up because we were hitting the ground every thirty seconds anyway. After some wait we heard some activity in « I » company ahead of us. We thought



we were moving out, but soon the call of « Tanks » was whispered back along the column. The first tank that rounded the bend was a Sherman but it was followed closely by many Tigers, and the company dispersed in the woods. The order was given to open fire with bazookas and rifle grenades, and the woods was soon filled with explosions. A phosphorus grenade hit the back of a tank and set it afire. The tank stopped. The other tanks drew up along side and drenched the woods with machine gun and eighty-eight fire while the crew of the burning tank extinguished the blaze. Right there, a lot of us learned about foxhole religion. It seemed an act of God that we were not all hit that night. After the fire had been put out, the tanks, seven in all, moved down the road till the roar of their engines died in the distance. At length the silence was broken by a badly wounded man calling for a medic and soon the forest was filled with the cry as other wounded men took it up.

Men tended their wounded buddies; squad leaders and platoon leaders assembled their units; and the company reorganized on the road as day broke. We marched back past the place where the tank attack occurred, and dug in on a hillside overlooking the town we were to attack, Granmenil. On the road we had seen our company jeeps which had been run over and smashed by the tanks. During the day planes bombed and strafed the town and our positions. Armor moved up. That evening a sniper opened up and wounded a few men until he was driven off or hit by our fire.

At 0300 the next morning, December 26, we loaded up with extra ammunition and grenades and pushed off for Granmenil, our first attack. After moving into the edge of town quietly, we deployed with the first platoon on the left, the second on the right. The first platoon fought their way slowly several blocks into the town. The second, having a wider front, cleared one row of houses in their zone of advance when they were pinned down in the yards and field behind this row of houses. At least everyone in the second thought that he was pinned down at the time. After trying bazookas, rifle grenades, hand grenades, mortars, rifles, and machine guns in an effort to knock out the enemy position, it was decided, since day was breaking, to set up a line of defense in the houses we had taken. At this point the enemy machine gun position suddenly began shooting eighty-eights at point-blank range into the houses we were occupying. It was a tank. Other machine guns opened up down the streets of the town and other enemy tanks could be heard rumbling around on the far outskirts. Many men were hit. The company left the town as German tanks entered town from the far side. German machine guns opened up from all directions, and our artillery poured in exploding across the road from us and in the town. Under fire from three sides, we finally worked our way back to a position near our original foxholes. When the artillery lifted, what was left of the company formed a skirmish line before the town as « I » and « L » Companies, supported by armor, occupied the town.

The battalion formed a perimeter defense of the town in snow-covered, wind-swept foxholes.



On January 2, we moved to Sadzot, Belgium and, after a two-day stay, moved into the woods to clean out a pocket of Germans who wanted to surrender the hard way. We cleaned them out, but we spent three miserably cold nights in the woods doing it and dug in numerous times, if for no other reason than just to keep warm.

Finally we moved back to Sadzot and from there to a rest area at Deigne, Belgium for a five-day rest. Two days after arriving we again entrucked going about forty miles. We stopped in a wilderness, broke trail into the snow-laden forest, cut down limbs to make room to sleep, built fires, and spent another bone-chilling night. The next afternoon we marched fifteen miles to relieve elements of the Eighty-second Airborne near Corronne, Belgium. Another cold night was spent in the holes left by the Eighty-second. That was, in fact, Belgium. The enemy was bad, but not so bad as the numbing cold.

Four days later the company moved into Compte which had been taken two days earlier by the second platoon and moved on toward Salmchateau. No resistance was met except from the snow which was never less than three feet deep, as the second platoon moved up on the left of the town and the third on the right. «I» Company was clearing the town. On the far edge of town the third platoon met heavy enemy fire and, after a long fire fight, moved into the town which «I» Company had cleared to the Salm River. That night «K» and «I» Companies crossed the river and took the rest of the town. The next morning, «K» Company moved up to Bech which had been taken by «G» Company. After one night in the town the company moved to a nearby wooded area and spent four nights in foxholes.

There were no definite lines in these advances. A town would be taken, but all around it were bands of Germans looking for their cutfits and ready to shoot it out with any American troops which showed themselves. An occasional tripwire boobytrap took its toll from the company.

In clearing this wooded area outside of Bech, «K» Company ran into heavy machine gun and mortar fire. Bullets came in from all angles. Our machine guns were brought up; and, after a stiff fire fight with everything in the company firing the Germans surrendered.

Four days later the company moved forward to flank German positions that had stopped «I» and «L» Companies, but the Germans withdrew before «K» Company arrived. The battalion moved on to high ground which was the objective. After a two-night stay on the objective, the regiment was relieved by the 291st. Our regiment moved back to Renchau where we spent two nights in some Belgian army barracks. One day later we moved out to relieve the 290th in a wooded hillside before Braunlauf. We moved into Braunlauf which had been taken by the first battalion, stayed there for three days and were relieved by elements of the 30th Division. The division then moved back where we caught «Forty and Eights» for Luneville, France, on the Seventh Army Front.



At Luneville we got coffee and doughnuts from the Red Cross, and rode GI trucks over the Vosges Mountains to Ribeauville. We stayed in billets in Ribeauville for about two days then hiked about five miles to a wooded area on the outskirts of Holzwihr and dug in. There we were issued heavy socks, shoe pacs, and winter gloves. After a one-night stay in these positions we hiked another five miles to Bishwihr and then to another wooded area near Andelsheim. One day later we moved out with the mission of cutting a railhead near Appenwihr. The railroad was secured by the First Free French Army and we moved into a woods about 1000 yards before Appenwihr and dug in after dark. A tank battalion, tank destroyers, and anti-tank company moved into the woods during that night. At 0200 the next morning, February 3, we moved out in the attack on Appenwihr.

During the approach march, a fifteen minute artillery concentration poured into the town. The third battalion moved up with a one-company front, «K» leading. About 800 yards from the town the company moved into an absolutely flat open field. The third platoon lead across the field with the second and first behind in that order. The third platoon reached a point 150 yards from the town where German rifles, machine guns, and panther tanks opened up, pinning down the company. The rifle fire came from German infantry positions on the left of town; the machine guns were also firing from these positions and from the town itself. The tanks rolled out from behind houses where they had hidden themselves. Bazookas were called up. Two were pinned down and the third fired at machine gun positions and at the tanks. Tank destroyer fire was called for, but it seemed long in coming to the men pinned down in that flat field trying to find a furrow to get into or a pile of fertilizer to hide behind as the bullets zipped in from all angles, eighty-eight bounced off the ground or exploded, and the German tanks revved up and maneuvered. The tank destroyers opened up, their flat trajectory shells swishing over the men's heads and landing in the town. The German tanks withdrew and their infantry followed, some Germans staying in the basements of houses in town. The company moved forward and, by 1000 hours the town had been cleared; but enemy could be seen massing for the counter-attack in farm houses farther out. Mortar fire was called down on them. At 1100 hours the enemy started throwing everything into the town—eighty-eights, mortars, and bigger shells from across the Rhine. German Tiger tanks and infantry moved in behind the barrage, and we started a house by house withdrawal, part of the company forming a line on the edge of town to cover the withdrawal of the remainder across the field. The German tanks hit one of our tanks and the rest of our armor moved out; after which the delaying force made their way across the field which, by this time, was pocked with shell holes and littered with dead and wounded.

The company re-assembled at their forward assembly area and spent the night there when the 290th relieved us. We then moved out with some engineers to lay mines along the road leading north from Appenwihr. The road was covered by enemy machine guns and mortars; so the thirty-four



man company moved back, after sustaining more casualties, to Appenwihr which had been retaken by the First Battalion, where we dug in on road blocks protecting the town. That night we moved out on the attack. Our engineers had not yet completed a bridge across the Rhine-Rhone Canal; so we stayed till the next afternoon and then moved into the objective which had already been taken by the French Armor and stayed in the town that night watching the French cook chicken over open fires during the night. The next morning, three men left on a patrol to the Rhine. They returned that evening with their mission accomplished, the first men in the company to see the Rhine. We then moved up near a town which «I» Company had occupied. On the way German mortars came in, and German jet-propelled aircraft bombed a town nearby. We spent the day along a small creek near the town, and, that night, were relieved by elements of the 28th Division. We then moved back to Magniers where we got new clothes, showers, and American beer. After a five-day rest in this town, we boarded «Forty and Eights» for Canne, Belgium. After a week in Canne, we moved up on trucks to positions along the Maas river in Holland opposite Venlo where we relieved a British outfit. We were somewhat amazed by the fact that the British had their pants pressed and their shoes shined. These British had dug beautiful positions on the sandy, forested upper banks of the Maas. Strawlined dugouts, well camouflaged observation posts, and connecting trenches throughout. There we received replacements and pulled listening post on the edge of the river where we could sometimes hear the Germans talking from across the river. They could, no doubt, hear us coughing in our listening posts too; since they fired machine guns at us occasionally. After about a week in these positions, the first, second, and fourth platoons moved back to the town of Buekend from which we ran many patrols, one two-man patrol going across the river. On March 5 we left on a hike across the river, through Venlo, across the Holland-German border to the town of Borholz, Germany where we almost reached the ultimate in line company rear echelon. Our company was in battalion reserve, our battalion was in regimental reserve, our regiment in division reserve, our division in corps reserve, and the XVI Corps was in 9th Army reserve. After five days of a training schedule and going on hikes through Germany's abandoned defenses, we moved in trucks and by foot to the Rhine river near the town of Orsoy across from Duisberg. Here we lived in comfortable houses, pulled listening post, directed artillery across the Rhine, sent patrols across, and watched and heard the tremendous artillery barrage which preceeded the Rhine crossing.

On March 28, after 19 days at Orsoy, we hiked across a ponton bridge below Duisberg, on past tremendous amounts of American equipment brought across in the preceding few days; and, after a short stay in a wooded area, moved to some German barracks in Kirchhellen. The next morning we entrucked for Pulsin where we stayed in a barn till it was time to jump off in the attack on Marl.

«K» Company advanced to the left of the town taking many



prisoners with no resistance, stayed several hours in a row of houses on the left flank of the town, and, that afternoon, moved forward into Lenkenbech with a fleet of tanks, Thunderbolts bombing and strafing the town as we moved toward it. After sweating out much mortar fire and having a skirmish with the Wehrmacht and Volksturm, we billeted that night and marched south of Lenkenbech where the various platoons were split up on contact missions finally assembling at a town where we spent the remainder of the night in a house. The next morning we entrucked for Rapen where we billeted in the factory district and then moved to houses on the outskirts of town. Early in the morning of April 4 we moved out on the attack across the Dortmund-Ems Canal.

« I » Company was to cross the canal and advance to the first phase line where « K » and « L » Companies would push through, broadening the front and continuing the advance. We dug in on a road parallel to the canal while much enemy artillery and mortars came in, most of it falling around the projected bridgehead. « I » Company was unable to make the crossing. « K » Company then crossed the canal on the second battalion's bridgehead to our left and attacked the town of Heinrichsburg from the left flank. The company took many prisoners before coming to the town. The first platoon entered the outskirts of the town, and the company commander, who was with the first platoon, engaged in an argument with a German officer, with about twenty men, as to who was capturing whom. The second platoon at this time was engaged in a fire fight in a field just outside the town, remnants of the enemy escaping across the autobahn grade and into town where they were taken prisoner by the first platoon. The company commander, thinking the argument had gone far enough called the second platoon up on the right flank where it engaged in a fierce skirmish, capturing and killing many Germans and knocking out three eighty-eights in its push to the far edge of town where a defense line was set up. « L » Company arrived later in the morning on our right flank; and, at noon, the two companies jumped off simultaneously into the next town, Ickern. After chasing several machine gunners and their rifle protection out of the way, we moved through Castrop-Rauxel into Hacing Horst where we set up a defense line and held until we were relieved by the 291st.

In Hacing Horst, we were surprised one day to see the electric lights go on, and we immediately hooked up the radios left in our billets and tuned in on the AEF programs. Previous to this we had, of course, been using candles when we could find them, flashlights when we could borrow them, and carbide lamps which were plentiful in the Ruhr.

At 0300 April 8 we pushed off in support of « L » Company hiking to the 291st position where « L » Company jumped off with tank and tank destroyer support. « L » Company occupied the town of Frohlinde, and moved on. We moved up to this town and later pushed off, through heavy sniper fire, behind banks and hedgerows, down a gully, and through a woods



to a castle where we stayed several hours; and, at 2100 that night we moved up, under cover of darkness to Lutgen-Dortmund.

We moved in to the town, clearing houses as we went. At approximately the fifteenth house along the main street we were hit by a vicious counter-attack by German Paratroops armed with burp-guns, machine guns, and many panzerfausts. The third platoon secured a house on the right side of the street, the second a house directly across the main street from the third, and the first a house behind the second. The paratroops, hollering and screaming, firing panzerfausts and burp guns, and throwing hand grenades through the windows of our houses, succeeded in knocking down the door of the first platoon house with a log as a battering ram and setting up a machine gun firing into the large first-floor room. This machine gun was knocked out and the second platoon's machine gun was brought up, succeeding in keeping enemy reinforcements from advancing. The second platoon moved out of their house and into a field on the left where they deployed awaiting developments there. Since we were sustaining heavy casualties and since there was no definite battle line, our own artillery was called down on our positions. The second platoon, being in the open, sustained casualties before they could move out of the impact area. When the artillery ceased, the second platoon moved back to their house and all was quiet during the remainder of the morning hours. When dawn arrived, we sniped at the Germans, and they fired their burp guns and panzerfausts at us until about 1100 when «I» Company and tank destroyers arrived. We moved up behind «I» Company through the central part of town, and at about 1800, we branched off from «I» Company and advanced to the edge of town where we billeted for the night.

The next morning we again pushed off behind «L» Company through a factory area till noon when «I» Company took over the attack through a populated area. At 1500 «K» pushed through to the edge of the hamlet; and, after a pause, resumed the attack with a vicious fire fight at a factory on the edge of Langendreer. After taking the factory we moved on to the edge of the town and secured it in billets.

As we moved out of the town the next morning we paused while our Air Forces handed a thorough pasting to several factories in the valley to our right. We moved forward, the first platoon riding tank destroyers and tanks to a hill overlooking a town on the Ruhr river which we occupied with no resistance after a fifteen minute artillery barrage. Several snipers were chased out or captured; and, after a small skirmish on our right flank, all was quiet. That night we moved to the river, the plan being for the first platoon to cross the bridge, which was still intact; while the second and third formed a base of fire. As we moved into position the Germans blew the bridge. After directing artillery against German tanks and infantry which we could hear and see against a blazing fire across the river, we moved back to billets in Heven. The next morning we marched to Witten where we billeted in a large apartment house.



After a two-day stay in Witten we left in trucks for a rear assembly area. We arrived in the afternoon and marched over very hilly, forested terrain to our forward assembly area, in a forest where we dug in. Our mission was to relieve the 291st and take a town.

Finally we marched back along the same route until we reached a road along which other soldiers were also marching. They belonged to the 79th Division which was relieving us.

From there we pulled back to Castrop-Rauxel and from there to Kierspe. We were taking care of displaced persons and prisoners of war in Halver, Schalksmuhle, and Brugge when V-E Day arrived.

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# **OUR OFFICERS**

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CAPTAIN DONALD W. APPLEGATE  
COMPANY COMMANDER





1ST LT. PETER LYSKO,  
FIRST PLATOON LEADER



1ST LT. WILLIAM S. FLEISHER,  
SECOND PLATOON LEADER

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1ST LT. DONALD L. SMITH,  
THIRD PLATOON LEADER



1ST LT. LAMONT G.  
MACDONALD



1ST LT. EUGENE F. PHILIPPS, COMPANY  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER, CAPTAIN APPEGATE,  
AND 2ND LT. ROYCE LAIN, WEAPONS PLA-  
TOON LEADER.



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1ST LT. HAROLD  
SIDRANSKY  
ADMIRÉS A BIT OF BELGIAN  
ART





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**COMPANY HEADQUARTERS**

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1ST SGT. BRUCE E. TILLEY



SGT. SIDNEY J. WILNER  
COMMUNICATIONS SERGEANT



PFC. JUNIOR D. ALYEA



PFC. JOSEPH J. AMENTA



PFC. WINSLOW A. BROOKS





T/4 JOHN BRUMM



PFC. CARL L. BULSON



PFC. FRANK A. CHESANE



PFC. MARTIN COHEN



PFC. ARMANDO J. DIBONA



T/5 DAVID E. ELLSWORTH



T/5 NATHAN GREENSTEIN



PFC. STEPHAN S. MANCUSO



T/4 LUCIUS C. MOXLEY





T/5 JAMES A. MORAN



PFC. EDWARD A. RHODES



PFC. GORDON B. SLEAD



PFC. MARSHALL BARNETT AND  
S/SGT. JAMES B. COYLE, MESS SERGEANT



L. to R. Back Row : T/5 JOHN STEWART, SGT. CLAIR J. BURNS, PFC. FRED FERGUSON, PFC. MARSHALL E. BARNETT. Front Row : PFC. STANLEY A. TRAHAN, T/5 DAVID ELLSWORTH, T/5 CECIL THOM, AND T/5 GEORGE HORTON, THE COOKS POSE IN FRONT OF THE LOCAL CHOWDER HOUSE IN HALVER.





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S/SGT. JOHN TRUE, SUPPLY SERGEANT



JEEP DRIVERS PFC. PAUL HENDRICKS, T/5 VINCENT CERCIELLO,  
PFC. MELVIN GREENBERG, PFC. UYLESS CARTER « CERC »  
SEES THAT « M » COMPANY'S JEEP STAYS IN SHAPE.



# **FIRST PLATOON**

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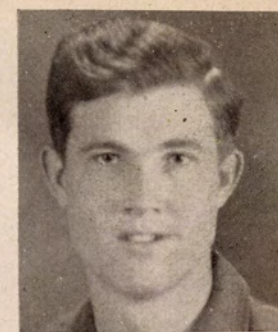




T/Sgt. EDWARD J. GRUENEWALD



S/Sgt. ALLAN C. HELSON



S/Sgt. ALLEN B. ALEXANDER



S/Sgt. MANUEL GARCIA



Sgt. DOUGLAS W. ADAMS



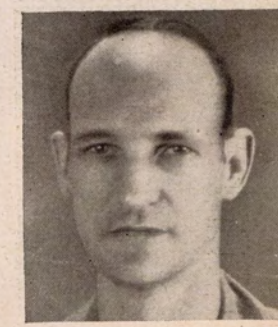
Sgt. ERNEST KAHN



Sgt. DAVID B. WATSON



Sgt. PHILIP S. PELLETTER



Sgt. CLAUDE E. BERRONG





PFC. ROBERT L. BARTON



PFC. WALLACE R. BELL



PFC. HARRY F. BLUME



PFC. GEORGE J. BOURGEOIS



PFC. CECIL J. BUMGARNER



PFC. FRANK J. CANONICO



PFC. EZRA CANTRELL



PFC. JOHN K. CARLOW



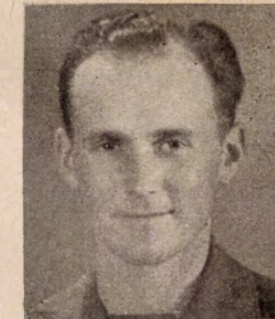
PFC. PHILIP L. CAROLYN



PFC. WENDELL CARPENTER



PFC. EUGENE K. CROSS



PFC. ROBERT P. DAVIDSON



PFC. JOHN E. DAWS



PFC. JULIUS DELIA



PFC. BEN T. FLECK



PFC. FORREST R. GREEN



PFC. NED R. HEIMBACH



PFC. LEO C. IOPOLLO





PVT. WILLIAM G. KARLS



PFC. ROBERT SMITH



PFC. LLOYD THOMAS



PFC. MARSHALL TOSSEY



PVT. EUGÈNE WIGGINS



PFC. BURCHELL H. BALES



PFC. NEWMAN P. DAVIS



PFC. URMAN W. BARTHOLOMEW

## First Platoon in Combat

Now that the shooting in Europe is over and the weary doughboy has time for a few reminiscent thoughts of home, inevitably comes back to his mind other thoughts; grim ones of war, of buddies never to return and an occasional backward glance into the past to that time or two when he found himself wondering if all his efforts and sacrifices would actually help bring about the end. He can look back now and see what his and millions of other efforts accomplished. Here are some of the contributions of the first platoon of King Company, 289 Infantry.

Trudging wearily up the hill, heavily laden with cumbersome equipment, the platoon found itself in a densely wooded area north of Granmenil, Belgium. So great was their weariness that men, taking a break along the roadside, fell asleep although American shells were coming in.

The men were rudely disturbed by the call that tanks were coming up the road. Pfc. Ernest Kahn (now Sergeant) who had the 536 radio, got the message from Captain Conway to fire on the tanks and immediately shouted that order to the bazooka team. The German column was lead by a captured Sherman tank, but six panthers followed, and Cpl. Richard Wiegand had just time enough to fire one round from his bazooka before he was killed by the tanks' machine guns. Then began a concentration of enemy tank fire which seemed to be searching for each man individually. When the tanks had passed, a bitter, vengeful platoon reorganized on the road.

During the ensuing attack on Granmenil Pfc. Ed Clinton was killed by a German he had cornered in the back yard of a house.

As the first platoon was moving to the town of Bech which had been taken by the second battalion, the Germans started tossing in mortar shells from close range. Lt. Charles P. Harvey called for assistant squad leaders to give them the plan of attack. The meeting was halted, however, by another enemy barrage. When the smoke lifted, the officer lay dead. Sergeant Kahn was covered with dirt, and Sergeant Philip Pelletter had his helmet knocked from his head by a shell fragment. The company was moved quickly into the town where they gained some protection in the buildings. Two days later the platoon was clearing a woods outside of Bech. Snipers were so thick that it was almost impossible to move, and it was here that S/Sgt. Fred Howden was hit.

The first platoon took the brunt of the Lutgen-Dortmund counter-attack. The men moved in after dark. Artillery had cleared the first three houses; so the second squad, led by S/Sgt. Manuel Garcia, began clearing the first undamaged house. While they held this position, S/Sgt. Howard



Behrns and his squad cleared the next house and held. As S/Sgt. Allen Alexander's squad was working on the next house, enemy machine guns opened up about 100 yards up the street. Sgt. Alexander placed his men at the windows of the farthest house, and, with the assistance of the other two squads, brought up by Lt. Joseph Zimmerman and T/Sgt. Edward Gruenwald, returned the fire. A light machine gun and rifle grenades were put into action at the front door and men were placed at each window in preparation for a counter-attack.

The firing quieted down and the platoon was ordered to hold at all costs. At approximately 0100 there was a loud banging on a side door and shouts in German to come out and surrender. With this, the counter-attack began.

The men fired out of the windows and from the doors of adjacent rooms and down the hallway. S/Sgt. Allen Helson set up the light machine gun in the hall to fire out through the front door to the right and up the street.

The machine gun crew had nearly all been wounded and had been placed in the cellar in the care of the platoon medic, Pfc. William Karls, who was assisted by Pfc. Ben Fleck, because of the number of men wounded.

The Germans ran around the house whooping and firing at the windows and throwing in concussion grenades until about 0120, when they started mixing in a few panzerfausts, apparently trying to blast their way in. One blew down the side door, injuring three men near it.

The 536 radio was jammed by a German high frequency set and coherent contact with the company was practically impossible; so Lt. Zimmerman sent Pfc. Philip Carolyn back to the C. P. to request artillery fire. A splendid job of coordination placed the fire in a perfect bracket around the house. This, with the aid of a machine gun attached to the second platoon routed the Germans. Seventeen men were wounded and one killed due to the counter-attack. Lt. Zimmerman was awarded the Bronze Star and S/Sgt. Helson the Silver Star.

Although the platoon figured in many hair-raising incidents, none stands out more clearly than the contemplated crossing of the Ruhr River.

Little opposition was met in moving up to the river. There was a short stop at this point, but the men's hopes for a longer stay were short-lived because early that evening came the news that one more operation was to be performed, the crossing of the Ruhr by means of the only bridge left unblown by the retreating Germans.

The first platoon was to cross first while the second and third platoons formed a base of fire.

The men were to go across the bridge two at a time, cutting trip and charge wires as they moved, with S/Sgt. Garcia's squad in the lead. The two scouts, Sgt. Adams and Pfc. Jack Carlow would be the first men.

Advancing along a lonely road near the bank of the river, the platoon was enveloped in a haze of mist and fog. The last glows of evening were

fading as the platoon neared the bridge. Suddenly in the distance a huge column of white smoke, greyed in the haze and darkness, rose toward the sky followed by a terrific explosion. Fate, or whatever it may be called, had taken ample care of the bridge. It had been blown by the Germans.

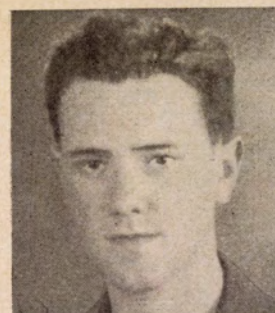
The men in the first platoon will not soon forget the contributions they made toward the victory.



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**SECOND PLATOON**





T/Sgt. FRANK L. MCCLINTOCK



S/Sgt. RUSSEL W. ADKINS



S/Sgt. JAMES M. COIL



S/Sgt. CARLISLE O. LANDEL



S/Sgt. JOHN N. PRATT



S/Sgt. JULIUS P. STOEKE



S/Sgt. ROBERT E. WENDLING



S/Sgt. HARRY H. WHITTAKER



Sgt. WILLIAM J. NELSON





PFC. ELMER L. BITTNER



PFC. SALVATORE J. BRIGUGLIO



PFC. GERALD B. CAMPBELL



PFC. ROY B. DAVENPORT



PFC. MANUEL DEPONTE



PFC. LYLE E. DIXON



PFC. ERNEST L. DODSON



PFC. ARTHUR E. FLASHER



PFC. JAMES A. FRANCISCO



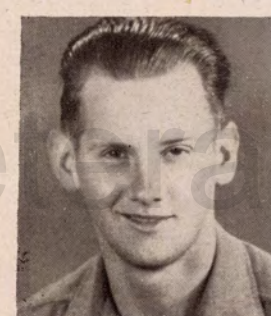
PFC. RAYMOND R. FRANKLIN



PVT. MOSES FRECHETTE



PFC. ABRAHAM FREEMAN



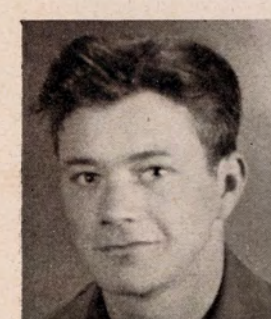
PFC. ANDREW E. FRENCH



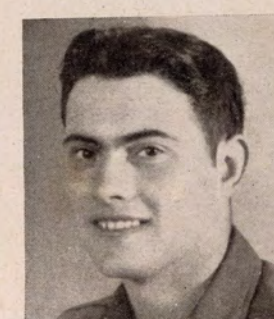
PFC. BUFORD E. HAGAN



T/5 JOSHUA HELTON



PFC. MARVIN L. LIBACK



PFC. JAY F. WRIGHT



PFC. DOUGLAS AUNE



## Second Platoon in Combat

Today the doughs of the second platoon are men proud of the job they have done in contributing their share of combat, helping to win the war.

They remember well the days of hard, bitter fighting they experienced in Belgium, Holland, France, and Germany. Though those days have not been forgotten, they feel that their job has only been half completed, with the war still going on in the Pacific.

Lt. William Fleisher from Harrisburg, Pa., their platoon leader is highly praised by his men for his gallant and expert leadership of the platoon during their darkest hours. He holds the Bronze Star with one cluster. T/Sgt. Frank McClintock, the platoon sergeant also holds the Bronze Star. The Distinguished Service Cross was awarded to Tossey Powell and Bill Barnes for their bravery in Heinrichenburg.

Words can't express the men's feelings towards their buddies who have died in battle. One of the many well remembered is T/Sgt. Louis Bernicchi, former platoon sergeant who was killed in the attack on Appenwihr while leading the platoon. S/Sgt. Martin Devine, squad leader of the second squad and holder of the Silver Star, was killed in the fight for Granmenil.

In the attack on Salmchateau where the snow was deep and the weather was freezing, the second platoon was the assault platoon in the crossing of the Salm River bisecting Salmchateau. T/Sgt. Bernicchi led the tired, depleted platoon across the hastily constructed foot bridge which was under artillery fire. They cleared the town of snipers taking many prisoners, and a patrol consisting of Sgt. William Nelson, Pfc. Harry Whittaker, Pfc. George Small, and Pfc. Elmer Bittner went out to contact Easy Company which was supposed to meet King Company there.

The crossing of the Dortmund-Ems canal affords an example of the smooth functioning of the platoon under Lt. Fleisher. After crossing, the company was marching up a road parallel to the canal expecting to hit the enemy from the left flank if the company weren't hit first. The first platoon passed under the autobahn underpass and into the left outskirts of Heinrichenberg. As the second platoon approached the underpass they were fired upon by enemy machine guns. Immediately the platoon returned fire, and about twenty Germans left their holes and buildings and ran across the road and into an open field on our left attempting to cross the autobahn grade. S/Sgt. Robert Wendling's first squad on the left side of the road formed a base of fire as S/Sgt. Russell Adkin's second squad and S/Sgt. Harry Whittaker's third squad moved up the ditch on the right side of the road and opened fire to their left into the field. Two BAR men, Elmer



Bittner and Andy French moved up to the autobahn and peppered the top of the autobahn grade cutting off the Germans in the field and preventing possible reinforcements from establishing a skirmish line on the autobahn. One panicky German tried to escape through the first squad's firing line and found himself impaled on Abe Freeman's bayonet. By this time the riflemen had picked off almost all the Germans in the field and the platoon moved forward into the town the third squad leading with the first coming up as soon as they got through the underpass. Under fairly heavy enemy fire the platoon crossed a field by fire and movement and entered the town.

Tossey Powell and Andy French on the left ran into a fire fight between twenty Germans in an air raid shelter and part of the first platoon on our left. Powell tossed a grenade into the shelter as French covered the entrances with well placed BAR fire. The Germans gave up. The first squad pushed through the center of town firing, clearing buildings, and taking many prisoners. As the third squad moved into the right side of town an eighty-eight opened up on them wounding S/Sgt. Whittaker and Pfc. Arthur Flasher. Pfc. Bill Barnes, who had advanced farthest into the town at the time, spotted the eighty-eight and started firing on it with a Mauser rifle, since his M-1 had jammed. Several men from the first squad came up to add their fire to his. Barnes was wounded by a rifle bullet cutting a furrow in his head. The rest of the third squad was by this time firing on the gun. Rifle grenades and hand grenades routed some of the Germans and seven were taken prisoner. T/Sgt. McClintock spotted several Germans making for another eighty-eight on the left. He sent S/Sgt. Adkins squad after them. Pfc. Norman Williams was wounded before these Germans were killed. A third eighty-eight was captured on the right since the Germans who passed it in their flight were being too hotly pursued by bullets to fire it.

In Lutgen-Dortmund Andy French, Martin Libak, and Albert Dobbins snuck around the house the second Platoon had been occupying thinking to bring fire on the advancing paratroopers. They heard a slight pop to their rear and an instant later an over whelming explosion knocked them off their feet. Andy French's BAR fired a burst as the men left, and the next morning a dead German was found where the panzerfaust had been fired. In the artillery barrage which followed, Donald Fletcher's rifle was destroyed. He pulled up a fence post and carried it through the remainder of the battle.

Another incident took place when the platoon met resistance in a factory outside Langendreer. With Pfc. « Chico » Reyes firing his bazooka, French with his BAR, Lt. Fleisher using a panzerfaust, and the entire platoon firing, the factory was entered and secured.

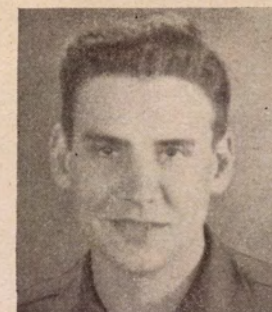
These are some of the combat memories which the men of the second platoon will never forget.

## THIRD PLATOON





T/Sgt. PAUL B. PHIPPS



S/Sgt. ARTHUR A. BRIMHALL



S/Sgt. PAUL W. COOK



S/Sgt. RICHARD H. WALL



Sgt. DANIEL J. COUGHLIN



Sgt. JOSEPH A. LA RUSSA



Sgt. JOHN L. MILLS



Sgt. DEAROLD D. SIEBERT

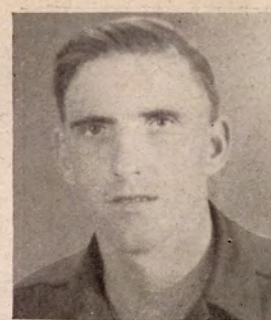


T/5 ROBERT W. KING





PFC. DOYLE D. BARTGIS



PFC. JOHN C. BERTKE



PFC. HAWLEY A. BLANCHARD



PFC. RAYMOND W. BLEVINS



PFC. JOHN CLINE



PFC. MICHAEL DEMSKO



PFC. CHARLES T. GORMAN



PFC. JERRY B. GRIFFIS



PFC. HORACE W. HILL



PFC. JOHN KERNAGHAN



PFC. MELVIN P. LAIRD



PFC. COY C. LATHAM



PFC. LYNDELL L. LILEY



PFC. ROBERT B. LONG



PFC. MANUEL R. MADEIROS



PFC. NORMAN C. ODEKIRK



PFC. LAWRENCE D. OVERSTREET



PFC. WILLIAM A. OWEN





PFC. WALLACE C. NESTINGEN



PFC. WILLIAM T. POWE



PFC. EMMET M. SLEDGE



PFC. STOCKTON L. SMITH



PFC. PAUL B. THRASHER



PFC. WILLIAM C. VANCE



PFC. JOHN D. VASSALO



PFC. HOWARD J. WILLIAMS

## Third Platoon in Combat

The Third Platoon has had many tragic and exciting experiences in combat. In the cold of Belgium, for instance, the third was ordered to a hill on the right of Salmchateau. As they moved over the crest of the hill under the leadership of Lt. John Brady, they were pinned down by fire from a German machine gun. A patrol led by S/Sgt. Smith (now Lieutenant) and consisting of S/Sgt. Daniel Swisher, Sgt. John Mills, Pvt. Ben A. Jaross, and Pvt. Marvin Bacon, moved toward the house. They were also soon pinned down, but not before Jaross and Bacon were hit. Mills made his way back to the platoon for help and returned with the medic, who started to render first aid to the two wounded men but was forced to withdraw because of sniper fire. The patrol returned to the platoon, but Bacon was left behind dead.

When German tanks entered Granmenil to drive the company out, Pvt. Paul F. Wills and Pfc. Charles Albert moved forward with the bazooka and ammo. Scurrying through intense machine gun fire they secured positions behind a building where they got off several rounds at the tanks before rejoining the company which was pulling out.

After K Company had participated in a three-company sweep through the woods near Sadzot, during which we had dug around twenty stubborn Germans from their underground homes in the frozen ground, a contact patrol to Love Company on our right was sent out. The patrol consisted of S/Sgt. Paul F. Wills, Pfc. William Earl (now T/Sgt.), Pfc. Oscar Horton, Pfc. Lawrence Overstreet and Pfc. Paul B. Phipps (now T/Sgt.). The men groped through the dark woods for about twenty minutes when they were halted. They gave the password, but instead of the countersign they heard only footsteps in the snow going rapidly away from them. The men fired at the sound. The next morning they investigated and found nothing but blood in the snow.

When King Company was in positions along the Rhine River, the third platoon was the first in the battalion to send a successful patrol across the river. The original patrol consisted of S/Sgt. Swisher, Pfc. Jerry B. Griffis, Pfc. William Vance. As they pushed off, the boat began to fill with water: so it was necessary to leave Vance behind. The patrol was completed and the desired information was obtained. For this the two men received the Bronze star.

After crossing the Dortmund-Ems Canal, the third platoon was advancing toward Heinrichsburg in support of the company. Being early morning, it was still very dark. The third squad saw some figures approaching from the open field on the right, into the road. Believing them



to be G.I.'s, they passed half of the figures before they were halted. Pfc. Manuel Medieros yelled back to Earl asking if they were G.I.'s. Not receiving an answer, Pfc. Medieros advanced into the road and halted the unknown column. They yelled something in German; so Sgt. Mills' third squad hit the ditch and opened fire across the road and into the field. The second squad then set up enfilade fire down the ditch in which the Krauts had taken cover. The BAR man of the third squad, Pfc. Bofysil, opened up down the ditch with his rifle which caught the Krauts in a deadly cross-fire. No more enemy fire was received, and the company moved out. The next morning the medics reported many German dead and wounded in the field and ditch.

After being on the move for two days, the men had begun hoping for a night's sleep. We were set up in buildings surrounding an old stone castle. About 2300, the order to «Saddle Up» was sent down. The men were told, as we moved out, that Lutgen-Dortmund must be taken before morning. After marching about an hour we moved into the town in a column of two's in support of the company. The leading platoons had been hit by enemy machine gun and panzerfaust fire and had set up defenses in two houses on the left side of the main street. Since the company's right flank was exposed the third platoon was ordered to take positions in a house on the right side of the street. The platoon moved quietly into the house by one's and two's and set up security. In the ensuing counter-attack, during which the Jerries threw panzerfausts and grenades through the windows, two men were injured, T/Sgt. Earl and Sgt. William Carr. At one time during this attack the Jerries, whooping and hollering down the street, set up a machine gun in the street near the house which the platoon was securing. Sgt. Dearold Siebert opened up on it with a BAR killing two Jerries and putting the gun out of action.

After the platoon had cleared and secured its sector of Lenkenbeck, Jerries were spotted across a field to our front, and mortar fire started falling around our positions. Realizing that we had no field of fire, Lt. Smith obtained permission to move the platoon out of town and set up a defense. The platoon opened fire on the Jerries and drove them off but sustained five casualties from the enemy mortars.

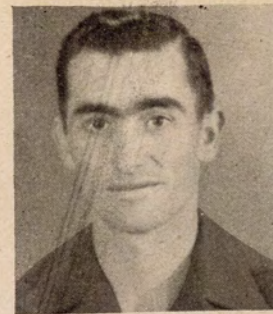
The Third Platoon is proud of its accomplishments in combat, but hope that they, or any one else, will never have to do it again.

## FOURTH PLATOON





T/SGT. ANTHONY P. COGLIANO



S/SGT. HUGH E. MCKENZIE



SGT. DEAN C. CULBERTSON



SGT. JOHN K. SHELTON



SGT. BEAUNOUS E. WALK



PFC. HAROLD J. ABPLANALP



PFC. ROBERT S. BELL



PFC. MARVIN T. BOWERS

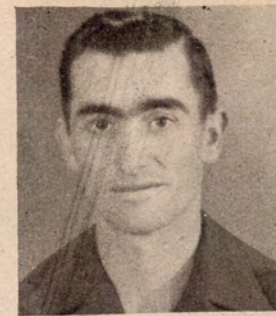


PFC. JOHN F. BOYD





T/SGT. ANTHONY P. COGLIANO



S/SGT. HUGH E. MCKENZIE



SGT. DEAN C. CULBERTSON



SGT. JOHN K. SHELTON



SGT. BEAUNOUS E. WALK



PFC. HAROLD J. ABPLANALP



PFC. ROBERT S. BELL



PFC. MARVIN T. BOWERS



PFC. JOHN F. BOYD





PFC. JOSEPH J. BRISCOE



PFC. ARTHUR C. BROBACK



PFC. RAYMOND H. CROWDER



PFC. SAMUEL CRUMPLER



PFC. NORMAN E. ENGLE



PFC. ROGER GALLISDORFER



PFC. JAMES W. GILMORE



PFC. RICHARD A. GOFF



PFC. DARRIS H. GOOCH



PFC. ULYSSES S. OSBORN



PFC. ROY E. MCCARTY



PFC. NEIL MCCORMACK



PFC. JERRY P. MIKULEC



PFC. ROCCO J. PANDOZZI



PFC. JAMES W. SKILLMAN



PFC. JOHN J. TRZCINSKI



## Fourth Platoon in Combat

The machine gun section of King Company goes in for fire power in a big way. In addition to their machine guns and T/O weapons, the crew carried two Thompson subs and M-1 rifles. It might be added that this was rather unnecessary, for once they laid down a field of fire with the M. G.'s, only prisoners and dead men emerged. As is the story of war, though, all the dead men were not enemy. Following are some incidents of the fourth platoon in battle.

During the Granmenil battle, King Company's mortar section was called forth to knock out a machine gun nest that was holding up the progress of the company. The three mortar squads under Sergeants Hugh McKenzie, Beaunous Walk, and John Shelton, went into action upon the nest. Several hits were scored by Pfc. Edward Selke, Anthony Cogliano, Walk, and Section Leader George Jobe, but the nest continued to spit bullets. It wasn't until the nest started spitting eighty-eights that it was realized that it was a German tank.

The company had just left Bech when Sergeants Jobe and Selke of the mortar section were hit by artillery. Cogliano had scarcely taken over the section before the company battery was called upon to knock out a machine gun nest. Sergeants McKenzie's and Shelton's squads went into action in two feet of snow. Gunners Harold Abplanalp and John Roberts proved themselves when they fired into the woods and knocked out two German machine gun nests. The squad leaders were sweating; because they were firing close to the first platoon, one round landing twenty-five yards from them.

Appenwihr is a name that will long be remembered by King Company's weapons platoon, for it was here that the platoon was hit between the eyes. Nine men were left at the end of the battle.

Many from the platoon died a heroic death at Appenwihr, but above all is the memory of Pfc. John Roberts, the little Iowan who ran around through the thickest of the battle directing mortar fire. The enemy threw in all they had, and succeeded in knocking out the mortar but not « Benny ». He ran around as if he dared the enemy to hit him. It wasn't until the company had completely withdrawn from the town that the enemy accepted « Benny's » challenge. A single artillery round came into the woods where the company was digging in and the weapons platoon lost one of its most beloved members.

The busiest outfit along the Rhine during the first weeks of March was King Company's light artillery battery. One could go down to the « crow's nest » above the kitchen any time of day or night and find Sergeants



Cogliano and Shelton complete with field glasses, maps, and compasses, screaming fire orders to Sergeants McKenzie, Walk, and Lawrence Stienke at the positions on the dike.

On one certain day you might have found Sergeants Cogliano and Shelton tearing their hair out trying to direct fire on a canoe some 1500 yards away in the Rhine—oh well, orders are orders. Gunners Norman Engle, John Clark, and John Trzcinski gave up all hope of sleeping for they were always roused in the middle of the night to render supporting fire for King Company's patrols.

In Heinrichenburg when a German officer, leading fifteen troopers, started to throw a hand grenade at the M. G. section, machine gunner Edward Dietz accepted the challenge by sending a carbine slug into the would-be superman. The grenade exploded, killing the officer, and wounding some of his men, and allowing the second platoon to capture the remaining resisters.

The gallantry of the machine gun section reached its peak at Lutgen-Dortmund where they helped fight back a severe counter-attack by German paratroopers armed with burp guns and panzerfausts. The section fought well but lost their leader, Sgt. Alex Kondrich.

Lastly there was the time on the Ruhr River when Pfc.'s Glen Miller, Steve Popalio, and John Stewart with five men from the second platoon were trapped in a house by about ten German with burp guns and machine guns. Miller and Popalio were wounded, but the six men drove off the enemy and left the house with the wounded when the third platoon arrived.

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# **HONOR ROLL**

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## Honor Roll

PFC. ALBERT, CHARLES L.  
PVT. BACON, MARVIN J.  
T/SGT. BERNICCHI, LOUIS P.  
S/SGT. BLATTER, MELVIN R.  
PVT. BREWER, JOHN F.  
PFC. BROWN, HENRY D.  
PFC. CARMAN, JIMMIE J.  
PFC. CLINTON, EDGAR S.  
S/SGT. DEVINE, MARTIN L. JR.  
PVT. DISCHINGER, PROSPER F.  
CPL. DRESSLER, THOMAS F.  
PFC. GAIENNIE, ROD.  
PFC. GONZALES, ELIZARDE A.  
PFC. GREENE, PHILIP J.  
PFC. GRISH, WALTER J.  
PFC. HARINGA, EDWARD H.  
1ST. LT. HARVEY, CHARLES P.  
PFC. HOPPER, WALTER M.  
PFC. HORTON, OSCAR R.  
PVT. KILLIAN, NORMAN C.  
S/SGT. KONDRICH, ALEX JR.  
1ST. SGT. LEBA, FRANK.  
PFC. LIEBENSTEIN, CLAIR V.  
PFC. MARLOWE, ROBERT H.  
PFC. MAY, DONALD G.  
PFC. NAUMANN, EARL G.  
PFC. ROBERTS, JOHN C.  
PVT. SASSMAN, CLARENCE E.  
PFC. WARD, WILLIAM E.  
CPL. WIEGAND, RICHARD F.



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