

ORIGINAL
Aug. 1944

HEADQUARTERS 9TH INFANTRY

APO No 2, U. S. Army.
4 September 1944.

SUBJECT: Action Against Enemy Report - August, 1944.
TO : Commanding General, 1st U. S. Army, APO 230.
THRU : Commanding General, 2d Infantry Division,
APO No 2, U. S. Army.

Submitted herewith in quadruplicate is Action Against
Enemy, etc, Report for the month of August, 1944 together with
a copy of the Unit Journal and the Unit Journal File.

For the Regimental Commander:

1-Inclosures
Action Against Enemy
Report, etc, for the
month of August, 1944.

RICHARD C ERNST,
1st Lieut., 9th Inf.,
Assistant Adjutant.

CLASSIFICATION CHANGED TO:
CANCELLED
BY AUTHORITY OF THE ADJUTANT
Andr Meyer *clars*
DOWNGRADING COMMITTEE *8 Apr 46*

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SECTION A FIRST BIRTH, BIRTHS AFTER / AFTER ACTION REPORTS

August 1, 1944

9-10-44

As the period began the Ninth Infantry was driving south in their sixth day of continuous fighting in a campaign which had begun on 26 July 1944 in the vicinity of St. Germain d'Elle some 15 KM's due north of their present position astride the Torigni-Ft. Aunay highway. The Regiment had lost 30 officers and 732 enlisted men but had captured 117 prisoners of war from the 5th, 9th and 15th Paratroop Regiment - an indication that the resistance of the 3rd Paratroop Division had been broken, in view of the presence of the latter Regiment - not a part of the 3rd Paratroop Division.

On our left was the 23rd Infantry Regiment and on the right, elements of the 35th Division. During the night 31 July - 1st August the 1st Battalion was dispatched southeast down the railroad line to Laune and thence was directed south to Ft. Aunay. By the time the Battalion had reached the Regimental boundary just west of Laune, the forward elements of the 23rd Infantry had come up abreast of the Ninth. In consequence, the 1st Battalion was attached to them and continued under their control during the day. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions had seized their objectives on the Torigni-Ft. Aunay highway by midnight of the 31st - objectives given to them only a few hours before.

On 1 August 1944, the 3rd Battalion attacked and seized Crossroads No. 153, 1500 yards to the southwest; the 2nd Battalion advanced to la Bibaudrie; and as day closed, the 1st Battalion moved into an assembly area in the vicinity of Ft. Aunay. The only critical period occurred early in the afternoon when the 3rd Battalion was counter-attacked by infantry and self-propelled guns. The enemy effort was contained and repelled.

Casualties incurred for the day - 14 officers and 173 enlisted men.
Prisoners taken 8

The CP moved to a position 600 yards south of la Donerie.

2 August 1944

At 0630 the Division Commander ordered the Regiment to resume the attack. The 1st Battalion was to remain stationary until the 23rd drew abreast and then would revert back to Regimental control and follow the route of the 2nd Battalion.

By 1100 all routes apparently converged in the vicinity of la Cabotiere. Elements of the 35th Division intermingled with our units because overlays overlapped. By noon, against little opposition, the Vire River was reached by the 2nd Battalion.

Colonel Hirschfelder went forward under artillery and mortar fire to direct the crossing of the river. By 1315 the 2nd Battalion, under cover of smoke had successfully negotiated the passage. By 1500, they had taken the steep slopes, with the support of tanks against determined enemy resistance and active self-propelled guns. By 1615 all three Battalions had crossed to the southern bank. Company A of the 2nd Engineers had constructed two vehicle crossings of Summerfield Track, a tank crossing and a foot bridge.

As of 2040 the 1st Battalion was northeast of Herbeliere, the 2nd Battalion was at la Mouche and the 3rd Battalion at la Fayrie, an average advance for the day of about 8 KM's for a cost of 3 officers and 68 enlisted men. 46 prisoners of war were taken.

So speedy was the advance of the Regiment that once again the Ninth Infantry was without protection on either flank. One battalion of the 35th Division had succeeded in crossing the Vire to our west but had been driven back by the enemy. In consequence the Ninth Infantry CP established north of St. Martin Don was in a precarious position. Reports were received of enemy infiltration toward the CP from the west. Firing could be heard at ever closer range. All available Headquarters Company personnel and the Antitank Company established a perimeter defense and a twenty man patrol pushed some 500 yards to the southwest to clear the area of snipers and to prevent the enemy from mounting a counterattack from that direction. 1st Lt. George Hirschfelder and S/Sgt Rense Glase of the Traffic and Security Platoon, responsible for the protection of the CP, were awarded...

3 August 1944

At 0100 orders were received to continue the attack along the designated route in the morning. At 0715 all three Battalions jumped off on time. Resistance was determined and enemy artillery and mortar fire were unusually heavy and accurate.

By 0900 the 2nd Battalion had advanced to la Genotiers 3000 yards to the south. The 3rd Battalion was unable to push farther than les Vaux and the 1st Battalion was at la Mouche. At these two forward points the 2nd Battalion and the 3rd Battalion were compelled to deploy. The 2nd Battalion was able to commit only one platoon of its reserve company because of a draw along their left boundary. The 1st Battalion was called on to seize Road Junction 161 between the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, but at 1530 the attack was cancelled and the Regiment was relieved.

This was the most costly day of combat experienced by the Regiment in the campaign- 18 officers and 219 enlisted men were killed, wounded or missing. Many of the casualties may be attributed to sheer fatigue. Men's reactions were noticeably slow and many neglected to take cover when shells exploded nearby. The strength of the Regiment dropped to 2378 men and some 60% of these were replacements. At noon, during a period of fifty minutes, Major John Hanby, Regimental S-3, was killed; Major Lloyd Itak, Battalion Commander of the 3rd Battalion, and Major Frank E. Ball, 2nd Battalions Executive Officer, were wounded by artillery fire. It was the ninth day of continuous contact with the enemy. 5 prisoners of war were taken.

spearheading the Regiment on this day was "G" Company. The company lost 130 men and 4 officers during the nine day campaign. It had made an admirable name for itself and had been the outstanding unit of the Battalion. The morale within the company remained remarkably high despite the shocking losses of officers, non-commissioned officers and men.

On the 3rd of August, "G" Company was the most advanced infantry unit in the entire V Corps sector. All through the day when it moved, it did so without security on either flank. There follows a brief report of this company's operations for the periods:

Company G crossed the line of departure at 0715, 3 August 1944, as the leading company of the Battalion. Having moved approximately 2100 yards, we encountered enemy long-range fire. Continued to move forward down into a draw with two platoons abreast. As we started up toward the high ground, we received cross fire from our flanks and frontal fire from the high ground.

When the assault platoons failed to advance, the support platoon was committed on the right where they ran into more enemy cross fire. Five tanks were committed in their area and the platoon advanced three hedge rows. The tanks moved forward to the next hedge row and three of them were hit by "Bazooks" and 88's. The fourth tank was out of action on hedge row to the rear. The fifth tank withdrew.

A short time afterwards a Battalion from another combat team relieved us.

Excerpts from oral statements of the Platoon Leaders:

1st Platoon:- "We moved into the attack behind the tanks. After moving three hedgerows under heavy machine gun fire, we held. While moving, four tanks were put out of action and the platoon suffered seventeen casualties. While in position I directed artillery fire on the enemy positions. Total damage for the day - 30 Germans hit, two machine guns, a tank, and 12 mortars."

2nd Platoon:- "We moved out into the attack with the second platoon on the right. We moved about 2100 yards, then hit the enemy. We got up to the hedge where the enemy was located; had an exchange of hand grenades and when we tried to go over the hedge were hit by enemy machine guns from the front, losing one of the squad leaders. During this maneuver seven Germans were hit, also a machine gun and machine pistol. During this time we were subjected to heavy machine gun fire, mortar and artillery fire. Estimated enemy casualties - 19."

3rd Platoon:- "I was the left flank platoon and when we gained contact with the enemy we were starting toward high ground. Then they caught us with cross fire and frontal fire. The section of heavy machine guns opened up on the Germans doing considerable damage. Then the Germans started using French civilians to cover their positions."

machine gun fire and then held up for our left flank was exposed and was receiving machine gun fire from there. Shortly afterward we were relieved by another battalion.

We suffered eight casualties. "Estimated German casualties - 10."

Weapons Platoon:- "I fired over a hundred rounds of mortar ammunition on the high ground to our front in support of the front line platoons. My position received 88's and mortars all during the day."

The relief of the 1st and 2nd Battalions was accomplished by midnight of 3 August and of the 3rd Battalion the next day by the 38th Infantry.

* * * * *

As the Regiment went into the Division reserve for the first time in 58 days after a ten-day drive against first-class German troops, certain statistics may prove of interest. The drive, beginning along the Comorlain - Berigny Highway on 26 July 1944 progressed 26 KM's due south over a route twisting back and forth through narrow sunken farm tracks and improvised supply routes for over 40 KM's. The Regimental sector averaged 2500 metres in width - cutting a swath through Normandy almost invariably the spearhead of the Division if not the Corps.

From D / 1 to the beginning of this attack the Regiment had suffered total casualties of 914 enlisted men and 45 officers. For the period 26 July to 4 August inclusive, 59 officers and 1154 enlisted men were killed, wounded, missing and/or evacuated.

177 Prisoners of War were evacuated through the Regimental IPW Team without counting those who were processed through the Battalion Aid Stations.

(See Interrogation Reports No. 1 and 2)

7 August 44

After a three day rest - the first relief from contact with the enemy in 58 days - the Regiment moved south to Vire behind the 29th Division who had passed through the town to the south and east. Elements of the 2nd British Army were northeast of Vire and the boundary between them and the 1st Army ran along Highway #2 out of Vire. The Regimental CP moved to Martilly on 7 August and preparations were initiated for the relief of the 29th Division who were to take up positions on our right.

On 8 August, while not in contact with the enemy, 4 Officers and 48 enlisted men were evacuated because of enemy artillery fire.

On 9 August 1944, the relief of the 116th Infantry, southeast of Vire, was completed without untoward incident by 1600. Artillery and mortar fire inflicted 37 casualties. Three prisoners of war were taken. The 2nd Battalion was dug in on Hill #250 by dark.

A large salient existed between the Regiment and the 9th British Brigade on the left, no elements of which had advanced south of Highway #3 running due east from Vire. Despite this unfavorable position, orders were received to continue the attack to the southeast.

At 1400 on 10 August 1944 the 2nd Battalion began their move followed by the 3rd and 1st Battalions in that order. By 1640 the advance was stopped by Division order with the 2nd Battalion at La Petitiere and the 3rd Battalion just north of La Boiviniere. The 1st Battalion and the Regimental CP closed in at l'Augire with the 1st Battalion occupying the reverse slope of Hill #250.

During the morning an enemy pocket of resistance was reported in the 175th Infantry sector on our right. Damaging artillery firing into the Regimental rear and machine guns covering the area northeast of 638288 compelled the dispatch of Company A into the adjoining sector.

shortly thereafter, as the 3rd Battalion crossed Hill #250 following the 2nd Battalion, a group of enemy tanks and Infantry attacked from the southwest but were quickly driven off.

At about 2000 hours, 3 heavy enemy tanks, one light tank and a column of some seventy infantrymen were ambushed by Company G as they marched south along Highway #3 east of La Petitiere. Bazookas fired at point blank range from hedgerows bordering the road, bounced harmlessly from the tanks which made good their escape. With the help of a section of Company H heavy machine guns the German column was completely annihilated. Over forty bodies were strewn along the road for over 300 yards. Later that evening the enemy, apparently reinforced, counterattacked across an open field from the south in a line of skirmishers. The commands of German officers or Non-commissioned officers could be heard driving the Germans forward. Our machine gunners and riflemen held their fire until the enemy was within fifty yards. The counterattack was repelled with over thirty Germans cut down in the open field just south of the unimproved road running east from La Petitiere to highway #3.

Casualties: Four officers and 137 enlisted men. Four prisoners of War were taken.

On the following day, 11 August 1944, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions remained in defensive positions while the 1st Battalion took up positions on the reverse slope of Hill #274 and the Regimental CP closed in at la Molliere. Enemy artillery severely shelled the CP area and mortars and artillery inflicted 112 casualties on the Regiment. Forty-nine prisoners of war were taken by patrols. Preparations were made for a renewal of the attack to the southeast on the 12th. The 1st Battalion relieved the 2nd Battalion during the night. Between 1800-2000 hours, all five company commanders in the 2nd Battalion had been wounded. During the past 30 hours that Battalion had lost one company commander killed, the Battalion S-3 killed and six company commanders wounded.

12 August 1944

The Ninth Infantry's last engagement in Normandy occurred on 12 August 1944 and appropriately was a completely successful operation. By Division Order the attack began at 1000 hours and was halted by the same authority at 1830 some 3000 yards to the south of the line of departure.

The 1st Battalion, having relieved the 2nd Battalion during the night, jumped off from positions south of la Petitiere and advanced slowly but steadily to reach la Monerie by 1800. Moving in the face of heavy artillery and mortar fire, the Battalion captured 116 prisoners of war and counted over 50 German dead in their immediate zone of advance.

The 3rd Battalion, whose line of departure ran through la Boivoniere, meeting the same type of heavy fire pushed slowly but steadily forward until halted along the unimproved road south of les Brieres at 1830.

The operation was noteworthy in two respects - 1) 294 walking prisoners were taken by the Regiment - at least 20 more being evacuated through medical channels; 2) The superior job performed by all unit commanders in leading and controlling their troops, now largely composed of replacements with only a few months basic training. In this latter connection, it should be remarked that without experienced officers or non-commissioned officers to push the men forward, enemy shell bursts within a hundred yard radius normally causes a recruit to bury himself in the nearest hole, to emerge only when prodded. The steady progress of the Regiment on this day testifies to the indefatigable and aggressive leadership displayed by the troops leaders in all echelons of command.

Our casualties were 8 officers and 173 enlisted men. 217

At about 1100 hours the Regimental Adjutant, the Headquarters Commandant and the Communications Officer went forward from the CP at la Morliere to reconnoitre an area in the vicinity of la Boivoniere to establish a new CP. At la Petitiere just south of the 2nd Battalion positions the party were suddenly caught in a crossfire of enemy machine guns - a pocket of resistance remaining behind the advancing front lines. For several hours the Adjutant and Headquarters Commandant were pinned down behind a house, both sides of which were swept by enemy machine guns. The rest of the party prevented enemy infiltration by establishing a base of fire some yards behind the house. Finally reinforcements arrived to drive the enemy back. In the meantime the Adjutant had fired his last round of ammunition with good effect into one German who had succeeded in reaching the house and was preparing to toss a grenade. One man in the group was killed as he fired a bazooka toward one of the enemy machine gun positions.

That afternoon the CP moved forward into the area so recently cleared.

On 13 August 44 the Regiment was once again placed in Division reserve, the 38th Infantry passing through our positions, but for at least 36 hours no appreciable benefit accrued because of the constant artillery and mortar fire which fell over the entire sector. Casualties evacuated during this period amounted to 4 officers and 163 enlisted men.

18 - 19 August 1944

After four days devoted to rest, cleaning up and re-organization, The Regiment received orders assigning them to the VIII Corps whose mission was to seize the fortified port of Brest some 230 miles from la Fouissardiere, the Regimental CP. On the 17th, the advance party, composed of 10 officers and 52 enlisted men, left in two $\frac{1}{4}$ ton trucks and two $2\frac{1}{2}$ ton trucks, spending the night in Dol, 70 miles away, and arriving at their destination at Lesneven, Brittany the next afternoon.

The Regiment, leading the Division, loaded on trucks and crossed the IP east of St Pois at 161800. An advance march unit under Captain Vernon T. Adler left several hours previously, posting 200 guides along the 210 mile route. The remainder of the Regiment moved in three serials - each composed of four march units - a total of 109 - $2\frac{1}{2}$ ton trucks, 142 $\frac{1}{4}$ ton trucks, 31 $1\frac{1}{2}$ ton trucks, 12 $3/4$ ton trucks and 3 ambulances.

The CP moved with the first march serial and the new CP opened in the vicinity of Floudaniel at 190915 after an uneventful trip. Seven vehicles were delayed - five mortar failures and two accidents, both of a minor nature.

The following day the Ninth Infantry relieved the 28th Infantry in position around the Brest airfield and the CP moved to the village of Karaziou. No enemy action was reported for the day. On 21 August, intermittent small arms, mortar and artillery fire fell throughout the Regimental area. 20 EM were evacuated. The companies organized their positions maintaining contact with the 28th Infantry on the right and the 23rd Infantry on the left. The CP moved to l'Ormeau.

A considerable amount of valuable military information was obtained from civilian evacuees from Brest and its environs, almost total evacuation of the French population having been ordered by the Germans three days prior to our arrival in the area. For the first time large numbers of VFI personnel were observed but did not operate at Regimental levels.

Between 22 - 24 August, readjustments were made in the front lines to conform to Division boundaries. Patrols constantly probed south to determine the enemy dispositions and strength. 3 officers and 48 enlisted men were evacuated.

At 1300 on 25 August 1944, the Regiment attacked within their zone of action with the 1st Battalion on the left and the 2nd on the right. After a 20 minute artillery preparation, rapid initial progress was halted along a line roughly paralleling the black-top road running from Guivivas to Gouesnou, 200 yards from the line of departure. What was presumed to be the enemy's lightly held OPLR showed aspects of a MLR in the number of dug in emplacements, stubborn resistance encountered, and the bold and effective use of self-propelled 88's. Mortar fire destroyed three supporting tanks in the 1st Battalion sector. One tank turned over south of the black-top attempting to maneuver. Its unhurt occupants, remained buttoned up inside for two days, until the ground was taken by C Company. At night German patrols on several occasions knocked on the hull but were apparently unaware that there was a crew alive inside.

At 1840, the CP moved into enemy evacuated concrete pill boxes on the southeast of the airfield, barely 300 yards behind the front lines. Transportation was compelled to remain some 500 yards further north at the time because of enemy direct artillery and small

amrs fire. Once established, however, the site was exceptionally helpful in maintaining control, and, because of the availability of many bombproof dugouts, exceptionally safe. 1st Lt Raymond E Matteson, I & R Platoon Leader, was killed on this afternoon while observing the front from a control tower. Colonel Hirschfelder, Regimental Commander, had spent considerable time there and only climbed down 30 minutes previously, when enemy machine gun began to fire directly at him. At that time, he advised Lt Matteson to chose some less conspicuous and vulnerable spot. Lt Matteson remained at the OP, disregarding consideration for his own safety because of the ideal observation obtainable there. A direct hit from a 105 gun demolished the tower and killed Lt Matteson.

Casualties for the day: Officers - 1 killed in action. wounded in action. Enlisted Men - 4 killed in action, 3 missing in action, 77 wounded in action. Prisoners taken - 7.

26 August 44

During the night 25-26 August frequent exchanges of hand grenades took place all along the front lines indicating the closeness of contact maintained with the enemy throughout the night.

At 0645, Company C withdrew to the Regimental CP area to permit firing of 8 inch guns and 155 MM howitzers on pill boxes located to their immediate front. At 0715x the plan was discarded because of poor visibility, but 40 minutes of 105 MM and 155 MM artillery was fired to cover the re-occupation of the positions.

At 0800, both the 1st and 2nd Battalions attacked. Very heavy enemy machine gun, mortar and artillery fire was encountered throughout the day, over 100 rounds of 88 MM direct fire blasting the 1st Battalion CP area between 1545 and 1615.

By 1000 hours, B and C Companies had not been able to advance. B Company had crossed the black-top but was receiving fire from the southwest, south and southeast. 400 yards to the east, C Company had been unable to cross the road and were also receiving fire from both flanks, particularly from a group of recognizable pill boxes to the southeast in the 23rd Infantry area. A Company was committed between B and C with the mission of clearing the village of Kermao. By nightfall, A and B were on line just one field south of B Company's line of departure. Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion, unable to advance at first and unsuccessful in local outflanking attempts, shortened their line by pulling G Company from their right flank southeast of Gouesnou, to the rear of E Company northeast of Keralleunoc.

2 Platoons of K Company took up the positions thus vacated. E Company after very heavy fighting, was able to push south 500 yards to the east of Bourg-Neuf, followed by one platoon of G Company. F Company north of the village, got one platoon south 200 yards from its line of departure, but pulled it back at dark.

The nature of the terrain - hedgerows, and the nature of the enemy defenses - pill boxes, barbedwire, mines, deeply dug in, cleverly camouflaged emplacements, dugouts, trenches, required a high degree of teamwork among the smallest units. It was just this teamwork that was lacking because of the fact that the Regiment was no longer the same highly trained outfit that had landed in France on 7 June 44. Over 3000 officers and enlisted men had been evacuated, and, unfortunately if inevitably, almost the complete fighting roster of officers and non-commissioned officers was gone. All the invaluable training in the attack of a fortified position - the use of flame throwers, bangalore torpedoes, pole and satchel charges, etc, had been had in

vain. On 24-25 August, six men per company were sent to the rear for instructions in the use of the flame thrower. The responsibility of leadership had never been more onerous. To lead and control recruits under fire required constant exposure to fire, indefatigable supervision of every soldier's actions.

Casualties for 26 August 44: Officers - 8 wounded.

Enlisted Men - 25 killed in action, 165 wounded in action.

17 officers and 258 enlisted replacements were received 23-26 August.

5 prisoners of war were taken.

27 August 1944

Only C Company was involved in active operations this day, making a limited objective attack. C Company reduced a strongly held fortified position guarding the crossroads northeast of Kermao and joined the other front line companies south of the black-top road running from Guipivas to Gouesenou.

Both flanks of the Regiment were still exposed and the enemy continued to hold commanding ground to the front. Their fire was incessant- over 250 rounds of direct fire artillery falling in the 1st Battalion area during the period. Our Air Corps was active bombing and strafing the enemy lines in rear areas. Fires in the outskirts of Brest burned all day. All of the roads south of the black-top were mined. 3 of our tanks in the C Company area were lost in attempting to reach the 2nd Battalion. Coming to an obstacle in the road some 300 yards south of the black-top, they turned into a field to by-pass the road block. The fields were mined with 5 rows of carefully camouflaged French or Belgian mines buried 3 to 6 inches below the sod. One tank got through, apparently without damage but was abandoned. One hit the last mine in one row and lost its track. The third apparently

made aware of the presence of danger while in the middle of the field, turned directly back toward the road, detonated two mines on the edge of the field without being stopped but was destroyed by an enemy bazooka. No tank corps casualties were reported. 170

Two hot meals of ten-in-one or C rations were being fed to all troops, each day after dark. The men and officers carried with them to the front one blanket and one shelter half but despite inclement weather, few cases of respiratory diseases appeared. (See monthly medical report, 2d Infantry Division). Casualties: Officers - 3 wounded in action; Enlisted Men - 11 killed in action, 48 wounded in action. 4 prisoners of war taken.

28 August 1944

Close contact was maintained throughout the night - one hedge-row between the opposing forces. E Company engaged in frequent skirmishes during the night. C Company consolidated their newly won positions found to consist of concrete emplacements surrounded by wire entanglements, cleared fields of fire and communication trenches.

At 1000 hours, the Regiment renewed the attack with 3 Battalions abreast. By 1050, only G Company had been able to reach the unimproved road 400 yards south of the the blacktop but by the end of a hard days fighting A, B, G, F, and L Companies were on line-an average gain of 500 yards. K Company remained to the right rear of the Regiment unable to move because of the 28th Infantry's inability to advance. A Company led by Capt. Cameron Clough, attacked between B Company and C Company and succeeded in seizing the village of Kermao. Capt. Clough had personally carried the flame thrower that destroyed the first enemy emplacement holding up the advance of the Company. He crossed an open field alone, covered by the fire of his men. By such leadership, evidences of which

were displayed throughout the Regiment, raw troops drove back German Para-troops sworn to defend their positions to the last man. (But see IPW Reports for 30-31 August and Interrogation Report #2). After reaching Kermao, a captured American light tank emblazoned with a swastika attacked up the road running southwest from the village. Capt., Clough, having no bazooka ammunition at hand, directed the firing of a captured 37 MM gun on the tank. The gun carried no sights but 3 rounds fired in rapid succession caused the tank to retreat. The fighting strength of this company was now only 96 men.

The 2nd Battalion reported that the area to the front and right of their zone of action, vicinity of Bourg-Neuf, was honey-combed with dug-in emplacements, with deep communication trenches connecting as many as two and three fields. From these trenches, the enemy fired without being observed. It was necessary to burn and smoke all the houses in and around Bourg-Neuf before we could advance in that sector.

The 3rd Battalion received direct artillery fire from the high ground west of Bourg-Neuf and were harassed all day with devastating fire from SP guns running up and down the trail north and southwest of that village.

Artiller fire from this same general area blanketed the Regimental CP. No damage was done. At 200 hours, however, a single stray mortar shell hit a building housing two liaison officers's vehicles and wounded 5 men. All through these days, at frequent intervals, small arms bullets chipped the concrete runways, tinkled through windows and whistled over head.

Cannon Company maintained an OP under the eaves of one of the administrative buildings on the airfield from which observation of the entire front could be obtained. Two enemy artillery pieces were destroyed

and the destruction observed. On the 29th, the OP was changed just before flying debris crashed through the building, tearing off the roof.

Casualties for the day: Officers - 1 killed in action, 2 wounded in action; Enlisted Men - 14 killed in action, 4 missing in action, 153 wounded in action. 141 replacements were received. 114 prisoners of war were processed through the IPW cage.

A German major, an English speaking NCO and a German Navy petty officer came through our outposts under a flag of truce with three US MAC officers and 8 US Medical Corpsmen with a letter addressed to General Middleton, the VIII Corps commander. After concluding some agreement in connection with location of hospital areas in Brest, the Germans were blindfolded and returned through our lines without incident. While held in our IPW dugout, casual questioning elicited a few interesting sidelights. The major refused to have his picture taken. The English speaking NCO remarked at one point that it was 5:00 PM "Double British Summer Time", and later made the remark in passing, "When you get to Brest, - -." The major requested and was given permission to take back with him a half eaten K ration.

29 August 1944

At 291000 August 1944, after very light preparation fires, the Regiment resumed the attack south, making the main effort of the Division. The character of the enemy resistance remained unchanged, but by 1157 hours, A Company and B Company had advance 800 yds to take their objective on Hill 90. They were ordered to consolidate and support the attack of the 2nd Battalion on their right. By 1444 hours F and G Companies were abreast of the 1st Battalion.

I Company fought its way into the outskirts of Bourg-Neuf, but could not hold the positions because of the violence of the enemy fire. By the end of the day the 3rd Battalion were re-grouped around Bourg-Neuf.

Company E of the 5th Ranger Battalion, was attached to protect the Regimental right flank.

Prisoners of war had reported impending counter-attacks from time to time in the last few days. Some confirmation appeared when reports were received of the loss of some 2 companies of the 28th Infantry on our right. At 1900 hours an enemy patrol of 9 to 15 men penetrated to the rear of the 1st Battalion CP, but were driven off. One prisoner was taken and 8 of the enemy killed. Almost immediately a counter-attack was launched in company strength directed at the gap between A Company and the 23rd Infantry and another strong patrol attempted to penetrate between B Company and G Company. By 2100 the attack was repelled. A Company killed about 15 Germans and captured 10. Our artillery destroyed about 60 more as they retreated to their lines. Capt Cameron Clough, again distinguished himself by remaining in command of his company from 1600 when he was temporarily blinded by fragments from a grenade until 2200 when the area was quiet and secure. Capt Clough has permanently lost the sight of one eye.

The outstanding incident of the day occurred some 500 yards due south of the Regimental CP in the 23rd Infantry sector. There in the face of an attack by I Company of the 23rd Infantry, the enemy detonated hundreds of pounds of TNT and ammunition stored in six pill boxes. Those who set off the explosions came over to our lines as prisoners and a few minutes later a tremendous explosion took place followed by several smaller explosions. Chunks of concrete two feet square flew 700 to 800 yards and the whole Regimental CP area was showered with debris. I Company suffered very large casualties and, as of this writing, still listed 14 men as missing.

Casualties of the day: Officers - 10 wounded in action.
Enlisted Men - 109 wounded in action. Prisoners of war captured -
16.

30 August 1944

Enemy resistance continued to exhibit a ferocity and determination unsurpassed in this Regiment's experience in France. Every road was covered with machine gun and mortar fire and enemy artillery fell throughout the period. The enemy had to be driven from their dug in positions with bayonet and grenade.

The 1st and 2nd Battalions readjusted their lines. Company A occupied two fields further to the east to close the gap existing between us and the 23rd Infantry. The 3rd Battalion of that Regiment was attached to the Ninth at 1445. Company B occupied two fields to the right rear while Company G moved south five fields to close the gap between the 1st and 2nd Battalions.

At 1215 hours the 3rd Battalion attacked to clean out the pocket holding up the right flank of the Regiment. Very stiff resistance was met all along the line. At 1330 hours the enemy counter-attacked between the 3rd Battalion and Company E, 5th Ranger Battalion. The Rangers - numbering only 69 men repelled the attack with prompt and aggressive counter-action, suffering 5 casualties. At the end of the day, Company K had occupied all the houses in Bourg-Neuf; Companies I and L were echeloned to the south facing west.

Casualties: Officers - 2 killed in action, 2 wounded in action.
Enlisted Men - 11 killed in action, 1 missing in action, 84 evacuated (including 5 non-battle casualties). Prisoners of war taken - 39.

31 August 1944

The day passed without any major operation attempted. All front line companies continued in close contact, exchanging rifle fire and granades with the enemy. The 3rd Battalion 23rd Infantry, moved south several hundred yards without resistance to come abreast of our front lines. Enemy artillery continued to pound our positions but the weight of the shelling diminished noticeably. Mortars and SP-guns were active all day. At no point in the sector could our patrols penetrate more than two fields without attracting heavy machine gun fire.

Prisoner of War information elicited by Capt. Podlesski, CO. IPW Team #28, indicates that present front lines have reached but the first of three German MLR's. (See IPW Report 31 Aug 1944).

Casualties - Enlisted Man - 4 KIA, 23 SWA, 27 NBC. Replacements received: 4 Officers, 129 EM.

Prisoners of War taken - 15.

As the month closed the strength of the Regiment had dropped to 2683 EM and 140 Officers and Warrant Officer. During the month which included only 12 days of active operations and 6 more days of contact, casualties were as follows:

	: Officers :	Enlisted :	:
Killed	: 10 :	128 :	:
Wounded and/or Evacuated	: 92 :	1837 :	:
Missing	: 1 :	36 :	:
	<u>103</u>	<u>2001</u>	:
Total	- - - - -	- - - - -	2104

During the same period 1826 replacements were received including some 300 former member of the Ninth, returned from the hospital. 77 Officer replacements were received. The above casualty figures include evacuated cases of all descriptions. Reference is made to the Medical Report, Hqs, 2nd Inf. Div., month of August for breakdown of these

31 August 1944 continued

figures. Considerable Combat Exhaustion evacuations first made their appearance in this third month of combat. At the close of the month some 50 men were in a rest camp maintained in the Regimental Rear to attempt to forestall some such cases and rehabilitate others.

Since D-Day the Ninth Infantry has suffered the following casualties:

	: Officers :	Enlisted =	:
Killed	: 22 :	324 :	:
Wounded and/or Evacuated	: 144 :	3182 :	:
Missing	:	:	:
<hr/>			
Totals	: 166 :	3506 :	:
		Grand Total :	3672

Total Prisoners of War processed through Regimental IPW Cage for the month of August 1944 - 626.

Sept. 1944
ORIGINAL

2nd INFANTRY DIVISION

HEADQUARTERS NINTH INFANTRY
AFTER ACTION REPORTS
FOR SEPTEMBER 1944

REPORTS AFTER ACTION - AFTER ACTION REPORTS

Brest Campaign (Cont'd)

1 September 1944

L-109

At the beginning of the period the three battalions were on line some six miles north of Brest: the Third on the right, Second in the center and the First on the left. The 1st and 2nd Battalions had breached the enemy main line of resistance in the Kernac area and were holding while the 3rd Battalion cleared out the German strongholds at Fournuef and Bourg-Neuf.

Fournuef, a key village adjacent to Bourg-Neuf, was rimmed with pillboxes and emplacements which were blocking the advance of the 9th Infantry and the 121st Infantry toward Brest and which included among its defending troops the 14th Company, 7th Parachute Regiment, and a platoon of the 8th Company of the same regiment.

The assault on Fournuef was made by Company I and Company L striking simultaneously at 1000 hours from positions northeast and east of the village. I Company attacked the prepared defenses frontally, while L Company strove to envelope the enemy by advancing south across the Fournuef road and then west into the village.

The fighting, much of it at close range, with bayonets, was so severe and casualties on both sides so heavy that neither company achieved its objective immediately. The German grip on Fournuef, however, was loosened by the ferocity of the attack and by subsequent artillery fire, and during the night the enemy withdrew.

At Fournuef the 1st Platoon of I Company was wiped out as a fighting unit. Losses for the entire Battalion during three days of fighting for Bourg-Neuf and Fournuef were 45 officers and men killed and 110 wounded.

308-INT(9)-0-3

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION DELETED
AUTHORITY SECRETARY ARMY
DATE 17 Jun 46
BY David Dickson INITIAL - gfw

Twenty-five German dead were counted around the Fourneuf defenses. Fifty-seven Germans who wished to surrender but could not get through our intense fire gave themselves up to units of the 9th Infantry on the right; nine surrendered to Co. K.

For its heroism and skill in smashing the German line the 3rd Battalion was recommended for a Distinguished Unit Citation. (The attached statement contains a complete account of the Fourneuf - Bourg-Neuf operation.)

Casualties: 1 Officer, 96 enlisted men. Replacements: 124 enlisted men and 22 officers. See attached monthly IPW Report for PW totals.

2 September 1944

All battalions remained in close contact with the enemy. The 3rd Battalion moved in to occupy Fourneuf and the ground beyond. Against artillery, mortar and machine gun fire, the 2nd Battalion sparred for high ground near Morlen. The 1st Battalion, in the farthest advance of the day, reached the outskirts of Kerven, 1500 yards south of the Fourneuf road. an enemy ammunition dump 2,000 yards to the front was reported hit by our artillery. Casualties: 56 enlisted men and 5 officers. Replacements: 237 enlisted men and 7 officers.

3 September 1944

Enemy withdrawal to the southeast continued. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions advanced south and west against comparatively light fire. The 1st Battalion, although encountering heavy machine gun fire, sent patrols south of Kerven.

During the day the 3rd Battalion was pinched out by our 2nd Battalion and by the 1st Battalion of the 121st Infantry, and retired to a rest area near Gouesnou, at Penhoat. Casualties: EM 69, Officers 30. Replacements: EM 64, Officers 15.

4 Sept 1944

The advance now had reached a point where many buildings in Brest were in plain view of our troops. All day the 1st Battalion was at grips with the enemy around Guataodon Chau, south of Kerven. At 2000 hours the 2nd Battalion was pinched out by the 1st Battalion of the 38th Infantry and retired to the rest area. Our 1st Battalion thereupon was attached temporarily to the 38th Regiment. Casualties: EM 42, Officers 4. Replacements: EM 33, Officers 1.

5 - 7 Sept 1944

Upon completion of relief of 2nd Battalion, 9th Infantry, by the 38th Infantry, at 050015 Sept 44, the 1st Bn 9th Infantry became attached to the 38th Infantry.

Battalion CP was located at co-ordinates 9935-0335 map France with "A" Company on the left and "B" Company on the right, "C" Company in reserve. Front line extended generally along a line 989029--984035. The Battalion was in a defensive position in close contact with the enemy and maintained contact with units on both flanks by patrols. These units were the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 38th Infantry.

Primary mission of the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry was to keep close contact with the enemy and support, by fire, the anticipated attack to be made by the 38th Infantry. During the period of attachment the 38th Infantry effected TOT concentrations and had propoganda broadcasts in which the 1st Bn 9th Infantry participated.

Battalion was relieved by 3rd Battalion 38th Infantry and reverted back to the 9th Infantry at 071450 Sept 44 at Penhoat.

Casualties: EM 45, Officers 1. Replacements: EM 87, Officers 5.

11 September 1944

The Regiment set out on the last lap to Brest, ultimate objective in this campaign. The plan was for the 9th Infantry to relieve the 8th Infantry Division in a sector north of Brest, and leaving the rest area at Gouesnou, the Regiment moved forward to an assembly area in the suburban districts of Kerleguer, Lambezellec and Mesmerian.

12 September 1944

The Regiment completed the task of relieving the 13th Infantry and the 121st Infantry during the hours of darkness, and during the rest of the day improved and consolidated positions. Regimental C. P. was moved to Lambezellec, where it remained until after the fall of Brest.

13 September 1944

Battalion alignment was: First on the right, Third in the Center and Second on the left. Patrols from the 1st Battalion reached the Penfeld River line in front of its sector. A reinforced platoon from "I" Company occupied houses in Kergoat.

14 September 1944

Operations during this period centered around aggressive night patrols, which succeeded in reaching the stone-and-earthen wall that surrounds Brest. This ancient wall, dating back to 1680, constituted together with a thirty-foot ditch in front of it, a difficult obstacle for our troops.

15 Sept 1944

A 3rd Battalion patrol got within 75 yards of the wall before being stopped by artillery fire, while a 2nd Battalion patrol reconnoitered the wall in its sector. The 1st Battalion sent patrols along the river. Harassing fire was now being delivered on Brest 24 hours a day.

16 Sept 1944

Large fires along the river and inside the wall were visible from all O. P.'s. At 0900 hours 159 Russian soldiers who had been with the German forces in Brest surrendered to " C " Company. These troops, all of them engaged in unloading supplies at the U-boat pens, apparently were distrusted by the Germans and were disarmed and sent to our lines under a white flag.

17 Sept 1944

The campaign reached its climax with the entry of 9th Infantry troops into Brest. Patrols had begun jabbing at the wall and ditch long before dawn, and activity increased at 1000 hours when four combat patrols, two each from the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, were sent out with the mission of crossing the ditch and occupying high ground between the ditch and a bluff just north of the Penfeld River. The 2nd Battalion patrols reached the ditch in their sector, but were pinned down by heavy enemy mortar, machine gun and rifle fire. One of the 3rd Battalion patrols was stopped by intense machine gun fire also, but the second patrol, from " I " Company, pushed through to the wall at the western border of the city, 150 yards from a bridge across the Penfeld River.

The break-through came at about 1800 hours. I Company's assault platoons followed, and behind them a short time later came K and L Companies. As soon as all three companies were inside the wall the Battalion, in a column of companies, began a steady advance into the city along the Penfield River.

In contrast to some of the bitter fighting of the month-long siege the actual break-through was accomplished without serious opposition. Apparently surprised and disheartened by our final thrust, the Germans made only a weak stand in Brest and surrendered by the thousands. Our casualties in the city were light. By nightfall Company I, spearheading the advance, had moved more than 1000 yards beyond the breach in the wall.

For hours before the break-through I Company probed the western defenses of Brest with patrols. The first patrol, from the 2nd Platoon advanced from Kerele, a community 1,500 yards north of the city, at 1100 hours, worked its way east to a concrete road along the Penfield River, and then cut back toward Brest as far as the suburb of Kergoat, where it was pinned down by machine gun fire, believed to have come from across the river. The mission of this patrol had been to get through the wall, dig in and send a messenger back to lead the 1st Platoon into Brest by the same route. The 1st Platoon was waiting in an area between Kergoat and Kerele. If this plan had been successful, then the rest of the company stationed at Kerele, was going to move into the city on the heels of the 1st Platoon.

While the patrol was still pinned down, however, the 1st Platoon was moved out at 1230 on Battalion order and advanced to Kergoat near the patrol from the 2nd Platoon. There the 1st Platoon set up a defensive position. The patrol rejoined the 2nd Platoon.

After the 1st Platoon had secured a defensive position at Kergoat the rest of the company moved in and occupied it, and the 1st Platoon went on 200 yards to the second hedgerow west of the wall.

From this new position the 1st Platoon sent out a patrol with the mission of finding a gap in the wall and reporting the location of it. In this section the wall is relatively weak. Although made entirely of stone, it stands only about eight feet high and is between six inches and a foot thick. When it reached the wall, the patrol found a five-foot gap, which appeared to have been torn by artillery fire. The location was reported. A patrol thereupon was sent out from the 2nd Platoon with the mission of going through the gap into the city. The mission was accomplished at about 1600 hours.

When 1st Lt. William J. Ray, commander of I Company, received word that the wall had been successfully breached, he ordered the 1st Platoon through the gap and began clearing the area for the advance of the rest of the company and the Battalion. One squad from the 1st Platoon worked along the river, another along the wall. The rest of the company meanwhile was moved up to the point outside the wall where the 1st Platoon had been.

The first enemy encountered were seventeen Germans in a tunnel a short distance inside the wall. They surrendered without a fight. From a tunnel across the river, in the 28th Division sector, machine guns fired on I Company. Fire was returned with a bazooka, and while Lt Ray was bringing up rifle grenades for a heavier concentration, the enemy fire ceased,

and about eighty Germans came out and surrendered to a unit of the 29th Division.

With this menace removed from its right flank, the 1st Platoon continued its advance along the waterfront. The chosen avenue of approach was a long corridor bounded on the south by the river and on the north by a high embankment containing tunnels used by the Germans for hospitals and barracks. At 1900 hours the rest of "I" Company moved through the wall, followed next by "K" Company and then by "L" Company, and the Battalion advanced in a column of companies in that order.

Some rifle and grenade fire was encountered, but the swarms of prisoners constituted the main barrier to swift advance. The Battalion was still advancing after dark more than 1,000 yards from where it had entered the city when a halt was ordered for the night.

18 Sept 1944

The following extract from the Regimental Combat Report dated 18 September 44 constitutes a complete record of the operations of the Regiment on this last day of combat for the month of September:

By 172200 the 3rd Battalion had closed inside the Brest City wall after its successful penetration at the junction of the wall and the river described in 162200 Combat Report. Occupying the low ground to the south of the escarpment inside the wall, I and K Companies were subjected to hand grenades and machine gun fire from their rear. The enemy there located numbered 250 and were armed with 30 machine guns and several mortars. The 3rd Battalion was ordered to resume the attack at 0900 hours from a line of

departure just north of the 00 grid line (Map: France 1/10,000, Sheet: Brest).

The 2nd Battalion was ordered to cross the moat in their sector and scale the wall prior to 180700 with two (2) companies. Their mission was to drive the enemy from above described escarpment prior to the attack of the 3rd Battalion.

By 0830 the 2nd Battalion had successfully accomplished their mission. All enemy resistance was overcome.

"I" Company, moving to the line of departure at daybreak met no resistance and established themselves along a line NE along road from 946994 by 0900. At that time "K" and "L" Companies moved through "I" Company attacking south with "K" Company on the left and "L" Company on the right; "I" Company to occupy the arsenal at 945986 when the other two (2) companies reached the wall running NE from 946987. Enemy resistance consisted of heavy of heavy machine gun fire coming from buildings and ruins throughout the zone of advance. "K" Company encountered particularly heavy fire from a pocket of German Paratroopers at 949997.

At 1200 hours elements of the three (3) rifle companies of the 3rd Battalion combing each block through the Old City of Brest were approaching Rue Emile Zola bordering President Wilson Place on the northwest. A Parliamentary came through the front lines under a flag of truce with a message requesting the Commanding Officer of the American troops in Brest to meet with the German Commander. The emissary refused to deal with any officer of lesser rank. Major William F Kernan, 3rd Battalion Commanding Officer, with a group of five (5) officers met the emissary outside the tunnel entrance to the underground hospital at the hospital at 94859924

~~SECRET~~

and was led through the hospital to the Regimental CP of the 7th Paratroop Regiment which was located in a concrete building at ground level just off President Wilson Place.

Colonel Erich Pietzonka and his staff were present. After introductions, Colonel Pietzonka asked if Major Kernan ever heard of him. He then continued the conversation by complimenting Major Kernan on the skill displayed by the American troops in penetrating the German defenses. He stated that he had been surprised by the final maneuver. He further stated something to the effect that re-supply of arms had been landed in the 29th Division sector some time previously in anticipation of an attack from that direction. The Colonel expressed himself as willing to surrender but wanted it clearly understood that he was not in communication with any of his subordinate units and could not guarantee that his orders would reach them. He warned of the possibility of some continued fighting by isolated groups. He requested an acknowledgement that his troops had fought honorably and upon being assured that the negotiations were being conducted in good faith the following armistice terms were agreed upon:

- (1) Both sides cease firing.
- (2) French civilians to be barred from the City of Brest until German troops were evacuated.
- (3) German troops to be adequately guarded from French (Terrorists*).
- (4) All German able bodied troops to leave their arms in their dugouts and assemble in President Wilson Place at 1500 hours when a formal surrender would be made.

These preliminary negotiations were concluded by 1250 hours and the Colonel issued his orders. American officers and enlisted men were sent with German messengers under a white flag to carry the order to the various elements of the garrison of Brest. A copy of this order and a translation thereof is attached.

Surrender terms were then negotiated subject to confirmation by the by the 9th Infantry Regimental Commander, who was on his way to President Wilson Place.

The matters brought up and agreed upon were as follows:

(1) Colonel Pietzonka requested an acknowledgement that he had fought honorably and according to the rules of war.

(2) Colonel Pietzonka reiterated his request that French civilians be bared from the city until all German troops were evacuated.

(3) Colonel Pietzonka requested that guards be put on all hospitals, stating his fear of excesses committed by French "Terrorists". He reported large supplies of foodstuffs and medical supplies stored in the hospitals.

(4) Colonel Pietzonka requested that the women who had worked around his Headquarters be given protection from the French and be evacuated through US Army channels.

On these four points Major Kernan assured the Colonel that his request were entirely in order.

At 1400, a message was received through Captain Vernon T Adler, Battalion Executive Officer, that Captain Heino Handl, Commanding Officer, 1st Bn, 7th Paratroop Regiment desired to surrender to Major Kernan. Captain Handl was told to report in person to Colonel Pietzonkas Headquarters.

Colonel C J Hirschfelder arrived at the CP at 1420. He confirmed the terms tentatively agreed upon and assured Colonel Pietzonka that he and his officers would be evacuated by motor transport with their personal baggage. Colonel Hirschfelder also gave his consent to the separation of the officers orderlies from the other prisoners.

At 1450 Major General Robertson arrived at President Wilson Place and witnessed the formal surrender of the garrison of Brest. Some 400 German prisoners had gathered in the square and more streamed in as quickly as those were marched off to the IPW forward collecting point. Some difficulties were experienced in separating these German prisoners able to be evacuated through regular IPW channels from the large number of Germans gathered in the subterranean hospital under President Wilson Place.

PWs evacuated through medical channels not tabulated. At 2130 2154 PWs were evacuated through the IPW cage. Among these captured was a Marine Vice Admiral and staff and the Commanding Officer of the 7th Parachute Regiment with Staff.

TRANSLATION OF
ORDER FOR SURRENDER OF BREST GARRISON

Sector East 18.9.44
1400 hrs.

TO ALL COMBAT TEAMS:

From the sector West came the suggestion for a truce. Americans penetrated into the heart of the City from West and North. CP completely surrendered. A truce affecting all units of the Sector East is necessary at once. Am leaving the final decision

to the individual Combat Teams. We, at Wilson Square, are powerless. If the occasion necessitates it, destroy all weapons and assemble at Wilson Square at 1600 hrs. We have performed our duties to the last.

Hail Fuehrer, People and Fatherland:

Signed: PIETZONKA,

Colonel and Commanding Officer
Sector East.

A, the month concluded the Regiment was in the process of moving up into an assembly area in the vicinity of St Vith, Province of Malmedy, Belgium. Some 900 men travelling on organic transportation left Landerneau, Brittany on the morning of 27 September and closed into St Vith on 30 September. The remainder of the Regiment entrained during the night 27-28 September in 67 boxcars and two coaches at Landerneau. The first train arrived in Longuyon, France at 1600 30 September 44 and the second train closed in during the night.

The month will be remembered, of course, for the spectacularly successful capture of Brest, for the many prisoners captured and for the bloodlessness of the final assault - only eight men were killed and seventeen wounded from 11 September to 18 September 1944. The entire campaign, however, cost in casualties 1295 enlisted men and 55 officers.

HEADQUARTERS NINTH INFANTRY

SECRET
Auth: OG, 2nd Inf Div
Date: 2 Nov 1944
Initials: ~~W. E. W.~~
APO #2, U. S. Army,
3 November 1944.


SUBJECT: Action against Enemy, Reports
After/ After Action Reports.

TO : Commanding General,
1st United States Army,
APO #230, U. S. Army.

THRU : Commanding General,
2nd Infantry Division,
APO #2, U. S. Army.

Submitted herewith Action Against Enemy, Reports After/
After Action Reports for the month of October 1944.

For the Regimental Commander:


W. E. WHITNEY,
Captain, 9th Infantry,
Adjutant.

- 3 Incls:
✓ Incl 1 - After Action Report.
✓ Incl 2 - Unit Journal.
✓ Incl 3 - Unit Journal File.

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Incl 5

AFTER ACTION REPORT

OCTOBER 1944

At the beginning of the period the 9th Infantry, fresh from the victory at Brest, was on the way to Germany and the final showdown battles of the war. The entry into Germany on 4 October 1944 came almost 25 years after the Regiment, travelling the same general route through Luxemburg and Belgium, had first entered Germany after the Armistice in November 1919 as part of the Army of Occupation.

Between the surrender of Brest on 18 September and the arrival of the Regiment on the Siegfried line on 4 October the days were devoted to rest, reorganization and travel. The movement to Germany began when the advance detail left Landernau, near Brest, by vehicle on 26 September at 0800 hours. The organic transportation, under the command of Major Frank E. Ball, crossed the I.P. on 27 September at 0820 in two serials composed of five march units. Nine hundred officers and men, including personnel of the 2nd Medical Battalion, travelled in this convoy, which made the trip of more than 575 miles in these stages:

1st Day	Landernau to St. Aubin
2nd Day	St. Aubin to Chateauneuf
3d Day	Chateauneuf to St. Quentin
4th Day	St. Quentin to Schonberg, Belgium

The trip was accomplished without an accident. There were only four mechanical breakdowns and all the vehicles that started the trip closed into St Vith with the column.

The bulk of the troops travelled most of the way to Germany by rail, leaving Landernau in two trains on the night of 27 September. The trip was made in World War I style

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in Forty-and-eight boxcars - 40 Hommes, 8 Cheviaux - with 34 men to the car.

The first day brief stops were made at Rennes and LeMans. The second day the troops had a distant view of Paris. The third day, 30 September, they passed through World War battlements around Verdun and arrived at Longuyon in Northeastern France, terminus of the rail journey. From the station a steep and slippery 2½ mile march was made to fields above the town where the night was passed in bivouac.

1 October

At 1300 hours the Regiment left Longuyon by motor convoy for Schonberg, Belgium, a distance of about 100 miles. All through Luxemburg and Belgium the troops were cheered by Sunday crowds lining the streets of towns and villages. By nightfall the Regiment was encamped in thick pine forests above Schonberg, in the sight of the hills of Germany three miles away.

2 - 3 October

The Regiment remained in bivouac above Schonberg preparing to relieve the 8th Infantry and elements of the 12th Infantry, 4th Division, along an 8,000-yard sector of the Siegfried Line.

4 October

The Regiment entered Germany. First to leave the Schonberg bivouac, at 0330 hours, was a motor column of weapons carriers and prime movers of the Third, First and Second Battalions in that order. In the same order the troops crossed the I. P. at 0400 on the seven-and-a-half-mile march to the front line. It was still dark when they passed the border.

Rain had turned the roads into bogs, and the troops, struggling under full equipment, toiled through darkness and drizzle up one steep hill and down the next. Many of them said afterward that the march into Germany was the most strenuous ordeal of its kind they had experienced in Europe.

By 1130 the Regiment had completed relief of the 4th Division units. The sector it now occupied, primarily as a holding force, ran in a north-south line through the pine forests of the Schnee-Eiffel Mountains, forming a salient between Task Force X on the left (north) and the 38th Infantry on the right. Our alignment was Second Battalion on the left, First Battalion in the Center and Third Battalion, less K Company, on the right. K Company and Cannon Company were attached temporarily to Task Force X. The Regimental C. P. was moved from Schonberg to Schlausenbach, Germany, a farming village from which the inhabitants had been evacuated.

Along most of the line open areas, in places two or three thousand yards wide, separated our MLR from the enemy MLR. Within our lines were more than two dozen Siegfried pillboxes previously wrested from the Germans, some of which were used as C. P's, by the Battalions and certain companies.

The pattern of deployment down through the companies, platoons and squads was influenced by the location of dugouts, pillboxes and foxholes previously used by the 4th Division. These positions, however, were promptly and constantly expanded

and strengthened and the outpost line changed. With considerably fewer men to hold the same area, every terrain feature had to be used to the best possible advantage. It was impossible to construct a MLR of interlocking bands of fire, or even to maintain a defensive line that could be continuously observed.

The general trace of the Regimental positions ran along the Schnee-Eifel ridge line, but almost every company was compelled to situate itself around the forward slopes of subsidiary ridge lines or shoulders running at right angles to the main line. Deep draws between these shoulders were constantly used as routes of approach by enemy patrols. Consequently as will be noted by referring to the attached Situation Overlays, a line drawn from north to south connecting every outpost would present a scalloped effect.

One of the difficulties imposed by the extremely large sector was the creation of wide gaps between the outposts. Initially because of these gaps and of the thick woods, small enemy patrols were able to infiltrate to the very center of our positions without too much difficulty. As a result all positions were constructed as independent islands of resistance prepared for all around defense. At night the outposts buttoned up and readied themselves to repel attacks from any direction. Concurrent with the extensive building program instituted in the second week of occupation of these positions was a similarly intensive program of laying tactical and protective wire all along the front. In the extensive gaps that could not be covered by fire, booby traps, anti-personnel mines and trip flares were installed to impede the enemy and alert our out-

posts. By the end of the month thousands of yards of barbed wire had been strung and hundred of mines laid. Total amount of wire was: single strand, 1440 yards; two strands, 2960 yards; three or four strands, 2460; single apron, 825 yards; double apron, 575 yards; number of yards covered by concertina, 13,079. Following are figures on other obstacles: 116 flares with trip wire; 711 fragmentation grenades with trip wire; 332 anti-tank mines, 54 one-half pound blocks of TNT.

Platoons on outpost duty were rotated every 24 hours.

An additional difficulty encountered was the curious composition of the soil which held moisture close to the surface of the ground in high as well as low areas. Thick, sticky mud rendered parts of the few small roads essential for supply almost impassable. Engineer Squads were kept constantly busy maintaining the roads, filling holes and ruts and improving forest paths that had not been used in a long time.

German units known to be defending the Siegfried Line along the 9th Infantry sector were the 2nd SS Panzer Grenadier Division and the 6th and 11th 9AF Fortress Battalions, units recruited from Luftwaffe personnel. During the month an undetermined number of SS troops were replaced by Volk Grenadiers.

(Casualties: 12 non-battle

(Prisoners taken: 6)

5 October

As enemy patrols probed the First Battalion area, the work of improving and reorganizing positions was begun in earnest all along the line, and our own patrols were organized and vigorous patrolling schedules put into effect.

On orders from Regiment each Battalion organized a Ranger Platoon consisting of one officer, one non-commissioned officer and 15 privates.

These platoons were placed under the supervision of the Battalion S-2. Relieved of all responsibility, except their own local security, and reserved for patrol work alone. Members of the platoon were separately billeted and fed wherever possible. Night patrolling was done by Rangers only.

Each rifle company was instructed to designate for patrol work one officer, one non-commissioned officer and five privates who could be called upon to supplement or replace members of the Ranger Platoons if more officers and men were needed. Until called, however, they remained in their respective units and were used for daylight patrolling.

Regiment established the following as the minimum patrolling schedule:

Daylight

a. Battalions with three companies on line - one combat patrol and two reconnaissance patrols daily.

b. Battalions with two companies on line - one combat patrol and one reconnaissance patrol daily.

c. Contact and security patrols to the flanks and between the outpost line and the Battalion C P.

Night

Each Battalion was to send its Ranger Platoon on a mission each night.

Contact patrols to the flanks were maintained.

Missions of combat patrols, both day and night, were announced by Regimental Headquarters, with special missions ordered on recommendation of Battalion Commanders. Missions of reconnaissance patrols

were announced by Battalion Commanders.

(Casualties: 9 non-battle)

6 October

Enemy patrols attempted to infiltrate through the lines of the First and Second Battalions, and in one of the day's skirmishes B Company killed two Germans.

(Casualties: 2 killed, 8 wounded, 28 non-battle)

7 October

Supported by brisk artillery and mortar fire, an enemy force estimated at between one and two companies attacked E and F Company outposts at 1300 hours, capturing 9 men and wounding several others. The main blow fell on E Company outposts. Six men of the 2nd Platoon who were in the outpost nearest the enemy were surrounded and captured together with three men of the 3rd Platoon who were working on a new outpost line closer to the company's MLR and stood their ground and fought when the attack came. The fate of the men in them was not known definitely until the next day when the Germans dropped propaganda leaflets naming them as prisoners and saying they were being well treated. The leaflets were addressed to the "Guys of the 2nd Infantry Division."

A sharp counter-attack by our forces was made later in the E Company sector. (See 10 October.)

In a skirmish with a forty-man patrol that infiltrated its sector at 0320 and was repulsed Company K suffered four casualties, including one man killed.

Casualties: 1 killed, 8 wounded, 6 non-battle, 10 missing and 6 prisoners taken.

By this time rapid progress was being made in providing for the troops the most comforts and amenities possible under the circumstances.

With steady rains already falling, an extensive program of log-shelter-building was ordered as an essential safeguard of the health of the troops, who otherwise would have had to go on living, perhaps through winter months, in fox-holes, sometimes in water inches deep. The Regiment proved to be rich in log-

cabin architects and improvisers, and slowly the forest took on the appearance of a boom town of log command posts, log kitchens, log squad rooms, log drying rooms and various elaborate log shelters with tin or tile roofs and clay chimneys. Squad shelters usually had sleeping space for four men, with members of the squads taking turns sleeping in them at night in the order of their rotation on guard duty. When the Regiment first went on the line two-man foxholes were standard. In building the log shelters, however, it was decided to permit accommodations for four men for reasons of comfort and morale. At the outposts were log covered dugouts in which men could sleep while not on guard and from which they could fight.

The work of building log shelters was long and arduous. Trees had to be felled, cut into logs and carried to where they were needed. The sound of axes rang through the forest from daylight to dark, and at times, the area resembled a lumber camp as much as a battle line. As an example of the size of the task, the First Battalion was felling more than 400 trees a day at the height of its building program.

But the shelters were not the only new comforts. Inside showers were installed in a house and barn at Schlausenbach, and each day 180 men were brought back to use them. From the showers the men could go to a moving picture, the first of which, "Stars on Parade," was shown on this day. A rest camp with beer, ice cream, cards, books, radio, showers and barber shop was opened by the 2nd Division at Vielsalm, Belgium, with accommodations sufficient to

allow the Regiment to send 135 men and six officers at a time for 48-hour visits. Further comfort was on the way in the form of sleeping bags. (One thousand were issued on 18 October).

Concurrent with new comforts, however, were the inevitable shortages and inconveniences imposed by long supply lines. Bread and coffee were scarce for a few days, and the cigarette situation was critical during most of the month.

S-2 reported: "Enemy artillery and mortar fire for the period was the lightest yet encountered."

{ Casualties: 1 killed
5 wounded
10 non-battle)

9 October

At 0300 a 12-man German patrol infiltrated the K Company sector and reached a point about 1,500 yards from the Regimental C.P. All personnel at the C.P. were alerted, but the patrol was repulsed by K Company's .50-calibre machine guns. Three Germans were believed to have been wounded.

{ Casualties: 4 wounded
6 non-battle)

10 October

A Second Battalion combat patrol consisting of twelve men from E Company, six men from G Company, four men from the Battalion intelligence section and a mortar observer lashed at the enemy in the E Company sector, wiping out a German outpost, killing or seriously wounding eleven men and capturing four others, two of whom were wounded. One member of the patrol was killed and another wounded.

The enemy outpost had been discovered earlier in the day by a six-man patrol from E Company.

Casualties: 1 killed, 1 wounded and 9 non-battle.

11 - 18 October

These were days of patrol warfare along the regimental front. Reconnaissance patrols ranged through the forest observing enemy dispositions, listening for enemy sounds, spotting enemy gun emplacements, seeking out enemy mine fields. Ambush patrols pounced on unwary Germans and brought them back for questioning. Combat patrols jabbed at enemy lines, attacked machine guns, battled enemy patrols. Total casualties for the eight days were: 9 missing, 21 wounded and 88 non-battle. 10 prisoners taken.

(Lt Col H. K. Wesson, Commanding the First Battalion, was fatally wounded by an anti-personnel mine while inspecting positions on 13 October. He died on 15 October.)

19 October

A great increase in enemy artillery was noted. From 1515 to 1530 the Second Battalion area received nine rounds. Between 50 and 60 rounds landed in the rear of L Company and 25 in the rear of I Company soon after 1800. Fifty rounds were hurled at C Company at about the same time, causing two casualties. Throughout the day 62 rockets were fired into the First Battalion area and caused four casualties. Artillery fire was preceded by long-range machine gun tracer fire believed to have been used for target designation. Casualties: 1 missing, 6 wounded and 12 non-battle.

20 October

Enemy artillery fire decreased. At about 1100 hours 25 rounds

landed along the front between L Company and C Company. Three rounds each were received by the First and Second Battalions between 2215 and 2320. Sixteen rockets were fired into A Company area at 1045. No casualties were reported caused by this shelling.

L Company patrols observed Germans building log shelters.

At 0230 two men from M Company were wounded and one man was killed when one of them stepped on an enemy mine-and-dynamite charge in a road. Casualties: 1 killed, 1 missing, 3 wounded and 10 non-battle.

21 October

German flying bombs, of the type used against London, passed over the Regimental sector, some of them directly above above the Regimental C. P. They continued on their way, however, and caused no damage in the immediate vicinity. On this first day of their appearance on this sector eight bombs were counted. Others came over on subsequent days.

The first group from the Regiment to be given 48-hour furloughs in Paris left by truck at 0730. The group consisted of one Officer and sixteen enlisted men. Other groups of about the same number left every two days during the rest of the month.

Enemy mortar fire was considerable.

Various indications of increased enemy activity were noted, particularly on the First Battalion front. Sounds of enemy vehicles and of chopping and digging were heard through-out the day, and at 1120 the Third Battalion O. P. reported a German light tank headed southward. Casualties: 1 wounded and 13 non-battle.

22 October

A Second Battalion patrol engaged six Germans in a fire fight and estimated that four of them were wounded. Two Germans were known to have been wounded by an L Company patrol. Enemy mortar fire continued. Casualties: 2 wounded and 3 non-battle.

The following "Estimate of Enemy Situation" presents a good illustration of the nature of the opposition faced by the Regiment at this time:

HEADQUARTERS FIRST BATTALION
NINTH INFANTRY

APO #2, US Army
22 October 1944

Subject; Estimate of Enemy Situation

To : Commanding Officer
Ninth Infantry
APO #2, US Army

Enemy information gained thus far indicates the probable enemy OPLR runs on a line 053867-05558630-05308615-058855-05858485-05758465-04358470-04508475-044847-04258430.

To substantiate this estimation we have the following factual reports to present. For a more comprehensive understanding of our picture we have partitioned our battalion area into three distinct sectors, namely, left, center and right.

Considering the left sector first, we begin at our left flank boundary where we find an enemy outpost on the hill at 054866. The following activity has been reported on or in the vicinity of this hill.

(1) On Oct. 11 an A Co. patrol observed nine men eating at 056864; (2) On Oct. 18 nine enemy at 05408655 fired on an A Co. patrol and 12 more enemy were seen on the eastern slope of this hill. A dead enemy was found the same day at 05258655; (3) On Oct. 14 an anti-tank gun was observed at 0538665 by the 2nd Battalion; (4) Oct. 19 enemy small arms fire was heard at 056865 by an A Co patrol; (5) On Oct. 20 an A Co patrol reported enemy rifle fire at 05358550.

Tying up with the troops at this strongpoint are the troops (estimated at three platoons) bivouaced in the woods 05608635-061862 where 14 wisps of smoke were seen by a Co A patrol October 15. Confirming this information, on Oct. 16 another A Co patrol counted 12 wisps of smoke in these woods.

Consistent negative reports by patrols indicated that the triangle of ground formed by the two creeks coming to a junction at 055863 is not occupied by the enemy, nor is the wooded part of the ridge running generally from 048861-055862.

However, the road fork at 056862 is covered by a squad of men and a machine gun as indicated by the following reports; (1) On Oct. 9 an A Co. patrol saw enemy chopping wood at 055862; (2) On Oct 12 an A Co patrol saw four enemy along the thin strip of woods at 05608625 and 05608420; (3) On Oct. 13 an A Co patrol

killed or wounded three enemy at 05558630 and saw seven other enemy here. The patrol was fired on by a machine gun at 054862. In addition the patrol heard chopping at 05708625; (4) The ranger patrol of Oct. 17 was fired on by one machine gun, four rifles at 05558615.

From here we move east in our sector and find a reinforced platoon holding down the reverse slope defense along the ridge from 053861-058855. We base this on the following information: (1) On Oct 15 a patrol from A Co saw three enemy at 054861 in dugouts, and three going to a cabin, a CP, at 05308610. The patrol heard voices of 20 or more men and considerable chopping at 05508615. (2) Adding to our information, on Oct. 16, an A Co patrol saw 10 men enter and leave two dugouts in the field at 054861. The patrol also saw machine gun emplacements at 05458615 and 05758595. This patrol also reported a machine gun at 057858, in addition to the other two previously reported. Four more enemy were seen at 056858 by this patrol. (3) Providing information for the fourth known machine gun is the report of Co A's outpost of Oct 10 telling of machine gun fire at 057855.

Further indicating that there are troops dug in on this reverse slope are the following reports: (1) On Oct. 16 Co B reported 10 enemy fires at 058855; (2) On Oct 11 Co B patrol heard eight voices at 056857; (3) Co B patrol on Oct 20 heard 20 or more voices at 056857 and small arms fire from here. An A Co patrol on Oct 20 confirmed this report; (4) A Co. patrol on Oct 20 heard wood chopping at 056857 and a rifle shot from 05408605. In addition they saw five enemy crossing the field at 06058595 and heard more chopping of wood at 05658590; (5) Voices were heard by B Co. patrol on Oct. 10 at 058856.

One strip of the ridge is mined and barbed wire has been installed in some places. On Oct. 16 A Co's outpost saw two enemy laying mines at 057856 and an enemy laying barbed wire on Oct. 19 in the same vicinity, Oct 21, enemy was heard hammering at stakes here.

We now turn to the center of our sector where we have found relatively little enemy activity. We do know the enemy has a part-time listening post at 053854. In two instances we have observed one or two enemy observing here, only to find the wooded draw vacated the following day by patrols.

On Oct 8 a Co B patrol saw three enemy in this draw and on Oct 10 another B Co patrol saw two enemy here. However, on Oct 11 the draw was found not occupied by B Co patrol. On Oct 13 two (2) enemy were again seen in this draw, but again a ranger patrol found no enemy here on Oct 14.

The road at 057850 is used as a supply route for the enemys' reverse slope defense, and traffic has been heard on it at various times. On Oct 8 a B Co patrol heard a heavy truck on this road, while on Oct 10 another B Co patrol reported two trucks and one motorcycle on this road. On Oct 14 B Co again reported traffic on this road.

A B Co patrol which spent the entire days of Oct 15 and 17 on the hill at 054849 reported no activity in the draw at 053854, but saw one man come out of Wascheid and pick vegetables at 056851.

Wascheid is the probable supply point and aid station for the enemy on our left and the communications trench running from Wascheid along the draw at 055847 to 04858470 to supply the enemy on our right. The trench was used by 15 enemy to go to and from Wascheid Oct. 15 and 17. In addition, B Co has seen supplies and litters carried back and forth along this trench every day since we have gone into position.

On our right flank we find another strongpoint around the hill at 046845, manned by a company, less one platoon. An outpost and observation post is set up across the draw at 043846 in the woods at 044844. Five machine guns are known to be at this strong point; one at 04608475 commanding the draw at 046849; second at 045847 commanding the road net at 04708475; a third at 044846 commanding the draw at 044846 commanding a draw at 04358460; and the fourth and fifth at 047844 and 0480-8385 respectively for harrassing fire purposes.

23 October

Reconnaissance patrols were active on both sides. Enemy artillery fire decreased. K Company left Task Force X and returned to the control of the 9th Infantry. The company was placed in reserve.

{ Casualties: 1 wounded
4 non-battle)

24 October

Enemy patrols were very active, and enemy artillery fire, some of it believed to have been from long-range guns, was considerable, although it caused no casualties.

An enemy patrol worked its way to within 25 yards of B Company's first outpost and fired on the contact patrol. The Germans withdrew, however, when brought under fire. Guide lines between B and C Companies were found cut in several places.

At 1245 An A Company patrol engaged in a fire fight with an enemy force, losing one man and capturing two wounded Germans. Both of the prisoners died soon afterward. An L Company patrol killed three Germans and possibly wounded a fourth.

Cannon Company returned to the control of the 9th Infantry.

{ Casualties: 2 wounded
9 non-battle
1 missing)

25 October

Enemy artillery was active. At 1130 27 rounds of artillery and mortar fell in the First Battalion area. At 1700 12 rounds fell in A Company area. The Second Battalion reported four casualties caused by more than 30 rounds received during the period.

At 0940 B Company's No. 2 outpost reported six enemy approaching. A combat patrol was dispatched from C Company, flanking the Germans and killing one of them before the enemy withdrew.

At 1115 a First Battalion reconnaissance patrol was ambushed by a group of six or eight Germans, who opened fire with two machine pistols. The patrol returned the fire, and the enemy withdrew with one man known to have been wounded.

{ Casualties: 1 missing
5 wounded
7 non-battle)

26 October

The Regiment received the severest artillery shelling it had yet encountered in Germany and one of the severest it had encountered since landing in France on 7 June. The fire apparently was timed to catch our troops while they were supposedly congregated for breakfast.

Between 0600 and 0820 approximately 965 rounds of artillery and mortar fell in the Second Battalion area. Two hundred rounds fell in the First Battalion area between 0645 and 0745, of which 100 rounds landed in A Company area between 0645 and 0705. There were no indications that the Germans planned to attack under cover of the artillery, and the shelling made no marked difference in the casualty trend. (See figures below).

The Third Battalion was relieved by the attached 27th Armored Infantry Battalion and went into Division reserve in a rest area near the Division C. P. at St. Vith, Belgium. The Battalion was

billeted with civilians in three villages, Born, Medell and Meyerode.

The 27th Armored Infantry Battalion kept one company in reserve in case of attack anywhere along the regimental front. This company was acquainted with routes into each company area so that it could move swiftly to any point that might be threatened. Casualties: 1 killed, 5 wounded and 10 non-battle. 2 Prisoners taken.

27 October

Enemy artillery fire was again heavy. Between 0650 and 0725 151 rounds of heavy mortar and artillery fire fell in the Second Battalion area. Twelve more rounds fell at 1145 and between 60 and 70 landed in the interval from 1212 to 1227. From 0645 to 1225 85 rounds fell in the First Battalion area. Of these 40 rounds landed in A Company area and around the Battalion Aid Station between 0645 and 0700. Fifteen rockets landed in C Company area at 1225. As a result of the shelling the First Battalion suffered five casualties, including one man killed.

Enemy night patrols were active.

Casualties: 3 killed, 4 wounded and 11 non-battle.

28 October

Enemy artillery continued to fall throughout the regimental sector, most of it landing in the First and Second Battalion areas. Sixty-two rounds of rocket and mortar fire fell in the First Battalion area during the day and 88 Mortar and artillery rounds in the Second Battalion area.

A seven-man enemy patrol ran into a Second Battalion ambush

and the two scouts were fired on and believed killed.

{ Casualties: 1 wounded
5 non-battle

29 October

Enemy artillery lessened considerably. Forty rounds of rocket and mortar fire fell in the First Battalion area and ten in the 27th Armored Infantry Battalion area.

An ambush patrol from B Company fired on four Germans at 1945 and estimated that three of them were wounded.

(Casualties: 5 non-battle)

30 October

Enemy artillery was limited to scattered rounds, most of them landing at night in the First and Second Battalion areas.

A First Battalion patrol engaged six Germans in a fire fight, and all the enemy were hit.

(Casualties: 9 non-battle)

(Prisoners taken: 1)

31 October

No enemy artillery was reported and only scattered rounds of mortar. Enemy activity was generally quiet during the night.

{ Casualties: 1 wounded
2 non-battle)

Total casualties for October were:

Killed	10
Wounded	72
Missing	23
Non-battle	268
	<u>373</u>

Replacements received, all former members of the Regiment:
60 Officers - 371 Enlisted Men.

Twenty-five prisoners were taken during the month

For the Regiment October was a month of readjustment from the hedgerow and house-to-house fighting of former campaigns to the mountain and forest warfare of the Siegfried Line; a month of solidifying positions, training new men, feeling out enemy strength and dispositions, building up supplies and of preparing shelters to protect the troops from cold and rainy weather. October was a month of unusually heavy rains. As the period ended morale was excellent, and the Regiment was ready for whatever mission it was to be given in the drive through Germany.

SECRET

SECRET
Auth: C 2d Inf Div.
Date: 5 December 1944.
Initials: *W.E.*

*OPW
ETO*

HEADQUARTERS NINTH INFANTRY

APO #2, U. S. Army,
5 December 1944.

SUBJECT: Action Against Enemy, Reports
After/After Action Report.

TO : Commanding General,
First United States Army,
APO 230.

THRU : Commanding General,
2d Infantry Division,
APO #2, U. S. Army.

Submitted herewith Action Against Enemy, Reports After/
After Action Reports for the month of November, 1944.

For the Regimental Commander:

W. E. Whitney
W. E. WHITNEY,
Capt, 9th Inf,
Adjutant.

- 3 Incls:
Incl 1 - After Action Report.
Incl 2 - Unit Journal.
Incl 3 - Unit Journal File.

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November 1944

November on the 9th Infantry sector of the Siegfried Line in Germany was a month of contending alternately with deep snow, thick mud and heavy rains and of constant give-and-take war with the enemy, in which the Regiment, as usual, gave more than it took. It was a month that for the older members aroused memories of the 1943 winter maneuvers at Watersmeet, Mich.

The Regiment throughout November continued to hold the sector it had taken over on 4 October in a pine forest along a ridge of the Schnee-Eifel Mountains. This sector at mid-month was a scene that might have been borrowed from a painting of the winter at Valley Forge, a scene of small groups of soldiers huddled around fires that could be built by day, of guards standing at their posts in snow several inches deep, of men chopping logs for their cabins and shelters.

Patrols roamed the forest by night and day attacking German outposts, reconnoitering German positions, ambushing German patrols. Many of these German patrols were clad in white camouflage uniforms. Our patrols experimented with wearing full-length white underwear over regular uniforms. The period in which the ground was covered with snow was from 9 November to 20 November.

While our artillery fire increased steadily in intensity during the month, the 9th Infantry crammed liberal doses of machine gun, mortar and 105mm howitzer harassing fire down the enemy's throat on an expanding daily schedule. For example, the number of .50-calibre machine gun rounds fired on this

schedule increased from 350 on 1 November to 20,000 rounds on 23 November. The number of all types (heavy, light, white phosphorous) of 81mm mortar rounds rose from 100 on 1 November to 559 on 18 November. In the same period the number of 60mm rounds of harassing fire rose from 100 to 313.

Harassing fire was controlled by Regiment. In the case of the .50-calibre machine guns, three firing positions were established at strategic points, ten guns in each, and could be fired in battery. To achieve high concentration of fire all guns of one position fired in battery on the same target. In this manner the cone of dispersion covered a sizable area. When firing positions were active at the same time, targets were selected in such a way that the cones of fire from all positions constituted one continuous concentration. Firing times changed from day to day.

On 11 November the time was 1100 hours. While an Armistice Day artillery barrage thundered overhead, the 9th Infantry saluted the occasion with 20 .50-calibre machine gun rounds per gun, 8 .30-calibre machine gun rounds per gun, 18 81mm rounds per mortar, 27 60mm mortar rounds per mortar and 6 105mm howitzer rounds per gun, all fired on known or suspected targets. The enemy's first reaction was 6 rounds of 80mm mortar fired at A Company. Other rounds of enemy mortar and light artillery landed soon after 1100 hours in the areas of E, C, L and F Companies.

Buzz bombs, first seen over the 9th Infantry sector on 21 October, fell in considerable number in and around the area during November, causing no casualties and only minor damage. One of them crashed on 22 November after passing through a cone of our .50-calibre machine gun harassing fire. On 12 November a trailer and its contents, including four M1 rifles, several pistols and a pair of binoculars, were damaged by a compressed air tank that hurtled to earth behind the 2nd Battalion Headquarters Company mess after the bomb, of which it was a part, had crashed in F Company without exploding. The first of the bombs to land in the area struck near the Aww road 700 yards west of the Regimental C. P. in Schlausenbach at 2305 on 1 November. Glass in the transom over the C. P. door was broken by the blast and windows were blown out in the mess hall situated in a barn nearby.

This was only the beginning of trouble for C. P. personnel, however, as the Germans took to shelling Schlausenbach spasmodically throughout the month principally during the hours of darkness. Five shells landed in the C. P. area in the early hours of 5 November. On the night of 16-17 November 15 shells were fired at the village, and these were followed by another 12 between 2200 and 2300 hours on 17 November. A more severe shelling occurred before dawn on 21 November. Twenty-five 105mm rounds slammed into Schlausenbach, ripping down wires and shattering windows, including those in the C. P., message center, and Colonel C. J. Hirschfelder's house. One shell crashed through the roof

of the house in which a squad of the I. and B. Platoon was quartered and exploded in an unoccupied second-floor bedroom. Men sleeping in an adjoining room were not injured. A short distance away another shell damaged the jeep of the I.P.W. Team. Toward the end of the month a few shells landed in the C.P. area during daylight hours.

None of the shellings caused casualties. Living quarters were sandbagged, and, with an eye to possibly graver measures by the desperate enemy, an air-raid warning siren was installed outside the C.P. on 20 November.

The callousing work the men of the 9th Infantry performed in October building log shelters paid off in November in dividends of comfort and health. When the snow came the Regiment was prepared for it with warm squad shelters, platoon drying-rooms, well protected dugouts, log kitchens and C.Ps.

However, the task of providing comfortable shelters did not end with October. All during November the men worked to improve and rain-proof their shelters and to build new ones where the old had proved inadequate. Chinks between logs were filled with mud. Extensions were built. Walls were lined with cardboard from the kitchen and buttressed by dirt-filled ammunition boxes, and floors and ceilings were made out of salvaged lumber. Endless types of improvised stoves made their appearance, some fashioned out of German helmets and gas mask cans. Some of the cabins were elaborate. The 1st Battalion Ranger platoon, for example, had a cabin with curtains, a hand-painted lamp, rug, table, bunks, even a doorbell - a bicycle bell affixed above the entrance. By the end of the month the number of living quarters completed was 410, of drying-rooms 34.

Not all the work went into sleeping-shelters and drying-rooms. Mess halls and latrines were built. Battalion C. Ps. were enlaged by the addition of log pavilions at the front of the pillboxes. F Company constructed a new outpost line. Throughout the Regimental sector new fire lanes were cut and old ones cleared of fallen branches. To protect vehicles from shrapnel "jeep stalls" were constructed - three-sided roodless garages. And as a safeguard against immersion foot ("trench foot") wood platforms were built in guard posts. Companies were directed to have dry socks available for every man at all times.

The work of maintaining supply roads went on during probably every daylight hour of the month. Snow and rain made some of the roads almost impassable. During the thaw that set in on 17 November, to cite one case, stretches of the supply road leading to K Company were under water deep enough to cover the wheels of a jeep. In some places, notably the 1st Battalion, new roads had to be built as substitutes for old ones on which vehicles could be seen by the enemy since the leaves had fallen.

The constant work of making the forest habitable imposed manpower problems on company commanders, who were faced every day with the task of striking a balance between men going on work details, men going on pass or to the showers or on sick call and men required for security.

Opposing the 9th Infantry during November were the 294th Regiment and the 6th and 7th Companies of the 295th Regiment of the 18th Volks Grenadier Division. Included among these troops were former Navy personnel and soldiers transferred from Denmark.

Life in the 9th Infantry in November, however, was not all work and war. The Regiment continued to send men to Paris on furlough and to rest camps. In addition to the 2nd Division rest camp opened in Vielselm, Belgium, in October, another and more luxurious one was opened in November by VIII Corps in a chateau at Arlon, Belgium. Every 48 hours the Regiment sent 135 men and 6 officers to Vielselm and 15 men and one officer to Arlon. Every fourth day 22 men and 2 officers left for Paris. Moving pictures and showers remained part of the daily schedule. P. L. rations were more liberal in November than in the preceding month; there was no recurrence of the October cigarette shortage. And Thanksgiving, 23 November, was observed in the best tradition possible under the circumstances, with 4,847 pounds of turkey - one and a half pounds a man - and cranberry sauce.

The day-by-day after-action report follows:

1 November

As the period began the 3d Battalion, after a week in Division reserve, relieved the 2d Battalion, which, in turn, reverted to Division reserve. This placed the 3d Battalion, originally on the right of the Regimental sector, on the left, with the 1st Battalion in the center and the 27th Armored Infantry Battalion, temporarily under control of the 9th Infantry, on the right.

Thirty-one rounds of artillery fell in the 2nd Battalion area between 0600 and 0640. At 2305 a buzz bomb landed 700 yards west of the Regimental C. P. Casualties: 1 Wounded, 7 non-battle. Replacements: 3

2 November

Enemy artillery was light, with only 6 rounds reported. Fifty-four rounds of enemy mortar fire landed in the 3d Battalion between 2140 and 2218.

Casualties: 1 wounded; 5 non-battle.

Replacements: 10

Prisoners taken: 2

3 November

Enemy activity was light. Only scattered mortar fire was received.

Casualties: 7 non-battle.

Replacements: 24

4 November

Enemy activity was limited to light artillery and mortar fire.

Casualties: 5 non-battle.

Replacements: 7

Prisoners taken: 1

5 November

Enemy artillery was fairly active. Ten shells landed in the 1st Battalion and 5 in the Regimental C. P. area.

Casualties: 13 non-battle.

Replacements: 3

6 November

Thirty-six rockets landed to the right of C Company and in a draw between C Company and the 27th Armored Battalion.

Casualties: 1 wounded; 5 non-battle.

Replacements: 10

7 November

A four-man enemy patrol approached the first outpost of A Company, but retired when fired on. Two Germans were believed to have been wounded. Thirty-seven rounds of mortar and artillery fell in the 3rd Battalion, 6 in the 1st Battalion.

Casualties: 4 wounded; 7 non-battle.

Prisoners taken: 4

8 November

Enemy patrols in front of A and C Companies were turned back by our mortar fire. Fifty-eight rounds of enemy mortar and artillery fell in and to the left of the 1st Battalion area.

The original alignment on the Regimental sector was restored as the 2nd Battalion returned from Division reserve and the 27th Armored Battalion withdrew to another sector. The 2nd Battalion was now on the left, the 1st Battalion in the center and the 3rd Battalion on the right. As was the case when the 27th Battalion was on the right, the 3rd Battalion held one Company - K - out of line as a counterattack force under the command of Regiment. K Company was ordered to be in readiness to move to any part of the Regimental front threatened by enemy attack.

Casualties: 5 non-battle.

Replacements: 15.

9 November

Action was limited to patrolling and light enemy artillery.

Casualties: 11 wounded; 12 non-battle.

Replacements: 3.

10 November

Forty-one rounds of enemy mortar landed in the 1st Battalion, 10 rounds in the 2nd Battalion.

Casualties: 1 wounded; 11 non-battle.

Replacements: 12

Prisoners taken: 1

11 November

At 1100 hours Regimental organic weapons, supported by Tank Destroyer weapons, fired an Armistice Day salvo. All fire was directed against known or suspected targets. The enemy returned the fire. During the day 66 rounds of mortar fire landed in A Company, 57 in E and F Companies, and 25 near L Company.

Casualties: 23 non-battle.

Replacements: 1

12 November

Our mortars fired on three enemy soldiers approaching A Company. One of the enemy was wounded and captured, the others fled. Eighteen rounds of enemy mortar fire landed in G Company, 10 in I and L Companies, 20 of them near L Company C. P., and 30 between C and L Companies.

Casualties: 13 non-battle.

Replacements: 16

Prisoners taken: 1

13 November

At 0400 hours a small enemy patrol was reported 25 yards in front of B Company outposts. Our machine guns opened fire. The Germans answered it with 11 handgrenades and 20 mortar rounds, and then withdrew. Sixteen enemy mortar rounds landed in front of E and F Companies.

Casualties: 2 Killed, 11 wounded, 10 non-battle.

Replacements: 3.

Prisoners taken: 1.

14 November

Enemy activity was limited to light artillery fire.

Casualties: 5 non-battle.

Replacements: 6.

15 November

The 1st Battalion Ranger patrol ambushed an eight-man enemy patrol and killed the leader.

Casualties: 13 non-battle.

Replacements: 57.

16 November

The 2nd Battalion Ranger patrol encountered an enemy outpost and killed one of the men in it. A patrol from B Company wounded one of the enemy in a fire fight. Fifteen artillery shells landed in the Regimental C. P. area between 162300 and 170246.

Casualties: 9 non-battle.

Replacements: 70

Prisoners taken: 1.

17 November

The 2nd Battalion Ranger platoon suffered three casualties from enemy mines. Enemy mortar fire increased, with 37 rounds falling in the 2nd Battalion, 19 in the 1st Battalion and 2 in the 3rd Battalion. Twelve rounds of enemy artillery landed in the Regimental C.P. between 2200 and 2300 hours. Five 88mm rounds burst in front of the 3rd Battalion C. P. at 2245.

In front of the 3rd Battalion C. P. at 1230 the enemy made a propoganda broadcast. The answer: an artillery barrage.

Casualties: 3 wounded, 15 non-battle.

Replacements: 4.

18 November

Enemy mortar and artillery fire was considerable. One hundred and thirteen rounds fell to the right of the 1st Battalion around 1100 hours. Twenty artillery and mortar rounds fell in the 3rd Battalion, and 12 rounds of heavy artillery landed in the 1st Battalion. During hours of darkness the 1st and 3rd Battalions received harassing machine gun fire.

Casualties: 3 wounded, 15 non-battle.

Replacements: 3.

Prisoners taken: 1.

19 November

Enemy harassing mortar and artillery fire continued. Over a 24-hour period the 2nd Battalion received 54 mortar and 21 artillery rounds. Two 12-round concentrations fell in C Company, and 1 round of heavy artillery fell in A Company. Fifty-six rounds fell in and around the 3rd Battalion. No casualties were

caused by this fire.

The 1st Battalion Ranger Patrol killed one German and silenced an enemy machine gun. Three enemy outposts were located by the 3rd Battalion Ranger patrol.

Casualties: 2 wounded, 20 non-battle.

Replacements: 7.

20 November

New evidence of a profusion of German mine and booby traps was discovered by a 3d Battalion Ranger patrol. The patrol, after penetrating the first belt of minefields, encountered other minefields beyond, consisting of S-Mines, Schu mines, egg grenades and various kinds of booby traps. Said the S-2 report: "The patrol ran into a maze of booby traps and mines, with S-mines predominating. They were spaced about every five yards, although no definite pattern could be determined." When the patrol was returning from its mission, one of the men was wounded by a Schu mine.

Thirty-three rounds of artillery and 28 rounds of mortar fell in the Regimental sector during the period.

Casualties: 1 wounded, 9 non-battle.

Replacements: 16.

21 November

Between 0331 and 0647 25 105mm rounds fell near the Regimental C. P. in Schlausenbach, causing minor damage but no casualties. Between 1545 and 1600 64 rounds of heavy mortar and 5 rounds of artillery fire fell in the 1st Battalion area and 37 rounds of heavy mortar in the 2nd Battalion area. Three casualties were caused by this shelling.

Casualties: Wounded, 11 Non-Battle.

Replacements: 4.

22 November

A 1st Battalion Ranger patrol encountered a four-man enemy patrol at 1000 hours, and in an ensuing fire fight, two of the Germans were believed to have been wounded.

Four unidentified planes were heard circling over the front-line area of the 1st and 3rd Battalions.

During the period 40 rounds of enemy artillery and 136 rounds of mortar fell in the Regimental sector.

Casualties: 1 Wounded, 13 Non-Battle.

Replacements: 35.

23 November

Enemy artillery and patrols were active. At 1825 hours an enemy patrol was discovered approaching the No. 1 outpost of A Company. Fired on from the No. 2 outpost, the patrol began moving toward outpost No. 3. A fire fight, in which one of our men was wounded, ensued, but the patrol withdrew after A Company mortars opened fire.

Casualties: 3 Wounded, 11 Non-Battle.

Replacements: 4.

24 November

Enemy activity was light. German artillery in the Regimental Sector consisted of 13 rounds - 9 in the 1st Battalion area, 3 in the 3rd Battalion and 1 between the 2nd Battalion and the Regimental C.P. Three unidentified aircraft were reported over the front lines during the night.

Casualties: 4 wounded, 8 Non*Battle.

Replacements: 7.

25 November

A 2nd Battalion Ranger patrol was believed to have killed a German surprised near the enemy lines. A 3d Battalion Ranger patrol encountered two Germans and pursued them in hope of locating a gap in the enemy minefields.

Thirty-four rounds of enemy artillery and 86 rounds of mortar fell in the Regimental area during the period.

Casualties: 2 wounded, 12 non-battle.

Replacements: 10

26 November

A 2nd Battalion Ranger patrol fired on two Germans. Results of the fire could not be determined. Third Battalion Ranger patrols found many anti-personnel mines and pull-type booby traps, some of which were found on small pine trees. Enemy artillery consisted of 72 rounds, more than half of them falling in the 3d Battalion area.

Casualties: 2 wounded, 14 non-battle.

Replacements: 9

27 November

S-2 reported: "Enemy shelling for the period was the lightest yet encountered, with 8 rounds of medium mortar falling in the rear of F Company at 0940 and 1 round of light artillery in the vicinity of the Regimental C. P. at 1420."

Loud Screaming was heard on the German line when our mortars fired on known enemy positions. Unidentified planes circled over the 3d Battalion.

Casualties: 1 wounded, 8 non-battle.

Replacements: 1

23 November

One of the most unusual patrol incidents of the Regiment's campaign in Germany up to this time occurred on this day. The patrol involved was a 3d Battalion Ranger patrol consisting of 2nd Lt. Paul A. Brooks, of K Company, and 15 men. On approaching the German lines, members of the patrol spotted two dugouts behind concertina wire and while others covered them, five went through the wire to investigate. Pvt 1st Class Billie B. Hill, of K Company, looked in the first dugout, and finding it empty, went on to the second. Just as he reached it he saw a German running away through the woods. Pfc. Hill fired at him with a sub-machine gun, and the German fell dead. The sound of the shots scarcely had died away, however, when a rifle bullet whined out of the second dugout almost beneath Pfc. Hill's feet, Lt. Brooks fired into the dugout with a sub-machine gun. There was a pause, then a rifle was tossed out as a gesture of surrender, and a German crawled out after it. Members of the patrol surrounded him to take him back to the American lines. When the group was passing through the concertina, the German suddenly shouted, "Mines, mines!" and reached down and pulled a wire. The air was shattered by an explosion.

Lt. Brooks was struck in the foot. Pfc. Aurelius A. Arquin, of K Company, fell with shrapnel in his leg, and Pfc. Hill's clothes were torn by the blast. The German moaned. He had been blown five feet in the air and landed on his head. In another moment he was dead. His detonating the mine may have been an act of suicide or panic. Lt. Brooks and members of the patrol were of the opinion that the German had decided to risk his life

life on a desperate gamble to destroy his captors and escape.

Lt. Brooks was not hurt seriously enough to be evacuated.

A 2nd Battalion Ranger patrol fired on four Germans, inflicting one casualty.

Enemy artillery fire continued light.

Casualties: 2 wounded, 6 non-battle.

Replacements: 23.

29 November

A 2nd Battalion Ranger patrol shot a German outguard.

More enemy mines were discovered. Enemy artillery was light.

Casualties: 1 wounded, 5 non-battle.

Replacements: 1.

30 November

Enemy activity was light. No artillery fire was received and only 6 mortar rounds, all in front of F Company.

Casualties: 7 non-battle.

Replacements: 9.

Prisoners taken: 2.

Total casualties for November were:

Killed	Wounded	Non-battle
2	56	304

The month's replacement total was 373. Fourteen prisoners were taken.

As the month ended there was evidence of a thinning of enemy forces opposing the 9th Infantry. The prisoners taken on 30 November said that the enemy sector previously held by the 2nd Battalion of the 294th Volks Grenadier Regiment was now held by the 7th Company of the 295th V. G. R., while the 6th Company, 295th V. G. R., they believed, had been spread out to cover its own front and the front previously held by the 7th Company.

ORIGINAL
December 1944

~~SECRET~~

: Auto: CG, 2d Inf Div
: Date: 5 January 1945
: Initials:

HEADQUARTERS NINTH INFANTRY

APO 2, U. S. Army,
5 January 1945.

Subject: Action Against Enemy, Reports
After/After Action Report.
To: Commanding General,
First United States Army,
APO 230.
Thru: Commanding General,
2d Infantry Division,
APO 2, U. S. Army.

Submitted herewith Action Against Enemy, Reports
After/After Action Reports for the month of December 1944.

For the Regimental Commander:

LYNN O. LACY,
CWO, USA, 9th Infantry,
Assistant Adjutant.

- 3 Incls:
- Incl 1 - After Action Report (quadruple)
- Incl 2 - Unit Journal (1 copy)
- Incl 3 - Unit Journal File.

302-INF(9)-0.5

CLASSIFICATION CHANGED TO:
CANCELLED
BY AUTHORITY OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL.
[Signature]
COMBINING COMMITTEE 2 Mar 44

killed during the period, two by a 2d Battalion Ranger patrol and two by a 3d Battalion Ranger patrol, which suffered one casualty.

Casualties: 1 wounded, 7 non-battle.

Replacements: 11.

Prisoners taken: 2

3 December

A 2d Battalion Ranger patrol shot a German guard at an outpost. During the period 11 rounds of artillery and 34 rounds of mortar fell in the Regimental area.

Casualties: 6 non-battle.

Replacements: 8.

4 December

Enemy artillery was the heaviest in several days with 20 rounds falling in the 1st Battalion, causing one casualty, and 11 rounds in the 2d Battalion.

Casualties: 1 wounded, 5 non-battle.

Replacements: 6.

5 December

Activity was limited to patrolling and harassing fire. No enemy artillery or mortar rounds fell in the Regimental area during the period.

Casualties: 5 non-battle.

Replacements: 27.

6 December

A 3d Battalion Ranger platoon cleared two small enemy minefields. Beyond them the patrol discovered concertina wire with 13 s-mines attached. All were removed but two, and these exploded. Three

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Germans, warned by the sound, opened fire, and the patrol withdrew. Again enemy artillery and mortars were silent.

Casualties: 5 non-battle.

Replacements: 10.

7 December

Our patrols were active. Nineteen rounds of enemy mortar fell in the 2nd and 3rd Battalion areas.

Casualties: 16 non-battle.

Replacements: 5.

8 December

Patrols had a busy day. A 2nd Battalion Ranger patrol engaged in a fire fight with an eight-man German patrol and inflicted one casualty. Another patrol, observing four Germans on the other side of some concertina wire, opened fire, hitting three of them. A 3rd Battalion patrol shot a German in an outpost. American artillery fired on a work detail of 15 or 20 Germans.

Casualties: 15 non-battle.

9 December

A 2nd Battalion Ranger patrol drew sharp fire in an unsuccessful pursuit of a German ^{patrol} observed in the course of its movements. Another 2nd Battalion Ranger patrol was fired on, this time by six Germans.

Casualties: 8 non-battle.

Replacements: 18.

- 4 -

On 10 December, 67 days after it had taken up its position in the Schnee-Eifel, the 9th Infantry was relieved by the 422nd Infantry, 106th Division, and began moving north for an attack, scheduled for 13 December, on a sector of the Siegfried Line near F. Wehlerscheid, Germany.

The first stage of the move, made on 10 December, was to Weywertz, Belgium, a distance of about 25 miles. The 1st Battalion, still the rest area, moved independently, leaving Steinebruch at about 1330 hours and closing in before dark at its bivouac area near Weywertz. The rest of the Regiment, plus the 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry, travelling in 350 vehicles in three serials, was unable to begin moving from Schlausenbach until 1600 hours. The relief was not completed until 2045 - 10 December 1944. The delay was caused by a heavy snowfall that left the roads in extremely bad condition. These conditions slowed the Regiment's movement to Weywertz. Foremost elements began closing in after dark, but it was not until around 0100 hours on 11 December that all units were in. The troops were bivouacked in shelter tents in the snow.

(10 December casualties- 3 wounded - before the Regiment was replaced
13 non-battle.

(Replacements: 3)

On 11 December the Regiment remained at Weywertz continuing preparation for the forthcoming offensive.

(Casualties: 3 non-battle)

(Replacements: 1)

The next stage of advance to forward assembly areas was covered on 12 December when the Regiment moved several miles east from Weywerts to Roherath, Belgium, near the German border. The move, in organic transportation plus transportation from 1 QM Truck Co. began at 0900 hours. The Regimental C.P. was established in Roherath. The battalions, all of which closed in before dark, detrucked in Roherath and marched to the assembly areas in the Monschau forest north of Roherath, between the town and the line of departure.

(12 December casualties: 23 non-battle)

(Replacements: 1)

On 13 December the 9th Infantry began its first offensive operation since the Battle of Brest in September. The plan was to surprise the Germans by attacking through positions held by 2d Ren Trp and the 99th Infantry Division and overrunning a Siegfried Line stronghold of many pillboxes guarding a road net at F. Wehlerscheid. It was planned that the 2nd Division ultimately should seize the roads behind the pillbox line for further exploitation by armored units. The 9th Infantry's mission was to swing left capture the town of ROHREN and to trap German troops holding the sector of the line further north.

At 0830 the 9th Infantry opened the attack, striking in a northeasterly direction astride a road that led through the German positions. The line of departure was 50 yards beyond the farthest outpost of the 99th Division. The 1st Battalion moved through woods to the west of the road. The 2nd Battalion moved through woods to the east of the road. The 3rd Battalion at the outset was in reserve, following the 2nd Battalion

The account of the battle for the Siegfried line positions and of the subsequent withdrawal and defensive operation necessitated by the German offensive to the south is here broken down into three parts, dealing, respectively, with the action of the three battalions.

I - 1st Battalion

By dark on the evening of 12 December 1944, the 1st Battalion, was in a forward assembly area about 2000 yards north of ROCHERATH and had completed plans for a daylight attack to be made as part of the 9th Infantry Regiment at 0830 on 13 December. The mission of the 1st Battalion was to move cross-country west of the main road leading from ROCHERATH to the road junction 124002, vicinity of F. WEHLERSCHEID and to seize and secure the road leading northwest therefrom, 400 yards to the northwest. In that this main road paralleling the advance of the Battalion was known to be heavily mined and road-blocked in numerous places, the move was planned to stay off the road, to avoid all mined areas, and to carry on individuals necessary ammunition and antitank mines to secure the Battalion for a 24 hour period without resupply. In consequence details were completed in the assembly area for the carry of much additional mortar ammunition, antitank mines, demolitions and extra supply of signal means necessary to the attack.

At 0730, 13 December the Battalion moved out cross-country with the Battalion in closed formation, two rifle companies up. After a most taxing march made doubly difficult on the men because of the passage through dense forests and knee-deep marshes, the Battalion successfully arrived in the area 124996, about 600 yards cross-country southwest of its objective. Up until this time (about 1330 hours), the movement of the Battalion had been made with surprise. Though small arms fire and heavy mortar fires had from time to time been received on the route of march, it is believed that the dense woods concealed the size of the movement involved, and that the enemy fired only on what he believed to be the usual heavy patrols in the area. However, upon arrival at this point observation across the large clearing west and south of F WEHLERSCHEID gave away the element of surprise hitherto in our favor. Heavy mortar fire and direct fire weapons came into the Battalion lead-

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ing elements in great volume, and though the position because of its exposed nature became almost untenable, plans were continued in this area for a continuation of the move.

The road leading just south and west from F. WEHLERSCHEID, along which leading elements were lined, was discovered to be heavily mined. Probing across the road resulted in ten casualties in "C" Company from shoe and "S" mines. However, mine sweepers and personnel from the Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon were moved forward, and still under heavy fire moved across the road and cut lanes in the mine fields as far as 400 yards north of the road. While this work was in progress and though the position was almost untenable, the Battalion closed in, prepared for counter-attack and covered the action of the mine clearing detail north. Through the Battalion artillery liaison, heavy fires were massed in the F. WEHLERSCHEID area and in and around the mine clearing detail. Though these fires were unobserved because of the nature of the terrain and poor visibility, their volume definitely curtailed enemy fires and allowed the Battalion to continued its operation.

By 1530 the mine clearing details had cleared lanes well along the route of march but because it was getting dark, the Regimental Commander directed that the Battalion tuck in, give no ground, and prepare to continue operation on the following day. At 1630 a few riflemen endeavored to counterattack the right flank from the east under cover of intense mortar fire. This attack was repulsed by 1715.

The night of 13-14 December proved a perfect hell for the men, having for protection against the wintry cold only that which they had carried with them. Subjected to continuous mortar and direct fire artillery during the night, the Battalion held its ground and completed plans to resume the attack at 0830, 14 Dec.

The combination of heavy loads and a cross-country march through unavoidable marsh ground had taken its toll. By daylight on the 14th the Battalion additionally had lost 4 killed and 97 wounded because of the heavy fire and Anti-personal mines.

Plans for the continuation of the attack at 0830, 14 December encompassed the movement of a rifle company north of the road with attachments of the Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon sufficient to clear further mine fields and out the discovered concertina wire under the protection of the rifle company; and the subsequent movement of the rest of the Battalion in column of companies through these approaches. The plan was carried out slowly but according to plan, with "B" Company covering the breaching made by its own teams and those furnished by the Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon. By 1200 it was felt that the necessary breachings had been made and a careful preparatory fire plan was put into effect to cover the movement of the rest of the Battalion. Heavy supporting fires were placed on pillboxes in the F. WEHLERSCHIED area, and the area was continuously smoked to cover the Battalion as it came up for the attack. Under the cover of this preparatory fire, "A" Company moved through "B" Company into position to jump. However, "A" Company's movement north of the road and into position was subjected nevertheless to the most intense mortar and automatic weapons fire. Regardless, the Battalion moved across its line of departure and moved about 150 yards towards its objective. Here, however, undiscovered concertina, combined with heavy fire, interrupted the progress of the attack. Planned fires for the conduct of the attack came in magnificently and were effective to such an extent that without them leading elements would have been blasted to pieces. Under these fires, wire cutter teams from "A" Company began to neutralize the newly found wire, but at this time the Regimental Commander, ordered the Battalion Commander to move back to his positions as of daylight and await further orders. The same artillery which had been ordered to cover the Battalion moving in, were again called for to cover the Battalion as it withdrew.

Their effectiveness saved the Battalion from disaster and under them the Battalion returned to its position and regrouped slightly to the southwest. At this place orders were received from the Regimental Commander to dig in, hold the ground and to plan careful patrolling for the following day, while air support softened up the objective.

The day of the 14th proved even harder than the previous 24-hour period, and the end of the day found the men battered, weary and cold. However, during the day, a supply road had been opened up to the Battalion and thanks to the superior supply organization within the Regiment, the night was eased by a hot meal and blankets.

The day of the 15th was spent in patrolling and further probing while awaiting air support which did not materialize because of the very bitter weather and poor visibility. Just before midnight on the 15th the Battalion Commander was ordered to be prepared to make a reconnaissance in force (not to exceed one rifle company) over the same ground over which the attack had previously progressed. These orders were amended after midnight, and the Battalion was ordered to be prepared to exploit a well-conceived and daring infiltration into the enemy position which was then being conducted by the 2nd Battalion of the 9th Infantry on the right. The 2nd Battalion having started just after dark on the evening of the 15th, was making headway into the enemy position at such places that it was expected to relieve pressure on our front. Their infiltration met with well-deserved success and under cover of the 2nd Battalion, the 3rd Battalion was passed through to secure ground as far as F. WEHLERSCHEID. In consequence the 1st Battalion moved at first light by the most direct route to its objective and took up positions, facing north and northwest around F. WEHLERSCHEID. The only planning that was necessary for the successful completion of the operation was the clearing of further lanes through mine fields, and the blowing of a

single enemy-held pillbox. "B" Company led the way on this move, and in that their movement was over exposed ground that had been violently contested up until this time, it was made with trepidation but with great gallantry. Four casualties were incurred in the move—one by small arms fire and three by anti-personnel mines. However, the Battalion closed into position successfully by 1015 hours, consolidated and prepared for counterattack.

It was later learned by captured PW's that the heavily organized enemy position seized by the Regiment in the moves narrated, was permitted because of the disorganization of the enemy personnel therein incident to a current relief of the enemy units in the position. However, enemy reaction came swiftly, and just at dark on the evening of the 16th most violent attempts at infiltration into the position became apparent all along the line. Thanks to carefully planned artillery fires, particularly concentration 143A-144 (which will always be remembered), the counterattack, estimated in strength at 100 [and later confirmed by a captured PW], was repulsed about 2245, 16 December. All during the night the Battalion sector was subjected to heavy mortar and direct fire from unobserved guns. However, the Battalion was well dug in, having utilized the superior enemy fortifications and trenches and only 18 casualties resulted in the occupation of the position. However, 49 men were evacuated because of bad feet brought on by the ordeals of the operations to date; and on the morning of the 17th, the fighting strength of the Battalion was approximately 22 officers and 387 enlisted men, having dwindled from a jump-off strength on the 13th of 35 officers and 678 enlisted men. By this time the Battalion was tired and had been continuously under fire for 96 hours. By this time too, the chain of command had been greatly weakened, the Battalion having lost two company commanders in "A" Company, one company commander in "B" Company, one company commander in "C" Company, and numerous platoon leaders, platoon sergeants and key men.

At 0955, 17 December, completely unexpected orders to evacuate the position so dearly won and withdraw in the direction of initial forward assembly areas

of 12 December were given to the Battalion Commander, those orders subsequently learned being incident to and required by the German counter-offensive which began on 16 Dec. The orders to the Battalion Commander included instructions as to clearing the area with all fighting gear and every possible bit of equipment and were augmented by the knowledge that further instructions relative to the future mission of the Battalion would be given later in our progress to the south. The problem of breaking contact and withdrawing over the route which the Battalion had come was made difficult by the fact the Battalion was still in continuous contact with the enemy had been since dark on the evening of the 16th. This problem however, was solved again happily by continuous normal barrage called to cover the withdrawal; and the movement of two reinforced rifle platoons through three consecutive delaying positions on the tail of the Battalion column. Company Commanders exercised the circumstances, almost unbelievable control both in the movement of their men and the taking with them of all equipment and transportation. The Battalion regrouped in the low ground about 1200 yards southwest of F. WEHLERSCHIED by 1500 and proceeded south on the main road toward ROCHERATH.

DEC 17 About 4000 yards north of ROCHERATH the Division Commander personally intercepted the Battalion Commander and gave him instructions as to his future mission, apprising him of as much information available regarding the German counter-offensive and the imminent threat to the Division's main supply road running north of ROCHERATH and along which the Division still had elements of another infantry regiment and much road-bound materiel. He directed the Battalion Commander to move his Battalion and to seize and secure the road net northeast of ROCHERATH, vicinity 054994, against enemy infiltration from the east. He directed the Battalion Commander to take command of all friendly troops in the area that might be found withdrawing from the east toward this road crossing and to stabilize a line to protect the east flank of the Division. He stated that he had previously committed at this same cross road Company K, 9th Infantry, the 1st platoon of Company M, and the Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon of the 3rd Battalion which was moving with them.

He also stated that elements of the 23rd Infantry and of the 393rd Infantry would be in the area, falling back against the German thrust in this area and to stabilize them if possible. The Commanding General punctuated the urgency of this situation by personally leading leading elements of the Battalion in commandeered $2\frac{1}{2}$ ton vehicles and leading them within 1000 yards of the road net position.

DEC, 17th 1957

Utilizing the transportation at hand, the Battalion moved to its objective and closed by 1700 hours. The leading elements of the Battalion, "B" and "A" Companies arrived just in time to get in position astride the road-net facing southeast before darkness fell. Contact with "K" Company was improved to give depth to the Battalion position. "C" Company whose effectives numbered less than 50 men was moved into a reserve position on the high ground on the north flank. A Detachment of the 644th TD Battalion was located in the area with three guns in positions to cover the cross roads. The Commanding Officer this detachment was contacted by the Battalion Commander 1st Battalion, ordered under command and told to remain in position until further orders. All of this time the Battalion was moving in and consolidating positions in the midst of a scene of wild confusion. Unobserved, but heavy small arms and machine gun fire was coming from the wooded high ground to the east and friendly vehicles and personnel out of control and unable to be contacted in many cases were streaming to the west. Against this demoralizing picture the Battalion moved in with orders to hold. Heavy machine guns were emplaced on the high ground and along the road net to cover the routes of enemy foot troops along the main road running to the southeast. In that the Battalion had cleared its original area in the morning, and had had of necessity to leave in position all of its anti-tank mines, it was without same. However, the Detachment Commander of the 644th TD Battalion had some with him and arrangement were completed for him to hand carry them to the cross roads area to be picked up by "B" Company.

Just at dark with the companies just in position, the Battalion Commander contacted the Battalion Commander of the 3rd Battalion, 23rd Infantry and made plans for him to extend the right flank along the high ground leading toward ROCHERATH just as soon as he was able to regain control of his scattered elements which were falling back to the west in front of the German attack. At that time his Commanding Officer of "I" Company, 23rd Infantry arrived without men and was shown on the ground where he would place his company to extend the right flank of the Battalion position, if and when he was able to gain control.

At 1800 a meeting was held at the Battalion CP, 300 yards northwest of the road net at which all company commanders were given further instructions and information as to the situation. Everything indicated how critical the situation was, and company commanders were informed to again imbue their men with the absolute necessity of holding the position. Measures were taken to counteract an immediate attack by the enemy on the position. The Company Commander of "B" Company made his arrangements with the Detachment Commander of the 644th TD Battalion to get his mines in position in front of him. The Battalion artillery liaison officer having worked feverishly on his communications, which had been out of contact through faulty action for some two hours regained communication and planned his defensive fires along the roads in front of the position. These counter measures had no longer been placed in effect, and the company commanders returned to their companies, than with dark came the first enemy attack. Communications to the companies fortunately worked, and in that the night was dark and mirky, without communication the Battalion would have been blind. A report to the Battalion that three tanks and infantrymen had passed through the position brought immediate response by our artillery which opened fire on them on the road toward ROCHERATH. The Company Commander of "A" Company observing this movement and registering the fires, reported one tank knocked out by artillery fire and

numerous casualties and screaming among the enemy. This road to ROCHERATH was then continuously interdicted for the remainder of the night, and after this first infiltration "B" Company mined the road between the Battalion and the rearward enemy elements. (For account of action by "B" Company, see attached statement dictated by Lt. Allen). Artillery fires, continuous until 2330, in front of the position, on the flanks of the position, on the roads leading toward ROCHERATH, and in the wooded high ground to the southwest, definitely broke up the strong armored forces coming in. Prior to a lull, about midnight, our bazooka teams and mines and the real gallantry of the men defending the cross road, coupled with the continuous and effective artillery fire had accounted for at least five tanks and an undetermined number of foot troops following. During all this period, the Battalion position was subjected to direct fire from tanks and machine gun fire from the southeast. Shortly after midnight "C" Company was ordered from its position on the flank to move 1000 yards to the southwest and come in on the ROCHERATH road from the north, attacking by fire any enemy which had infiltrated along the road behind tanks. This movement was carried out according to plan and "C" Company engaged in a fire fight on the right flank of the Battalion. The situation was confused and the night dark, but they accounted for some Germans and captured one. In the meantime, a company of the 38th Infantry had been ordered in the same position to guard against infiltration and in consequence "C" Company was withdrawn and moved to its original position reinforcing the left flank.

The remainder of the night was spent in re-establishing control and the evacuation of casualties, resupply of ammunition, and continuous artillery fires along the roads and in the suspected enemy assembly areas on the high ground to the southeast. During the night ^a wire line had been laid to a Battalion CP of the 38th Infantry where it was possible to relay messages to the commanding Officer of the 38th Infantry to whom we had been attached. From him the Battalion Commander received further instructions as to the urgency

of the situation and his effort to regroup and form a line through which the 1st Battalion could withdraw sometime the following day. However, orders were clear as they had been from the Division Commander, and they were that the Battalion would maintain its position until ordered otherwise.

DEC 18 At 0645 the full force of the German attack broke on the Battalion position. During the night several tanks had infiltrated within direct fire distance and these began to fire to cover the movement of armored elements and infantry behind them. In the early morning hours before daylight the men of the Battalion engaged the tanks and infantry with every means at hand. Continuous artillery fires brought down on call by the unit, on their own positions, in order to hit tanks; as well as continuous fires to the front, to the flanks delayed and continued to delay the movement of the enemy through the crossroads. A pitched battle continued to rage until about 1100 hours. Conditions of visibility were almost nil, and communications with the 38th Infantry were spasmodic and difficult. At 1000 hours, however, the Battalion Commander did receive word from the Commanding Officer 38th Infantry in formulate plans to withdraw through the 2nd Battalion of the 38th contingent upon their being able to organize a line west of the 1st Battalion position. Orders were specific, however, that unless the 38th Infantry could form such a line, the 1st Battalion would remain in position and hold; and withdrawal of the Battalion would only be accomplished only with permission of the Commanding Officer, 2d Battalion, 38th Infantry. He, in the meantime, was doing everything humanly possible to get his own troops in position. He informed the Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry, that he would be in position to cover him by 1200 hours, and to move plans accordingly.

DEC 18 By 1100 hours the situation of the 1st Battalion was desperate and the Battalion Commander relayed to the Commanding Officer, 38th Infantry the word that he could not extricate any of his Battalion without help of some tanks or

TD's miraculously in answer of this call, one platoon of Company "A", 741st Tank Battalion arrived on the scene. By this time the positions of "K" Company and "A" Company were over-run both by tanks and infantry and it was seen that the only chance of getting any of them out was under the cover of a counterattack. A counterattack with two tanks enveloping each flank of the cross-road position was quickly decided upon, movement into position and subsequent movement of the tanks to be covered by all possible artillery fires in front of the position. These fires began at 1115 and continued until 1145 at which time the tanks moved in. Two additional Tiger tanks were accounted for and under this counterattack what could move of the Battalion began to withdraw. The tanks withdrew, re-assembled and attacked again at 1230. The withdrawal combined with the second attack and was effected, all things considered with unbelievable control. "K" Company and "A" Company positions had been so badly over-run that there was little hope of salvaging anything but remnants and break-aways. As the Battalion withdrew its position was being turned both on the road and left flank by strong enemy troops, and though the withdrawal was covered by the tank platoon, the rear elements were in almost continuous contact as they moved back. The Battalion Commander and S-3 were the last to leave the area and "Heinies" were literally screaming "Hände Hoch" from the hedgerows as they withdrew.

The Battalion passed through elements of the 2nd Battalion, 38th Infantry and moved to the west where it reassembled on the high ground 2000 yards north of ROCHERATH and west of the main road leading north from there. There the Battalion remained for an hour and a half while the straggler line which had been placed on the road picked up stragglers and moved them to the Battalion area.

The Battalion Commander had been given orders by the Commanding Officer 38th Infantry to move the Battalion into billets in ROCHERATH and constitute a reserve by 1600 hours. In order to by pass the terrific fire fight which was raging on both sides of the main road leading out of ROCHERATH, the Battalion moved southwest across country and came into ROCHERATH from the west

Upon arrival the Battalion Commander, reported to the Commanding Officer, 38th Infantry and was directed to move further south into an assembly area in KRINKELT. This movement was taken up immediately and the Battalion closed in KRINKELT at 1915. There it went into billets in deserted hotel and enjoyed a hot meal which was rushed up to it by the Battalion 3-4.

Shortly after daylight on the 19th the Battalion Commander received instructions from the Assistant Division Commander to regroup and to constitute the only reserve left in the KRINKELT area. The Battalion moved from its billets into defilade on the west side of the high ground northwest of KRINKELT and reorganized. All companies disbanded and the Battalion reorganized under plans made during the night as a task force of six officer-led rifle squads, a platoon of heavy machine gun section and mortars. Total effective strength at this time was 20 officers and 197 enlisted men. There the Battalion was again told the critical situation existing in KRINKELT, and every man reaffirmed his intent to do anything called for. Map study was instituted with view of employing the remainder of the Battalion to refuse the northwest flank of the 38th Infantry position north of ROUSHEATH, or to counterattack east from KRINKELT. Resupply of ammunition was instituted and all steps taken to make what was left an effective fighting force.

At 1410 the Battalion Commander was given orders by the Assistant Division Commander to move to CAMP ALDENBORN to an assembly area and rejoin the 9th Infantry. These orders were carried out and the Battalion closed into the reserve assembly area at 1810.

This operation, which was successful, conducted by the remnants of an Infantry Battalion already tired from a hard and arduous attack saved the 2d Division from being cut into and allowed the Division to regroup in such a way that it saved the right flank of the First United States Army.

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The 18-hour delay not only saved the entire 2nd Division from being cut off, but permitted the piecemeal evacuation of the routed, disorganized and demoralized 99th Division through our lines. Had a German penetration been effected, it might have carried for many miles toward EUPEN and LIEGE to the west or behind AACHEN in the North. That is why this sector was for 48 hours one of the three centers of attention at Supreme Headquarters.

The immediate result of this stand prompted Colonel BOOS, Commanding Officer of the 38th Infantry and commander of all troops in the KRINKELT area, to tell Lt. Col. WILLIAM D. MC KINLEY, 1st Battalion Commander: "You have saved my regiment" - prompted Major DANIEL WEBSTER, Division G-3, to say, "You saved the Division" and prompted General HODGES to phone the following message to General ROBERTSON, Division Commander: "What the 2nd Division has done in these past four days will live forever in the history of the United States Army."

On the first day's attack (13 December) through the woods from dawn till afternoon, every man was wet through to the skin by melting snow. For long distances the woods - new growth - were almost impenetrable and every bough was snow laden. That first night was bitterly cold and wet. It should also be borne in mind that the men had been camping out in snow ever since the 10th - the Regiment having left their comfortable self-constructed log billets in the SCHNEE EIFFEL on that day.

The second point that must be emphasized is that the area to which the First Battalion's attack had carried on this day was literally the impact area for all the final protective fires of the enemy mortars and artillery planned to defend the solid line of pillboxes. Curiously enough, the other two Battalions which were relatively closer to the enemy lines did not receive the same volume of artillery fire and as the narrative indicates were able to plan and successfully carry out a spectacular infiltration through minefields and wire entanglements between two pillboxes and surround and systematically reduce a total of 24 on the 15th.

The First Battalion's experience beginning on the 13th was a series of ever more serious crises. When ordered to continue the attack against its sector of the enemy line on the 14th, Colonel McKINLEY felt - even if he would not admit it then or now - that his Battalion could not reach the objective intact and if they did, could not hold the positions, subject as they would apparently be to counterattack from the right (east), front (north), and left (west).

The difficulty of the task of reaching the enemy positions was not merely one of passing through the concentrated enemy fire. The whole zone of approach was over a quilt of deadly anti-personnel mines and booby traps. Specifically, on the 14th eight men whose job was to clear a narrow path for the Battalion were killed or seriously wounded in the process and the effect of these casualties - one after another - can well be imagined. Just being in these woods was a bad thing. Two other incidents come to mind characterizing the sense of constant danger that everyone shared. One occurred on the main road leading to the center of the enemy position. An evacuation point had been established well forward within 500 yards of the enemy, where ambulances could drive up and turn around. Many did so for several hours when a jeep turning in the same spot was blown in two, killing two men and seriously wounding a third. The second similar incident occurred in the six foot wide gap in the enemy wire through which our 2nd and 3rd Battalions effected their penetration - over 500 men had gone through before a prisoner of war being led back detonated a mine which killed him and wounded another prisoner of war.

To conclude this introduction it should be borne in mind that this Battalion began its attack with 38 Officers and 678 Enlisted men (front line strength, not including assigned service and administrative personnel not in foxholes) and withdrew on the 17th with 22 officers and approximately 400 enlisted men. To further recapitulate, this Battalion by noon of the 17th had passed through distinct emotional crises, if that is the term - 1) The attack on the 13th over terrain not previously reconnoitered without any artillery support. 2) The night 13 - 14 spent in an impact area where a false step might explode a mine. 3) The attack and withdrawal of the 14th. 4) The final successful attack of the 15th. 5) The morale threatening and dangerous withdrawal from contact.

The mission given the 1st Battalion was not immediately understood by all concerned nor was the urgency or importance fully appreciated. Colonel MC KINLEY had some inkling of the significance first because of fact of the withdrawal from positions so dearly won - without stopping to do more than superficial damage to the pillboxes - secondly because of his conversation with General ROBERTSON on the road when he received his orders. But upon arrival at the designated road junction, the full meaning became clear. "K" Company of the 9th, a section of MG's from "M" Company and a 30-man group from Headquarters Company 3rd Battalion, 9th Infantry, had already been cut from the rear of the 3rd Battalion column by General ROBERTSON and were digging in. Streams of men and vehicles were pouring down the forest roads through the junction in wild confusion and disorder. Control in the 99th Division had been irretrievably lost and the stragglers echoed each other with remarks that their units had been surrounded and annihilated. One of our own Battalions from the 23rd Infantry had also been engulfed in what actually was a flight to the rear. As darkness fell, the 1st Battalion was in position. Two platoons of 57mm antitank guns were unable to get into firing position and three Tank Destroyers of the 64th TD Battalion were commanded by Colonel MC KINLEY and, to their credit, remained in position until the end, although they were unable to any considerable damage to the enemy.

So confused was the situation and so poor the observation that the first attack at 1900 hours, comprising three tanks and about 100 infantry, passed down the road toward ROCHERATH through the Battalion without attracting any fire. From that time forward, however, movement from the east was met by all available fire and unquestionably friend as well as foe were killed.

AFTER ACTION REPORT FOR DECEMBER 1944

SECOND DIVISION

NINTH INF REGT

22

McKinley

Colonel McKinley described the night's fighting as a wild melee, with direct fire from innumerable tanks - heavy guns in addition to automatic weapons.

There are three points to be emphasized in considering the engagement.

The first is the part played by our artillery. Colonel McKinley said it was artillery that did the job. He said on three different occasions artillery support, when and where it was vitally needed, saved his battalion from annihilation, - and the last time, from complete destruction.

ammunition expenditure of 155mm and 105mm - 13 - 15 December 1944 - approximately 8,000 rounds total from 6 battalions. From 1800 hours 17 December to 0600 18 December - 2,500 rounds for 15th Field Artillery and about 1500 rounds each from one light artillery battalion, four medium artillery battalions, and one heavy artillery battalion. These figures can be compared to the 250 - round allowance permitted the 15th Field Artillery for a four-day period while the Regiment was in defensive positions on the SCHLES-SPITZ. If restrictions on expenditure had not been liberally relaxed, the 1st Battalion's story would have had a different ending.

Another statistic is as follows: of the normal complement of 110 men and officers attached to the Regiment by the 15th Field Artillery as forward observers, liaison or communication teams, 32 were evacuated from 13 December to 19 December. Four out of ten officers were evacuated, and seven out of the 1st Battalion's normal complement of 13 were evacuated.

The second matter which requires some comment is the question of tanks vs. Infantry. Without checking conflicting and confusing claims, Colonel McKinley traced the known destruction of 15 tanks as follows: 4 stopped by mines, 11 stopped by bazooka fire. Of these, four were Tiger tanks. Of the above, two were destroyed by gasoline. Of the remainder some were deserted by their occupants who were shot down. Some received hits from our artillery. Some were surely reconnoitered by the enemy.

Five tanks are known to have reached SCHLES-SPITZ down the road guarded by the 1st Battalion. Two of these got into the center of the town. All these were destroyed. A maximum of 12 tanks were stopped between SCHLES-SPITZ and the 1st Battalion by our artillery, whose most intense concentrations were registered on that area all night. Indeterminate numbers of tanks were hit in the assembly area just southeast of the high ground facing the 1st Battalion. The noises of their "rilling around" could be plainly heard, and the impact of our heavy guns was in the right place.

See above From 6PM Dec 17th to 6AM Dec 18th, a total of 11,580 rounds of 105mm and 155 mm American shells exploded in our area, not including the German artillery and tanks.

To those close to the fighting it seemed almost miraculous that any of the 1st Battalion escaped. At the Regimental C. P., then at WIRTZFELD, indirect periodic reports were received during the night that the Battalion had been overrun or surrounded. Tanks were known to have reached ROCHERATH as well as KRINKELT, both behind the 1st Battalion. The desperate calls of the artillery liaison officer with the 1st Battalion could be heard saying that if artillery did not come immediately, there would be no need for it later. After midnight no further word reached the C. P. until 0500 hours on 18 December when the following relayed message, sent three hours earlier, was received:

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"To CO, 38th Infantry: "WE HAVE BEEN STEADILY ENGAGED. WE HAVE KNOCKED OUT THREE TIGER TANKS. OTHERS HAVE INFILTRATED MY POSITION. HAVE SITUATION IN HAND AT PRESENT." - McKINLEY."

To those at WITZFIELD at times engulfed with the shattered remnants of the 99th Division, it seemed as if the First Battalion was gone. They thought so too.

Colonel McKINLEY told his staff that this was one of those tragic situations that history records. He may not actually have mentioned the ALMO, but it was in his mind. The particular glory of this whole operation is that the men held firm to bear the brunt of an attack which drove around their little island and finally overran the island itself. No one ran. Ten men and one officer out of more than 100 from "K" Company got out. Captain GARVEY in the cellar of the house that held his C.P. chose to remain because he couldn't get his men out. The 13 men of "M" Company's machine gun section are missing. Only 13 out of the 30-man Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion group survived. "A" Company had 10 survivors - no officers. There are two officers from "A" Company, since reported missing, who called for artillery to be placed on their position because enemy tanks and infantry were also there.

But the First Battalion did not run. They retired in good order upon order. They were not beaten men.

On the following day Major CARL W. MILLER, Regimental S-2, received a report from Division Military Police on the number of stragglers picked up in the rear. He turned to Colonel HIRSCHFELDER and asked, "Colonel, how many of our men do you think Division has got?"

"Fifty, 75, 100", the Colonel replied. "At least 50 from the First." he added.

"A total of 9," said Major MILLER.

II - 2nd Battalion

The 2nd Battalion, having found its assigned assembly area occupied by other troops when it arrived on 13 December, moved to another area within 300 yards of the line of departure. Although assurances were given to the contrary this area had not been entirely cleared and the battalion suffered two casualties from anti-personnel mines.

At 0830 on 13 December, after a hot meal, the battalion crossed the line of departure, with E and G Companies in the lead. The men carried their overcoats and rolls. At first there was no opposition, but the advance was difficult because of the mud and snow and the thick pine forest. The weather was cold and damp. A thaw caused the snow to drop from the branches, soaking the men's clothing.

As the columns moved forward H Company captured a German who had deserted before the attack began. A fellow deserter, seeing the Americans approaching and thinking they were Germans who would shoot him for desertion, blew his head off with a handgrenade.

At noon the battalion had reached the approaches to the German pillbox line. Scouts reported smoke from enemy fires and the assault companies dropped their rolls and overcoats and prepared to attack.

In front of the pillboxes the enemy had cleared a large area, filled it with massive wire obstacles and mines attached to criss-crossed trip wires covered a well planned final with

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protective line. When the battalion came to the edge of the clearing, it was halted by intense fire, not only from machine guns and rifles, but from artillery and mortars. Casualties were heavy. The Battalion Commander's radio operator and orderly were hit. Casualties among the command group included the Battalion S-3, the Company Commander of G Company, the Executive Officer of E Company and the forward Artillery observer with G Company.

In the attack E Company was on the left and G Company on the right. One platoon of E Company tried to cross the clearing and had actually advanced through five aprons of barbed wire when it was pinned down by enemy fire. On the right flank an attempt was made to breach the wire with bangalore torpedoes, but the fuses were wet and would not ignite. Meanwhile one squad from G Company succeeded in crawling through and under the wire to the enemy lines. Part of a second squad in support of the first followed, cutting a four-yard gap in the barbed wire as it went. These patrols were not in communication with their company. Moreover, the commander of G Company had been wounded and evacuated. Hence, word of this significant penetration did not immediately reach the battalion commander. At dark the battalion was ordered to break off the attack, reorganize and prepare to renew the assault the next day.

That night the weather turned bitterly cold, causing intense suffering among the troops, whose clothing had been soaked by dripping snow during the day. A hot meal was brought up, but because of heavy enemy shelling and the danger of mines, it was not served. The Battalion C. P. was set up in a

ditch less than 500 yards from the German pillboxes. The Battalion's front line was strengthened by committing a platoon from F Company between two G Company platoons.

On December 14 preparations of artillery fires began at daylight for the battalion's attack. Elements of E Company, however, were exposed to this fire, and suffered casualties. Consequently, the company did not advance. Meanwhile Lt Col WALTER E. HIGGINS JR., Battalion Commander, ordered G Company to attempt a penetration through a shallow wooded draw on the right flank. F Company was in reserve behind G.

The massive wire obstacles in the draw were blasted by some 30 Bangalore torpedoes, but as a squad started through the gap, four men were wounded by machine gun fire and a fifth was killed by a mine. It was realized that our artillery had not and was not registering properly. A further preparation was called for 1300 hours. The attack, however, never materialized. Because of terrain peculiarities, the battalion's supporting artillery was unable to register effectively on the designated targets. Repeated attempts were made until 1400 hours when orders came from Regiment for the battalion to withdraw, pending the employment of heavier artillery and an air attack to soften up the German positions. (See attached report on results of artillery). While 50 men from E Company were in forward positions as outposts, the battalion was withdrawn to the rear of the C. P.

On 15 December the weather was too hazy for tactical bombing, nor was any assault launched by the Regiment during daylight hours. That night, however, Col HIGGINS decided to try to exploit the gap in the wire made by the G Company patrol on the previous day.

Soon after dark an eleven-man patrol was sent out with a sound-powered telephone to cross to the German lines and report on enemy strength and alertness. In the darkness, however, the patrol kept getting lost, so one of the men who had out the wire the day before went out and located the patrol by following the telephone line, and then led it through the wire. The patrol reached the German lines at 2100 hours without being fired on. At 2130 it sent word back that it had surrounded a pillbox and that the enemy seemed to be unaware of what was happening. The Battalion commander thereupon ordered a thrust into the German position in strength.

First F Company was sent through the gap after the patrol to mark the path with engineer tape. Once inside the German lines the company began building up on the left of the bridgehead. E Company came next and took its place on the right. G Company remained behind to guide the 3d Battalion, which had been alerted and was moving up, and to guard the 2nd Battalion's right flank.

Col. HIGGINS, who had crossed with E Company, climbed on top of the pillbox to the left of the breach and directed F Company in surrounding it, thus preventing the Germans inside from firing. Col. Higgins then conferred with Lt. Col. William F. Kernan, 3d Battalion commander, and it was decided to send the 3d Battalion against the left wing of the German strongpoint. (See 3d Battalion) Meanwhile F Company went along the line reducing one pillbox after another by blowing in the doors with beehive

charges and killing or capturing the occupants. By 0930 on 16 December seven pillboxes had been reduced in this manner. Later, to clear the way for the 38th Infantry, which was moving up on the right, an F Company platoon was sent to neutralize a pillbox 500 yards farther to the east. While so engaged the platoon was attacked by a 17-man German patrol. In the fight that followed 4 Germans were killed, 4 wounded and 4 captured.

On the morning of 17 December the battalion was alerted for the withdrawal necessitated by the German breakthrough to the south. Twenty minutes after the order to withdraw was given at 1100 hours, the battalion was on the move. With the companies in the order E, G, Headquarters, H and F, the battalion passed through the gap in the barbed wire, placed all impediments in the organic transportation and began a forced march to Wirtzfeld over roads that were congested and often the target of enemy artillery.

At a meeting in the Regimental C. P. Major General WALTER M. ROBERTSON, Division Commander, directed Col HIGGINS to take up a position west of Wirtzfeld and defend the KRINKELT-ROCKERATH road-net from the south and west at all costs. By 1700 hours the battalion had closed in at this new position. With the right flank on a lake, a defensive line was built up facing southeast. The general situation in this area was deteriorating, however, and the battalion received orders to move farther north and west to establish a line that would retect possible withdrawal of other units of the Division and delay the enemy. The move was

completed by midnight. In this new position the 2nd Battalion covered two roads leading out of WIRTZFELD to the north and west.

On 18 December the 2nd Battalion remained in this position and protected the withdrawal of the Regiment from WIRTZFELD after dark. On 19 December the battalion received orders that it would be relieved by the 38th Infantry as the 38th withdrew from forward positions. Relief was effected the next day.

Meanwhile Col. HISSING readjusted his line to conform with positions of the 3d Battalion, 393d Infantry, 99th Division, on his left and the 3d Battalion, 38th Infantry, on his right.

On 20 December the 3d Battalion, 38th Infantry, was to relieve 2nd Battalion at 1200 hours. The task of effecting relief began at 1030, but a fire fight broke out on the 2nd Battalion's left front. F Company was continually engaged and was unable to break contact until 1400 hours. The relief of the Battalion was further jeopardized by intermittent enemy shelling. The Battalion's ranks had been so thinned by casualties that the front line strength of the three rifle companies, E, F, and G, totalled only about 200. The Battalion's position, in fact, was taken over by a single company of the 38th Infantry.

At 1400 hours the battalion moved to a bivouac area in woods south of CAMP ELSENBOAN, BELGIUM, closing in before dark.

III - 3d Battalion

When the 9th Infantry attack was launched at 0830 on 13 December, the 3d Battalion was in reserve, and in approach march formation followed the 2d Battalion in its advance toward the pillboxes. K was on the left, L on the right and I Company was in battalion reserve.

Orders committing the 3d Battalion to action came soon after noon. The 2d Battalion, at the edge of the clearing before the pillbox line, was stopped by heavy enemy fire, and it was decided to send the 3d Battalion through the right flank (J Company) of the 2d in an effort to envelope the German stronghold from the right. The 3d Battalion went through according to plan and moved into the woods to the right of the clearing, with K Company still on the left and L on the right. The Battalion advanced to within 75 yards of the German line, but could make no further progress because of effective fire from two pillboxes. At the end of the day K and L Companies remained in position. I Company returned to the rear of the 2d Battalion in Regimental reserve.

On 14 December K and L Companies renewed their attack, but were unable to crack the German defenses. A wider envelopment was attempted by L Company, which tried to flank the German position by going around to the right through the 99th Division sector. The attempt did not succeed. At the end of the day the entire battalion reverted to reserve in its previous position behind K Company.

The battalion remained in reserve until the night of 15 December when the 2nd Battalion broke into the German pillbox line through the gap in the barbed wire and the 3d was called upon to join in the assault. The companies passed through the gap in the order K, L, and I. Once inside the German line the 3d Battalion crossed an east-west road behind the row of pillboxes being attacked by the 2nd Battalion and moved to the left toward another group of pillboxes and the WEHLERSCHEID road net, which was one of the Regimental objectives.

K Company by-passed the first five of the second group of pillboxes, as well as a Customs house converted into a strongpoint, and moved on to seize the easternmost of two road junctions in WEHLERSCHEID. A pillbox guarding this road junction was reduced. The company's operation was completed at 0645 hours on 16 December.

L Company, following K, reduced two of the five by-passed pillboxes and moved up to assault the Customs house, which guarded the road net. Before dawn the 2nd and 3d platoons were placed on a firing line encircling part of the house. With this support the 1st Platoon attacked at daylight. Seventy-seven Germans, surrendered without inflicting a single casualty on the attackers. Total number of prisoners captured by the 3d Battalion in this sector was 125. From the Customs house K Company continued to its objective, the second road junction in WEHLERSCHEID, which it seized at 0800.

Meanwhile I Company reduced the last three of the pillboxes by-passed by K and L Companies and two more pillboxes further north. This task was completed at 0930. The battalion then formed a defensive line around the captured road junctions and remained there until the withdrawal order was issued on the morning of 17 December.

The battalion was ordered to move with all possible speed to a point between WIRTZFELD and BULLINGEN. On the way the Division Commander met the column, detached K Company and sent it to defend a key road junction east of ROCKELRATH. During the night of 17 December and the morning of the 18th December the Germans made a desperate attempt to break through at this point, as mentioned in the part of this report dealing with the 1st Battalion, which was at the road junction with K Company. K Company suffered a heavily loss. More than 100 officers and men were in line when the action began. Only one officer and ten men were able to make their way out when the order to withdraw was given on 18 December.

Meanwhile on 17 December the rest of the 3d Battalion reached its new position between WIRTZFELD and BULLINGEN. The 9th Infantry C. P. was in WIRTZFELD, the Germans were in BULLINGEN. The 3d Battalion's mission was to prevent the Germans from moving up the road from BULLINGEN to WIRTZFELD. As it turned out, they never attempted to while the 3d Battalion was there. The enemy shelled WIRTZFELD and the 3d Battalion, but the battalion was not engaged in a fire fight. On 19 December the 3d Battalion withdrew through the 2nd Battalion north of WIRTZFELD and went to CAMP ELSENBORN.

The following are tables of casualties suffered by the three battalions from 15 to 20 December, inclusive:

KILLED

Bn	13th	14th	15th	16th	17th	18th	19th	20th	Total
1st	1	2	1	0	1	15	0	0	20
2nd	1	9	9	0	0	1	0	0	20
3d	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	<u>4</u>
									44

WOUNDED

Bn	13th	14th	15th	16th	17th	18th	19th	20th	Total
1st	18	80	15	1	13	40	5	3	175
2nd	64	23	39	6	6	0	3	1	142
3d	12	46	6	10	7	1	5	3	<u>90</u>
									407

MISSING

Bn	13th	14th	15th	16th	17th	18th	19th	20th	Total
1st	0	2	2	0	6	94	0	0	104
2nd	4	0	9	0	1	0	0	0	14
3d	0	2	2	1	45	3	15	0	<u>68</u>
									186

NON-BATTLE

Bn	13th	14th	15th	16th	17th	18th	19th	20th	Total
1st	26	89	29	4	14	3	1	6	172
2nd	75	68	19	10	3	5	9	6	195
3d	33	65	19	19	21	9	3	9	<u>178</u>
									545

In addition to battalion casualties in these 8 days special units, including the Medical Detachment, suffered the following casualties: 4 killed, 25 wounded, 6 missing and 48 non-battle.

35

Thus Regimental casualties for this 8-day period totaled 48 killed, 432 wounded, 192 missing and 596 non-battle - 1,268 in all.

With it's strength so depleted and the situation still so urgent, tactical reorganization of the Regiment was undertaken after the Regiment entered Division reserve at Camp Eisenborn. The following tables show the Regiment's battle strength in men and weapons as of 22 December and it's tactical organization.

1ST BN

Hq & Hq Co - 10 O, 74 EM

Bn CP Group - 7 O, 12 EM

8 M-1s
1 Carbine
3 Pistols

Hq Co Hq - 4 EM (1 - B Co 1st Sgt)

1 M-1
2 Carbines
1 Tommy Gun

Intell Personnel - 4 EM (1 - Co B)

2 M-1s
1 Carbine
1 Tommy Gun

A & P Plat - 3 EM

3 Carbines

Comm Plat - 1 O, 19 EM

4 M-1s
11 Carbines
2 Tommy Guns
2 Pistols

Rocket Launcher Det - 1 O, 13 EM (4 - D Co)

5 Carbines
8 Pistols
6 Rocket Launchers

AT Plat - 1 O, 19 EM

5 M-1s
14 Pistols
3 57mm Guns

Co C - 6 O, 98 EM

Co Hq - 1 O, 5 EM

3 M-1s
2 Carbines

1st Plat - 3 O (1-Co B), 50 EM (15 Co B,
38 M-1s 2 Co D, 1 Hq Co)

2 Carbines
7 BARs
3 Tommy Guns

2nd Plat - 2 O (1-Co B), 43 EM (17 Co B,
33 M-1s 11 Co A, 2 D Co, 9 Hq Co)

3 Carbines
4 BARs
3 Tommy Guns

Co D - 4 O, 69 EM

Co Hq - 2 O, 8 EM
8 Carbines

MG Plat - 1 O, 27 EM (3 Co A, 1 Co B)

11 M-1s
9 Carbines
6 Pistols
1 '03
4 HMGs

81mm Mortar Plat - 1 O, 34 EM

7 M-1s
16 Carbines
11 Pistols
2 81mm Mortars

Total Personnel Forward: 20 Officers
242 Enlisted Men

1st Bn Troops With Rear Echelon

Hq Co - 10 Drivers
 1 Mess Sgt
 1 Supply Sgt
 1 Cook
 1 Clerk

14

A Co - 1 Clerk
 1 EM SD Div
 1 Baggage Guard
 1 Mess Sgt
 1 Supply Sgt
 4 Drivers
 3 Cooks

12

B Co - 2 Drivers
 1 Clerk
 1 EM SD Div
 1 Mess Sgt
 1 Supply Sgt
 9 Cooks

15

C Co - 1 O SD Div
 2 Clerks
 1 Supply Sgt
 1 EM SD Div
 1 Mess Sgt
 3 Drivers

8

D Co - 1 Clerk
 1 Mess Sgt
 1 Supply Sgt
 18 Drivers
 2 EM SD Regt

23

Total Personnel w/Rear Echelon: 1 Officer
 72 Enlisted Men

Breakdown Forward & Rear - 1st Bn

Hq & Hq Co
 Forward - 10 O, 68 EM
 w/Co C - 10 EM
 Rear - 14

A Co
 Forward
 w/C Co - 11
 w/D Co - 3
 w/Regt - 1
 Rear - 12

B Co
 Forward
 w/C Co - 32
 w/Hq Co - 2
 w/D Co - 1
 Rear - 15

C Co
 Forward - 4 O, 41 EM
 Rear - 1 O, 8 EM

D Co
 Forward - 4 O, 65 EM
 w/C Co - 4 EM
 w/Hq Co - 4 EM

Totals Forward & Rear: 21 Officers
 314 Enlisted Men

2ND BN

Hq & Hq Co (5 EM Att from H Co)-
9 O, 96 EM

Co F, contd

Bn CP Group- 4 O, 5 EM
2 M-Is
3 Carbines

LMG Section - 1 O, 11 EM
5 M-Is
4 Carbines
2 Pistols
2 LMGs

Hq Co Hq - 2 O, 21 EM
9 M-Is
12 Carbines
1 Rocket Launcher

HMG Section - 1 O, 13 EM
3 M-Is
6 Carbines
4 Pistols
2 HMGs

Intell Section - 6 EM
6-MIs

Comm Plat - 1 O, 28 EM
2 M-Is
23 Carbines
2 Tommy Guns
1 Pistol
1 Rocket Launcher

60mm Mortar Section- 1 O, 12 EM
4 M-Is
4 Carbines
4 Pistols
2 60mm Mortars

A & F Plat - 1 O, 14 EM
6 M-Is
7 Carbines
1 Tommy Gun
2 Rocket Launchers

Rocket Launcher Teams(3)- 1 O, 6 EM
1 M-1
4 Carbines
1 Pistol
3 Rocket Launchers

AT Plat - 1 O, 22 EM
9 M-Is
1 Carbine
10 Pistols
2 Tommy Guns
6 Rocket Launchers
1 .50 Cal MG
3 57mm Guns

Co G- 8 O, 134 EM (17 Att from E Co,
15 Att from H Co)
Co Hq - 2 O, 9 EM
2 M-Is
7 Carbines

Co F - 121 EM (36 att from E Co,
14 Att from H Co), 8 O

1st Flat - 1 O, 44 EM
30 M-Is
2 Carbines
6 BARS
6 Tommy Guns

Co Hq - 2 O, 13 EM
3 M-Is
9 Carbines
1 Tommy Gun

2nd Flat - 1 O, 29 EM
18 M-Is
6 Carbines
2 BARS
3 Tommy Guns

1st Flat - 1 O, 30 EM
20 M-Is
6 Carbines
2 BARS
2 Tommy Guns
1 Rocket Launcher

LMG Section - 1 O, 12 EM
5 M-Is
3 Carbines
4 Pistols
2 LMGs

2nd Flat - 1 O, 36 EM
24 M-Is 3 BARS
5 Carbines
1 Rocket Launcher 4 Tommy Guns

HMG Section - 1 O, 14 EM
5 M-Is
5 Carbines
4 Pistols 2 HMGs

Co G, cont'd

60 mm Mortar Section - 1 O, 20 EM

- 4 M-1s
- 7 Carbines
- 9 Pistols
- 2 60 mm Mortars

Rocket Launcher Teams (3) - 1 O, 6 EM

- 3 M-1s
- 3 Carbines
- 3 Rocket Launchers

H Co - 5 O, 45 EM (Detached: 15 w/G Co, 14 w/F Co, 5 w/Bn Hq Co)

Co Hq - 1 O, 4 EM

- 2 Carbines
- 2 Tommy Guns

81 mm Mortar Sect - 4 O, 41 EM

- 7 M-1s
- 16 Carbines
- 18 Pistols
- 4 Rocket Launchers
- 4 81 mm Mortars

Total Personnel Forward: 30 Officers
396 Enlisted Men

2nd Bn Troops With Rear Echelon

Hq Co - 1 Mess Sgt

- 4 Cooks
- 1 Supply Sgt
- 1 Armorer-Artificer
- 1 Personnel Clerk
- 1 Mtr Sgt
- 1 Mechanic
- 3 Drivers

E Co - 1 Personnel Clerk

- 2 Cooks
- 1 Mail Clerk
- 1 Mess Sgt
- 2 Truck Drivers
- 1 EM SD Div

F Co - 1 O, Asst Bn Mtr O

- 4 Cooks
- 1 Supply Sgt
- 1 Mail Clerk
- 1 Armorer-Artificer
- 2 Truck Drivers
- 1 DS Ireland Marriage
- 1 EM SD Div

8

13

1 O, 14 EM

G Co - 1 Mess Sgt

- 7 Cooks & Cks M/ps
- 1 Clerk, Personnel
- 1 Baggage Guard
- 1 Truck Driver

H Co - 1 Motor Sgt

- 1 Mechanic
- 15 Truck Drivers
- 1 Personnel Clerk
- 2 EM SD Div
- 1 Cook

11

21

Total Personnel w/Rear Echelons: 1 Officer
67 Enlisted Men

Breakdown Forward & Rear - 2nd Bn

Hq & Hq Co

Forward - 9 O, 91 EM
Rear - 13 EM

F Co

Forward - 3 O, 71 EM
Rear - 1 O, 14 EM

H Co

Forward w/G Co - 2 O, 15 EM
w/F Co - 2 O, 14 EM

E Co

Forward w/G Co - 2 O, 17 EM
w/F Co - 2 O, 36 EM
Rear - 8 EM

G Co

Forward - 5 O, 102 EM
Rear - 11 EM

Total Forward & Rear: 31 Officers
463 Enlisted Men

3RD BN

Bn CP Group - 8 O, 4 EM

2 M-1s
2 Carbines

Bn Hq Co - 3 O, 84 EM

Hq Co Hqs - 9 EM

6 M-1s
2 Carbines
1 Tommy Gun
1 Rocket Launcher

Intell Section - 6 EM

6 M-1s

A & F Flat - 1 O, 12 EM

1 M-1
11 Carbines
1 Rocket Launcher

AT Flat - 1 O, 28 EM

8 M-1s
7 Carbines
13 Pistols
6 Rocket Launchers
1 .50 Cal MG
3 57mm Guns

Comm Flat - 1 O, 25 EM

3 M-1s
17 Carbines
5 Tommy Guns

Co I - 3 O, 86 EM

Co Hq - 13 EM

1 M-1
10 Carbines
1 Pistol
1 Tommy Gun

1st Flat - 1 O, 27 EM

15 M-1s
4 BARs
3 Carbines
5 Tommy Guns

2nd Flat - 1 O, 31 EM

21 M-1s
4 BARs
1 Carbine
5 Tommy Guns

Co I, cont'd

Weapons Flat - 15 EM

3 M-1s
9 Carbines
3 Pistols
2 LMGs
2 60mm Mortars

Co L - 3 O, 86 EM

Co Hq - 1 O, 20 EM

13 M-1s
7 Carbines

1st Flat - 25 EM

18 M-1s
3 BARs
2 Carbines
2 Tommy Guns

2nd Flat - 1 O, 27 EM

20 M-1s
3 BARs
1 Carbine
1 Tommy Gun

Weapons Flat - 14 EM

1 M-1
4 Carbines
9 Pistols
1 LMG
1 60mm Mortar

Co M - 5 O, 65 EM

Co Hq - 1 O, 10 EM

5 M-1s
5 Carbines

MG Platoon - 26 EM

3 M-1s
13 Carbines
9 Pistols
1 Tommy Gun
3 HMGs

Mortar Platoon - 3 O, 29 EM

9 M-1s
7 Carbines
12 Pistols
1 Tommy Gun
2 Rocket Launchers
1 81mm Mortar

K Co (Attached to Hq Co) - 2 O, 17 EM

5 M-1s
4 Carbines
8 Pistols

Total Personnel Forward: 338 Enlisted Men
24 Officers

3rd Bn Troops With Rear Echelon

Hq Co - 10 drivers
1 clerk
6 cooks
1 supply sgt

18

I Co - 2 drivers
1 clerk
3 cooks
1 Supply Sgt
1 Mess Sgt

7

K Co - 4 drivers
1 clerk
5 cooks
1 Supply Sgt
1 Mess Sgt

18

L Co - 2 Drivers
1 Clerk
1 Cook
1 Supply Sgt
1 Mess Sgt

6

M Co - 19 Drivers
1 Clerk
1 Supply Sgt
1 Mess Sgt
1 Motor Sgt
1 Mechanic

24

Total Personnel w/Rear Echelon: 68 Enlisted Men

BREAKDOWN FORWARD & REAR - 3RD BN

Hq & Hq Co
Forward - 11 O, 84 EM
Rear - 18 EM

I Co
Forward - 3 O, 86 EM
Rear - 8 EM

K Co
Forward - 17 EM 2 O
Rear - 12 EM

L Co
Forward - 3 O, 86 EM
Rear - 6 EM

M Co
Forward - 5 O, 65 EM
Rear - 24 EM

Totals Forward & Rear: 24 Officers
406 Enlisted Men

TOTALS OF THE THREE BNS

	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Enlisted Men</u>
Forward	74	976
Rear	2	207
Total	76	1183

DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, SECTION 3.3, NND927605
BY RB/MB NARA, DATE 2/2/94

43

As the period ended, with the Regiment still in reserve south of Camp Hisenborn, strength gradually returning to normal owing to the influx of replacements and hospital returnees. The normal company organizations were reformed. From a low point of 1631 EM and 131 officers, the strength of the Regiment had increased to 138 officers and 2312 EM on 31 Dec 44.

In the first 21 days of December the Regiment received 142 replacements. In the last ten days 740 replacements came in, making the month's total 882.

The month's total casualties were as follows:

Killed	Wounded	Missing	Non-Battle
50	469	195	831

Dictated statement of 1st Lt Roy Allen concerning "B" Company engagement east of Rokerath, Belgium, on 17 and 18 December 1944.

At 1930 17 December 1944 it was reported by the 1st Platoon, "B" Company, that three tanks were approaching our position. It was reported that there were other tanks and that with each tank were about 30 Germans. The three tanks were allowed to go by owing to the fact that we were not prepared for tanks. At approximately 2000 hours we again heard tanks approaching our position. Sgt Ted Rickerstaff and Lt Roy E. Allen both of "B" Company, immediately prepared to place antitank mines in front of the on coming tanks. As we armed the eighth mine, the German tanks were 400 yards away. A bazooka was then placed in a position to cover the mines. Two tanks were stopped by the mines and the other proceeded to go around them through the fields. Two tanks were knocked out with bazookas.

During the night we heard other tanks moving around as they prepared to advance up the road. Bazookas and mines were again placed in position to take care of the tanks should they come our way. The tanks started to approach our position at about 0700 18 December. As they approached the mines, they could see the other two tanks which had been knocked out, and they proceeded to go through the field. The leading Tiger tank was hit by a bazooka and stopped. However, it kept on firing both its machine guns and a large turret gun. Lt Milesnick, "B" Company, went forward, brought other bazookas into position and fired four rounds at the Tiger tank. These did not penetrate. During the time the bazooka was being fired the tank was firing its machine guns and turret gun in the general direction of our company. Lt Milesnick was hit in the leg. Sgt Odis Bone, "B"

Company, and a group of about four other obtained gasoline from a broken half-track, poured it on the Tiger tank, and set it afire. During this time the machine gunners of "D" Company were returning fire at the tank. As the tank occupants opened the hatch of the tank, they were shot by the machine gunners. I saw one heavy machine gun of "D" Company knocked out by the tank before the Germans left it. The men who had been firing the machine gun immediately got another set up in position and continued to fire. Sgt Earlie W Moncrief of "B" Company (missing in action) and myself placed mines on another small road we thought may possibly be used by the Germans for their tanks. During this time we were receiving fire from enemy machine guns. The riflemen of "B" Company fired at the turret men of the enemy tanks as they proceeded to come down the road. One American tank which was being operated by Germans was stopped by the unit on "B" Company's right flank. Two Germans left this tank. One was shot by "D" Company and I shot the other. I personally searched this man to be positive he was German. The men of "B" Company next to the road our tanks were defending did not leave their position until they were ordered to do so, although they were receiving much fire from enemy tanks and infantrymen.

Although it endangered the lives of the men, Lt Milesnick and I requested our own artillery to be placed on the road approximately 20 yards in front of our position. Many rounds of our own artillery was falling on our own lines, but we did not request it to be lifted owing to the fact it had temporarily stopped the incoming tanks. Before we withdrew from the position, it was impossible to communicate with the artillery so as to instruct them where to place their

fire. This was due to the Germans jamming our radio net. I stayed in position with approximately 14 men of "B" Company and fired back at German infantrymen who turned to cross the road to our front.

None of the men hesitated to comply with orders, and although a German tank did cut off our escape to the rear, the men stayed in position and returned fire until ordered back by the Battalion Commander. We pulled back 200 yards to higher ground and again set up a defensive position, where as it grew light, we were to cover the road by fire. This could not be done at night. From this position we could prevent German infantrymen from crossing the road; however, it was impossible for us to stop the tanks.

During the hours of darkness the men did return fire although it meant death for many of them because they gave away their position.

Sgt Lindquist, "B" Company, was 12 feet from a German tank. He saw a German approaching the hedgerow, behind which he was stationed, and very near other men of "B" Company. Although Sgt Lindquist had to expose himself to the tank, he shot this German. At the same time the machine gun on the tank opened up and killed Sgt Lindquist.

Results of 155 MM Artillery on Pillboxes

15 Dec 44

On the afternoon of 13 December 1944, 2 guns of Battery C, 987 FA Battalion (SF) were ordered forward to fire armor piercing and concrete piercing shells at the pillboxes located at F. Wehlerscheid. It was difficult finding a battery location because of the woods. A spot was finally located at approximately the line of departure - about 3500 yards from the targets. The guns could not be accurately adjusted on the 13th but on the 14th remaining two guns were brought forward and adjusted all day on the pillboxes while other medium artillery threw cratering shells into the area in front of the pillboxes. Forward observers of the 155mm guns reported some success, getting direct hits and in some cases shells penetrating the pillboxes. This claim was contested by members of the Regiment; however, after all pillboxes had been reduced on the morning of the 15th, not a single pillbox was found that had been damaged by artillery fire. Artillery had scored direct hits on several pillboxes but merely chipped off dirt and pieces of cement. The battery fired 112 rounds of armor piercing and 64 rounds of concrete piercing shells.

LTC MARTIN A. PETERS

8 February 2004

FORT SAM HOUSTON

This is the story of the 18 hours leading up to my capture by the German Army in the Battle of Bulge on 18th December 1944 in WWII. In area of Rocherath Belgium and the Ardennes.

Per your letter I have enclosed story of my experiences in Lausdell Crossroads fighting. I was a 19 year old PFC in 2nd Div 9th Regt Co K at that time. In 1995 (50th Ann. WW II) I made a oral tape of WW II experiences for my family. Have enclosed translation in my own words of Lausdell action which started 17 Dec 1944. Hope this will be useful for you. William Soderman
of Co K received the CMH here. Sincerely, Frank E. Royer

PS You can contact me at my sons E-mail

craig4885@cs.com

OR

FRANK E. ROYER

810 SO. SHORE DR.
Kansas City, MO 64151

PHONE 816 741 4445

The 2nd Div captured the Wahalerscheid Crossroads. Well, anyway ... we slept that night. I think by that time it was up to about the 15th or 16th of December. The attack had taken several days to get through where we were. But really, we were through the line where we could really make a breakthrough. But we got word that night to be careful on guard duty; the Germans were counterattacking somewhere. It was the start of the Battle of the Bulge, but we didn't know that, 'cause the Germans didn't—it was a quiet night. Then we were up to the next day. Oh, (chuckles) we had another funny—the next morning, here's a whole platoon of Germans, probably twenty or thirty of them, marching down the road to the pillbox. They didn't know we were there yet. So we captured them. Some of them, they had guns, but I don't think they had any ammunition in them even. But we captured the whole platoon of Germans just marching, because they didn't know where we were. That was just another strange thing, you know.

Then the 17th of December, we were told to pull back and give all these pillboxes back, which we'd lost quite a few people getting them. Because the Battle of the Bulge started on the 16th actually, against the Germans. And why they did it, I guess it was the weak part of the line, and they were using big armies. They had several armies and they were sending divisions against, where we might be a company, maybe a battalion or a regiment would be out in front of us. So we had to give up all these hard-won pillboxes and started marching back. We had to go back, and we marched all day. Probably, oh, in the middle of the afternoon, I saw a general-in-chief over there by the side of a road, a crossroad. I'd never seen a general before over there. (chuckles) But I find out later by reading books, he was our division commander. He was a two-star general. Robinson was his name, General Robinson, I think it was. He called my company commander, I could hear him. He said, "Hey Jack"—he called him Jack. His name was Captain

Jack Garvey. Course, I didn't call him Jack, but he came over there. I could hear him tell my commander, he was talking loud and we could all hear. We were just standing there waiting. He said, "Well, I want you to go down this road. There's supposed to be some action down there"—some of the divisions or some outfit, the 99th Division or something. "You're going to be a division reserve." And division reserve is way back. There was supposed to be the 99th Division in front of us. So we just happened to be unlucky. As he drove up, we were marching by and he stopped. So our company—it was just a company—went down this road, and the rest of the guys kept retreating back to wherever they were supposed to be going. So we were kind of a flank guard, I guess. We figured that out for ourselves.

We didn't have to go too far down the road. The officers always had maps for some reason. The whole time, I never saw a map as a private. Nobody ever showed me, and I always just went wherever they told me. But we got to a point on our map where we were supposed to hold this road. There were some crossroads, and there was a farmhouse up on one side. The rest were all fields. By that time, we were getting a little snow. It was December 17th, that was. So we started digging in our foxholes. That was in the afternoon. Now, that's something I didn't say, but the first thing the infantry—everywhere we went, we dug a hole. So every night you dug a hole. That was the first thing you did before you ate. I want to emphasize that because that's your protection. So we dug holes, and while we were digging that afternoon there were stragglers coming back along the road in front of us there. Some of them with no guns or helmets, they were really kind of [retreating]. It was a bad—they were from some other division. I don't know what they were—99th I guess. We'd see them and they'd say, "Oh, you can't stop them," or something. "They're terrible," or something. I suppose they had had it bad, but ... so we just kept digging, 'cause we didn't see a sign of a German yet, so it wasn't nothing critical. There was an artillery unit in the field about a quarter of a mile from us. And the infantry, when you're with the artillery, boy, you figure you're safe. You always like to have somebody in front of you, maybe a company or even a squad. (laughs) You like to have somebody there. So we felt pretty ... but anyway, while we were digging, they moved out. So that was bad for us, we knew that.

TM: You saw them moving out?

FR: Oh, yeah. It was still daylight.

We didn't have a meal, they didn't give us meals. We just stayed in our foxholes. German artillery started falling around there. That was from a distance; it was coming in. So we had

these K-rations they give us, we were carrying them if we wanted to eat that night. But around about at dusk, we saw our first tank. Like I say, this is the first tank I've ever seen since August since I've been over there—German tanks. We didn't have anything to stop it with, really. The bazookas—they called them anti-tank bazooka guns—we had one of those in our company. Our company is around 180 or so, but when we went down in this field, when we were put down here we weren't a company anymore, because after three or four days of those pillboxes, we was probably about forty guys in a company. That's where it was, so we were really more of a platoon than a company. I didn't stress that. So we were spread out, our foxholes. So some of the tanks—they stopped for some reason or other up there, up a ways. I couldn't see—you could only see you and maybe two or three guys around you, is all you know what's going on. But the artillery got real bad then around there. So we just stayed down in our holes. By then it was dark. Then some of the tanks started going through along the roads in front of us. One of them was coming down over the foxhole. He got off of the road where our foxhole—and he was coming over the foxholes. We had one American tank destroyer in our area right behind us. And that knocked the German tank out right over the guy's foxhole, but we got him out. He didn't burn up or anything. The tank caught fire and the Germans didn't get out, they couldn't get out. (quietly) We couldn't get them.

Other tanks then went on by, and that makes you feel bad because then you know you're kind of cut off there. It was dark ... you were shooting, but you don't know what you were shooting at exactly. There were Germans out there. I don't know, so ...

TM: And you thought there might still be Americans ahead?

FR: Well, they'd been coming in, yeah. Well, actually, we were supposed to have a whole ... I think a battalion was supposed to be out there. That's about eight hundred guys, yeah, supposed to have been. But see, these Germans were attacking with real force behind them. They didn't just stop. They had so many. They were regiments and divisions. Well, we'd have an armored division; they call them panzer divisions. We found out in books that there were, I think, three armies they had. They're consisted of divisions. So I just ... never seen so many tanks in my life. It was firing almost all night long that night. Finally after midnight I guess it slowed down a little bit. But by then a lot of Germans went by us, so we were kind of trapped out there. But they had told us we had to hold this thing for eighteen hours; that's what the captain said when we got there. Because eighteen hours will give the division behind us that was marching down that road, time to get to where they were supposed to be safe.

Dec 18

So anyway, morning came and there were more German tanks, and the artillery got bad. In books I read the lieutenants called for our own artillery on our position, because they were libel to get more tanks or Germans than they were us. Because we were in our holes, and the Germans weren't so much. So we had real bad artillery fire of our own American artillery. And we also had chemical mortars that make kind of smoke ... when it gets on your clothes it kind of burns a hole. It doesn't stop until it gets to the skin, then it burns—they're kind of bad. But some of those they were shooting were close to us, but they didn't hit us or nothing, I guess. I ended up with some on my clothes later on, because at dark they glow. The chemicals glow on your field jackets, I guess just pieces of them.

PM

There was quite a few guys killed then. It was around 12:30 then—that would have been the eighteen hours I guess. So 12:30, the German tanks went up to the only house there was. That was where the captain had his company command post in the house, and that was a bad move on his—but he didn't know it was going to be like this. So the German tanks went right up to the door, you know. So they come out, the captain and a couple of guys. By then they had us where you couldn't hardly shoot. Our ammunition, by that time we were low; we didn't have hardly any ammunition left. So there was a couple of guys got out of their hole, and the Germans didn't shoot them, anyway. I was with a guy named E.J. "Sandy" Sanders. He was from South Carolina. He was a private like me. We said, "Well, what do we do?", you know. So we just decided "Well, OK, they didn't shoot them," so we got up. I think there was about ten of us altogether that got captured with the captain and the lieutenant. By the way, there was a lieutenant in the foxhole next to me during all this fighting, and that's very unusual to have a lieutenant even, an officer so close. It was just unbelievable; everything was different than anything we'd ever had. It was just so much going on.

COPY NATIONAL ARCHIVES
9th Regt. After Action Report

2ND
DIV

9th INF REGT AFTER ACTION REPORT

L-34

The 18-hour delay not only saved the entire 2nd Division from being cut off, but permitted the piecemeal evacuation of the routed, disorganized and demoralized 99th Division through our lines. Had a German penetration been effected, it might have carried for many miles toward EUPEN and LIEGE to the west or behind AACHEN in the North. That is why this sector was for 48 hours one of the three centers of attention at Supreme Headquarters.

The immediate result of this stand prompted Colonel BOOS, Commanding Officer of the 38th Infantry and commander of all troops in the KRINKELT area, to tell Lt. Col. WILLIAM D. MC KINLEY, 1st Battalion Commander: "You have saved my regiment" - prompted Major DANIEL WEBSTER, Division G-3, to say, "You saved the Division" and prompted General HODGES to phone the following message to General ROBERTSON, Division Commander: "What the 2nd Division has done in these past four days will live forever in the history of the United States Army."

2nd DIV 9th INF REGT
AFTER ACTION REPORT

MC KINLEY 22

Colonel HENNING described the night's fighting as a wild melee, with direct fire from innumerable tanks - heavy guns in addition to automatic weapons.

There are three points to be emphasized in considering the engagement.

The first is the part played by our artillery. Colonel HENNING said it was artillery that did the job. He said on three different occasions artillery support, when and where it was vitally needed, saved his battalion from annihilation, - and the last time, from complete destruction.

ammunition expenditure of 155mm and 105mm - 13 - 15 December 1944 - approximately 8,200 rounds total from 6 battalions. From 1800 hours 17 December to 0600 18 December - 2,500 rounds for 15th Field Artillery and about 1500 rounds each from one light artillery battalion, four medium artillery battalions, and one heavy artillery battalion. These figures can be compared to the 250 - round allowance permitted the 15th Field Artillery for a four-day period while the Regiment was in defensive positions on the BREITENBURG. If restrictions on expenditure had not been liberally relaxed, the 1st Battalion's story would have had a different ending.

Another statistic is as follows: of the normal complement of 140 men and officers attached to the Regiment by the 15th Field Artillery as forward observers, liaison or communication teams, 32 were evacuated from 13 December to 19 December. Four out of ten officers were evacuated, and seven out of the 1st Battalion's normal complement of 13 were evacuated.

The second matter which requires some comment is the question of tanks vs. Infantry. Without checking conflicting and confusing claims, Colonel HENNING traced the known destruction of 15 tanks as follows: 4 stopped by mines, 11 stopped by bazooka fire. Of these, 3 were Tiger tanks. Of the above, two were destroyed by gasoline. Of the remainder some were deserted by their occupants who were shot down. Some received hits from our artillery. None were surely reconnoitered by the enemy.

Five tanks are known to have reached BREITENBURG down the road guarded by the 1st Battalion. Two of these got into the center of the town. All these were destroyed. A maximum of 12 tanks were stopped between BREITENBURG and the 1st Battalion by our artillery, whose most intense concentrations were registered on that area all night. Indeterminate numbers of tanks were hit in the assembly area just southeast of the high ground facing the 1st Battalion. The noises of their "milling around" could be plainly heard, and the impact of our heavy guns was in the right place.

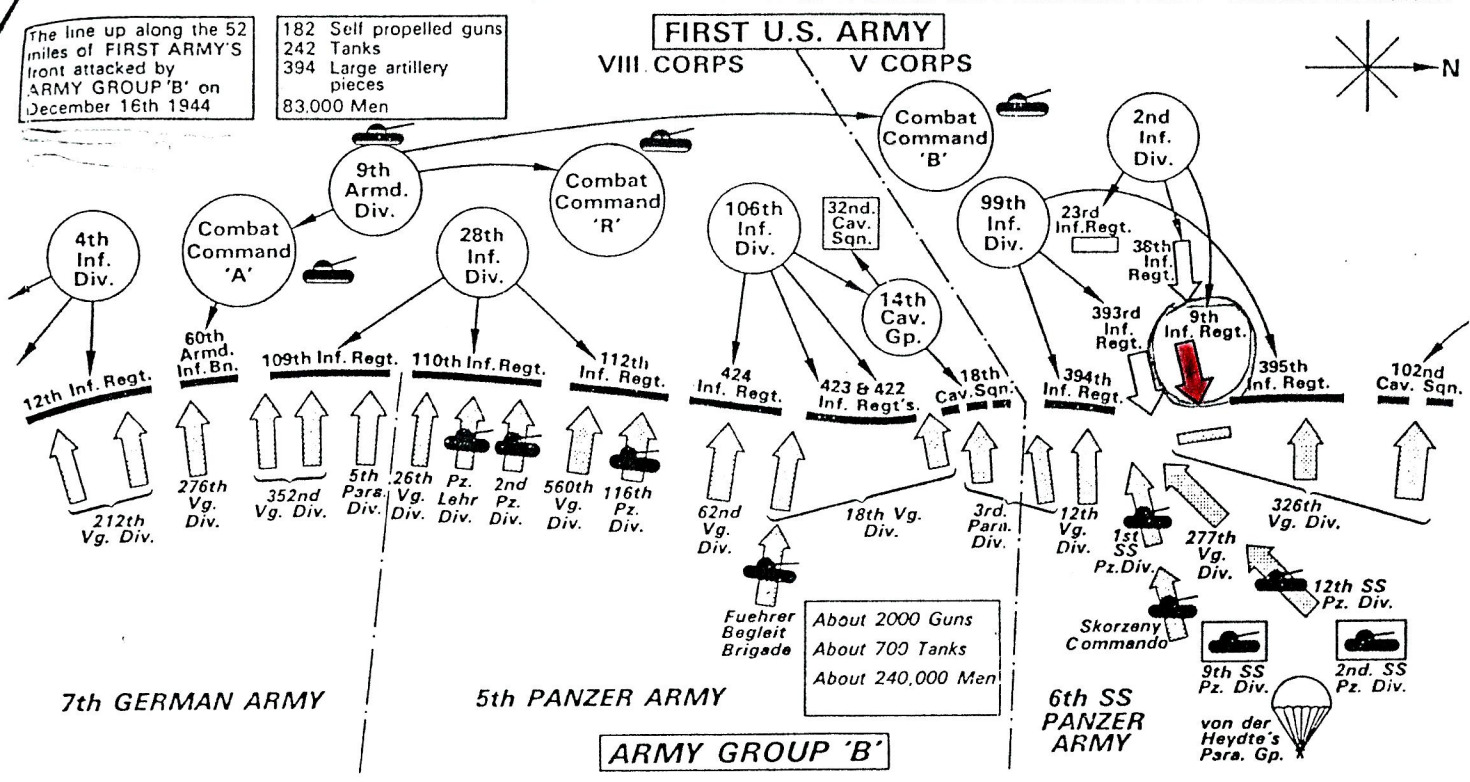
See Above

FROM 6 PM Dec. 17th to 6 AM Dec. 18th, a total of 11,580 rounds of 105mm and 155mm American shells exploded in our area, not counting the German Artillery and tanks. The Germans had 2000 Artillery pieces and
- attached to about 1000 (see enclosed map of First U.S. Army)

BATTLE OF THE BULGE (BELGIUM) DECEMBER 1944

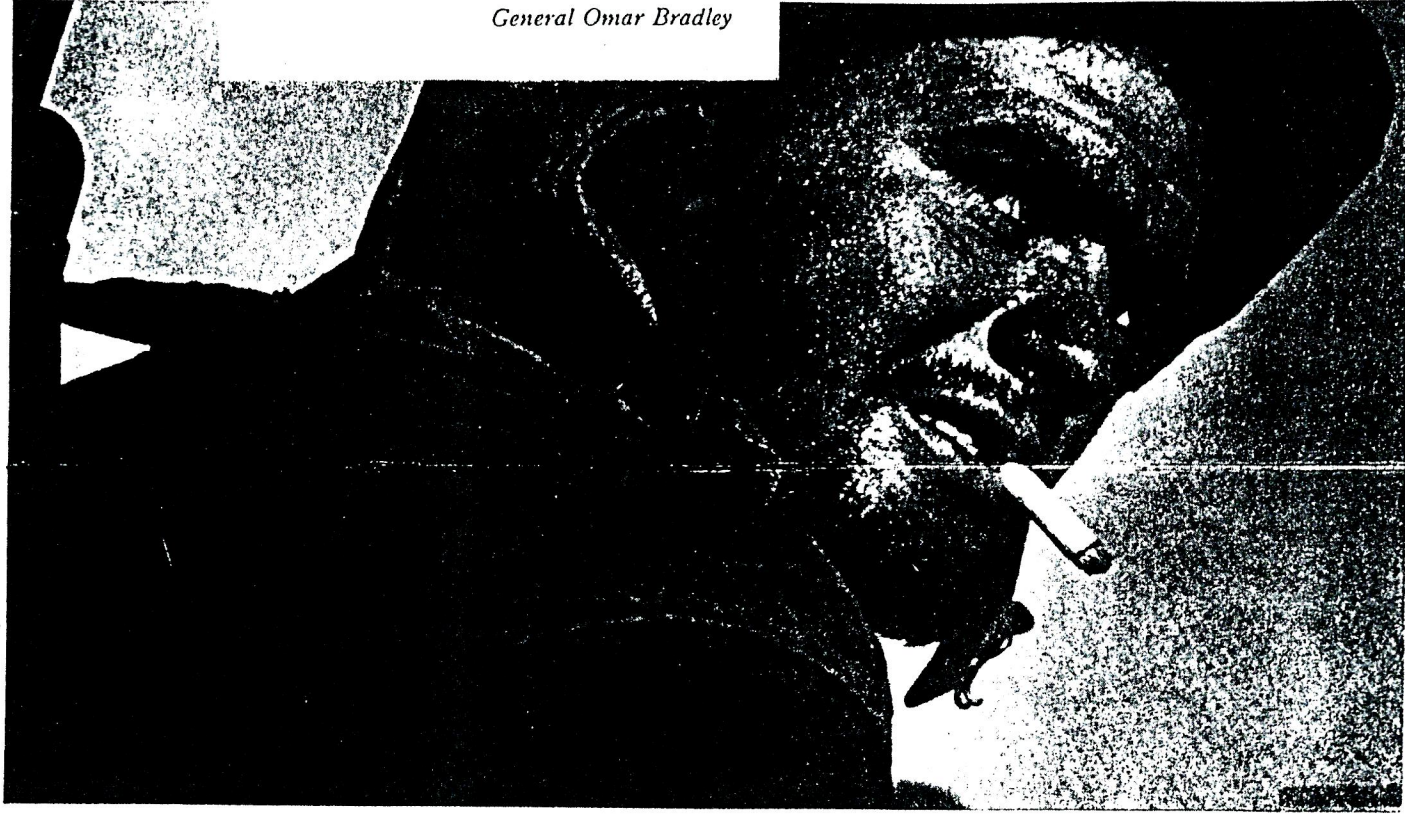
The line up along the 52 miles of FIRST ARMY'S front attacked by ARMY GROUP 'B' on December 16th 1944

182 Self propelled guns
242 Tanks
394 Large artillery pieces
83,000 Men



BACKGROUND AND PREPARATIONS

General Omar Bradley



NINTH INFANTRY

Special report on 4 day
engagement at Brest.
Also intelligence
reports.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

BATTLE OF BOURG-NEUF AND FOURNEUF

The following is an account of a four-day engagement, 30 August to 2 September 1944, in which the 3rd Battalion, 9th Infantry, driving toward Brest, France, smashed a crucial strong point in the enemy's first main line of resistance at Fourneuf and Bourg-Neuf:

At the end of August the Ninth Infantry was battling southward in Brittany toward Brest and had broken through one strong German line of resistance near the Brest airfield. Another line blocking the next stage of advance lay several hundred yards farther south. It was anchored in the twin villages of Bourg-Neuf and Fourneuf, with the main defenses on a ridge guarding Fourneuf and dominating the entire area. (See Sketch Map No. 1, attached hereto.)

These defenses, including pillboxes, tunnels, foxholes, communicating trenches and cleverly camouflaged gun emplacements reinforced by timber and stone, were organized in depth. They faced in three directions, north, east and west; commanded excellent fields of fire and were so arranged as to take advantage of the difficult terrain. For apart from these carefully prepared fortifications which the Germans had so much time to construct, the terrain presented many natural tactical obstacles. The line of departure, an east-west road near Keralleunoc, was on one ridge. The main Fourneuf defenses were on the opposite ridge 1,000 yards to the south. Hence our troops had to advance down the slope of one ridge and up the slope of the other. From the outset our every movement could be observed. Enemy outposts could and did fight from hedgerow to hedgerow unobserved by our troops. Sunken lanes offered covered routes of withdrawal and supply for the defending forces, and yet served as bloody traps for our soldiers.

The enemy line was well manned. Among the German troops were the 4th Company, 7th Parachute Regiment, which was a weapons company then at full strength, and a platoon of the 8th Company, 7th Parachute Regiment. These troops differed greatly from the demoralized, disorganized German troops being captured in large numbers by the other two battalions. They were arrogant and self-assured; their morale was good. (See Statement of Captain Vsevolod N. Podlesski, Commanding Officer, I.P.W. Team #28, attached hereto.)

Before 30 August the Ninth Infantry Regiment had been attacking with two battalions abreast; the 2d Battalion on the right and the 1st Battalion on the left. The 3d Battalion, less "K" Company, was in reserve. "K" Company was dug in protecting the Regimental right flank, just east of Gouesnow.

As the 2d Battalion approached the enemy strongholds at Bourg-Neuf and Fourneuf, its progress southward stopped. The only possible advance was to the southeast, flanking Bourg-Neuf and Fourneuf on the east. On 29 August, therefore, it was decided to press the attack with three battalions abreast, committing the 3d Battalion on the right. This alignment brought the 3d Battalion, commanded by Major William F. Kernan, squarely up against the carefully prepared German positions at Bourg-Neuf and Fourneuf. The ensuing battle in

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this area raged through three days of bitter fighting to a hand-to-hand climax in hedgerows and pillboxes on 1 September. On 2 September, final day of the engagement, the battalion occupied all its objectives without further opposition.

The conduct of the entire battle was notable for skillful and determined leadership and many instances of great personal bravery and self-sacrifice, one of the most outstanding of which was a bayonet-and-grenade charge that cost the 3d Platoon of "I" Company almost 100 percent casualties.

The chronology of the four day engagement follows:

First Day, 30 August 1944

The Battalion launched the attack in column of companies, in the order "I", "J", "K".

With artillery support, "L" Company drove south to the first enemy positions, (see Sketch Map No. 1), where the heavy machine gun, small arms and mortar fire encountered was augmented by the direct support of self propelled guns firing at point blank range from the road running through Bourg-Neuf. A decision was made, therefore, to move the company around to the left, gain contact with the 2d Battalion, whose boundaries ran along the road bordering Fields #6, #7, and #21, and flank the enemy from the east, while "I" Company took up the fire fight north of the village. Several times as "I" Company was by-passing Bourg-Neuf it tried to close in on the village from the flank, but each attempt was repulsed by artillery, mortar and rifle fire and grenades. Twenty casualties were suffered by the company on this first day of fighting. By nightfall it had taken up positions along the Fourneuf road, almost 1000 yards from the line of departure, in Fields #16, #20, and #21.

"I" Company struck south from the line of departure in contact with "J" Company. It soon became evident that the strength of the enemy positions required that the major part of the Battalion be used in the development. Consequently, "I" Company was ordered to occupy Fields #6 and #7.

"K" Company, initially, remained on the right flank keeping contact with units of the 121st Infantry on the right of the Ninth Infantry. Later in the day, however, "K" Company was relieved by "E" Company of the 5th Ranger Battalion, and moved southeastward to the outskirts of Bourg-Neuf to occupy the same ground "L" Company and "I" Company had held and then vacated in their flanking operation. Thus, with "K" Company on the north and "L" Company and "I" Company on the east, Bourg-Neuf was threatened from two directions at the end of the first day. (See Sketch Map Nos. 2, 3 & 4.)

Second Day, 31 August 1944

"L" Company's mission for the day was to cross the Fourneuf road, swing due west astride the road and seize Fourneuf. The enemy defense was dug in along the hedgerows paralleling the road and were defended with bitter determination despite our superiority of supporting fires. Every field was criss-crossed with cleared fields of machine gun fire through the hedgerows. To reach these

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Fields from the Fournuef road our men had to surmount a nine-foot hedgerow. Time and again the two assault platoons flung themselves over the hedgerow under artillery and mortar fire only to be pinned down short of their objective by the enemy's machine guns. On one of these attacks Sgt. Anthony Raimondo, leading his squad, succeeded in reaching the protection of the very hedgerow behind which the enemy was situated. The German weapons could not be depressed sufficiently to cover the ground immediately in front of them. Sgt. Raimondo and his two scouts engaged in a furious hand grenade battle. The rest of the squad was pinned down half way back in the field. The men could not advance because of machine guns firing from the flank.

Apparently, however, some of Sgt. Raimondo's grenades had been effective. He was able, finally, to get the remnants of his squad out of the field. Sixteen men were killed or wounded throughout the day's fight for that ground.

Stopped in its attack south, "L" Company turned west toward Fournuef. By nightfall, in conjunction with "I" Company's push to Bourg-Neuf on its right, it had driven the enemy back three hedgerows. In fighting of this character, this was a substantial gain for this period of time. (See sketch Map No. 4)

"K" Company and "I" Company collaborated in an attack on Bourg-Neuf with the mission of forcing the enemy from his well organized and strongly held positions in and around the buildings in the northern and southern sections of the village. "K" Company was to sweep south through the fortified area that had stopped "L" Company on the previous day with the limited mission of driving the Germans from the houses in the northern part of the village. Simultaneously, "I" Company was to launch its attack, driving due west across the front of "K" Company to clear the houses in the southern part of the village.

Both companies crossed their lines of departure at the appointed hour, smashing forward under withering enemy artillery, mortar and automatic small arms fire. The enemy strongly contested every inch of the way, but by the close of the day both companies had gained their objectives, outposting their areas and preparing for a continuation of the attack the next day.

During this day's operation "K" Company found its path strewn with a pattern of mines laid in great profusion, including Teller mines with anti-personnel pressure-type igniters, cunningly concealed S-mines, "shoe" mines and "mustard pots".

Third Day, 1 September 1944

At 1000 hours on 1 September 1944, under a skillfully layed smoke barrage, Company "I" attacked Fournuef. (See sketch Map No. 5)

The assault on the main pillbox and trench defenses described above and shown in the accompanying sketch was assigned to the 3d Platoon, under T/Sgt. Archie F. Averette. The company's casualties in the previous days had been heavy and on the morning of 1 September 1944 the 3rd platoon had only twenty-four men, the platoon leader and twenty-three others, of whom only eight had been with the platoon when it arrived in France, on 7 June 1944. The 1st and 2nd Platoons also were reduced to less than thirty men each.

The 3d Platoon organized into two squads. Each squad advanced on its objective, in wedge formation, with fixed bayonets. The approach was open to enemy fire, but the German gunners fired blindly in the smoke. Reaching the pillbox without casualties, the platoon charged with grenades and bayonets. Close-quarter fighting flared all along the line. Some of the enemy were shot, some bayoneted and some, prodded from their holes, surrendered. Three prisoners were sent back to our lines unescorted; no one could be spared to guard them.

S/Sgt. Lester F. Marvin, leader of the right assault squad, and his BAR man pushed across the full length of the fortified positions, paving the way for a possible break-through by our forces, when enemy reinforcements, observed from the Battalion CP, came along the sunken roads from the west and opened fire with machine guns. Men in both squads, including Sgt. Marvin and his BAR man, were killed. Many were wounded.

Meanwhile Sgt. Averette and several men made for a tunnel that led under a hedgerow to the Fournuef road. A struggle for the tunnel ensued. The Germans guarding it were wiped out. Three of our soldiers were killed. Sgt. Averette and two of his men crawled through the tunnel, but while seeking to establish contact with the 2d Platoon on the left, they were caught by the machine gun fire of the newly arrived German reinforcements and were killed.

These casualties wiped out the 3d Platoon as a fighting unit.

The 2d Platoon engaged the enemy at point-blank range in the Fournuef road and among the buildings of the village. Its casualties were so heavy it had to pull back without taking its objective immediately.

In the fierce fighting, however, the two platoons, though hard hit, inflicted serious casualties on the enemy and the toll rose when our artillery blanketed the area later in the day. Twenty-five enemy dead were counted on the battle ground. Fifty-seven Germans, almost entirely from among the reinforcements who had been brought up and then mauled by our artillery, surrendered to units of the 121st Infantry. Nine more straggled back over the field that night and surrendered to Company "K" at Bourg-Neuf.

The Germans were too much weakened to hold the Fournuef positions. During the night of 1 September they retired leaving the way open for Company "I" to advance to its objective the next day.

Company "L" thwarted the previous day in its attempts to seize the fields south of the Fournuef road, struck South with renewed vigor on the third day. The enemy was still strong and several times the company was hurled back from hedgerows before it finally shattered German resistance.

On the first attack, at 1000 hours, under cover of all the Battalion's heavy weapons, one squad of the 2d Platoon swept across field No. 24 while a second squad cleared out the houses in the Northwest corner of the field. Five men reached the low hedge bisecting the field half way to the German positions. There two accurate enemy mortar shells killed four of the men and wounded the squad leader. With his leg broken, he attempted to stumble back along the low hedgerow bordering the field on the West. He was caught in the path of the machine gun firing across the hedge and shot to pieces.

A second attack was stopped dead by mortar and machine gun fire. Losses were serious and the men were disheartened. At 1400, Major Korman climbed up the hedgerow bordering Field No. 24 to observe the positions which had held for so long. He directed his artillery forward observer to shell the field just 75 yards away. He told Lt. Davis, the company commander, that the positions could and would be taken. He turned to Lt. Van Vorpe, the only rifle platoon leader left, and told him to get his remaining 14 men over the hedgerow in a line of skirmishers as soon as the last round of 105's was on its way. At 1430 the barrage fell. The men scrambled up the hedgerow. At that critical moment the enemy's mortars replied. One heavy shell landed on the hedgerow, killing 2d Lt. Jack Carter, the mortar observer; his radio operator and two of the five-man light machine gun section attached to the platoon. It seriously wounded the remaining three members of the section and also four men of Lt. Van Vorpe's platoon who were caught on top of the hedgerow. Lt. Van Vorpe himself slid across the field. Only two others reached the far hedgerow, but with this as a nucleus, Lt. Van Vorpe gradually built up a line of fire. By nightfall four machine guns were in position. The field was taken. The pocket of resistance in the southwest corner of the Courneuf-Bourg-Neuf road junction was outflanked. "L" Company riflemen poured fire into it from the North along the road and from the newly won positions to the East. Five German bodies were evacuated the next day. Three prisoners were taken.

When the fighting ended on 1 September 1944 the Battalion had lost 45 men killed and 110 wounded. The core of enemy resistance had been crushed. That night they made no effort to recapture the positions from which they had been driven or to evacuate their dead. Dawn patrols revealed that the survivors had withdrawn. The 121st Infantry and the 3d Battalion together pushed South 1000 yards without incident. (see overlay - "Disposition of front line troops" - attached hereto.)

The heroism and self-sacrifice of these Infantry troops irrevocably deprived the Germans of a position of considerable tactical value, which subsequently proved to be the pivot of all their ground and fire organization in the entire sector. The ferocity and determination of the 3d Battalion's repeated and relentless assaults dealt a lasting blow to the morale of the enemy. To the last enemy fortified line at the old Mill before Brest, no comparable resistance was met.

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HEADQUARTERS NINTH INFANTRY

APO #2, U. S. Army,
14 September 1944.

S-T-A-T-E-M-E-N-T

1. In the course of the operations between 25 August - 5 September, 1944 the Ninth Infantry captured German Prisoners of War from the following enemy units:

a. 7th Paratroop Regiment (2d Paratroop Division)

4th Company,
5th Company
6th Company
7th Company
8th Company
13th Company
14th Company
15th Company

b. Miscellaneous Infantry and Naval units attached to above Paratroop units.

2. PW Periodic Interrogation Report for the 24-hour period, 292100 - 302100 August 1944 reads in part as follows: "PW interrogation revealed that the following units are facing INDEX (Ninth Infantry Regiment) from enemy's right to enemy's left; 7th Company, 5th Company, 8th Company, 4th Company - all belonging to the 7th Paratroop Regiment. One PW revealed the boundaries of the 4th Company to be as follows: Highway running south of GOUESNOV is left boundary; road running south of KERALLEUNOC into BOURG-NEUF is right boundary. 8th Company is on right of 4th Company. 2d Company probably on left of 4th Company, latter information not certain. 4th Company reinforced by one platoon of 13th Company, also some marines."

A captured enemy overlay forwarded on 31 August to Regiment by Division G-2 confirmed the above disposition of enemy troops, with the exception that the 5th Company was shown on the overlay as being in reserve, and the 6th Company as being on line.

Thus, the following enemy elements faced the 3d Battalion of the Ninth Infantry:

a. The 4th Company of the 7th Paratroop Regiment.

b. The left flank of the 8th Company of the same Regiment.

3. PWs captured by the Ninth Infantry from the adjacent enemy 4th and 8th Companies, reinforced by attached paratroopers from other companies and other personnel from miscellaneous Naval units show the following day-by-day distribution:

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

3. (cont'd)

PWs Captured From	<u>4th Company</u>	<u>8th Company</u>
25 August	0	0
26 August	0	1
27 August	1	0
28 August	0	18
29 August	0	3
30 August	6	18
31 August	6	3
1 September	3	0
2 September	4	13
3 September	0	5
4 September	7	2
5 September	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL	27	63

Analysis of above figures show:

- a. PWs from 4th Company were composed of:
 - Basic 4th Company personnel.....18
 - Other paratroopers attached..... 4
 - Attached Naval personnel..... 5
 - 27
- b. PWs from 8th Company were composed of:
 - Basic 8th Company personnel.....28
 - Other paratroopers attached.....16
 - Attached Naval personnel.....19
 - 63

The above figures are shown in this statement for the purpose of illustrating the difference in quality of personnel of the two adjacent enemy companies. Up until 30 August, the 4th Company yielded but one PW as against 22 PWs from the 8th Company.

4. The 4th Company was a Heavy Weapons Company, with two Machine Gun Platoons and one Heavy Mortar Platoon (81mm). PW interrogation revealed that in this campaign the 4th Company did not lose its identity as a Heavy Weapons Company, except perhaps that instead of having heavy machine guns it was supplied with light machine guns. The number of mortars in use was probably 6 - 8. It was reinforced by some personnel from the Regimental 13th Company and attached personnel from German Naval units, who were used as riflemen. Thus, the Company was able to fight not only as a Heavy Weapons Company with extremely concentrated automatic and mortar fire power, but also act as a rifle company. Furthermore, through interrogation it was ascertained that in contra-distinction to other companies in this paratroop regiment, the 4th Company was not substantially diluted by Naval personnel. It is believed that approximately one squad of Naval personnel per platoon was attached to the company, the other attachments coming from such paratroop special unit companies as the 13th, 14th, and 15th. According to PWs the 4th Company was at full strength when it was put on the line.

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5. It was not until after 29 August that the 4th Company began to show signs of deterioration, but even then the number of PWs captured was insignificant in comparison with those from other companies (for instance, the 5th, which lost 48 PWs in one afternoon).

The attitude of the 4th Company's PWs also showed a marked difference as far as morale and appearance was concerned. During interrogation they proved unwilling to give much information about their unit's organization, strength, casualties, weapons, etc. In IPW Periodic Report # 86, the following entry was made: "PWs from the 4th Company showed indications of high morale. Most were washed and clean shaven, and uniforms were in neat condition."

VSEVOLOD N. PODLESSKI,
Capt, FA, CIC, Team #28.

IPW PERIODIC REPORT

From: 1 Sept 1944

To : 1 Oct 1944

IPW TEAM #28

Index Hds.

3 Oct. 1944

ENEMY IDENTIFICATIONS:

Enemy identifications for this period is incomplete, due to the fact that it was impossible to segregate all PWs captured upon the collapse of the Fortress BREIT. The following segregation is of those PWs taken before the final phase of the BREIT campaign.

<u>a. 7th PARA-BATT. (2nd PARA DIV.)</u>						
4th Co.	1 Pvt.	1 Pfc.	7 Cpl.	2 Nco.	Total	11
5th Co.	3 Pvt.	1 Pfc.	5 Cpl.	3 Nco.		12
(att. 7th)	1 Pvt.					1
6th Co. (att. to 8th)			1 Cpl			1
7th Co.	2 Pvt.	1 Pfc	7 Cpl.	5 Nco.		15
8th Co.		2 Pfc	2 Cpl			4
2nd Bn. Hdq. (att. 8th)		1 Pfc	2 Cpl			3
12th Co. (att. to 4th)		1 Pfc.				1
15th Co. (att. to Co. unknown.)		2 Pfc				2
(att. to 7th)				1 Nco		1
(att. to 8th)		1 Pfc.				1
(att. to 5th.)	1 Pvt					1
						1 Total 53
<u>b. 2nd PARA ARTY BATT. (1st Bn Medics)</u>						
1st Bn Hdq. (att. 8th Co.)				1 Nco		1 Total 1
<u>c. 9th U Boat Flotilla</u>						
(att. 5th Co.)	1 Pvt	1 Pfc.	1 Cpl.		Total	3
(att. 7th Co.)	1 Pvt		1 Cpl	1 Nco.		3
(att. 8th Co.)		1 Pfc.	2 Cpl			3
(att. unknown)			2 Cpl.	1 Nco.		3 Total 12
<u>d. 231st Marine ARY BN. (A A)</u>						
(att. 7th Co.)			1 Cpl.			1 Total 1
<u>e. NAVAL DOCK UNIT</u>						
(att. unknown)			3 Cpl			3 Total 3
<u>f. MEDICAL DET. 504th AIR FORCE MIXED AA BN.</u>						
(att. 8th Co.)				1 Nco.		1 Total 1
<u>g. 54th AIR SIGNAL BATT.</u>						
(9th Co. att 8th)			1 Cpl.			1 Total 1
<u>h. TORPEDO COMMAND</u>						
(att. 7th Co.)			1 Cpl			1
(att. unknown)			1 Cpl			1 Total 2
<u>i. HARBOR COMPANY</u>						
(att. 7th Co.)			1 Cpl.			1 Total 1

SECRET

1. 805th MARINE ARTY I						
2nd Btry. (att. to						
7th Co.)						
	1 Pfc.	2 Cpl.	3 Nco.	Total	6	
(att. 8th Co.)		1 Cpl			1	
(att. unknown)		1 Cpl	1 NCo.		2	
3rd Btry. (att.						
7th Co.)						
(att. 8th Co.)		7 Cpl.	4 Nco.		11	
7th Btry.		1 Cpl.			1	
(att. 4th Co.)		1 Cpl			1	
(att. 7th Co.)		1 Cpl			1	
					<u>1</u>	Total 23
k. 851st INF. RGT.						
14th Co. (att.						
7th Co.)						
	1 Pvt	1 Pfc		1 Nco	3	Total 3
1. 852nd INF. RGT.						
3rd Co						
(att. 7th Co.)						
		1 Cpl			1	
5th Co						
(att. 7th Co.)						
	3 Pfc	1 Cpl.			4	
6th Co.						
(att. 5th Co.)	1 Pvt.	7 Pfc.	2 Cpl.		10	
(att. 7th Co.)	2 Pvt.	1 Pfc.	7 Cpl.	3 Nco.	13	Total 28
8. 6th SPERRBRECHER FLOTILLA (BLOCKADE RUNNER FLOTILLA)						
(att. 4th Co.)						
		1 Pfc.			1	
(att. 5th Co.)						
	1 Pvt.				1	
(att. 7th Co.)						
	1 Pvt.	3 Pfc.	4 Cpl.	6 Nco.	14	
(att. 8th Co.)						
	1 Pvt.	1 Pfc	1 Cpl.	1 Nco.	2	
					<u>2</u>	Total 20
n. 40th SPERRBRECHER FLOTILLA						
(att. 8th Co.)						
	1 Pfc.	2Cpl.			3	Total 3
o. FIGHTER SQUADRON #1. AIR FORCE GROUP # 152						
(att. 7th Co.)						
		1 Cpl.			1	Total 1
p. Russian PW Labor En. (1 Lieutenant, 158 EM)						
					Grand Total	153
					Grand Total up to time of	159
					Collapse of Fortress Brest:	312

The period from 1 Sept. 1944-1 Oct 1944, incl., was marked primarily by the capture of the East Sector of BREST by this regiment, during which only an estimated total of prisoners can be given. Until the collapse of the fortress, accurate count and segregation of PWs could be maintained. Upon the surrender, however, only a rough count could be made, and segregation by units was impossible. The accurate count of PWs up to this time was 312, and the total of PWs taken upon surrender was 2313, although this figure is short of the actual total.

A large number of wounded and medical personnel from the two hospitals taken by this regiment remained untotaled, for none but the walking wounded were evacuated through PW channels. Other hospital units and seriously wounded were evacuated by Corps and Army personnel, and remained uncounted.

Reports of individual resistance after the formal surrender had taken place were almost nil, according to reports from our line troops, and PWs. The Germans were, on the whole completely aware of the impending surrender, and most of them were clean shaven, and many carried bundles and suitcases evidently prepared previously. All Realized that they had carried on a hopeless fight but were

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extremely proud of the fact that they held out as long as they did.

On the 15th of Sept., 159 Russians were given a white flag by a German Captain, and told to find their way to the American lines. This group was located and captured by Index Rod "C". All the PWs had been German PWs for some time, and had been placed in what might be called a labor bn., of which the 720th Truck Co. was a part. The PWs had been occupied on the harbor, loading and unloading supplies. Some were still in PW dress, while the rest were attired in nondescript uniforms of the army and navy.

These PWs were of immense value to the regiment for information concerning targets and installations in the BRIST area. The Russians had to be kept separate from German PWs at IV. BRIST PW cage because of threatened revenge for the time they spent in captivity.

This IPW team, upon the fall of BRIST found no need for interrogation, but acted as interpreters for units evacuating hospitals, and at other points requiring German speaking personnel.

The German Commandant was amazed at the maneuver that placed our Third Bn. inside the fortress wall, and stated that had it not been for that move, he could have held out for another three days or so. When presented with details of our action, he inquired of junior officers whether security had been posted at our point of entry, to which an affirmative answer was given. This security, however, was the first personnel to be forced to surrender, thus being unable to give warning.

Our line troops state that the maneuver would have been much more difficult if not possible, had the security personnel used its machine gun, due to the small point of entry and the unobstructed field of fire.

Seventeen American wounded were located in the hospitals, and all claimed excellent treatment by the German doctors, particularly one who had a head injury made a delicate brain operation necessary. He was up and walking within ten days. All professed to have had the best care available, and good food.

/s/ Vsevolod N. Podlesaki
/t/ ВСЕВОЛОД Н. ПОДЛЕСАКИ
Capt. (N. A.)
SIC IPW Team #28