

# The Fifth Infantry Division IN THE ETO



PASS IN REVIEW



USA, ICELAND, ENGLAND, IRELAND, FRANCE, LUXEMBOURG, GERMANY, AUSTRIA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA



the lot of the wounded a miserable one indeed. Observation by cub plane was virtually impossible owing to the utter blackness of the weather and low overcast. Visibility of even the normal observation posts was limited most of the time, and at times was absolutely nil.

The First Battalion attacked North to FERICY against stiff enemy resistance, and after a sharp fight the enemy withdrew on the morning of the 25th of August. The first bridgehead across the SEINE was secure!

In the meantime the Tenth Combat Team, which was bivouaced at LA CHAPELLE, received orders from Division to continue the march to the East through LA CHAPELLE, VILLIERS SOUS GREZ, GREZ SUR LOING, VILLECERF, and MONTEREAU FAUT YONNE. At 2300 hours the Regimental Commander was informed that the Twenty-First Field Artillery Battalion, less Battery A, was attached to the Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion in direct support of the regiment.

### CROSSING AT MONTEREAU

The combat team advanced at 0800 hours 23 August in the following order: Second Battalion with Second Platoon Company B Eight Hundred Eighteenth Tank Destroyer Battalion; Second Platoon Company B Seven Hundred Thirty-Fifth Tank Battalion; Anti-Tank Company, less two platoons; Cannon Company; and Company B Seventh Engineer Battalion attached: First Battalion with Company B Eight Hundred Eighteenth Tank Destroyer Battalion, less one platoon; and First Platoon Anti-tank Company attached. The Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion displaced continually to support the advance, while the troops marched on foot.

The Third Battalion remained in LA CHAPELLE until the entire combat team had passed through.

After the Second and First Battalions had marched through LA CHAPELLE the Tenth Infantry Command Post was set up in a street of the town at 1100 hours. The Second Battalion reconnaissance elements after reaching GREZ reported by radio that the bridge over the LOING River was blown but that passage was possible by means of civilian rowboats and over a plank laid across the rubble of the blown bridge. The Second Battalion Executive Officer, Capt. Roy W. Hancock, picked up four trucks from the Third Battalion and loaded F Company on them. These troops were rushed to GREZ and a bridgehead was established. Company G was sent as a flank guard South of MONCOURT on both sides of the river.

At this time a French woman, a member of the NEMOURS FFI came to the Commanding Officer of the Tenth Infantry

Regiment and stated that the bridges at NEMOURS were prepared for demolition, but that the FFI were holding the bridges still intact. She stated that the Germans were in the vicinity of the city and were expected to attack and blow the bridges at any time. She further stated that if the Germans did attack, the FFI detachment could hold out for a very short time at the most.

A Captain of the FFI cycled to LA CHAPELLE and offered to guide the troops to the bridges. The S-3 of the Tenth, Major Harris C. Walker, took a reconnaissance force from the Regimental Anti-Tank Company Mine Platoon and proceeded to the city at full speed. He found the three bridges intact but with 15 1000-pound bombs lying on the main bridge.

The Commanding Officer of the Third Battalion, Major A. P. Shipley, formed a mobile force consisting of two machine gun platoons of M Company, mounted in jeeps; one rifle platoon of I Company; the Third Platoon of Anti-Tank Company; the Third Battalion Anti-Tank platoon; and members of the Battalion staff; and sped through LARCHANT to NEMOURS to defend the bridges against possible German counterattack and seizure. The mines were removed by the Anti-Tank Company Mine Platoon, and on inspection the bridges were found to be strong enough to support medium tanks and tank destroyers.

The populace of the city gave the troops a royal welcome showering the men and vehicles with fruit and flowers, and swarming around the vehicles at every halt to express their appreciation and joy at the arrival of the Americans.

All vehicles were moved by these bridges, while the foot troops crossed the 12-inch plank bridge at GREZ, and continued to march to the Northeast. By the time the First Battalion had arrived at the crossing Company B Seventh Engineer Battalion was attempting to repair the bridge sufficiently to carry vehicles and had removed the plank. The First Battalion used civilian rowboats to cross the river, one of which capsized loaded with 10 men and their equipment, drowning one man. Several of the members of the First Battalion companies went to the aid of the men that were unable to swim and it was due to their efforts that more were not lost.

During this period the vehicles of the Tenth Combat Team were crossing the bridges at NEMOURS and eventually the vehicles rejoined the battalions at VILLE ST. JACQUES, a few miles Northeast.

The combat team command post group followed the advance guard to EPISY, to find that a group of Germans had slipped between the tail of the advance guard and the command post group, and had left the area five minutes previous to the arrival of the command post group, going North. While questioning the civilians concerning this incident, several explosions were heard in the direction of MONTEREAU. It was believed that these were the blowing of the bridges at MORET-SUR-LOING, and the bridge between there and MONTEREAU.

Before dark G Company was relieved of its mission of flank guard at MONCOURT and was brought by motor to rejoin the Second Battalion then on the march near VILLE ST. JACQUES.

At about 2000 hours the Regimental Commander, Col. Robert P. Bell, directed this battalion to seize and organize the hill 2000 yards Northeast of VILLE ST. JACQUES and to reconnoiter MONTEREAU to the SEINE and YONNE Rivers with a view to crossing and establishing a bridgehead at dawn. By this time the Second Battalion had marched 21 miles, and, although the weather during the day had been pleasant, an extremely severe electrical storm drenched everyone at 2100 hours. Lightning struck a tree in the vicinity of an artillery position near VILLE ST. JACQUES killing two men and injuring two more. The rain continued through the night until almost noon the following day. The First

Citizens of Montereau shave the heads of French girls accused of "collaborating" with the Germans.







U. S. tank passes burning German vehicle as it rolls toward Fontainebleau.

Battalion closed in to the combat team march bivouac just East of VILLE ST. JACQUES, and trucks brought up the Third Battalion. The regimental command post was in a small woods on the side of a hill Northeast of VILLECERF, and like everyone else the staff spent a miserably wet night. During the day's move the Tenth Combat Team column had been about 18 miles long.

On the morning of the 23d the artillery began a series of leap-frog displacements forward, the first positions being at LA CHAPELLE, the second at GREZ, the third Northeast of MONTCOURT and the fourth North of VILLE ST. JACQUES. During the previous day's 21-mile march by the infantry, neither the Forty-Sixth nor the Twenty-First Field Artillery Battalion was in position to support the infantry. However, due to the rapid displacement forward of the artillery battalions of the Division it became a matter of pride in the Division that the artillery not only traveled with the infantry battalions it was supporting and carried the infantrymen on its trucks, but almost at a moment's notice, could swing off the road and go into action quickly enough to give the Battalion Commanders fire support when they needed it, and where it would hurt the Boche most.

Further instructions were requested by Division at 2300, but as none were forthcoming, the Second Battalion was directed by Division at 0130 August 24th to occupy MONTEREAU commencing at 0300 hours. Further orders by radio instructed the Tenth Combat Team to cross the SEINE River at MONTEREAU and establish a bridgehead under cover of darkness. Seventy assault boats would be available by 0400 hours.

Daybreak (0630 hours) was but a few hours away and it became necessary to put on all possible speed. There was little information available about the area to the front of the Tenth Combat Team since reconnaissance elements had been stopped by a German force estimated at two platoons in strength at a railroad overpass on the South edge of MONTEREAU. The Second Battalion of the Tenth Infantry moved out in the attack at 0720 with attached units. In addition to normal attachments the battalion was given the mortar platoon of Company M Tenth Infantry for the attack.

The assault boats were expected momentarily but they had not arrived by the time the attack jumped off. As the forward elements moved down the slope toward MONTEREAU they received mortar fire from North of the river and as they approached the town they were brought under small arms fire by the German garrison. The attack became a series of small bitter engagements in the streets of the

town and it was only after a hot session of street fighting that the town fell to the Americans.

After a brief study of the rough terrain on the opposite bank, it was decided to effect a crossing as soon as the assault boats could be assembled. If a crossing was to be made in the vicinity of the blown bridges, the high ground at LES ORMEAUX would have to be seized and held so that additional troops could cross under cover of this terrain feature and the troops holding it. The First Battalion was to cross, directly behind the Second Battalion, move to the West and occupy the village of MONT DE RUBRETTE and the surrounding commanding terrain.

The town was receiving considerable fire from the German artillery, plus machine gun, "burp" gun, and sniper fire from across the river. Our troops were occupying the buildings, and tanks and tank destroyers were moving to the edge of the river to knock out the hostile weapons on the opposite shore.

The Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion registered at 1700 hours on the Twenty-Third from the vicinity of VILLE ST. JACQUES. During the advance toward MONTEREAU their principal missions had been counter-battery fire. Two enemy horse-drawn batteries were caught on the road running parallel to and just North of the river. The screaming shells crashed into the enemy batteries and when the smoke lifted, horses were seen writhing in their harness or running away in all directions. Limbers, guns, and caissons were overturned, and the crews fled in panic from the tangled wreckage.

Orders were given to the First Battalion to assemble in the Northwest portion of the BOIS D'ESMANS and to cross the open ground into the city. While moving across this open area the troops were brought under enemy observation and artillery fire and suffered 23 killed and wounded in gaining the comparative safety of the city.

Throughout the day efforts were made to secure assault boats and assemble bridging equipment sufficiently strong to support tanks and tank destroyers. In the meantime the regimental command post moved to the Chateau at VILLE ST. JACQUES.

Orders were issued to place D Company in support positions to support the Second Battalion's crossing. The remaining platoons of Company M were placed in positions in MONTEREAU to support the crossings of the First and Second Battalions.

Before dark the regimental command post moved to the Banque de FRANCE in MONTEREAU and the Third Battalion moved to the BOIS D'ESMANS, closing at 1600 hours.

Finally the One Hundred Sixtieth Engineer Battalion furnished 70 assault boats for the crossing and the operation commenced. Initially all three heavy weapons companies supported the crossing, but as its fire units crossed Company H displaced, leaving Companies M and D to cover the crossing of the Second Battalion. A smoke screen laid by the 81 millimeter mortars of all three heavy weapons companies followed by an artillery concentration of two rounds per gun per minute for 15 minutes screened and covered the movements. The artillery prepared fires to cover all potential targets, and liaison officers and forward observers were stationed with their respective battalions. Organic artillery posts were set up in the hills South of the river between VILLE ST. JACQUES and MONTEREAU. Complete and continuous air observation was furnished by the cub planes.

The first crossing of the assault boats was made at 2105 hours on August 24th and fifteen minutes later Company F was across the river with the first wave of boats returning for a second load. By 2230 hours the Second Battalion had completed its crossing with no enemy fire except occasional shelling. The battalion headquarters and each rifle company took wire across with them giving the bat-



talion switchboard four lines forward. The battalion immediately moved toward its objective, LES ORMEAUX. The leading elements were frequently challenged by enemy outposts and sentries, but answered the call with a burst from an automatic rifle. The advance continued.

By 2315 hours leading elements of the battalion were on the objective having quietly moved through St. NICOLAS to LES ORMEAUX, and were establishing an all around defense. Although all possible precautions had been taken to insure the battalions against surprise and penetration of their lines, it was discovered early the following morning that there were 28 German soldiers sleeping behind a garden wall completely unaware of the presence of the AMERICANS in the town. These men were the gun crews of two 70 mountain millimeter howitzers that were emplaced in the garden. The enemy force was liquidated and the guns became captured materiel.

The First Battalion followed the Second Battalion and immediately struck out for their objective, RUBRETT, MONT DE RUBRETTE, and the surrounding ground. It was very dark at this time and the movement was made as silently as possible.

When the column was approximately 2000 yards from RUBRETTE, the first squad of the leading company (Company A) was challenged. The Company Commander, Capt. Elias R. Vick, ordered fire withheld thinking that it might be members of the FFI. However, after a second challenge, the enemy opened fire and the Americans leaped to cover in the ditches along the road. The Captain ordered an automatic rifle team to move up along the side of the road and on hearing any sound, to open fire. The team advanced about 100 yards and at this point, the enemy fired a white flare and cut loose with a machine gun firing directly down the road. The automatic rifle team returned the fire from an estimated 10 to 15 enemy dug in at the road junction. The remainder of the First Platoon Company A, was directed to attack on the right and the left of the road and eliminate the outpost.

The Second Platoon Company A was directed to move to the right and obtain the high ground approximately 75 yards to its right front.

The support platoon and remainder of the battalion waited on the road at the foot of the hill. The attack of the First Platoon was successful and members of the out-

post were either killed or driven away. It was now 0400 hours.

Heavy fog had set in and visibility was limited to about five yards. It was not definite that the high ground to the right of the battalion was the objective but orders were issued to the companies to continue movement to the high ground and to set up an all-around defense, with Company A to the left front, Company B to the right front, and Company C to the rear.

While this maneuver was taking place the battalion staff was in a small shack on the side of the hill studying a map by flashlight. Just as the decision was made that the battalion was still about 1000 yards short of its objective, the Germans struck.

The blow came in the form of a counterattack delivered at the left flank of the battalion at approximately 0435 hours. The attacking force was estimated to be in about platoon strength supported by 50 millimeter mortars. Simultaneous with the attack came a torrent of fire from the German reinforced outposts on the road, and at least a section of enemy machine guns sited to fire along the ridge occupied by A Company. The tracers streamed through the utter blackness of the night, and the shots, explosions of hand grenades, and yells served to make the situation even more confusing. The A Company Commander rushed out of the shack, down the road in the face of the enemy fire which was now raking the slopes and searching the road, and, on arrival at the scene of the counterattack, ordered a 60 millimeter mortar set up without bipod. With the aid of the mortar, and the answering fire put up by the Americans, the German platoon was forced to fall back and the attack was repulsed. By this time dawn had broken, patrols were sent forward to RUBRETTE and returned in about an hour with the information that there was very little resistance in the town. One platoon of A Company was sent forward and the remainder of the battalion followed, occupied the high ground surrounding the town, and the town itself. As soon as the companies arrived in the area they were dispatched to take up positions for an all around defensive plan for the battalion.

Only minor casualties were suffered during the night as a result of the German counterattack and supporting fires. The First Battalion had reached its objective and it was organized for defense.

In the meantime the commander of the Eighty-Eighth Engineer Heavy Ponton Battalion reported to the Combat Team Commander that his unit was to build the bridge for the combat team. He further stated that the men had been training for over three years and that they were itching for action. They got it.

The 110 huge trucks in his column in addition to the vehicles of Regimental Headquarters Company plus First and Second Battalions, Company M, Anti-Tank Company, Company B Seventh Engineers, One Hundred Sixth Engineer Battalion, Company B Seven Hundred Thirty-Fifth Tank Battalion, and Company B Eight Hundred Eighteenth Tank Destroyer Battalion filled the streets to overflowing.

At daybreak the Germans discovered that the Americans had made a crossing in force and, in fact were still crossing.



Above: German machine gun sprayer close to engineer boat ferrying vehicle across Seine, at Montereau.

Right: Small force crosses Seine on pontoon ferry built by engineers.





Right: Engineers float section of pontoon bridge to join sections already in place across Seine River.

Below: Infantry digs in along banks of Seine to protect engineers building pontoon bridge.



The anti-tank guns, weapons, jeeps, and litter jeeps were being ferried across by means of a raft. The raft had been constructed by the One Hundred Sixtieth Engineer Battalion which had also set up a heavy machine gun on the far shore for protection.

Suddenly the Germans opened up with everything they had. Machine guns, machine pistols, 20 millimeter guns, light and heavy mortars, and 75 millimeter howitzers literally tore the air apart with flying lead and steel. The enemy concentrated most of their fire on the assault boats, and the ferry. Several city streets and the river were enfiladed, and the railroad underpasses were shelled. The Eighty-Eighth Engineer Heavy Ponton Battalion suffered 28 casualties in the first few minutes of the firing and fell back from the bridge site.

On the far shore, the Second Battalion Executive Officer, Capt. Roy W. Hancock, single-handedly manned the heavy machine gun which had been left by the engineers. Throughout the period that this officer manned the water-cooled .30 caliber machine gun the German weapons were searching the banks in his area in a vain attempt to neutralize the gun.

Under his almost continuous fire, the gun, minus the all-important water can, began to overheat and steam. Two members of an Army Photographic Section obtained water for the gun, and it continued to rake the Jerry positions with a galling fire.

By this time the Americans had recovered from initial surprise, and were returning the enemy's fire with carbines, rifles, .30 and .50 caliber machine guns and 57 millimeter anti-tank guns in an attempt to locate and destroy the German automatic weapons. The Germans firing from St. NICHOLAS were difficult to locate since they were behind walls and in houses and factories. One sniper had even taken up a position in one of the barges on the river.

Company L was ordered across the river to clean up St. NICHOLAS and at 1330 hours attacked with its right flank on the river and its left flank on the ridge. As the troops neared the town they took no chances with the hidden Germans, and blasted the positions with all the fire power at their disposal. This included heavy machine gun fire from M Company firing directly across the river. Through-

out the attack all of the combat team artillery (Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion and Batteries B and C of the Twenty-First Field Artillery Battalion) were firing concentrations into an area 400 yards by 500 yards with our troops on three sides. In clearing out St. NICHOLAS, L Company suffered eight casualties, killed and wounded.

As soon as the enemy fire began to slacken the ferry was taken over and operated by the Tenth Infantry Anti-Tank Company Mine Platoon, under command of Lt. Frank M. Vinson. During practically the entire daylight crossing the river was raked by enemy fire, and every boatload of personnel or equipment had to run the gauntlet of steel coming and going. It seemed to make no difference to the German gunners whether the boats were filled with troops on the way over, or wounded being evacuated. Several hits were made by the Boche on boatloads of wounded which were displaying the red cross of the medics prominently. One such boat was practically cut to pieces in mid stream and sank with its load of helpless casualties. Pvt. Harold A. Garman, Co. B, 5th Medical Battalion, was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for rescuing two casualties from the water.

Also during the crossing there was plenty of action on the fringes of the bridgehead and in the hills occupied by the Second Battalion.

At about 0830 hours the Second Battalion was hit by a counterattack, the first indication of which was a German officer walking toward the lines out of the fog. Before the surprised officer could escape he was captured and told to tell his men to surrender at once. The officer refused. A minute later the fog lifted as quickly as the curtain on a stage. The battalion machine-gunners and riflemen found targets from 50 to 300 yards away in a wheat stubble field as flat as a billiard table. After a period of watching the massacre the German officer called to his men to surrender. Thirty-five to 40 were taken prisoner, and 30 wounded Germans were picked up in the field, all with .30 caliber bullet wounds. Fifty to 60 enemy dead were counted.

There was also some action in the First Battalion area during the afternoon of August 25. Reports were received at the First Battalion Command Post of five Germans in the woods about one mile to the left rear of the battalion area. This was reported by a member of the FFI. One officer and five men were sent to round them up. The patrol located and surrounded them and the Germans held up their hands as if to surrender. As the patrol started forward to take them, fire from about 30 of the enemy concealed in the area wounded two men and pinned the rest of the patrol to the ground. The patrol finally got back to its company and passed the information of the whereabouts of the enemy to battalion headquarters. Artillery fire was immediately placed on the area. The attached tank destroyer platoon from Company B Eight Hundred Eighteenth Tank Destroyer Battalion was moved into position on the far side of the river enabling it to fire directly into the enemy positions. Their fire flushed the





Pvt. Ernest Zeno, 5th Division Medic, gets a new helper—a German medic who will help take care of the sick and wounded.

enemy and much to the amazement of a machine gun section of Company D, attached to E Company on the left flank, two columns of Germans of approximately 70 men each appeared about 400 yards in front of them and directly in their sector of fire. The machine gun section recovered from their amazement and opened fire in conjunction with the riflemen of Company E expending every round it had on hand. The Germans who were not hit ran for the woods about 1000 yards away where upon the Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion liaison officer called for artillery and received all available artillery in three concentrations. The rounds landed in and about the woods and the tree bursts knocked over man after man as the enemy scattered through the woods. There was a great number of German dead and wounded lying in the area. Eyewitnesses state that when the battlefields quieted down that night, the French civilians robbed the German dead and buried them naked.

Artillery cub planes were used throughout the action observing to the front and both flanks of the advancing columns. The information received from these planes was invaluable and saved a great number of lives by preventing enemy ambushes, spotting concentrations of enemy troops before they could be brought into action, and accurately directing artillery fire on the German strongpoints. Several times during the operation they encountered fairly heavy anti-aircraft fire but after taking evasive action, continued to observe to the intense mortification and anger of the Jerry anti-aircraft gunners.

Communications were insured to command rear elements by a five-pair cable laid across the river by the regimental wire section under the direction of the Regimental Communications Officer, Capt. Robert H. Phillips. Two of these were reserved for artillery fire missions. The regimental wire crew also installed a switchboard on the far shore permitting the displacement of the battalion switchboards for better communication with the companies.

The remainder of the day and night was spent in consolidating the bridgehead and making it secure against possible German counterattacks. Normal supply and evacuation was carried out in spite of sporadic enemy artillery fire.

In the operation of crossing the SEINE the Tenth Combat Team lost one officer and 62 men killed and wounded. The Germans lost 367 captured (275 of which were wounded) and had an estimated 280 killed by rifles and machine guns. It was impossible to estimate the number killed and wounded by our artillery and other heavy weapons.

With the fall of MONTEREAU the way was opened for the Allied Armies to cut PARIS off from the South, and to continue the encirclement of the city and its suburbs by driving North from the Division's SEINE River bridgeheads. For

superior performance and perfect coordination in establishing the bridgehead over the SEINE River at MONTEREAU the Tenth Combat Team was awarded a unit citation by the Division Commander and a Letter of Commendation was later forwarded through channels by the Army Commander, Lieutenant General GEORGE S. PATTON JR.

At this time it seemed almost a certainty that the Red Diamond was headed for PARIS, and hopes ran high for the liberation of that fabulous city by the Fifth Infantry Division. This, however, was not to be, for orders were to continue the hammer-like swing to the Northeast and the wide encirclement of the city.

All eyes were on the Third U. S. Army as it thrust itself across Central FRANCE with powerful blows from the rolling armored columns. To the amazement of even the seasoned campaigners and the thousands of home-front strategists, the infantry kept pace with and on occasion passed the armor, ready to dismount and drive the enemy from their prepared defenses, mopping up the areas left behind by the swift advance of the tanks, establishing bridgeheads, and taking town after town as the bewildered German armies fell back to avoid complete encirclement.

During the period of 25-26 August 1944 the Second Combat Team remained in positions in the vicinity of THOURY FERROTTE a few miles South of MONTEREAU.

At 1500 hours on the 25 August, however, the Second Battalion Second Infantry was alerted for movement across the YONNE River to establish a bridgehead in the vicinity of MISY SUR YONNE, eight miles Southeast of MONTEREAU. This movement was completed at 1800 hours on the 25th of August. No contact with the enemy occurred while the battalion held this bridgehead.

The One Hundred Sixtieth Combat Engineer Battalion and the Nine Hundred Eighty-Ninth Engineer Treadway Bridge Company and the Two Hundred Forty-First, Two Hundred Eighty-Second, and Two Hundred Eighty-Fourth Field Artillery Battalions were attached to the Division on the 25th August.

The warning order for the movement of the Second Combat Team to the East was received at 1800 hours on the 25th August and preparations were made for the move during the night.

The combat team moved out at 0800 hours on the 26th of August and crossed the bridge at MISY SUR YONNE. Movement across the bridge was slow, and shortly after the Third Battalion, Second Infantry had crossed in its entirety, an attempt was made to cross the armor. One platoon of tanks made it across before the bridge became so damaged that movement of the armored vehicles was stopped completely.

The Second Battalion, Second Infantry, moved from the bridgehead area to positions of readiness for a move to the vicinity of BRAY SUR SEINE, 15 miles to the east. Slight resistance was met in BRAY, but due to the rapid deployment of the infantry and prompt aggressive action, this was overcome and the town occupied at 1415 hours on the 26th of August.

The Third Battalion, Second Infantry, reached its detrucking area in the vicinity of FOUNTENAY, at 1315 on the 26th of August. The Regimental Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon moved out to investigate the enemy in the vicinity of NOGENT SUR SEINE, but found no enemy in that area when they entered the town at 1500 hours and proceeded to the main bridge which was blown. Company K followed the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon and occupied the town at 1530 hours.

The town was searched completely but no sign of the enemy was found. Company L followed Company K and moved up to support the action at the river. By 1830 hours two platoons of K Company had crossed the river in boats and were followed by the remainder of the company.



This enabled K Company to hold the bridgehead, supported by Company L from the South side of the SEINE.

Meanwhile the First Battalion, Second Infantry, moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of ST. AUBIN and the Second Battalion, Second Infantry, less two companies, moved to an assembly area near FONTAINE-MACON. Two companies of the Second Battalion moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of GUMERY.

At 2100 hours on August 26, the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon, Second Infantry, plus one platoon of light tanks from Company D of the Seven Hundred Thirty-Fifth Tank Battalion and Company G of the Second Infantry, moved back to BRAY to clear out pockets of resistance. The tanks and the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon arrived at 2130 hours to find fire falling in the vicinity of the town coming from the North bank of the SEINE River. Heavy mortar and 88 millimeter fire caused the units to separate for protection and owing to the confusion thus created some of the force became lost in the darkness.

The scattered elements were brought together at daybreak and after a brief fire fight the enemy withdrew. The remainder of the combat team closed into the area at 2400 on the 26th of August and the area was outposted and patrolled.

In the meantime the Tenth Combat Team had consolidated its bridgehead at MONTEREAU and spent the 27th of August in collecting prisoners of war and enemy materiel. During the day the heavy ponton bridge was completed by the Eighty-Eighth, One Hundred Sixtieth and Two Hundred Fourth Engineer Battalions.

At 0900 August 27th, a bridge was begun at NOGENT, by Corps Engineers. The final decision as to the type of bridge was made at 1300 hours and progress on the construction was steady throughout the afternoon. At 1100 hours the remainder of the Third Battalion, Second Infantry, started across the river in civilian boats and this battalion, less transportation, closed across the river by 1400 hours.

The One Hundred Sixtieth Engineer Combat Battalion, Nine Hundred Eighty-Ninth Engineer Treadway Bridge Company, and the Five Hundred Thirty-Seventh Engineer Light Ponton Company were detached from the Division on the 27th of August.

The Fifth Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop's First and Third Platoons reconnoitered to the East and North of the Division outposting ROMMILY, and NOGENT SUR SEINE until relieved by the infantry.

During this period approximately 100 prisoners were captured, and 125 French towns and villages were liberated.

Tank destroyer of 818th fires at German convoy attempting to escape from Milly, France.

The Second Combat Team was alerted at 1200 August 27th for movement to the North on completion of the bridge at NOGENT. The bridge was expected to be completed at 1800 hours on the 27th.

The head of the column was stopped two miles North of NOGENT by a combination of mortar and small arms fire. The Second Battalion, Second Infantry dismounted and went into action overcoming the resistance and occupying the high ground covering the route of advance.

The column then proceeded without interruption until all units except the Third Battalion, Second Infantry closed into the concentration area in vicinity of COURTAUVANT at 0100 hours on the 28th of August. The Third Battalion remained at NOGENT to hold the bridgehead until the 0600 hours on the 28th. The Second Combat Team left the COURTAUVANT area and advanced North by motor toward RHEIMS. The march proceeded unhindered and the first objective was reached at 1038 August 28th. Here a Seventh Armored Division unit held up the progress for about 15 minutes by crossing the route. A few hours later the column was again halted by Seventh Armored Division units. A reconnaissance of the bridges at this time found that the bridges over the MARNE River at EPERNAY, BISSEUR, MARUIEL and TOURS were blown. The column remained halted on the road until 1800 hours when units moved into a march bivouac, remaining there until 2030 hours when they assembled in a central area for the night.

At 2100 hours the First Battalion, Second Infantry was alerted to establish a bridgehead across the MARNE River at MARUIEL five miles East of EPERNAY. This unit began to move at 2300 hours on the 28th and had completed the movement across the river by 0700 hours the next morning. At 0500 hours on the Twenty-Ninth the Third Battalion, Second Infantry was alerted to move across the river and the movement was begun at 0600 hours. The Second Battalion moved to support positions on the South bank of the river and was closed into these positions at 1200 hours on the 29th of August. Units then held their positions and remained in readiness for further movement to the North.

Meanwhile, on the 26th of August the Eleventh Combat Team left VULAINES-SUR-SEINE, just East of FONTAINEBLEAU, with the additional attachment of the Two Hundred Eighty-Fourth Field Artillery Battalion and moved 12 miles East to the vicinity of FORGES. Movement was made with the First and Third Battalions moving on roughly parallel roads. The Second Battalion moved in reserve position in the column.

At noon on the 27th of August the First and Third Battalions resumed the march to the East, moving in advance guard formation on parallel roads. As no enemy was encountered the Regimental Commander moved the Second Battalion through the First and Third Battalions by motor. This battalion proceeded rapidly to the high ground to the East of NIMPEL LES and stopped. The First Battalion motorized passed through the Second Battalion and occupied NOGENT-SUR-SEINE, relieving the Third Battalion, Second Infantry. The remainder of the Eleventh Infantry Regiment closed into this area at 1730, August 27th without incident.

At 1500 hours August 28th the Eleventh Combat Team was ordered from Division reserve to move toward RHEIMS, 70 miles to the Northeast. The Eleventh Combat Team traveled 50 miles and arrived at MORANGIS, at 2030 hours.

At 2000 hours on the 27th the Tenth Combat Team less the Second Battalion plus Company B Seventh Engineers and the Two Hundred Eighty-Second Field Artillery Battalion began movement East. The Second Battalion remained behind to hold the MONTEREAU bridgehead until relief arrived. The Combat Team assembled at TRAINEL, on the 28th of August. On the evening of the 28th of August the advance was resumed and the Combat Team bivouaced at LE BAIZEL, just South of the MARNE River.







People of Milly, France, swarm around troops as town is liberated.

During this move word was received by the command post group that the point of the column had been fired on by machine guns and that one tank destroyer from the Eight-Hundred Eighteen Tank Destroyer Battalion had been knocked out by fire from German armor. Civilians reported that there were about 300 of the enemy on the left flank of the battalion in addition to several tanks, in the nearby town of CORFELIX. Company I, then the advance guard company, was deployed and ordered to attack CORFELIX with the heavy weapons of M Company in support. The Two Hundred Eighty-Second Field Artillery Battalion took up positions to give the attackers supporting fire. One platoon of I Company moved on the right side of the hill into the woods to attack the enemy from the right, while a platoon of K Company proceeded directly toward the center of the little village.

As the enemy opened fire Company K answered with marching fire from the hip and moved in. When the men came within range of the enemy tanks they opened up on them with bazookas. The crew of one tank abandoned their vehicle although it was undamaged. Shortly after this the enemy fled from the area leaving several of his vehicles and 50 prisoners behind. An estimated 25 of the enemy were killed. The entire engagement took approximately one hour. The balance of the enemy, about 200, escaped on foot to the East.

On the 29th of August the One Hundred Sixtieth Engineer Combat Battalion, the Nine Hundred Eighty-Ninth Engineer Treadway Bridge Company and the Five Hundred Ninth Engineer Light Ponton Company were attached to the Division for the purpose of constructing bridges over the MARNE and VESLE Rivers.

At 1500 hours on the 29th of August the advance to RHEIMS began. No enemy was encountered as the Second Combat Team moved ahead until the outskirts of the city were reached. At this point small arms fire was received from the city and the high ground to the East of the city.

The companies of the leading battalion quickly deployed and pushed ahead to attack the German positions. It was easily apparent that the resistance offered was at best a delaying action and the city was by no means as well defended as were ANGERS, CHARTRES and the other enemy strongpoints.

By 2330 after a sharp exchange of fire with the retreating enemy, the high ground was taken and early on the morning the 30th of August the combat team entered the city itself. During the night the enemy shelled the positions of the Second Combat Team with Tiger tanks and 88 millimeter guns, but at the first sign of our advance, began to

withdraw. There was some street fighting, and harassing by snipers and mortars, but by noon on the 30th the city was fairly well occupied and mopping up operations in progress. During this phase of the operation the Division captured more than 300 prisoners and liberated 200 inhabited localities including the city of RHEIMS.

The Second Combat Team was alerted at 1200 hours on the 30th for movement to an assembly area East of RHEIMS in the vicinity of CERNAY-LES-RHEIMS. Movement to the new area began at 1615 hours and the last unit closed at 2120 on the 30th of August. The Third Battalion Second Infantry occupied the city of RHEIMS, and maintained motorized patrols throughout the area. Guards were stationed at captured materiel dumps in and about RHEIMS.

At 1600 hours on the 29th of August the Eleventh Combat Team resumed the advance with the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon preceding the Second Battalion advance guard. The column headed toward the MARNE River at MAREUIL SUR AY four miles East of EPERNAY and was halted by a road traffic jam created by the Seventh Engineers repairing and building bridges over the MARNE canal.

Here the combat team turned Southward and moved to BISSEUIL, where a bridge over the AISNE canal was still intact. They crossed here and swung Northeast to cross the VESLE River at BELLEVUE.

The Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon and the Eleventh Infantry advance guard Company E hit the village of BEINE, at about 2230 and on determining the presence of an enemy force in the town, took up positions to attack. As the deployed platoons of E Company Eleventh Infantry advanced toward the enemy positions they met a heavy and prolonged burst of fire from 20 millimeter, machine gun and mortars. The rifle platoons pressed the attack home and after the first bursts of fire, the enemy fled. Company E swung five miles to the West to NOGENT L'ABESSE, 10 miles East of RHEIMS.

At the same time, the main body of the Eleventh Combat Team was held up at the BELLEVUE bridge by a Seventh Armored column which swung directly across the combat team's front from Northwest to Southeast, between the advance guard and the main body. After a brief conference between the Eleventh Combat Team Commander and the Seventh Armored Commander it was decided to let the armor continue its advance.

At 0500 August 30th the Eleventh Combat Team continued to assemble in the vicinity of NOGENT L'ABESSE. Although approximately 50 prisoners were taken in this area there was no organized resistance.

On the 30th of August the One Hundred Sixtieth Engineer Combat Battalion, Nine Hundred Eighty-Ninth Engineer Treadway Bridge Company and the Five Hundred Ninth Engineer Light Ponton Company were detached from the Division.

At this time Company C of the Seven Hundred Thirty-Fifth Tank Battalion was down to three tanks. One tank had been knocked out at ANGERS and the others had been left because of broken treads, and motor failures due to the long and strenuous motor marches made in constant pursuit of the fleeing German Army since the St. Lo breakthrough on the 26th of July.

On the 29th of August the Tenth Combat Team moved to EPOYE, just Southwest of RHEIMS. On the 30 and 31st the Combat Team was assembling in the vicinity of CERNAY EN DORMOIS, and prepared for movement to East.

Throughout the month of August the enemy activities consisted principally of continued withdrawal well in advance of our attacking columns. Most cases of defense, when encountered, consisted of hastily manned and prepared positions defended by groups of stragglers.

Information from prisoners of war indicated that our



breakthrough from NORMANDY had caught the German Armies by surprise and lack of communication and information had resulted in a lack of organized defense plans. In all cases the enemy operations were characterized by the fact that at no time did the enemy forces have information as to who were on their flanks and what friendly elements were in their rear, and in most cases were trying desperately to obtain this information when we struck, or were in the process of reestablishing flank contact with elements close enough for them to depend on. In short it was largely their own blitzkrieg tactics that cost them practically the whole of FRANCE, in the first three to four months of the invasion.

## ON TO VERDUN

The Eleventh Combat Team was alerted on the 31st of August for movement to VERDUN, 72 miles due East. The columns hit the road at 1430 hours. The motor movement was halted temporarily by the Seventh Armored Division, but by 1530 the combat team was again moving forward with the First Battalion plus Cannon Company forming the advance guard. The column moved through the ARGONNE Forest, site of the "Lost Battalion" of World War I, without a shot being fired, whereas in World War I, battles had been fought there for four years. At 1900 hours the column was about six miles West of VERDUN, following Combat Command A of the Seventh Armored Division.

The Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon, Eleventh Infantry reported one bridge intact over the MEUSE River in VERDUN itself. On receipt of this information the First Battalion Eleventh Infantry moved into VERDUN.

Three tanks from Combat Command A, and Company A, Fortieth Armored Infantry Battalion, which had arrived at 1200 hours, were guarding the bridge. The First Battalion was ordered to seize the high ground East of the city. It detrucked in VERDUN at 2000 hours and met some enemy mortar and artillery fire at the outskirts. As these shells awoke the echoes of twenty-six years, the First Battalion of the Eleventh Infantry deployed and began to advance. At this show of force, the Germans began to withdraw, and by daylight the high ground was secured and dominating observation obtained.

The Second Battalion of the Eleventh Infantry detrucked in the city and followed the First Battalion. During the night of the 31st of August the Second Battalion patrolled the town, and at daylight pushed out to secure the high ground Northeast of VERDUN. The Eleventh Infantry Command Post was established in REGRET, a village about four miles West of VERDUN.

Owing to the presence of the Seventh Armored Division on the roads, a quick change of plans was necessitated. The Tenth Combat Team was moving North of the Eleventh Combat Team toward VERDUN, but had been held up by blown bridges, and the great columns of armored vehicles blocking the road. The First Battalion Eleventh Infantry held the assigned Eleventh Infantry sector, and the Second Battalion Eleventh Infantry took over the high ground to the Northeast of VERDUN that the Tenth Infantry was to have taken.

Company L, Eleventh Infantry (reinforced) was sent 15 miles South to BANNONCOURT, to secure a bridge over the MEUSE River. Company K, Eleventh Infantry (reinforced) was sent 10 miles to the West, back along the same route to CLERMONT. Previous to this, after the Eleventh Combat Team had passed CLAIRMONT for the first time on the 31st of August, a force of some 200 Germans came out of the ARGONNE Forest and terrorized the town. It was discovered through interrogation and document study that these Germans were the advance guard of a German Infantry Division that was being sent to hold along the MEUSE River. The enemy force that had been terrorizing the town man-

aged to escape to the South and got away. The prisoners taken stated that they had not visited the village of CLERMONT, and that they were all from the advance guard of the aforementioned German Division.

Supporting the Eleventh Infantry during the action in and around VERDUN were the Nineteenth, Twenty-First and Two Hundred Eighty-Fourth Field Artillery Battalions; the One Hundred Ninety-Fifth and Two Hundred Fourth Field Artillery Groups (of three battalions each); Company C Seventh Engineer Battalion; Company C Eight Hundred Eighteenth Tank Destroyer Battalion, and Collecting Company C Fifth Medical Battalion. Although the situation did not require supporting artillery fires, all battalions were in position to fire if needed.

German supplies captured in and around VERDUN included arsenals of guns and ammunition, railroad rolling stock, and several warehouses of food and clothing. The arsenal was partly blown up, but had two long 155 millimeter cannons, eight 150 millimeter howitzers, and 24 nebelwerfers intact.

On the afternoon of September 1st the Eleventh Infantry command post was set up in the Hotel BELLEVUE in VERDUN.

At 0800 September 1st the Tenth Combat Team moved East from CERNAY EN DORMOIS encountering light resistance, and upon enemy withdrawal, crossed the CANAL DE BIESME by a ford. The Third Battalion Tenth Infantry proceeded from there by a Southern route to the vicinity of CLERMONT, to clean up a pocket of resistance. It was to be assisted in this by the Two Hundred Eighty-Second Field Artillery Battalion. The advance of the battalion to the objective was slow and tedious in as much as the enemy had blocked roads, blown bridges, and laid mines in an effort to delay our advance.

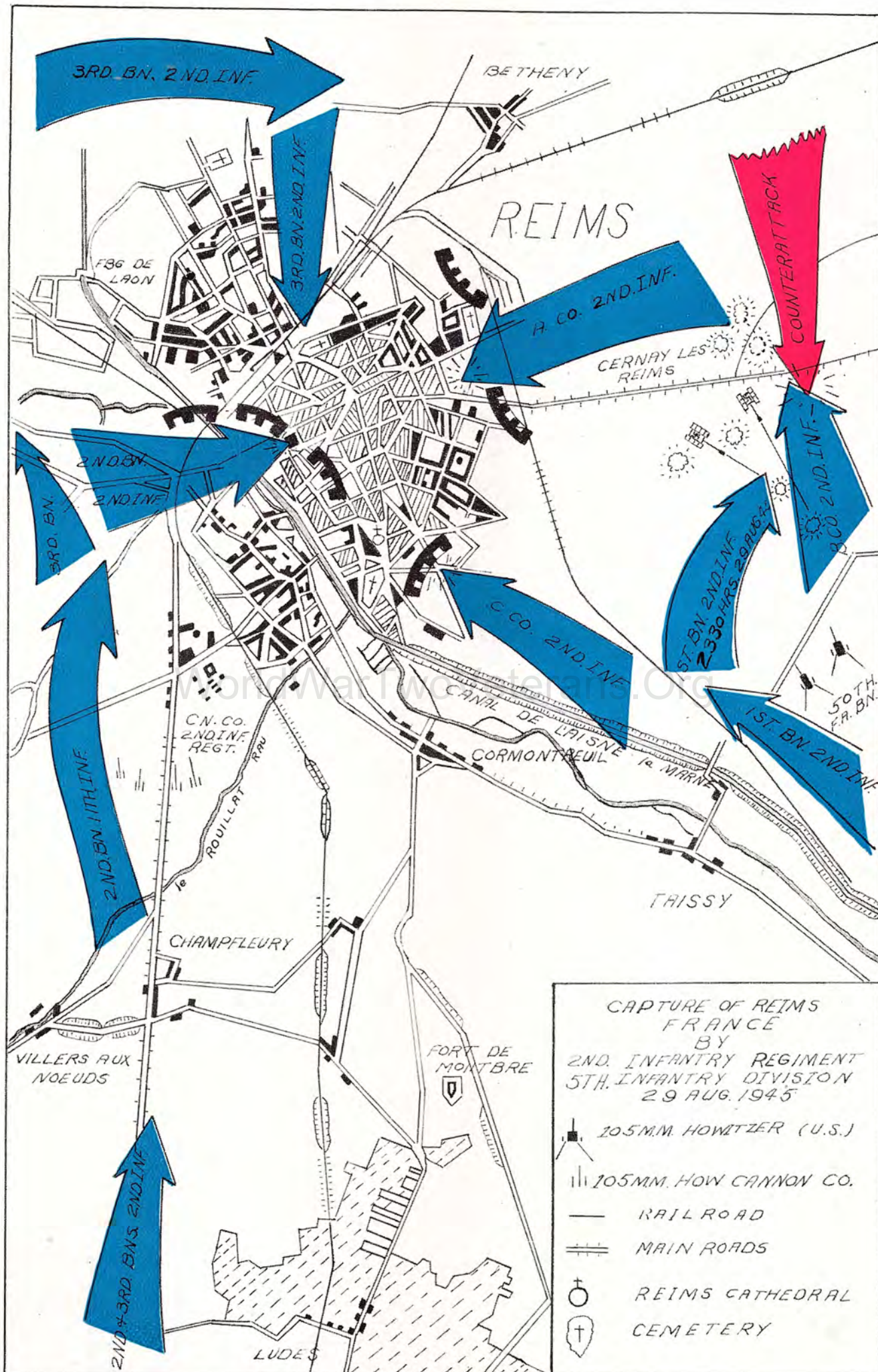
As this force moved in on CLERMONT, resistance was reported in the vicinity of VARENNES eight miles to the North consisting of a reinforced motorized battalion including remnants of the famous AFRIKA CORPS lately withdrawn from ITALY. During the afternoon the Tenth Infantry Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon spotted this group organizing in an open field in the vicinity of AVOCOURT. Prompt aggressive action on the part of the Second Battalion Tenth Infantry and the supporting field artillery battalion drove the enemy into the woods, effecting casualties and destroying a number of his vehicles. Plans were made to trap the entire enemy unit.

The Third Battalion less Company I, which was left to complete the mopping up of enemy resistance in CLERMONT, was shifted around to the woods to the South to block the enemy's escape route to the East. The other possible escape route was to be blocked by the Seventh Armored Division. As the troops closed in the enemy managed to slip past the armor and during the night withdrew through the woods to the only remaining escape route.

Some idea of the confusion in the minds of both the Germans and the Americans in this area can be gained from the following incident. At the time that the Third Battalion Tenth Infantry was shifting to block the enemy escape route, the Seventh Armored Division was present in the area. It was known that the escape road running to the Northwest was blocked by elements of the Seventh Armored, but the location of all the elements of this Division were known only by Third Army Headquarters, and it is possible that they were somewhat in the dark also.

As the Third Battalion prepared to move down the main road leading into the village of CLERMONT, tanks were heard moving about in the valley which, up until this time had been receiving interdictory fire from the Two Hundred Eighty-Second Field Artillery Battalion. The Third Battalion Anti-Tank Platoon was hurriedly placed in position at the road junction just Southwest of CLERMONT, and the Third Platoon of Regimental Anti-Tank Company was







ordered to displace forward and support the battalion platoon.

In the meantime the tanks could be heard coming up the hill toward the Third Battalion positions. In the utter blackness of night it was almost impossible to distinguish the armor until it was almost on top of the road junction. At a scant 200 yards the 57 millimeter gun fired. The armored vehicle stopped.

As the Anti-Tank gun prepared to fire again American voices were heard and shortly after this the road junction was sprayed with .50 caliber fire from an American tank destroyer.

When the situation was straightened out it was learned that the tank destroyer platoon had been escorting a Seventh Armored supply column of approximately 30 trucks. This column had been moving through our interdictory fire. The tank destroyer had been barely clipped by the 57 millimeter armor piercing round, and no casualties were incurred from either the .50 caliber or the artillery fire. Shortly after this the Third Battalion moved forward and took up positions to block the escape of the enemy.

During this period the Fifth Division was entering the area over which some of the most bitter battles of the First World War were fought. Military cemeteries became an increasingly frequent sight, American, French, and German crosses covered several of the hillsides. The woods to either side of the road were crisscrossed by trenches and zig-zag fortifications. Mounds of earth in circular or semi-circular formation marked the location of half-forgotten batteries of artillery, and powder-white craters marked the scene of barrages hurled across the hills that were seeing their second great war in a quarter of a century.

During the action near CLERMONT a small delaying force set up their weapons in a grass-covered emplacement, dug sometime in 1917, and succeeded in holding the advance of our elements for a considerable period of time. As the Division moved deeper into the hallowed battlefields, the names of many well known battle sites flashed before them, MONTFAUCON, MEUSE, MEUSE-ARGONNE, CHATEAU-THIERRY—surely the ghosts of the first AEF were watching as the dusty columns poured down the roads after the fleeing Boche.

During the period of the swift advances of the Fifth Division from RHEIMS, the enemy limited its activity to sharp but small delaying actions. Enemy morale was definitely at a low ebb, chiefly due to confusion resulting from lack of communication, organization, transportation, and equipment. Prisoners taken during this period complained of the lack of supplies, reinforcements, and coordination, and were extremely pessimistic concerning their chances to make any stand prior to reaching the West Wall.

Orders were received to continue the advance to the East and the Fifth Division continued the march through the historic scenes of the great battles of the first World War.

VERDUN—that name will live forever in the hearts and minds of all who participated in or even heard about, the heroic defense made thereby the beleaguered French Armies from 1916 to the close of the Great War. It was here that the immortal phrase: "They shall not pass" had been born. As the Tenth Combat Team approached the town, they encountered the scars of the conflicts that raged there over 26 years before. Great stretches of untilled land stretched away from the roads on either hand; signs in English, French and German stated that the waste lands were still dangerous to the careless wanderer, still laden with deadly hand grenades, and mines. Now and then one could see in a litter of rusty equipment, helmets, bayonets, barbed wire, and canteens. Trenches zig-zagged in every direction; the hills were pock-marked with shell holes until the whole area resembled nothing so much as a heaving sea. Limited reconnaissance by personnel of the Division yielded views

of deep dug-outs and command posts, some with the musty furniture and rotten blankets lying where the former occupants had dropped them. Stories were brought back of the discovery of bones, shoes, and great shell cases strewn over the desolate area. It was at once an eerie and awe-inspiring sight.

The Tenth Infantry Command Post was set up in the historic FORT DE DOUAUMONT. It was this famous fortification that repulsed assault after assault by the grey-clad German hordes in 1917. From here the charge by two battalions of Senegalese and French One Hundred Thirty-Seventh Infantry Regiment began that ended in the tragic TRENCH OF BAYONETS that resulted when German mines and artillery blew up a captured trench and buried alive practically the entire attacking force. The trench has been made into a monument by the French Government. One can still see the rifles and bayonets thrust through the ground as though still held by the decayed hands of their owners.

During the night of the 1st of September German planes flew over the city, dropping flares, and bombing the city between 2400 and 0200 hours. Bombs fell all around the Hotel Bellevue and bridge, but there were no direct hits on either. No one in the Eleventh Infantry Command Post was injured. The next day the Regimental Command Post moved five miles East of VERDUN to the ruins of FORT DE BELRUPT. The Germans bombed the city of VERDUN for the next two nights.

While the Second Combat Team remained in the vicinity of CERNAY LES RHEIMS orders were received to move to the vicinity of VOUIZIERS, 30 miles Northeast, and to clear out the enemy force reported in that area. Movement was begun 31 August at 1820 with the combat team moving in one column. When a point near MARCHAULT was reached the column split. The First Battalion was ordered along a North route to VOUIZIERS while the remainder of the column moved South through BRECY, six miles South of VOUIZIERS.

The First Battalion Second Infantry reached VOUIZIERS, and entered the town without opposition. The approaches to the town were mined and booby trapped. The bridge was blown in the town of VOUIZIERS. Units of the Fifth Reconnaissance Troop guided the battalion to a ford South of the town and the battalion began the crossing at 2330 hours on the 31st.

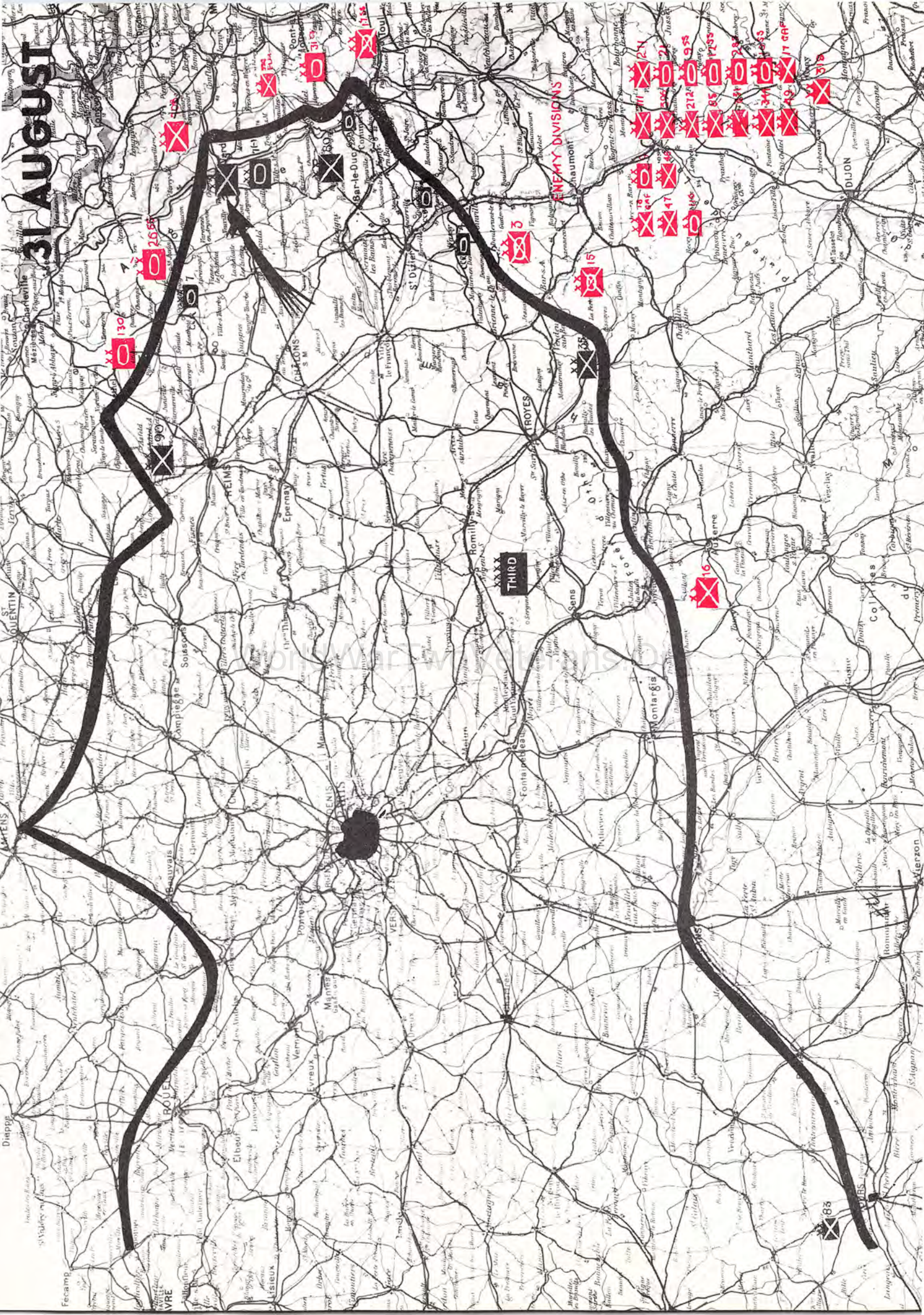
The remainder of the Second Combat Team crossed the AISNE River in the vicinity of BRECY and the head of the column reached the vicinity of TERMES, three miles East, where it was halted by a minefield. One medium tank was knocked out and four casualties were received. The Second Combat Team less the First Battalion bivouaced for the night while the minefield was cleared. The First Battalion completed the crossing and seized the high ground East of VOUIZIERS. The next morning the advance was resumed East through GRANDPERE.

At 1030 hours on the 1st of September the Second Combat Team less the First Battalion resumed its advance East with the Second Battalion leading. Although slight delaying action was met South of St. JUVIN, the Second Battalion brushed this aside and continued to VARENNES.

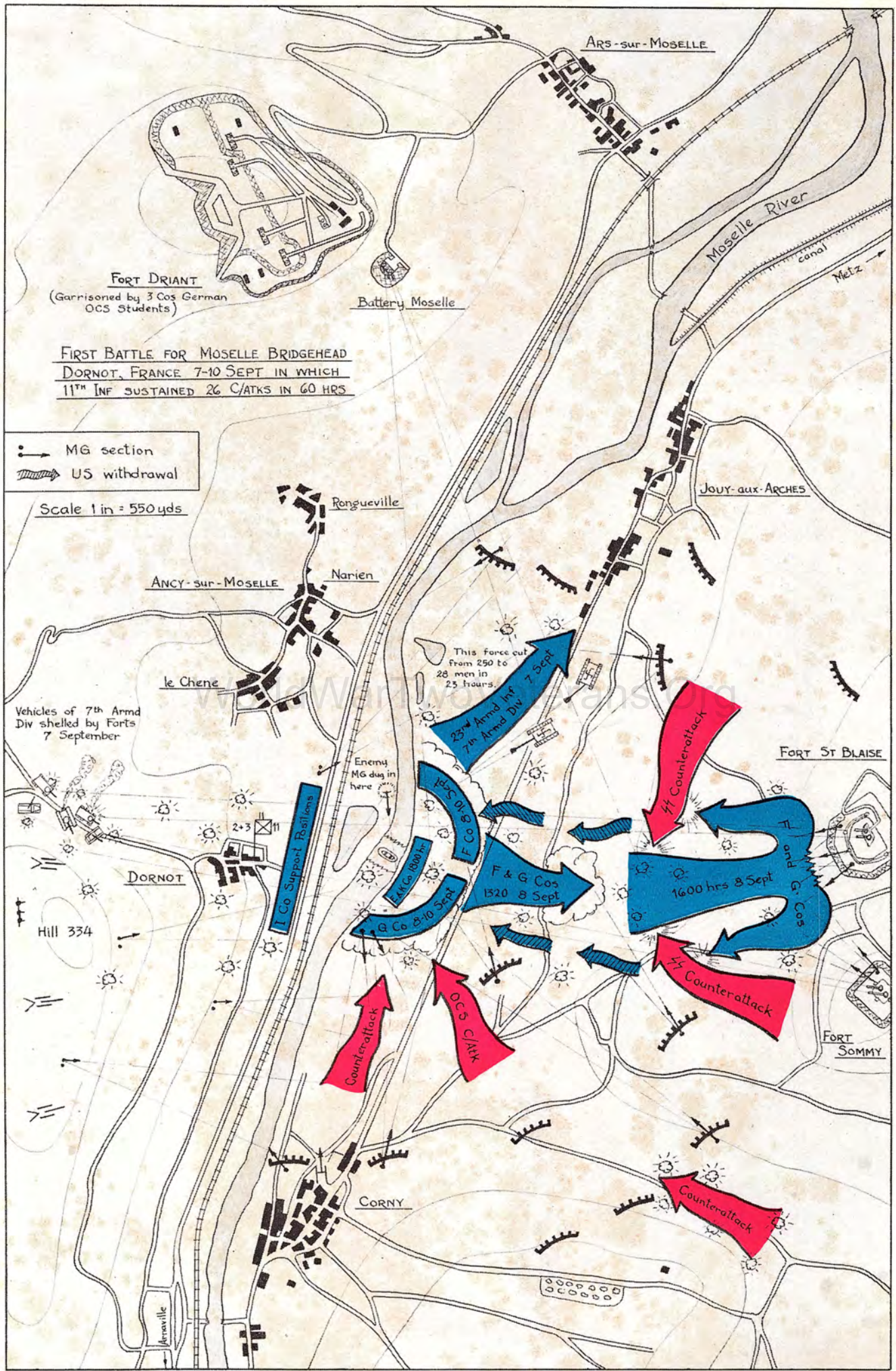
The First Battalion moved from VOUIZIERS to the vicinity of LANDRES. Resistance was reported at BEFFU, CHAMPIGNVILLE, IMECOURT, and LANDRES. In the vicinity of CHAMPIGNVILLE two Tiger tanks were contacted and later eight light tanks were reported in that area. The enemy armor delayed that column but withdrew before action could be taken against them. During the night the First Battalion Second Infantry moved to the vicinity of MONTFAUCON, closing in at 0800 September 20. Here it remained through the day. Orders were received to move to the Division bridgehead East of VERDUN and at 0800 September 30 the



31 AUGUST











Ceremony in front of City Hall at Rheims, France, following liberation.

Second Combat Team started movement closing into the vicinity of ELIX, at 1320 the same day.

During the period of these moves the Seventh Engineer Battalion did routine but none the less dangerous engineer work such as removing mines and road blocks, road maintenance, and maintenance of equipment.

For a few days the Fifth Division occupied defensive positions in and around the battlefields of VERDUN, and at one point in the defense, weapons were set up in 1917 emplacements covering barbed wire laid down in 1939, against an attack by the Germans in 1944.

At this time the German Armies were in frantic retreat, disorganized and bewildered. Their defensive positions along the MOSELLE River were not properly manned nor prepared. The troops that were supposed to man them had been cut off, his transportation system was ruptured and his entire defensive system was collapsing.

A reconnaissance force from the Sixth Cavalry Group had already entered the city of METZ and reported the city clear of the enemy. The door to GERMANY was open and it required but a quick thrust to secure all the MOSELLE valley, hold the doorway open and hurl the American Armies across the German border. But this was not to be.

Unknown to the enemy at that time, the German Armies in Eastern FRANCE had an ally. That ally was known to the American commanders as "logistics," or the science and problems of supply. The pursuit of the enemy carried the Fifth Division and Third Army much farther than had been anticipated. Advance elements had outstripped ground supply units, and were moving, and living, in part at least on gasoline and other supplies dropped from aircraft.

That the Germans did not know this at first, was certain. After all, the Allied supply echelons had performed the impossible before, and the Germans were all too aware of the results. The very fact of their withdrawal from METZ and the surrounding area proved their faith in the Allied supply system.

But even as the Germans fled, the American forces were slowing to a halt, for lack of supplies, but not, however

through lack of effort. Every available means of supply was exploited. Even tactical maps were rushed to us by plane. In all, eight tons of maps were dropped to the THIRD ARMY as it approached the borders of the REICH.

However, maps were not enough, nor were rations, even though the Army had to eat, whether on the move or standing still. Nor were all these plus ammunition enough to hold open the door to the REICH.

If guns and tanks are the sinews of an Army, then gasoline is the lifeblood of a modern fighting force. Gasoline for the tanks, and prime movers, for the ambulances, and jeeps, for kitchen ranges and squad stoves, for cub planes and engineer equipment, and all the other modern implements of warfare.

And gasoline we did not have. On the 4th day of September there were but 2000 gallons of gas in the entire Division, 1000 of which were needed for cooking. The Fifth Division could not move, not even to pursue the disorganized elements of the METZ garrison fleeing North and East of the West Wall.

The Fifth Division was immobilized in the VERDUN area from 1st of September to the 6th of September. All around the battalions stretched the wastes of another war, a war in which it took months to make a move of from 1000 yards to two miles. There were all the signs of the terrible struggle to take or hold a hill, a woods, or a line—the trenches, the wire, heavy with the rust of a quarter of a century, the mustard gas deposits, the personal debris, all there, all undisturbed.

It was a soldier's museum; there stood the Ossuary, housing the remains of 40,000 soldiers picked up from the battlefields. In the cemetery outside of the Ossuary were the markers of 17,000 graves faced toward the East as if still on guard against the German Armies. In other areas there were level stretches of land completely devoid of rubble, with monuments like the one reading: "Here was the village of Fleury, destroyed in 1916."

Here sat the Division while the door to Germany swung shut, while the Gestapo drove the METZ garrison back to their posts, while the forts were manned, positions dug, re-



inforcements brought up, until not all the gas in the world could force the door open without long, hard days of fighting, heavy casualties, and thousands of rounds of ammunition expended.

The Sixth Cavalry Group reconnaissance elements were forced to evacuate METZ for lack of support, and hard on their heels, to the very banks of the MOSELLE River came the German troops.

In the afternoon of September 5th, the Tenth Combat Team moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of FRESNES, 10 miles East of VERDUN, where it reverted to Division reserve. Here it was delayed again because of insufficient quantities of gasoline. Also on the 5th of September the Two Hundred Eighty-Second Field Artillery Battalion was detached from the Division.

Information received of the enemy on this date indicated the following: the Germans were preparing to defend the city of METZ. They were digging trenches in the public gardens and had machine guns placed strategically throughout the area. The main road junctions in the area were outposted with strong groups of the enemy, and they were preparing the old fortifications in and about the city for use. The Seventeenth SS Panzer Grenadier Division was in the area in strength. Roads were mined, bridges blown, and groups of the enemy were taking up defensive positions along the East bank of the MOSELLE River.

At this time, the Ninetieth Infantry Division (less one combat team) took up positions on our left, and the Eightieth Infantry Division moved up on our right flank. Reports indicated that the Eightieth Division had small forces on the East bank of the MOSELLE, but were driven back by heavy enemy action.

On the 6th of September, orders were received for the Eleventh Infantry to proceed East to the MOSELLE River and establish a bridgehead near CORNY, six miles Southwest of METZ, the exact site of the crossing to be selected after thorough reconnaissance.

Also on the 6th of September the Eighty-Fourth Chemical Battalion (Smoke Generator) and Troop C of the Third Cavalry Squadron were attached to the Division.

By this time sufficient gasoline had arrived to make almost any type of movement possible, but it was too late, the Germans had returned, and a battle was impending.

Information received of the enemy at this time indicated that the enemy preparations for the defense of METZ and the East bank of the MOSELLE had gone forward speedily, and that the majority of the positions were occupied in strength. Not only had the enemy organized the East bank of the MOSELLE for a determined defense, but it had advanced to the West bank and was organizing defensive areas. Reconnaissance elements encountered small arms and artillery fire from the vicinity of GORZE, four miles from the crossing site at about 1200 hours. The streets of the town were reported mined and covered by machine gun and mortar fire. Prisoners of war and civilians reported the following: About one enemy infantry company in AMANVILLERS, with dug-in positions West of the town; two heavy weapons companies in the vicinity of ARS SUR MOSELLE; about two enemy companies in the vicinity of St. GERMAINE; St. HUBERT was a fortified farm with four 20 millimeter guns, four 75 millimeter guns, two 150 millimeter guns, and four 50 caliber Anti-Tank guns; enemy groups with machine guns at ARRY; enemy holding a line Southwest of VERNEVILLE, and a line from GORZE North to GRAVELOTTE; scattered mine fields were on all roads leading across the MOSELLE in the Fifth Division area.

## THE CROSSING OF THE MOSELLE AT DORNOT

The 7th of September dawned wet and miserable as the Eleventh Combat Team column crawled slowly down

the road to BUXIERES and detrucked, preparatory to forcing a crossing of the MOSELLE River. The battalions arrived in the order, First, Second, and Third. The combat team was supported by its normal combat team supplement of Company C Eight Hundred Eighteen Tank Destroyer Battalion; Company C Seven Hundred Thirty-Fifth Tank Battalion; Collecting Company C Fifth Medical Battalion; Company C Seventh Engineer Battalion; and the Nineteenth Field Artillery Battalion. As the action developed, the Division Artillery, and the Two Hundred Fourth Field Artillery Group which included eight-inch guns, and later 240 millimeter howitzers, along with the Eleven Hundred Third Engineer Combat Group, the One Hundred Sixty-Eighth Medical Battalion, and the Four Hundred Thirty-Fifth Collecting Company litter teams, entered the picture.

All that, however, was superimposed on the deed of the men and officers of the Second Battalion Eleventh Infantry, K Company, and the Third Battalion Medical Detachment, in establishing a bridgehead across the MOSELLE River, a bridgehead, which at one time, became the Easternmost point of advance of the Allied Armies driving towards GERMANY. It was a point so galling that a thousand Nazi storm troopers and fanatic Adolph Hitler Brigade soldiers were killed in their efforts to eliminate this small bridgehead.

Rain and mud hampered slightly the advance of the First and Third Battalions on the 7th of September, but at about 2200 hours they reached their objectives, the high ground on the West bank of the MOSELLE just to the North and South of the town of DORNOT.

On both sides of the river hills rose sharply from the narrow stretches of low ground running along both banks. In order to effect a crossing it was necessary to descend the hills (or pass down a draw) on one side of the river, cross the river, and ascend the hills on the other side. Most of the hills were covered with wooded areas and the summer foliage made movement within the woods practically invisible to watchers on the opposite bank of the river.

Simultaneous with the movement of the First and Third Battalions, the Second Battalion of the Eleventh Infantry went into an assembly area in the vicinity of BUXIERES. The Second Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Kelley B. Lemmon, called a meeting of his commanders and staff at the regimental command post in BUXIERES to study a map of the area around DORNOT on both sides of the river.

A site was picked and a decision reached to force a crossing before daylight on the 8th of September. Up to this time no artillery fire of appreciable intensity had been received by our troops although it was known that the Eightieth Division farther South at PONT-A-MOUSSON had two companies on the East bank of the MOSELLE which had to withdraw after being severely mauled by heavy artillery and mortar fire. It was also known that the Seventh Armored Division had been forced to withdraw part of a company across the river for the same reason.

The final plan was for the Second Battalion of the Eleventh to force a crossing at DORNOT while the Seventh Armored Division was to cross a Battalion of armored infantry at a site 1000 yards North.

The Second Battalion marched from its assembly area through the town of GORZE, which had been previously cleared of the enemy by E Company and the Second Platoon of Eleventh Infantry Regimental Anti-Tank Company, and arrived at DORNOT at 0430 hours to find the town crammed with Seventh Armored personnel and vehicles.

A Colonel from XX Corps delivered an order to the Commanding General of the Seventh Armored to the effect that the armored infantry would cross before the Eleventh Infantry at the Second Battalion site. At this, the Second Battalion halted, brought up boats to a spot 250 yards from



the river's edge and waited for the armored infantry to cross.

At this time the armored infantry had one assault boat in the water which did not cross due to small arms fire. This information was passed back from the Second Battalion Commander to regiment and from there to Division Headquarters as of 0630 on the 8th of September.

In the meantime the Second Battalion couldn't get any closer due to the congestion caused by Seventh Armored personnel and vehicles. At 0930 the Division Commander phoned the Eleventh Regimental Commander that the Seventh Armored had been ordered to clear the area and move North to make its crossing. The armor did clear the area somewhat, but many vehicles with their bright cerise panels were left parked out in the open on the road leading uphill from DORNOT which was under perfect enemy observation. All these vehicles (mostly armored cars) were smashed by enemy fire later and many set on fire. The mines and ammunition on them exploded to the great danger of the personnel in the area. Of course the element of surprise had been completely lost, and if any man in the enemy positions on the far bank was not aware of what was going on and where it was about to take place, he would have to be completely blind.

The Second Battalion planned to cross at 1045 hours and brought the assault boats closer to the water's edge. When the hour arrived, however, enemy artillery and mortar fire was so intense that further artillery preparation was called for. The Nineteenth, Two Hundred Eighty-Fourth, and Twenty-First Field Artillery Battalions blasted the far shore, and finally at 1115 hours F Company jumped off with five boats in the first wave. The river at the crossing site was 50 yards wide. Due to the presence of enemy snipers and machine guns on the near shore, close to the crossing site and the hail of mortar and artillery fire falling on both banks, F Company suffered several casualties in crossing. Company G followed immediately and lost 1 killed and 5 wounded due to enemy machine gun fire. However, the boats continued to ferry the troops across and by 1320 hours all of G Company was reported across.

With both F and G Companies went a section of heavy machine guns and a section of mortars from H Company. E Company made it across later in the afternoon and K Company finished crossing at 1800 hours.

All crossings were made under heavy mortar and machine gun fire. Direct fire from Tiger tanks was periodically laid on the crossing and the surrounding area. Company C of the Seventh Engineer Battalion controlled the assault boats on the 8th of September, and suffered many casualties.

Once across, E and G Companies echeloned to the left

rear of F Company, and advanced directly East and uphill toward the forts located on the two crests of the hill mass 2050 yards from the river. German infantry counter-attacked savagely but was pushed back into the fort and 10 Germans were killed as F Company advanced. During the attack uphill to the forts, F Company suffered no casualties, but as it reached the woods just short of the fort the Company Commander, Lt. Nathan F. Drake, bent over a wounded German to ask him a question. As he bent over he was shot in the forehead by one of three German snipers located just 10 yards away. His men sprayed the position of the German riflemen thoroughly with rifle and automatic rifle fire.

The forts were about 2000 yards East of the river, located on the military crest of the high ground with consequent commanding observation of all activity on the West bank of the MOSELLE and the river crossing site. These forts had been built around 1870 and improved in 1939 and again by the Germans in the few weeks of August, 1944, prior to the American advance.

This information was obtained from prisoners, civilians working in the forts, and a French Colonel Dumage, but not until after the Americans found out the hard way.

As described by the men from F Company who arrived at the fort at about 1600 hours on the 8th of September, the fort was well nigh impregnable. F Company had cut its way through five separate barbed wire, double apron fences, only to come up against an iron barred fence studded with curved hooks to prevent scaling.

On the other side of the iron fence was a dry moat which dropped an estimated 30 feet from the ground level surrounding the entire fort. The fort itself was a high-domed structure of reinforced concrete covered by several yards of earth, on top of which grass formed excellent camouflage against observation.

F Company did not receive any automatic fire from the fort although a wounded prisoner stated that there were 1500 SS soldiers inside. After consultation with battalion headquarters by radio it was decided to pull both F and G Companies back about 400 yards to allow artillery to fire on the fort. 1st Lt. James Wright (then Commanding F Co.) and Capt. Jack S. Gerrie, Commanding G Company, decided to try to break into the fort with the aid of artillery.

The Companies fell back and artillery fire was called down on the fort by means of an SCR-300.

The artillery soon got the range and laid down a heavy barrage on the fort. As soon as this fire lifted the enemy increased their own mortar and artillery fire, and German infantry began counter-attacking and infiltrating on both flanks. Orders were sent for E and K Companies to pull up to F and G Companies to prevent a splitting of the battalion. As E and K Companies began to move up they were raked by enemy machine gun cross-fire across an open road which they had to cross to reach F and G Companies.

Plans were then made for E Company to form a defensive line along the North edge of the large patch of woods and for G and F Companies to fall back 800 yards to the rear of E Company, and form a horseshoe-like defense with the right and left flanks anchored to the river bank. By this time the entire area occupied by our troops was under intense mortar and machine gun fire. German infantrymen had infiltrated from both flanks to cut F and G Companies off from E Company. Pressure was heavy from the front also.

To keep from being completely cut off, F and G Companies were forced to fall back through the enemy in their

Second Battalion, 11th Infantry, march through Dornot on advance to Moselle River in France.





rear, a difficult and dangerous maneuver at the best, and one which would not have been undertaken if the situation had not been as desperate as it was. G Company began to withdraw by making a swing to the left rear, and moving back to the right through a rectangular patch of woods. Unfortunately there were enemy riflemen in the woods, and a running fire fight developed as some members of the Company ran into German pockets. Many of these men never got back.

F Company also swung first to the left rear and pulled out through a vineyard. Both companies were forced to cross several open spaces, the largest and most dangerous being the black-topped road separating them from E Company.

As these Companies began to cross the road the enemy machine guns opened up with a deadly cross-fire causing considerable casualties in the ranks of the companies that had already suffered heavily in the fighting at the fort and the first stage of the withdrawal. Those men of F and G Company that were fortunate enough to get back were arriving all through the night until 0800 hours the next morning. As the companies gathered in the pitch black darkness, Lt. Diersing, 1st Sgt. Hembree, and other key non-commissioned officer of E Company put them in position from E Company's flanks down the river's edge. By this time E Company had suffered several casualties and their Company Commander, Lt. Jack E. Brown, had been wounded.

Heavy artillery concentrations from our supporting heavy and light artillery kept the German infantry from closing in on our troops. As a matter of fact artillery support was excellent and plentiful but observers could not locate guns on which to fire counterbattery missions. The artillery fires consisted mostly of defensive fires to the front and both flanks of the hard-pressed troops on the East bank and fired on call. The calls were continuous and the sweating, tired crews of the Nineteenth, Twenty-First, and Two Hundred Eighty-Fourth Field Artillery Battalions manned their guns throughout the entire night, slamming shell after shell into the breeches as their smoking guns pounded the far shore, breaking up the savage attacks of the desperate enemy defenders, and keeping a protective wall of flame and steel around the decimated companies holding out in the small bridgehead.

Capt. Eldon B. Colgrove, the Nineteenth Field Artillery Battalion liaison officer, stayed on duty for 60 consecutive hours, receiving fire missions from the far shore by radio, and relaying information to the batteries from the forward observers with the companies on the far shore.

In the meantime the Second Battalion Eleventh Infantry plus Company K was fighting hard in the confined bridge-

head, as the enemy continually attempted to slip through the lines, plastering the near and far shores with mortar and artillery, blasting the town of Dornot and the surrounding area.

The Second Battalion Command Post was located in the town of Dornot and was under fire almost continuously.

At 1700 hours the battalion command post received a direct hit which knocked out the battalion radio, killed three men and wounded several others, including the Battalion Executive Officer, Capt. Herman R. Schell, and the Battalion S-2, Capt. Douglas C. Hargrove. The command post was hit again on the following day and forced to move.

Back on the East bank the riflemen dug in where they were. Foxholes were close together. The horseshoe defense followed the shape of the woods and ran from the river on the left flank to the river on the right flank.

A reserve of F Company was organized to meet counterattacks from the left or North flank, and a reserve of F and G Companies was organized to meet counterattacks from the right or South flank. What was left of the H Company heavy machine guns and the G Company Weapons Platoon was placed on the flanks.

The first tank attack came just before dark. Three tanks, later identified as Mark IV tanks with bazooka shields came from the left rear and wheeled along the left flank of the woods firing into the woods with machine guns and 20 millimeter cannon fire. Although E Company was receiving the fire, no one fired and the position was not given away, as the enemy tankers had hoped would happen.

The tanks continued along the left flank to the front, struck the black top highway and disappeared into the woods on both sides of the highway to the right front.

Following the tanks came German infantry talking loudly and yelling "Yanks Kaput." The Yanks did not Kaput, however, but shot most of the Germans that got too far behind the tanks.

The object of this tank-infantry team was apparently to force the Americans to disclose their positions. It failed, however, except when E Company riflemen opened up with conclusive fire. Many casualties had occurred during this attack, and shortly after the attack had passed, the wounded began to call for help, calling out "Medic," "Medic," or calling for the aid man by name. Realizing that this would tell the Germans that we had been seriously hurt, the 1st Sergeant of E Company, Sgt. Claude W. Hembree, passed word around to the effect that there were to be no calls for help or shouts from the wounded. As the runner passed through the foxholes on his mission the shouts died away and there were no more calls or cries from any of the casualties, even the seriously wounded refusing to whimper. It was accepted by all personnel in the bridgehead that "the wounded don't cry" and they didn't.

What casualties could be evacuated were carried by litter down to the aid station by the river. The buddies of the wounded men carried the casualties down to where the aid men had set up an improvised aid station, and then returned to take up the fight.

The aid station was not manned by surgeons as the terrific shelling prevented the movement of aid station personnel from the near to the far shore, and the aid men made improvised dressings, gave sulfa drugs, and administered hypodermics when needed.

After the horseshoe had been organized on the West bank, Captain Church, Battalion S-3 and Captain Gerrie, Commanding G Company, returned to the East bank and reported to the Second Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Lemon. Colonel Lemon realized the seriousness of



Assault boats were carried by hand down road leading to the Moselle.



the situation and requested permission to evacuate the bridgehead, and pull the battalion back to the East bank. The bridgehead, however, was the only one across the river and orders were received to hold it at all costs. Air support along with heavier artillery support was promised and it was intended if the Second Battalion plus K Company could hold out, to push reinforcements across and put a bridge in.

The Eleven Hundred Third Engineer Combat Group was waiting in the rear of Dornot with the equipment to put a bridge in if the site could be cleared by fire.

German artillery and mortar fire, however, did not let up for a minute during the entire operation, except for a few brief lulls on the 10th of September. Except for these lulls, the rain of shells on the bridgehead, the river bank, the town of Dornot, and the area around it, was continuous.

The enemy guns and mortars were well hidden and the commanding observation gave them a great deal of advantage over our forward observers who were forced to search, usually in vain for enemy positions. F Company reported that while they were close to the fort in the early hours of the crossing, that they could hear fire direction commands being given to an enemy gun crew somewhere to the right of the fort, but although the loud crack of the gun proved the location to be within 300 yards, they were unable to locate it.

The desperate enemy attacked again and again in an attempt to wipe out the dwindling band of men holding the tiny bridgehead. In all 36 counterattacks were reported. This figure did not include the numerous times that the Germans attempted to infiltrate, work to the rear and cut off the meagre supply route that existed.

The enemy used every possible trick to confuse or frighten the riflemen and machine-gunners that continued to hold out contrary to all expectations of the Boche, and repulsed attack after attack.

One of the tricks they employed was a deceitful shout of "Cease firing," by an English-speaking German officer. The First Platoon of E Company was confused at first and ceased its fire with the exception of one man. On the repeated order, the German accent gave the voice away and the platoon commenced fire again, wiping out a group of from 15 to 20 Germans. This was by no means the only trick, and the enemy in their fanatic desperation did stupid foolish things and they did clever, tricky things. A trickier stunt was the one applied by at least two different German machine-gunners. They evidently fired in pairs, one firing tracer about five feet high, thus leading the Americans to stoop and run under such fire, and at this, they would run into fire not indicated by tracer about two feet in height. This trick was finally discovered, but not until a good number of leg and abdomen wounds had been inflicted.

German camouflage was superior. Causing great havoc at the crossing site was a well dug-in and concealed German machine-gunner. His site was a large foxhole topped with heavy logs and earth. It was well sodded and gave the appearance of a small mound. He fired through a nine-inch aperture, the muzzle of the gun remaining inside the aperture so that no muzzle blast gave his position away. His line of fire was across the lagoon between the river and the railroad track on the West bank or near shore and also swept the crossing site itself and the left flank of the bridgehead. He was actually located on the West bank, on "friendly" shore.

On the nights of the 8th and 9th of September he sang German songs loudly, yet try as they would, the American troops could not locate him. He was finally neutralized by area fire from 60 millimeter mortar and automatic rifle and rifle fire from the First Platoon of I Company on the 10th of September.

Private Dale Rex of G Company, an assistant machine-gunner six feet five inches tall in his GI stocking feet

supporting two hundred and fifty pounds of muscle, who had been in the army only eighteen weeks before joining the Eleventh Infantry as a replacement, took over the machine-gunner's position when the latter was killed early on the 8th and continued to man it the rest of the time. His position was on the left flank with another machine gun and the two simply "mowed down," as they expressed it, Germans who attacked almost shoulder to shoulder in a "fix bayonet" charge across an open field, day and night. They lost count of the Germans and simply say "hundreds." Riflemen called to support the story, do so, and when asked to estimate the number of Germans killed could do no more than say "hundreds—three or four hundreds, anyway." They explained that the Germans simply formed up in a line almost shoulder to shoulder and attacked, wave after wave, piling dead upon dead. Later during the actual evacuation, Rex took off his clothing and gave it to a wounded patient to keep him warmer and then himself swam the 50-yard-wide river four times guiding other swimmers to the best places of exit on the West bank, saving one man from drowning, and helping to load and unload boats.

1st Sergeant Claude W. Hembree was a monument of strength to E Company, which was the company on the front nearest the fort and was the closest to all the tank attacks. He organized a runner system and a litter system, kept his men disciplined and encouraged in the face of tank attacks, organized and placed bazooka teams to meet the tanks. His command post was fifty-yards from the black top highway along which the tanks travelled every time they attacked. During the actual evacuation, he helped Lieutenant Ross Stanley of H Company regain control and discipline over the boat loading which had been lost for a few frantic moments when Captain Gerrie left the loading point to go back and look for more men in the woods. It was Sergeant Hembree and other E Company riflemen who reported another underhanded stratagem of the Germans. A group of Germans, about platoon strength, attacked E Company late in the afternoon of the 9th. Automatic rifle and aimed rifle fire killed about twenty and left about five who immediately dropped beside their killed and wounded comrades and used their bodies as shields. They lay still, pretending to be wounded but still holding on to their weapons. E Company riflemen shouted out to them to drop their weapons but they feigned unconsciousness. They were only about fifteen yards from E Company's positions and one rifleman, whose name was not recorded asked the first sergeant "What are we gonna do, sarge? Let 'em stay there till dark? They'll crawl in on us then." "Hell, no!" was the reply. "Kill em." Which they promptly did.

Private First Class George Dickey and Private First Class Frank Lalopa volunteered to man a K Company outpost slightly beyond the K Company main line. The night of the 8th a German coordinated tank-infantry attack hit the left flank of the bridgehead. K Company was defending the left rear. The tanks came up to the edge of the woods where the two soldiers were located and poured machine gun and 88 millimeter fire into the woods, then proceeded East along the left flank of the bridgehead. German infantry followed the tanks. As the enemy closed in, Dickey and Lalopa received a warning order to withdraw. Although the two were armed with only their M-1 rifles, they refused to withdraw and instead poured their own fire into the advancing enemy who cut them off from the rest of K Company and killed them. Next morning, K Company men crawled out to where Dickey and Lalopa were and found the bodies of twenty-two Germans in front of them, some of them within three yards of the two. Undoubtedly, many more Germans had been wounded by the fire of these two men.

Technician Fifth Grade William G. Rea, company aid man for K Company continually rendered first aid to the wounded under direct machine gun and rifle fire and shell



fire. During the evacuation on the night of the 10th, Rea crossed the river three times in evacuating litter patients. One time he carried a wounded man 300 yards, unaided, walking erect through small arms fire, after having crawled the 300 yards to reach the man, back to the aid station. Every man in K Company, when asked to name someone who had done something especially outstanding, named Rea first.

Sergeant Joseph Capehart of K Company, on the night of 8 September, took over a machine gun whose gunner had been killed and despite bursts of 20 millimeter and machine gun fire that actually came so close to his body that it shredded his clothes, continued to man the gun and maintain a murderous rate of fire upon the advancing enemy. Most of his squad was wounded and he single-handedly, with machine gun fire, repulsed two other counter attacks. Although wounded, he maintained his machine gun post for thirty-six hours, until relieved by another squad.

Riflemen in E Company voluntarily gave up their foxholes to machine gunners who came to reinforce E Company, and dug new ones for themselves.

Officer leadership was not lacking. Many officers were wounded and killed because they could not stay in foxholes but had to be up moving around, checking on positions. In addition to Lieutenant Drake, the killed included: Lieutenant Matthew Wirtz of F Company, Lieutenant Stephen Lowry, Company I, and Lieutenant John Hillyard, Executive Officer of K Company. All the other rifle company officers were wounded.

Men of E and F Companies reported that their platoon leaders apologized to their Company Commanders and 1st Sergeant for being wounded. The men appreciated such things in leadership as occurred when the walkie-talkie radio operator of 2d Lieutenant Thomas J. Cullison, E Company, was fatally wounded by close sniper fire. Instead of ordering one of his men to recover the radio, Cullison said, "goddamit, now I've got to crawl out and get that radio back." He did that safely, keeping in communication and maintaining control from company to platoon. He was reported drowned during evacuation.

2d Lieutenant Clinton Hall was the lead man in his platoon fire fight against the counterattack. His squad leaders reported that he was operating his walkie-talkie radio with his left hand and firing his carbine with his right, from a prone position. He told his platoon later that a platoon leader's place was slightly to the rear of the firing line so as to be able to control the firing and that he was sorry he permitted himself to be caught in such a position but that he had to kill Germans too. He was wounded and evacuated later.

One further note concerning the enemy. Prisoners reported that once they left the fort they were not allowed to go back in. They went out to attack and got through or else. Most of them wound up in an "or else" status. The troops were SS troupes, members of an Adolf Hitler Brigade, an SS signal battalion and 1500 soldier students of the Officer Candidate School in Metz. The latter were thrown into the line as riflemen and tried frantically and fanatically to make a name for themselves. Most of them made graves instead.

When it appeared certain that a bridge could not be established and that sizeable reinforcement was not possible and the battalion was gradually cut to pieces by the continual enemy fire, the battalion was ordered withdrawn. Plans were made for an evacuation on the night of the 10th to begin at 2115 hours. Two men from I Company volunteered to swim the river, carrying the message. The message-order from Lieutenant Colonel Lemon to Captain Gerrie, could not be sent over the radio because one radio was lost and believed to be in enemy hands.



Second Battalion, 11th Infantry, crosses Moselle River at Dornot.

The order was clear and detailed but simple. Briefly: Troops in Dornot and on the left bank were to begin evacuating at 2115 hours. Evacuation had to be done silently, and, consequently, without vehicles. They were left behind.

During the afternoon of the 10th, I Company moved down from its position on the hill near Dornot. The weapons platoon took up positions on the forward slope, behind the railroad track. The Third Platoon took up positions on the West bank from Anxy to Dornot, on the left of the bridgehead, to cover the left flank and try to decrease the cross-fire from the bridgehead's left. The first platoon positioned itself from the river bank along the North edge of the lagoon with the same mission. The Second Platoon took up positions along the right of the lagoon to cover the right flank of the bridgehead troops. The Third Platoon was in position all day, the Second Platoon went into position during the afternoon; the First Platoon went into position during the night, being in position by 2125 hours.

Evacuation was to start from the far shore by boat, swimming and use of expedient floats. All weapons and equipment were to be thrown into the water. Lieutenant Marshall was going to fire a green flare when the evacuation was complete. Guides were posted from the railroad track to an assembly area, where hot food, coffee, new clothes and cognac waited. Those were the essentials. Upon the green flare signal, the artillery, which would be firing defensive fires around the bridgehead area as usual up to that time, would increase in intensity and would start with the town of Dornot and walk across the river combining the woods and continue up the hill to the fort. The purpose was to kill the Germans who undoubtedly would close in on the evacuating bridgehead forces.

At 2100 hours, three officers came to the West bank of the river with about 65 men, the group being a mixed bunch of I Company men, Second Battalion Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon men, 35 men from Company C of the Seventh Engineers and a few from the Two Hundred Fourth Engineer Battalion. The Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon men brought men who were placed along the bank to assist the swimmers in getting out of the water. Three boats which could be used were found in the lagoon. They, as were all the assault boats after the first crossing, were riddled with bullet holes and required the work of two men bailing continuously to make the 50-yard crossing, one man paddling.

Ropes were attached to each end of the assault boat so that the boats could be pulled back and forth across the



river by boat teams on each bank. On the West bank, two teams of five men each were required for each boat. When the evacuation started, luck was with the troops and there was, miraculously, no shelling. The machine gun and sniper fire had been neutralized by I Company during the afternoon, I Company incurring considerable casualties from shelling during the process. When the three boats reached the far shore, too many evacuees crowded into one boat and it was swamped. One of the other two boats made four trips and the other made three trips from the time until 1020 when engineers brought down four rubber saucages with hand ropes attached, and two rafts. Evacuation speeded up a little then.

On the far shore, in addition to the boats, men used all sorts of expedients to help float themselves across. Buoyant empty water cans were used, as were empty ammunition cases. Many swam across in the cold water. A few drowned. Many pulled themselves over on the ropes attached to the boats. Many were the deeds of heroism and nameless were the heroes. Men like Lieutenant James Wright of F Company, Private Rex of G Company, and Technician Fifth Grade Rea of K Company swam over, helping swimmers on the way and returned to help still more others. Lieutenant Wright was seen to make one crossing and return but has since been missing.

Captain Gerrie supervised the loading and Lieutenant Marshall the unloading. Discipline was perfect except for a few moments when Captain Gerrie left to round up more men in the woods. Lieutenant Stanley came up and forced men who were momentarily panic stricken to back off and load under discipline. He was assisted by 1st Sergeant Hembree and Staff Sergeant Gritzmacher of K Company. Lieutenant Stanley and Sergeant Gritzmacher with a boatload of G Company men, were in the last boatload to leave. Lieutenant Stanley spent several additional minutes insuring that no one was left behind asleep in foxholes near the river.

Men who were waiting to be loaded in boats were so exhausted from 60 some hours of sleeplessness that they would fall asleep in their foxholes. Lieutenant Stanley's boat left as one or two (the stories vary on the particulars) German tanks came down to the river's edge and fired pointblank fire across the river. One burst of fire hit the boat which preceded Lieutenant Stanley and was carrying H Company men. The front part of the boat was torn away by the fire and the rest sank. Some of H Company's missing were undoubtedly in that boat. Lieutenant Marshall and Lieutenant Lewis had gone to the East, or far, shore, to insure that no personnel had been left behind and had pulled ashore about 100 yards south of Lieutenant Stanley's boat. Lieutenant Marshall walked up to Lieutenant Stanley just as the latter made ready to shove off. Stanley said no one was left, so Marshall made one more check, calling for anyone who might be hidden. Then the tank came up and Lieutenant Marshall hugged the ground.

Just at that time a green flare, green by coincidence, was sent up by the Germans. Lieutenant Marshall and his signal sergeant brought back their green flares to prove it. But not mattering who had fired it, the Division Artillery responded, and the Germans also increased their fire at this time. Marshall and Lewis started back across in a small rubber dinghy. The American artillery started, as planned, in Dornot and moved Eastward. By a rare stroke of luck it jumped the river only two shells landing in the river to Marshall's recollection, and the two officers safely reached the West bank. Caught in the American artillery barrage, however, was the last boatload of evacuees and the personnel working to evacuate them on the West bank.

All the casualties possible were evacuated along the prescribed route, around the South end of the lagoon, across

the railroad, up to the right of Dornot to the assembly area where the wet, cold, sleepy, exhausted and battle-weary officers and men of E, F, G, H, and K Companies and a handful of one company from the 23d Armored Infantry were fed hot food and issued new shoes, underclothes, shirts and pants in the dark. The next morning, they were marched farther back, one-half mile West of Gorze to another area where the process of re-equipping and replacing personnel began while the remaining personnel rested.

That the plan of having the Division Artillery sweep from Dornot across the river and through the woods uphill to the fort succeeded in killing many was vouchsafed for by one man, Private Zawakowski, of G Company Eleventh Infantry, who had either fallen sound asleep or passed out in a foxhole about fifty yards from the river's edge. When he awoke, it was early morning, just before first light and everything was still. He got out of his foxhole, which had a roof of branches topped with shelter half and six inches of sand on top of the shelter half, and walked across dead Germans from his foxhole to the river bank. He pulled himself across by the boat-raft ropes, as they had been left on the far shore on the off chance that someone might have been left behind.

The companies arrived in the assembly area with their strength fifty per cent less.

The Second Battalion and K Company Eleventh Infantry received a unit citation from the Division Commander, Major General Irwin, in addition to many individual citations for their heroic work in the Dornot crossing, the true value of which will be seen in the next chapter.

## THE ARNAVILLE CROSSING

THE ORIGINAL plan of attack for the city of METZ was, in general to have the Eleventh Combat Team force a crossing in the vicinity of Dornot, and to have the Second Combat Team make a frontal attack on the city from the West. The first part of the plan was proving too costly

Light tank of 735th Battalion and infantry advance together.





and the evacuation of the Eleventh Infantry bridgehead appeared imminent, so a new plan was necessary.

During the attack of the Eleventh Infantry on the East bank of the MOSELLE the Tenth Combat Team had replenished its gas supply, and on September 7th closed to a designated assembly area in the vicinity of CHAMBLEY.

At 1400 hours September 8th orders were received from Division Headquarters to send one battalion to the high ground West of the river near ARNAVILLE to relieve the battalion of the Eleventh Infantry already in position there. The Third Battalion was selected and the relief was accomplished before nightfall. At 2200 hours the same date Lieutenant Colonel Randolph C. Dickens, G-3, Fifth Infantry Division, entered the command post with orders for the Tenth Infantry to cross the MOSELLE River the following day. Time of crossing was to be at the discretion of the Commanding Officer Tenth Infantry; also the exact site of the crossing. The mission: to secure the high ground North of ARRY!

The amended plan for capturing METZ was becoming apparent. Orders had been issued for the Second Battalion, Eleventh Infantry to hold its bridgehead, which was still

intact at this time. This bridgehead would hold the attention of all the Germans in the vicinity while the Tenth Combat Team established a more tenable bridgehead two miles to the South. True, the Eleventh Infantry bridgehead was costly, but attempts to cross the MOSELLE River by other Divisions had been equally costly and plans were being made for even more costly crossings. *The MOSELLE River had to be forced!*

A heavy bridge company was available for construction of a bridge after the bridgehead was established. Early the next morning Colonel Bell and his reconnaissance party went forward to examine the area of the crossing.

On reaching ARNAVILLE, it was apparent that enemy forces were operating in the immediate area and the reconnaissance group divided itself into two patrols to examine the approaches, canal locks, and river. There had been extensive demolition by the Germans in the area of ARNAVILLE and the local patriots warned the party that roads and trails were mined. However, the reconnaissance party was able to select suitable approaches and found two existing foot-bridges over the canal. The river banks were suitable for the launching of assault boats. With regard to a bridge site, it was fortunate that in the immediate vicinity was the site of a military bridge constructed and later destroyed by the French Army during the Campaign of 1940.

On his return to the command post at 1400 hours the Combat Team Commander issued his order for the crossing to the assembled unit commanders and staff officers.

On the night of September 9th, the Tenth Combat Team finished a march of 20 miles from CHAMBLEY to ARNAVILLE, on the MOSELLE River, about seven miles Southwest of METZ.

It had been learned previously that the enemy troops in the area consisted principally of two regiments of German Officers' Candidate School personnel, and elements of the Seventeenth SS Panzer Grenadier Division, and elements of the Second SS Panzer Grenadier Division and the Panzer Grenadier Division "GROSSDEUTSCHLAND" were also reported in the area, plus several batteries of German artillery.

At 0210 hours on the 10th of September, the Tenth Infantry supported by the Third Battalion attacked under cover of darkness across the MOSELLE River in the vicinity of ARNAVILLE.

Surprise was the object and surprise was the result as Company A Tenth Infantry moved silently down to the MOSELLE. Each man was loaded with all the ammunition he could carry, three K-rations, and a full canteen. He also went with the knowledge that the Eleventh Infantry only two miles North was receiving a terrific pounding from heavy artillery and that he was likely to march into the same deadly fire.

Silently the infantrymen carried the boats down to the water's edge, stepped into them and crossed, landed, spread out and hurried inland toward the high ground. No artillery preparation preceded the crossing as surprise was essential.

Company A, followed by C and then B, each with elements of D and Battalion Headquarters attached trudged across the grassy flatland toward ARRY. The flatland was devoid of any cover or concealment for 500 yards, rising slightly at the hard-surfaced CORNY-ARRY road, running North and South. The battalion crossed 300 yards of the terrain before the crossing was discovered and small-arms fire was received.

Major Wilfred H. Haughey, First Battalion Commander, was across with his advance command post. Heavy artillery had not yet started to fall but he knew what he could





expect and knew that he could not afford to let daylight catch his battalion in the flatland. Consequently, he ordered his S-2 to reconnoiter the best route toward the top of Hill 386. The next time he saw the S-2, the Lieutenant was on top of the hill. He had seen what he believed to be a possibility to exploit an avenue of approach and had taken one platoon of A Company and one platoon of C Company under his command and charged up the hill. He and his pick-up command by-passed a Chateau on the edge of ARRY, fixed bayonets and actually ran up the hill in the dark. They gained the top by use of marching fire and bayonets, using cold steel to bayonet six Germans to death and forcing the rest to flee from that particular section of the hill.

Meanwhile, Companies A and C dashed across the hard-surfaced road, suffering considerable casualties from machine gun fire which enfiladed the road. The A Company Commander, Captain Elias Vick, was the first to cross the road and fell mortally wounded. Once across the road, Companies A and C fixed bayonets and charged up the hill, slightly to the left or North of the route the S-2's command had taken. Company C neutralized an 88 millimeter gun and its crew of six directly in its path as the infantrymen charged with marching fire and bayonet.

The attack was costly in casualties as it had to be made in the teeth of a perfect METZ Officers' Candidate School fire plan as shown by a captured copy. The situation for the defenders was much the same as if American Infantry Officers' Candidate School members at Fort BENNING were actually called upon to defend a hill with a fire plan which had been given the school solution in the classroom and worked out time and again in demonstration and occupation of the ground. And on Hill 386 the plan was ready. The ground was occupied by German troops, and the air was full of German lead and steel.

## HILL 310

As the First Battalion was taking Hill 386, the Second Battalion crossed in assault boats at the same crossing site the First Battalion used, crossed the North-South hard-surface road which was still under enfilading machine gun fire and attacked Hill 310, in the Bois de GAUMONT. Companies F and G met heavy small arms fire as they started up the hill but pushed steadily upward until they met a line of Germans entrenched in foxholes three-quarters of the way up. A Platoon Leader of Company F, Lt. Andrew Paulishen, gave the order to fix bayonets and use grenades liberally. The rest of the two companies followed suit and the cold steel and hot grenade fragments brought the Americans to the top of the hill over the dead bodies of Germans. The bayonet alone accounted for at least one enemy heavy machine gun crew.

(Bayonet fighting was not a usual occurrence in this war. It was used first by the Tenth Infantry Regiment at CAUMONT in the NORMANDY beachhead and again at ANGERS where, because of the Germans' fear of steel, its surprise and terror effect achieved quick and deadly results. It was in this MOSELLE bridgehead, however, that the bayonet was used the most freely.)

Down on the river-crossing site, smoke generators were put into operation to shield crossings from German observation at FORT DRIANT four miles North on the West bank and VERDUN Group which the Eleventh had tried to take only two miles to the North. The Tenth Infantry Anti-Tank Company took over the job of ferrying men and material on rafts.

When the plans had been made for the crossing of the MOSELLE by the Fifth Division, the need for a smoke screen had been foreseen. Initially it was a job for a 4.2 inch mortar battalion but the only smoke unit that could be obtained

was a Smoke Generator Company (the Eighty-Fourth Chemical Company Smoke Generator). This company was attached to the Division, but it arrived too late to be used in the first crossing by the Eleventh Infantry.

At daybreak on the 10th of September, smoke was available to cover the crossing, and bridge construction work done by the Eleven Hundred Third Engineers. The smoke generators were started at 0600 hours and the prevailing winds screened the required area perfectly and enabled the outfit to operate from a good position one mile to the West of the river, and up the valley behind ARNAVILLE. At first the screen held up admirably allowing the Tenth Combat Team to continue the movement of troops, supplies, and ammunition across and evacuate the wounded by assault boats and rafts. However, the wind changed suddenly and the screen failed to hide the operations. As soon as the crossing site was revealed the enemy began to blast the area with all the artillery he could bring to bear.

Four generators were brought close to the river's edge to screen the work on the bridge site. These were brought forward and set up under heavy enemy fire. Other generators were to move to the area if needed, but due to the heavy rain of shells on the crossing site on the night of September 10-11, work on the bridge was discontinued and the generators were carried across on a ferry that night. A sufficient number were set up to maintain a screen over the crossing operations no matter what tricks the wind might play. A sufficient screen was set up, and as the situation developed a 180-degree perimeter of generators maintained a continual screen over the area and hid the crossing of supplies, vehicles and personnel from the enemy, who, although they could not see what was going on under the screen, poured a searching, and deadly fire from artillery and mortars blindly at the area.

In the meantime the First and Second Battalions were driving toward the high ground and by 0800 hours of the 10th September, all of the two battalions were on top of the two hills, 386 in the Bois D'ARRY and 310 in the Bois de GAUMONT, and were consolidating and digging in to repel expected counterattacks. Forward artillery observers prepared defensive concentrations. Major Haughey moved his advance command post up with the rifle companies as did Major William E. Simpson, commanding the Second Battalion. Then, even as the infantrymen were digging in and enemy artillery fire was increasing, the first German counterattack came.

Three tanks and a platoon of German infantry struck at the right flank of the First Battalion at 0810 hours. Artillery concentrations directed by forward observers and observation posts on the West side of the river beat off the first counterattack. Other counterattacks followed in quick succession. Fanatic METZ officer candidates pressed one counterattack upon the heels of the preceding one. Most of them formed up in ARRY and the woods to the front and hit the center and right of the bridgehead. Infantrymen fought back with bazookas, rifle grenades and well-directed artillery. There were no anti-tank guns across yet and the riflemen were forced to hold off the tanks with bazookas.

Sergeant Angelo Speggen of D Company, for example, during the counterattack observed a German squad attempt a flanking movement, waited until the Germans were almost on him and then killed the nine with machine gun bursts. Private First Class John Yezzi, in another machine gun squad, was riddling the ranks of counterattacking Germans who advanced firing machine pistols and rifle grenades even as they yelled "Kamerad" in an obvious ruse.

"Kamerad, hell!" shouted Yezzi to his squad, "pass me another belt of ammo!"

Corporal Russell D. Brugler knocked out a tank with five bazooka rounds. Private First Class John Greentree hit a tank with three rounds of bazooka ammunition, which



failed to knock it out. Undaunted, he killed the German infantrymen following the tank with his M-1 and kept the tank buttoned up until it retired. When German tanks broke through to 81 millimeter mortar positions, Sergeant Walter Jenski ran down a narrow road right alongside the tank firing rifle grenades at the treads and then threw a grenade inside the turret. He didn't knock it out but did drive it off.

The heaviest counterattack of the day struck at noon, when an enemy tank company, supported by infantry, jumped off from behind ARRY, divided into two columns and tried a double envelopment of the First Battalion on Hill 386. Company C felt the brunt of the attack. Riflemen and machine gunners stuck to their posts and picked off advancing infantrymen.

Captain William B. Davis, Company C Commander, was on the flank closest to ARRY, with his radio operator. He directed artillery fire on the tank columns, disorganizing them somewhat and causing damage but not stopping the attack. The radio operator was killed and Captain Davis was wounded in both legs. He strapped the radio on his back, continued directing artillery on further troop concentrations in ARRY, then rolled downhill to his company post and gave orders on troop dispositions to meet the attack, which had already broken through and overrun some positions. His actions further stimulated the company and the attack was beaten off with heavy casualties to both sides, although just before the attack was turned back, the company ran completely out of bazooka ammunition and rifle grenades and had four bazookas knocked out. Captain Davis refused evacuation until he was forcibly placed on a litter. He was fatally hit by shell fragments as he lay there.

Litter carriers and ammunition carriers were performing miracles of hand-carrying men and materiel one and one-half miles, which was tough enough to do just against the barriers of natural terrain, not to mention the extremely hazardous journey across the 500-yard stretch of flatland to the river which by this time was being shelled heavily by 105 and 150 millimeter guns in FORT DRIANT, FORT ST. BLAISE and FORT SOMMY. Counter-battery on the forts was useless, as later inspection of the forts showed that the only weapon that had any effect against the steel-reinforced concrete forts was a 2,000-pound bomb. Shells from American 105, 155, and 240 millimeter howitzers and 8-inch guns had no effect. There were also batteries of artillery emplaced and well-scattered 88s kept peppering the ground held by the 10th. When the troops were not being counterattacked they were being shelled.

Air support had been provided for but when the planes flew over the town of ARRY, the pilots saw fatter and more vulnerable targets on the roads leading into the bridgehead area, seven or eight kilometers to the South and East. They destroyed a convoy of 15 gasoline trucks and strafed motor columns but that was of no help to the immediate local situation.

At 1313 hours, Colonel Bell directed the Third Battalion of the Tenth to cross two rifle companies and clean out the village of ARRY. Shortly thereafter, the Germans came into ARRY in still greater strength and increased the rate of fire on the First Battalion. The Tenth's mortars, cannons and supporting tank destroyers on the West side of the river and the supporting artillery retaliated with fire that knocked out three German tanks.

At the North edge of the bridgehead, below CORNY, the Germans started another counterattack. Forward artillery observers had perfect observation, however, and Division and Corps artillery TOTs stopped the attack cold. Artillery also hit four tanks in front of Company F and two in front of Company G, and helped disperse counterattacking German infantry.



Infantryman runs for cover as German artillery shell bursts near. This picture was snapped as infantry fought to cross the Moselle River.

By 1500 hours Companies I and K of the Third Battalion of the Tenth had been ferried across the MOSELLE River in assault boats and were moving toward ARRY. Support aviation bombed and strafed ARRY, setting the town on fire. The doughboys moved in still closer and as the final artillery preparation lifted, went in to clear out the town. It was strictly an infantryman's affair—no tank or tank destroyers in support. The men of I and K marched into the town with marching fire, firing automatic rifles and light machine guns from the hip. They met opposition from both tanks and infantry but their mission was to clean out the town. They kept going.

Bazookas knocked out two Mark IV tanks and another pair of tanks was driven off by the same type of fire. German infantry in cemented cellars were rooted out by grenades. By nightfall the entire town had been cleared of German tanks and infantry and I and K were pulled back behind the First Battalion in regimental reserve on the West side of Bois D'ARRY. From then on until the 16th when the Third Battalion took Hill 396, Companies I and K absorbed severe shellings. They dug in and shored over foxholes with tree branches as best they could for shelter against a terrific lacing from artillery and mortars.

Engineer work had been disrupted by the constant shelling on the river and the flatlands and anti-tank company of the Tenth had taken over entirely the task of ferrying across jeeps, 57 millimeter anti-tank guns and the two and a half ton kitchen trucks. The ferrying was accomplished under constant artillery fire. Enemy shelling of ARNAVILLE continued heavy throughout the night of 10-11 September and the bridge was not constructed that night. The ferrying rafts and assault boats were the only river-crossing means.

Meanwhile, all elements of the regiment carried on the attack. Service Company carried the ammunition and supplies down to the river bank where Anti-tank Company ferried them across and returned with casualties. The rifle companies clamored for more bazookas, and personnel of Regimental Headquarters Company not involved in maintenance of communications or operations went out on the roads and hi-jacked the desperately needed bazookas. They gathered 49 in this manner and they were placed in the hands of the riflemen who used them all.

Communications personnel continued to service wire lines through the continuous artillery fire. A total of eight wire lines had been taken across the river to maintain communications for the infantry regiment alone, exclusive of the artillery lines. And at one time, all eight of the infantry's wire lines were shot out but were reestablished by the non-stop efforts of the regimental wire crews. After the kitchen



trucks were crossed two hot meals a day were ready for each man in the bridgehead. However, carrying parties often found it too dangerous to take the time to eat a hot meal and the men were forced to eat K rations. 1st Lt. Eugene Dille, one of those who took across a supply of bazookas and ammunition, was found dead the next day surrounded by 35 dead Germans.

After darkness on the night of 10-11 September, the out-post line of the Second Battalion heard tracked vehicles moving in front of them and patrols found that German tanks had pulled up to within 150 yards of the battalion front.

The tanks were on Company F's Front. The attitude of the German tankers was self confident to the point of cockiness. They taunted the Americans, trying to get them to disclose their positions but battle-tested veterans would not. The Germans sat on top of their tanks smoking, laughing and talking loudly, evidently sure that they had the Americans at their mercy.

Thus the infantrymen who had left the village of CHAMBLEY 24 hours before, walked twenty miles, crossed the MOSELLE, fought uphill and absorbed shellings and counter-attacks all day, had no sleep that night either. They lay awake in their foxholes awaiting the imminent counter-attack. It rained and the rain turned to a pelting sleet for a little while, doubling the infantrymen's misery. Tank destroyers and tanks could not get across the river yet and the slope was too steep and muddy to get 57 millimeter anti-tank guns forward in the Second Battalion area. Artillery fires were prepared. Bazooka ammunition was low but they had plenty of rifle grenades, rifle bullets, and hand grenades.

At 0530 hours on the 11th September, the tanks which were already in position began firing at point-blank range and rumbled toward the Second Battalion, supported by an estimated battalion of infantry. Prisoners taken revealed that most of the troops were SS troops sent out of the METZ garrison with orders to eliminate the American bridgehead. Supporting artillery fire rained down on the German tanks and infantry, almost on top of the Second Battalion troops.

The terrific fire caused the infantry to separate from the tanks and the tanks, after two were knocked out by 155 millimeter artillery shells, lost heart and retreated. The German infantry was fanatically aggressive and kept probing until it found a draw on Company G's right flank. They started to rush up the draw but a G Company light machine gun annihilated a squad discouraging that approach. All of the battalions machine guns were brought into use as the SS troopers and METZ officer candidate companies attacked in waves. They closed in hand-to-hand fighting, with knife and bayonet duels.

The Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion forward observer with the Second Battalion of the Tenth continued to direct artillery while fighting raged around him. The artillery cut the attacking infantry to pieces and the few remnants were forced to retreat. Then 88 millimeter guns began firing from a distance of 750 yards. They fired at a single man and at that distance there was not time to duck. Reorganization was a very difficult problem under such conditions and had to be carried on chiefly by voice commands. The attack had been beaten back, however, without any loss of ground, although it was necessary for hours afterward for support elements to mop up small groups of the enemy who had broken through the front-line positions. One small group with machine gun support forced itself onto a small crest and was placing fire on the flank of Company G and upon mortar positions of Company E and Company H. The Company Commander of Company G, Captain Lewis Anderson, took Company Headquarters personnel and his mortar section and attacked the enemy

machine gun positions, reducing the threat by killing the crews. A casualty report of the counterattack revealed 125 enemy dead, 100 wounded and 15 prisoners. The Second Battalion suffered many casualties in the attack.

At the same time that the Second Battalion was repelling the counterattack, the First Battalion was fighting German tanks and infantry which struck its right flank. Company D's heavy machine guns held their fire until the advancing German infantry was but a short distance away and completely exposed to raking fire. Very few Germans escaped the cross fire. Those that did withdrew. Two tanks were knocked out by 57 millimeter guns which had been ferried across and shoved and dragged into firing positions during the night.

Meanwhile the rate of artillery fire on the river never let up. An 88 millimeter shell struck a double ponton raft carrying two, two and a half ton trucks of ammunition and nearly capsized it, leaving the raft badly tilted in mid-stream. The battalion motor officer, Lieutenant Odvar Haug, and a detail of six men unloaded the ammunition from trucks to assault boats and paddled small loads to the East bank where carrying parties carried it by hand and small carts up to the top of the hills where the troops were. The unloading took five hours, all under artillery fire that shot up geysers of water all around the crossing site.

On the night of September 10-11 the Third Battalion of the Eleventh Infantry composed of Companies C, B and L crossed the MOSELLE into the bridgehead of the Tenth and turned North toward CORNY to protect the left flank. The Second Battalion of the Eleventh after withdrawing from DORNOT remained in the vicinity of GORZE protecting the left flank of the Division and maintaining contact with the Third Cavalry on the left. Troop B replaced Troop C of the Third Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron on the 11th of September.

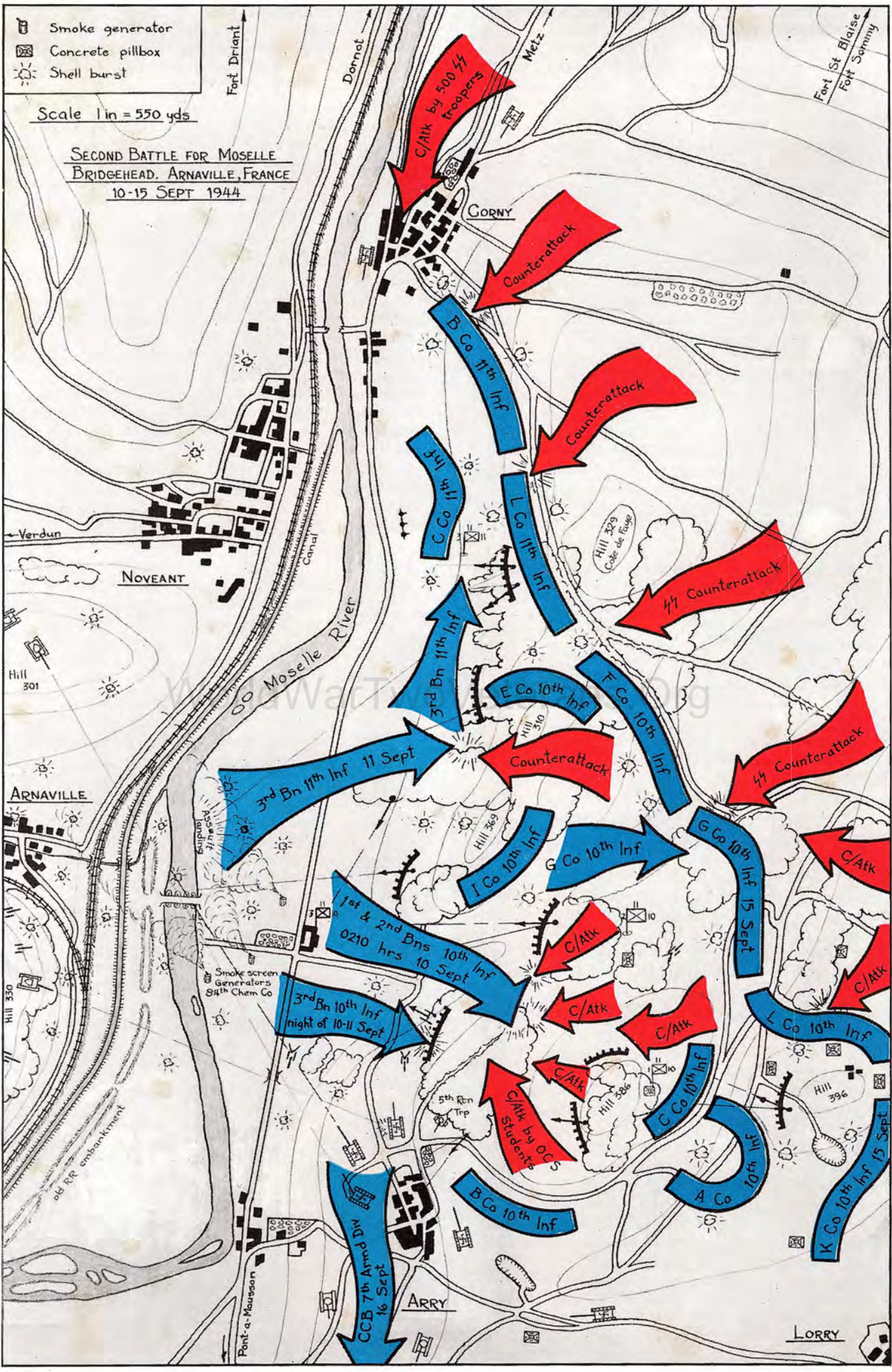
At about 0730 hours on the 11th of September Company B of the Eleventh Infantry crossed the MOSELLE River at ARNAVILLE by assault boats into the bridgehead.

This company organized on the East bank and moved North toward CORNY, its left flank on the river and its right in contact with Company L Eleventh Infantry. After an advance of nearly one mile the First and Third Platoons made contact with the enemy and a fire fight followed with Company B pushing the enemy back, raking his positions with marching fire and advancing into the Southern fringe of CORNY. As the attack progressed it became evident that this enemy unit had considerable less fight in them than the first units encountered in crossing, and 40 prisoners were taken. The company occupied CORNY at about 1830 hours. Company Headquarters and the mortar section were

In a dugout on Moselle bridgehead, PFC William F. Neilson looks at pin-up girl while PFC Luther Vanover reads a magazine.









set up in a brick building at the edge of town. The night was fairly quiet.

The remainder of the Third Battalion Tenth Infantry crossed and joined I and K Companies. L Company went into a position to support the Section Battalion, protecting the right flank of that battalion by covering a draw.

Engineers were still unable to start bridge construction the afternoon of 11 September, but they did find a ford for armored vehicles. Six tank destroyers were forded across by 1630 hours and by 1730 hours Company B of the Seven Hundred Thirty-Fifth Tank Battalion was across. The ford required constant repair and maintenance and during a two-hour period two bulldozer operators were killed at the site by shell fragments while operating their dozers.

As the German shells screamed in mounting crescendo, the Second Battalion Tenth Infantry command post was hit and moved back 100 yards to a better defiladed spot. A runner passing the battalion command post as it was being moved, noticed the headquarters personnel moving back and excitedly reported to his Company Commander that battalion was retreating. That Company Commander relayed the information to Captain Eugene F. Witt, commanding F Company, who had received no such word from battalion headquarters and was temporarily out of communication. Despite the grim outlook, Witt replied: "I don't give a damn what battalion is doing. I'm going to hold. I'm the senior officer here and until I get word otherwise, you hold, too." A message from battalion a little later justified his action.

Shelling increased in intensity and the battalion command post was hit again. Heavy shells also pummeled the First Battalion sector. Shortly after midnight the Germans loosed a lengthy artillery barrage on the entire bridgehead that made the previous shelling seem merely monotonous. The air screamed, the earth actually quaked and tree branches were sheared and shredded by the shells as the doughboys pressed the bottom of their foxholes, checked their ammunition and held their ground for the next blow.

It came at 0330 hours, the tactically shrewdest blow of the battle. It was a well-planned and co-ordinated night attack which hit the First Battalion, then the Second Battalion and CORNY. Another double envelopment was attempted but protective fires cascaded down on the tanks and infantry and disrupted the attack. German dead covered the hillside. Indicative of the strength of the attack were 14 enemy machine guns taken from the dead in front of one company's sector.

The process was repeated on the Second Battalion sector and dealt with the same way. At 0545 the enemy attacked CORNY with four tanks and infantry, firing armor-piercing ammunition and spraying the area with machine guns. Just as the tanks emerged from the faint light of early morning and began to enter the town an American tank destroyer of the Eight Hundred Eighteenth Battalion entered from the other side. One tank was knocked out by the tank destroyer and another by a 57 millimeter anti-tank gun. The other two turned and fled. Just as the tanks reached a point about 75 yards from the brick factory on the edge of town the tank destroyer fired again knocking out a third tank. This left the infantry unsupported, and the riflemen, machine gunners and mortarmen of Company B of the Eleventh drove them off with sweeping fire killing 38 Germans and capturing 30.

During the night of 11-12 September engineers had begun work on the bridge and by 1200 hours the 12th of September the bridge was completed. Company C of the Seven Hundred Thirty-Fifth Tank Battalion crossed immediately and was placed in direct support of the First Battalion Tenth Infantry. During the afternoon of the 12th, part of Combat Command B of the Seventh Armored Division crossed the bridge and occupied assembly positions in rear of the Third Battalion Tenth Infantry and was attached to the Fifth Infantry Division.

Heavy shelling continued throughout the night, but there were no counterattacks. It was a question as to whether the steady dismal autumnal rain that fell was a help or a hindrance. It did hinder the enemy tank movements but it also turned bridgehead roads and trails into quagmires.

The Third Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (less troop B already attached) was attached to the Division on the 12th of September.

On the 13th of September Combat Command Baker, of the Seventh Armored moved the balance of its command into the bridgehead, intending to go through ARRY to MARDIGNY, but was stopped by heavy artillery fire in the vicinity of ARRY and held there for the night. Heavy rains made bathtubs out of foxholes and soup out of dirt roads on the 14th September and movement of armor was postponed until the 15th September.

## HILL 396

On the 15th September a very heavy ground fog hovered over the area early in the day, but the Third Battalion of the Tenth Combat Team and the Tenth Combat Command Baker of the Seventh Armored Division, with Seven Hundred Thirty-Fifth Battalion's Tank Companies B and C in support of the Third Battalion, moved out. The objective was Hill 396, the bald hill East of Hill 386 which was the dominating terrain feature in the entire bridgehead area and from which an observer could see METZ five miles to the North. As Companies L and K moved out of their assembly areas they were subjected to a mortar barrage that lit right among the companies and caused numerous casualties at the start. I Company swung North to block the valley leading down from FEX, where many counterattacks formed.

Visibility was limited to about five yards at the beginning and all the tanks but B Company bogged down after the first 100 yards. Foot troops wiggled wet toes around in squishy combat shoes, looked to the dryness of rifle muzzle and bolt, cursed the mist and mud as a matter of course and kept going. By 1000 hours, as the Third Battalion and B Company of the Seven Hundred Thirty-Fifth stormed the hill, the sun was out and shining brightly.

The doughboys found themselves storming a bald hill which was studded with small pillboxes, evidently constructed for training purposes although they did defend from the West against an attack heading East. The appearance of the tanks surprised the Germans, who took refuge in the pillboxes, which housed machine guns. Taking quick and opportune advantage of the Germans' surprise the tanks fired at the pillboxes to keep them buttoned up while the men of L and K Companies approached the pillboxes. Then the tanks ceased fire long enough for the infantrymen to dash up to the pillboxes and throw grenades inside. As the Commanding Officer of L Company, Captain Harold Bower, and a group of his infantrymen entered one pillbox to take prisoner a cocky SS Major and a squad of Germans the Major curled a lip and said: "You Americans will take Berlin before you ever hold this hill." Bower took the Major's Luger and said, "We'll see."

Having taken the top of the hill, which was absolutely devoid of any cover, the infantry dug in as best they could and, as expected, German artillery shells began to cover the hill thoroughly. An examination of the hill a few days later showed that at least one shell landed in every four-foot square on the hill.

With the bridgehead firmly established the regiment continued its efforts to break through and encircle METZ from the South. On September 17, the Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion crossed the MOSELLE River and took up positions in support of the line troops. Also on that day, in the early morning, patrols of the Third Battalion reconnoitered as far as Hill 212 without contacting the enemy.





Tired men of the 10th Infantry are pulled back to Bayonville for a brief rest.

On the 16th of September the First Battalion Eleventh Infantry composed of Companies A, I and K, crossed the MOSELLE River at ARNAVILLE and relieved elements of the Tenth Infantry on Hills 310 and 361 on the right of the Third Battalion Eleventh Infantry. The Commanding Officer Eleventh Infantry then assumed command of the North sector of the bridgehead.

The enemy, however, had not left. The cadets of the METZ Officer Candidate School were still very much alive. Bunching these elite troops into a force roughly approximating a company in strength, on the morning of the 17th, the enemy hurled them against the left flank of the Third Battalion Tenth Infantry. The advance toward American positions was made under cover of mortar and artillery fire and in perfect deployment.

The Fifth Division took the initial round without too much trouble. Waiting until the enemy troops were within 500 yards of the battalion our supporting artillery cut loose and saturated the area with a devastating barrage. The advancing lines wavered, halted and finally broke and withdrew in haste to the woods.

Almost immediately, the cadets reappeared. This time they came forward in a wild, howling, fanatical charge—much as ETO fighters had pictured the Japanese Banzai attack. Red Diamond troops held their positions, slashing the gradually thinning ranks with withering volleys of rifle fire. Heavy machine guns on swinging traverse steamed, the water in their jackets boiling.

Only the dead and wounded stopped—but they were many.

Most of those who actually succeeded in reaching American positions were destroyed in brief, savage hand-to-hand struggles. Two columns actually succeeded in penetrating and rushing on to the rear, joining behind Company L. For a short time Company L was in a highly vulnerable and dangerous position. Two platoons of I Company and Company B, 735 Tank Destroyer Battalion came to L's assistance smashing the infiltrating enemy in close contact fighting. The few Germans still alive broke and ran. At the same time I Company of the Eleventh repelled a counter-attack that resulted in 96 dead Germans and two Americans killed.

With the repulse of this attack, the battle to secure the bridgehead ended. The Tenth Combat Team had forced the bridgehead, and held it despite incessant shellfire, despite constant attack by tanks and infantry, and despite a high casualty rate among all units present in the bridgehead at that time.

Tanks had been beaten off by bazookas and rifle grenades again and again until anti-tank guns, tanks and tank destroyers were able to cross the river and come to the assistance of the hard-pressed companies. The enemy had spared nothing in his attempt to dislodge our troops. With what ammunition they could hand carry through the shell

fire, the troops of the Tenth Combat Team and the Third Battalion, Eleventh Infantry had withstood an average of one full scale counterattack every five hours and numerous smaller harassing actions. The infantrymen fired until certain types of ammunition had been exhausted, until machine guns actually burst their water jackets, and when through sheer weight of numbers the enemy reached our lines, the companies had stood their ground and destroyed their best troops with pistol, rifle-butt and bayonet. The bridgehead was now secure, but it had been secured at a staggering price. Between September 10th and 16th the Tenth Infantry lost 24 officers and 674 enlisted men killed, or 15 percent of its officers and 22 percent of its enlisted men.

It may be safely assumed that the enemy supporting artillery at various times had amounted to 15 batteries, including 170 millimeter guns and numerous roving self-propelled assault guns. The main burden of the defense was carried out by the SS division GOETZ VON BERLICHINGEN. Enemy losses during this period were exceedingly heavy and it was conservatively estimated that his losses in killed and wounded (not including prisoners, which amounted to at least 233) amounted to 2000 men. Enemy morale varied with the units, but on the whole it was very good.

## THE METZ OPERATIONS

The Tenth Infantry Regiment received its second unit citation for this action as Major General Stafford LeRoy Irwin, Division Commander, cited the unit for outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy during the period of 9 September to 15 September, 1944.

In the meantime, the Second Combat Team moved out at 0800 on the 7th to seize and hold the high ground on the West bank of the MOSELLE River just North of METZ. The Combat Team moved in two columns, First Battalion on the North flank and Second Battalion on the South. The First Battalion moved forward steadily until it reached AMANVILLERS, eight miles Northwest of METZ, where it was halted by heavy frontal and flanking machine gun and mortar fire. The rifle companies quickly deployed and pushed forward through the sweeping fire. Almost immediately they began to suffer casualties, but they pushed on, returning the enemy fire with vigor. Although limited gains were made, the desperate fire of the enemy took heavy toll of the infantrymen and at last the battalion was ordered to dig in for the night.

Since this was an unexpected engagement, only hasty reconnaissance for positions could be made. A more distrustful attitude was taken toward the civilians in the area because of the proximity to the German border, and the large number of German civilians transplanted in the area, which had been under German rule prior to 1918. Some civilians were friendly and helpful, but several cases of isolated German troopers changing into civilian clothes and spying or directing artillery fire were reported. In the town of LORRY in the Tenth Combat Team sector, a complete Gestapo Lieutenant's uniform was found in the house, but the former occupant was not apprehended. It was believed that several of the German civilians in the area had either telephone or radio contact with the German forces because of the unusual accuracy of the German artillery even when visibility was limited to a few hundred yards.

The terrain across which the Second Combat Team was attacking definitely favored the enemy, who made the best possible use of it. The Second Battalion Second Infantry advanced to the vicinity of VERNEVILLE, three miles Southward of AMANVILLERS, where contact was reported by the Regimental Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon. At 1900 hours on the 7th the battalion made a coordinated attack and after a sharp fight, drove the enemy out, taking



up a line generally 300 yards East of the village for the night.

Up to this time the Third Battalion Second Infantry had been in Corps reserve, but at 1800 hours on the 8th of September it reverted to regimental control and was ordered to the vicinity of MALMAISON, two miles South of VERNEVILLE, closing in at 2400 September 8th.

During the 8th of September the First, Second and Third Battalions were unable to advance due to extremely heavy mortar and artillery fire.

Plans were made to formulate a tank force around the First Battalion for an attack the next morning. The Third Battalion patrolled actively to the South and Southeast.

At 1015 on the 9th of September, the Second Infantry was attached to the Seventh Armored Division to continue the attack. On the 9th of September the Combat Team was ordered to resume the attack to the East. By 1230 September 9th, the Second Battalion had come up on line with the First and H-Hour for the First Battalion was set for 1300 hours. The First Battalion jumped off on time and progressed as far as AMANVILLERS, where it came under heavy small arms and artillery fire. Flanking movement and counterbattery were of no avail when the enemy drove savagely at the right of the battalion in a desperate counter-attack. The riflemen poured their fire into the enemy and the heavy and light machine-guns ripped the enemy line again and again as the enemy came on. Mortars were put into action, and finally after an exhausting fire fight, the enemy attack was broken.

Just as the riflemen were drawing their first easy breath after the nip and tuck fighting to keep the enemy out of their lines, the seemingly shattered enemy struck again. The riflemen called for more ammunition and began firing desperately again as the reinforced enemy formations hurled themselves on the thinned lines again. This attack came in a great force and it quickly became apparent that the attack could not be held with the troops at hand. A hurried call for help was sent to the Second Battalion and riflemen and machine-gunners rushed up and flung themselves into firing positions as the Boche poured up the slope. The firing became a steady roar that could be heard all over the Second Regiment's sector and just as it seemed that the enemy would penetrate the line, the formations broke and melted away down the hill. The attack was finally halted at 1630 hours and the enemy dead covered the ground. Both the First and Second Battalions suffered considerable casualties. The rest of the day was spent in much-needed reorganization and digging in.

In the meantime the Second Battalion Second Infantry attacked to the right of the First Battalion echeloned to the rear. It had advanced but a short distance when it received a staggering rain of small arm and artillery fire. The Second Battalion was sorely in need of the units that had been sent to help the First Battalion and was unable to advance for the rest of the day.

The Third Battalion Second Infantry resumed the attack when the Second Battalion came up even with it but it also had advanced only a short distance when heavy enfilading fire and small arms fire to the front held it up. Air missions were scheduled for the following day, after which the combat team was to resume the attack.

Giving constant and accurate support to the Second Infantry was the Fiftieth Field Artillery Battalion. Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel William Calhoun, as well as his forward observer parties, was constantly in forward observation posts calling adjusting fire missions.

By 1600 hours on the 10th the air missions were completed and the First and Second Battalions again attacked AMANVILLERS. The attack went slowly due to stiff enemy resistance. The fury of the fighting in this area was attested to by the large number of dead from both sides that

covered the ground. Americans were determined to advance, and the Germans were equally determined to hold.

As the troops slugged their way toward the town the tempo of the enemy fire increased to such a roar that the Battalion first slowed to a halt and then began an orderly withdrawal to the former positions. Walking into such fire, even with the usually protective marching fire from the hip, was like walking into a stone wall, and the scattered casualties marked the most forward advance of the American troops.

Upon completion of the air missions the Second Battalion also advanced to the attack and progressed rapidly toward its objective, Hill 339. Just as the reorganization of the hill began the enemy counterattacked with such fury that two companies were all swept away, and hand-to-hand fighting raged all over the objective. One company managed to hold fast and met the enemy fire with a blast of small arms that matched the hurricane of fire from rifles, "burp" guns, and machine guns that was searching the hillsides. The enemy troops flung themselves again and again at the rapidly thinning company, but the Americans held fast. Finally, after the hill was littered with dead, wounded and dying, the German force withdrew leaving the hill in hands of the Second Battalion.

The Third Battalion Second Infantry continued to clear the woods in its area until relieved by the Eighty-Seventh Reconnaissance Troop at 0400 hours on the 12th of September. The battalion then moved to the area of the decimated First Battalion and took over while the First Battalion went into reserve.

On the 12th of September the lines were straightened and after hard fighting the Second Battalion Second Infantry retook some of the lost ground. The day was spent mainly in clearing the LA CHAMOISE Woods. At 1700 hours on September 12th the Second and Third Battalions attacked MONTIGNY, but the enemy fire closed down like a hand and the advance slowed up.

At 0600 hours the Second and Third Battalions Second Infantry again were prevented from gaining their objective by very stiff resistance. Although they attacked with all available artillery support and with all the aggressiveness possible under such circumstances, they were held by a stubborn enemy to the same positions they held in the morning.

On the 14th of September the Third Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron was detached and Seven Hundred Seventy-Fourth Tank Destroyer Battalion (towed) was attached to the Division.

Also on September 14th came the relief of the Second

5th Division jeep crosses ponton bridge over canal at Arnaville. Smoke screens Moselle River in background.





Combat Team by elements of the Ninetieth Infantry Division and the Second Combat Team moved to the vicinity of CHAREY seven miles west of Arnaville on the 15th for a day's rest. The Second Infantry reverted to Division control on the 15th of September. The combat team remained in the vicinity of CHAREY, with the exception of the First Battalion which moved across the MOSELLE River to take up holding positions 1000 yards West of MARDIGNY, 2500 yards Southeast of ARRY.

Combat Command B, Seventh Armored Division was detached from the Fifth Infantry Division on September 15th.

At 1600 hours on the 17th of September the Third Battalion Second Infantry attacked with the First Battalion of the Tenth Infantry to take Hill 245. Enemy resistance was heavy, but not as stubborn as previous, and about four hours later the hill was taken. The Third Battalion began consolidation of the positions against a possible German counterattack. The Second Battalion Second Infantry remained five miles West of the MOSELLE River, having been placed in Corps reserve. During this period the Battalion was used to examine and train unqualified replacements being received by the Division.

On the 18th of September at 1400 hours the Third Battalion Second Infantry again attacked and reached a limited objective to improve its position. On September 18th the First Battalion moved to Hill 245 preparatory to passing through the Third Battalion.

During the 19th of September both Battalions held the same position while preparations were made for the First Battalion to pass through the Third and attack COIN-SUR-SEILLE. The Fiftieth Field Artillery Battalion was able to establish excellent Observation Posts and was prepared to fire on call and on targets of opportunity. Companies C and D Eighty-First Chemical Battalion were attached to the Division on the 19th of September.

At 1100 hours on the 20th of September the First Battalion Second Infantry passed through the Third Battalion and attacked COIN-SUR-SEILLE. Although the artillery fire was fairly heavy the attack progressed well and by 1800 hours the battalion was in position beyond the objective and digging in.

As was to be expected the Germans counterattacked, but without the fanatic rush and fury of the previous attacks, and were beaten off. They reorganized after that and came on again and again, but each time they were beaten back with heavy losses. The Third Battalion remained in its area behind the First Battalion in order to give the defense depth and to back up the First Battalion if necessary.

The Eighty-Fourth Chemical Smoke Generator Company was detached from the Division on the 20th of September, as the traffic across the bridge had considerably less to fear from enemy artillery than had the first elements.

Moselle River near Pagny.



From the 21st to the 24th the units remained in defensive positions with no new developments despite some heavy shelling.

On the 18th of September Company F Eleventh Infantry replaced Company B Eleventh Infantry in the line at CORNY in the Third Battalion Eleventh Infantry sector. Company B rejoined the Second Battalion Eleventh Infantry the next day. This situation at this time in the bridgehead involved aggressive patrolling and the establishment of mine fields. On September 24th orders were received to organize defensive positions. The First Battalion Eleventh Infantry extended its line to the South and East and relieved elements of the Tenth Infantry.

Meanwhile, on the West side of the MOSELLE River, the Second Battalion Eleventh Infantry made preparations to attack FORT DRIANT. Meanwhile on the morning of September 19th, instructions were received changing the Tenth Combat Team's objective and boundaries. The new objective designated was the town of POURNOY-LA-CHETIVE and the railroad East of the town, which was of vital importance to the enemy. The orders called for the advance toward this objective to begin at 1100 hours on the 20th of September. The Second Battalion was designated to capture the town while the First and Third Battalions were to remain in place. One platoon of Anti-tank Company, Company B and Company D, less one platoon, of the Seven Hundred Thirty-Fifth Tank Battalion and one platoon of tank destroyers, were placed in direct support of the Second Battalion.

During the remainder of the day plans were perfected for the attack. Anti-tank mines were delivered to the battalion for use in consolidating positions gained and Cannon Company was alerted to prepare to support the operation. The Third Battalion less Company K, was to remain in position on Hill 396, while Company K, with one platoon of Company D Seven Hundred Thirty-Fifth Tank Battalion, was to remain in MARIEULLES prepared for any possible counterattacks. During the night, active patrolling was carried on and listening posts established. The attack on POURNOY-LA-CHETIVE was to prove another difficult and costly operation for the Tenth Infantry Regiment. The assault was to be launched against the fortified town from the South over approximately 1500 yards of open, rolling terrain over which the enemy had excellent observation from the North, East, and South.

By 1100 hours, September 20th the Second Battalion was on the move. The assaulting battalion moved forward rapidly to a point 1000 yards North of SABRE Farm.

The battalion moved forward rapidly to a point 1000 yards Northeast of Hill 212. The Germans apparently had been waiting for the perfect moment and this was it. Strung out across the open terrain, the battalion was highly vulnerable.

Mortar fire from SABRE Farm and from a point in the edge of the woods 1000 yards South of the farm opened on American troops. Anti-tank guns from the vicinity of COIN-SUR-SEILLE began to pound the lead elements, Companies F and G. The machine guns to our front and on our flanks began to chatter in a vicious cross fire. The perfect visibility, and the flat open terrain left the Second Battalion troops mercilessly exposed. At that moment, POURNOY seemed a long way off.

It was obvious that the Tenth had to regain the fire initiative and advance or be slaughtered. The tanks and tank destroyers supporting us opened up and helped divert some of the fire while H Company increased its fire despite the fact that its crews-served weapons were clearly visible to the enemy, gradually reestablished fire superiority and enabled the battalion to continue the advance.

The German fire was still intense, however, and ranks thinned alarmingly as the companies approached the ob-



jective. In view of the mounting casualties, our ability to sustain the attack was becoming a serious question.

The indomitable infantrymen kept on. Firing from the hip, stepping up to replace the gap in the skirmish line left by a fallen comrade, walking in a steady, measured pace they gained the edge of the town. Violent hand-to-hand fighting ensued. Platoons knifed out to clear sections of the town and sever the railroad. The enemy appeared determined to halt the attack, but the men of the Second Battalion had not come this far to be stopped. With bayonets, grenades and rifle butts they hunted the enemy down and routed him from his hiding places. It took five hours, five savage, bloody hours before the town was announced clear. The ground was literally strewn with the dead of both forces.

It took courageous and skillful fighters the quality of men like Private First Class William A. Catri of Company G to slash into POURNOY in one of the bitterest attacks the Tenth Regiment and Fifth Division ever had. Catri was a member of a bazooka team and as tanks counterattacked his company, his teammate was wounded. Without orders, Catri jumped up and ran forward about 40 yards under fire to a shallow shell hole about 50 yards from the nearest tank. He loaded and fired the bazooka by himself and hit and disabled the tank. Though buffeted several times by the concussion of tank fire, he held his ground, spotted a second tank 60 yards away, fired and hit it, forcing it to withdraw while his platoon advanced into POURNOY. For that action he received the Distinguished Service Cross.

Artillery fire was brought to bear on the locations known to contain German weapons, and the troops began to dig in to meet the inevitable counterattack. The Tenth Combat Team Command Post was established in MARIEULLES by 1100 hours and communication with the advance units established. Shortly after this the Second Battalion Tenth Infantry was struck by a determined counterattack made by German tanks and it was only after much hard fighting that the town was brought under control.

Apparently the German commanders recognized a severe threat to their lines in the POURNOY salient, and were determined to regain their positions in that area. At daylight on the 21st the enemy renewed the attack on the Second Battalion Tenth Infantry with tanks and infantry coming in from the Northeast and North together with several small units that had infiltrated into the town during the night. The attacking force was estimated to be about two companies heavily reinforced by tanks and supported by artillery. The troops had beaten off almost continual attacks and were under extremely heavy artillery and mortar fire a good part of the time. Orders were to hold POURNOY, and to insure the safety of the town, Company C Tenth Infantry was sent in to reinforce the Second Battalion. With the aid of these comparatively fresh troops, the attack was met, slowed down, and finally broken, at 1220 hours.

Considerable enemy movement was observed in front of the Tenth Infantry sector and artillery fire was directed on several targets. At 1915 hours the enemy again counterattacked from the North supported by fire from artillery, nebelwerfers and mortars from the vicinity of COIN-LES-CUVRY. As the attackers neared the front lines heavy enemy machine gun fire raked the defenders. As soon as it was determined that the enemy machine guns were also sited near COIN-LES-CUVRY the guns of the Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion pounded the area and forced the enemy to slacken their fire. The attack was finally beaten off with heavy casualties on both sides.

Throughout the night and the following morning Second Battalion positions were shelled heavily. Enemy activity was reported on three sides of the town and particularly in the small woods to the Southeast. Artillery concentrations were fired on the woods and a number of the enemy were seen to run out in the direction of the Second Infantry



Pillbox captured by 10th Infantry near Arry, east of Moselle River.

lines near COIN-SUR-SEILLE. The enemy continued to exert pressure on the town of POURNOY, but no further organized attacks took place during the 22d of September.

On the 23d of September the First Battalion Tenth Infantry relieved the Second Battalion in POURNOY and the Second Battalion occupied the old First Battalion positions on Hill 212. The Battalion in POURNOY continued to receive artillery fire but no counterattacks were launched against it.

Throughout the period of persistent counterattacks thrown against the POURNOY positions the Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion furnished especially close support and a good deal of the credit for breaking up the enemy attacks belongs to the forward observers and the gun crews who were at times occupying positions in the battalion's Northernmost outposts and firing ranges down to 1330 yards against enemy mortars.

Due to communication difficulties with Fifth Division Artillery, massed fires against certain targets were coordinated through the Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Fire Direction Center, involving Fiftieth and Two Hundred Eighty-Fourth Field Artillery Battalions and the Two Hundred Seventy-Fourth Armored Field Artillery Battalion.

At this time preparations were being made for an attack on Fort DRIANT, one of the largest and most formidable fortified positions in the ring of steel and concrete forts guarding the city of METZ. During the period of the defense of the Tenth Infantry positions in and around POURNOY an estimated 175 enemy were killed, 400 wounded, and a total of 29 prisoners were evacuated. A total of three tanks and one field gun were destroyed. Combat Command "A" Seventh Armored Division remained in the Fifth Division area holding positions near SILLEGNY. Combat Command "B" Seventh Armored Division attempted river crossings of the SEILLE River near LONGUEVILLE LES CHEMINOT but were forced back by heavy mortar and artillery fire and remained in position on the West bank of the SEILLE River.

Evidence of strong German troop concentrations and defense in depth proved the German Commanders considered any thrust in this area to be a danger to the METZ defenses, and reports were continuous from civilians and constant patrols that the German troops were still strengthening their positions and had been heavily reinforced. New trenches, new foxholes, increased movement in the front lines, flashing lights believed to be a code, sounds indicating truck movements, all this coupled with aerial reconnaissance proved that any former weaknesses in the German positions had been more than made up.

During the period of the 23-24th of September the Division remained in position consolidating and maintaining the bridgehead across the MOSELLE River. The Second Bat-





Outpost across Moselle River near Arry. Smoke screen shrouding Arnville Bridge can be seen in background.

tation of the Eleventh Infantry continued assault training preparatory to its forthcoming attack on FORT DRIANT. Twelve prisoners were taken and an estimated 75 enemy were killed, 200 wounded, and a total of 8 field guns were destroyed. Enemy resistance followed roughly the lines of the old fortifications but no constant front lines as such existed.

On the 24th of September the Seven Hundred Seventy-Fourth Tank Destroyer Battalion was detached from the Division, and the Second Battalion of the Second Infantry was released from Corps reserve at 1100 hours and started movements to assembly area in the vicinity of VIRTONVILLE in preparation for the relief of Combat Command "B" of the Seventh Armored Division. The Second Combat Team started relief of the Seventh Armored Division in its sector on the right of the Division. The First Battalion withdrew from COIX-SUR-SEILLE and started relief of Combat Command "A" in the area South of SILLEGNY. The Second Battalion started the relief of Combat Command "B" in the area West of CHEMINOT. The Third Battalion remained in position covering the withdrawal of the First Battalion.

Also on this date the First Battalion of the Tenth Combat Team started occupation of positions in the left sector of the main line of resistance. The Third Battalion of the Tenth Infantry expanded its position to include the area formerly held by the Second Combat Team. The Second Battalion withdrew from POURNOY LA CHETIVE, the scene of the numerous and bloody counterattacks by the German Tank-infantry teams in the final stages of the drive to secure the bridgehead. Upon withdrawing, the Second Battalion of the Tenth took up positions on a hill to cover the withdrawal of the remainder of the combat team.

The Third Battalion of the Eleventh Combat Team remained in position and developed a main line of resistance and an outpost line in its sector. The First Battalion expanded its sector to occupy positions formerly held by the Tenth Combat Team. The Second Battalion of the Eleventh Infantry continued its preparations for the expected attack on FORT DRIANT. The Fifth Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop was attached to the Second Combat Team and moved to the right flank of the Division bridgehead to protect the flank and maintain contact with the Eightieth Infantry Division on the right.

It quickly became apparent to both sides that there was a big operation in the offing, and both sides were shifting about, digging in, and in general, disposing their forces in the best possible manner to meet whatever might come next. Both sides noted the movements and at this stage the attacking Americans and the German defenders could be likened to a pair of fencers watching each other warily, and keeping their guards up.

Perhaps the first hint of what the next move would be

came to the Germans when American air support in the form of several groups of P-47s dropped bombs on FORT DRIANT and adjacent gun batteries. A direct hit was noticed on a gun battery. The planes also dropped bombs in the woods at Bois de CREPY and bombed gun positions at MAGNY. Eleven P-47s dropped 22 250-pound bombs on an ammunition dump at Bois DE L'HOPITAL where smoke and fire were observed. Possibly the area bombing kept the enemy from guessing about our coming attack on FORT DRIANT, but whether the Germans were strengthening it or not, it was to prove to be a very formidable obstacle indeed in the battle for METZ.

During the preliminary operations against METZ, the river crossing and subsequent attacks to enlarge the bridgehead, the enemy artillery reached an intensity never before encountered by the Fifth Division. German fire came from all types and calibres of guns, and was delivered from long range, short range, and in many cases directly on the front line troops from tanks, assault guns, Fortress guns, and heavy anti-aircraft guns employed in a ground role against the troops, mostly 88 millimeter high velocity weapons.

Known enemy units in the area were officer candidates from the Officer Candidate School in METZ, who were both Infantry and Artillery students, plus the Seventeenth SS Artillery Regiment, Seven Hundred Nineteenth Artillery Regiment, Third Artillery Regiment, and the defensive guns of the Forts ringing METZ, among which were Forts: LORRAINE, PLAPPEVILLE, DRIANT, SOMMY and BLAISE. Estimated total artillery pieces were: 97 105 millimeter guns or howitzers, 37 150 millimeter howitzers, 25 88 millimeter guns, 42 75 millimeter guns, 20 infantry howitzers, and 30 Anti-tank guns.

On the 26th of September the Seven Hundred Seventy-Fourth Tank Destroyer Battalion was attached, less Company "B" to the Division. The Third Battalion of the Second Combat Team withdrew from its positions on the hill and closed into an assembly area in the vicinity of MARDIGNY as regimental reserve.

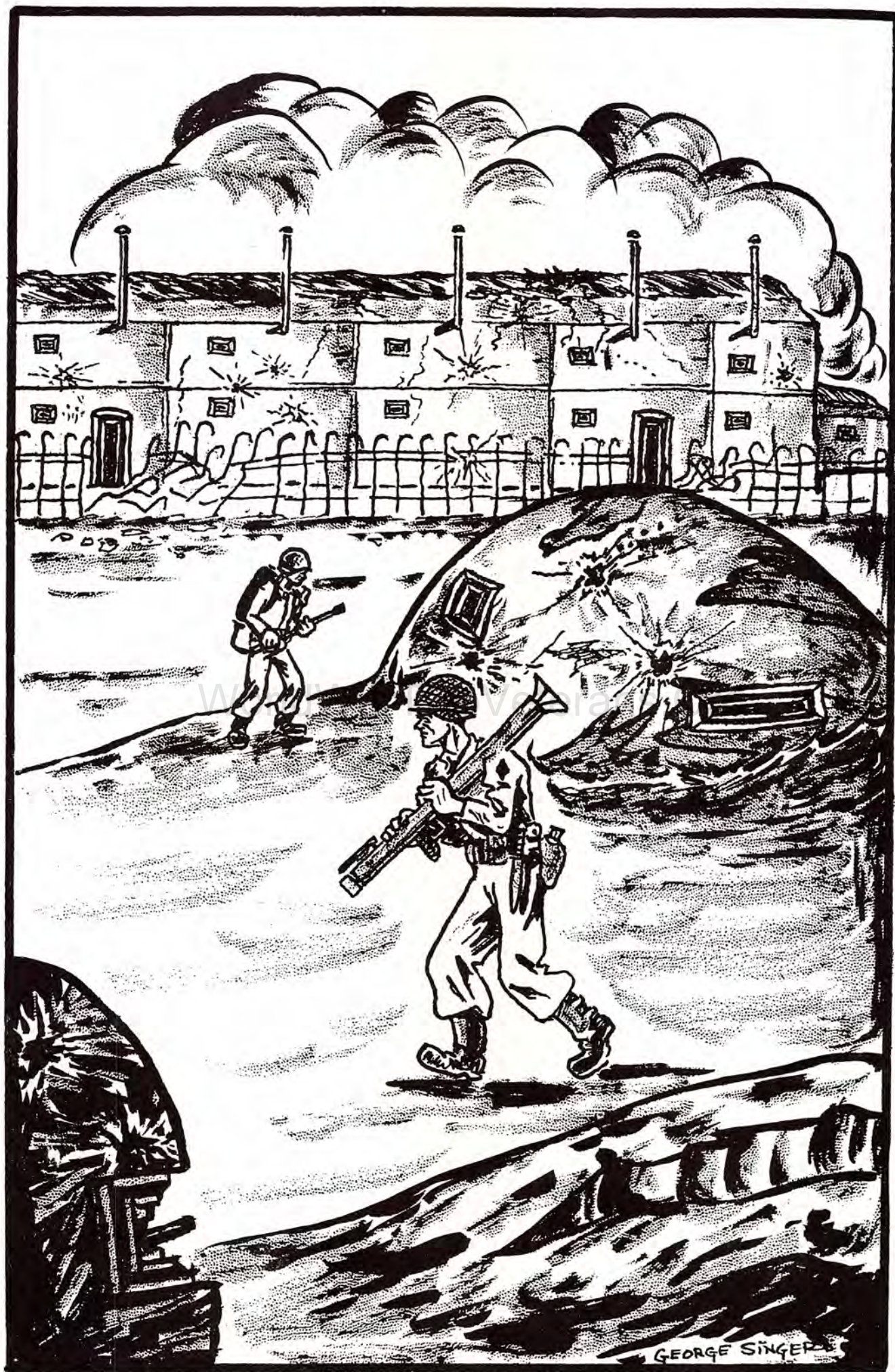
The Second Battalion of the Tenth Combat Team withdrew from its positions on the hill and closed into MARIEULLES as Tenth Regimental reserve. The Second Battalion of the Eleventh Infantry occupied positions preparing for the attack on FORT DRIANT. The Two Hundred Fourth Engineer Combat Battalion aided in the construction of anti-tank obstacles and defenses. During this period Fort DRIANT was bombed with apparently good results by 35 P-47s. Twelve bombs dropped caused a large explosion and a huge white cloud of smoke rose to about 4000 feet. Many large fires were started.

During the morning and early afternoon of the 27th of September the enemy struck the Division bridgehead lines with three counterattacks at three separate points. The first, reported to have been in the strength of about a company and a half was broken up by artillery fire near SILLEGNY. The other two struck our lines at MORVILLE SUR SEILLE and PORT SUR SEILLE and were beaten off.

It was on this day that the planned attack on FORT DRIANT took place. Previous to this date, certain elements of the Division and attachments were engaged in studying and training for the assault of one or more of the forts guarding METZ. Air reconnaissance was carried out over the fort as often as possible and several patrols probed the outworks of the heavily fortified lines. The Second Battalion of the Eleventh Infantry had been released from the line and had been going through intensive maneuvers in the rear areas, preparatory to making the attack.

Several bombing missions had been carried out with an eye to softening up the huge stone, steel, and concrete defenses, and it was hoped that the shelters and casemates had sustained considerable damage. This proved to be a false hope.





GEORGE SINGER



# *The Assault on* FORT DRIANT

Before going into the details of the battle for FORT DRIANT, and subsequently the battle for METZ, it would be well to look to the history of the forts and the city in order to better understand the operation and the need for it. To begin with, the country in and around the city of METZ is rich in the lore of history, particularly military history. Almost from the beginning of organized warfare, the hills in and around METZ coupled with the course of the MOSELLE RIVER made the location easily adaptable for defense. Among the earliest discoverers of this were the Romans. They lost no time in taking over the rude defenses there and establishing a Legionary Camp with all the defenses that went with one. This was quickly changed to a fortified city, and in time became one of the strongest of the Roman defensive posts against the barbarians. From this early start up until the present day METZ has seen more than its share of wars, and of conquerors. From a stronghold of semi-barbaric Kings to the Easternmost fortification of the French nation was a series of historic, and bloody steps. So well was this city fortified, however, that although it was brought under siege and assault countless times, never in the history of that battered defense was it ever taken by storm. Each succeeding army left some form of fortification to the city, and each succeeding attacker left entrenchments and scars until the city and the surrounding hills became a veritable maze of defenses, running from old stone walls and crenellated towers, to pit-

falls, trenches, tunnels and finally a concentric system of modern fortifications planned by the French, modified by the Germans, remodified by the French again, and finally reoccupied and modernized by the Germans who were determined to hold METZ or die in the city and forts.

These forts, great casemated affairs of stone, steel, and reinforced concrete, were so located as to be mutually supporting and at the same time practically independent of each other. The huge guns were so emplaced as to be able to cover any blind spots left by the guns of another fort. In short, if the defenders of one fort found themselves attacked, they had but to call any or all of the other forts, and their guns could be brought to bear, and the attacker would find himself in the midst of a tremendous barrage, not from one fort, but from three or four. A cleverly devised system of tunnels made it possible to move from one casemate to another without exposing troops to the attackers' fire. At one time it had been possible to pass from fort to fort in this manner, but many of the tunnels had become useless. Communication between the forts improved with each decade, until at the time of the American assault on the city, the garrison commanders were in contact with one another by radio, telephone, teletype and at times by a series of runners and patrols.

In analyzing the whys and wherefores of the plans and methods used in assaulting the well-nigh impregnable fortified positions around METZ it must first be understood that

Aerial photograph of Fort Driant.





a successful bridgehead across the MOSELLE RIVER would open the way for a drive to the SAAR RIVER and the SIEGFRIED LINE. In order to secure the bridgehead it would be necessary to capture or destroy the defenses of METZ, which, otherwise, would become a very dangerous threat to the left flank of the bridgehead and delay the forward movement of troops and supplies. Geographically, it was believed that Fort DRIANT controlled the gateway to METZ from the West. Therefore, in order to gain admittance to the city itself, it would be imperative to capture the fort.

Fort DRIANT stood defiantly on the hill about five miles Southwest of METZ on the West bank of the MOSELLE RIVER. There was an air of mystery about it for it was unlike any fortification ever encountered by the Fifth Division, and seemed to belong to another age entirely.

Actually the Americans knew very little about the fort itself. What was known was that the French and Germans had modified it during their various occupations of LORRAINE.

The Division's bridgehead operation East of the MOSELLE was receiving devastating flanking fire from DRIANT because of its location and commanding observation. It was discovered that most of this fire was coming from Battery MOSELLE, a huge casemate and gun battery situated so as to protect the Southeast flank by firing its big guns down the MOSELLE valley.

What met the eye was a fortress whose defenses were built around four steel turret casemates and a central fort. What did not meet the eye was an intricate system of pillboxes, positions, tunnels, shelters, minefields and firing slits. Each casemate was connected by an underground tunnel to the central fort. Each casemate housed a three-gun battery protected in the rear by machine guns firing through slits.

Around the central fort and extending to within 200 yards of each flank was a moat 20 yards wide and approximately 30 feet deep. The fort faced Southwest with a frontage of 1000 yards and a depth of 700 yards. Wire was strung completely around the outside of the fort and around the casemates and the inner fort. The wire in this case was strung so as to make a belt 20 feet wide.

There were five concrete shelters, two of which were on the South flank, two on the North flank, and one in the Southeast corner. Each shelter was believed to have a capacity of at least 300 men. The shelters were connected with the casemates by underground tunnels. Armored pillboxes and observation posts were placed at strategic locations within the fortress so as to give protected observation of personnel within the fort and to cover likely approaches with machine gun fire. The walls of the casemates were of concrete (reinforced) and were seven feet thick at their most vulnerable spot! The roofs of the casemates and shelters were also of heavy reinforced concrete flush with the ground on all but the East or back side.

The extreme thickness of the walls and roofs of these installations made it possible for the garrison to withstand extremely heavy bombardment from both air and artillery. Furthermore, it enabled the other forts in the area, JEANNE D'ARC, and MARIVALE to the North, and BLAISE and SOMMY to the east, to fire directly at Fort DRIANT, killing the attackers trying to get in from above, and at the same time doing no damage to the garrison deep in the shelters and tunnels.

Very little information about the garrison and condition of the fort could be obtained. There were several charts and pamphlets brought to the Division by French Engineer Officers, but detailed information was extremely scarce. It was estimated the fort was garrisoned by at least three companies of Officer Candidate trainees from the German Officer Candidate school at METZ.

The attack on Fort DRIANT was planned for the 27th of

September, and the following units were attached to the Eleventh Infantry Regiment to support the Second Battalion of the Eleventh Infantry in the assault; Company B, Seven Hundred Thirty-Fifth Tank Battalion; Company D, Eighty-First Chemical Mortar Battalion; Company C, Seventh Engineer Battalion; and Company C, Fifth Medical Battalion. The Nineteenth Field Artillery Battalion was placed in direct support and the Divisional Artillery was placed "on call" for the attacking force.

The Second Battalion of the Eleventh Infantry had as previously stated, been given some training in assaulting a fortified position, but due to the heavy losses from the 8th to the 10th of September, had received nearly 50 percent replacements, most of which were green troops, inexperienced and in some cases untrained. In addition to this, Company B, Eleventh Infantry, had been substituted for Company F.

One squad of Engineers was attached to each company of infantry, each squad being fully equipped with explosive charges and demolition equipment.

At 0930 hours on the 27th of September American planes bombed Fort DRIANT preparatory to the attack. The weather, which had hampered air operations previous to this, improved slightly, and the planes were able to drop their bombs squarely on the fort with some effect. This was followed by an artillery preparation, and at 1400 hours on the 27th, the attack jumped off. The companies moved swiftly ahead, and through the element of surprise were able to get fairly close to the main fort before they were met by the fire of several hitherto uncharted pillboxes. It was found to be impossible to use pole charges against these pillboxes due to the large amount of tactical wire surrounding the pillboxes and the fort itself. One squad of Company E cut through the wire but was pinned down immediately by interlacing bands of machine gun fire. Caught in the open with no means of breaching the wire, and, having lost the element of surprise, the attacking force dug in. By this time they were receiving artillery and mortar fire from DRIANT and the surrounding forts. It quickly became evident that the attack had failed, and that to remain in the position would be useless.

Under cover of darkness the attackers withdrew and dug in on the line of departure. Bad weather not only made further air operations against the fort impossible, but added to the discomfort of the troops in the hastily scooped fox-holes.

On the 28th a fairly comprehensive plan of the fort was obtained from the French, through a bit of sleuthing by Capt. Karl Kittstein and Master Sergeant Henry Tillinger of the Eleventh Infantry Interrogation Team and study of this plan plus the information received from the attacking elements proved that the fort was much more formidable than had previously been supposed. That plan for an attack on the 28th was called off and preparations for a determined attack were drawn up. The first attack on the fort had been made against the Northwest corner, and the plan was studied for a new point for the assault. Detailed plans were made by Colonel Yuill, Major Russell and Captain Page Brownfield of the Eleventh Infantry.

Inasmuch as the demolition equipment had been abandoned on the withdrawal of the assaulting companies, it was necessary to make new demolition equipment including satchel charges, pole charges, bangalore torpedoes, and "snakes." These "snakes" were charges placed in long pipes, attached to tanks, and were pushed ahead of the tank, through the wire barriers, and detonated from the tank itself. Some difficulty was encountered in finding the necessary equipment, especially the pipe to construct the "snakes," but eventually the necessary devices were made ready by the engineers and Seven Hundred Thirty-Fifth Tank Battalion.



Time did not permit further delay, and the attack was planned for 1000 hours on the 3d of October. The attack was to be preceded by an intense artillery barrage, and bombing of the fort by napalm bombs.\*

The general plan was to have a tank-infantry team, supported by engineers, artillery, and air, attack the Southwest and Northwest corners of the fort. Special equipment for the attack consisted of "snakes," flame throwers, bangalore torpedoes, pole and satchel charges, and the planned air assault by fighter-bombers using 500 and 1000 pound high explosive and napalm bombs with delayed action fuses.

The composite tank company was made up of picked men, and had 11 tanks armed with 76 millimeter guns, five light tanks, four self-propelled 105 millimeter howitzers and two tank dozers for roadwork and filling in ditches.

It was planned to have E Company attack the Northwest corner, B Company attack the Southwest corner and have G Company follow the two companies prepared to exploit the gains of either. The immediate objectives of the battalion were the barracks in the Southwest bastion of the main fort, armored observation posts, pillboxes, and infantry shelters. The battalion also had orders to occupy the ground above the casemates, and seek a way to get inside of them. The artillery and chemical mortars were to support the tank-infantry teams by smoking enemy observation of the flanks and to the front, and by firing on any known or likely gun positions. Two of the medium tanks in the assault waves were to be used by the artillery forward observers' parties.

Early on the morning of the 2d of October a reconnaissance was made for the best possible route through which to take the tanks. The reconnaissance was thorough and complete. Technical Sergeant Ernest Reeder of B Company wormed his way through the wire and past the battalion's initial objective. He then returned and took the tank officer, Lieutenant Bauer of Company D of the Nine Hundred Thirty-Fifth over the same route. This was a particularly outstanding accomplishment in view of the fact that the area was under almost constant mortar and artillery fire.

The time of the attack had to be postponed three times in order to wait for the air support, and at last it was decided to go on without it, at 1145 hours.

Disaster struck almost immediately. While waiting in the woods for the jump off, the "snake" from one of the tanks was lost due to bad road conditions, and one tank dozer failed to reach the line of departure owing to a broken fuel line. The other tank dozer was reported to have a slipping clutch.

The attack jumped off at 1200 hours and on the way to the wire barricades the snake from another tank was broken, the second tank dozer failed because of the slipping clutch, and the remainder of the snakes were either lost or discarded.

Company B of the Eleventh Infantry moved in the lead in the following order: First Platoon, Company Headquarters, Second Platoon, and Third Platoon. The tanks and self-propelled 105s moved forward with the First Platoon. The wire was reached and a hole blasted in it by the high explosive fire of tanks and 105s. Darting through this hole the First Platoon and the lead tanks moved on towards their objectives leaving the initial pillboxes to be cleaned up by the following waves.

The terrain was hilly, and pockmarked by shell holes and craters, affording good cover for both attackers and defenders. In a series of short rushes the squads of the First Platoon raced for their objectives encountering heavy

small arms fire as they neared the Southwest bastion. Through surprise and aggressiveness the squads were able to reach their objectives quickly with light losses.

One squad of the First Platoon proceeded to clean out and occupy a small ridge in front of the concrete shelter or barracks in the extreme Southwest corner of the fort. One squad pushed ahead to the concrete barracks itself, while the 3d squad went to work on a second barracks fairly close to the South flank casemate.

By this time the garrisons of DRIANT and surrounding forts had recovered from their surprise and were bringing every possible weapon to bear on the attackers.

In an effort to blast their way into the barracks, the tanks and 105s were brought up and attempted to pierce the walls of the two barracks with direct fire at 30-yard ranges, but met with no success. The walls of the two-story miniature forts were four and one-half feet thick, with heavy steel doors barring the entrances. The second story was flush with the ground.

At this point the aggressiveness of the attack slowed down and it looked as though this attack too had failed. However, Private Robert Holmlund discovered a ventilator on top of the Southwest barrack and managed to push several bangalore torpedoes through it. The resulting explosion drove out the Germans, and the squads rushed into the barrack.

They quickly cleared the building of the enemy, discovering in the process a tunnel connecting the two barracks. As they attempted to move into the other barracks through the tunnel they were machine-gunned from the other end.

Machine gun fire sprayed from surrounding pillboxes prevented the placing of charges in the ventilator of the other shelter. After a short delay a self-propelled gun was guided into position, and after blasting away at one point with armor-piercing and high explosive rounds, succeeded in smashing a hole through which the infantry was able to scramble. The squad managed to clear out all of the barracks with the exception of a small barracks room on the second floor.

In the meantime the Second Platoon passed through the squad holding the ridge in front of the second barracks and vigorously attacked the nearby, Southern, casemate. It was met by a hail of small arms fire from pillboxes in and around the casemate. In the meantime artillery from the forts surrounding DRIANT pounded the topside of the fort killing the Platoon Leader, and taking heavy toll of the attackers. Of the four flamethrowers, only one worked.

The remainder of the platoon pressed the attack, and after a hot fire fight succeeded in occupying the area above the right casemate in the Southern group of casemates. The Third Platoon passed through the squad on the ridge that was supporting these movements by fire, and after sustaining heavy losses from the machine guns on top of the left Southern casemate, and the extremely heavy artillery and mortar fire, occupied the area above that casemate. Although the company was on its objective, they were in no way able to hold the ground without losing men. Evidently the garrison commander of Fort DRIANT had notified the other forts that the attackers were on top of his casemates, because the heavy guns from the surrounding forts pounded our troops atop the fort unmercifully. Lt. Welby Van Horn and a B Company rifleman rushed the entrance to the main fort but were killed immediately by machine gun fire.

A desperate attempt was made to organize the area for defense. Captain Harry Anderson established his Company Command Post in the Southern barracks, and the tanks were placed in position around the two captured barracks. Throughout the night these tanks were guarded by infantry and communication was by means of tapping on the hulls, as the telephones which had been fixed to the tanks had

\*Napalm bombs are filled with jellied gasoline which ignites as bomb explodes.



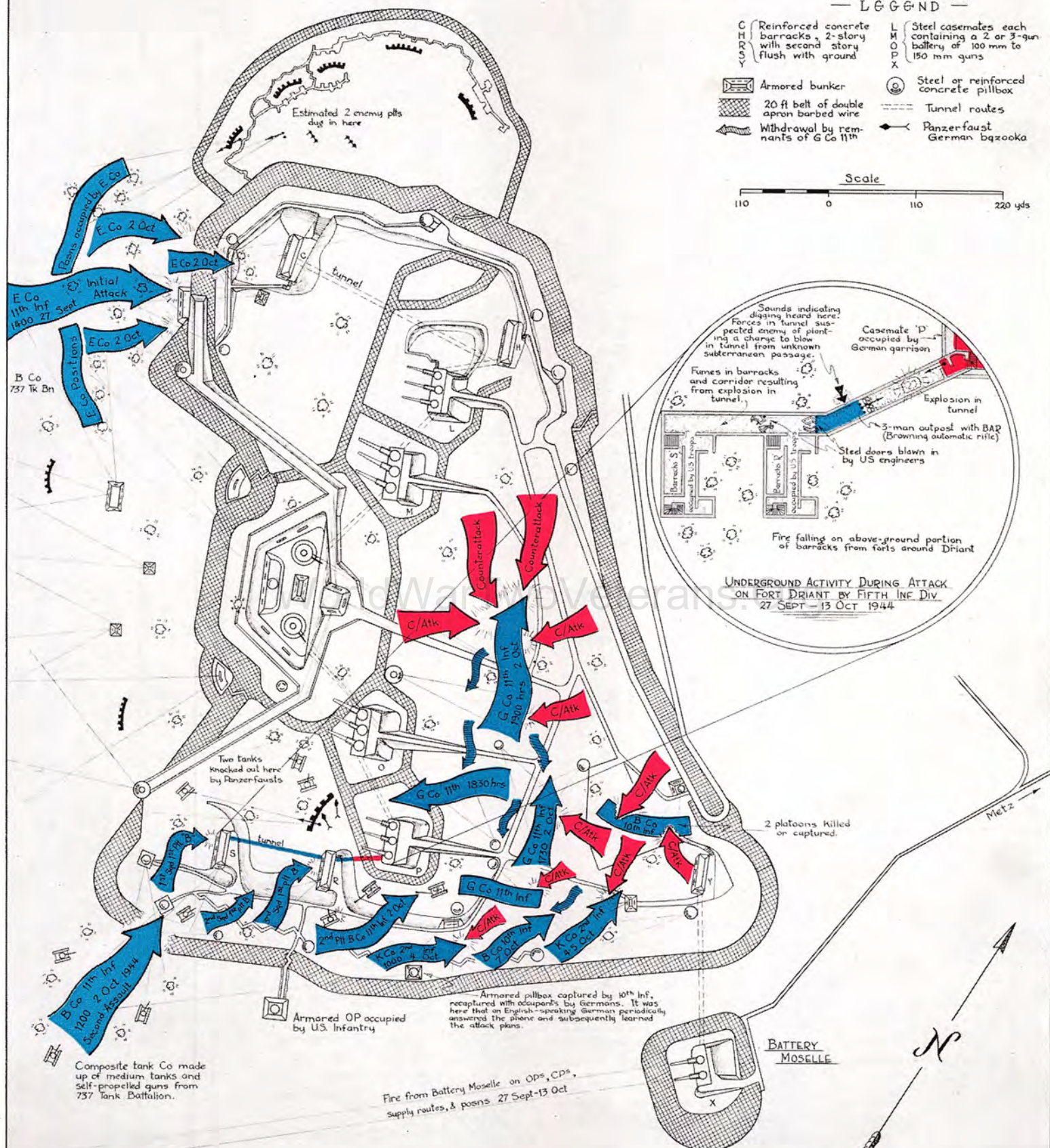
# BATTLE FOR FORT DRIANT, FRANCE

27 SEPT TO 13 OCT 1944

## LEGEND

- |                       |   |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|
| C<br>H<br>R<br>S<br>Y | Reinforced concrete barracks, 2-story with second story flush with ground | L<br>M<br>O<br>P<br>X | Steel casemates each containing a 2 or 3-gun battery of 100 mm to 150 mm guns |
|                       | Armored bunker  |                       | Steel or reinforced concrete pillbox  |
|                       | 20 ft belt of double apron barbed wire                                    |                       | Tunnel routes   |
|                       | Withdrawal by remnants of G Co 11th                                       |                       | Panzerfaust German bazooka  |

Scale  
110 0 110 220 yds





been shot away during the fierce fighting in the afternoon.

Simultaneous with the attack of B Company, was the assault on the Northwest corner of the fort by E Company of the Eleventh Infantry. The attack was successful initially, and a breach was made in the wire and the attack continued. As the assaulting troops rushed through the opening they were met by a staggering volume of artillery, mortar, and machine gun fire. It soon became evident that the company was rapidly being decimated and the order was passed to withdraw through the wire, and dig in. Owing to the loss of both dozers, the supporting tanks were unable to cross the ditches to the right or left, and the sheer steepness of the embankment to their front made it impossible to move ahead. They did, however, continue to fire at the many emplacements and pillboxes, enabling the riflemen to dig in against the terrific shelling. At 1730 hours, a counterattack began forming behind the fort proper, and the 3d Platoon was ordered to pass through E Company, but the heavy fire from all weapons made it impossible. Just as the enemy counterattack prepared to jump off, it was smashed by our artillery and the miraculous appearance of air support broke up the remaining enemy groups and they melted away into the fort.

At approximately 1730 hours, G Company passed through B Company, and attacked the two main casemates on the Northern flank of the fort. Owing to the cover of darkness they were able to occupy the ground above the casemates and dug in for defense on the left flank of B Company. During this attack the surrounding forts as well as the batteries of Fort DRIANT kept up a hot fire on the attacking company.

Sometime that night the German garrison of the fort was reinforced, probably from one of the other forts through a system of tunnels and entrenchments. A short time later the Germans poured out of the sallyports and shelters and attacked G Company from all sides. Just as it seemed inevitable that the battalion lines would break and that G Company would be overrun, K Company of the Second Infantry was committed on the morning of the 4th of October and the attackers were driven off. After the arrival of K Company Second Infantry, the battalion lines were stabilized, but the force was slowly being nibbled away by constant artillery and mortar fire, as well as the searching machine gun fire and small counterattacks, patrols, and infiltration by the Germans throughout the 4th and 5th of October.

The fighting took place both above and below ground. It must be remembered that although the Americans occupied the area surrounding the huge casemates and shelters, the Germans still remained inside them, and that not only were the Americans surrounded by the numerous semi-concealed and armored pillboxes and observation posts, but the Germans were moving about under the attackers through the maze of tunnels and shelters below ground.

The fighting above ground was slow and bloody work owing to the tremendous fire power in small arms and artillery in use by the Germans.

Fighting below ground in the tunnels became slow, heart-breaking work. The demolition charges were inadequate against the thick concrete walls, and the main corridor leading into the Southern casemate was covered by Boche machine guns.

As the demolitions and grenades went off, the underground rooms and corridors became filled with heavy fumes from the explosions, and the dust made it impossible to see more than two or three feet in any direction. As each charge was set, it became necessary to evacuate the immediate vicinity in as much as the men were rapidly being overcome by the dust and fumes. Every attempt was made to clear the gasses out of the corridors and shelters, fans were rigged, baffle walls were built, but all to no

avail. The baffle walls were blown down by counter-charges of the enemy who constantly hampered the movement through the tunnels by machine gun fire, bazookas, and by bouncing hand grenades around the corners at the choked and blinded men.

It became literally impossible to leave the shelters for any length of time due to the heavy mortar and artillery fire saturating the areas outside the shelters.

At this point the attack was stalemated, the men were sick and exhausted, the demolitions were nearly used up, and the casualty rate was increasing with every hour, especially among the ranks of the attackers above ground. The only means of supply for our troops fighting in the fort was by the tanks assigned to the artillery forward observer parties.

For the troops above ground in the shallow foxholes, movement during daylight was impossible. The evacuation of human excreta had to be done in the foxholes by use of shellcases, K ration boxes, and tin cans. Sickness among the command caused by some of the C ration made the situation impossible. Accordingly, plans were made to relieve the Battalion.

After an estimate of the situation, and of the past events of the assault, the Division Commander decided to form a task force under the command of Brigadier General Warnock, the Assistant Division Commander. This force was thereafter known as Task Force WARNOCK. This force moved out to assume command of the Fort DRIANT sector on the nights of 5th and 6th of October.

The 2d Battalion of the Eleventh Infantry was partially relieved that night. Companies B and G of the Eleventh and K of the 2d Infantry were relieved by Companies B, C, and elements of D Company of the Tenth Infantry Regiment.

As the sick and exhausted men of the Eleventh Infantry were relieved from the shell-torn area by the comparatively fresh men of the Tenth Regiment, a new attack was being planned for the 7th of October.

The effectiveness of enemy fire on the surface of the fort enhanced the value of underground operations. Therefore, it was decided to exploit the tunnel leading from the forward underground shelter occupied by our troops to the nearest casemate. The initial underground operations were timed to begin simultaneously with a strong surface attack. A heavy artillery preparation was called for, after which Company B, Tenth Infantry jumped off, capturing three pillboxes, 11 Prisoners of War and reaching a line halfway between shelter R and objective B-4.\* In order to carry the attack with success a bunker directly to the front of Company B had to be eliminated. The Germans had been seen entering and leaving this bunker regularly and it was thought to be an observation post as well as a defensive position. A squad armed with pole charges and grenades was sent to take this bunker. Four grenades thrown into the doorway were sufficient for the Germans in the bunker and they surrendered. A squad of nine men occupied this bunker as an observation post for Company B. On the eve of the attack these men were captured by an enemy patrol. It is thought these men were taken prisoner just as the Germans had been taken.

In the meantime a new line of departure was secured by vigorous patrol activity and an armored observation post South of the Southern barracks was captured. The observation post was then manned by a squad and a sound-power phone put in. Frequent calls to the observation post during the night were answered by an assurance that everything was OK. Plans for the attack on the following day were discussed, unfortunately in close proximity to

\*See sketch of Fort DRIANT.





Machine gunners hurry to new positions as P-47 drops bomb near Fort Driant.

the observation post phone at the Battalion Command Post. This was a fatal mistake, for unknown to the rest of the force, the observation post was surprised sometime after dark, the entire squad captured, and an English speaking German soldier detailed to assure the Battalion Command Post by telephone that all was OK.

On the morning of the 7th of October the attack jumped off, but was stopped cold in its tracks by enfilading fire from the supposedly friendly observation post. Apparently plans for the attack were in the enemy's hands, as well as the observation post itself.

After being pinned down by enemy fire, Company B was ordered to hold its ground until the Third Battalion, Second Infantry could pass through it. The orders were carried out, but during the afternoon of the 7th an enemy counter-attack on both flanks succeeded in killing or capturing two platoons and taking the Company Commander and two artillery forward observers prisoner.

During the night of 8-9 October the Third Battalion, Second Infantry moved into the fort, taking over the tunnel job from Company C, Tenth Infantry. Company C had succeeded in working its way through the tunnel leading from R to P, a distance of about 100 yards. In taking this 100 yards Company C had to blast its way through steel doors and debris. The debris was piled to the ceiling and back in the tunnel about twenty feet. While working in the tunnel the men had to work in the dark with no knowledge of their location under the fort. The Germans could be heard through the walls of the tunnel and were thought to be placing counter charges. The greatest difficulty in the tunnel was fumes and dust created by charges set off in such close quarters. The fumes were thought to be carbon monoxide and issue masks were of no value in combating them.

At 1200 hours 9 October the Third Battalion, Second Infantry began building a baffle wall at the position where Company C, Tenth Infantry had been relieved. This baffle wall was about 6 feet thick and rose almost to the top of the tunnel, allowing about 2 feet clearance at the top. A machine gun squad and a bazooka team was placed on the wall to control the tunnel. The men manning the wall would take turns and the Germans could be heard talking and chiseling at the other end of the tunnel. Intermittent fire by our men and the Germans was constantly flying back and forth.

Around 1650 hours of the 9th a terrific explosion occurred in the tunnel between "P" and "R." This explosion had

three times the force of a 60-pound beehive charge. As a result of this explosion 2 bazooka men and 2 engineers were killed. Eight of the machine gun squad was injured and the machine gun destroyed. Twenty-three men were seriously gassed by the fumes created from the explosion. The cause of the explosion is not known definitely but a few comments have been made, some of which are: the Germans set off a counter charge; something left under the stairways leading to the tunnel, probably carbide, exploded spontaneously. The Germans are not known to have explosives powerful enough to create the damage and inflict the casualties that were caused. Everyone became ill and the fumes became very heavy. There was no way out of the tunnel due to enemy Artillery being particularly heavy and active at this time, keeping everyone under cover. The men were in no condition to fight after that and the attack scheduled for that night was postponed.

After the explosion, the baffle wall was built to the ceiling, completely sealing off the tunnel, but the Germans placed a charge that blew it down. The wall was rebuilt, but with a space being left at the top. A Non Commissioned Officer and two men were placed at the top to keep the enemy out of the tunnel.

Added to the danger from mortar, artillery, and shellfire, was the constant war of nerves going on beneath the ground. At one time the Battalion Commander phoned the General commanding the task force that he could hear the Germans scratching at the other side of the six-foot-thick concrete wall separating him from the Germans. He added the fervent hope that they weren't preparing a charge to blow the wall in on him.

The situation of the attackers, both above and below ground became not only hopeless, but acute. Water was at a premium, rations and ammunition were replenished with great difficulty. It was virtually impossible to remove the dead and wounded owing to the fury of the artillery and mortar fire falling around the barracks and on the positions of the attackers topside.

The fumes from the carbide were rapidly overcoming man after man in the subterranean corridors and rooms, the post at the top of the baffle wall became a death trap, for as fast as men were placed atop the wall, the Germans either killed or wounded them by machine gun fire from concealed positions in the tunnel, or by the simple maneuver of bouncing grenades around the corner at them.

The troops both above and below ground were living a ratlike existence in shallow holes or choking tunnels, the casualty rate was climbing, and it soon became evident that further operations in that vicinity would not only be useless, but would involve a large loss of life in a hopeless situation. The Battalion Commander realized that the troops were living on sheer nerve and the last reserves of their courage, and informed the Task Force Commander of the situation.

On the morning of 10 October the Chief of Staff, Third United States Army; the Corps Commander, Major General Walker; and Generals Irwin and Warnock, decided to withdraw from Fort DRIANT. This decision was based on the fact that sufficient forces were not available and that further attack would be a needless loss of life.

The task force remained in their positions until the 12th of October when the withdrawal began under cover of darkness. It had been decided to destroy as much of the tunnels, shelters, and barracks as possible in order to prevent the enemy from reoccupying and repairing them.

As the battered troops of the sick and exhausted task force slipped quietly out of the tunnels, they passed groups of engineers from Company A of the Seventh Engineers stealthily placing charges in hallways, stairwells, corridors, and drains. Charges were placed to explode at half hour, hour and hour-and-a-half intervals. The charges used were



explosives packed in sandbags and sited so as to blow out exposed walls and stairwells. Bangalore torpedoes (placed in the utility conduit of the corridors and barracks as a harassing charge with a six-hour delay igniter), mortar and heavy explosive artillery shells, and TNT. The total poundage of the explosives used in these charges amounted to over 6000 pounds of explosives with fuses cut for from 30 minutes to 6 hours.

As the last of the troops evacuated the tunnels, the fuses were lit and the positions abandoned. The last of the force had withdrawn from the fort at 2330 hours on the 12th of October. At 0100 hours on the 13th of October loud explosions were heard coming from the fort. The artillery increased their rate of fire, and the withdrawal was accomplished without mishap.

It must be remembered that, although the fort itself and outworks were abandoned, the German Commander was by no means left to his own devices. The remainder of the Division, while not actively engaged in reducing the fort, were, however, moving to seal off the garrison from as many approaches as possible.

After the DRIANT Task Force withdrew, the fort itself remained all but surrounded. About two-thirds of the perimeter was occupied by the American forces.

Throughout the entire DRIANT operation the attacking Battalions were subjected to heavy fire from all types of enemy weapons. The weather was, for the most part, rainy and cold, hampering both air and ground operations, and increasing the misery of the troops entrenched on top of the fort and in the area surrounding the fortifications of METZ. Although the enemy suffered heavy losses in personnel through the breaking up of their numerous counterattacks, and patrols, and suffered losses in material, it was impossible to estimate with any degree of accuracy, the amount of casualties sustained owing to the inability of our troops to hold the ground long enough to make a comprehensive check. Since the attackers never really broke into the main casemates, the number of wounded although considerable, was not known to us.

Losses for all Fifth Division units engaged in the assaults of Fort DRIANT totaled as follows:

	Killed in Action	Wounded	Missing
Officers .....	4	20	4
E. M. ....	60	527	183

The majority of those overcome by carbide and powder fumes recovered sufficiently to carry on without being evacuated.

Throughout the period of 27 September to 14th October, during which the DRIANT operation took place, the remainder of the troops in the MOSELLE Bridgehead continued to hold the ground gained during the expansion period.

Patrols were maintained, observation posts manned, and a constant watch kept on the existing enemy lines. Artillery ammunition was limited, and tanks were substituted several times for harassing fires. Several unidentified missiles were reported variously as Robombs, or Jet-propelled planes, but no definite indication made. Enemy aircraft were over the area several times, and at least two ME 109's were shot down by ack-ack.

Patrolling and shelling provided the action for both sides until the 18-19th of October, when the Eleventh Infantry Regiment was relieved in the line by the Three Hundred Seventy-Ninth Infantry Regiment of the Ninety-Fifth Infantry Division. Also on the 18th of October, the command group of the Three Hundred Seventy-Eighth Infantry Regiment, Ninety-Fifth Division arrived and proceeded to coordinate the relief of the Tenth Combat Team and First Battalion Second Combat Team. By the 20th of October all units of the Tenth Combat Team were out of the line except the Third Battalion which remained as regimental reserve. The Third Battalion was relieved on the morning



Tec. 4 Daniel O. Polte welds nose on "explosive snake" for use in assault against Fort Driant.

of the 21st and joined the other elements of the Division in the vicinity of PIENNES for rest, reorganization and training.

During the night of the 18th of October the Second Battalion Second Infantry Regiment was relieved by the Second Battalion of the Three Hundred Seventy-Seventh Infantry Regiment. At 1100 hours on the 19th of October the First Battalion of the Second Regiment was relieved by the First Battalion Three Hundred Seventy-Seventh Infantry Regiment. On the 20th of October the Third Battalion of the Second Regiment and Regimental Headquarters began the movement to the rest and training area and by the 21st of October the entire Regiment including Anti-Tank and Cannon Companies had been relieved and closed into the new area.

The Second Combat Team was assembled in the area near MORFONTAINE, the Tenth Combat Team assembled in the vicinity of JOPPECOURT, and the Eleventh Combat Team moved to ERROUVILLE near the old MAGINOT LINE fortifications.

During the period of 1 to 21 October the Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion had continued its normal mission of direct support of the Tenth Combat Team in stabilized positions about 8 miles South of METZ.

Observers made the most of what clear weather occurred, and fired several observed missions resulting in the breaking up of German infantry concentrations, convoys, and harassments of known and suspected gun positions in the METZ fortifications.

Much use was made of massed fires of several Battalions including the Fiftieth, Six Hundred Ninety-Fifth, Forty-Sixth, and Two Hundred Seventy-Fourth Armored Artillery Battalions. Fires to disrupt counterattacks were used to great effect. Prisoners stated that personnel of an entire German company were made casualties when a TOT fell on a woods in which they were assembling to attack.

Up until the relief of the Fifth Division in the MOSELLE Bridgehead on the 21 of October, the Division had been in a'most continual contact with the enemy for 44 days, during which the enemy artillery fire and aggressive attacks ranged from small scale harassing missions to furious barrages and fanatic suicide charges.

Supply and evacuation was carried out under the most difficult of conditions, and all echelons of the Division welcomed the opportunity for rest and reorganization offered by the move to the area around PIENNES.

It was during the latter days of this period that the duffbags and athletic equipment arrived from MONTEBOURG via the quartermaster. For most of the Division it was the first opportunity to open duffbags and change



BATTLE FOR METZ  
9-21 NOV 1944

1 INCH = 1388 YDS.





clothes for the dry and clean clothing left in the bags nearly four months previous while preparing to break through the Normandy Beachhead line. It might be added, however, that as often as possible, and for as many as possible, the Quartermaster Corps set up shower points near the Division field train bivouac or in some fairly safe area and troops were trucked to these points, stripped, showered, and given a complete change of clothing.

Rest camps had been set up in rear areas to enable small groups of men to snatch a few days' respite from the terrific tension, and strain connected with operations in the front lines, but unfortunately, the nature of the operations at this time made it impossible for all front-line elements to take advantage of these camps, even by staggered reliefs.

As soon as possible after the immediate needs of the troops had been answered in the way of rest, clothing and equipment, an intensive training course in assault of fortified positions was undertaken. For the most part, pillboxes and bunkers of the old MAGINOT LINE fortifications were used for "dry runs" and practice demolitions. Engineer troops demonstrated the use of assault devices and demolitions so that another disaster such as was brought about by the loss or misuse of the Fort DRIANT "snakes" should not occur.

With the return of hot chow, mail, movies, USO and RED CROSS programs, and the release from sleepless nights and nerve-wracking days the Division gained in health, strength and morale. Replacements were brought in, new equipment secured (although not all losses in equipment could be made good at once), and the Division was once more made ready for front line operations.

On the 30th of October, 1944, after 10 days' rest, orders were received directing the Fifth Division to relieve the Ninety-Fifth Infantry Division in the Moselle Bridgehead just South of METZ. On the 31st, the Second Combat Team started movement at 1130 hours to the vicinity of VANDIERES, completing the movement to the new area at 1500 hours. Movement to relieve the Three Hundred Seventy-Seventh Infantry Regiment was begun immediately.

The Tenth Combat Team moved into the bridgehead and completed the relief of the Three Hundred Seventy-Eighth Infantry Regiment at 2300 hours. The Seven Hundred Thirty-Fifth Tank Battalion was attached to the Division as were the Seven Hundred Fifth Tank Destroyer Battalion (Self Propelled), Seven Hundred Seventy-Third Tank Destroyer Battalion (Self Propelled) and Companies C and D of the Eighty-First Chemical Mortar Battalion.

On the 1st of November the Eleventh Combat Team (Less the Second Battalion) moved into the bridgehead and completed the relief of the Three Hundred Seventy-Ninth Infantry Regiment, Ninth Infantry Division at 2100 hours. The last unit of Division Artillery closed in position at 1848 hours, completing the relief of the Ninety-Fifth Division Artillery. The Commanding General of the Fifth Division Artillery assumed command of his sector at 1245 hours. The Commanding General of the Fifth Division assumed command of the Fifth Division Sector at 1330 hours.

On the 2nd of November the following operations were carried out: The Seven Hundred Fifth and Seven Hundred Seventy-Third Tank Destroyer (Self Propelled) Battalions were detached from the Division. The Second Battalion Tenth Infantry completed the relief of the Second Battalion, Three Hundred Seventy-Eighth Infantry; the Second Battalion of the Eleventh Infantry Regiment completed the relief of the Third Battalion, Three Hundred Ninety-Seventh Infantry. The Fifth Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop organized and maintained observation posts in the vicinity of BOUXIERES. All units of the Ninety-Fifth Division were relieved by 1900 hours on the 2nd of November. Active patrolling was immediately undertaken to the front of the bridgehead positions with the result that three prisoners

were captured, seven enemy killed, and an estimated twenty wounded by the aggressive activities of the Division patrols.

At this time the Division was occupying a sector that bordered on the perimeter defenses of METZ. The fortifications were a combination of old defenses, pillboxes, bunkers, trenches and foxholes. The German garrison was reinforced by what available civilians in METZ considered fit for military service by the Gestapo. The Gestapo commander of METZ, Anton Dunc Kern, who was also Brigadier General of the SS troops in METZ, and Brigadier General of Police in charge of all the Police in the SAAR basin, had orders to use any means necessary to carry out the defenses of METZ and insure the loyalty of the troops and civil populace in that area. His efforts, while not always successful, were generally ruthless, and he was not above marching the entire male audience of one of the city's theaters off to the trenches without a word of warning.

Just previous to the battle for METZ, the Wehrmacht garrison of the city was supplemented with a Volksturm, or peoples militia of four companies, with a total strength of 400-500 men. The city police were armed with carbines and old German rifles, as were the Volksturm, and both units were committed in the trenches outside of the city. The II Stellungs Battalion, which had previously occupied a portion of the Siegfried line, was dispatched to METZ to assist in the defense of the city. This unit had a total strength of roughly three hundred men and had an estimated 24 heavy machine guns.

The Fourteen Hundred Sixty-Second Heavy Anti-Tank Battalion, with four companies and 6 75 millimeter anti-tank guns had at one time been committed in the vicinity of MAGNY where they abandoned their guns and retreated to METZ where it was believed they fought as Infantry. Elements of the Fifty-Third Fortress Battalion, Forty-Fifth Fortress Machine Gun Battalion, and the Thirty-Eighth SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment were also reported to be in the vicinity of METZ. These units by no means made up the entire garrison of METZ, but they were identified by Prisoner Interrogation and captured material, and showed, in part, a cross section of the piecemeal commitment of units in the defense of METZ and the surrounding forts.

It was also reported by prisoners that there was no water in the city due to the damage done to the water mains by Allied bombing. Orders had been issued to the civil populace to evacuate the city by way of the railroad station, and, while a good number of the people had left on the order, there were still many of them living in the cellars. The final order issued to the garrison commander of the city was to the effect that he and his troops were to hold the city to the last. It will be remembered that the city had been evacuated early in September, and that American troops in the form of a cavalry reconnaissance troop had at one time been in the city itself and found it cleared of troops. On orders from the German Army Headquarters, the unit commanders, with the aid of the Gestapo, had turned the retreating troops around and reoccupied the city defenses and forts.

From the 1-15th of November the Division continued regrouping their forces and maintaining their positions preparatory to an offensive operation. Harassing fires were carried out, and enemy artillery fired intermittently on the bridgehead. Routine patrols continued on the Division front, and a good deal of information about the enemy and their defenses was obtained in this manner.

The various battalions in line were relieved from time to time in order to prevent excessive wear on the troops of one unit, and to allow the maximum number of men to take advantage of rest camps and shower points. The Seven Hundred Seventy-Fourth Tank Destroyer Battalion was attached to the Division at 1110 hours on the 5th of November. The guns in the Verdun Fort group took our positions under fire causing light casualties. Enemy aircraft



put in several appearances over the Division area but were apparently reconnaissance planes. The adjacent units carried out attacks and made substantial gains to both right and left of the Fifth Division sector, reporting that very little in the way of extensive fortifications was encountered, and that the enemy defenses consisted mostly of hasty entrenchments and scattered minefields. Enemy tanks were known to be in the area, but the exact number was unknown. Patrol activity resulted in several sharp fights between patrols and outposts, and the Eleventh Infantry sustained slight losses when an enemy patrol jumped a small outpost in their front lines.

From the 5th to the 7th of November plans were discussed and operations coordinated by the Division and Corps Staff and Commanders. While the preparatory orders for attack were being studied by the regimental and battalion commanders, combat and reconnaissance patrols continually probed the enemy lines seeking information about emplacements, automatic weapons, location of the German troops, mine fields, and possible routes of attack.

The SEILLE River, which had been twenty to forty yards wide when the Division left the MOSELLE bridgehead for reorganization at PIENNES, had been swollen by constant rains to two hundred yards and it was necessary for the engineers to conduct detailed reconnaissance in order to determine the best sites for crossing.

In order to successfully take and hold the city of METZ, it was necessary to push the Boche back from the bridgehead and enclose the city in so far as possible before beginning the actual assault. It was partly with this end in view that the Third Army offensive operations across the SEILLE began on the 9th of November, 1944.

Owing to the flooded condition of the river, most of the bridges were either out (either washed out or destroyed by the Boche), or under water and unsafe. A very few were intact and usable.

The plan set forth by Division was to have the Second Combat Team attack and seize LOUVIGNY and move east to a point just West of PAGNY, resume the attack at 0700 hours and take VERNY and the next objective. The Tenth was assigned objectives on the far side of the SEILLE River, and the attacks were scheduled for 0600 hours on the 9th of November.

At this time the weather became cloudy and cool. The constant downpour characteristic of late fall and early winter weather of this area had resulted in serious diffi-

culties for the supply and service echelons, roads were washed out, bridges flooded, mud deepened, clothing, and equipment became soaked, and the front line troops were faced with wet nights and rainy days in addition to the usual front line hardships.

## PRELUDE TO METZ

The combined attacks of the Second and Tenth Combat teams of the Fifth Division were designed to fit strategically with the attacks and offensive operations of the Ninety-Fifth and Ninetieth Divisions on the left of the Fifth, the Eightieth Division of XII Corps on the Fifth Division's right flank, and the Sixth Armored Division's operation eastward out of the Fifth's bridgehead.

After a thorough reconnaissance, the platoons of the Seventh Engineer Battalion brought up assault boats to the attacking regiments under cover of darkness and the move to cut METZ off from the South began.

Troops of the Second Infantry Regiment moved forward to the crossing site and filed down to the boat site picked out by the Engineer reconnaissance parties.

The 9th day of November broke gray and misty as troops of the Second Battalion, Second Infantry, crossed the swollen SEILLE River at 0600 hours in assault boats and stormed the town of CHEMINOT. Two concentrations of nebelwerfer fire were laid near the site of the crossing, but caused no casualties. The town itself, fell to company G without a fight as a lone surviving German tottered out of a cellar waving a white flag in token of surrender.

The First Battalion Second Infantry crossed following the Second Battalion and was able to utilize a footbridge that the engineers had erected between CHEMINOT and LES-MENILS. While the Second Battalion policed up the town of CHEMINOT and held the high ground overlooking LOUVIGNY, the First Battalion swung to the right and attacked the town from the South. Supported by mortar and machine gun fire from the Second Battalion and by friendly artillery, the First forged into LOUVIGNY and by dark had seized the town. The Second Battalion pushed on to the East taking up positions for the night along the North-South road running South from PAGNY-LES-GOINS. Meanwhile the Third Battalion crossed the river following the First, and when the First moved North to attack LOUVIGNY, the Third continued East and took up positions to the right of the Second and somewhat South of St. JURE. The first day's operation had succeeded in taking all assigned objectives and the end of the day found the Second Infantry in position to jump off the next morning.

Simultaneous with the attack of the Second Regiment, was the assault crossing of the SEILLE River by the Tenth Regiment.

The attack began to roll at 0600 hours on November 9th. The Third Battalion of the Tenth Infantry crossed three footbridges constructed by attached engineers South of the MOULIN NEUF, and in another hour had captured and consolidated positions on hills 184, 187 and 207. Enemy resistance at LA HAUTONNERIE FARM was encountered. At 0706 hours the Second Battalion started across, Company F leading.

The ground was everything an infantryman in the attack didn't want it to be—soggy, covered with anti-personnel mines, and open. The gentle rolls and slopes of the marshy terrain afforded no cover. It was reminiscent of the POURNOY-CHETIVE attack.

Enemy groups which had been overlooked or by-passed by the Third Battalion now opened on the Second Battalion, and Company F found itself being riddled by machine gun and rifle fire from its flanks, and from the HAUTONNERIE Woods to its front, its objective.

Company F was an entirely new unit, having been de-

Major General S. LeRoy Irwin explains strategy of the attack on Forts Sommy and St. Blaise to General George C. Marshall on his visit to the front.







The Fortress of St. Blaise was little more than a pile of debris when the Germans surrendered to the 3rd Battalion, 11th Infantry.

stroyed practically to the man at POURNOY LA CHETIVE, and its men were undergoing the rigors of a full-scale attack for the first time. They reacted as inexperienced men invariably do—and hit the ground.

The Commanding Officer of Company F, Captain Theodore F. Kubarek, realized the situation and personally undertook the task of getting his company on the move again. Despite the merciless crossfire and the artillery and mortar fire which was beginning to rain on the "pinned-down" troops, he ran from man to man exhorting them to resume the attack.

At first only a handful of men followed the captain as he started forward toward the German machine guns chattering from the edge of HAUTONNERIE WOODS. But in groups of two and three, then by squads—then by platoons they rose, the attack spread and started forward, firing their BARs and MIs from the hip.

Enemy fire lessened almost immediately and leading assault waves flooded over the German positions on the edge of the woods and kept going.

Once on the objective, the men hesitated in their digging to watch waves of B-17s roaring over.

Partly because of the weather, and partly because of the fact that the American Air Force was strained to the utmost to meet all the strategic and tactical needs of the Allied Armies in Europe, air activity over the front and particularly in that sector occupied by the Fifth Division was somewhat less than the unit commanders, and the men in the foxholes, would have asked for. The sight of Jerry being worked over by a group of bombers is a heartening thing indeed, especially if the bombing is being done in that area the watcher expects to have to fight his way through. The bombers worked on the towns of POMMERIEUX, and GOIN and bombs were seen to fall directly on the targets. Clouds of smoke and dust rose from both towns as the bombers switched their attention to the high ground immediately to the front of the Tenth Regiment sector. Shortly before the attack, a large force of German infantry were observed digging in along this ground and preparing defensive positions as if in expectation of the Tenth Infantry attack.

The night of November 9-10th was one of consolidation and patrolling. The First Battalion Tenth Infantry succeeded in establishing contact with the Eleventh Regiment on the left flank and the Second Battalion Tenth Infantry located the Second Regiment on the right.

The attack resumed at 0700 hours the following morning, when the Second Infantry jumped off in conjunction with the Eightieth Division on its right. The Tenth assisted

the Second Infantry in the latter's attack on PAGNY LES GOIN, with supporting fires.

The Forty-Sixth and Fiftieth Field Artillery Battalions had occupied positions during the initial expansion of the bridgehead area which permitted support fires to be given deep enough in enemy-held territory to remain in those positions for the attack. The morning of November 10th dawned cold and damp as the Second Regiment continued its advance.

The First Battalion, on the left of the regiment, attacked toward PAGNY-LES-GOINS at dawn and was met by heavy artillery, mortar and small arms fire. Momentarily halted, the battalion called for and received artillery support, stormed the town and by 1300 hours had cleared it of the enemy.

Simultaneous with the First Battalion attack, the Second Battalion jumped off for VIGNY. Light opposition was encountered, consisting largely of long range small arms fire and artillery. By 1245 hours, the battalion, supported by tanks and spearheaded by Company G, had seized and cleared the town and outposted the high ground to the north and east.

ALEMONT, a town to the right of the regimental sector, meanwhile was holding up the advance of the Third Battalion. Heavy small arms fire was coming from the village and it pinned down the right flank of the Third Battalion. The Third, commanded by Lt. Col. Robert E. Connors, acting speedily and decisively, stepped outside of its zone, sent I Company to clear the town and continued its attack against heavy resistance to capture BUCHY with support of the Second Battalion just as dusk was falling.

The First Battalion, after reorganizing on its first objective pushed on toward SILLY-EN-SAULNOIS in the face of increasing resistance. Time and again the medics of the Second Infantry distinguished themselves on the battlefield, by their coolness, resourcefulness and skill under fire. An incident that occurred in the attack of LOUVIGNY won attention of doctors and surgeons throughout the United States.

During the attack, Technician Fourth Grade (then Private First Class) Duane N. Kinman came upon an enlisted man, Private Henry Roon of Company D, who had sustained a severe wound in the neck which resulted in a stoppage of the air passage. Realizing that immediate action was essential to save the man's life, Technician Kinman calmly performed, on that muddy battle field, an emergency operation with a dull jackknife and, utilizing a fountain pen as an improvised tracheotomy tube, made it possible for the wounded man to breathe.



The skill with which this delicate operation was performed under fire won high praise from the surgeon who examined the patient at the Field Hospital. Upon hearing of the operation, the medical school of Western Reserve University offered Technician Kinman a scholarship as token of their high regard for his act.

The attack on SALLY was costly but successful. Again on the second day of the offensive, the Second Infantry had seized its assigned objectives on schedule. Prisoners, which previously had been captured dearly, were taken by the dozens and at the end of the day more than 400 had passed through the regimental prisoner of war cage.

As a result of the aggressive attacks on the 9th-10th of November over 700 prisoners were taken, an estimated 250 killed and a large number wounded. Reported enemy equipment destroyed included 6 staff cars and 9 miscellaneous vehicles.

Throughout the night preceding the 9th November and through the remainder of the attack, the Seventh Engineer Battalion aided the infantry in the crossing of the SEILLE River by furnishing assault boats, footbridges, and rafts, manning them with engineer personnel, and placing men at designated spots to guide the troops to the crossing sites. The Eleven Hundred Third Engineer Combat Group completed the construction of a treadway bridge across the SEILLE at LONGUEVILLE, started construction of a class 40 bridge on the CHEMINOT-PONT-A-MOUSSON road, and continued repair operations on the PONT-A-MOUSSON bridge that had been damaged by the high water.

The Eleventh Infantry remained in position along the division outpost line and main line of resistance while the Second and Tenth Regiments were in the attack. Occasionally it became necessary to place cooks, clerks, and drivers in the thinly held line. At one time, when Company "I" Eleventh Infantry was drawn out of the line to form a reserve, it was replaced by the Third Battalion ammunition and pioneer platoon.

The Fifth Cavalry Reconnaissance troop was placed on the right flank of the Division to maintain contact with the Eightieth Infantry Division, and to secure the flank. A detachment from the Second Infantry joined other elements of the Fifth Division in memorial services at the SAINT MIHEL Military Cemetery at THIAUCOURT in honor of the dead of World War I, while the attacks across the SEILLE river were still in progress. Some propaganda shell was fired the day prior to the attack, and was specifically directed at one enemy unit in the line around SILLEGNY.

A summation of enemy opposition on crossing the SEILLE River shows that the advance was opposed by machine gun and mortar fire of elements of the 45th Machine Gun Battalion, supported by an advance party of the Forty-Eighth Machine Gun Battalion. Mine fields had hampered infantrymen considerably. Artillery fire from the METZ forts, the circle of steel and concrete called the GROUPE FORTIFIE VERDUN was particularly heavy.

On the 11th of November the Tenth Combat team was ordered to relieve the Second Combat team which was then preparing to continue the attack which had turned slightly northeast. Under cover of a preparation by the Fifth Division Artillery, enough of which had moved forward to give them adequate support, the Second Regiment jumped off on the morning of the 11th.

The First Battalion, mounted on tanks, advanced on DAIN EN SAULNOIS while the Second Battalion, led by Company E, moved on BEUX. Enemy artillery attempted to break up the forward movement of the Second Infantry. Both battalions were on their objectives by noon of that day and the Third Battalion had swung northward to seize the high ground a thousand yards East of PONTROY. The Second Battalion moved Eastward from BEUX to the high ground overlooking the NIED-FRANCAISE River, and prepared to effect a

crossing. On orders from higher headquarters, the battalion remained on the West side of the river in the Bois de FAX and outposted the area. The Fiftieth Field Artillery Battalion aggressively moved into position east of DAIN EN SAULNOIS, so as to cut by fire the main escape road eastward from METZ. From this position fire was placed on COURCELLES-CHAUCY, a road-tail junction about ten miles east of METZ.

The Sixth Armored Division, which had passed through the regiment at VIGNY on the 10th, likewise halted at the river and conducted extensive reconnaissance for bridges.

During the night, a Sixth Armored patrol found the bridge West of SANRY-SUR-NIED intact and immediately seized it. Long before dawn, troops of the Second Battalion were on their way to this bridge and at sunrise, 12 November, the entire battalion was across.

There ensued a short, sharp skirmish for the town of SANRY. By 1000 hours, the town had been cleared of the enemy and outposted by Company E. Companies F and G prepared to advance to the Southwest as the tanks of the Sixth Armored Division, with the bridgehead secured now, rolled across the NIED RIVER.

On the West side of the river, the remainder of the Second Infantry turned its efforts Northward. The Third on the right and First on the left consolidated Hill 246 and the high ground to the Southwest.

Leaving Company E to hold SANRY-SUR-NIED, Companies F and G pushed on at 1500 hours to seize BAZONCOURT and VAUCREMENT respectively while the First Battalion sent a task force consisting of a platoon from Company A and a platoon from Company C to seize a bridge at ANCERVILLE. By darkness, all missions had been accomplished.

All that afternoon enemy artillery had pounded SANRY. Heavy mortars, 88's and 20 millimeter guns made the town one of the least healthy that the Second Infantry had ever occupied. The bridgehead was a direct threat to the supply route—and escape route—for METZ and the enemy realized its importance fully as well as did the men of the Second Infantry who held it.

At 1400 hours a platoon of Seven Hundred Thirty-Fifth Medium Tanks and a platoon of Eight Hundred Eighteenth Tank Destroyers joined in the defense of the town, commanded by Captain Joseph Fekete of E Company. At dusk, the enemy pounded, with every weapon he had, the supply route from the bridge to each of the towns held by Second Infantry troops. SANRY was given a particularly heavy pounding.

On the 13th, while the Third Battalion and the First Battalion, less detachments, exchanged fire with the forts at SORBIEY, the Second Battalion troops in the bridgehead felt the fullest brunt of the enemy's attacks.

At 1400, the Germans launched the first of a series of vicious counterattacks. Estimated to be two companies of veteran fighters (later identified as companies of the Ninety-Second Regiment of the Twenty-First SS Panzer Grenadier Division), some elements succeeded in advancing to a point outflanking high ground positions of Company E to the north. Intense machine gun and small arms fire forced their withdrawal. At the same time, another fierce attacking from the Northeast was disorganized by artillery fire from Cannon Company, Second Infantry, and driven off by small arms fire. Severe casualties were inflicted on both attacking forces.

A second counterattack developed almost immediately from the Northeast against positions on Hill 246. The enemy was driven from the hill by fire of the LMG section in support of Company B on Hill 246. However, the enemy did succeed in occupying positions on the high ground which permitted them to deliver automatic small arms fire on the streets of the town prohibiting movement. This action necessitated hunting out these positions and destroying the enemy—a mission which was promptly accomplished.



A lull followed, but shortly after darkness had fallen, at 1900 hours, a third counterattack developed preceded by intense artillery and mortar fire which destroyed an anti-tank gun, a tank destroyer and an ammunition truck. This third attack came from the North and Northeast. Despite very heavy losses, the enemy succeeded in reaching the outskirts of the town, with some elements infiltrating into the buildings of the town itself. This necessitated withdrawing all troops and armor within the town itself, to establish a defense of SANRY. Tanks were placed close to buildings with riflemen armed with spare LMGs to protect them from underneath. Cannon of the tanks and tank destroyers were systematically aimed to cover the streets.

At approximately 2230 hours, the intensity of enemy mortar and artillery fire increased. Preceded by barrages of mortar fire, the fourth and heaviest enemy attack yet launched hit the town. Heavy fighting developed in and around the buildings. The fire fight developed in intensity with tanks and Tank Destroyers firing ricochet fire off the streets into the on-coming enemy. Supporting artillery fired emergency concentrations at the North end of the town. Riflemen and grenadiers fired into the streets or between buildings from vantage points at windows, walls and rooftops. Such was the fanatical fury of the enemy attack that the fight continued until approximately 0230 hours, 14 November, before the enemy could be cleared from the streets. A reorganization was then necessary because whole units had been isolated, fighting independently. An estimated 200 enemy were killed and a hundred wounded in that night's battle. Our losses were 22 men wounded, of whom nine were returned to duty the same day.

Despite his losses the enemy persisted in his attempt to recapture SANRY and to seize or destroy the bridge. At 0500 hours on the 14th, a force estimated at a platoon in strength, attacked the Company E positions at the North end of the bridge, approaching through the draw West of Hill 246. The attempt was detected in time and the enemy was driven off with losses. An American water-cooled machine gun was captured.

Again at 0700 hours, enemy forces were observed forming in the vicinity of LAMBARIE FARM, about 1000 yards Northeast of SANRY. Immediately thereafter, the Sixth, and last attempt was made by the enemy, in force, to destroy the bridge. Supporting artillery fire completely disorganized this attempt and the enemy withdrew leaving their dead and wounded. Enemy artillery fire was again extremely heavy, accounting for most of our losses: one killed, 23 wounded (of whom eight were returned to duty the same day).

After the repulse of this final counterattack, the enemy continued to harass the bridgehead with accurate, observed artillery fire, but no further attempt was made by his infantry to retake the bridge.

Prisoners told interrogators that more than 750 German troops had taken part in the six counterattacks and that less than a third of that force remained. The other had been killed, wounded or captured. Company E of the Second, First Platoon of Company A of the Seven Hundred Thirty-Fifth, and the First Section, Third Platoon of Company H, of the Second, were given a Presidential Unit Citation.

While Company E and the rest of the Second Battalion was holding the SANRY bridgehead as a springboard for the Sixth Armored Division, the remainder of the Second Infantry edged its way Northward on the 13th. At 1500 hours, Company K occupied PONTOT, after an I&R platoon patrol found the town unoccupied. The remainder of the battalion and Company C on the left flank patrolled actively to the front.

Again on the 14th, the Third Battalion advanced from 1000 to 2000 yards against scattered opposition. During the day, reinforcements were seen entering the SORBEY forts—

under a white flag. Prisoners reported also that the Germans were using medics as well as service troops to man their defensive positions and explained that the reason for the desperate counterattacks was that COURCELLES-SUR-NIED was a loading point for ammunition and supplies being evacuated from METZ.

While the Second Battalion, now reinforced by Company A instead of Company B, withstood the intensive pounding of enemy mortars and heavy artillery, the Third Battalion, with Company C attached, attacked the morning of the 15th. By 1300 hours Company K had captured MECLEUVES and Company C had stormed Hill 291. Three hours later the battalion beat off a strong enemy counterattack and consolidated its positions for the night.

After a day of reorganization, in which all elements of the First Battalion were relieved from the bridgehead and put in the line South of SORBEY, the Second Infantry (less Second Battalion) launched a coordinated attack on the SORBEY forts. Early in the morning of the 17th, the First Battalion found the town of SORBEY unoccupied and sent Company B to occupy and defend it. At 0900 hours, the Third Battalion pushed its lines slightly forward and the First Battalion launched its attack on the forts. After a day-long battle, against resistance from dug-in positions outside the forts, the positions were taken at 1600 hours. After dark, Company L occupied the town of FRONTIGNY against light opposition and Company B cleared the town of COURCELLES-SUR-NIED.

Having accomplished its mission of providing a bridgehead through which the Sixth Armored Division could pass in its attack to the East, in threatening the German escape route and diverting at least one regiment of the enemy from the defense of METZ itself, the Second Battalion was ordered to withdraw from the bridgehead and move to an assembly area in the vicinity of PONTOT the night of 17-18 November. By midnight, the battalion had moved back across the SANRY bridge and the ANCEVILLE bridge and at 0330 hours on the 18th reverted to regimental reserve in PONTOT.

Against crumpling resistance, the Second Infantry vigorously pushed the attack on the 18th. The First Battalion cleared the GRANDE BOIS DE CHAMPEL, the BOIS LEFEVRE and by darkness had taken the town of ARS-LAQUENEXY. The Third Battalion seized JURY and continued to occupy FRONTIGNY and MECLEUVES. The Second Battalion was moved from its reserve position at 0900 hours, swinging to the left through the Tenth Infantry sector to take up position in the vicinity of PELTRE for an attack on MERCY-LA-METZ. Jumping off at 1600 hours the Second Battalion took MERCY-LA-METZ and continued on to capture, with light opposition, the GROUPE FORTIFIE DE LA MARNE and outpost the woods to the east.

Remnants of many units were captured, and prisoners from the Seventeenth SS Panzer Grenadier Division reported that the Thirty-Eighth SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment had been virtually annihilated.

The Second Infantry was within sight of METZ on the 19th of November and likewise in sight of the end of the METZ campaign. Attacking at 0730 hours, the First Battalion advanced rapidly against light opposition. At 0855 hours, Company B established contact at VAUDREVILLE with reconnaissance elements of the Ninetieth Infantry Division which was attacking from the northwest and the encirclement of METZ was made more solid. Company A took PUCHE, Company C took MARSILLY, the Second Battalion took LAUVALTERS and FORT LAUVALIERS, and by noon the band of iron had been sealed firmly around the fortress City METZ.

In this eleven-day drive, the regiment gained 22,000 yards to the East and 24,000 yards to the North on a front of approximately 4000 yards. It liberated 42 towns and villages, captured 622 prisoners, killed an estimated 950-1000 and wounded an estimated 1800-1850 of the enemy.





Infantrymen follow a narrow path as they enter the historic city of Metz.



Barracks of Fort Driant destroyed by Division engineers as Division pulled out of Driant after unsuccessful attack.



Main blockhouse of Fort Driant, shown after the fort surrendered.



General Twaddle, Commanding the Ninety-Fifth Division, passing through Fifth Division area, near Metz.



The regiment's losses were comparatively light. For the over-all period, five officers and 48 men were killed and 13 officers and 273 men wounded.

It was during this period that winter set in in earnest. The whole front turned suddenly from dull grey-green to white. The nights turned cold, and the sky continued to be overcast and gloomy.

The Germans could not have asked for a better weapon than the wet, freezing weather. Tanks found it difficult and sometimes impossible to move across the terrain. Men, soaked from the steady rain and snow shivered in slit trenches and foxholes. Trench foot became epidemic. The nights were black, the days foggy and dim. Movement by map was most difficult.

(In order to get a clear picture of each regiment's part in the METZ battle, each one is being carried through as a unit in this narration. It must be remembered that the Division staff always kept the units coordinated and the actions being described herein are all part of a Division scheme. In the METZ battle, the Second Infantry drove East, then North; the Tenth drove Northeast, then North; the Eleventh was on the left flank and waited until the Second turned North before it took up the attack.)

While the Second Infantry Regiment was driving to seal off METZ, the Tenth Combat Team struck savagely at the enemy farther South.

On November 13th, the First and Second Battalions moved to occupy the ground which they had patrolled. By 1225 hours a patrol from the Second Battalion had reached the GROUPE FORTIFIE L' AISNE and were searching it. They had taken the town of ORNY, and the GROUPE FORTIFIE L'YSER, clear of enemy, had fallen to a platoon. These were the first of the 22 METZ Forts to fall, to any Third Army troops.

Enemy resistance stiffened on the 14th. The First Battalion ran into a stonewall defense at the South edge of the BOIS DE L'HOPITAL. The fighting was heavy, but the advance continued. Against bitter resistance the Second Battalion smashed its way into POUILLY and occupied the factory North of the town.

It was during this action that the attackers were subjected to a well-remembered and hated enemy weapon. The 20 millimeter AA gun, so widely used in the early part of the campaign in France was a prime weapon in the defense

of the town, and the First and Second Battalions suffered considerable losses before these guns were finally put out of action.

That afternoon, all Battalion commanders were instructed to consolidate wherever they found themselves one-half hour before dark and were cautioned to watch for counter-attacks from METZ and from the Northeast. In accordance with division orders, Colonel Bell extended his left flank to the SEILLE River and the river became the boundary between the Tenth and Eleventh Regiments. This placed the town of MARLY in the Tenth's zone and the Second Battalion found itself with a large front to cover so that the other battalions might be free to clear the BOIS DE L'HOPITAL.

The main effort was to be made on the 15th. Resistance grew increasingly heavy and the regiment stopped at CHESNY to consolidate a defense for the night. The advance continued in the morning.

During these days, the enemy was offering the stiffest fight of the METZ campaign. These were the days of ROSE HILL where the Germans forced the Tenth to run the bloody gamut of the defended slope three times before giving in. These were the days when the determined, bitter rearguard actions extracted a fearful toll—Company F had 21 men left in action! These were the days when an audacious enemy infiltrated into the lines under cover of the moonless nights and made little savage forays where he was least expected.

The following morning, Lieutenant Colonel Frank Langfitt's First Battalion cracked the defense ring in front of the BOIS DE L'HOPITAL and went on to clear the woods all the way to the road West of FORT CHESNY NORD. The penetration was not easy. The German defense cracked, but not like an egg shell—it was more like smashing rocks with a sledge hammer, only not so safe.

Company C, less one platoon, cleared MARLY by 0935 hours. Companies E and F remained in positions Northeast of POUILLY. The Third Battalion moved through the BOIS DE L'HOPITAL to the woods Northeast of CREPY. During the night, Company C moved from MARLY and occupied the HAUT DE BOUTON.

FORT CHESNY NORD surrendered to the First Battalion early the next morning and Company L took PELTRIE and consolidated positions on the North edge of town. Instruc-

German troops leave Fort Plappeville after surrender.





tions were issued for the Third Battalion to keep going for the towns of GRIGY and BORN and the Second Battalion was directed to move North, capture FORT QUEULEU from the West and go into METZ.

Major Harris C. Walker's Second Battalion had taken MAGNY by 1300 and two hours later Companies E and F were on the North edge of town. Patrols began to move to FORT QUEULEU and one platoon of Company E entered and held the Southwest portion of the Fort in the late afternoon. CRIGY had fallen to the Third Battalion. The Regimental Command Post had moved up to CREPY.

In conjunction with the attack of the Tenth and Second Combat Teams, the Eleventh Combat Team jumped off from its position on the 15th of November.

The First Battalion plus I and L Companies and an attached platoon of tanks of the Seven Hundred Thirty-Fifth Tank Battalion jumped off at 0745 hours in a direct assault on AUGNY. Fire from both FORTS SOMMY and ST. BLAISE was very heavy, and point-blank AA fire pinned B Company down temporarily. By 1800 hours strongpoints were bypassed, tanks were relieved from Battalion control and forward elements had dug in North of PRAYELLE FARM. In another advance, B Company, attached to Third Battalion, took 25 prisoners. The Second Battalion's drive, spearheaded by G Company, pulled abreast of the First Battalion when E Company took HAUTE RIVER FARM along with 20 prisoners. Meanwhile, trench foot cases, which had steadily increased in recent days, cut F Company's strength to 70 Enlisted men. At 1655 hours G Company elements entered AUGNY, while elements of other battalions were clearing enemy pockets of resistance and also converging on AUGNY. At 2400 hours the First Battalion established its command post in AUGNY. Considerable enemy resistance was encountered by patrols of the Second Battalion, that sought to probe MARLY, East of AUGNY, so a large concentration of artillery fire was called for and laid on German positions in the town. More than 100 prisoners were taken by elements of the regiment on 15 November. In attacking METZ, the Eleventh Infantry had to by-pass FORTS SOMMY and ST. BLAISE by going so close the fort guns could not depress to fire.

The assault on Southern approaches to METZ continued on 16 November. The First Battalion attacked along the Western flank of FRESCATY Airfield, North of AUGNY, and the Second Battalion covered the Eastern flank by heading towards MARLY, where the enemy still held strong positions. Company F was pulled out of the line with all personnel suffering from trench foot, varying in degree from mild to severe. The company had been in the line for two weeks, during which time they were obliged to hold muddy, soggy and flooded ground. Other companies also reported trench foot, but none on the scale of F Company. Company L, attached to the First Battalion, made good progress in driving on the airport, and by-passed a company of Germans who had dug in at ORLY. Near the airport, itself, L Company was heavily engaged, not only by numerically superior forces, but also by heavy AA, artillery, and small arms fire from FORT ST. PRIVAT. Company I, plus battalion reconnaissance platoon, attacked FORT SOMMY in an attempt to neutralize the fortification's harassing effects on forward regimental units. The Germans defended their strong point and hurled grenades in a close-range battle. Company B went to the North of FORT ST. BLAISE and captured BAS FARM to seal off any possible escape gap from either fort. Company I drew back and dug in around wire entanglements. Other units moved North to capture TOURNEBRIDGE, near the railroad marshaling yards of METZ, while another force removed road blocks and went East to take JOUY.

Now completely surrounded, both forts received a psychological warfare broadcast telling the occupants of their non-escape plight. Prisoners taken in combat and by-passed pockets exceeded 100. Prisoners of war included 1 General,

2 Captains and several other officers. The first prisoners of Volksturm troops (German Home Guard) were taken here, most of them being old men and willing to surrender when fighting at close quarters. As fighting grew in intensity around the FRESCATY airport, casualties rose, due in part to heavy 88 millimeter and AA fire.

The General in this case was Brigadier General Anton Dunckern of the SS (Schutz Staffel) and police, charged with the mission of insuring the loyalty of the Garrison and civil populace of METZ. As has been previously stated, his methods were usually effective, but he was not popular with his fellow prisoners, nor with his captors who were inclined to treat him with a great deal less respect than the German privates and officers who had been doing the fighting in the trenches. He was captured by a squad from Company E of the Tenth, while he was trying to hide out in a brewery on the outskirts of METZ. He was the first SS general to be captured by the Allies.

The Eleventh Infantry's battle for METZ raged through 17 November as the relentless attack by all three battalions converged upon the airfield and Southern outskirts of the city. The VERDUN FORTS (SOMMY and ST. BLAISE) shelled AUGNY and vicinity regularly, and although completely surrounded and cut off by Third Battalion troops, the forts continued to hold out. A "Surrender Now—or Die" ultimatum was broadcast to both forts without results. Both First and Second Battalions were engaged in heavy fighting around three sides of the airfield. With attached tanks of the Seven Hundred Thirty-Fifth Tank Battalion, the First Battalion broke through German positions on the left flank and by noon had moved the command post from AUGNY to ORLY. Enemy forts employed heavy artillery and point-blank AA fire while our own artillery shelled FORT ST. PRIVAT heavily. An enemy column of vehicles and infantry moving North of ORLY was sighted by a First Battalion observation post. Artillery fire was requested but a "Can't Adjust" reply was received. Outposts of the First Battalion went all the way to POLKA POINT and crossed the bridge to gain better observation of the enemy forces which, as it turned out, were withdrawing through METZ.

The 18th of November saw all three Regiments of the Fifth Division with their attached and supporting units poised on the outskirts of METZ. During the night of the 17-18 November troops of the Second Regiment occupied FRONTIGNY and moved on COURCELLES. At 0730 hours all Battalions were driving hard for the city itself. The Eleventh Combat Team expanded its left flank and launched an all-out attack from the South.

As the Second Battalion moved into the edge of the city of METZ and searched a former German headquarters, a map (scale 1:5,000) of the entire city of METZ with the plan of all defenses was found. Second Battalion Eleventh Infantry secured positions on the left flank of the First Battalion in the vicinity of TOURNEBRIDGE. Battle casualties for the day were comparatively light, but more cases of trench foot were reported. Forty-three prisoners were captured.

On 18 November, the battle for METZ itself was well underway, and the regimental commanding officer, Colonel Yuill, moved the forward command post to AUGNY. Heavy enemy fire from FORT ST. PRIVAT and gun emplacements at FRESCATY airfield held the advance up. First Battalion, Eleventh Infantry elements swung to the left of FORT ST. PRIVAT and continued to contain it, while Second Battalion units went to the opposite flank. Artillery duels continued throughout the day and heavy concentrations of enemy artillery fell on AUGNY, ORLY, and VERNY. Third Battalion units, with a platoon of tanks attached, were engaged in heavy house-to-house fighting in the Southwest outskirts of METZ. German tanks were sighted along the road East of FORT ST. PRIVAT. From fires that raged in METZ, E Company outposts could make out the figures of



enemy patrols and drove them back with machine gun fire. Earlier that day a Third Battalion medic was killed by a sniper at close range, while another was fired on with a burp gun. This, despite the fact that Red Cross brassards were clearly displayed. Hard hit by trench foot, F Company was pulled back to DOUANE for reorganization. Of the entire company, fourteen enlisted men remained on duty. Prisoner of War information was as follows: The Assault Company of the Thirty-Eighth SS Regiment consisted of 70 riflemen and 2 light machine gun sections. The unit was reassembled near FORT DRIANT at 0300 hours of the previous morning, split up into two groups, one of which entered the fort and the other went over to the East side of the river to be put in position along the railroad track facing the Eleventh's Third Battalion. One prisoner of war claimed that a pilot who bailed out of a P-47 was somewhere in the vicinity and trying to get back to our line. Many other prisoners of war included "old" men of 50 and 60 years of age who were split up and placed under the control of SS officers and key non-commissioned officers without infantry training. The First Volksturm Battalion consisting of 3 companies (150 men each company), deployed the First Company in the Southwest corner of the airfield while the Second and Third Companies went into the fort. The First, Second and Third Companies of the Thirty-Eighth SS Regiment also came from METZ and entered FORT ST. PRIVAT.

By 19 November METZ was reported surrounded when the Tenth Infantry closed the gap and elements of the Ninety-Fifth Division effected another crossing of the MOSELLE to reach the outskirts of the city. Elements of the Eleventh's Third Battalion were engaged in bitter house-to-house fighting in the Southwest part of the city, while Second Battalion units made small gains on the West side of FRESCATY Airfield. First Battalion troops with L Company, but minus C and B Companies by-passed several pillboxes and continued its assault on FORT ST. PRIVAT. On the next day METZ was entered from all sides, but the advance of the First Battalion Eleventh Infantry halted to contain FORT ST. PRIVAT, which continued to cover all Southern approaches to the city.

The 20th of November marked the final lunge into the city by the attacking regiments supported by the tanks and tank destroyers, and by the guns of the Division Artillery, which, though severely limited in effective mass fires by a dangerously low ammunition allowance, continued to support all three regiments in their attacks on what forts still remained. The Eleventh Combat Team still drove at the main city from the South despite heavy losses incurred in reducing the Southern group of Forts.

The First and Third Battalions remained to contain FORTS ST. PRIVAT, SOMMY and ST. BLAISE, while the Second Battalion was being regrouped. At 1400 hours a white flag bearer, flanked by two pompous figures appeared at the main door of FORT ST. PRIVAT. Major Schell, Commanding Officer of the First Battalion, Eleventh Infantry and Captain Thomas Seideman, German-speaking First Battalion surgeon, went forward to accept a "surrender." The SS Fort Commandant, Major Matzdorf, however, requested that ten of his severely wounded men be evacuated by the Americans and that fighting otherwise continue. When Major Schell explained that all would receive good treatment if he capitulated now, Major Matzdorf retorted, "My men and I are prepared to die fighting—if necessary." The conference was over. Later that afternoon when word of the surrender of FORT QUEULEU (to the Tenth Infantry) was received, Captain Kittstein of the IPW team returned to see Major Matzdorf at FORT ST. PRIVAT to inform him of this. The taut major refused to surrender so a Psychological Warfare unit made a broadcast to the garrison at 2200 hours that night—without result.



2nd Infantry attacks Cheminot.

While the Eleventh Combat Team struck from the South, the Tenth Infantry Regiment after taking BORN, smashed its way into the city from the East. The First Battalion, Tenth Infantry received only moderate resistance (compared with the bitter fighting around POUILLY and MAGNY) as it mopped up from house to house in the QUEULEU and PLANTIERES sector. Orders to cross the SEILLE and clean out the heart of METZ all the way to the HINDENBURG STRASSE—were received in the afternoon of November 19th. The crossing was to be completed by 0700 hours on the 20th.

At 0600 hours, November 20th, the Third Battalion Tenth Regiment crossed and advanced to HINDENBURG STRASSE. The Second Battalion crossed and advanced to the territory South of LOTHAR STRASSE and West of the railroad. Mopping up the Regimental area occupied the remainder of the 20th and the morning of the 21st. The garrison at FORT QUEULEU surrendered at 1045 hours on the 21st. All resistance was reported clear in the Tenth Regimental area by 1200 hours.

As the attack progressed Eastward and then turned North to encircle METZ, the Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion had gone into position in the vicinity of CHEMINOT, then PAGNY LES GOIN, VERNY and finally FLUERY. During this period the battalion was obliged to devise many special expedients to deliver continuous support fires. The very soft clay soil would not support the wheels of a piece during firing, and the spades were not adequate, even with large logs wired to them, to keep the piece from moving to the rear each time it was fired. With winch cables of prime movers fully extended, the howitzers were hooked to the winch cable which had been run through a snatch block attached to some solid object as a large tree, and the cable drawn taut. Thus any movement of the piece to the rear would have meant moving the heavy prime mover through deep mud also. Platforms of saplings were built, and the habitual revetments erected to protect the piece in case counter-battery fire should be received.

The fire direction centers in each of the positions were emplaced in wine cellars, which were the most shell-proof places that could be found, and all of the towns in the area bore witness to the shelling and bombing which preceded our entry.

The factors which affected the action around METZ the most were the wet ground, the rainy or snowy weather, and the daily haze which hampered observation, in addition to the numerous fortifications which had to be captured or reduced.



During the push on METZ the Tenth had encountered opposition varying from small arms fire to 75 millimeter, 76 millimeter, 76.2 millimeter, 88 millimeter, and 105 artillery assault guns, tanks and mines had failed to stop it. Anti-aircraft battalions had been utilized as infantry to delay attacks and SS troops of the Thirty-Eighth SS Regiment were employed in counter attacks. In his apparently desperate effort to halt the attack, the enemy had even brought static battalions out of the SIEGFRIED line and thrown them against the Division.

The Eleventh Combat Team on 22 November, established a forward Command Post at Hotel Royal, in the heart of METZ. Eight Prisoners of War deserted from Ft. ST. PRIVAT during the night and all stated that morale within the fort was very low. Company B returned to the First Battalion and joined in containing PRIVAT, while L Company reverted to the Third Battalion, which was in position around the VERDUN forts.

On Thanksgiving Day, Second Battalion moved to the Hotel Regina in METZ and was charged with providing security for the city via outpost and patrols. The Regimental Command Post was set up in the Hotel Royal. Meanwhile, both First and Third Battalions continued to contain the forts. Not everyone had turkey.

Colonel Paul Black now commanded the regiment, having succeeded Colonel Charles Yuill on the 21st upon the latter's hospitalization.

Following a conference with the commandant of FORTS SOMMY and ST. BLAISE on the previous day, Executive Officer Major John Acuff of the Third Battalion Eleventh Infantry accepted the surrender of the VERDUN forts at 0800 hours of 26 November 1944. Lieutenant Colonel Birdsong was in Paris on leave at the time. Two officers and 148 enlisted men filed out of both forts. An inspecting party reported no food, poor living quarters and ordnance equipment. Artillery had no effect on the forts, whereas aerial bombardment caused considerable damage to the North fort. In a brief ceremony following the surrender, Company K cited for heroic action at the DORNOT bridgehead, received the honor of raising American colors over the fort, the same fort which, on September 8, had decimated the ranks of the Second Battalion and K Company in the DORNOT bridgehead.

## THE FALL OF THE FORTS

METZ was captured—officially—on 21 November and its scattered garrison policed up by Thanksgiving Day. The Second Infantry moved through the city to relieve the Three Hundred Seventy-Ninth Infantry (Ninety-Fifth Infantry Division) of its mission of investing the METZ forts which were still holding out.

The First Battalion was assigned the mission of containing FORT JEANNE D'ARC, the Second took over the guarding of the "SEVEN DWARFS," FORT MARIVAL, ST. HUBERT, BOIS DE LA DAME, JUSSY NORD, JUSSY SUD, VAUX NORD and VAUX SUD. The Third Battalion returned to FORT DRIANT, this time not to attack it but merely to contain it, to cut its supply line and with the help of heavy artillery to batter it into submission.

By 1700 hours on 23 November, the relief had been accomplished, the Commanding Officer of the Second Infantry assumed command of his new sector and the regiment settled down to the task of outwitting the besieged Germans.

While a detachment of the Second Infantry took part in the formal ceremonies in METZ which turned the liberated city over to the civilian authorities 24 November, patrols of the Second Battalion probed the line of the SEVEN DWARFS and found FORT JUSSY DU NORD and JUSSY DU SUD unoccupied. Heavy small arms fire from FORT JEANNE D'ARC prevented investigation of FORT ST. HUBERT.

During the night of 24-25 November, Second Battalion combat patrols investigated and occupied the remaining forts of the "DWARFS" chain and cut overland communication between FORTS DRIANT and JEANNE D'ARC.

Prisoners that had been captured reported that morale in the unsundered forts was low, but that the commanders were determined to hold out as long as ammunition and rations lasted. Artillery and mortar fire from the forts fell sporadically in the regimental area but few casualties resulted.

When it became apparent that the forts could withstand every type of artillery fired at them, Psychological Warfare teams began broadcasts to the holdouts.

As a result of one of the broadcasts a meeting was effected 30 November between an officer representative of the commanding officer of FORT JEANNE D'ARC and an officer representing the Commanding Officer Second Infantry. A demand of unconditional surrender was refused by the Germans who termed it "dishonorable and therefore unacceptable." A broadcast to DRIANT requesting a meeting was ignored.

While the Second Combat Team alternated between Bombardment and Broadcast in an attempt to take the smaller forts with as few casualties as possible, the Eleventh Combat Team concentrated on reducing the Southern group of FORTS in much the same manner.

On 27 November, the Second Battalion minus F Company moved by motor from Hotel Regina in METZ and went 4½ miles to LONGVILLE, where relief of the Tenth Infantry before FORTS PLAPPEVILLE and ST. QUENTIN was effected. Yet another surrender appeal was broadcast to Ft. ST. PRIVAT, which was being contained by the First Battalion. On 29 November, Colonel Black, Eleventh Infantry Commanding Officer, held two conferences with Major Matzdorf in Fort ST. PRIVAT. After the second parley, the fort commandant agreed to surrender the fort at 1600 hours. At the pre-arranged hour the garrison slowly began filing out of the fort. Eighty of 488 enlisted men were wounded; there were 22 officers. The Second Battalion continued to contain FORTS ST. QUENTIN and PLAPPEVILLE with extensive patrolling. Enemy mortar and artillery fire ranged from moderate to heavy.

German troops leave Fort St. Quentin after surrender.







Sgt. John L. MacMath, Jr., uses his French-American dictionary in trying to persuade a French Mademoiselle to do his laundry.



Narrow roads were crowded as vehicles and tanks raced towards Rheims.



Chaplain Golisch orients a group of reinforcements before they are sent into the front lines.



# Into Germany: Karlsbrunn, Saarlautern and the Siegfried Line

The month of December opened with the Division engaged in a very unusual tactical situation. Part of the Division was in METZ, cleaning and reorganizing while at the same time still containing the four unfallen forts—DRIANT, PLAPPEVILLE, ST. QUENTIN and JEANNE D'ARC. At the same time, the Tenth Infantry Regiment was detached from the Fifth and attached to the Ninety-Fifth Division and attacked Eastward toward the Saar river. The rest of the division later moved from METZ up with the Tenth and the Second and Eleventh Combat Teams fought in SAARLAUTERN before the Fifth was hurriedly yanked out of the line and sent North to LUXEMBOURG when the Germans launched their violent ARDENNES offensive on 17 December.

As December opened, the Second Battalion, Eleventh Infantry was containing Forts ST. QUENTIN and PLAPPEVILLE in an efficient but comfortable manner. Efficient in that it kept a tight ring around the forts so that enemy patrols venturing out were either captured or turned back; comfortable in that troops were able to quarter themselves in warm buildings close to the forts.

## LAST OF THE METZ FORTS

On December 1st, Colonel Black, Eleventh Infantry Commanding Officer, with Captain Kittstein as his interpreter, approached Fort ST. QUENTIN carrying a white flag. Their object was to get the encircled forts to surrender. Captain Kittstein and an enlisted man entered the fort and arranged with the German commanding officer to have a conference at 1230 hours with Colonel Black. The conference was held and surrender terms discussed. After a two-hour discussion the German Commander would not consent to surrender terms and decided to continue to hold out.

During the daylight hours the companies all kept in their positions and contained the forts. The forts were subjected to artillery and mortar fire and whenever there was any enemy visible there was sporadic small arms fire. At night patrols were very active. Patrols were sent out from each company and the Battalion Reconnaissance platoon. These patrols prevented any enemy from leaving the forts and also managed to collect a few prisoners from time to time.

On 5 December a message was received at Battalion Headquarters from Division, saying that a prisoner of war from Fort ST. QUENTIN who had just been captured said that there were about 500 men in the Fort, that there was one 75 millimeter howitzer and little or no ammunition, hardly any food and that the forts were ready to surrender.

At 0815 hours on 6 December it was reported by Company E that there was a white flag flying on Fort ST. QUENTIN with a message from the German Commanding Officer, Colonel Stoessel, asking that a conference be held at 1130 hours with an officer from Division. On the 6 December, 1944, Colonel Paul O. Franson, as Parliamenterie was directed to conduct a parley with the German Commander of Fort San Quentin. After arranging the details and designating the party to accompany him to the Fort, Col. Franson met the German officers, conducted the parley, and as the outcome of the negotiations, the Fort surrendered to Colonel Franson and Lieutenant Colonel John T. Russell, commanding the Second Battalion, Eleventh Infantry Regiment.

Prisoners taken were: 22 German officers, 124 German non-commissioned officers, 458 privates and 53 wounded men. The personnel captured, other than the wounded, were in good physical condition, but very hungry. Two American enlisted men who had been prisoners of the Germans were recaptured.

Material captured included 400 rifles, 14 pistols, 400 hel-

rets, 800 ammunition pouches, 2 generators and about 600 beds and bunks. Much of the equipment was scattered about the fort and was badly damaged or destroyed, but the real reason for surrender was lack of food.

On December 6 the Second Battalion was relieved by the First Battalion, Three Hundred Forty-Fifth Infantry of the Eighty-Seventh Division. The Second Battalion motor marched to LAUTERBACH, Germany, where it joined the remainder of the regiment in an assembly area there. At 1115 hours on the 7 December a party of officers from the Fifth Division comprised of Colonel Franson, Division Chief of Staff, Lt. Colonel Clayton E. Crafts, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, Major Alois R. Sintzel, Regimental Surgeon, Second Infantry, Captain Harry Smith, Executive Officer, Second Battalion, Eleventh Infantry Regiment, and a flag bearer left the CP of Company G, Eleventh Infantry and met the German Parley group just outside of Fort PLAPPEVILLE. At 1130 hours the German group appeared, led by Captain Durst, Commanding Company G of the Eleventh Infantry, who had gone out to act as a guide for the German Parliamenterie.

The party retired to a nearby house to discuss the details and after the German Commander had been convinced of his hopeless situation, terms were agreed on, and the German Commander unconditionally surrendered his command.

Captain Richard Durst, Commanding Officer of Company G was left behind with an interpreter to handle the negotiations for the surrender. At 1200 hours on 7 December, Fort PLAPPEVILLE surrendered to Captain Durst, Company G, Eleventh Infantry and was immediately turned over to the Three Hundred Forty-Fifth Infantry.

During the early morning of 8 December, the First and Second Battalions of the Second Infantry were relieved by elements of the Three Hundred Forty-Fifth Infantry (Eighty-Seventh Infantry Division) and proceeded by motor to an assembly area in the vicinity of CREUTZWALD, on the LORRAINE-GERMANY border.

At noon that same day, as the remaining elements of the regiment were preparing to turn over the sector to the Three Hundred Forty-Fifth Infantry two German non-commissioned officers came to front lines of the Second Infantry empowered to arrange a meeting between their commander and the American commander.

At 1500 hours, the commanding officer of Fort DRIANT, Lieutenant Colonel Richter, met the Commanding Officer Second Infantry, Colonel A. Worrell Roffe, at the foot of Fort DRIANT. After a thirty-minute discussion of terms, the German commander surrendered the fort with 19 officers and 592 enlisted men to the Second Infantry.

A half hour later, the sector was turned over to the Three Hundred Forty-Fifth and the remainder of the regiment, less Company I, prepared to move Northward. Company I remained to guard the fort and arrange for the evacuation of prisoners.

With the fall of Fort DRIANT came the end of the arduous MOSELLE offensive. Nearly four months had passed since the first attempt to cross the MOSELLE on September 9th. The Fifth Division had suffered terrific losses in those months, but as a result of the smashing attacks and desperate defenses against the equally desperate and wholly fanatic Boche, the way was opened to the SAUER River and Germany.

With scarcely enough time to catch its breath, most of the Fifth Division left METZ and the surrounding area to the Eighty-Seventh Infantry Division and moved forward to within striking distance of the SIEGFRIED Line.

Attachments to the Division on the 1st of December were: Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, Sixth Cavalry Group.

Sixth Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron.



Fifth Ranger Battalion.

Company C Six Hundred Second Tank Destroyer Battalion.

Company B Two Hundred Ninety-Third Engineer Combat Battalion.

Troop E Twenty-Eighth Cavalry Squadron.

On the 1st of December 1944 as the Second and Eleventh Combat Teams were containing forts the First and Second Battalions of the Tenth Combat Team were attached to the Ninety-Fifth Division, giving the designation of TASK FORCE BELL, and were ordered to proceed to a previously designed assembly area in the Southwestern edge of FORET DE LA HOUE, in the vicinity of CARLING. The troops began to move from the city of METZ at 1100 hours, and approximately six hours later were closed in the new assembly area awaiting orders to advance.

The mission was to clear the section of LORRAINE and the SAAR Basin of the enemy up to the SAAR River just North of the highly important arms producing center of SAARBRÜCKEN, Germany. The mission assigned to the Combat Team might more accurately be recorded as a calculated risk in consideration of the fact that the strength of the enemy was not definitely known, and that, minus the support of the Third Battalion in the initial phase of the attack, such a comparatively small force was expected to cover an area of wooded and irregular terrain the dimension of which, in normal operations, would possibly have called for the services of an entire infantry division.

But with the enemy being rapidly forced back toward the SAAR River on both of the Division flanks, the exigencies of the situation made it imperative that the sector to the front should be cleared as hastily as possible, so the Forty-Sixth Field Artillery reverted to the Tenth Infantry control.

When the Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion left the METZ area to move East on 23 November 1944 it left the Tenth Infantry, and assumed the mission of general support of the Ninety-Fifth Infantry Division which was then holding a bridgehead across the NIED River in the vicinity of Fort SORBEY, and extending to the Northwest for several miles. The Ninety-Fifth Infantry Division was not in contact with the enemy, however, and in spite of torrential rains, the battalion performed the much-needed maintenance of material at BEUX. Later, positions were occupied at ST. SUZANNE and in the vicinity of ZIMMING. ST. SUZANNE had been a French garrison of the Maginot Line, and evidence of the system of fortifications was everywhere. In the positions at ZIMMING the Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion reverted to control of the Fifth Infantry Division, and was informed that it would support elements of the Tenth Infantry in the vicinity. On 28 November, however, orders were received, and the battalion moved back to METZ and took positions in the Eastern part of town, and prepared to bombard the numerous fortifications which surrounded the city and were still holding out.

The Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion fired 1744 rounds in eight hours as a part of a Division Artillery plan to demoralize and cause the surrender of the fort garrisons. This tremendous expenditure of ammunition had been fired by only two of the battalion's three batteries, Battery C having been sent back to the East to support the Third Battalion of the Tenth Infantry in the vicinity of CARLING. Gun crews, cooks, mechanics, and signal personnel all joined in the huge job of preparing ammunition for firing. After the night long pounding, the battalion moved again this time to the vicinity of NIEDERVISSE back in the Maginot Line. The mission was direct support of TASK FORCE BELL. The battalion was attached to the task force, and fired in support of the attack the following morning.

## TENTH INFANTRY INTO CREUTZWALD AND KARLSBRUNN

The immediate objective of the Tenth Infantry was the FORET DE LA HOUE. The advance began with the Second Battalion on the left and the First Battalion on the right. The advance was begun from the road running Northwest and Southeast through GUERTING, and proceeded through the Southwest portion of the forest. In a little more than two hours after the advance started, Company B ran into considerable small arms and mortar fire coming from the railroad serving the coal mines in the vicinity of CREUTZWALD. The fire mounted as the other assaulting companies pulled up abreast. Both battalions halted for the night in positions West of the KOHLENWALD-SAULE road, patrolling the front preparatory to resuming the advance on the following day.

During this period, the Third Battalion was relieved by the Fifth Ranger Battalion and reverted to regimental control. This battalion left Company L, Tenth Infantry in CARLING as a covering shell and then proceeded to an assembly area in the vicinity of HAM. Company D, Seven Hundred Thirty-Fifth Tank Battalion, was attached. Meanwhile the regiment reverted to the control of the Fifth Infantry Division.

As the advance of the battalions was resumed on the second day of December, the enemy resisted stubbornly with small arms, 20 millimeter mortar, and artillery fire. As they were gradually forced back their resistance became more centered around the mining town of CREUTZWALD and mine shafts in that vicinity.

The Second Battalion, Tenth Infantry, jumped off in attack simultaneously with the First Battalion whose companies had reached and crossed the railroad. The advance continued so swiftly that by 1100 hours some of the advance elements were beyond the range of radio contact. Fifteen minutes later forward elements of Company F, Tenth Infantry reported themselves pinned down by small arms fire. This delay was temporary, only, and with Company E still pushing forward, the general advance of the battalion continued. At the end of the day's activities both battalions had crossed the road and railroad before CREUTZWALD. Company B of the First Battalion was shifted to the right flank, the KOHLENWALD Woods, adjacent to the BISTEN River. As a result of the day's operation, the FORET DE LA HOUE was completely clear of the enemy.

Operating on the right flank of the Tenth at this time was the Sixth Cavalry Group and the Fifth Ranger Battalion attached to the Fifth Division.

On the 2d of December the Sixth Cavalry Group attacked at 1000 hours to the Northeast toward the town of L'HOPITAL against fairly stiff enemy resistance and reached the Northeast corner of FORET DE ST. AVOLD.

Company A Seventh Engineer Battalion, completed the construction of a Bailey Bridge across the SELLE River, aiding materially in the flow of supplies to the attacking troops and speeding the evacuation of wounded and prisoners.

On the third of December the Sixth Cavalry Group and the Fifth Ranger Battalion were counterattacked at 0715 and again at 1115 hours, but after sharp fighting managed to drive the enemy off with severe losses and to continue their attack toward LAUTERBACH where they dug in on the outskirts of the town for the night. During the advance in this sector on the 3d of December a total of 41 prisoners of war were evacuated, an estimated 100 enemy were killed, 200 wounded, and material destroyed by the attacking troops and supporting artillery included one anti-tank gun, one self-propelled gun, 2 machine guns, and one armored car.

In the Tenth Infantry sector, as the weather turned colder and the first light snow fell, the advance was resumed on the morning of December 3d, with assault companies of the First Battalion jumping off in attack, as planned, at 0630 hours. Meanwhile, the Regimental Com-



mand Post, which had been located at VIEDERVISSE for operations after the Regiment left METZ, prepared to move into the mining settlement in the outskirts of CREUTZWALD, and by 1015 hours was set up in that locality. Also, during the interim, the company that had remained as a covering shell when the Third Battalion rejoined the regiment, was relieved and returned to the battalion.

The task of driving the enemy from the mine shafts and houses before CREUTZWALD proved to be a difficult assignment. By 0800 hours, however, Company B had driven into the outskirts of the town and was engaged in dislodging the occupants. An hour later, Company A, after a stubborn fire fight, had cleared its sector of the woods to the stream and had one squad across. Company C was still advancing at the time, and by noon Company B troops were reported in possession of five blocks of the town. In the early afternoon, Company C was held up near one of the mine shafts. By 2100 hours, Company A and B, having completed their respective missions, were alerted preparatory to crossing the BISTEN River. Company C, with a detachment of medium tanks and light tanks, was ordered to take its objective, and tank destroyers were assigned to accompany Company B.

During the day the Second Battalion, Tenth Infantry, remained in position and prepared to attack and cross the river after darkness. In the meantime, the Third Battalion had commenced displacement of troops to CREUTZWALD at about 0830 hours, and two hours later was ordered to attack the enemy in KARLSBRUNN Woods, East of CREUTZWALD. By the close of the day they had advanced to the CREUTZWALD-LAUTERBACH road and elements of both the First and the Second Battalions had entered German territory by crossing the BISTEN River North of CREUTZWALD.

During the night of December 3d and 4th, the remaining elements of the First and Second Battalions completed the crossing and consolidated their positions. When morning came the advance toward the SAAR River was resumed; the Third Battalion moving East toward LUDWEILLER while clearing the woods to its front, and the First Battalion moving toward the woods at BUGHENSTAUDEN and Hill 283, clearing a pocket of resistance at LA CROIX on the route of advance.

On 4 December 1944 the Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion moved to the vicinity of CREUTZWALD and the following day displaced to WILHELMSBROOM, the last position in France. The advance had been virtually continuous and on 6 December the battalion occupied its first position on German soil at FRIEDRICHSEILER. During the advance, one artillery field officer was killed in action while observing artillery fire on enemy mortar positions. Shortly after this another officer was reported missing in action while acting as a forward observer.

The attack of the Third Battalion jumped off with Companies I and K leading. Shortly afterwards Company K discovered that they had inadvertently passed a number of Germans and called for reinforcements. Company L was promptly dispatched to give them support.

The advance continued with methodical thoroughness, the enemy shot up and finally scattered, until by the middle of the afternoon the battalion was meeting only slight and disorganized resistance, and by 1400 hours were on their objective.

In the meantime, the Second Battalion had taken over the mission of the First Battalion, entering the woods near Hill 283 at 1500 hours. The First Battalion was ordered to assemble in the woods to the East, and to follow the Third Battalion. In the operation through the KARLSBRUNN Woods, the Third Battalion encountered some resistance from small and isolated enemy groups which on the whole proved more harassing than effective.

Three hours after the Third Battalion had reached the East edge of the woods and had dug in, they received an

enemy counterattack of at least company strength supported by mortars and artillery fire. It was a determined, hard-hitting assault in which the attackers sought to move in and close quickly under cover of their concentrations. K Company stood its ground despite a sharp rising casualty rate—stood and held until tank destroyers of the Eight Hundred Eighteenth TD Battalion, led by Lt. Taylor and Captain Frank Bradley, moved into firing positions. The counterattack was broken. The First Battalion and Third Battalion still held their ground in the edge of KARLSBRUNN Woods, the Second Battalion had taken Hill 283, and preparations were being made to continue the advance on the morning of December 5th.

In the day's operation, the Regiment had successfully cleared enemy points of resistance in the vicinity of BUGHENSTAUDEN and in the KARLSBRUNN Woods, repelled counterattacks from the East, and captured 105 prisoners. The enemy suffered an estimated 100 casualties in dead and wounded. Incomplete reports of enemy material captured intact included artillery pieces, 20 millimeter guns, mortars, and Panzerfaust rockets.

On the 4th of December, the Third Battalion of the Eleventh Infantry was committed on the right flank of the Tenth Infantry, after a quick redeployment from METZ. With its mission of containing the Verdun Forts SOMMY and BLAISE in the area Southeast of METZ completed, by virtue of surrender on 26 November 1944, the Third Battalion, Eleventh Infantry had moved into the city limits of METZ, minus Company K which remained to guard the now unoccupied fortifications until relieved on 1 December by Company B of the First Battalion, Eleventh Infantry.

On 2 December 1944 the Battalion was attached to Division Headquarters and ordered to move East of METZ to ST. AVOLD, FRANCE with the mission of halting any attempted enemy counterattacks within the division's zone of action, but meanwhile remained in division reserve. With regimental anti-tank company attached, the Battalion entrucked in METZ at 1300 hours, rode 31 miles Eastward and arrived at ST. AVOLD by 1545 hours to occupy military barracks that had previously housed enemy troops. Civilians in the nearby town informed the Battalion S-2, that in withdrawing the Germans had "planted" at least thirty time-bombs in the vicinity of ST. AVOLD, and added that some were timed to explode after four days. Although already partially occupied by an anti-aircraft unit, a careful search by Third Battalion officers failed to reveal the existence of time-bombs within the barracks, so companies were allotted sleeping quarters for the night.

At 1330 hours on the next afternoon—following a morning reconnaissance by Battalion Commander Lieutenant Colonel Birdsong, the Battalion upon orders from Division proceeded on foot Northwest toward HAM, but enroute the destination was suddenly changed to an assembly area directly South of CREUTZWALD. The troops arrived at the designated point at 1930 hours after a nine-mile march through driving rain.

Meanwhile, Regimental rear command post, all units of the First Battalion, Service Company and Cannon Company had moved from METZ to the barracks of ST. AVOLD. At exactly 2300 hours, 3 December 1944, a time-bomb exploded in one of the largest of a group of buildings, that on the previous night were billets for members of the Third Battalion, but now were occupied by ordnance and anti-aircraft units. The stone building, a victim of what was believed to have been explosives placed in a newly-laid floor, was two thirds demolished and had pinioned an undetermined number of soldiers, dead and alive beneath masses of rubble piled two stories high. While orders were issued for personnel to move out of all buildings, volunteers were already clearing away rubble to extricate soldiers beneath, and as a result the lives of several of the anti-aircraft and ordnance units who occupied the buildings were saved. Long range



enemy artillery hurled several rounds into the vicinity of St. AVOLD, but no casualties were incurred.

With LAUTERBACH, Germany, as its primary objective, the Third Battalion, Eleventh Infantry opened a drive from South of CREUTZWALD East across the Western fringes of the KARLSBRUNN forest, crossed the German frontier to become the regiment's first unit to enter the country and encountered resistance Northwest of LAUTERBACH gap. Companies I and K deployed to attack when enemy artillery was received, but by the time heavy weapons were brought into position it had become dark and the decision was to dig in for the night and renew attack operations in the morning. A Company K combat patrol that went out that night to determine if enemy troops occupied a group of houses at the edge of the forest surprised a platoon of Germans and in sharp engagement that followed, killed five and took twenty-two prisoners without loss. That same night the Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon removed a road block consisting of felled trees to enable anti-tank guns to move up in support of the attack that was scheduled for the next day.

Next morning, the 5th of December, saw the First and Third Battalions of the Tenth attack LUDWEILER and the Third Battalion of the Eleventh hit the town of LAUTERBACH in conjunction with the Fifth Ranger Battalion.

At 0530 hours two patrols of I and K companies spear-headed the attack of the Third Battalion Eleventh Infantry on LAUTERBACH. No resistance was encountered and all units converged upon the town to link up with elements of the Fifth Ranger Battalion who had simultaneously penetrated into the Western portion of LAUTERBACH in their attack from the Southeast. Amid sporadic fire from enemy snipers, the Third Battalion filtered through the forest and broke out into open country West of LUDWEILER. The Battalion's mission was to secure high ground across the ROSELLE River and without pause, troops of the unit deployed to carry the attack on the town of GRAND ROSELLE itself. Tenth Infantry troops on the left were to provide security from that flank. Machine gun and artillery fire from that sector was becoming heavy but a point just West of the river and South of LUDWEILER was reached by 1800 hours and all was in readiness for the river crossing. Several prisoners were captured in patrol skirmishes, five were wounded and evacuated by medics. Although several Third Battalion men were wounded, no one was killed. Extensive patrolling took place at night as several patrols were sent to establish contact with the Tenth Infantry, while others went toward the river to probe enemy defenses. At one time during the night an L Company patrol literally collided with fifteen Germans. The encounter was not without humor as both patrols beat a hasty retreat without firing a shot in the close quarter confusion. Another patrol that went to contact the Tenth Infantry fought a prolonged battle with a German force of undetermined strength and returned several hours later. Contact with the Tenth had not yet been established. While screening patrols were still active, a platoon of Company K attempted to effect a crossing of the ROSELLE River slightly South of LUDWEILER, by way of a foot bridge that came under intermittent mortar and artillery fire. Due to intense small arms fire only five men crossed the narrow river to hold a miniature bridgehead in the midst of German positions, until an hour later when four more infantrymen of Company K made it to the far shore. Strange incidents developed in the town of GRAND ROSELLE adjoining LUDWEILER when several rear Command Posts of the Third Battalion Companies accidentally moved into the town after dark, some four hundred yards beyond most forward line positions, for, as it turned out, enemy troops controlled the town, and in at least one case Americans unwittingly shared a building with German soldiers. Apparently aware of the presence of American troops, Germans patrolled GRAND ROSELLE extensively and often clashed with Third Battalion

patrols in jet-black darkness. But when daylight came and Third Battalion troops jumped off to renew the drive across the ROSELLE River, it was discovered that the enemy had withdrawn from town during the night, leaving behind a sizeable force of snipers who more than harassed troops that entered the town.

As the Third Battalion of the Eleventh cleared LAUTERBACH, the Third Battalion of the Tenth struck LUDWEILER on the 5th of December. Tanks supporting the First Battalion were released to the 3d and they were in the Southwest section of LUDWEILER by 1500 hours, although the town was still under artillery fire and infested with German panzerfaust teams. Company A then helped the Third Battalion clear LUDWEILER while Companies K and L patrolled to the West bank of the ROSELLE River. The Second Battalion moved up to WERBELN, and patrolled toward BOUS.

By the morning of December 6, Company A Tenth Infantry was slowly but steadily clearing LUDWEILER while the Second Battalion and the Fifth Reconnaissance Troop were clearing enemy resistance from DIFFERTEN, WERBELN, and the woods to the North.

At 1740 hours that day Company K of the Eleventh crossed the ROSELLE to expand its perilous nine-man bridgehead, advanced 500 yards beyond the bank at the foot of a hill, and took up defensive positions in a line of trenches formerly occupied by the enemy. Company I was split up to secure both flanks of the battalion while L Company joined K. The enemy found the range soon after dark and caused some casualties among Third Battalion troops. In total darkness some fanatical Germans managed to filter downhill past outposts and into some identical trenches with Americans from where they opened with sporadic burp gun and other automatic weapons fire, but those enemy elements were neutralized by annihilation or capture. At daybreak three enemy medics, wearing new type, knee-length aprons displaying a hug red cross against a white background, were seized when they lost their way and wandered into a K Company outpost.

German shelling resumed early that morning and several artillery and mortar shells scored direct hits on the bridge South of LUDWEILER, but the bridge remained passable to foot troops. Later that day, the Battalion Reconnaissance Platoon cut through the front lines and patrolled East toward the SAAK River in an attempt to determine the enemy's strength in that sector. In an engagement with a German patrol midway between the ROSELLE and SAAK Rivers, the reconnaissance platoon took two prisoners before enemy pressure forced a withdrawal. At 1400 hours information was received that the Sixth Cavalry would relieve the Third Battalion that night. It was cold and rainy, and the news was well received.

Amid enemy patrol activity, intermittent shelling and raking machine gun fire, relief of the battalion began at 0215 hours when elements of the Sixth Cavalry arrived. The relief was completed by 0630 hours and the entire battalion marched three miles West to LAUTERBACH, which the Third Battalion had previously captured, and which now was to serve as the regimental assembly area.

Total number of casualties in the Eleventh Infantry during the period of this action was 7 Officers and 35 enlisted men wounded and evacuated. Among ten enlisted men who were killed in action was Staff Sergeant Joe Capehart, Eleventh Infantry veteran and two-time recipient of the Silver Star award for gallantry in action.

The Tenth Infantry Regimental Command Post began operating for the first time on German soil on December 6 when it set up in the town of DIFFERTEN while the town was still being subjected to shell fire and not yet clear of snipers. The ensuing two days were spent in mopping up the various small pockets of resistance in the regimental area.

The First Battalion continued clearing LUDWEILER and surrounding woods while the Second Battalion cleared



WADGASSEN, HOSTENBACH and the Northern part of KARLSBRUNN woods.

It was near DIFFERTEN that Private First Class William D. Haag of a battalion headquarters wire section was out checking for a break in one of the wire lines from battalion to a line company. Returning to the battalion command post, he was challenged by an enemy patrol. Realizing that if no signal was given, the battalion command post would be endangered, Haag gave a shout and rushed at the Germans with bare hands. He was killed but other infantrymen heard him and came running to break up the patrol and kill six Germans. Haag was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

By December 7 the Third Battalion had cleared its zone all the way to the SAAR River and the Second Battalion was tied in with the Ninety-Fifth Infantry Division on the left. By 1510 hours on December 8 all resistance in the Regimental zone had ceased, and the Sixth Cavalry relieved the Tenth Infantry Regiment of all patrol missions along the river at 2330 hours. On December 9th, with the mission of the Combat Team accomplished, the men of the victorious but tired and understrength battalions, moved to assembly area for regrouping; First and Third Battalions to vicinity of LUDWEILER, and the Second Battalion to vicinity of HOSTENBACH and WERBELN.

As a result of operations during the period from December 1st-9th, the regiment's mission to clear the territory West of the SAAR River including FORET DE LA HOUVE, KARLSBRUNN Woods, and the towns of CREUTZWALD, DIFFERTEN, LUDWEILER, WERBELN, SCHAFHAUSEN, HOSTENBACH, FRIEDRICHWEILER, and WADGASSEN as well as many other villages and settlements too numerous to mention, had been successfully carried out. The front along the general line of the SAAR River was straightened. In addition to the severe losses inflicted upon the enemy in dead and wounded and equipment destroyed, 375 prisoners were captured during the period.

In conjunction with the Tenth Infantry Regiment, forces engaging the enemy during the period included as attachments: Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion, Company B, Seven Hundred Thirty-Fifth Tank Battalion, Company B, Eight Hundred Eighteenth Tank Destroyer Battalion, Company B Seventh Engineers, and Company B Fifth Medical Battalion. During the first five days of the operations in the DIFFERTEN-LUDWEILER area, elements of special companies and attached units constituted the Regimental Reserve, and during the three subsequent days of the attack Company A was in reserve.

Intelligence obtained of the enemy during the period revealed that the Tenth Combat Team had been opposed by elements of two German divisions—the Thirty-Sixth and the Three Hundred Forty-Seventh. Heavy artillery fire from bunker positions of the SIEGFRIED Line North of the SAAR supported the enemy in his vain efforts to keep us from German soil. Once again the terrain had been to their advantage.

The woods of FORET DE LA HOUVE and KARLSBRUNN, extending over several square miles, enabled the enemy to delay our advance by making use of road blocks, craters, tree obstacles, and anti-tank ditches. Repeated counter-attacks in company strength attempted to slow our drive. However, these efforts availed the enemy little. Commencing the drive as a reinforced combat team, and with a front at one time in the operation 500 meters wider than that of the Ninety-Fifth Infantry Division on our left, the Tenth by the end of the period almost completely had disorganized two enemy regiments, who, despite orders to the contrary, finally attempted to withdraw in disorderly fashion by rowing or swimming across the SAAR River where many drowned.

Troops of the German Three Hundred Forty-Seventh Division were found to be mostly young men eighteen to twenty years of age, or former German Air Force person-

nel. In the main they fought well until our supporting artillery concentrations caused them to reconsider. In the later phase of the drive the confusion in their ranks increased as their units were split up and dispersed. Even then, their officers, lost from their regular units, desperately attempted to continue the fight by forming combat groups of their own—forcing any group of men they could round up, to fight under their command. It was further observed that the Alarm Companies, formed of men from supply trains and rear echelons, and thrown in battle as last-minute reserves, were unused to front line duty, and gave up quickly.

It must be remembered that during this period the Forts in the METZ area had not all surrendered and all three Combat Teams were operating with forces in both METZ area and in the SAAR River area, hence no Combat Team was complete in its strength and in effect had become Task Forces. This placed all personnel under considerable strain in addition to the ever-present front line tension due to the fact that there was seldom enough troops on hand to operate in a normal way, and all personnel were required to do a great deal more than that normally expected in order to carry out the missions assigned to them. The roads in the area were blocked with every conceivable type of barrier by the retreating Jerry, and snipers, mine fields, and booby-traps remained an ever-present threat.

### SAARLAUTERN AND THE SIEGFRIED

By mid-afternoon of the 9th of December, the Second Infantry Regiment had closed into its assembly area from METZ and the Fifth Division was once again an integrated unit with all three Combat Teams in proximity. The Third Army plan at this time involved cracking the SIEGFRIED Line along the SAAR River and plunging Eastward through the SAAR-PALATINATE to the RHINE River. The Ninety-Fifth Division was working on that task in SAARLAUTERN and the Thirty-Fifth Infantry and Fourth Armored Divisions were attacking to the South of the Fifth Division. Far North in Germany, the U. S. First and Ninth Armies had reduced AACHEN and were progressing very slowly Eastward. It was tough fighting everywhere and winter was coming fast. Nowhere, however, was the SIEGFRIED as thick as it was in the pillbox-studded belts of fortified cities such as SAARLAUTERN and SAARBRUCKEN.

So—day after day, within artillery range of the SIEGFRIED, troops practiced formations for assaulting pillboxes, brushed up on their knowledge of demolitions and rehearsed unit tactics in the portion of the MAGINOT line that was in the Division area.

On 12 December, the Ninety-Fifth Infantry Division, which was fighting in SAARLAUTERN, requested assistance. At 1745 hours the Third Battalion Second Infantry was attached to them with the mission of guarding the bridge across the SAAR River.

During the period December 9th-19th inclusive, the Tenth Regiment, with minor exceptions, remained in its several assembly areas absorbing reinforcements, re-organizing and training. The Sixth Cavalry patrolled the river line but enemy patrols making a practice of crossing the river under cover of darkness, made it necessary for the Tenth to maintain a fairly strong system of outposts. This was particularly true in the Second Battalion area where it was deemed essential to keep one company of troops on constant vigil, companies of the battalion being rotated for the performance of this duty. In addition to enemy patrol activity, the forward area was subjected to intermittent artillery fire from gun positions in the SIEGFRIED Line.

During the afternoon of December 13th, the Third Battalion Second Infantry moved to the Ninety-Fifth Infantry Division area to guard the bridge across the SAAR in that sector of the front. Plans were made for the relief of the Third Battalion of the Second Infantry Regiment by the First Battalion on December 17th.



The initial plans called for cavalry activity between WEHRDEN and WAGASSEN in order to give the enemy the false impression that a crossing of the river was to be made on this front during the early morning of December 18th, while elements of the Second Infantry Regiment passed through the bridgehead to relieve the Three Hundred Thirty-Seventh Infantry Regiment. The Eleventh Infantry at this time was slated to relieve the Three Hundred Ninety-Seventh Infantry. Later in the day, however, these plans were modified in that the movement of the First Battalion to relieve elements of the Third Battalion, Second Infantry was rescinded. A feint at making a crossing on our front was to be carried out. The object was to draw enemy reserves from the bridgehead area of the Ninety-Fifth Division. Feinting operations along the SAAR River were to begin the evening of December 17th, and were to last until daylight the following day. The Second Battalion, Tenth Infantry, was to operate in the WADGASSEN area, while the Third Battalion, Tenth Infantry, would demonstrate near positions of Company B. Cavalry and Rangers were to operate in the area between WIERDEN and HOSTENBACH. To make the demonstration more convincing, two truck loads of boats were to be brought into WADGASSEN clearly visible to the enemy. Corps artillery would support the drama with fire and white star clusters would be utilized to control the movement of tanks.

The carefully planned maneuver as actually carried out proved ineffectual except as a successful covering operation for the relief of elements of the Ninety-Fifth Division by elements of the Fifth Division. By coincidence the Germans had big plans of their own.

## THE 17th OF DECEMBER

That was a date long to be remembered in the European war. For on that date, the Wehrmacht gambled everything on a last, large, full-scale offensive that struck the U. S. First Army in the ARDENNES forest in LUXEMBOURG and BELGIUM. In a Field Order to his troops, Germany's Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt had said "... you know that all is at stake."

The offensive had been planned with usual Prussian efficient attention to detail and duplicity. German troops were massed without being detected and all the heavy vehicular movement and shifting behind the lines along the SAAR valley had evidently been a feint.

The Wehrmacht, steeled by the presence of SS Divisions and Panzer Lehr Divisions, hit the ARDENNES, crumpling the untested One Hundred Sixth Infantry Division which had just been put into the lines fresh out of the zone of the interior and smashing severely the Twenty-Eighth Infantry Division, the Ninety-Ninth Infantry Division, and elements of the Ninth and Tenth Armored Divisions. On the North flank of the offensive the First and Second Infantry Divisions held and on the South the Fourth Infantry Division staunchly defended the path to LUXEMBOURG City. Waving aside the Geneva convention rules, which the Germans knew only in defeat, the Germans used the principle of mass with telling effect to overrun American regiments. Parachutists were dropped in very small groups. Captured American trucks and armored vehicles were used, painted with the U. S. white stars, to confuse both air and ground forces. All this was taking place under a blanket of fog which had settled over the North as though by arrangement with the German general staff. Planes of the Ninth Air Force were unable to fly. At MALMEDY, in Belgium, and in the villages along the banks of the OUR River, Americans lay in the snow, murdered.

Down in the SAAR valley, on the 17th of December, the Fifth Infantry Division took over the SAARLAUTERN bridgehead from the Ninety-Fifth Division, with the Second Infantry relieving the Three Hundred Seventy-Seventh In-

fantry and the Eleventh Infantry relieving the Three Hundred Seventy-Ninth Infantry.

All the field artillery battalions moved to defiladed areas as close as possible to SAARLAUTERN. The light 105's were not expected to damage heavy pillboxes but fired heavily in the ensuing five days on targets in the open and on frequent counterbattery missions as the Germans had "beau-coup" artillery and apparently an ample supply of ammunition. Commanding the Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion at this time was Major Charles B. Ballou who had replaced Lieutenant Colonel Brunzell.

Division artillery brain-trusters borrowed a page from their METZ book of experience at this time and employed the 40 millimeter ack-ack guns and .50 caliber quadruple mounts of the Four Hundred Forty-Ninth AAA AW Battalion in novel and effective fire plans. The 40 millimeters and the .50 caliber mounts would wheel into a prepared position and pump thousands of shells in a very few minutes into lucrative targets, then move into new positions. Their fire was always evidently very galling to the Germans because after every fusillade the Germans would reply with artillery concentrations on the vacated positions. During the time the Nineteenth, Twenty-First, Forty-Sixth and Fiftieth supported the Second and Eleventh Regiments in the SAARLAUTERN bridgehead, the weather was so rainy and foggy that air observation was impossible and forward observers conducted most of the missions. In the bomb-cratered, half-demolished city, observation was extremely limited and forward observers habitually brought fire on the enemy one hundred yards away. Many of the fire missions were relayed to heavier corps artillery units.

On 16 December the Eleventh Regiment had been ordered to move Northeast and relieve the Three Hundred Seventy-Ninth Regiment of the Ninety-Fifth Infantry Division in combat positions in SAARLAUTERN. Troops entrucked at 1700 hours in LAUTERBACH and were joined by the First Battalion convoy in a 10-mile move to ALT-FORWEILER, from where the Second and Third Battalions hiked 5 miles into SAARLAUTERN to begin relief of the Three Hundred Seventy-Ninth. The Ninety-Fifth Division had cleared the Western portion of town and was now engaged in fierce house-to-house fighting across the river in FRAULAUTERN. They had previously captured a main bridge while Germans were preparing to blow it. The First Battalion also proceeded on foot to SAARLAUTERN and by 2050 hours of the following morning relief of the Three Hundred Seventy-Ninth had been completed and all regimental elements were in position. During the move Lieutenant Colonel John T. Russell, Second Battalion Commanding Officer, suffered a severe knee injury when he became involved in a jeep accident. He was evacuated and command of the battalion passed to Captain Ferris A. Church. Later that morning Colonel Paul J. Black established the Regimental Command Post in the heart of SAARLAUTERN and as tanks and tank destroyers of the Eleventh Combat Team were coming in to relieve corresponding attachments of the Three Hundred Seventy-Ninth Infantry Combat Team, the main roads were jampacked with two-way traffic. Sensing undue movement, the Germans shelled all approaches and the main road leading into SAARLAUTERN. Shelling was as intense as that experienced by the regiment in CAUMONT in the Normandy beachhead.

"Enemy artillery was active." That's the way the newspapers described the two to three thousand rounds of artillery that daily blasted the portion of SAARLAUTERN held by American troops. What it meant actually was that the city was blanketed by continuous harassing fire which did little tactical damage but was a source of constant tension. By midnight of the Seventeenth, the relief of the Three Hundred Seventy-Seventh was complete and the Second Infantry was fighting in the SIEGFRIED Line.

Although the Fifth Division had been given considerable training in the assault of fortified positions, and most bat-



talions had gained valuable experience in actual combat against the forts of METZ, the ensuing action against the SIEGFRIED Line brought up a good many new angles, and the fighting was hard and bitter. The German troops occupying the defenses were far from static, poorly trained Fortress troops, and they were determined to hold their positions to the last man and round. In as much as the Americans were equally determined to drive the Boche from their pillboxes and strong points the battle for a breach in the vaunted German SIEGFRIED Line gained in intensity. It was well known that a ruined or half-ruined town or city was easier to defend and harder to take than a comparatively undamaged one of much larger size. This became even more apparent to the assaulting companies of the Second Infantry as they smashed and blasted their way deeper into SAARLAUTERN.

Pillboxes, hidden blockhouses, trenches, traps and cul-de-sacs made rapid progress virtually impossible, and more than once a platoon would lose half a squad taking a position, only to lose more men from enemy fire from a nearby position into which the defenders of the first had fled. Infiltration, patrol activities, mortar and grenade fire caused losses to mount and gave the battalions of the Second Regiment scant time for rest even after a limited objective had been taken. The enemy was past master at the art of defending a city, and the Germans placed their weapons in such a manner that the attackers seldom were aware of their presence until they actually opened up. As one position was attacked, the surrounding positions would support it by fire until they too were in turn attacked, and silenced.

The German West Wall had been built through the city itself and the SAAR River had been utilized as a natural obstacle. Pillboxes were camouflaged as shacks, shops, coalpiles and could be detected only when the enemy opened fire from them.

For four days the men of the Second Infantry battered their way from house to house, pillbox to pillbox to clear the enemy from SAARLAUTERN. By evening of the 21st, 232 buildings and 5 pillboxes had been wrested from the enemy and the regiment had reached the outskirts of the city.

In SAARLAUTERN, the doughboys did the kind of fighting about which they had read in accounts of the battles on the

Russian front. Movement on the streets was denied by machine gun and 20 millimeter fire. To go from house to house meant the laborious process of "mouseholing," or blasting a route through the walls of adjacent buildings, rather than use streets which were nothing but fire lanes for the Germans.

Supply and evacuation became even more difficult than before, owing to the many obstacles, minefields, death-traps, and craters that characterized the area.

The company aid men exerted themselves to the utmost to get to, aid, and evacuate the many wounded, and in doing so invariably lost personnel due to mortar, artillery, and sniper fire.

The communication sections found it necessary to operate in full strength nearly twenty-four hours a day in order to maintain liaison between the battalions and companies, and between the battalions and the Regimental Command Post, owing to the intense artillery barrages that blanketed the sector from time to time cutting wires, denying routes of contact, and knocking out radios.

Food and water was brought up usually at night, hand carried to the platoons and eaten hastily between assaults and fire fights.

Anticipating heavy street fighting, all battalions of the Eleventh made contact with the enemy and carefully probed positions on the first day. One squadron of fighter-bombers (P-47s) were sighted over German lines, and during a bombing and strafing attack enemy anti-aircraft guns brought one down. The first of many pillboxes which the enemy had disguised as innocent looking civilian homes reinforced with a two-foot thickness of concrete was encountered. Company E called for tank fire to neutralize one bothersome strongpoint that was holding up a local advance. Meanwhile, a Second Battalion outpost reported 5 Tiger tanks moving toward the lines. These later opened fire on Second Battalion positions, but artillery drove them off. At the end of the day the battalions had consolidated allotted ground and captured a number of houses. The enemy had continued to shell rear areas indiscriminately and a German reconnaissance plane bombed SAARLAUTERN that night.

On 18 December the regiment launched a strong attack to the North and Northeast with 3 battalions committed.

Member of the 5th Infantry Division, S/Sgt. Curtis L. Brooks, Prospect Hill, N. C., in snow clothes near Haller, Luxembourg.







Pinned down for a day and a half before American Tanks finally reached and relieved them near Diekisch, Luxembourg. These are all that remain of a platoon of 2nd Infantry Regiment, 5th Infantry Division.

Tank destroyers supported the attack and reduced a number of disguised pillboxes, which were immediately sealed by tank-dozers. In more than one the defenders refused to be taken prisoner and were annihilated when "beehive" charges were placed on top the rubble and detonated. Enemy shelling continued on a large scale and the Second Battalion Command Post had a close call when a twenty-round concentration fell nearby. German armor sought to check the advance of the First Battalion but withdrew when tank destroyers moved up. Houses were blasted methodically with rockets, artillery and direct tank fire and by day's end the regiment had cleared two city blocks, taken 178 houses and a dozen prisoners. Apprehended in the basement of one house was a German soldier and 10 women. All were taken into custody.

With a preparation of an estimated 2000 round artillery and mortar barrage, the enemy launched several small-scale tank-supported counterattacks. These attacks were broken up in close quarter fighting which saw enemy tanks lumber within 100 yards range of regimental lines and fire point-blank down the streets. Artillery fire and tank destroyers drove the armor off while First, Second and Third Battalions' small arms fire checked enemy infantry. That night, two C Company outguards halted an enemy patrol and were immediately fired upon, but both men held

their position and succeeded in forcing the enemy back with rifle fire. Somehow, other German patrols penetrated to beyond battalion positions and during the night automatic weapons and burp guns were heard firing sporadically in areas occupied by rear echelon troops. As mortars renewed intense shelling one mortar shell found its mark in the hatch of a tank destroyer supporting the First Battalion and killed two of its occupants. Enemy tanks moved into the Third Battalion area and fired several rounds before slinking off when artillery found the range. Progress of all battalions was slowed when enemy resistance increased. No major attack developed, however, and more houses were cleared. In one local attack that day, Sergeant Dale B. Rex, G Company machine gun squad leader, and holder of the Distinguished Service Cross award for "extraordinary heroism" during the MOSELLE River bridgehead operations, when he personally killed an estimated total of 300 Germans, was killed by sniper fire. A recommendation for a posthumous award that was turned in several days later, stated that Sergeant Rex "heroically remained exposed to enemy fire, until killed while covering the advance of his unit."

By the time the regiment received orders on the 20th to move, at least 40 more houses were cleared and a total of 35 prisoners had been taken.

Troops of the 11th Infantry Regiment move into position in the line near Gralingen, Luxembourg, on the Third Army Front.





# LUXEMBOURG and the ARDENNES

While the Second and Eleventh Regiments were making good progress through the SIEGFRIED Line in SAARLAUTERN, the ARDENNES offensive was going from bad to worse for the Allies. Lieutenant General Omar Bradley, commanding the Twelfth Army Group, decided to swing the Third Army of Lieutenant General George S. Patton up to attack the South flank of the offensive. General Patton immediately diverted his Fourth Armored Division from the SAARGUEMINES sector and the Twenty-Sixth Infantry Division from its rest area in METZ and used them, together with elements of the Eightieth Infantry Division to start a drive that resulted in the eventual rescue of the besieged One Hundred First Airborne Division at famous BASTOGNE.

But for the highly important mission of relieving the staunch but hard hit Fourth Infantry Division and protecting vital LUXEMBOURG CITY, General Patton called on General S. LeRoy "Red" Irwin and his Red Diamond Division. The Fifth responded with a miracle of troop movement and the usual standard of battle skill and courage.

The Tenth Combat Team, including the Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion, was the first unit to be pulled out of its area on the West side of the SAAR and sent racing to the aid of the Fourth Infantry Division. The infantry was motorized on artillery and quartermaster trucks and left at 1700 hours on the 20th of December, closing in its assembly area in the Fourth Division area in LUXEMBOURG at the end of the day.

At 1800 hours the same day, the Third Battalion of the Second Infantry Regiment began taking over Eleventh Infantry positions in SAARLAUTERN.

In order to effect a smooth relief it was necessary to relinquish some ground. Troops of the Eleventh hiked six miles from SAARLAUTERN to ITTERSDOFF under long-range German artillery fire. Shell upon shell hit the main SAARLAUTERN route and although several casualties were reported, the march to the entrucking point of ITTERSDOFF continued unbroken. Here, battalions became motorized and moved 50 miles Eastward to DISTDOFF, France, which was to serve as the regimental assembly area. The rear train and rear Command Post spent the night in UBERHERRN, Germany, just beyond enemy artillery range and rejoined the regiment in DISTDOFF on the following morning.

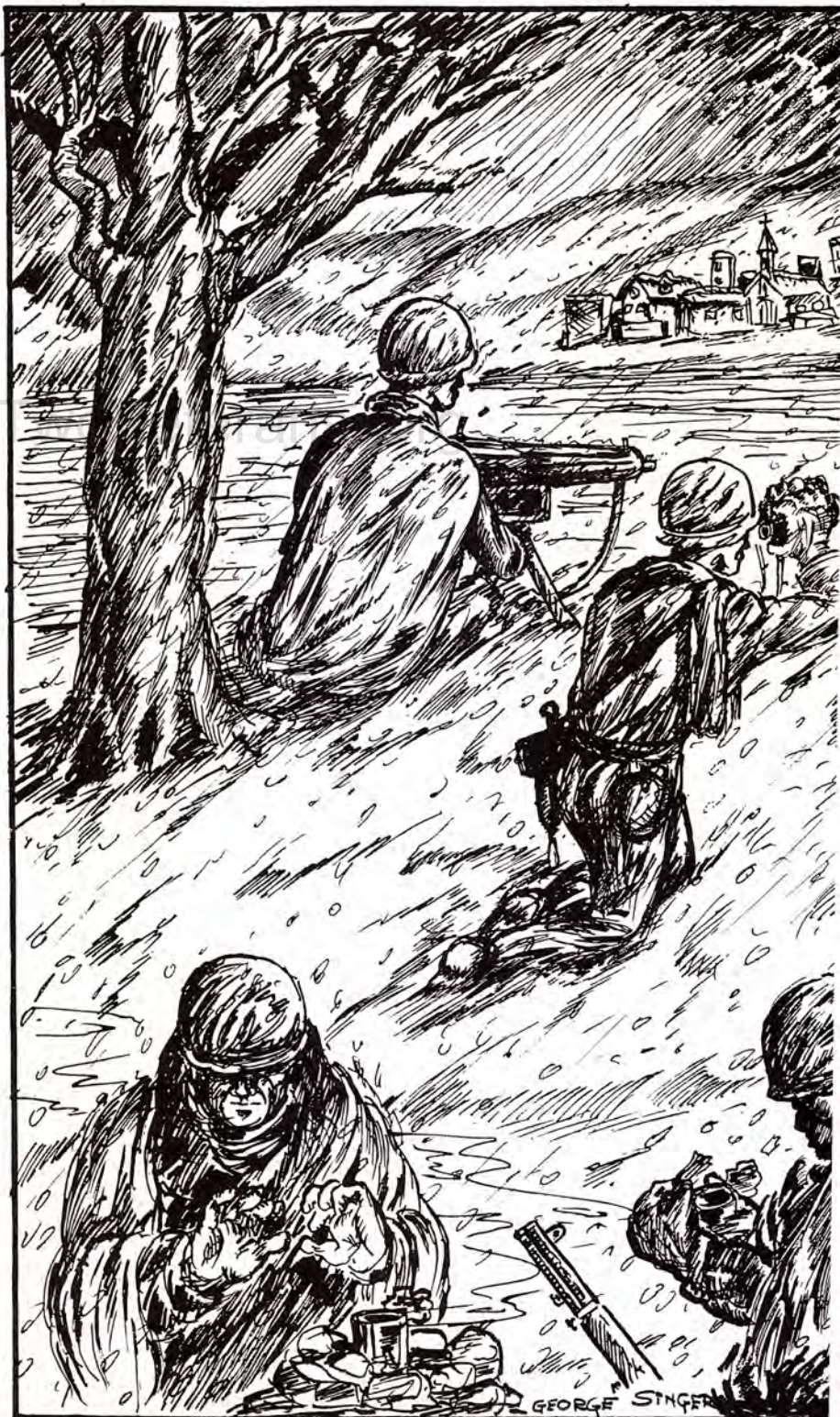
The Second Infantry repulsed two enemy counterattacks the night of the 20-21 and the next night was relieved by the Three Hundred Seventy-Seventh Infantry Regiment of the Ninety-Fifth Infantry Division, which the Second had relieved a week previously.

Even before the last elements were relieved, the head of the regimental column was on the road, moving through snow and rain to METZERVISSE, France. Even with full headlights, it was a slow movement as weather cut visibility virtually to zero.

No sooner than the regiment had closed into METZERVISSE, than orders were received to push on to a final assembly area in the vicinity of NIEDERRANVEN, Luxembourg. Onward the regiment moved, and at 1600 hours on the 22d it closed in the new area, ready to be committed in any area threatened.

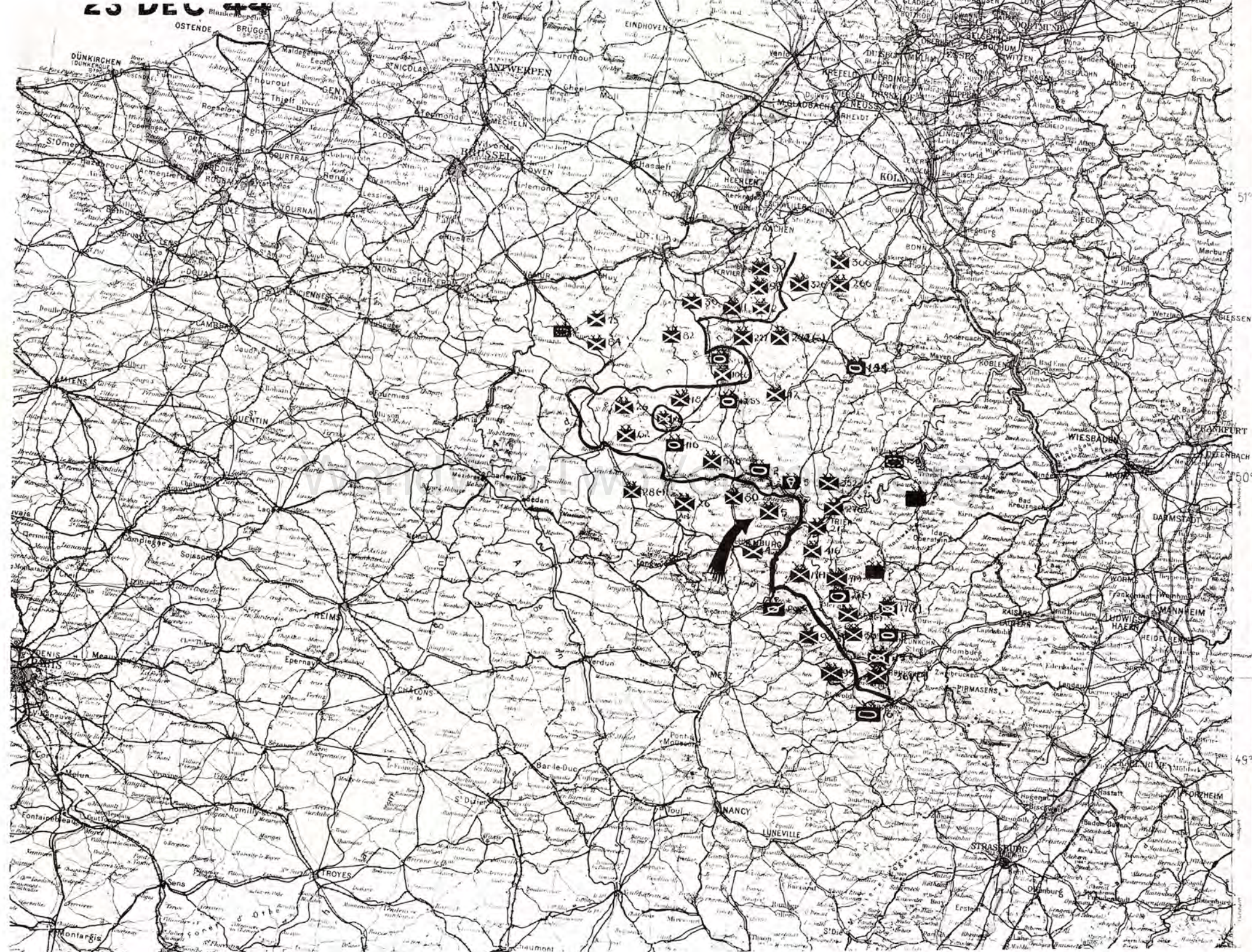
The Second Infantry had accomplished a difficult relief under fire and moved 100 miles through rain, snow and mud in less than 22 hours. The whole division, and even the entire Third Army, had moved fast and expertly. The speed with which the shift was accomplished proved an extraordinary feat in troop movement. Despite the apparent confusion on dark road, 80 percent of the division troops were in the Fourth Division's area within 24 hours of issuance of the movement order.

In the snow-covered ARDENNES the desperate German Offensive reached a crescendo. The Americans found themselves literally stunned by the sudden blow. The Allied line was ripped asunder and the German Divisions poured through the gaps. Whole battalions were swept away, isolated platoons, companies and even regiments found them-





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selves surrounded. Some of them managed to hold together and fight their way out of the torrent of German Armor and Infantry and make their way to the rear where they again found themselves in the position of front line troops as the Boche reached communication lines and sliced through them toward embattled BASTOGNE. Engineers, Signal troops, Military Police units and Quartermaster troops found themselves fighting to protect vital installations from the German assault divisions.

As the flank divisions in the American lines in the ARDENNES sector were struck, clerks, cooks, drivers, and supply elements were put into the lines as riflemen. Replacements with but a few days' combat experience dug in against the fury of the German attack.

It was decided at this time to hold fast on the flanks of the German breakthrough and pinch the enemy off if possible. The assignment given the Fifth Division was to strike the South flank and hurl the Germans back across the SAUER River near ECHTERNACH and prevent, by so doing, LUXEMBOURG CITY from falling into German hands.

### TENTH INFANTRY AND MICKELSHOF FARM

Forty-Eight hours after the order to move had been received, and 70 miles farther North, the Tenth Infantry Combat Team, attached to the Fourth Division, had attacked in the snow and bitter cold.

It was initially planned for the regiment to relieve elements of the Eightieth Infantry Division, but, before the plan could be carried out, the order was rescinded and the regiment advised to sit tight for the night of 21 December. Two battalions of tank destroyers were placed in support of the regiment and at 1200 hours orders were received to prepare for an advance on the following day.

That night, however, at 2300 hours Colonel Bell returned from Fourth Division headquarters and at a subsequent staff meeting discussed a drastically modified plan of operations. New orders called for the regiment to attack objectives South of ECHTERNACH, passing through elements of the shattered Fourth Division which were precariously holding a line generally South of SCHEIDGEN and extending Eastward. The time for the attack was set at approximately 1200 hours, December 22d, and was ordered as follows: Second Battalion on the left, First Battalion on the right. The boundary line between the two battalions was the ECHTERNACH-MICKELSHOF road to the Second Battalion. The Third Battalion was held in reserve in the vicinity of ECURIE.

The mission of the combat team was to relieve one company of the Fourth Division at MICKELSHOF which was cut off from the remainder of its regiment, by a coordinated attack in conjunction with elements of the Twenty-Seventh and Twelfth Combat Teams on the left, Fourth Division artillery plus two medium battalions in general support, and the Forty-Sixth and Fiftieth Field Artillery Battalions in direct support. Other attachments at the beginning of the push included elements of the Eight Hundred Third Tank Destroyer and the Eight Hundred Eighth Tank Destroyer Battalions and Company B, Seventh Engineers and Company B Fifth Medical Battalion.

The assault battalions were moved by truck to assembly areas North of HEMSTAL and to the rear of their respective zones of advance during the morning of December 22d. Due to the almost invariable delays present in a movement of this nature, the advance as projected failed to get under way until 1315 hours. When the two battalions crossed the line of departure they were met with considerable small-arms, machine gun and mortar fire. Fifteen minutes later, the enemy was shelling the entire area as Company B moved up into line. By 1400 hours, the companies were in contact some 400 yards North of the SCHEIDGEN-MICKELSHOF road when advised to hold their gains.

Over in the Second Battalion's area, the same heavy shelling was in progress as Companies E and F started forward

through the woods. At the same time, a force of approximately 200 Germans was moving in the attack directly toward Company F. Suddenly they faced one another across an open snow-covered field.

As soon as the riflemen of Company F recovered from their surprise they began to lay down a marching fire that knocked down German after German. Abandoning the attack in favor of aimed rifle fire, they took up positions and raked the attacking Germans with a deadly hail of small arms. The Germans quickly realized their mistake and withdrew to their former positions, calling down a storm of artillery and 120 millimeter mortar fire.

Realizing that to remain static with the torrent of shells pouring into their positions was to invite annihilation, Company F struck forward in an attack. As the infantrymen moved out, the Boche artillery followed them, causing severe casualties and filling the air with screaming shell fragments. When the troops finally reached MICKELSHOF they had suffered heavy casualties and the artillery was falling with unabated fury. Once in the town they established contact with the company of the Fourth Division, that had been previously cut off and were trying to hold the line with cooks, drivers, runners, and Military Police.

The following morning the battalions resumed the attack at 0800 hours. The First Battalion with Companies A and B leading pushed forward over difficult snow-covered terrain meeting no opposition from the enemy in the early phase of the advance, the core of the opposition being directed elsewhere. Company A troops advanced against comparatively light resistance through the woods to the vicinity of MICKELSHOF, while Company B, advancing on the right, entered the town and reported it clear at 0915 hours. By nightfall troops were occupying the high ground on a line extending from near the town to the Northeast, and were patrolling actively to the front farther North. Company C was moved to positions to the rear of Company A and to the left of the battalion zone with the mission of protecting the left flank, enemy resistance being strongest in that sector.

In the initial stages of the advance of the Second Battalion, heavy small arms and artillery fire was encountered. After pushing ahead to a point 400 yards North of the MICKELSHOF-SCHIEDGEN road, leading elements of Company F ran into enemy infantry who were extremely well deployed in depth and supported by self-propelled guns, mortars, and rockets or nebelwerfers. Successive barrages of shells exploded in the midst of advancing doughboys.

The results were inevitable. With the air filled with screaming shells of heavy calibre, and the woods raked by flying steel from tree bursts, the Second Battalion lost men. Lost them in twos and threes, in half squads and squads; the medics were killed as they tended the wounded, key non-commissioned officers fell while urging the men on; officers died as they led the advancing platoons. In an attempt to take cover from the tornado of flame and steel the men charged the German foxholes, cleared them out with bayonet and hand grenade, and occupied them for the scant interim before leaping up and running again. The attackers were so close to the German lines that they could hear the phone of the enemy forward observers ringing, and still the artillery fell. Company F, which had started the attack with 140 men, had been cut down until there were about 46 left to continue.

The forward line of Company F soon became untenable and orders were given the men to extricate themselves by infiltrating back to their original positions. The beleaguered troops withdrew and brought a few frightened prisoners with them.

The enemy now attempted to exploit the initial advantage that the deadly effectiveness of their artillery, much of which was observed fire, had gained for them, for at approximately 1330 hours an enemy force estimated at 200 infantrymen, was observed moving through a draw toward





Snow-caped infantrymen advance across open ground.

the left flank of the Second Battalion. This bold and ingenious effort on the part of the Germans to strike a telling blow at the exposed flank of the battalion, fortunately detected in time for perfection of counter measures, was stopped cold by concentrations of the supporting artillery. The enemy dispersed and withdrew in disorderly fashion after suffering extremely heavy casualties.

Thus ended the worst of the day's ordeal of fire and death. Contact was maintained with the enemy on the right of the battalion zone during the night. Company F continued to receive heavy mortar fire on their old positions, interspersed with occasional shell fire of a heavier type. The enemy dug in to the front. One company of the Third Battalion remained in position near ECURIE, while the remaining two companies were assembled preparing to support the Second Battalion. During the day the regiment returned to division control and the command post was established at HEMSTAL. Approximately 50 prisoners were taken and 200 casualties inflicted upon the enemy during the day's fighting.

On the morning of 24 December, the Second Infantry was committed to relieve the depleted Twelfth Infantry, Fourth Infantry Division, which had borne the brunt of the German counter-offensive in the South. With the Second Battalion on the left and the Third Battalion on the right and the First in reserve, the regiment jumped off at 1100 hours from a line of departure a few hundred yards North of BREITWEILER and CONSDORE.

## SECOND INFANTRY AT BERDORF

Opposition was heavy, especially in the MULLERTHAL draw where Company F and Company G battled for eight hours to gain a scant 200 yards. Company E, advancing in the center of the regimental zone, met less stubborn resistance and by dark had taken OSTERHOLZ farm and gained nearly 1000 yards. The Third Battalion had advanced a 1000 yards against moderate opposition when it suspended operations for the day at 1630 hours.

Christmas day dawned clear and crisp and snow-laden evergreens imparted a poignant reminder of the Yuletide season as the Second Infantry forged ahead on the second day of its drive to push the Germans back to the North side of the SAUER River.

Finding progress more rapid on the right of the zone, the Second Battalion moved up to the high ground west of the MULLERTHAL draw, captured DOSTER Farm, and advanced approximately 2000 yards, keeping abreast of the Third Battalion. Long after darkness fell, the skies glowed with the blossoming of white phosphorous shells fired by friendly chemical mortars and the bursts of enemy nebelwerfers.

Two hours before dawn on the morning of the 26th, the Second Battalion jumped off to capture the town of BERDORF. The attack met with phenomenal success. Companies G and

E routed many a German soldier from his bed and Company F found an entire company lined up in the street in reveille formation. By daybreak the town had been virtually cleared. Over 100 prisoners were taken.

It was about 0900 hours that the Germans north of the SAUER River realized that the town was almost entirely in American hands and opened up on the town with heavy artillery, mortar and nebelwerfer fire. Alerted now, the German defenders in the northern part of the town fought back with a fury born of desperation. All day the battle continued and on into the night. It was after 0200 on the 27th before the last German had been driven by bazookas and grenades from the last building in town. While the Second Battalion was battling to clear the city of BERDORF, the Third Battalion was taking MONS BURKELT Farm 1500 yards to the East. Late in the afternoon, the First Battalion was committed with the mission of bypassing BERDORF and seizing Hill 370 North of the town and clearing the woods in the vicinity of Ferme HAMM.

Meanwhile, in the town of DISTORFF, the Eleventh Infantry Regiment was briefed on the situation that required a diversion of Third Army troops to face the enemy in LUXEMBOURG and BELGIUM. The Eleventh Infantry's mission was to cover the formation of the XII Corps while remaining in the vicinity of LUXEMBOURG CITY.

Information from Prisoners of War indicated that the enemy was to launch a main attack toward the city itself on 23 December, employing 2 Volks Grenadier Divisions. The enemy was also known to have dropped parachutists behind United States lines for sabotage purposes. Prisoners of War wearing American uniforms were captured in rear areas and were found to be completely outfitted with American paybooks, service records, U. S. Calibre .45 pistols and "Lucky Strikes." Several who were apprehended in American jeeps maintained communications with enemy troops by use of German-made radios. A careful check on all suspicious persons was in progress.

In staggered order of march the Third, First and Second Battalions of the Eleventh Infantry re-entrucked in DISTORFF on 21 December and moved directly North into LUXEMBOURG. Thus, less than 24 hours following the receipt of move orders the regiment had rolled through areas of three European countries—Germany, France, Luxembourg. As the column was passing through LUXEMBOURG CITY orders were received for the regiment to occupy defensive positions on the XII Corps Reserve Battle Positions, replacing the Eightieth Infantry Division which was vacating this position with orders to attack North and West of ETTTELBRUCK. First Battalion and Anti-tank Company assembled the afternoon and evening of 21 December in vicinity EISENBORN, IMBRINGEN and BOURLINSTER, while Third Battalion and Cannon Company occupied march bivouac in the North edge of LUXEMBOURG CITY and Second Battalion bivouacked East of LUXEMBOURG CITY, vicinity of the airport. At daylight the 22d of December, Third Battalion and Second Battalion and Cannon Company continued the march by motor to detrucking areas in rear of Corps Reserve Battle positions and continued on foot to occupy these positions. The Third Battalion continued on truck approximately 8 miles North of the city, detrucked and proceeded two miles on foot to a point just South of HEFFINGEN. A short time later the Second Battalion deployed some distance to the West and occupied SCHOOS. The First Battalion remained in reserve, occupying EISENBORN and IMBRINGEN, 4 miles North of LUXEMBOURG CITY. That night enemy aircraft were overhead in large numbers and ack-ack guns fired frequently. No bombs were dropped on regimental areas. That same night the regiment experienced its first snowstorm since combat operations began.

By the next day, 23 December, the mission had been changed and the regiment was ordered to assist in driving the enemy North and East of the SAUER River and to wipe



out the German bridgehead established there. While the battalions remained in defensive positions, staff officers and company commanders went to reconnoiter front line positions and map out the plan of attack for the following day. Major Acuff of the Third Battalion assumed command of the Second Battalion and Major Church reverted to executive officer. There was more enemy air activity on the night of 23 December, and a coincidental report that enemy paratroops were dropped in the vicinity of BOURLINSTER alerted all regimental elements. Other planes dropped bombs some distance to the North. Near SCHOOS, a Second Battalion outpost sighted a five-man enemy patrol and drove them off with small arms fire. It was the first contact regimental elements had made with the enemy in this sector.

With elements of the Fourth Infantry and Ninth Armored Divisions holding a line running from CHRISTNACH Northwest to SVELBORN, the First and Third Battalions of the Eleventh, under cover of darkness that night, moved into an assembly area in the vicinity of CHRISTNACH. The Second Battalion marched to high ground Northeast of REULAND, where regimental forward Command Post had set up, and went into reserve. Units of Six Hundred Fifty-Fourth Tank Destroyer and Seven Hundred Thirty-Seventh Tank Battalion were attached and joined the command. The Air Force was out in great strength; fighters and fighter bombers pounded enemy positions behind the line. Prior to operations, snowcapes, many of which were fashioned from white cloth sheets as contributed by friendly civilians, helped to blend infantrymen with the snow-covered landscape.

At 1100 hours of 24 December, with the Third Battalion on the left, First Battalion on the right and the Second in reserve, the Eleventh Infantry with tank attachments jumped off from the Line of Departure running South from FRECKEISEN to CHRISTNACH. The Second Infantry was on the Eleventh's right flank while the units of the Ninth Armored Division held a ridgeline from SVELBORN to EPELDORF, with whom the regimental Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon was ordered to maintain contact. Under a heavy artillery preparation, the Third Battalion, in order of companies, K, L and I advanced rapidly to SEITERT and immediately began occupying the high ground 1000 yards Southwest of HALLER. General Lentz of XII Corps Artillery visited Third Battalion headquarters to check on effectiveness of artillery support. Enemy troops (identified in a previous G-2 report as the 988 Volks Grenadier Regiment) suffered heavy casualties, but while the Third Battalion consolidated captured ground enemy artillery, mortar and nebelwerfer fire became increasingly heavy. Meanwhile, the First Battalion launched an attack in the direction of WALDBILLIG that carried toward the draw Northeast to MULLERTHAL, and in the face of strong enemy resistance A, B and C Companies were being held up while Germans hurled numerous barrages of mortar and artillery from WALDBILLIG. At this point, rather than delay operations until morning, the Regimental Commanding Officer ordered the Second Battalion from its position in reserve, to move up and occupy the Third Battalion area in darkness that night while the Third curved Northeast to place itself on the right and the Second Battalion on the left. Amid renewed enemy artillery fire, both Third and First Battalions pressed the attack that night. By early hours of morning, Company B had sent strong patrols into WALDBILLIG. These patrols met moderate resistance, but a toehold was secured. Farther West, Third Battalion troops were being heavily shelled, and a K Company mortar section that set up West of WALDBILLIG suffered direct hits by "screaming meemies," inflicting casualties amongst mortar personnel. The Second Battalion sent Company F to reinforce Second Battalion flanks. Of 17 prisoners of war taken during the drive, several disclosed that batteries of nebelwerfers as well as



Germans who died for Hitler by 5th Division artillery fire near Echternach.

75's were in position at HALLER, which the enemy was known to be using as a headquarters. Information was received that the Air Corps had blasted 50 vehicles of an enemy convoy East of the SAUER River.

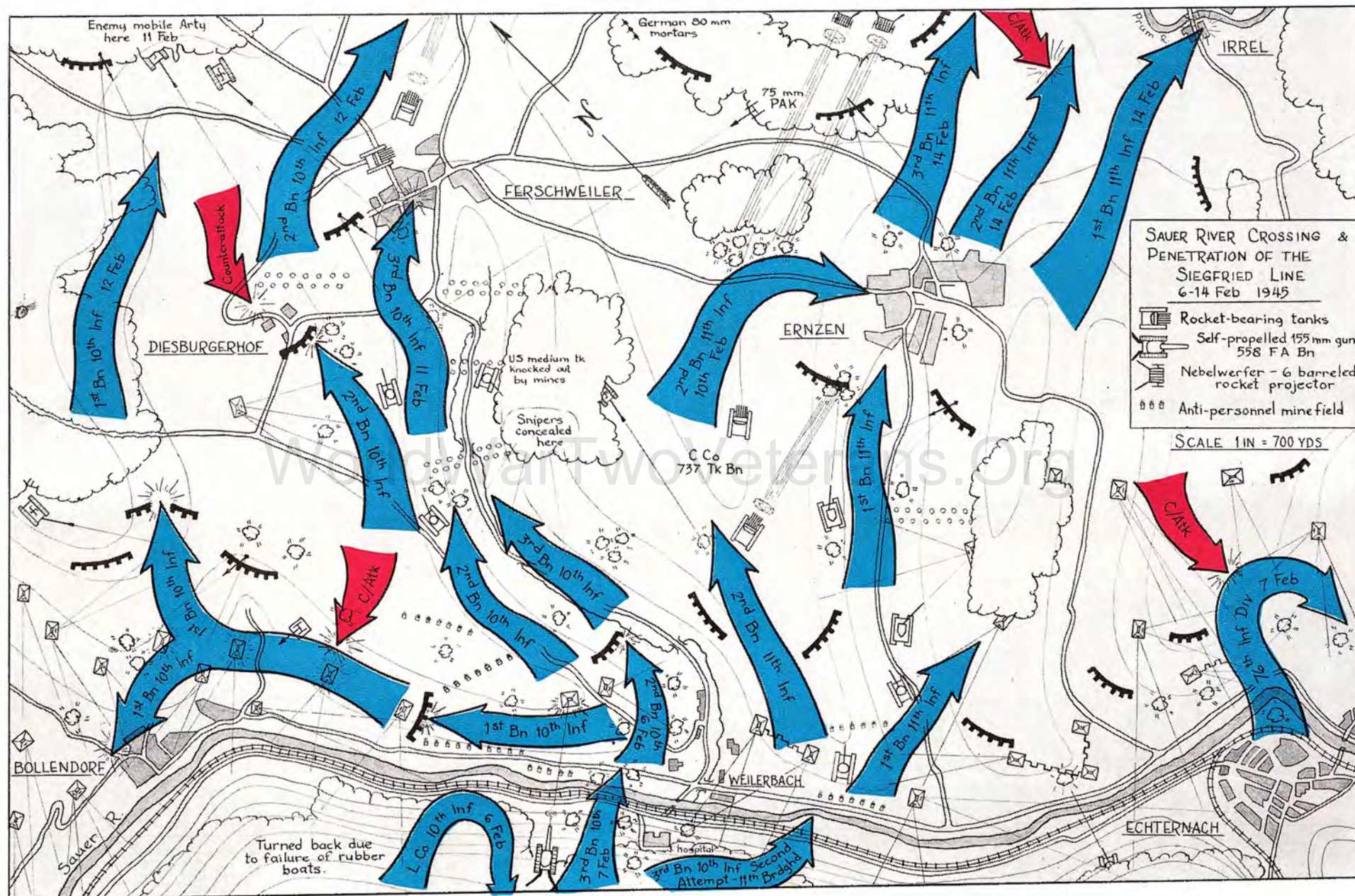
The defensive system set up by the enemy in this area was one of defending the towns and villages and surrounding high ground. He had also set up various headquarters in these towns and the enemy artillery had been placed in and about them with some set up in the edge of the woods. Thus any town or wooded area was very likely to be a good artillery target. Here again as in ANGERS, FONTAINEBLEAU and numerous other places the enemy attempted to get cover from artillery fire by setting up in patches of woods. Tree bursts in cases such as this had devastating effect.

The artillery fired a heavy preparation for the attack on the towns of HALLER, SEITERT, and outlying districts. The medium artillery fired some counterbattery but this was slight because little was known of battery locations. Thereafter artillery firing was continued and heavy. Targets were "juicy" such as nebelwerfer infantry in the open, enemy artillery, tanks, self-propelled guns and counterattacks. Ammunition was plentiful. There was an artillery observer with each infantry company and as a result one fire mission followed another. 1601 rounds were expended by the Nineteenth Field Artillery Battalion alone the first day of the attack killing and wounding a great many enemy. However, the German was not to be outdone and he, too, used every bit of artillery at his command.

The attack continued on Christmas day with a division artillery Time-on-Target on enemy organizing for a counter-attack at 0630 hours. Following that, every bit of artillery that could be used was fired into the town of HALLER and some into the town of WALDBILLIG. It had devastating effect as was proven later when the towns were taken by the infantry. A turkey dinner with all the trimmings was served to the men of the battalion but the war went on. Christmas night the battalion used the new pozit fuse for the first time. Observers reported that a good percentage was giving air bursts of the proper height.

The Eleventh Infantry's battle raged through Christmas Day, a clear, crisp day that saw massive fleets of bombers and fighters passing overhead. The First and Third Battalions jumped off to renew the offensive. Held up by fierce enemy fire and faced by an estimated 555 troops deployed from WALDBILLIG to beyond the draw on the river flank, the First Battalion called on tanks to render closer support. A Company, temporarily split to bolster the flanks, con-







tacted elements of the Second Infantry on the right; they were also being held up by violent enemy fire. Meanwhile, the Third Battalion had made good progress in an advance against somewhat lighter opposition. Soon after the jump-off, Third Battalion troops skirted North of WALDBILLIG and seized two objectives on high ground Southeast of HALLER and later sent strong patrols to HOHWALD, where an enemy escape route, by way of First Battalion pressure, was being threatened. Realizing this, the enemy pounded Third Battalion positions, then struck with a counterattack from HALLER. The attack was repulsed and the enemy suffered heavy losses. The enemy also suffered heavily while attempting to withdraw along the First Battalion sector. They were subjected to intense tank and artillery fire. Although in reserve, the Second Battalion continued to follow the Third Battalion and occupied the ground vacated by it. Tanks that had supported the Third Battalion in successful attacks withdrew to an assembly area near FRECKEISEN.

In early afternoon, C Company, supported by the entire tank company, launched a flanking attack from FRECKEISEN and drove to high ground North of WALDBILLIG. By reason of this maneuver, resistance which had been holding up the First Battalion's advance was now outflanked and a short while later, B Company broke through into WALDBILLIG, where the streets were littered with destroyed German equipment. Prisoners captured in and near WALDBILLIG numbered nearly 200. With this breakthrough, the First Battalion fanned out North and East, mopping up pockets of resistance on high ground near HOHWALD. At this point the Second Battalion was committed and given the mission of seizing HALLER itself while the First Battalion passed into Regimental reserve behind the Third Battalion on the right flank. Supported by a platoon of tanks, the Second Battalion opened its attack on enemy positions South of HALLER at 1730 hours and maintained strong pressure despite violent enemy shellings. The attack carried into the night and the Second Battalion edged its way toward HALLER, while the Third Battalion engaged a force of an estimated 300 men in draws North of the town. Enemy resistance in both areas was strong, but by 2000 hours Company G, with a platoon of Company E attached, passed through elements of Company F to gain entry. In a furious hour-long battle, G Company knocked out nine machine guns, cracked the defenses and drove into the German key-point. That the enemy had planned to hold HALLER became evident during the process of house clearing. Numerous Christmas feasts that Germans had previously prepared were left intact and provided Second Battalion men with chicken and turkey dinners instead of cold "K" rations. A total of 158 prisoners were rounded up, all of whom were amply supplied with United States rations, cigarettes, clothing, shoes and other items of equipment. Four jeeps, four pack-type 75 millimeter howitzers and eight other American vehicles, including a half-track personnel carrier, was recaptured, while German booty consisted of an ammunition dump (including 15 rounds of 105 millimeter United States ammunition), five enemy bazookas and several ack-ack guns. Prisoners identified most of the units of the 988 Volks Grenadier Regiment. Mopping up operations continued through most of that night, and the Third Battalion held semi-circular ridge-line positions along HARDTHOF and HOHWALD.

Prior to the renewal of the offensive operations by the Second and Third Battalions on the morning of 26 December, First Battalion units, in reserve South of HOHWALD, were alerted the basis of a Second Infantry drive on the right flank. There was a possibility of an attempted enemy retreat through the forest and First Battalion troops were in position to intercept. B Company was sent to the road running through Northeast of HALLER for a similar purpose—to cut off enemy forces who might attempt any infiltration through the enveloping movement now being

formed by the Second and Third Battalions. The enemy apparently counted heavily on HALLER defenses, for both Battalions quickly seized several objectives in a new advance that began at 0830 hours. Third Battalion troops cut through HALLERBACH and, without much opposition, went North to occupy high ground in the vicinity of MOMKREHUNCKEL. Engineers operating with Company I cleared several road blocks in the midst of a small arms engagement. Also supporting operations was the Ninety-First Chemical Mortar Battalion's Company C and a company of Eight Hundred Third Tank Destroyers, who relieved the Six Hundred Fifty-Fourth Tank Destroyers. A short while later a Third Battalion patrol established an observation post on the high ground overlooking the river, and reported heavy vehicular traffic on the bridge at STATION. Meanwhile, advancing North astride the HALLER-BEAUFORT road, E and F Companies of the Second Battalion encountered strong resistance in the draw along the KRANK woods West of HALLERBACH. Enemy troops were well dug-in and sniper and mortar fire became intense, pinning down E and F Companies in the draw. Company G, in battalion reserve since its capture of HALLER, was committed and shifted to the right of the battalion. This enveloping movement caught the enemy's left flank and shortly after dark E and F Companies gained the West of the cliffs to control the woods directly North of HALLER. Three enemy infantry battalions were believed to be in position to fight strong delaying action on a line running from BEAUFORT diagonally North to the river. Earlier in the afternoon enemy artillery, mortars and nebelwerfers pounded Third Battalion positions and as the last eerie-sounding "screaming meemies" passed overhead, a strong enemy infantry assault was launched from the right flank. The enemy in turn received a violent shelling from our artillery, self-propelled guns and 4.2 mortars. K Company was committed from reserve and enemy force driven off in a whirlwind battle. Enemy patrols later sought to probe Third Battalion lines—in one case losing half their number to L Company marksmen. During the night G Company sent strong patrols to probe BEAUFORT defenses. Earlier, when the Second Battalion's capture of BEAUFORT did not seem imminent, Third Battalion forces turned Northwest and occupied high ground in the vicinity of MULLENBACH, from where artillery fire was adjusted on the enemy escape routes Northeast of DILLINGEN. The First Battalion moved North, occupying high ground near HALLER, and, from its position in reserve, supported the advance of the other battalions with stationary fire. Enemy planes were over line positions that night but no bombs were dropped. Intensity of enemy fire on this day was the heaviest encountered by the regiment since DORNOT bridgehead operations in the MOSELLE sector 8-10 September 1944. The enemy launched rockets on an unprecedented scale.

Simultaneous with the operations of the Second and Eleventh Combat Teams on the 24th, 25th, 26th and 27th were the attacks of the Tenth Combat Team to secure and hold the town of SCHEIDGEN.

During the early hours of the morning of December 24th, doughboys of Company E Tenth Infantry pushed off. It was still dark when approximately an hour later, they encountered about fifty enemy troops advancing down the draw to meet them. A brief fire fight ensued. The company withdrew a short distance to allow mortar crews and the artillery to engage in an intermittent exchange of shots with the enemy. At 0500 hours Company E again pushed forward and thirty minutes later was across the bitterly contested road, and preparing to continue the advance.

At 0810 hours Company B on the right of the First Battalion received a counter-attack from the North in approximately company strength. Artillery was promptly called in on the would-be attackers and shortly after the deluge





Mud as well as snow proved a constant enemy in Luxembourg. Here a mired artillery ammunition truck is being winched out of mud.

of shells found the target, the battalion reported the activity subsided and the threat to be under control. The Combat Team was then ordered to resume the advance at 1100 hours.

The First and Second Battalions moved out as scheduled in a continuation of the regimental drive North. Objectives included the town of SCHEIDGEN, Ferme FROMBERG, and Hill 313. Company G on the right of the Second Battalion, flanked with supporting tanks of the Seven Hundred Thirty-Seventh Tank Battalion, pushed off for Hill 313, but was shortly engaged by an enemy of unknown strength. Tanks knocked out two enemy machine guns.

By this time it was apparent that the woods concealed a sizeable force of the enemy. Artillery fire was adjusted on that sector, presumably effecting heavy casualties, a conclusion supported by the numerous dead found there by our troops as they entered the woods. By noon the two companies were holding up, awaiting elements of the First Battalion to come abreast and, within the next few hours, troops of Company E moved into SCHEIDGEN. The enemy, resisting stubbornly, was slowly but inexorably forced into a general withdrawal.

While engaging the enemy force in the woods to the right of the Battalion boundary, Company G became lost and before the situation could be corrected were for a few moments in danger of overrunning the positions of Company E. At approximately 1300 hours the company had effected a hasty reorganization and was once again heading North. At 1600 hours tanks reached the base of the hill and one hour later men of Company G were on the hill and digging in for the night. Undoubtedly, the enemy knew that Hill 313 would be occupied because it was obviously a commanding terrain feature. As a result, he had it well zeroed in. Company G took a terrible pounding from the massed German artillery fire and from the enemy tanks which approached within a few hundred yards of the position and sniped at the Americans with 88s.

During daylight hours elements of Company E were partly employed in clearing the town of SCHEIDGEN.

The advance of the First Battalion had progressed satisfactorily with Company B on the right moving to the vicinity of Ferme FROMBERG, when at 1300 hours a counter-attack by an enemy company supported by four tanks was encountered moving South on the North-South road from

LAUTERBORN. With the deadly accurate fire of Division artillery units once again a decisive factor, the attack was promptly repulsed.

The Third Battalion was returned to regimental control at 1430 hours and ordered to assume the mission of the Second Battalion. During the night December 24-25 the Battalion passed through the Second Battalion and assembled in the vicinity of Hill 313, prepared to continue the advance. The Second Battalion, less Company G, then assembled in regimental reserve near SCHEIDGEN, where it was joined by Company G during the morning of December 25th.

As the reader can notice in this narrative and as every soldier who ever was with the Fifth in combat will long remember and appreciate, the artillery battalions always played a major role in inflicting damage on the enemy. The Fifth Division Artillery Battalions, trained to high peaks of efficiency in Iceland, England and Ireland, wrought especial damage to the Germans in this ARDENNES fighting. All the battalions had perfected the methods of time fire, which meant fusing a shell timed so that it exploded in the air over a target and sent steel splinters downward as well as outward, and of tree bursts which meant simply firing high explosive into woods whose trees detonated the shells and sent fragments downward and outward.

Now the artillery brought into play a weapon which military scientists later said was a weapon second only in importance to the atomic bomb. This weapon was the so-called "pozit" fuse which made a shell explode at a certain height above the target. The radio-controlled fuze made unnecessary all the mathematical calculations required for time fire and was 100 per cent reliable.

The Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion fired the first pozit fuzed shell in the Fifth Division sector from a gun position at BECK on Christmas Eve. The Forty-Sixth fired in support of the attack of the Tenth Infantry toward ECHTERNACH on the SAUER River. Enemy artillery was active, and weather was usually such as to preclude air observation. Many rocket projectors were used by the enemy, and although these had limited range, they provided the enemy with a high volume of fire on the forward elements. Observed fires in the area around SCHEIDGEN and ECHTERNACH were used with some of the greatest effect yet experienced, especially when time fire was used. The enemy was caught on some of the flat, open hill tops and suffered great casualties.

Christmas Day, grim visaged and battle wise veterans of the Tenth Infantry looked out over the snow-covered terrain of picturesque little LUXEMBOURG, read General Patton's Yuletide greetings and unique prayer for favorable weather, and marveled at the timely break in the ominous grey ceiling above them. The discouraging mantle of haze and fog which had covered the movement of Rundstedt's daring and dangerous offensive and which had so effectively impaired Allied counter measures from the air, suddenly lifted. Christmas Day dawned bright and swarms of fighters and bombers droned overhead, tracing the sky with an intricate pattern of vapor trails.

At 0745 hours troops of the First Battalion with Companies B and C leading, moved out toward the North and the enemy, making their ways slowly over the snow in the direction of the SAUER River. The Third Battalion continued to hold Hill 313 but advanced Company I up the draw to the North. Company L followed at 0730 hours and passed through Company E's positions, which extended now along the road Northeast of SCHEIDGEN, and secured the hill to the North in that vicinity. The move was made without opposition, and the men dug in. However, a patrol sent to the Northeast in the direction of Ferme MELICK spotted enemy there attempting an organization.





10th Infantry patrol armed with sub-machine guns which advanced into German held territory near Echternach and brought back valuable information concerning the enemy.

The battalion received orders to prepare to attack during the night. The objective was the next crest of high ground which overlooked the SAUER River and the city of ECHTERNACH. At 2100 hours Lieutenant Colonel Alden Shipley discussed the plan of attack with his company commanders. Company L was to proceed to high ground in the vicinity of Ferme MELICK by stealth and secure the ground in preparation for a daylight attack to gain the remainder of the hill North to the river. Company I was to follow, extend the left flank of Company L in the attack and to organize its portion of the objective. By early morning Company L had completed the movement by stealth and was in position South of Ferme MELICK, ready to attack. During the day the Second Battalion had remained in regimental reserve at SCHEIDGEN and at the close of the day was preparing to move to Hill 313.

The attack on December 26th jumped off at 0900 hours with the First and Third Battalions leading, and the Second Battalion in reserve at Hill 313. The First Battalion advanced rapidly to the ridge overlooking the river, consolidated its positions and patrolled to ECHTERNACH during the night.

By 1000 hours, in the Third Battalion's phase of the operation, Company I had worked to a position left of Company L and prepared for the jump off. At 1325 hours the battalion attacked and instantaneously met with determined resistance by the enemy from well organized defensive positions. Initial progress was slow due to heavy enemy artillery and rocket fire, but veteran troops, employing an effective marching fire method of attack, neutralized the enemy resistance, and at 1340 hours Companies I and L were on the objective. Two hours later they had consolidated their positions.

The climax of the Third Battalion's drive came when Lieutenant Colonel Alden Shipley's men caught two companies of Germans trying to swim the icy SAUER River and brought down heavy artillery time-on-target fires upon them. As though to make the victory complete an almost identical scene was later re-enacted when remnants of an estimated battalion of enemy troops attempted to withdraw in the same manner.

The mission was over, but success was marred by grim reminders of German cruelty. All about, in the little draws and culverts North of SCHEIDGEN, in the torn and shell-scarred woods South of ECHTERNACH, and in the gutted fields that stretched out from MICHELSHOF there was additional proof of the stories of German atrocities during the

initial stages of the campaign. There was something about the way the dead were so often found—lined—always in groups of six—and shot through the head—that made the Red Diamond men realize to what depths the enemy would stoop in his determination to stop the American Army. Many of the American dead were stripped; their shoes were always gone.

The positions of the leading battalions were maintained during the day of December 27th, and at night the regiment was relieved by elements of the Fourth Division coming back into the lines and by the Second Infantry Regiment of the Fifth Division. When the relief was complete the battalions moved to assembly areas as follows: First Battalion to the vicinity of HERSBERG, Second Battalion vicinity of GRADLINSTER, and the Third Battalion vicinity of HEFFINGEN. This movement switched the Second and Tenth Combat Teams to the left of the Eleventh as the Fourth Infantry Division returned to the line of the Fifth Division's right flank.

Meanwhile, in the Eleventh Infantry sector the German infantry was fighting a desperate delaying action supported by tanks and self-propelled guns. In spite of the lack of suitable roads and intensely cold weather, the battalions of the Eleventh Infantry continued the attack.

By 27 December the enemy had been driven back along the entire regimental front, but German rearguards remained to hamper the drive to the river. E and F Companies entered BEAUFORT and Third Battalion elements moved in to take LA CHAPELLE, but in the meantime other Third Battalion units were clearing minefields near commanding positions on the MULLENBACH-KREHUNCKEL ridge line. A report that one hundred enemy planes were operating North of the river came while a large number of Ninth Air Force fighters roared overhead, apparently trying to make contact with the enemy. A Third Battalion observation post sighted enemy forces withdrawing North across the river near MULLENBACH and brought down artillery fire on them. One span of the bridge was later blown by the enemy. Prisoners taken in BEAUFORT revealed that they had orders to withdraw if contact was made. Second Battalion troops outposted BEAUFORT while the First Battalion passed through BEAUFORT and launched an attack Northwards with the mission of securing high ground West of DILLINGEN and cleaning the enemy from the hill mass. A German line of artillery fire North of the river had now become active and harassed First Battalion troops who were advancing North to BEFORTERHAIDE. C Company encountered stubborn resistance in the vicinity of BEFORTERHAIDE. Elements of the Fifth Reconnaissance Troop, contacted by C Company during the drive also supported the attack with strong support fire. The dogged advance continued in darkness and amid violent shellings and almost fanatical resistance, but BEFORTERHAIDE was taken and the attack relentlessly rolled toward BIGELBACH. B Company moved Northwest on the left flank and captured Hill 402, North of BERENS, and Hill 348, SCHEIDBERG. By 0120 hours A Company, committed to bypass and outflank resistance, when it passed between B and C Companies, swept in on the town from the left flank, but heavy fire from an unexpectedly strong enemy force fought C Company to a standstill and A Company was ordered to withdraw to high ground West of BIGELBACH. C Company patrols that probed the town throughout the night fought sharp actions against an estimated three hundred enemy troops that held BIGELBACH. At 0730 hours on the morning of the 28th a violent explosion that heralded the blowing of the DILLINGEN bridge also signalled the assumption of First Battalion operations, but just prior to dawn the enemy disengaged and withdrew from BIGELBACH.

First Battalion troops pursued the enemy, but the ad-



vance was slowed when small pockets of enemy resistance appeared, and at the same time civilians who remained in the immediate zone of operations were being evacuated. Regimental boundaries had now been narrowed and the Tenth Infantry moved into and to the left of the First Battalion, Eleventh Infantry sector. The Second Battalion was put in reserve and went back into HALLER while the First and Third Battalions were drawn to BEAUFORT and began extensive patrol activity along the South river bank. Other patrols made contact with elements of the Twelfth Infantry of the Fourth Division, fighting for the first time alongside the Eleventh Infantry. Third Battalion troops patrolled nearer DILLINGEN. That day, front-line troops of the Eleventh Infantry had a belated Christmas Day turkey dinner—interrupted on several occasions by incoming enemy shell-fire.

Patrolling continued through the balance of the period for the First and Third Battalions, now in a semi-static defense position, and missions varied from flushing small groups of enemy stragglers to clearing minefields and maintaining contact with Twelfth Infantry troops on the right flank. Some casualties were sustained during intermittent day and night enemy shellings that were concentrated, for the most part, on HALLER. On 30 December, First Battalion Companies fired heavily from stationary positions in support of Tenth Infantry troops who were attacking REISDORF. An American medium bomber was shot down over German positions, but three airmen were observed to bail out and parachute down into enemy territory.

The Nineteenth Field Artillery displaced to WALDBILLIG on the afternoon of the 27th, remaining there the night of 27-28 December, and then moved again in the afternoon to the vicinity of HALLER. A constant hail of artillery had been placed on the enemy crossing sites of the SAUER River and main road leading away from it. As the battalion moved into the HALLER positions it received some shelling, but no casualties were sustained. However, the enemy consistently shelled the A Battery position forcing it to move and establish a dummy position in the old one. Again on the 29 December the battalion received approximately two hundred rounds in the position area but no casualties were inflicted even though one round landed in a B Battery gun pit and a shell fragment pierced the trail of the gun. On the 31 December at 2400 hours the entire Corps fired time-on-target on enemy installations but some of the effectiveness was lost because the Germans did the same thing to Fifth Division troops. On the 29 December the battalion survey truck ran over a minefield near the Command Post destroying the truck and sending nearly all of the survey personnel to the hospital. However, no one was mortally wounded.

With all three combat teams driving hard at the enemy flank, an appreciable penetration of the enemy spearhead took shape. The Second Combat Team continued to strike savagely at the enemy positions in an attempt to drive him from his breakthrough positions around the village of MULLERTHAL and the surrounding high ground.

At 0300 on the 27th, Lieutenant Colonel William Blakefield's First Battalion attacked the woods and seized the high ground. The Second Battalion, under Lieutenant Colonel Leslie K. Ball, moving out at 0900 hours advanced South through the MULLERTHAL DRAW without opposition and upon reaching MULLERTHAL reverted to regimental reserve and went into billets at CONSDORF.

Throughout the 27th, the First Battalion consolidated its positions, rooting out the last Germans from the woods, while the Third Battalion extended its position slightly to the right, taking over a portion of the zone of the Tenth Infantry.

The next day, the Third Battalion was relieved by the

First Battalion of the Twelfth Infantry and the First Battalion was relieved by the Third Battalion of the Twelfth Infantry. At noon, the Second Battalion began a movement to the vicinity of STEGEN, where it relieved the Forty-Fourth Armored Infantry Battalion (Sixth Armored Division) in positions along the SAUER River South of DIEKIRCH. The relief was accomplished by 0200 hours of 29 December.

The remainder of the regiment moved to the vicinity of SCHRONDWEILER, Luxembourg, on the 29th. The Third Battalion went into regimental reserve at STEGEN and the First Battalion into corps reserve at SCHOOS.

The Second Battalion continued to man the outpost line and the Main Line of resistance. Observation posts reported steady enemy vehicular activity in DIEKIRCH and on the road leading to VIANDEN. Enemy air activity was light but persistent.

On New Year's Day, the First Battalion relieved the Second Battalion on the main-line of resistance, the latter organization reverting to Corps reserve. There was no increase in enemy activity and shelling remained sporadic.

For two weeks this static situation prevailed. Artillery duels and patrol activity were the extent of operations as the Second Infantry reconnoitered routes and laid plans for the attack that everyone knew would be forthcoming.

On December 28th, the Tenth Combat Team was ordered to relieve elements of the Sixth Armored Division in the area North of ERMSDORF. The zone of the regiment extended generally from GILSDORF to REISDORF, and the order prescribed that it should be held by two battalions. In compliance with these instructions the Second Battalion was ordered to occupy the right and the Third Battalion the left of the regimental zone. The Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion moved to the vicinity of ERMSDORF, Luxembourg, where it relieved the Two Hundred Twelfth Armored Field Artillery Battalion. This was in compliance with orders moving the entire division West to a new sector. It was while in ERMSDORF, on 28th December 1944, that the battalion command post, located in a building in the town was struck by a bomb dropped from a lone enemy plane. Major Ballou, the battalion commanding officer, was severely wounded, Major Conde, battalion executive officer, was killed, and eighteen others were wounded. Major R. C. Canaday rejoined the battalion the following day as executive, and Major B. B. Blank joined as commanding officer. The First Battalion went into regimental reserve near MEDERNACH. The relief was accomplished during the night 28-29 December, and was completed prior to 0600 hours December 29th. During the day positions were consolidated and minor adjustments made, outposts placed, and patrols sent out to cover the bridges across the river. On December 30th, the Second Battalion occupied Hill 314 and guarded the bridge at REISDORF. The following day patrolling was continued, positions selected on the Division reserve line, and work on these positions commenced by the engineers.

As a result of the operations in Luxembourg by the concerted attack of the Fifth's three combat teams, heavily reinforced by Division and Corps artillery, the German offensive toward the city of LUXEMBOURG was abruptly halted and the Fifth Division fighting as a unit, had passed through the badly mauled Fourth Infantry and Ninth Armored Divisions to advance six miles in as many days in the face of heavy artillery, very heavy nebelwerfer and rocket fire, and sporadic airplane bombing and strafing. The Division had thrown two German divisions into utter confusion, recaptured much American equipment, and taken eight hundred and thirty prisoners. It had killed a much larger number, eliminated the threat of the Southern salient, and thrown the enemy back across the SAUER River, eliminating its bridgehead.

The situation also was improving in the rest of the Bulge, farther North. Besieged BASTOGNE had been reached



by a Third Army task force and relieved. The German drive had definitely been stopped and the Bulge was slowly being squeezed back into the SIEGFRIED Line, from which it erupted.

The Red Diamond was not an unfamiliar insignia to the sturdy folk of Luxembourg, the Fifth Division having occupied the tiny Duchy after the last war.

As a result of the Tenth's operations in this sector, the territory South of the SAUER River at ECHTERNACH was clear of the enemy and the river line and bridges occupied from GILSDORF to REISDORF.

A summary of enemy operations during the period reveals that the Tenth Combat Team had stopped a contingent of troops identified as the Two Hundred Twelfth Volks Grenadier Division. The Three Hundred Twentieth Infantry Regiment and the Two Hundred Twelfth Fusilier Battalion were destroyed in the operation.

On New Year's Eve, 1944 (the third consecutive New Year's Eve overseas for the Fifth Division) German planes put in an appearance over the Fifth Division sector. Several flares were dropped but no bombs.

Adhering to the old American custom of plenty of noise on New Year's Eve, all units prepared harassing fires and barrages to be fired at midnight. As the hour approached, all crews stood by to fire. Slightly before the stroke of twelve, however, the Germans gave evidence of having somewhat the same custom, and barrages of nebelwerfers, mortars, and high velocity artillery fire poured into the American lines. Shortly after this the American gun crews gave the word to fire and the front was lit by the flashes from .50 caliber machine guns, artillery, mortars, small arms, and anti-aircraft fire.

January, 1945, found the First and Third Battalions of the Eleventh Infantry in defensive positions along the Southern bank of the River SAUER. Regimental boundaries ranged from REISDORF, occupied by the Tenth Infantry, on the left flank Southeast along the SAUER River to a point just East of STATION, where the Twelfth Infantry, Fourth Division, joined the Regimental right flank at HALLER, approximately three miles South of the river, while the First and Third Battalions maintained outposts and conducted extensive patrolling operations along the river front. Enemy stragglers and others who had hidden out with the purpose of being taken prisoner, were picked up by patrols that searched all civilian homes near the river. The Regimental line consisted of the First Battalion on the left and the Third Battalion on the right and both Battalion Command Posts were established in BEAUFORT. Enemy artillery and nebelwerfers sporadically shelled the BEAUFORT-BIGELBACH-HALLER areas and concentrations also fell near Cannon

Company and Nineteenth Field Artillery gun emplacements.

Defensive positions to include minefields, roadblocks and barbed-wire entanglements were prepared at strategic points, and plans were formulated to send patrols across the river into German lines for the purpose of taking prisoners. Patrols maintained constant contact with outposts and vigilantly probed the river front to intercept corresponding enemy detachments that might attempt a river crossing. Reconnaissance planes of the Luftwaffe were over Eleventh Infantry positions each night, and some bombs were dropped at various points—injury no one. Enemy fighter-bombers strafed HALLER and CRISTNACH in several daylight sneak attacks.

At 2330 hours of 5 January, 1945, a patrol of seven enlisted men of Company I, plus one member of the Third Battalion Intelligence Section, set out on the mission of crossing the river into enemy lines. Object of the reconnaissance was: 1. to take prisoners (if possible), 2. To gain information of German defenses and troop dispositions. Camouflaged in snow capes, the patrol moved out in bright moonlight and crossed the river by means of two rubber assault boats.

The river, at this point, was approximately sixty yards wide and the contingent reached the opposite bank undetected. The patrol cautiously reconnoitered along open ground, toward the main river road by way of a narrow footpath that led through a wooded area. Without encountering resistance, the patrol turned Northeast and reconnoitered approximately one mile along the main road. The contingent then deployed along either side of the road and from concealed positions waited in vain for a German patrol to appear. No physical contact was made with the enemy, but a short while later the patrol returned along the same road and probed 400 yards to the South of the foot path beyond the crossing site to discover a number of antitank mines imbedded in the road. By 0130 hours, 6 January 1945 the patrol recrossed the river undetected and returned to report on the operation. Meanwhile, First Battalion patrols that were to make a similar crossing and reconnaissance in their sector, decided to postpone the operation until the following evening due to the bright night. The patrol also failed to cross the river on the following night when a group of Germans, apparently a night patrol, made an appearance on the opposite shore.

Several other First and Third Battalion patrols embarked in attempts to cross the river but in each instance their movements were observed by enemy outposts and crossing was not effected. At one time a four-man reconnaissance patrol of the Regimental Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon paddled near the far shore only to discover that they were under direct observation by Germans who apparently waited for them to alight from the assault boat and take them prisoner. When the patrol perceived the partially concealed enemy, they immediately turned about and paddled toward the friendly shore. Strangely enough the enemy did not open fire. Germans patrols also sought to cross the river, but watchful Eleventh Infantry outposts called for concentrations of mortar and artillery fire that soon came—discouraging enemy crossings.

The position of the Nineteenth Field Artillery Battalion at HALLER from the 30 December until the 16 January was one of defense and the expenditure of ammunition was not great. A few observed missions were fired during the daylight hours and a great deal of the new pozit fuze was used for harassing fire at night. On the 16th the Nineteenth was relieved from direct support of the Eleventh Infantry by the Nine Hundred Seventy-Fourth Field Artillery Battalion and displaced to the vicinity of ERMSDORF to reinforce the fires of the Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion. A total of 12,946 rounds had been fired by the Nineteenth alone in the drive to push the enemy back across the SAUER River.

Three 10th Infantrymen hug the side of a hill in a sortie into the German lines in Luxembourg.





Throughout the first eighteen days of January, 1945, the Tenth Regiment held the defensive line South of the SAUER River extending generally from GILSDORF to REISDORF inclusive. By rotation two battalions were employed on the main line of resistance set up along the highground overlooking the river, while another was held in regimental reserve in MEDERNACH. Outposts were maintained in order to protect the regiment from any possible surprise attack by the enemy and especially to guard the three bridges across the river in the regimental zone, including the one at MOESTROFF. The Regimental Command Post was located in a spacious chateau near MEDERNACH.

During the period 1-15 January inclusive, these positions were maintained and improved, while alternate positions on a division reserve line and other delaying positions were selected and prepared by the Three Hundred Fifty-First Engineer Battalion. Front line battalions patrolled both sides of the river line actively and consistently during the period.

Considerable enemy activity was observed across the river, especially in FOUREN and on the road leading to WALSDORF; also at Ferme HERBSTGRAECHT, TANDEL, the TANDEL-HASTENDORF road, and BETTENDORF, just across the river on the right flank. Patrols donned snow capes and crossed the river in rubber boats but the intelligence obtained was inadequate. Allied strategy required the application of continuous pressure on the Southern flank of the German salient, and higher headquarters desired information of enemy dispositions, installations, and organization.

On January 9th, the company commander of Company L was ordered to organize a combat patrol consisting of one rifle platoon under the command of the platoon leader to destroy enemy installations in and around the town of BETTENDORF, and to take prisoners.

The mission was planned in detail for Company L's first platoon, led by Lieutenant Wilfred Longpre. The Sixty-Seventh Photo Interpretation Team made town plans of the village of BETTENDORF from aerial photographs and using those and visual reconnaissance from observation posts, the platoon was thoroughly oriented by the Regimental S-2 Major Edward Marsh, Battalion Commander Lieutenant Colonel Shipley and Company Commander Harold Bowers. The platoon, thoroughly oriented, moved out in the darkness at 0200 hours down to the river bank. The men were clad in white sheets developed as a field expedient, and carried six rubber snow-camouflaged assault boats, but used only one in the crossing. Getting six men into the boat from the icy bank proved not an easy task, especially for Sergeant David E. Rogers, carrying the radio.

PFC Anthony E. Lozarro, PFC Joseph Riccio, PFC Joseph J. Kulwanowski and PFC Robert J. Bondwin don makeshift snow suits prior to a foray in the front lines.



Crossing the river as quietly as possible, the platoon assembled and then moved unobserved to the North end of the town from the West side. Assistant squad leader Sergeant Hubert Stegman cut all the wire lines running North from the town. The platoon began to move through the streets.

As the patrol approached an enemy company command post it was discovered by a sentry and challenged. A burst of automatic rifle fire eliminated the sentry and fragmentation and concussion grenades were tossed through the Command Post windows followed by additional automatic fire. A German ran out of the building and gave himself up. An enemy machine gun chattered from the second story and in turn was silenced by a rifle grenade.

When satisfied that no one was left alive in the house, the raiding party moved on hurriedly to another building known to quarter enemy troops and repeated the previous performance. Another stunned prisoner was taken and those electing to remain in the room after being invited to surrender, were blasted with grenades.

A third prisoner was taken at a third house thus attacked by Staff Sergeant Charles Testino and, having by this time spent over an hour and a half in the town, the patrol, without sustaining a single casualty, returned to the lines by way of a partially blown bridge with the three prisoners. Division artillery laid down a time-on-target on what remained of the stunned garrison.

The last German captured turned out to be a non-commissioned officer with valuable documents on his person, one of which peculiarly enough consisted of an order from the regimental commander of the Nine Hundred Fifteenth Regiment of the Three Hundred Fifty-Second Volks Grenadier Division, who, apparently, had just completed an inspection of the BETTENDORF position on the previous day and, extremely dissatisfied, had written an order directing correction of the "false sense of security" prevailing, and recommending additional minefields and other obstacles. The perfect raid by the Tenth proved his point.

Upon returning to the battalion with its mission highly successful, the platoon found itself the recipient of gifts of a bottle of Scotch, a bottle of gin and bottle of bourbon from the Division Assistant Commanding General Brigadier General Aln D. Warnock, and the Division G-2, Lieutenant Colonel Thackeray.

Supplementary intelligence was obtained on enemy command posts from prisoner interrogations. The enemy defensive positions centered around CLAIREFONTAINE and BETTENDORF, scene of the spectacular raid, and, with the exception of occasional artillery fire, no indication of aggressiveness on the part of the enemy was apparent.

Patrolling continued and, on the night of January 15th, the Second Battalion, which at the time was holding the left sector of the main line of resistance, took over the hill on the right of the Second Infantry's sector and the regimental boundary was extended to the left to include it. At the same time the Third Battalion, less one platoon of Company K and one squad of Company I, occupying the right sector of the line was relieved by the Third Battalion of the Eighth Infantry Regiment of the Fourth Division which was, in turn, with the platoon of Company K and one squad of Company I, attached to the Tenth Infantry Regiment. In each case, however, outposts of the units relieved remained in position during the movement and were not relieved until later. Following the relief the Second Battalion assembled in MEDERNACH and the Third Battalion in FELS. All movements were completed prior to 2400 hours.

The Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion remained in the positions around ERMSDORF until 16 January 1945 when positions were occupied at Ferme FOLKENDANGE, to support



Evidence of German atrocities is shown by these six American soldiers lined up in orderly fashion where they fell after being shot through the head.



the attack of the Tenth Infantry across the SAUER River between DIEKIRCH and BETTENDORF.

The front remained relatively quiet during the entire period, and with the lone exception of the BETTENDORF raid no spectacular activity occurred. Prior to the raid, BETTENDORF had been the locality from which tanks and mortars had fired upon our lines, and our own artillery fire was often directed upon gun positions there. WALLENDORF, another scene of enemy activity, was plastered with time-on-targets. On the 13th, American heavy bombers flew over our positions returning from enemy territory. One was observed in flames and Company A reported fourteen parachutes coming down to our area. Only two of the ill-fated crew reached our lines, however, and they were taken to the rear and safety.

### FIRST CROSSING OF THE SAUER

The next assignment handed the division was to cross the SAUER River Northward between ETTTELBRUCK and BETTENDORF and clear the Germans from the HOSCHIEDERDICKT hill mass for a depth of 12 miles with the tactical purpose of completely erasing the Southern part of the Bulge and then swinging East into Germany itself. The days continued to be cold, with frequent snowfalls adding to the already white-carpeted ARDENNES.

Division plan this time involved attacking with the Second Regiment on the left and the Tenth Regiment on the right, with the Eleventh to be held in close reserve and committed through either the Second or Tenth at the opportune time and place.

Pursuant to Division orders, all battalions reconnoitered the river line for suitable crossing sites and prepared for the attack which was slated to begin at 0300 hours, January 18th. Initial objectives prescribed for the Tenth Regiment included the two principal hill masses opposite the

Regimental zone on the North side of the SAUER River, Hill 383, and the high ground Northwest of BETTENDORF. The crossing in this area was to be made by the Second and Third Battalions, Tenth Infantry, immediately followed by the First Battalion.

In the darkness of early morn, January 18th, the Second and Third Battalions began the river crossing in assault boats as scheduled. The Third Battalion left its assembly area in a quarry and approached the river below GILSDORF, Companies I and K in front followed by Company L. The crossing was completed without discovery and the troops of the battalion moved out toward the high ground Northwest of BETTENDORF. So completely was the enemy caught unaware that by 0600 hours both assault companies had reached high ground, taken up positions on the objective, and by 0815 hours were joined and patrolling to contact elements of the Eighth Infantry Fourth Division on the right.

The relative ease with which the Third Battalion reached its objective without being discovered by the enemy and thereby avoiding a probable costly fire fight, was due primarily to the thorough reconnaissance made of the area prior to the crossing of the river in strength. The action of Company K in reaching the high ground is illustrative of the manner in which the surprise crossing was effected. The company began crossing the river at 0300 hours near the town of BETTENDORF and infiltrated without incident to the high ground Northwest of the town. During this operation the troops passed by several enemy machine guns and strong points so placed as to prevent just such an operation.

Success was largely made possible by the action of Lieutenant Ruric N. Williams, platoon leader of the Second Platoon, who, before the attack, had led two patrols across the river and had reconnoitered a route by which his company might pass in establishing itself on the high ground.



Thus familiar with the terrain, the lieutenant crossed his platoon in assault boats, formed on the far side, and in the darkness was able to lead the entire company across 500 yards of open ground through the enemy lines, so that by dawn the company had dug in and established itself to the rear of the bewildered enemy.

The Second Battalion on the left crossed the river below DIEKIRCH against mounting resistance and proceeded to clear the town of GILSDORF, remaining obstacle in the route of advance to the high ground, Hill 383. By 0800 hours this task was almost complete with Company G clearing the houses Northwest of GILSDORF and Company E moving around Southwest of Hill 383. The engagement had netted 16 prisoners at this stage of the operation, and the opposition varied from light to heavy.

At 0939 hours a reinforced company of enemy troops counterattacked the Third Battalion in Company I's sector. Within an hour's time the attack was repulsed, and one company moved to a point covering the road running Northwest through BASTENDORF. At approximately 1330 hours the battalion was instructed to be prepared to attack enemy positions in vicinity of CLAIREFONTAINE.

In the meantime the Second Battalion had cleared GILSDORF and the town was occupied by Company G. Companies E and F moved on Northward and attacked Hill 383 at 1140 hours. By 1400 hours the objective was taken, positions consolidated, and the troops prepared to continue the advance. Enemy artillery fire continued to be heavy in the sector, 40 rounds dropping at one time on the impact area 150 yards East of the bridge in GILSDORF.

At 1000 hours the First Battalion had been ordered to move across the river and fifteen minutes later Company B was on the way to relieve Company G in GILSDORF. By 1240 hours the troops had crossed the river, completed the relief, and were continuing the mopping up of the town and patrolling to the West. The engineers had by this time completed bridging and ferry operations, and the remaining companies were crossing the assault bridge. At 1445 hours Regiment ordered one company to take BETTENDORF, and at 1600 hours Company A was ordered into the town. Twenty minutes passed and the company was reported doing well, having secured a 90 millimeter gun abandoned by the enemy. Enemy resistance was stubborn and included some tank fire. Anti-tank guns were brought across the river, and at 1745 hours Company A had taken the town and 15 prisoners.

At the end of this first phase of the operation the Regiment had occupied and organized positions on both its main objectives, the Regimental boundary on the right had been extended to include BETTENDORF and Company A had cleared the town. Company B, plus one platoon of Company C, had followed the Second Battalion and gone into position on the Southwestern slope of Hill 383, in order to deny the Regimental left flank to the enemy in the DIEKIRCH vicinity. Approximately 150 prisoners were taken, and the flanks were patrolled to contact adjacent units.

There was no doubt that winter had set in on the Luxembourg front. Snow twelve inches deep covered the entire sector in which the regiments were to attack. The temperature had dropped to 16 degrees above zero the night of 17-18 January, as the troops of the Second Infantry moved forward to assembly areas overlooking the SAUER River South of INGLEDORF.

The crossing of the SAUER River was a surprise to the enemy—it said in the newspapers—but many a Second Infantry doughboy will dispute that statement. While the First Battalion made its crossing without much trouble to the West of INGLEDORF, the Second Battalion, after bridging attempts failed East of town, marched down to the river with every gun firing and literally blasted the enemy from shore defenses. But even after the assault boat crossing

had been effected, the enemy continued to fight back from positions prepared on the high ground North of the river.

Private Charles H. Schroder, an automatic rifleman of Company F, had been wounded in the crossing of the river, but like many other soldiers that day, he refused evacuation in order to remain with his company. Lying exposed on the flat open ground between the SAUER River and enemy positions on GOLDKNAP Hill, he maintained a steady stream of fire at the enemy guns that allowed his platoon to maneuver. Constantly exposed, he diverted enemy fire from his platoon until killed by artillery fire.

During this same action, Technician Fifth Grade Calvin J. Randolph, a company aid man with Company H, learned that there were three wounded soldiers lying where they had fallen on the open field in front of GOLDKNAP Hill. Although heavy mortar fire was pounding the area, Technician Fifth Grade Randolph entered the danger zone and while shrapnel tore his clothing succeeded in evacuating two of the wounded men. While attempting to rescue the third, Randolph was killed.

The First Battalion headed North and the Second Battalion, after clearing the high ground, swung around in back of DIEKIRCH, leaving the city itself to be taken by the Third Battalion. By nightfall, DIEKIRCH was cut off and the only escape route blocked by Company G. The remainder of the Second Battalion was in the woods Northwest of town and the First Battalion was Southwest of FRIEDHOF farm.

By nightfall on the 18th, the Second and Tenth Regiments had won a bridgehead across the SAUER that was 2,000 yards deep and covered an irregular 8,000 yard front. Tanks of the Seven Hundred Thirty-Seventh Tank Battalion and tank destroyers of the Eight Hundred Third Tank Destroyer Battalion were across. The Fifth's own Seventh Engineer Battalion, and the Third Army's One Hundred Fiftieth Engineer Battalion and Five Hundred Ninth Treadway Bridge Company threw across one treadway bridge, two Class 40 Bailey bridges, two assault boat and two foot bridges in less than 18 hours, despite the intermittent artillery fire that fell along the river two hours after troops forced the crossing.

The official summary of enemy operations during the initial stage of the attack in the vicinity of CLAIREFONTAINE-BETTENDORF disclosed that the front line companies of the Nine Hundred Fifteenth Regiment were surprised and overrun. Whole platoons of Germans were taken prisoner who claimed they never had a chance to fire a shot. The surprise was so complete that in the vicinity of HERENBERG, near Hill 383, the Tenth captured 5 artillery observation posts and one battery commander. The observers were unable to spot operations due to the heavy fog that blanketed the area. After the first two hours of the attack the bridgehead was subjected to heavy artillery concentrations. It was estimated that the enemy had at least 5 battalions of artillery in support of its troops in the Tenth Infantry sector alone, but suffered somewhat from lack of ammunition and locomotion of their guns.

Surprise was the initial advantage gained by both regiments as the river crossing veterans of the Fifth caught the enemy off guard. One German officer prisoner, a field artillery forward observer, said his first knowledge of the attack came when he was captured. The enemy had believed at most that the attack was simply a reconnaissance force despite the fact that supporting division artillery fire on suspected enemy battery locations was so effective that no return enemy artillery fire was received for the first two hours of the attack. Thereafter, however, artillery and nebelwerfer fire rained heavily all along the river.

After probing division lines intermittently throughout the night, the enemy found what it thought was a weak point and at dawn counterattacked in the First Battalion



Second Infantry sector. Infiltrating through the lines, an enemy force cut off the Company A command post, isolating it from the company. Fighting with carbine and pistol, the Company Commander, Captain Lennis Jones, personally killed eleven of the enemy, then worked his way back to his company, reorganized his men and led them forward to repulse the attack.

While the Third Battalion completed the clearing of DIEKIRCH, the First and Second advanced to the North despite heavy artillery and small arms fire. Just before dusk, the Second Battalion attack succeeded in the taking of FRIEDHOF farm and the capture of the commander of the Two Hundred Eighth Volks Grenadier Regiment with his staff.

The Tenth Regiment continued its Northward push on the 19th endeavoring to keep in contact with elements of the Fourth Division on the right flank, the Second Battalion attacking North and clearing the town of BASTENDORF. In taking BASTENDORF, the battalion liberated a staff sergeant of the Twenty-Eighth Infantry Division who had been hiding out near the town since the German counteroffensive started on December 17th.

Company G was left to occupy the town while Companies E and F advanced to the battalion's next objective, the high ground East of TANDEL, where they consolidated their positions. At 1830 hours they were counterattacked by an enemy force of infantry supported by tanks and artillery. With the assistance of supporting artillery, the attack was repulsed after only a half hour engagement.

BASTENDORF was one of the towns which had been overrun by the Boche in the ARDENNES offensive and Americans found a great deal of sad evidence. They found American dead piled in the church (stripped of their shoes) and American helmets scattered about the streets. Most of the helmets had holes in them. They all bore the insignia of the Twenty-Eighth Division. On doors we found "Reserved, Service Company Supply Room" and "S-4" written in chalk. The companies were standing in the middle of the scene of a former American defeat. The effect on the troops was to make the American attacks grow in aggressiveness.

It was later learned that approximately one battalion of the Two Hundred Twenty-Sixth Regiment of the Seventy-Ninth Volks Grenadier Division had been thrown in for the counterattack in this sector. They had been pulled out of the MERSCHIED sector, for that purpose. The counterattack was supported by 88 millimeter anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns from the Six Hundred Sixty-Eighth General Headquarters Anti-Tank Battalion. Remnants of other artillery regiments were thrown together to form a system of strong-points to protect the threatened BASTENDORF-BRANDENBURG road with small-arms, machine guns, and mortars.

In the meantime, at 1030 hours, the Third Battalion Tenth Infantry had been ordered to take the high ground between the towns of TANDEL and LONGSDORF, the attack to commence at 1445 hours. At 1300 hours the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Shipley, ordered Company I to push toward the objective from the center along a direct route toward LONGSDORF, while Company K attacked around the left flank toward the objective, and Company L around the right flank in the vicinity of TANDEL. The companies jumped off as scheduled, and at the close of the hour all three companies were verging on the objective. Positions were consolidated for the night and patrols sent out to the North. The First Battalion assembled North of DIEKIRCH at 1345 hours with Company C to the front, and remained in these positions during the night. The day's drive netted 59 additional prisoners.

On the 20th of January, the First Battalion and Second Battalion continued the advance to the North through swirling snow and cold, in the general direction of PURSCHIED and the OUR River. Intermediate objectives included



American ambulance, clearly marked, crashes into a tree following a strafing by German piloted captured American P-47. Driver and patient were killed.

the high ground before the village of BRANDENBURG and the woods and high ground South and Southwest of WALSDORF. Companies A and B of the First Battalion grouped in BASTENDORF for the attack. At 0820 hours, Company A jumped off behind artillery preparation and stopped at the woods. At 0835 hours, Company B and the Second Battalion moved out and, with Company A awaited tank support. At 0940 hours tanks had reached the edge of the woods and the attack got under way. One hour later the tanks had reached the crest of the hill, and were shooting up the houses in BRANDENBURG. The troops advanced slowly; Company B to the high ground and Company A to the town, which it occupied by 1600 hours.

Meanwhile, the Second Battalion had advanced to the edge of the woods South of WALSDORF, and the Third Battalion, having been relieved by elements of the Twelfth Regiment, moved West from TANDEL to continue the attack on the left of the First Battalion. Small arms and mortar fire made up most of the enemy's fire power opposing the advance, the amount of nebelwerfer and artillery fire having decreased considerably, and columns of enemy infantry were observed withdrawing to VIANDEN, a larger town Northeast of WALSDORF.

Exemplary of the Red Diamond infantryman's familiar contempt for the enemy and perfect coolness in a tight situation was an incident that occurred in the day's fighting involving Private William H. Thomas of Company M, Tenth Infantry. Thomas was on guard at his machine gun position as a group of Germans led by an officer moved up a draw toward him. Thomas didn't think he could get all of them so he calmly let them approach. Twenty-five yards away the officer hit the dirt to survey the situation and then spotted Thomas, and with his machine pistol, motioned him to surrender. Thomas responded with a gesture of "No, not me—you." This debate in pantomime continued for several minutes, during which, unobserved by the Germans, a nearby artillery observer of the Forty-Sixth Field Artillery, called for fire. Thomas finally gave the German the familiar "the hell with you" gesture at which the officer carefully removed his cap, smoothed his hair and replaced his cap with precise care as Thomas prepared for the counterattack. Then the German made the mistake of raising the upper half of his body as his men moved to the right. Thomas cut him in two with machine gun slugs and the artillery fire fell at that moment in the middle of the 30-some Germans, liquidating them.



As the Tenth closed in on BRANDENBURG, the Second Infantry pushed forward in its sector against stubborn resistance and had weather conditions.

On the 20th, the First Battalion remained in position while the Second Battalion making a wide end run under cover of darkness approached KIPPENHOF farm from the Southeast. KIPPENHOF was one of those typical European farm buildings with concrete walls 18-24 inches thick, located on a slight rise commanding the 400-600 yards of open ground between it and the nearest cover.

At 0800 hours the battalion attacked. The enemy allowed Company F to get within 100 yards of its outpost positions, then opened up with deadly, accurately-aimed small arms and automatic weapons fire. The company halted.

To get in position to bring artillery fire on the enemy, Staff Sergeant Clemens G. Noldau, of Company F, crawled forward across the bare, snow-covered terrain. Advancing to a position of better observation, Staff Sergeant Noldau was killed by enemy fire.

Company G pulled up abreast of Company F, and Company E moved through the woods to the East of the farm. By 1400 hours, after thorough artillery preparation, Company G jumped off in the assault on the fortified farm, seizing it and some 45 prisoners in a brief but bitter fight. Company E, moving from the East, cut off the escape of the Germans and joined Company G in the defense of the newly captured strong point.

That evening, the Third Battalion cleared isolated pockets of resistance, that had been bypassed in the attack and relieved the Second Battalion at KIPPENHOF.

Ski-litters were now being used almost exclusively for the evacuation of wounded from platoons to battalion collecting points. The Division had acquired 88 skis from the German warehouse in METZ and, when bolted to regular litters, they proved the solution to difficulties incurred by snow-covered hills and valleys. On the enemy side,

German snowsuits were yet another most interesting revelation, being a uniform that was both warm and snow-camouflaged.

The advance was continued on January 21st, with the First Battalion Tenth Infantry clearing the ground West and North of BRANDENBURG and, during the night, advancing to the South edge of the high ground in SCHEID Woods, in preparation for an attack on its positions the following morning.

The Third Battalion Tenth Infantry during this phase of the operation, had been given the mission to attack and occupy the town of LANDSCHEID, located Northwest of BRANDENBURG. This unit, when relieved on January 20th, had assembled for a brief rest in CLAIREFONTAINE before continuing the attack. When orders were received to reenter the fight, plans were laid as follows: A platoon from Company K to reconnoiter and clear from BRANDENBURG to a house located just short of the town. The patrol would move up the draw leading North from BRANDENBURG, seize the house, and cover the remainder of the company as they moved up to the house and on into the town. The platoon would be reinforced with one anti-tank rocket team and one light machine gun. Artillery forward observers were to accompany the patrol. One platoon of heavy machine guns was attached to the company which had further instructions to reorganize for defense in the forward edge of the town when the latter was taken.

Preparations for the advance were continued during the night of January 20th, and at 0430 hours the following morning the Battalion Command Post opened in BRANDENBURG.

High above the town stood the ruins of BRANDENBURG Castle, a fortification of the middle ages, now falling into ruin. Before operation would be safe in the town below, it was necessary to ascertain whether or not there were any enemy snipers or artillery observers in the lone tower that stood above the ruined bastions. The castle, well known in history, had at one time been the ancestral home of

Patrol from 5th Reconnaissance Troop of 5th Division work forward through snow to clear town of Michelau, Luxembourg. The patrol was led by Lieutenant Norman Sterling.





Lords of Luxembourg, and had even furnished a Kaiser with nobility for his state affairs. The Battalion S-2 section scouted the castle and found it empty.

In the early morning light, the files of men moving to their attack positions looked ghostlike in their hooded snow suits. As the mortar platoon of M Company Tenth Infantry proceeded up a draw considered to be protection enough from small arms, the platoon leader was challenged by a "halt." He halted. The voice continued to call out to him to surrender. At this the leader called out "Surrender, Hell!" and emptied his tommy gun at the enemy forms. Three dead were counted, supposedly an outpost placed by a main body that had withdrawn in the night. The mortars were set up and an outpost established in order to prevent the enemy from patrolling into the Battalion Command Post then only a few blocks away.

The K Company patrol moved out from the town and up the draw. Thirty minutes later the remainder of the company moved out to attack the objective from the right flank and Company I followed into BRANDENBURG.

The terrain in this sector was rugged with deep draws and valleys, woods and cultivated fields. LANDSCHEID, a small village, was situated on a high plateau. There were two approaches to the town; one up a draw on its flank and under enemy observation; the other, a road running directly into town. The approach up the road afforded cover and concealment to within a few hundred yards of the town. The company plan of attack was for a column of platoons to advance up the roads to the town, the First Platoon out in front strengthened with one section of light machine guns and a 60 millimeter mortar squad.

As the leading platoon approached the town it was fired upon by machine guns, rifles, and mortars, and tank fire struck at it from the left bank of the draw. Due to the nature of the terrain before it the platoon was unable to return fire. Enemy observation was good, and fire from all weapons was heavy and continuous. It was mid-morning, the weather was clear, and the enemy was located in all the houses of the town and on its outskirts.

Under fire, the mortar squad came forward and went into action. The machine gun nest was silenced with the first three rounds, allowing the remainder of the rifle platoon to maneuver into firing position, enabling another platoon to enter some of the houses on the edge of the town. The remainder of the company passed around the flanks to attack the town from the rear in a move that caught the enemy completely by surprise. Shortly after noon Company K had seized the town and at 1300 hours had consolidated its positions. Only slight casualties were suffered. At 1730 hours the company was joined by Company I and continued North in order to cover the draws leading into the town. Company K's outflanking tactic resulted in 55 prisoners, three enemy killed and a pass to PARIS for the company commander, Lieutenant John D. Kennedy, for his aggressive leadership.

During this phase of the operations the Regimental Staff had left its quarters in the chateau near MEDERNACH and was established below the ruins of the medieval castle in BRANDENBURG.

The Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion moved to the vicinity of LANDSCHEID, in weather which had changed from the rain and sleet to bitter cold with several feet of snow in many places. Materiel was painted with white water paint to make camouflage easier.

Artillery concentrations supported the attack of the First and Third Battalions of the Second Infantry the morning of the 21st of January. Only rear guard actions delayed the advance of the First Battalion as it swept Northwestward to seize LIPPERSCHIED and the high ground to the North before being passed through by the Eleventh Infantry. The Third Battalion ran into heavier opposition

on the right of the regimental zone but advanced nearly 3000 yards along the DIEKIRCH-HOSCHIED Road before being relieved by the Eleventh Infantry on the 22d of December.

Plans for the attack of the First Battalion Tenth Infantry on SCHEID woods called for Company C to move by truck to BRANDENBURG before daylight, placing a platoon from the company on the Eastern fringe of the woods and a platoon from Company B on the Western edge. By 0900 hours, tanks were to be on the objective with instructions to fire to the East only. Tank Destroyers would cover the tanks until the objective should be reached and then move into position when the tanks withdrew.

Morning of the 22d came and the attack progressed according to plan. At 0900 hours the tanks of Company B Seven Hundred Thirty-Seventh Tank Battalion were moving up and had spotted four enemy tanks in the woods. Fifteen minutes later they had accounted for two of the enemy tanks and had the other two boxed in. In another quarter hour they had knocked out several enemy vehicles, and supporting artillery laid a time-on-target on the woods. Company B then moved in on the objective and was clearing the woods at 1030 hours.

While the Battalion continued to clear the enemy from the woods on the East of objective, orders were received to push on to the next goal; the town of PUHL and vicinity.

Meanwhile, the Second Battalion had cleared its assigned zone South of WALSDORF, and had occupied the high ground farther North Southwest of the town.

The First Battalion continued the advance on PUHL against stiffening resistance, which centered along the high ground and woods in a line, NACHTMANDERSCHIED-PUHL. Here the Thirty-Sixth and One Hundred Sixteenth Regiments of the Ninth Volks Grenadier Division stubbornly defended every yard of ground and every house. Self-propelled guns supporting the defenders were employed to the best advantage by apparently well trained crews who managed to elude our artillery fire. By 1100 hours, the advance, supported by artillery and attached armor, was well under way. Tank destroyers picked up 20 prisoners, and at 1140 hours a platoon of Company B was closing in on the houses in PUHL. During this phase of the attack the company commander was wounded and evacuated. Around noon men of Company C were fanning out on the high ground under a screen of smoke and an hour later had pushed to the top of the hills into the woods. In the fighting that continued on into the late afternoon, Company C likewise lost its company commander, although casualties sustained during the entire advance were light. By nightfall Company A had arrived in the same woods, and a few hours later Company C was in contact with elements of the Second Battalion, which previously had moved North to relieve the First Battalion on the objective and to clear the high ground to the West. After contact was effected, however, the Second Battalion occupied the North edge of the woods South of the objective, and prepared to relieve the First Battalion on January 23d.

Back at LANDSCHEID one platoon of Company I had been ordered to patrol to the draw Northwest of the town, to proceed down the draw to the road running South to BRANDENBURG with the mission of clearing the area of enemy troops reported to have infiltrated there. The patrol left the town at 1415 hours and reported two hours later that it had taken prisoners and that the area was again clear of the enemy.

The engagement for the preceding 24 hours had not developed any spectacular or rapid gains, for the troops had fought against elements as well as the enemy; counterattacks from platoon to company strength, supported by tanks had rendered the advance slow and tedious. The results were encouraging, however. Prisoners taken during



the period totaled an estimated 165 men. Four enemy tanks as well as 6 self-propelled and anti-tank guns had been destroyed. The day had dawned clear and bombers and fighter-bombers that were over the area North of the front had observed road nets jammed with enemy vehicles moving East, North of VIANDEN. Artillery liaison plane pilots and artillery smoke shells guided the planes on to their targets, and squadrons that had been assigned to missions elsewhere on the Third Army front, were sent to the VIANDEN-EISENBACH area instead.

Not since the FALAISE GAP had the enemy transportation been so exposed. There were hundreds of vehicles of all descriptions—jammed on roads bumper to bumper when the fog lifted and Nineteenth Tactical Air Command planes came down on them. Undoubtedly, they had gambled on the sky remaining overcast. All day the air shook with the violence of our artillery barrages and the concussion of the aerial bombs. Later, troops saw the destruction. Knocked out vehicles lined the road on both sides for miles like fences.

During this attack, the Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion used a higher percentage of time fire than ever before, and in addition to the many personnel targets fired upon, several enemy batteries were taken under fire and destroyed. Enemy self-propelled guns caused some difficulty in this sector, and one of the most effective means of combating these weapons was the adjustment of fire on an auxiliary target, and fire for effect with a converged sheaf on the self-propelled weapons. This method is known to have destroyed one of these difficult targets. While in position at LANDSCHEID, on 22 January the Fifth Division Artillery fired by air adjustment on a column of vehicles estimated to be 1700 in number, and artillery units were credited with having destroyed 200 of the vehicles as they vainly attempted to get into the SIEGFRIED Line North of VIANDEN. Fighter bombers were credited with 900 vehicles destroyed, but actual discovery of the column was made by the Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion's air observation posts in the cub planes.

With the Second Infantry holding ground in the vicinity of LIPPERSCHEID the First and Second Battalions of the Eleventh Infantry, together with its attachments of Company C, Seven Hundred Thirty-Seventh Tank Battalion, Company C, Seventh Engineers, Company C, Seventy-First Chemical Mortar Battalion, Company C, Eight Hundred Third Tank Destroyer Battalion, and Company C of the Fifth Medical Battalion, moved into the Second Infantry area under cover of darkness at 2200 hours of 21 January 1945 and prepared to follow up and renew the attack prior to daylight of the following morning. The Eleventh's Third Battalion moved to ETTTELBRUCK where it remained in regimental reserve. From LIPPERSCHEID, the Second Battalion, on the regiment's left, passed through the Second Infantry positions at 0700 hours of 22 January and attacked due North toward MERSCHIED. The First Battalion simultaneously launched its attack on the Regimental right front and aimed for GRALINGEN and surrounding high ground. As E and F advanced Northwards enemy tanks and mortars fired violently from HOSCHIED and GRALINGEN, so G Company maneuvered around to the left flank and organized to press the attack from that sector while the Fifth Reconnaissance Troop took up positions to protect its left flank. Under terrific fire which the enemy employed while covering a troop-shifting move in HOSCHIED, E and F Companies were forced to draw back 300 yards, but G Company doggedly continued to move along the left flank. During this advance, Private Thayn Sargent, First Scout of Company G, observed a German machine gun nest as he turned a curve along a narrow icy trail. Sargent motioned members of his platoon to open fire on the strongpoint while he himself scaled a ledge on high ground that overlooked the enemy position. He had previously tied a rope to a

Browning Automatic Rifle and ammunition which he now hoisted up when the heights were gained. Sargent opened fire from this vantage point, killing one of the enemy crew and causing three others to surrender. One German retreated down the trail, but Sargent opened fire on an only escape route to cause twenty other Germans to come out of foxhole positions and surrender. Private Sargent was killed a short while later, during an attack on another enemy strongpoint. G Company continued to advance in the face of 120 millimeter mortar and machine gun fire and prior to encountering numerically superior enemy forces in defensive positions near HOSCHIED, the company knocked out four machine gun nests and took 42 prisoners. E and F Companies continued to receive strong enemy fire from HOSCHIED, one self-propelled 75 knocking out a supporting tank destroyer in a direct fire engagement. Cannon Company (in support of the Second Battalion) and the Nineteenth Field Artillery hurled numerous concentrations into HOSCHIED, inflicting what a prisoner of war later termed as "heavy casualties."

Meanwhile, the First Battalion advance on the right flank also met with strong enemy shellings, but not on the scale of that met by the Second Battalion. Steep grades, snow and ice not only brought about early fatigue amongst foot elements, but also caused supporting armor to bog down.

By 1330 hours B Company gained the hill 500 yards South of GRALINGEN, and A Company was in position 500 yards West of the town. Infantry of Company C, tanks and Tank Destroyers crossed a stream but armor was unable to ascend the snow-covered grades. Tanks and Tank Destroyers swung East in an attempt to support C Company which was to launch a direct assault against GRALINGEN from the South draw. At 1530 hours, C Company cut through the Southern draw and entered the town. Some house-to-house fighting developed, but by 2045 hours C Company was in complete possession of GRALINGEN and twenty-three prisoners. Second Battalion night patrols reconnoitered near HOSCHIED and made contact with the enemy on high ground West of town. Subjected to intense enemy fire throughout the day, the Second Battalion suffered 62 battle casualties but prepared to resume the attack on HOSCHIED on the following morning. Engineers worked on and widened the roads Southwest of GRALINGEN to allow armor to be brought up to render close support in the assault. In the meantime, Third Battalion troops who had been in reserve in ETTTELBRUCK, moved toward the battle lines and by 0645 hours of 23 January were in position to pass through the First Battalion in the resumption of the attack.

The attack jumped off as planned at 0900 hours as the Third Battalion passed through First Battalion positions in GRALINGEN with MERSCHIED as its objective. At the same time E and F Companies of the Second Battalion renewed frontal pressure on HOSCHIED while G Company cleared ridges and patches of woods along the left flank Southwest of town. The Fifth Reconnaissance troops continued to protect G Company's left flank and maintained contact with Eightieth Division troops who comprised the Fifth Division's left boundary. Later, the Third Battalion of the Second took over the Division's left flank for consolidation purposes and support fires. K Company of the Second Infantry relieved G Company of the Eleventh when the latter unit gained strategic ground Southwest of HOSCHIED.

The Second Battalion again was unable to gain appreciable ground in its early morning drive on HOSCHIED, and direct fire from HOSCHIED, as well as the Second Battalion objective, became as heavy as that encountered on the previous day. E and F Companies shifted the attack to the right flank, and by 1300 hours Company F drove to MARKENBACH, 1000 yards South of HOSCHIED, while E Company took high ground slightly nearer the main road. When G Company was relieved by K of the Second Infantry, the



Eleventh Infantry unit also shifted to the right flank but was placed into Second Battalion reserve while remaining elements of the Second Infantry's Third Battalion deployed along high ground near SPEER to secure the Eleventh Infantry's left flank against isolated enemy groups that were bypassed.

Following softening-up preparations of artillery, 4.2 mortars and machine gun fire the Eleventh's Third Battalion was committed through First Battalion positions in GRALINGEN. With Company L on the left and I Company on the right and E in reserve, the Third Battalion began its drive in the direction of MERSCHIED. Assault companies straddling the ridge in East and West draws advanced approximately 500 yards before sudden and strong enemy resistance was encountered. Both assault companies became pinned down by a violent concentration of enemy self-propelled, artillery and mortar fire which was to rage unabated throughout the day. In addition, the road running directly North was found to be mined, so the Seventh Engineer Platoon attached to the Third Battalion, was ordered to clear the road. This was accomplished by 1100 hours. Subjected to violent enemy fire and pinned down, Company I, led by Captain Bitney, swerved to the right and out of enemy observation where it continued a forward movement that carried to within 500 yards of MERSCHIED. Information received indicated that strong enemy forces (presumably elements of the Nine Hundred First Panzer Regiment) were well dug-in around and beyond MERSCHIED. Company I suffered heavily from severe enemy shellings and was virtually zeroed-in by enemy SP's as it moved through the draws South of MERSCHIED. During one enemy barrage, Captain Glenn T. Elliott, a Pacific veteran and Commanding Officer of L Company, was killed by shell fragments, and Lieutenant Kaiser assumed command of the unit. With only one platoon fairly intact, another of two-thirds strength and the third composed of one squad, Company L pulled abreast of I on a phase line 100 yards South of MERSCHIED at 1340 hours where both companies were ordered to dig in for the night. Three supporting tanks, attempting to move up with forward companies, overturned in deep snowdrifts and on icy roads. Rear roads were systematically blasted and cleared of mines to enable armor to render closer support. Enemy shelling of I and L Companies continued and resulted in the wounding of Captain Raymond W. Bitney and Captain James T. Heeley, Jr., Commanding Officer and Executive Officer of I Company. Lieutenant Koslosky became Commanding Officer of the company when both wounded officers were evacuated. Casualties within the battalion were heavy.

During the night of 23-24 January, Company G moved from its position when relieved by Second Infantry's K Company, and went to a line of departure on the Second Battalion's right flank, from where a direct assault on HOSCHIED was scheduled for early the next morning. Second Battalion patrols were active and probed to the very fringe of HOSCHIED before being driven back by enemy fire. Company A of the Seven Hundred Thirty-Seventh Tank Battalion relieved Company C of its attachment to the Eleventh Combat Team. In darkness that same morning, L Company patrols went to clear the wooded area on the Third Battalion's left flank. They were intercepted by enemy patrols and in ensuing fire fights numerous Germans were reported to have been killed, but stationary enemy strongpoints opened with very heavy machine gun crossfire from the Northeast and Northwest to pin down the L Company patrols for more than an hour. When enemy fire eased, patrols worked their way back to the previous phase line where both I and L Companies received automatic weapons fire interspersed with concentrations of mortar and artillery barrages throughout the hours of darkness.



7th Engineer-operated water point in Luxembourg.

Tank supported and reinforced by B Company of First Battalion, E, F and G Companies renewed the assault on HOSCHIED at 0830 hours of 24 January 1945, while scout cars of the Fifth Reconnaissance brought up the regiment's left flank by probing North beyond SCHLINDERMANDERSCHIED. E and F Companies attacked North to the objective, while F Company swerved right and neared the town from the Southeast. B Company followed on the right flank and advanced with supporting fire until pinned down by enemy counterfire, which now became intense from both HOSCHIED and MERSCHIED areas. In the determined assault, E and F Companies approached the outskirts of HOSCHIED but were unable to push through in the face of stiff enemy resistance. Supporting tanks of the Seven Hundred Thirty-Seventh Tank Battalion engaged German armor during the course of battle and knocked out a Tiger Royal and Mark V, but the enemy also made a determined stand and called for more tanks, two of which succeeded in entering the town from the direction of MERSCHIED. The strong resistance encountered in HOSCHIED resulted in the postponement of a First Battalion attack on objective 26 (high ground near HOSCHIED). At approximately 1300 hours Company G fought its way into HOSCHIED and became involved in fierce house-to-house fighting. E and F Companies were also involved in a similar task but were yet operating in the outer ring of houses within the town. By 1430 hours, the enemy had paid dearly for its fanatical resistance and was now, except for several remaining small pockets, driven from the town, leaving behind numerous dead and much abandoned equipment. Remaining pockets were dealt with by G and F Companies, the latter company taking 51 of 53 prisoners captured by the Second Battalion. Later that night, 5 additional prisoners were taken when Lieutenant Farmer and Sergeant Hayes of F Company accommodately accepted the surrender of the group who rapped on the window and shouted "Kamerad."

As an example of the type of esprit and tremendous pride each company had in its own particular battle skill and courage, the following remarks are lifted in their entirety from the Record of Events section of the morning report of Company G for 24 January 1945: "Action 24 Jan 45: Company G reached Line of Departure at 0130 and crossed



LD at 0800, due to slowness of Companies E and F in their assault to cross their LD's and to attack aggressively, the First and Third Platoons of G entered HOSCHIED under the able, efficient and determined leadership of Lieutenant Anderson, Company Executive Officer, and completed the Second Battalion's mission at 1430."

"This achievement was done under the handicap of battlefield rumors originating from the assault companies. These stories were on the gross fiction type and were suicide for any rifle company to believe. With utter disregard for possible dire consequences to themselves, the men of Company G who have been aptly and expertly trained in the tactics and traditions of the infantry by Captain Durst, Company Commander, and who delight in calling themselves 'The Gruesome Gents from Gallant George,' attacked and cleared the remaining seven-eighths of the town that was defended by enemy troops who had been ordered to fight to the last man—51 prisoners were taken."

"Company G knocked out 16 enemy machine guns and was instrumental in knocking out one heavy tank, one self-propelled 40 millimeter ack-ack gun, while the company's light mortar section knocked out two enemy mortars, caliber, unknown."

The foregoing was written by the first sergeant of Company G, but similarly intense records of pride could be found in each of the companies in the Division. It was the custom for each company to lay the blame for any defect in operation on a sister company. Sister battalions in the same regiment always claimed that their flanks were exposed because such-and-such a battalion failed to keep up with it. And Regiments made it a point for everyone to understand that if anything was wrong it was because "the other Regiment" wasn't doing its job properly. That was because battles became so intensely personal that an outfit's own losses and difficulties loomed much more importantly to the members of that outfit and it didn't seem possible that other outfits could be having as much trouble or were overcoming them with similar courage and skill. But let anyone outside the Division criticize any wearer of the Red Diamond patch and the critic would likely wind up in a hospital.

Prior to First Battalion troops moving from GRALINGEN to freshly captured HOSCHIED at midnight in preparation for their dawn attack on objective 26 (high ground 2000 yards North of HOSCHIED), a low-flying V bomb was reported overhead in a Southwesterly direction. The weather became somewhat colder with occasional snow flurries, and snow plows were required to clear roads at some points.

With the defeat of the enemy at HOSCHIED, resistance to the Eleventh's Northward advance became spotty and appeared considerably less fanatical, when both First and Third Battalions jumped off in new attacks the next morning. At 0500 hours of 25 January 1945, with A Company on the left, C Company on the right and B Company trailing in reserve, the First Battalion attacked North of HOSCHIEDERDICKT. Comparatively light resistance was encountered and assaulting troops were on their objective by 0810 hours. However, when tanks and tank destroyers began moving up in support, the enemy opened with extremely heavy artillery, self-propelled and mortar fire. The large scale shelling continued throughout the day and concentrations of "screaming meemies" that fell on HOSCHIED set fire to several buildings. At the same time, Second Battalion patrols probed South and West on the left flank and contacted Fifth Reconnaissance troops who were slowly working North beyond SCHLINDERMANDERSCHIED. Elements of F Company went South to HOSCHIED to occupy KNAPP Hill, high ground overlooking a horseshoe curve of the SAUER River, pending relief by the Third Battalion, Second Infantry who consolidated ground gained by the Eleventh. At 1000 hours, on 25 January, the Third Battalion Eleventh

Infantry jumped off in the assault on MERSCHIED. With I and K attacking on left and right, the advance developed against light resistance. A platoon of engineers was called for and dispatched to clear mines from the GRALINGEN MERSCHIED road. By 1140 hours K Company achieved the Battalion objective and cleared the town. Few prisoners were captured. A civilian who was taken volunteered the information that a panzer unit consisting of 10 tanks together with infantry, had replaced an infantry unit two days previous, and that these forces, other than a portion which had opposed the Third Battalion, had withdrawn from MERSCHIED when the First Battalion launched its attack at 0500 hours of that morning. L Company was committed from Battalion reserve and went to secure the unit's right flank, East of MERSCHIED. I Company met with violent enemy artillery, mortar and long range machine gun fire as it sought to push North of the town, so the company was drawn back into MERSCHIED until nightfall. Heavy enemy vehicular movement was observed North of HOSCHIEDERDICKT, and enemy SP's and artillery had taken up new positions in the vicinity of CONSTHUM, HOLSTHUM, and WAHLHAUSEN. The Regimental Commander ordered Second Battalion in HOSCHIED to direct concentrations of 81 millimeter mortar fire on CONSTHUM, with the purpose of disrupting enemy traffic.

During this time A and C Companies, who, earlier in the day were subjected to intense enemy fire on objective 26, renewed the attack with close tank support and advanced to the outskirts of HOSCHIEDERDICKT where several houses were cleared in face of increasing German resistance. B Company was ordered to secure the battalion's right flank, but an S-minefield which the enemy had zeroed in with mortar and automatic weapons fire prevented the company from advancing East of town. First Battalion patrols attempted to gain information on enemy positions that night. However, in each instance night patrols were driven back by strong enemy fire from North and Northeast. The direct assault on the town itself resumed at daybreak with A and C Companies inching forward in fierce house-to-house fighting. Company B continued to hold the right flank. Slow, hard fighting continued, but A Company and supporting tanks worked up to take three-fourths of the town by 1830 hours. C Company cracked through at the same time, and a short while later the entire town was cleared. Company F was dispatched from HOSCHIED to bolster the flanks.

In the final phase of the Tenth Infantry's attack enemy dispositions had shown signs of confusion and units of the One Hundred Thirtieth Panzer Lehr Division, also retreating into Germany, were rushed into the fight. Their commitment was to halt, or, failing in that, at least to delay our advance inasmuch as we were now rapidly endangering the last escape route from the ARDENNES salient. The enemy had made every possible use of the hilly terrain even to the extent of mining entrances to draws, covering them with infantry howitzers and anti-tank guns, and then fighting the entire length of the passage way.

During the early hours of the morning of January 23d, the First Battalion took up again the difficult task of clearing the enemy from the vicinity of PUHL. Fighting near the battalion observation post secured 18 additional prisoners as the troops came under enemy fire from the woods to the right front. At 0750 hours the enemy was observed digging in between Company B's outpost and the front line. Tanks were brought up, moved out to the forward edge of the woods, and at approximately 0930 hours were firing into the houses. The companies of the First Battalion were ordered to move out of PUHL as a highly effective artillery



time-on-target rained down on the town killing many of the enemy and destroying 12 of their vehicles. A few minutes later white flags were seen waving from the houses. Some of the Germans were giving themselves up.

While Companies A and B fought to clear PUHL, Company C at 0950 hours moved on Northward toward the town of NACHTMANDERSCHIED and into direct tank fire from the right front. Nevertheless, by 1025 hours the company had cleared a number of dwellings along its path and, supported by tanks, bore down upon the enemy in the town. One Seven Hundred Thirty-Seventh tank was lost to enemy fire as tanks and infantry continued to press on in the face of heavy enemy opposition. By this time, the two companies fighting for PUHL were succeeding in breaking the enemy's defense there. Company B had taken 10 more prisoners, and at 1100 hours the enemy was reported attempting to withdraw. By noon Company C was established in NACHTMANDERSCHIED after the town had been blasted by tank fire and the troops were engaged in driving the occupants from the houses.

Tanks accounted for an enemy half-track attempting to escape PUHL and an enemy tank approaching the First Battalion Command Post. Presently, bombers were overhead and tank destroyers eliminated two self-propelled guns and a half-track as Seven Hundred Thirty-Seventh tanks destroyed still another enemy tank. Company C continued the pressure against stubborn enemy resistance in NACHTMANDERSCHIED. Prisoners continued to stream in. As the attacks persisted, the enemy withdrew and, when night fell, our troops had secured both objectives. In all an estimated 60 prisoners were taken during the twin village attack by the men of the First Battalion.

Elsewhere in the Regimental area, the Second Battalion remained in position South of PUHL, patrolled to the East and established outposts. The Third Battalion after much preparation designed to capture the four points of high ground East of HOSCHIEDER was ordered instead to relieve the Third Battalion of the Twelfth Infantry Regiment on the right flank. However, before the planned relief could be carried out the Twelfth Infantry had already attacked the objective and secured three of the four hill masses. The relief began at dark and was completed at 0730 hours the following morning.

At 0330 hours, January 24th, the First Battalion Tenth Infantry Companies A and B began the advance on PUTSCHEID, the Regiment's final objective of this operation. The Second Battalion moved up to occupy positions in PUHL and outposted the vicinity. Company C in the meantime continued to clear and occupy NACHTMANDERSCHIED.

By 0730 hours Company A had covered half the distance to the objective and was encountering small arms and tank fire.

It was now evident that the enemy, consisting of changed elements of the One Hundred Thirtieth Panzer Lehr Division, was bent on defending the area at all costs in a final, desperate effort to keep open the escape lane to Germany and the SEIGFRIED Line. Despite the determination of the enemy to hold, however, troops and armor pressed on toward the enemy stronghold and, in a short period of time, three enemy tanks were spotted and destroyed. Forty-four enemy troops came up a draw to give themselves up.

The assault units were now within a few hundred yards of the town. The second phase of the attack, an assault on the town itself from the South, got under way. PUTSCHEID lay sprawled in a hilly and partly wooded area on the Western side of the Our River. The approach to the village was across exposed high ground on three sides and enemy direct fire weapons and machine gun covered the channel. No sooner had the advance begun, than the attacking force encountered direct fire from six self-propelled guns and from tanks operating in and outside the town.

Mortar and artillery fire from the vicinity of WEILER added to the effectiveness of the resistance.

At approximately 1300 hours the supporting armor gave the town a terrific shelling and advanced elements reached its outskirts with Company A prepared to enter. A few Germans were observed fleeing in an effort to escape tank fire. Company A moved into a draw that led into the town and the tanks raised their fire, but when the men had advanced to within 200 yards of the objective they were stopped by intense machine gun fire coming from an enemy strongpoint before the town. Likewise Company B, constituting the left flank, had entered the outskirts of the town, only to find itself pinned down by small arms fire. Enemy tanks were active and effective while our own tank destroyers maneuvered to get shots at them.

One enemy tank, after preferring formidable opposition from within the town, began to bear down upon Company A and a runner was dispatched to guide tank destroyers to it. While the men waited expectantly the tank momentarily turned West, and Company A moved farther into the town. Other enemy tanks commenced firing from the high ground back of the town and the increased activity indicated that an enemy counterattack on the company from the North edge of the town was imminent. Tanks moved into positions and, in the armored melee that followed, one Seven Hundred Thirty-Seventh tank was knocked out and three others hit; but the enemy tanks menacing our positions in the town were destroyed.

Enemy pressure continued unabated, however. Possessing excellent observation from the hill North of MERSCHIED they were able to direct extremely effective shell fire on the more advanced elements and at 1500 hours troops of both companies were withdrawn to positions South of the town in order to permit friendly artillery concentrations to bear on enemy armor and installations. The attack, nevertheless exacted its toll in casualties. Company A, upon which most of the enemy pressure was directed, had one officer wounded and ten enlisted men captured before the withdrawal could be successfully undertaken. During the process of withdrawing the company had retired first to the draw on the right, but were pinned down by machine gun fire. Meanwhile another enemy tank was destroyed in the town, but enemy pressure, rather than diminishing, continued in unabated fury on the left flank. Tanks were thrown in the path of direct fire to halt the enemy thrust and Division and Corps artillery rocked the town with the fire of 12 battalions. The tanks laid smoke, enabling the troops to extricate themselves. By 1700 hours both companies were more favorably disposed some distance South of the town and were digging in to hold their previous gains. Shortly thereafter, Company C was instructed to replace Company B in position and by 2400 hours the movement was completed.

Elsewhere during the day, companies of the Third Battalion advanced to the remaining high ground. Companies I and L remained in positions in the vicinity of WALSDORF. Elements of the Second Battalion patrolled the sector East of PUHL. An estimated total of 147 enemy prisoners had been taken during the day's engagements.

The Battalions remained in these positions during the 25th and 26th of January in preparation for a renewal of the attack on PUTSCHEID. At 2330 hours on the 25th, a sergeant and eight enlisted men from Company C patrolled within 400 yards of the town, but were discovered and fired upon. At the same hour on the following night, Company A sent an officer and four men who got within 250 yards of the town and could observe the enemy on the high ground outside the town smoking cigarettes. A large fire was burning, lighting up the whole area, and the patrol was detected. Germans opened up on them with machine





Civilians evacuate Haller, Luxembourg, as fighting rages near the town, seriously damaging most of the buildings.

guns and the patrol withdrew. At 1045 hours the First Battalion, Second Regiment, was attached to the Tenth and moved into position on the right flank thus extending the regimental boundary and relieving the Third Battalion of the Twelfth Infantry Regiment, Fourth Division.

Further observation on the 27th, revealed another enemy tank located in a house in the town. Tank destroyers shot up the house, 4.2 mortars dropped white phosphorous shells into the area and the tank took off to the East and out of the town.

In the meantime, the softening up process continued. Final plans were formulated for the capture of the town and a meeting was called to take place at the Company A Command Post. The plan revealed there called for Company A to take the high ridge overlooking the town from the West, while Company C, using the high sides of the draw, was to attack and enter the town from the right or East side.

At 0315 hours the Second Battalion moved one platoon of Company E to the hill Northwest of PUTSCHEID, thus blocking the Northern escape route from the village. The First Battalion began the attack at 0600 hours on the 28th of January. German prisoners had indicated that only a squad of the enemy was located on the ridge West of the objective, and by 0800 hours Company A had cleared the area and taken up positions there, while Company G advanced along the draw toward the town. Before the town could be entered along this approach, however, the assault troops had to cross over the high sides of the draw, exposing themselves to the enemy. At 0220 hours leading elements were over the hump, but only to find themselves immediately pinned down in front of the town by intense small arms, mortar, and tank or self-propelled gun fire. Fifteen minutes elapsed before the company succeeded in getting one platoon of men over the ridge. By 0900 hours another platoon was over and likewise pinned down by fire. Within 30 minutes the enemy counterattacked from the East side of the town with a strong force of infantry, tanks and self-propelled artillery and firing directly into the midst of Company A, drove the advanced elements of A Company from the sides to the bottom of the draw where cross fire from at least four well-placed machine guns pinned them down so that they could move neither forward nor backward. Artillery fire was called, but due to the haze and slight snow, it was impossible to adjust the fire sufficiently

to silence the machine guns. It was feared at the time that most of the men were either casualties or prisoner. Later reports sustained this. Approximately one platoon of the company plus the commanding officer, two platoon leaders, the forward observer, and the platoon leader of the attached heavy machine guns, were captured. The only officer remaining with the company was Lieutenant Robert W. Dunn. The unit was badly scattered and disorganized. Within an hour most of the remaining troops were withdrawing down the draw East of the town with the enemy closing in and bearing down upon them.

While the Lieutenant, under small arms and artillery fire, gathered the remnants of the company together and had them dig in to hold the draw, counter-measures were being laid to rectify the unfortunate turn of events. Company G, presently shifted to NACHTMANDERSCHIED, was offered as reserve, and Company B was thrown in for the attack on the town. At 1100 hours, Company A was prepared to work with a company of medium tanks Eastward into the town. 4.2 mortars laid down smoke to screen the movements of the tanks and at 1255 hours the attack was renewed. Tank destroyers found a target in an enemy tank on the West side of the village church. Some Germans were observed fleeing the town to the East, but others remained to fight. Resistance was heavy and continuous and enemy tanks made the attack necessarily slow. Tanks supporting the Tenth's attack, having previously withdrawn, were recalled. However, before Seven Hundred Thirty-Seventh tanks could arrive, the enemy had counterattacked, had been quickly and efficiently repulsed and the leading elements of the company were in the edge of the town, entering the houses. Tanks, upon their arrival, attempted to enter, but found it too difficult due to direct fire coming from the bare hill back of the town. By 1340 hours the infantrymen, having broken the enemy line, had reached the center of the town clearing as they went. The Germans were now fleeing the town and Seven Hundred Thirty-Seventh tanks were attempting to cut them off by firing upon their columns. Finally tanks lumbered into the town and within ten minutes Company A had fought its way through and was advancing to occupy the high ground on the other side to the North. Simultaneously, men of Company B were moving in from the South to secure the left flank and tie in with elements of Company E, while Company C, only partially organized, once again took up the fight and re-entered the town from the East side. Company G, held in abeyance, moved up in Company B's former positions. By 1400 hours the capture of the objective was completed with the exception of a few enemy stragglers spotted in a draw nearby, and the enemy had commenced to shell the town.

During the night the First Battalion was accordingly relieved by elements of the Eleventh Infantry, and the Second and Third Battalions were relieved by the Second and Third Battalions of the Second Infantry respectively. The relief was completed and command of the Regimental sector passed to the Second Infantry at 2215 hours. The First Battalion and Second Battalion of the Tenth as well as the Regimental Command Post then assembled in ETTELBRUCK and the Third Battalion in DIEKIRCH. The First Battalion of the Second Infantry reverted to Second Infantry control and on the following day at 2300 hours, Company E was relieved and rejoined the Second Battalion Tenth Infantry at ETTELBRUCK.

Meanwhile, a sleepless and chaotic night was in store for an estimated force of 200 Germans who occupied the town of WEILER, 1 mile Northeast of MERSCHIED. An attack on WEILER had been previously cancelled, and plans now called for a night combat patrol instead. Undetected an Eleventh Infantry (23 man) K Company patrol under command of Lieutenant James G. Kerr silently maneuvered to the edge of town where an enemy machine gun outpost





Forty-three men of the 5th Division wave their most prized possession—a furlough home after weary months in Iceland, England, Ireland, France and Luxembourg—in the first rotation group initiated in the Division.

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was taken by surprise. Two were immediately taken prisoner by Private First Class Roy F. Kane, but no shots were fired when three others made good their escape. The patrol swiftly followed into town and met with no resistance until a German sentry sounded the alarm with a rifle shot. The inevitable engagement that followed grew in intensity as more Germans joined the fight, but two more of the enemy were taken and many others were killed before four enemy tanks lumbered down the street firing heavily with cannon and machine guns. Unable to take cover in enemy occupied buildings, Sergeant John H. Miller and Sergeant Issac T. Clark, bazookaman, dodged direct tank fire in the narrow thoroughfare and gamely fired while on the move but failed to score hits on the enemy armor. In the face of mounting odds the patrol was forced to give ground through disorganized German defenses, not too hastily, however, to take another prisoner. With the enemy in a state of confusion, Lieutenant Kerr coordinated a smooth withdrawal and the patrol returned to its own lines. One member of the patrol who was reported as missing in action constituted the only casualty. Strong artillery concentrations that fell on WEILER following the patrol's departure resulted in heavy enemy casualties. Vital information concerning the enemy's disposition was gained when prisoners were interrogated.

On the same night, yet another patrol, an 8 man squad of the Second Battalion Eleventh Infantry Reconnaissance Platoon, also accomplished a vitally important mission—the probing of WAHLHAUSEN, a fact which later that day, made possible the swift capture of that town. The small group probed toward its objective and encircled the first house while Sergeant Harry Horvitz and Sergeant Martin Campbell kicked the door wide open and rocked the building with concussion grenades. With a pistol in one hand, a flashlight in the other, Private Robert Layth simultaneously

descended into the hatch of a partially camouflaged Tiger tank and shot up vital mechanisms. A second building received the same treatment as the first, and when Sergeant Horvitz rushed in he easily captured two whimpering Germans. The patrol was on its way to another house when suddenly the sound of marching feet drove it into ditches that lined the road. There before them, the contingent watched as approximately 80 fully equipped Germans marched by, apparently withdrawing from the town. The last German, a straggler, lagged some yards behind so Private Robert Foster pounced on him and made the capture. The patrol returned without loss.

On the basis of information gained by both night reconnaissance patrols, the Second Battalion attacked WAHLHAUSEN and a Third Battalion advance to WEILER developed on the afternoon of 27 January. With First Battalion units holding the point of the Regimental advance on high ground surrounding a network of road junctions, defensive positions and observation posts were firmly established at strategic points. At 1515 hours I and K Companies, Eleventh Infantry moved out from MERSCHEID North to WEILER, and in less than one and one-half hours both Third Battalion units were in the outskirts of the objective. Enemy resistance was light, and it now seemed that the Germans had withdrawn the bulk of approximately 200 troops leaving behind only a token force with some armor support. As K Company elements drove to cut the enemy from its Northern escape route, a force of about 50 Germans was observed making its way Northward. This was instantly reported to Lieutenant Colonel Birdsong, the Battalion Commander, who in turn requested an immediate concentration of artillery. Numerous casualties were inflicted on the enemy by heavy artillery barrages that soon followed. Company L advanced to WEILER, then cut to the right flank East of the town. One enemy half track that sought to



escape was knocked out by supporting tank destroyers. With remaining enemy troops now cut off inside WEILER, it was decided that the Battalion Reconnaissance would enter the town in darkness that night to determine the enemy's strength. If the Reconnaissance Platoon encountered resistance, I Company was to move in and clear the town. At 2200 hours the Third Battalion Reconnaissance Platoon proceeded into town and in less than a half hour succeeded in clearing the house. By 2300 hours, after a short and somewhat sharp engagement, the town was cleared and I Company immediately followed into and consolidated the objective.

Tank supported, E and G Companies attacked WAHLHAUSEN under cover of darkness. Time on target artillery fire softened up the enemy defenses and at 2155 hours Company G entered the town. Enemy machine gun nests, four of which were captured by elements of G Company offered strong resistance. At 0345 WAHLHAUSEN was completely cleared and Second Battalion patrols had moved 1000 yards North and East of the objective. Damaged or abandoned enemy equipment consisted of two Mark IV tanks, 12 trucks, one 20 millimeter anti-aircraft gun, one full tracked weapons carrier, seven machine guns, one command car, 2 mortars and a considerable quantity of small arms. Ten prisoners were taken. Hard pressed for time, the enemy installed several hastily built booby traps before abandoning WAHLHAUSEN, but these were detected and no casualties developed.

By 28th January 1945 all assigned regimental objectives were achieved and plans were formed to establish a defensive line, outposts and other positions while patrols were to probe to the OUR River before the SIEGFRIED line defenses. On the Eleventh's right flank, the Tenth captured PUTSCHEN, while the Fifth Reconnaissance and elements of the Eightieth Division brought up the left flank. First Battalion troops went 3½ miles North to occupy HOLZTHUM and CONSTHUM. The Eleventh Infantry had played an important role in the attaining of the Fifth Division objectives, a fact which later earned the Division a letter of commendation from Major General Manton S. Eddy, XII Corps Commander.

Artillery losses were critical during this drive. In the attack from the vicinity of DIEKIRCH to the North, the Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion lost two forward observers, and the issue of shoepacs and windbreaker mittens undoubtedly saved many more from frostbite and trenchfoot. Lieutenant Dmohoski was wounded in action while adjusting fire on an enemy self-propelled gun which was firing on him, and his radio operator, Technician Fourth Grade Melillo, was killed by the same SP. Lieutenant Budziak was reported missing after the attack on the severely contested village of PUTSCHEN, near the Luxembourg-German border.

During the period the Tenth Regiment had advanced from its positions on the South bank of the SAUER River to a line Southwest of the OUR River, extending generally from the high ground West of PUTSCHEN to the high ground Northwest of VIANDEN. Aside from the number of the enemy killed, and wounded, officially described as "excessive," the Regiment took 640 prisoners. A considerable number of tanks and artillery pieces, including infantry howitzers and nebelwerfers, were captured. Also, due to the regiment's rapid advance the enemy was forced to destroy much of his artillery and at least one battery of infantry howitzers. A minimum of eight enemy tanks and self-propelled guns were destroyed by artillery, and a large number of rifles, machine guns, and mortars were captured and destroyed.

Intelligence concerning enemy units identified during the period disclosed that the Three Hundred Fifty-Second Division possessed approximately 7 percent navy and air force

personnel, and an average company strength of 70 men. Their morale was considered satisfactory inasmuch as their troops were possessed of good and fairly secure quarters in heated cellars. Food was brought them regularly, supplemented by items procured from repeated excursions into local farm yards. The circumstances were such that the enemy was lulled onto a false sense of security which contributed immeasurably to the initial effectiveness of our surprise attack. As our advance gained momentum and their positions were overrun, it became increasingly difficult for the enemy to supply their front line troops. Much confusion was apparent and many of their troops were found incapable of fighting in the cold.

The Seventy-Ninth and Ninth Volks Grenadier Divisions had suffered heavy casualties in previous commitments and was comprised of many convalescents, recruits, and a small cadre of Russian veterans. The recruits and convalescents were exhausted due primarily to local difficulties, cold, and long marches; the veterans from the East were disgusted. Battalions of the One Hundred Thirtieth Panzer Lehr Division, consisting of 300 men to the battalion and supported by heavy infantry weapons, were of higher fighting caliber than those of the Volk Grenadiers; their beatings in previous engagements had been severe but, despite continuous strafing of their columns from St. HUBERT to the battle sector, they had been successful in salvaging most of their equipment.

Tenth Infantry losses, in comparison to those sustained by the enemy were comparatively light. During the entire operation 2 officers and 43 enlisted men were killed, 10 officers and 225 men wounded, 3 officers and 75 enlisted men missing, or a total of 358 casualties. Reinforcements received, including former members of the regiment returning to duty, numbered 526 officers and enlisted men, bringing the effective strength of the Tenth Regiment at the close of the month to 154 officers, 4 warrant officers, and 2933 enlisted men, or a total of 3,091 officers and enlisted men.

Units attached to the Tenth Regiment during the operation included: Forty-Sixth Field Artillery Battalion; Company B Fifth Medical Battalion; Company B Seventh Engineers; Company B, Eight Hundred Third Tank Destroyer Battalion (detached), January 22d at 1000 hours; Company B Seven Hundred Thirty-Seventh Tank Battalion; one platoon of Company D, Seven Hundred Thirty-Fifth Tank Battalion (attached, January 25th at 2000 hours); and Company D, Ninety-First Chemical Battalion (4.2 millimeter mortars).

On 28 January the Second Infantry Regiment was ordered to relieve elements of the Tenth and Eleventh Infantry Regiments in static positions overlooking the OUR River West of VIANDEN. Tactically, the mission was simple—maintenance of a defensive position. But the bitter cold weather made it an assignment of some difficulty. It necessitated frequent shifting of units to give each a maximum of relief from the elements. And throughout the period, patrols and outposts had to be constantly operating.

Activity was light, with the exception of a few short, sharp patrol clashes which convinced the enemy that a river crossing would be attempted and caused him to move reinforcements into the line, thus weakening his positions to the South along the SAUER River where crossings were made a few days later. A prisoner taken was from the Fifth Paratroop Division.

During the night 4-5 of February, the regiment was relieved and moved into billeting areas in the vicinity of ALTENSTER, Luxembourg.

The Battle of the Bulge having terminated with the enemy withdrawing into Germany and shifting sizeable units



to the Eastern front, it became increasingly important that simultaneous blows be struck the enemy from the West. Despite the fact that American Armies had not completely recovered from the blow that Von Rundstedt had delivered in the ARDENNES, and that many U.S. Divisions were tired and needed rest, it was imperative to strike immediately while the enemy was weaker.

As plans shaped up, the Third Army was to strike across the OUR and SAUER Rivers, on the Luxembourg-German border; the Fifth Division along a five-mile front across the SAUER, Northwest of ECHTERNACH.

Prior to the time set for the crossing of the SAUER and at the beginning of the month of February, the Tenth Regiment was assembled in ETTLEBRUCK and DIEKIRCH, Luxembourg, in Division reserve, organizing a Division reserve line and guarding bridges within the division area.

As the snowy month of January gave way to the torrential rains and fogs of February, the white cloaked fields and woods of the front became a sea of mud. The snow capes (mostly muddied rags by this time) were discarded, and the drab colored camouflage nets and uniforms were once more in order.

Building became important, not only for the protection against artillery offered by their four-foot stone walls, but also for the protection against the elements and opportunity to dry one's clothes and equipment before pushing forward again. Whenever possible, squads and platoons were rotated so as to give as many men as possible a chance to sleep in a dry place and to eat hot food. A word should be said about the cooks and kitchen personnel of the line companies. Owing to their ability to cook a hot meal in lea of a half-wrecked farmhouse, hampered by blackout restrictions, enemy patrols, and artillery fire, and often wearied through loss of sleep, and to their oftentimes miraculous ability to find a forward company or platoon with inserts full of hot chow and coffee after a harrowing trip over cratered roads and fields, the men in the foxholes were able to look forward to a hot meal at least once a day and sometimes three times a day. Under unfavorable attack conditions and impossible situations (such as river crossings), this, of course, was not possible, and the inevitable K-C—or 10-in-One Ration resulted.

Perhaps the largest contributing factor to the bitterness of the Fifth Division doughboys against the German soldier, was the knowledge that although Germany was cracking under the strain, and that inevitably the end was in sight, the German Army, which must have begun to realize it also, continued to resist with a dogged tenacity. To some, this brought a grudging respect, but to the majority who were killing and being killed, it only meant that the Boche was deliberately intent on killing as many Americans as possible before he finally gave up. To the rifleman in the line, the situation was far from bright. He resigned himself to the conclusion that unless Germany gave up soon, or he was wounded, he would be very lucky indeed to make a return trip home.

"Get the thing over with," became the uppermost thought in everyone's mind as, beneath the rain-filled February skies, the Germans clung to their Siegfried fortifications with sullen ferocity, and the Americans prepared for the assault with grim determination.



Infantry prepares to attack from winter fox hole in counter Bulge offensive—Luxembourg.



Enemy tank knocked out in counter Bulge offensive.

Round from 155 howitzer, 21st Field Artillery Battalion, is fired into Germany as the Battle of the Bulge neared its end.







Enemy positions near Mechelsberg, Luxembourg.



Mortar crew catch a cold meal while waiting for attack orders—  
counter Bulge offensive—Luxembourg.

Improvised snow capes used by Fifth Division Infantrymen.

