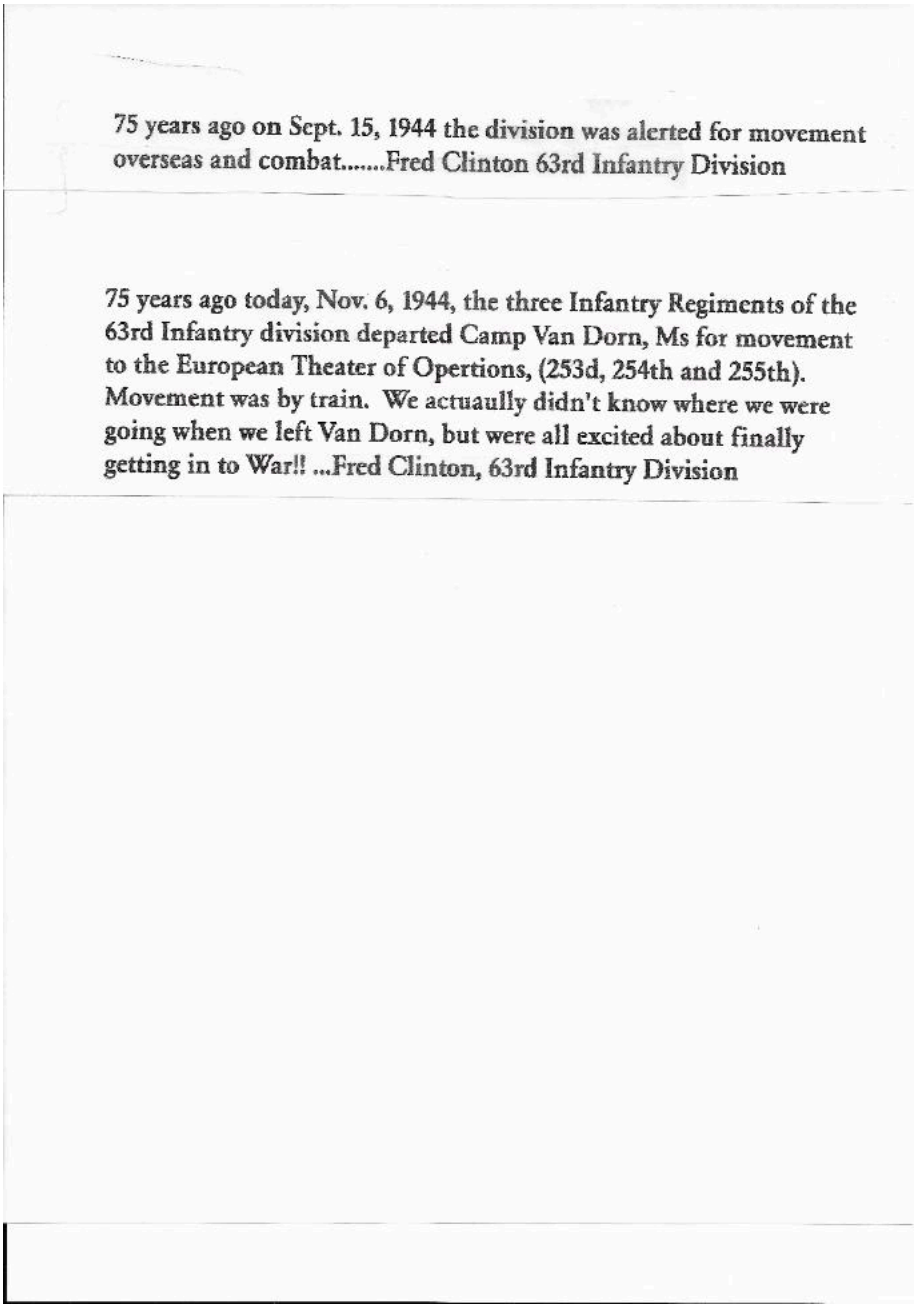
# Fred Clinton's 75th Anniversary Diary

In 2019 and 2020, the 75th anniversary of the last years of World War II, Fred Clinton posted a day-to-day diary of events in the history of the 63rd Infantry Division which took place in 1944 and 1945. He posted this diary on his Facebook page. Thanks to Connie Bates, the daughter of Sgt Wayne Scott, M Company, 254th Infantry Regiment, who provided her copy of this diary for others to see on this website



75 years ago on Sept. 15, 1944 the division was alerted for movement overseas and combat.....Fred Clinton 63rd Infantry Division

75 years ago today, Nov. 6, 1944, the three Infantry Regiments of the 63rd Infantry division departed Camp Van Dorn, Ms for movement to the European Theater of Opertions, (253d, 254th and 255th). Movement was by train. We actuaully didn't know where we were going when we left Van Dorn, but were all excited about finally getting in to War!! ...Fred Clinton, 63rd Infantry Division

75 years ago, on the 16th or 17th of December 1944, the regiment's of the 63rd Infantry Division began their departure from "Staging Area 2" outside of Marseille and were on their way to the frontlines via organizational vehicles and by rail in the old French 40 and 8 boxcars. Fortunately I (Fred Clinton) was selected to be an assistant driver of our section Jeep - cold buty much better then traveling in a non-heated-no bathroom boxcar. The trip would take several snowy and cold days. We would soon be in contact with a force of soldiers who main purpose was to kill us. At the time that wasn't crossing my

63rd Infantry Division
December 19, 2019 ·
75 years ago -20 Dec 1944- The three Infantry Regiments of the 63d Infantry Division began arriving at Camp Oberhofen, France. The camp had been liberated only a few days before our unit's arrived. Our quarters were horse stables- not the greatest but better than sleeping outside. Here we would celebrate Christmas and make final preparations to enter into combat with the German Army. In a day or so the three regiments would be attached to other Infantry Divisions because they had no supporting units such as Artillery-Medical-Signal, etc. Those elements were still in the USA and wouldn't arrive in country until late January 1945 and in the Combat area until early February. In the meantime our regiments would be attached to the 44th, the 100th and the 3d Infantry Divisions.

63rd Infantry Division

63rd Infantry Division
January 5 ·
While the support elements of the 63d Infantry Division we're sailing from the Port of New York on 5 January 1945 the 3d Battalion of the 253d Infantry Regiment was recapturing the town of Gros Rederching, France and the 255th Infantry Regiment had just occupied the town of Achen, France after a fierce and deadly battle. Also during this period the three Battalions of the 254th Infantry Regiment were attached to 3d Infantry Division regiments in the vicinity of Colmar, France- 1st Battalion with the 30th Infantry Regiment near Kaysersberg - 2d Battalion with the 7th Infantry Regiment near Lapoutroie and 3d Battalion with the 15th Infantry Regiment near Bergman. They would remain attached to these regiments until 7 January when they return to regimental control and would occupy defensive positions along the Fetch River with the 1st Moroccan Infantry Division on their left flank and 3d Infantry Division elements in their right flank.

63rd Infantry Division
January 5 ·
Up until now I have not mentioned those that gave their lives in battle so that we could live free. So I will begin to enter our combat losses to enemy action as they occur- From the period 22 Dec 1944 to 5 January 1945 we lost 57 of our comrades. 42 were lost on 3 January during the battles of
Gros Rederching and Achen. Our first loss to enemy action was Pfc Vincent Capasso, I Company, 255th Infantry Regiment on 22 Dec 1944. During the period of 22 Dec 1944 and 1 May 1945 the 63rd Infantry Division lost 988 soldiers as the results of enemy fire. The number of soldiers lost each day varied from zero (0) to sixty-one (61). During the period referred to we enjoyed 25 days with zero deaths. During the twelve days with the most casualties the division suffered the loss of 417 soldiers that were killed in action(KIA) or who died of wounds (DOW) received in action.
These figures do not take into consideration division soldiers that lost their lives due to non-battle accidents.
If you go to the 63rd Infantry Division Web site you can find the names of those who lost their lives listed in the Honor Roll Section.

63rd Infantry Division
January 7 ·
On 6 January 1945 we suffered no deaths in our ranks. On 7 January 1945 we had 5 KIA's (Killed in action).

63rd Infantry Division
January 9 ·
Our Infantry Regiments suffered one (1) Killed in Action on 8 January 1945 and seven(7) Killed in Action on 9 January 1945.

63rd Infantry Division
January 11 ·
On 10 January 1945 our regiments had one (1) KIA and on 11 January 1945 we had two(2) KIA. We would not have another KIA until 15 January 1945. Still we had many other losses due to cold weather injuries such as frozen feet. In the end we would discover that we would lose more men from cold weather injuries than from enemy fire.

Author
63rd Infantry Division Yesterday I gave out some data on KIAs for a short period in January 1945.,
Since that time I have taken the time to review unit morning reports for the 254th and 253d Infantry Regiments covering the period of 1 January 1945 to 4 Feburary 1945 to find out how many KIAs, MIAs, WIAs and non battle injuries and hospitalization there were during that period . What I found was rather interesting and I am going to publish my findings here today. Keep in mind that these figures cannot be certified as absolutely correct due to the condition of some of the unit morning reports, but I think it is accurate enough for you to get an idea of what casualties our regiments were suffering during this period. I expect to finish checking the morning reports of the 255tlh Infantry Regiment tomorrow and will publish those figures then.

63rd Infantry Division Here are the casualty figures for the 253d and 254th Infantry Regiments for the period 1 January 1945 thru 4 February 1945: 253d Infantry Regiment- Killed in
Action-11 Missing in Action- 7 Wounded in Action- 52- Hospitalized for non battle reasons- 166
For the 254th Infantry Regiment- Killed in Action- 8 Missing in Action- 5 Wounded in action- 52 Hospitalized for non battle reasons- 107 As January progresses you will see a dramatic increase in these numbers, so stay tuned for more information tomorrow.

63rd Infantry Division
· January 22 ·

Casualties for the 253d, 254th and 255th Infantry Regiment during the period 21-24 January 1945

RECAP OF CASUALTIES FOR THE 253D, 254TH AND 255TH INFANTRY REGIMENTS DURING THE PERIOD 21 JANUARY-24 JANUARY 1945.*

| | KIA | MIA | WIA | HOSP | total this period | total since 1 Jan 45 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 253D | 0 | 0 | 1 | 17 | 18 | 360 |
| 254TH | 23 | 3 | 77 | 21 | 124 | 387 |
| 255TH | 3 | 6 | 0 | 18 | 27 | 480 |

TOTALS since 1 January 1945.

| 104 | 94 | 318 | 711 | 1227 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| KIA | MIA | WIA | Hosp | |

*These figures cannot be certified to be exact due to some missing morning reports and condition of the copies that I have. I would say that they reflect a fairly accurate picture of the casualties suffered by our Infantry Regiments during the period cover by these figures.

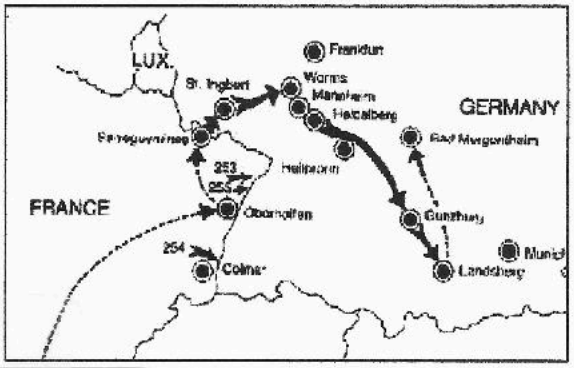
63rd Infantry Division
January 22 ·
Up until 23 Jan 1945 the 254th Infantry Regiment was mainly in defensive positions. That would change on 23 Jan 45 when the regiment would attack Hill 216 located near Bennwihr and the Fecht and Weiss rivers. They knew they were in for a battle since units of the 3d Infantry Division had attempted to capture this hill twice before, but were beaten back by the defenders. Will they capture the hill on this attempt? We will know by the end of the 24th of January 1945.

63rd Infantry Division
January 25 ·
It is now the afternoon of 25 January 1945 around 1600. The 254th Infantry Regiment units are assembled in a wooded area not too far from Ostheim, France. Although there is snow on the ground, it feels a little warmer in the forest plus we are getting our first meal from our mess tent for some time. But, before we can finish our meal, the Regimental officers return from a briefing at the 3d Infantry Division Headquarters and they tell us that we are directed to attack a village named Jebsheim and we are to begin our approach to the village at 1600. (Note: A French Parachute Battalion will be on our left flank going into Jebsheim) Whoa- we are already late and then we find out that due to a partially destroyed bridge over one of the rivers we have to cross to get to our line of departure we will have to go into the attack without benefit of tanks or vehicles to support our crew served weapons. That means that all equipment, all ammunition and weapons will have to be hand carried. So off we go along the road from Ostheim to Jebsheim in weather that was reported to be 20 degrees below zero Centigrade (4

degrees below zero Farenheit) with high winds and snow. Before this operation is over the 254th Infantry Regiment will suffer almost 700 casualties(66 KIA, 17 MIA, 310 WIA and 306 Hospitalized primarily for cold weather injuries). On the 28th of January alone, the regiment had 133 men hospitalized with cold weather injuries, mainly due to the fact that some of the units had to ford a small stream just prior to Jebsheim and in the process got their lower extremities wet. Due to the extreme cold weather this resulted in the large number of cold weather casualties.
It was reported that after the battle of Jebsheim that both sides of the conflict suffered almost 900 KIA. The battle of Jebsheim and the surrounding area was not concluded until around 4 February 1945. The 2d Battalion of the 254th Infantry Regiment earned a Presidential Unit Citation for their heroic efforts during the Jebsheim battle. When it was all over the 254th Infantry Regiment received a Presidential Unit Citation and a French Croix de Guerre for the part they played in the elimination of the Colmar Pocket. A more detailed description of this battle and the battle for Hill 216 can be found on the 63rd Infantry Division Website in the 254th Infantry Regiment section.
www.63rdinfdiv.com

63rd Infantry Division

63rd Infantry Division
February 6 ·
I will begin to post photos of the 63d Infantry Division units and personnel in Combat.. I hope you will enjoy and appreciate them:
The first photo shows the route taken by the 63rd Infantry Division during the time they were in combat and the location of the regiments before they rejoined the division in February 1945.




*B company 254th Infantry Regiment- 2 January 1945*

Departed Alspach, France 1600- arrived Ammerschwihr, France 1800. Distance travelled by foot 32 miles. Moved in as covering force for defensive position. Condition and morale of troops Excellent.

*B Company 253d Infantry Regiment- 20 Mar 1945*

Departed Ebringen 0115 on foot- arrived St Ingbert at 2000. Sent mop-up patrols thru houses searching for enemy personnel. Finished 2300- Results negative. Occupied billets in town.

*B Company, 254th Infantry Regiment- 17 December 1944*

6 officers and 175 enlisted men enroute by rail traveled 84 miles. Same day 7 enlisted men left Staging area #2 Delta Base Section France 0650 traveled by Motor convoy 186 miles- arrived bivouac area, St Robert, France 1655. Condition and morale of troops Excellent

*B Company, 254th Infantry Regiment- 16 January 1945*

Sigolsheim, France- Company maintaining defensive positions. 1st Lt Arthur J. DiAntonio of Company A, 254th Infantry Regiment assumes command.

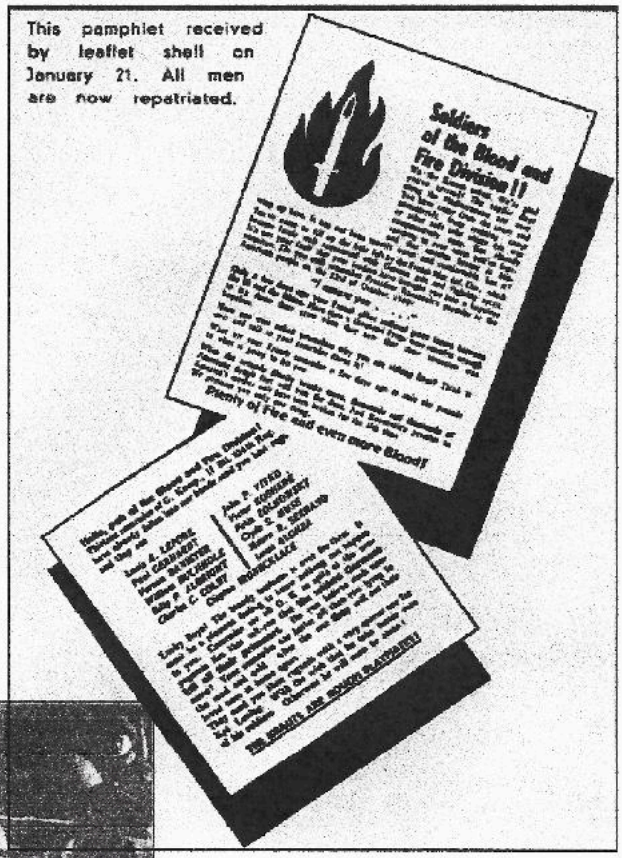
*A Company, 253d Infantry Regiment- 2 April 1945*

Left Schwansheim, Germany via foot march 1200. Motor convoy picked up company in the vicinity of Schwansheim and moved unit to a forward assembly area near Hammersheim. Remained in Regimental Reserve prepared to cross the Neckar River.

*B Company, 253d Infantry Regiment- 3 March 1945*

Company attacked enemy at 1405 and met strong resistance. Moving forward steadily but slowly- objective not yet taken. Number of casualties as yet unknown.

63rd Infantry Division
February 7th
Someone wanted to know the strengths of each regiment- Here are the strength figures for each regiment as of 1 December 1944:
253d Infantry Regiment: 2724
254th Infantry Regiment: 2719
255th Infantry Regiment: 2744

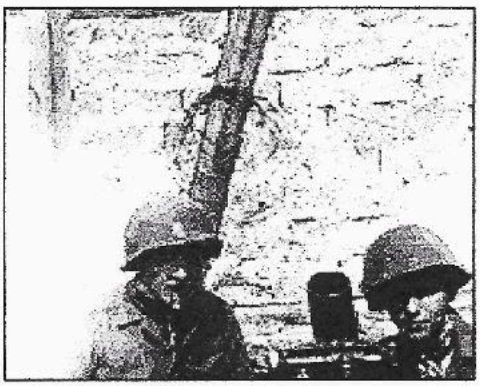




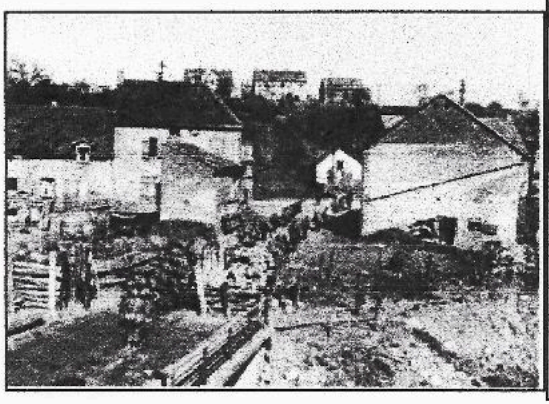

February 9thMore combat photos from the 63d Infantry Division:
#1- On the left- Sgt Shoemaker and on the right- Pfc Frederick Clinton at their 81mm mortar in Bennwihr, France January 1945. D Company 254th Infantry Regiment

#2-Donald E. Christy, C Co, 253rd Inf, on a liberated bicycle and wearing a
chimmey sweep's hat, rides through the streets of Kleinblittersdorf that had just been taken by Company B, 253rd Infantry. 20 Feb 45

#3- Troops of the 254th Infantry Regiment moving through Eschringen, Germany on 15 March 1945.



Pfc. Clinton on right, is the man I am eternal gratiful for his lifetime of researching and gathering information about his regiment and troops. So thankful he shared it with family members of these veterans of the 7th Army, who served the Army so proudly.



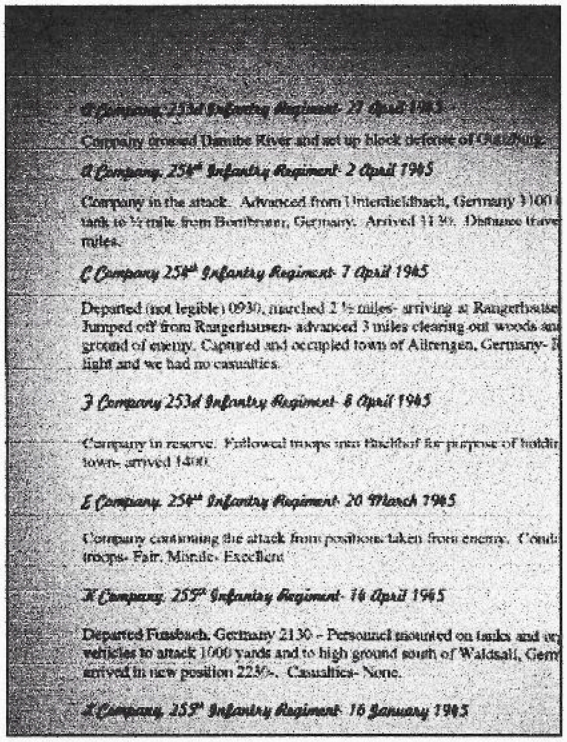



Donald E. Christy, Co. C, 253rd, riding a liberated bicycle and wearing a chimney sweep's hat, rides through the streets of Kleinblittersdorf that had just been taken by Company B, 253rd Infantry. 20 February 1945

63rd Infantry Division
February 13 -
Ambulance used to transport American soldiers Killed in Action during the Battle for Jebsheim, France- January 1945



63rd Infantry Division
February 13 -
More Morning Report entries



*Company crossed Danube River and set up block defense of Gundelfing

*E Company, 254th Infantry Regiment- 2 April 1945*

Company in the attack. Advanced from Unterdeildbach, Germany 1100 tank to ½ mile from Bonlbrunn, Germany. Arrived 1130. Distance trave miles.

*C Company 254th Infantry Regiment- 7 April 1945*

Departed (not legible) 0930, marched 2 ½ miles- arriving at Rangerhause Jumped off from Rangerhausen- advanced 3 miles clearing out woods an ground of enemy. Captured and occupied town of Allrengen, Germany- l light and we had no casualties.

*3 Company 253d Infantry Regiment- 8 April 1945*

Company in reserve. Followed troops into Buchhof for purpose of holdir town- arrived 1400.

*E Company, 254th Infantry Regiment- 20 March 1945*

Company continuing the attack from positions taken from enemy. Condi troops- Fair. Morale- Excellent

*K Company, 255th Infantry Regiment- 16 April 1945*

Departed Fusbach, Germany 2130 - Personnel mounted on tanks and ot vehicles to attack 1000 yards and to high ground south of Waldsall, Gern arrived in new position 2230's. Casualties- None.

*K Company, 255th Infantry Regiment- 16 January 1945*

March 22 at 9:21 AM ·
22 March 1945-

Berlin born Marlene Dietrich entertained the men of the 254th Infantry Regiment on an outdoor stage at Kirkel. Miss Dietrich sang three songs and played "Song of the Islands" on a musical saw before she finally lifted her skirt and revealed her famous legs. Fastened to her embroidered garter was a flaming red and gold patch of the 63d.
The top photo shows Miss Dietrich on the way to entertain the troops of the 254th Infantry Regiment. The bottom photo shows her giving autographs to some of the troops who attended her show. I must be in there somewhere!!



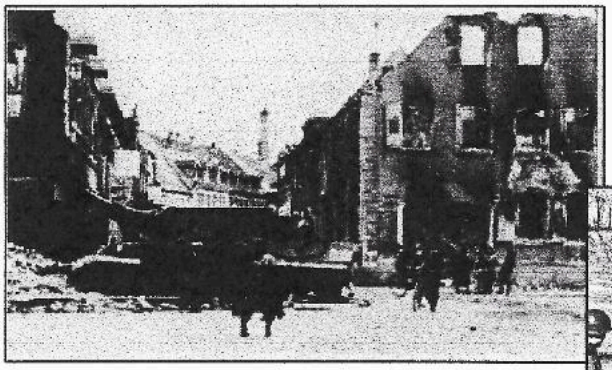


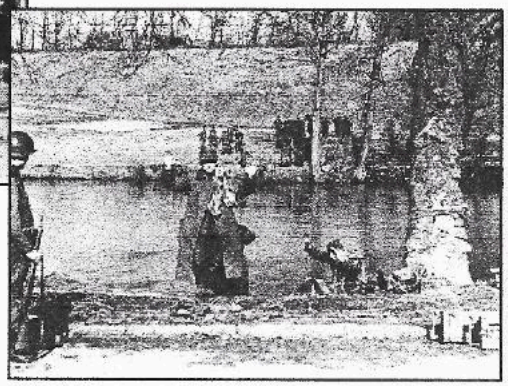

63rd Infantry Division
March 29 at 8:52 AM ·
29 March 1945:

From their assembly positions a few miles north of Mannheim on the plain of the Rhine River Valley, the three regiments were ordered by VI corps to relieve certain elements of the 44th Division and strike eastward along the Neckar River axis.
Prior to the Neckar River attack, however, it was necessary for the 63d Infantry Division to complete the attack and occupation of the city of Mannheim and some of its suburbs after relieving the 44th Division elements. At the same time the division would proceed to seize and occupy the city of Heidelberg, which lay astride the line of departure for their primary effort.

63rd Infantry Division
March 31 at 10:03 AM ·
30 March 1945:
The 1st Bn, 254th Inf at 2225 began the relief of the 324th Inf on the

The 255th Inf was assigned the responsibility to seize and hold Heidelberg. When they found themselves on the opposite side of the Neckar River from Heidelberg, members of the 3d Bn 255th located a civilian boathouse and using rowboats and canoes the 3d Bn ferried itself across the river. By 1000 on 30 March the 3d Bn 255th was in possession of the city.
Meantime, elements of the 253d Inf were moving through the eastern suburbs of Mannheim to relieve elements of the 44th Inf Div. In the afternoon of the 30th, elements of the 253d moved into Heidelberg with little resistance since the 255th Infantry had basically taken the city earlier.
On 31 March 1945, the direction of the division's attack changed and with that it was reassigned from XV Corps to VI Corps control. With Heidelberg under control of the 255th Inf, the 253d moved through the city and attacked toward the east and southeast at 0730 . As they moved eastward they found towns displaying white flags to signify that they were surrendering the city. By the end of the day, the 253d had moved about 11 kilometers and had occupied Gaiberg and Neckargemund (a city with loads and loads of Champagne).
In the meantime the 254th Inf had moved into Schriesheim in preparation for an eastward attack along the north bank of the Neckar River while the 255th Inf was held in reserve in the vicinity of Heidelberg.





63rd Infantry Division
April 1 at 7:24 PM ·
1 April 1945- The 253d Medical Detachment moved from Heidelberg to Neckargemund and liberated more champagne.

Combat Team Red, made up of the 253d Inf reinforced by Co A, 822d Tank Destroyer Battalion, Co C, 753d Tank Battalion, A Co, 263d Engr Bn, and the 861st FA Bn continued toward the east and southeast. By 2400 , elements of the Team had occupied Schwanheim, Haag and Langenzell. At the same time elements of A Company 263d Engr Bn were strafed by a German aircraft while they were clearing the main road near Neckargemund.
The next two days were much the same. At that time the 10th Armored Division was spearheading the drive and the 253d Inf was following along the same roads either on foot, in trucks or on the backs of the 753d Tanks. Each night they would stop in a small town and establish defensive positions and then in the morning it would start all over again.
**Combat Team White (254th Inf), minus the 2d Bn, plus the 862d FA Bn and some tanks and tank destroyers departed from Schriesheim at 1130 and arrived at Eberbach at 1730, a distance of 21 kilometers. Moderate resistance was encountered from the German rear guard elements which had fallen back toward the Jagst River.**
Combat Team Blue (255th Inf) plus the 863d FA Bn and some tanks and tank destroyers moved southeast some 16 kilometers to the vicinity of Horrenberg, Mauer and Meckesheim. The exposed flank of Combat Team
Blue caused quite some concern. A French tank Division was to have crossed the Rhine River and continued on to the area of the 63d Inf Div right flank; however, it was nowhere to be found. A German tank outfit continually harassed the advancing units as they moved toward the city of Sinsheim.

April 2 at 3:02 PM ·
2 April 1945-
Combat Team Red (253d Inf) had advanced another 20 Kilometers and crossed the Neckar River in assault boats and rafts of the 263d Engr Bn at Neckarelz, Diedesheim, Steinbach and Gundelsheim while Combat Team White (254th Inf) had moved east and southeast from Eberbach to make contact withe 253d near Mosbach. In the meantime Combat Team Blue (255th Inf) hd moved through Sinsheim and closed on the Neckar Rivewr between Bad Wimpfen and Hassmersheim while moving about 30 kilometers in one day.
**The 3d Bn, 253d remained in Diedesheim after crossing Neckar River to await the arrival of the forward elements of the 254th Inf.**
At Gundelsheim the 1st and 2d Bns of the 253d Inf left the Neckar River Valley and went on foot across coungtry towards the Jagst River. After crossing the river at Untergriesheim, the defensive positions of the German Army Group "G" were finally encountered on the 4th of April.
**To hold the German divisions in place while the 100th Infantry Division was to attack Heilbronn, the three regiments of the 63d Infantry Division had attacked the Jagst River line simultaneously from the North.**
On the morning of 2 April 1945, soldiers from the Luftwaffe had joined the ranks of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division , thus began one of the most difficult times encountered by the 253d Inf.



The panzer grenadiers quickly surrounded the band of engineers, preventing any movement out of the area. Lt. Johnston lost his life while seeking a means of escape from the quarry area, but all avenues were covered by automatic weapons fire. Sergeant Cal Stevens did manage to slip through the line, however, and ran back to Gundelsheim to alert the members of the 861st Field Artillery to the plight of the members of his Engineer platoon.

Upon receiving the news of the entrapment, the CO of the 2nd Battalion, 253rd Infantry, Major Ancher Christensen directed that a group of tanks with riflemen and artillerymen leave immediately on a mission to free the engineers. The rescue force arrived in about two hours and finally relieved the beleaguered group from their positions in and around the quarry area at dusk. In addition to the loss of Lt. Johnston, the 2nd platoon suffered two more killed, nine men wounded, and the capture of all of their vehicles and assault boats.

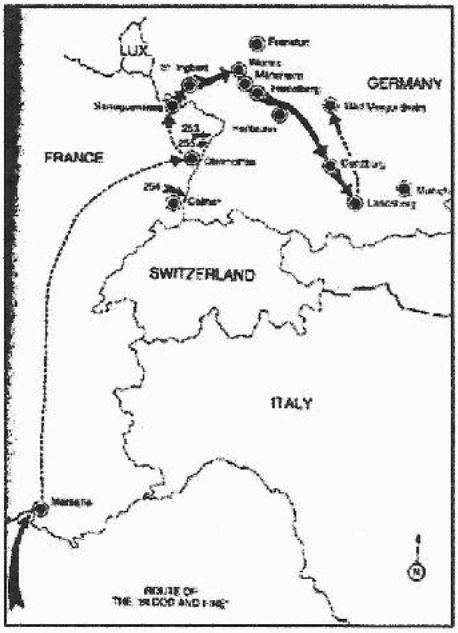
guarded by men from Company "B", 263rd Engineers, until the 763rd Ordnance Company could give the material proper disposition.

The First and Second Battalions of the 253rd Regiment moved into Hochstberg and Obergriesheim from Tiefenbach on the 3rd while the third Battalion followed the north bank of the Jagst to Mockmuhl, where it encountered a determined effort to resist. The Third Battalion, 253rd, was engaged in street fighting from 3 April to 5 April when the resistance was finally overcome, and it was relieved by elements of the 255th Regiment who held the town until the end of the Jagst-Kocher engagement.

While in Hochstberg, Lt. Dwight Crandell of "D" Company, 253rd Infantry, met with some members of a tank company from the 10th Armored Division. The tankers told him that they had been stopped in Hochstberg by intense artillery fire from 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division, which was entrenched along well-prepared positions just south of the Jagst River. The tankers were waiting for the infantry to move up and help.

On the morning of 3 April 1945, S/Sgt. Bill Snyder, 1st Lt. Donald Johnston, and the other members of the 2nd platoon of "A" Company, 263rd Engineers, crossed the Neckar River north of Gundelsheim with two 2-1/2 ton trucks loaded with assault boats, which were to be used by the 2nd and 1st Battalions of the 253rd Infantry in their effort to establish a bridgehead on the south side of the Jagst River at Untergriesheim. The platoon of engineers proceeded southward from their crossing site along the east bank of the Neckar through the narrow streets of Gundelsheim and, by error, continued southward toward the confluence of the Neckar and Jagst rather than taking the easterly road to Hochstberg. For reasons unknown, the platoon passed a road block site on the south side of the city without being challenged and soon found themselves in enemy territory.

The 3rd Battalion of the 38th SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment was defending in the area north of the Jagst and east of the Neckar rivers when the platoon of engineers arrived. Soon a fire fight broke out and most of the engineers sought out the protection of a small quarry-like area just north of the Jagst River. A small contingent found themselves isolated in a concrete culvert which lay beneath a railroad embankment and had been previously used as a latrine by the 38th SS PGR. A third group of engineers took cover in a ditch along the railroad embankment.





Men of Co. K, 255th Infantry, accompanied by 10th Armored Division tanks, move down a Sinsheim, Germany, street searching for snipers.

Billigheim where they were bombed by German planes, and they found that champagne will not put out a fire caused by a bomb in the tarp of a 2-1/2 ton truck. During the day, the batteries fired 1,024 rounds in all directions in an attempt to quiet the opposing artillery and mortar fire. In the meantime, the 863rd Field Artillery moved into positions in the vicinity of Adelsheim. The 718th Field Artillery, which had been attached to the 863rd since Heidelberg, was relieved from attachment and reassigned to the 861st Field Artillery to support the 253rd Infantry.

The 862nd Field Artillery, following the main force of the 254th Infantry, moved from Oberschefflenz to Osterburken arriving shortly before noon. They immediately began to set up their communications net, when they received word that a railroad train of political prisoners had been discovered in their area. Investigating troops from the 254th Infantry had found the train which had been in a rail yard for five days. The prisoners were packed 40 to 60 to a car, which left practically no room to sit or rest, and they had been locked in the cars with no food or water for the 5-day period. Their SS guards had left the train only

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an hour or so before, leaving a few men as a delayin force which was quickly dispersed by a small infantr unit.

The captives were in very poor physical condition Some had died and many others were too weak to stan and were lying in heaps on the rail car floors. Th stench of urine and human feces was overpowering Colonel Warren's men provided the pitiful unfortunate with shelter, clothing, and the first decent food tha they had eaten in months.

This was the 63rd Infantry Division's firs encounter with the plight of the displaced persons an political prisoners in Germany, and it served t confirm the many rumors which had spread throughou the Army regarding the inhuman treatment of Gypsies Jews, and others in the concentration camps.

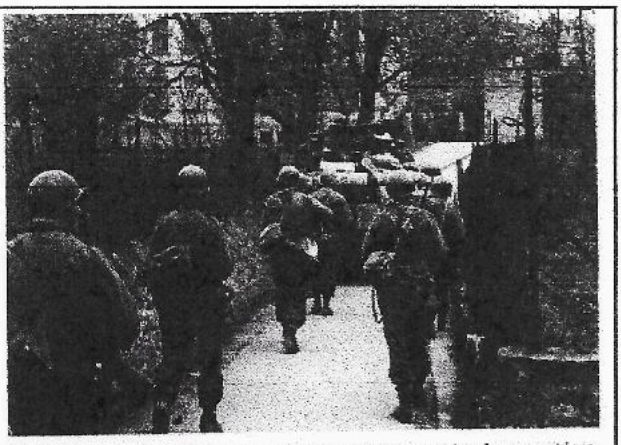
On April 4th, the 255th Infantry had proceede directly east from Mosbach and moved through the 254t Infantry line at Oberschefflenz and moved forward while encountering light resistance, to a lin extending from Billigheim through Roigheim and on t Adelsheim. The next day the 255th Regiment move south into its Jagst River positions at Jagsthausen, Bieringen, Berlichingen, Widdern and their environs.

Elements of the 254th Regiment moved further east into positions in the various small towns and oper areas along the north side of the Jagst aroun Krautheim and Dorzbach during the period from 4 Apri to 6 April.

The stage was set for the critical battle for th heights between Jagst and the Kocher Rivers. The 17t SS Panzer Grenadier Division occupied the high groun from Jagstfeld to the western half of the Harthause Wald opposite the 253rd Infantry and the 3rd Battalio of the 255th Infantry. Further to the east of th 17th SS PGD was the 553rd Volks Grenadier Division, the Pioneer Regiment "Rosenheim," and miscellaneous battle groups.

After a delay of some six hours resulting from th entrapment of the platoon of engineers, additional assault boats were provided by "A" Company of th 263rd Engineers to the crossing area.

At 0355 on 4 April 1945, the 2nd Battalion of th 253rd Regiment crossed the Jagst River in assaul boats near Untergriesheim under an extremely heav concentration of German artillery, mortar an Nebelwerfer fire. The 2nd Battalion moved out to th southwest and the 1st Battalion of the 253rd Regiment followed immediately to the same crossing area. The heavy concentration of enemy artillery and mortar fire



255th Infantry patrol follows a tracked vehicle during clearing operations. Sinsheim, Germany, 4 April 1945

continued as it crossed the river in assault boats and moved out to the east along the south bank of the river. Company "C", 253rd Infantry, moved to the southern edge of the wooded area adjacent to the river and west of Herbolzheim. Company "B", 253rd Infantry, moved through the woods and into the town of Herbolzheim, while Company "A" moved into and occupied the town of Untergriesheim. "D" Company moved a mortar platoon into Untergriesheim and a machine gun platoon into Herbolzheim.

The attack was slowed by the heavy concentration of Nebelwerfers and artillery fire. Nebelwerfers, which the infantry called "screaming meamies", were rockets normally used as attack weapons against cities; but in this case they were used against the infantry. Bill Mauldin said that the "doggie" becomes a specialist on shells after he has been in the line for a while. Sometimes he hates those that come straight at him, like the 88s, more than those that drop because the high ones give him more warning. On the other hand, if the flat trajectory one misses him, it keeps on travelling while the dropped one can kill even if it misses by dozens of yards. Some shells scream, some whiz, some whistle and others whir. Most flat trajectory shells sound like rapidly-ripped canvas. Howitzer shells seemed to have a two-toned whisper. Most dogfaces would like to get their hands on the guy who invented the "88" because the shell arrives almo without warning! Mauldin was absolutely correct.

The XII TAC bombed Oedheim and made fo reconnaissance sorties in an attempt to locate t German artillery and heavy mortar positions.

In the meantime, the 2nd Battalion, 253rd Infantr had moved to occupy the high ground near the town Willenbach. The troopers of the 38th Panzer Grenadi Regiment held to their positions tenaciously a counterattacked many times in an attempt to move t 1st and 2nd battalions back from their bridgehea Small arms fire and artillery continued to fall Herbolzheim, Untergriesheim, the woods, and the hi ground to the southwest all night long.

During the day, "A" Company of the 263rd Enginee made repeated attempts to construct a ferry operati over the Jagst, utilizing infantry support ra equipment which they had moved from Hassmersheim the Neckar. Heavy concentrations of German artille prevented the successful installation of the fer until well into the night. The ferry finally allow some heavier equipment such as antitank weapons acce to the battle area.

"Baker" Battery of the 863rd Field Artillery w positioned in Adelsheim but with only a very f targets because the line was so fluid in their are On the day before, the regiment was near a state fa at Zimmerhof where the Polish inmates had slaughter a calf for them. The cooks chose this opportunity inactivity to grill the steaks for everyone. The ne day would be a different story, however.

63rd Infantry Division
April 1945 was a terrible month for the division as relates to our soldiers that were Killed in Action;
Here is that dismal record for 1-9 April 1945:
1 April- 11 KIA
2 April- 15 KIA
3 April- 10 KIA
4 April- 15 KIA
5 April- 13 KIA
6 April- 15 KIA
7 April- 51 KIA
8 April- 61 KIA
9 April- 52 KIA
To get an understanding of what was going on to build up to such high casualties (and these figures don't list the hundreds of 63d Infantry Division soldiers that were wounded in action or Missing in Action) please read the following pages:

6 April 1945

The 861st FA moved to Herbolzheim and came under rocket and mortar fire as well as a strafing by jet planes. At the same time, the 63rd Infantry Division CP was moved to a more central position in Adelsheim.

While "A" Company of the 263rd Engineers was moving the infantry support bridge to a more protected location at Herbolzheim, a coordinated attack by both the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 253rd Infantry Regiment relieved the situation to some degree. The 2nd battalion, now with tank support, attacked to the east along the high ground and toward the town of Buchhof (Stein a Kocher).

The account of the 253rd Infantry History records the engagement between the 5th Company, 37th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, and "F" Company, 253rd Infantry, supported by an element of tanks from the 753rd Tank Battalion in the following terms:

The 2nd Battalion attacked in a column of companies, using only two companies, as Company "E" had to remain in a blocking position to cover the exposed right flank of the Regiment (the 398th Infantry Regiment having been unable to advance across the river and keep abreast of the 253rd Infantry Regiment). Company "F" led the attack and it was followed by Company "G". Company "F" moved out of Untergriesheim, up the hill occupied by Companies "E" and "G", passed behind these companies and attacked to the east in the direction of Buchhof with three supporting tanks from Company "C", 753rd Tank Battalion.

The attack progressed rapidly despite the fact that much time was needed to clean out several well-organized positions containing snipers and machine gun nests which were harassing the companies. Also adding to the danger was a succession of artillery, rocket and mortar concentrations which landed among the men during the entire attack. As the leading company reached the edge of Buchhof, it was met with stiff enemy resistance, and tanks placed fire in the town.

Company "F" assaulted the town of Buchhof at noon and was followed in by Company "G". Shortly after entering the town, the two companies were hit by a counterattack of some 20-30 infantry from the 17th SS AA (Reconnaissance Battalion) who maneuvered through the draw on the west edge of town. Although the companies suffered damage from "potato masher" hand grenades, the attack was driven off.

At 1600, when Company "F" was preparing to leave the town to continue the attack toward the east and the town of Stein am Kocher, the 37th Panzer Grenadier Regiment mounted yet another counterattack at "F" Company's left flank, this time with several hundred men supported by one self-propelled gun. "F" Company withdrew to the hilly area northwest of Buchhof and called for the 861st Field Artillery to support it by firing into the town. The artillery fire forced the withdrawal of the counterattacking unit, and Company "B" from the 1st Battalion was attached to the 2nd Battalion to bolster the beleaguered "F" Company.

This attack against the flank of the 37th and 38th SS Panzer Grenadier Regiments, in conjunction with air strikes by the XII TAC against the towns of Stein and Lampoldshausen which were called for by Division Headquarters, lessened the pressure on the 1st Battalion, 253rd Infantry, and allowed it to move across the open fields and high ground to a position before Kressbach.

"A" Company, on the northern high ground, suffered many casualties and had lost all of its infantry officers to the continued artillery and mortar fire as it moved to the east. Lieutenant James Robinson, the 861st Field Artillery Forward Observer attached to the company, lost both of his crew members during the shelling. Two replacements from "A" Battery were sent up, but in the early phases of the attack they too were hit by small arms fire and evacuated. During the remainder of the attack, Robinson was carrying his own radio except for short periods when riflemen relieved him of the 78-pound machine. Since he was the only officer remaining, Lt. Robinson was left in command of the company.

While still under heavy mortar and small arms fire,

Company and called upon them to follow him to the top of the hill. Although exhausted from the rigors of the day's action, the men of "A" Company rallied and charged to the summit of their objective where they dug into defensive positions. For his effort that day, Lt. James Robinson was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

"C" Company followed the creek through the fields on the right of "A" Company and, at a somewhat lower elevation, to a point just before and to the right of the town. Lt. Jim Dodd, the company commander of "C" Company, felt that he had figured out the German artillery and mortar harassing fire schedule -- five rounds every three minutes -- and he thought that he had enough time between rounds to run down to "A" Company and coordinate the necessary flank security for the night. He was surprised by a round that landed some ten feet behind him, injuring his right knee and left arm as he approached the town.

The village of Kressbach had been entered by a small patrol from the Forty Thieves late in the afternoon of April 6th. However, the battle plan called for the patrol to withdraw to the high ground southwest of the town after it was occupied by stronger forces from "A" Company reinforced by several of the tanks from Company "C", 753rd Tank Battalion. That force attacked from the northwest very late in the afternoon.

Carl Jackson and his mortar section set up their gun in the small orchard on the north side of town. The high ground offered excellent surveillance of the town below. After clearing the first house at the edge of the village, John Linscott and two others from his squad came upon a small equipment shed in the yard to the rear of the building. There were fresh tracks on the path leading to the shed. Linscott peered cautiously under the shed, where a hole had indicated a recent entry had been made, and found himself looking directly into a German face not five inches away. The Germans could have killed the small group of Americans as they approached, but instead they chose to surrender and were sent back to the rear.

Company "A", 253rd Infantry, continued the attack with the aid of several tanks from the 753rd Tank Battalion and at dusk had reached the far side of the town. During the night, however, "A" Company was forced to withdraw from the town because of the heavy pressure of a counterattack by a contingent from the defending 17th AA (Reconnaissance) Battalion. The German defenders had infiltrated the line and returned to the town by hiding behind the cattle as they returned to their barns at night. As a group from "A" Company withdrew through the lines of "C" Company, they were followed into the American line by a German patrol, all of whom were either killed or captured.

First Lieutenant (now Brigadier General, retired) Anthony Daskevich, who was leading the contingent of tanks from the 753rd Tank Battalion, recalled:

"We entered the town late in the evening with enough light left to reconnoiter and set up a defense to cover the main approaches into the town. As night fell, the Germans began to shell the town. Many fires were started and the streets were no longer covered with darkness.

"Later in the night, the Germans began to infiltrate panzerfaust teams into the town. Before we realized what was happening, the panzerfaust teams had knocked out two of my tanks. We had lost contact with our infantry outposts and didn't have the slightest notion about what was happening. I knew that we had less than twenty riflemen when we entered the town, hardly enough to cover outposts and stop infiltration."

Daskevich received permission to withdraw to the high ground northwest of the village and went to the "A" Company CP, which he found unoccupied. He advised his tank commanders to notify all of the riflemen in their vicinity, and the small force of three tanks and a handful of infantry then had to fight its way back out of town.

7 April 1945

On the 6th of April, the engineers had prepared assault boats for the 254th to cross the Jagst at Krautheim and also had constructed a ford site for the 255th to cross at Bieringen. On the 7th, the 1271st Engineers constructed a double Bailey Bridge across the Seckach at Osterburken, which improved the flow of supplies to the areas of combat.

On April 7 and 8, the 254th Infantry crossed the Jagst on either side of Dorzbach and Krautheim. The 2nd Battalion moved southward against light resistance and at the end of the day was in Marlach and Sindeldorf, and attacking Dorrenzimmern. On the other hand, very strong resistance was encountered at Hohebach since that town controlled the main highway. "C" Company from the 1st Battalion, 254th Infantry, was attempting to take the town without success. The 862nd FA fired a barrage of 96 rounds of high explosive and white phosphorous using time on target fuses at the town, and the second attack by Company "C" was successful. The regiment proceeded southward against light to moderate opposition and was impeded only by delaying actions of the company-sized battle groups of the 9th and 212th Volks Grenadier Divisions. On the 9th it was in the villages of Railhof, Hohenrot, Belsenberg and Hermuthausen. By 10 April 1945, the 254th had covered 6 miles and had reached Ingolfingen on the Kocher River which it crossed on 11 April 1945.

The 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 255th Infantry forced crossings of the Jagst River at Berlichingen and Bieringen on 7 April and quickly consolidated the two bridgeheads. After seizing the town of Alte Schontal with its spectacularly beautiful church, the 1st Battalion moved forward to the large wooded area called the Grosser Buchwald, which occupied the land heights between the Jagst and the Kocher Rivers. In the meantime the 2nd Battalion of the 255th Infantry expanded its Bieringen bridgehead to include the town of Westernhausen and the high ground east of that village.

The German defenders were beginning to suffer from the intense artillery fire emanating from the American side and sent some nine ME-109's to strafe all of the artillery positions.

As the seriousness of the situation which faced th 253rd Infantry Regiment developed, the regimenta boundaries were changed and the artillery of th division was regrouped and relaid. This resulted i the 255th Infantry Regiment being assigned a fron extending along the Jagst River from Zuttlingen t Marlach, some 25,000 yards in length. All of th artillery in the Division except the 863rd and Compan "A" of the 83rd Chemical Mortar Battalion was relai to fire in support of the 253rd Infantry.

The 3rd Battalion, 253rd Infantry, entered Siglinge and Zuttlingen while the 2nd Battalion moved acros the open fields toward Lobenbacherhof. Early on th morning of the same day, the village of Kressbach wa retaken by the first platoon of "C" Company, 253r Infantry, and on two occasions other elements of "C Company had tried to clear the open ground adjacent t the town.

Herr Spahmann continued with his description:

"The hungry and thirsty cattle were still screamin continuously -- especially the cows in pain becaus they needed to be milked. Early Saturday morning ( April), Herr Schwenzer and a few helpers dared to g to the cow shed -- then others also went to their hom to take care of the animals. Suddenly a big surpris -- now a lively artillery barrage came from th American side.

"Scared, all the farmers came running back into th protective cellar. Everything went well. Only Alber Muller received a light contusion near the eye fro some flying fragments.

"We knew immediately that after this mornin greeting, tanks would start rolling in, and we wer right. Suddenly the cellar door was pushed open an two 'Amis' with machine pistols demanded that al soldiers must come out. We answered that we are no soldiers but civilians. So they left again. Now th living room was again occupied with Amis. We were no allowed to leave the cellar."

Kressbach was a very small village of perhap fifteen or twenty houses and barns which supported th farming area surrounding the town. South of town across a field, a small stream, and about five hundre yards distant, was the forest edge of the Harthause Wald. To the east of town was open farmland for abou 1,200 yards with the same small stream running towar the town in the center of the field and the Harthause Wald tree line extending along the far south edge o the field.

In the afternoon of 7 April, the first platoon o

"C" Company plus a five-man machine gun squad was directed to proceed from the town through the open field to the east. This line of attack paralleled the forest line to the south and left the entire right flank of the first platoon exposed to any defending positions of the 37th SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment which might be in the forest edge. "A" Company, in the meantime, was to attack the forest edge which extended in a southward direction from the Harthauser Wald corner across the field from Kressbach.

The exposed flank had been recognized as a weakness in the plan and, therefore, heavy machine guns were placed in the second story windows of the town and positioned to fire at the western half of the forest edge. Two tanks were positioned along the road leading eastward from the north edge of town to place machine gun and 76mm gun fire along the eastern half of the forest edge.

On the cold rainy afternoon of 7 April 1945, the "Forty Thieves," as ordered, moved out into the open field and proceeded toward the east. The first squad was in the lead with scouts very far out ahead. The squad was spread as widely as possible, with half of its members on one side of the creek and half on the other. The menacing edge of the woods was on their right.

The disciplined troopers from the 2nd Battalion of the 37th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, the 1st and 3rd Companies of the 17th AA with machine gun emplacements, and a line of riflemen dug in at the forest edge watched and held their fire as the "Forty Thieves" moved out in front of them. The platoon members on the south slope of the field were only 50 yards in front and moving to the east across their line of fire. It was imperative that the defenders conserve their fire since their ammunition was almost depleted. In some cases the riflemen had only nine rounds left. Others were armed only with pistols having one magazine of 9mm ammunition.

The tank on the far side of the field and closest to Kressbach was fired upon and disabled by a panzerfaust thus rendering it useless; and the second tank, fearing a similar fate, withdrew to a more protected position in the town. The result of these two actions left the "Forty Thieves" without the important flank protection along the edge of the eastern half of the woods.

When the first squad scouts were out into the field approximately 1,000 yards from the town of Kressbach with the rest of the platoon about 400 yards from town, the defensive positions of the 17th SS opened fire. Machine gun and rifle fire cut down "Forty Thieves" on all sides, but return fire from "C" Company machine gun squad nullified momentarily.

The only place which offered any protection at was the creek which ran through the center of field. Those who were close to the stream entered on T/Sgt. Lou Warmoth's order to establish cover fire. Those who were any distance more than twe yards from the stream failed to negotiate it and w wounded or killed outright.

The spring-fed water in the creek was very cold early April, and at that time of the year it was ab a foot to a foot and a half deep. The creek ba were some two or three feet high in the highest pla and only about eight inches to a foot high in lowest places. Those soldiers who were fortun enough to get into the stream attempted to use south bank's protection and tried to fire back at SS in the forest edge to protect their fal comrades, and build the base of fire which was badly lacking. The SS troopers made sure that additional Americans got into the creek to reinfo those already in the stream. Any movement of wounded drew rapid fire from the forest edge. Cr for help could be heard from the wounded, then m rifle and machine gun fire.

The Panzer Grenadiers then turned their attention those in the creek. Because the defending positi were perhaps twenty or thirty feet higher than creek, the opposite or north bank and half of creek was in their field of vision. Those in creek were ordered to pull back by crawling downstr toward Kressbach. If one made the mistake venturing toward the opposite side he was sure to wounded. If he attempted to look over the near b he suffered the same fate. The creek soon contai many dead and wounded also. The final resu indicated that six died in the creek.

Members of the lead squad who had gotten back to safety of the creek faced a trip of as much as thousand yards through the cold water. The e

the water one could get a breath.

Further down the stream and nearer to the town was an open space of about fifty feet and then a large manure pile adjacent to a barn at the southeast corner of the village. At this point, the creek made a 45 degree turn toward the town which afforded enfilading fire for the enemy.

If he was able to get to the place in the stream closest to the manure pile, one had to get out and run to the pile. After two or three attempts to negotiate this route, the 17th SS PGD defenders zeroed a machine gun in to fire at the escapees. T/Sgt. Warmoth called for smoke, which distorted the SS Troopers' field of vision and allowed the escape from the creek.

One more surprise was in store. When wearing combat boots, it is normal to tuck the pant legs into the top of the boots. During the trip down the creek, the pants filled with water; and as each man would make the attempt to run to the manure pile, he had perhaps two gallons of water in his pant legs to slosh around. This would add about 15 pounds to the weight of his legs, making running almost impossible. Most fell two or three times in the fifty-foot run.

The few who returned from the creek unscathed, but cold and wet and frightened, gathered in a barn on the east edge of the village. Clothes were removed and the shocked returnees were dried with towels and fed cognac in large quantities. Although some drank as much as a half bottle straight down, there was absolutely no alcoholic affect because everyone was so cold. Clothing was borrowed from soldiers and civilians in the vicinity -- a shirt here, coat there, trousers from somewhere else. It didn't matter if they fit or not -- they were all dry.

On the 7th of April, 1945, at Kressbach, Germany, the 1st platoon of "C" Company, 253rd Infantry, lost 17 killed and 7 wounded. The "Forty Thieves" had been reduced to nine in number.

Daskevich from the 753rd Tank Battalion reflected on the engagement at Kressbach, "In conclusion, I must say that the battle for Kressbach was the toughest and the longest I had ever encountered. I was a veteran of Sicily, Italy, France, and Germany and I had been in many battles, but none could compare with what we went through in trying to take Kressbach."

Daskevich received the Distinguished Service Cross for his activities on the 7th and 8th of April near Kressbach.

The 253rd Medical Detachment also lost heavily i the Jagst River area when one aid man was lost on th 5th, two on the 6th, four on the 7th and six on th 8th of April. Thirteen aid men and stretcher bearer is an extraordinarily high attrition rate for fou days of combat.

The official record for this day states:

"Company 'C' attempted to move eastward across th open field southeast of Kressbach."

Farther to the east along the Jagst River line th 255th Infantry Regiment initiated its attack on th morning of April 7 with assaults across the river a Berlichingen and at Bieringen against elements of th 553rd Volks Grenadier Division and the Pionee Regiment "Rosenheim". The plan was to attack directl to the south toward the Kocher River from the 1s Battalion bridgehead at Berlichingen and the 2n Battalion bridgehead at Bieringen.

Lampoldshausen was bombed and strafed to limit th supplies and reinforcements from reaching the Germa defenders.

9 April 1945

The 3rd Battalion, 253rd Infantry, and the 3rd Battalion, 255th Infantry, effected a juncture in the center of the Harthauser Wald while the 1st Battalion, 253rd, continued to sweep the woods toward the south on their right flank. At the end of the day, all three battalions had reached the southern edge of the Harthauser Wald with the 3rd Battalion ,255th, in the vicinity of Buchhof; the 3rd Battalion, 253rd, around Lampoldshausen; and the 1st Battalion, 253rd, about a mile south of Ernstein facing Hosselinshof.

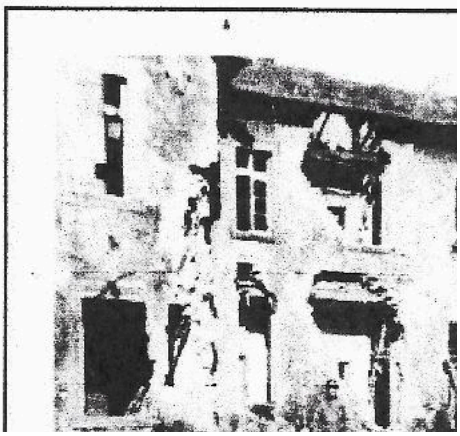
A defensive line was then established along the southern edge of the Harthauser Wald by the 253rd Regiment, whose rifle companies had suffered heavy casualties in the six days of fighting against the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division.

The 2nd Battalion of the 255th Infantry pushed directly south from its Bieringen bridgehead on the Jagst River to the town of Weissbach on the Kocher, some five kilometers away. The leading elements of Companies "E" and "F" waded the shallow stream under small arms and mortar fire and immediately struck out for the high ground south of the bridgehead. The underbrush was burning fiercely on the forward slope of the hillside, but the 2nd Battalion continued its attack through the burning woods. The high ground was taken by nightfall.

The 1st Battalion, 254th Infantry, met very stubborn resistance at Weldingsfelden, Jagstberg, and Hohenrot. The 2nd Battalion, 254th, had taken Eberstal. Then "E" Company went on to take Diebach and Ingelfingen, while "G" Company took Dorrenzimmern and Belsenberg. Near Belsenberg, "F" Company ran into a fanatical company-sized counterattack, and in one hour suffered 17 casualties. The 3rd Battalion, 254th Infantry, took Stachenhausen, Weldingsfelden, Eschenhof, and Hermuthausen.

The XII TAC's P-47 aircraft were used to bomb and strafe the towns of Stein, Gochsen, Kochersteinsfeld, and Neuenstadt, all of which lay directly before the 253rd line. At the same time, five ME-109s attacked and strafed the positions of the 862nd Field Artillery. During the attack, the men of the 436th AAA AW Bn. downed two of the planes, and during the same day, the 436th was credited with destroying three more planes and probably destroying four others.

April 7, 8, and 9 proved to be the bloodiest days of the 63rd Infantry Division's history with 60 to 70 killed or mortally wounded on each day, according to Jack L. Picken, a military historian from Iowa who attempts to keep track of such information.



10 April 1945

The 63rd Recon Troop relieved the 2nd Battalion, 253rd Infantry, in position on the right flank of the

Division. That delaying tactic allowed the 38th SS PGR to extricate itself from its positions in the Jagstfeld area and to withdraw across the Kocher River to the southeast, where it was joined on the 12th of April by the remnants of the 37th SS PGR and the 17th SS AA (Recon), which had withdrawn to the south bank of the Kocher at Kochersteinsfeld after being relieved by the German 198th Infantry Division.

When the German 198th Infantry Division relieved the 17th SS AA, Company "C", 253rd Infantry, was at the firebreak just east of Kressbach. Apparently the SS troops had pulled out of the line somewhat early, and the men from the 198th Infantry came out into the open area of the firebreak looking for the front line.

Now the tables were turned. This was the field east of Kressbach in reverse. The men of Company "C" were dug into well-established positions at the edge of the wooded area and the German troops were walking across the open area before them. The Germans presented easy targets for the men of "C" Company and a great many were killed, wounded, and captured. After the skirmish, both German and American aid men worked side by side as they assisted the wounded.

Among the ones who were captured was a man named Karl (last name unknown). Karl had worked for the Ford Motor Company in Frankfurt and had a wife and two children who were still living there. He did not seem to object when he was told to carry the SCR 300 radio after the company radio man was injured. Karl accompanied Company "C", 253rd, for about a week or ten days, standing in the chow line, and sleeping with the first squad of the 1st platoon. Unfortunately, the American food was too rich for Karl and he soon got a severe case of the GIs. He cried when he left the company and had to go to the prisoner compound.

After establishing bridgeheads across the Kocher River at Ingelfingen and Weissbach, the 254th Infantry and the 255th Infantry continued to exert pressure toward the south while the 253rd remained in its defensive positions in the vicinity of Lampoldshausen.

The 263rd Engineer Combat Battalion constructed an infantry support bridge at Mockmuhl.

12 April 1945- A sad day for us- Our President and Commander-in-Chief passed away.

What was interesting for me on this date in 1945 was the fact that we were in a German town that actually had electrical power. While searching a home I saw a nice radio, so I turned it on and immediately got BBC, a British station, and was advised that President Roosevelt had died. What a shock and how odd I was able to find out this way.

In addition to losing our Commander-in-Chief we lost another 13 of our comrades who were Killed in action.

After the 37th SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment was replaced in the line, the German 198th Infantry Division established a defensive position south of the Kocher River. That allowed the 37th SS PGR to withdraw through its line after crossing the river near Kochersteinsfeld at 0500.

The 63rd Division CP was moved to Kunzelsau. "L" Company, 253rd Infantry, moved from its defensive position SE of Lampoldshausen, crossed the Kocher River at Kochersteinsfeld at 1600, and proceeded on to Buttelbronn, arriving at 2200.

In the meantime, the bulk of the 17th SS PGD, which had been ordered to Nurnberg to help defend that city, was traversing the road to the east between Ohringen, Westernach, and Schwabisch-Hall toward Crailsheim. That route was only some 6 to 8 kilometers south of the bridgeheads and, therefore, elements of the 17th were established in blocking positions to the north of the road and in rear guard positions behind the division.

Battle groups, comprised of elements formerly attached to the 17th SS PGD, in addition to sections of Volks Grenadier Divisions such as the 559th and the 553rd, were strategically located in strong points such as Dottingen, Jungholzhausen, Waldenburg, and Wolpertshausen.

The strong points and related delaying tactics slowed the advances of the regiments of the 63rd Division to gains of 2 to 4 kilometers per day. By the 13th of April, when they were joined by the 253rd Infantry, the 255th and the 254th Infantry Regiments had moved southward to a line which ran from Ohringen through Ober Eppach to Fessbach and Rublingen. Early in the morning, "B" Company, 254th Infantry, received a counterattack on its position at Rublingen by the 1st Company of the 119th Volks Grenadier Division. This attack was repulsed after a two-hour engagement.