

1946

Blue infantrymen: the combat history of the Third Battalion, 310th Infantry Regiment, Seventy-eighth "Lightning" Division

United States Army

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Blue Infantrymen



IN APPRECIATION

In behalf of all the officers and men of the Third Battalion 310th Infantry, I want to extend the deepest and most sincere appreciation and gratitude to 1st Lt. Robert A. Durk, who personally supervised the publication and who skillfully performed all the designing and special art work, and to his assistants, 2nd Lt. Stephen A. Zelenka, Private First Class James E. Edling Emmett R. Adams, Gordon W. Greimes, and Roger G. Edwards, who collected and compiled the information and material necessary for the publication of this book. Through their efforts a living, and eternal memory of the Third Battalion and its men, both living and dead, has been created.

Harry Lutz



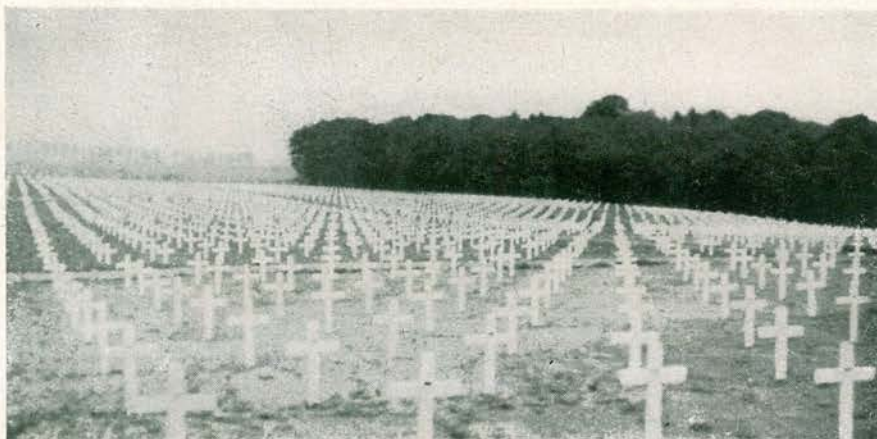
LT. COL. HARRY LUTZ

COMMANDING OFFICER

Blue Infantrymen

THE
COMBAT HISTORY
OF THE
THIRD BATTALION
310TH INFANTRY REGIMENT
SEVENTY EIGHTH
"LIGHTNING" DIVISION

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REMEMBER . . .

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land,
When you can no more hold me by the hand
Nor I half turn to go, yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you planned.
Only remember me. You understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray
And afterwards remember, do not grieve
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thought that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and be glad,
Than that you should remember and be sad.

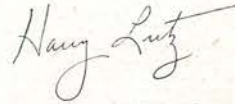
The above poem was written by Pfc Anthony Alo of Love Company, on his last furlough at home in the States before coming to the European theater. It was discovered among his books by his brother in June, 1945, long after the family had been notified of his death in action.

Pfc Alo was number one gunner of Love Company's Light Machine Gun Section and was killed on Jan. 30th, 1945 in the attack on Konzen. The poem was dedicated to his Mother and Dad by Tony at the time of writing.

ADONAS
11 11 11
TRAFEL
11 11 11

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the men of the Third Battalion 310th Infantry who gave their lives for their country in World War II. It is the intent that the material contained herein will serve as an everlasting picture of the deeds and the courage of those who have gone, but whom we will never forget. It is hoped that their bereaved families will find comfort in this book and that it will enable them to know of the comrades of their sons, husbands or brothers who died so that others might live.



Lt. Col. Inf.

OFFICERS

and next of kin

Blum, Jack
2nd Lt. ASN 0-1049732
Mr. Benjamin Blum,
1512 Charlotte St.,
Bronx, N. Y.

Bonner, James R.
Captain ASN 0-1289852
Mrs. Jennie C. Bonner,
2809 Dearborn St.,
Utica, New York.

Field, Robert W.
2nd Lt. ASN 0-2000601
Mrs. Alice P. Field,
1733 W. 106th St.,
Beverly Hills,
Chicago 43, Ill.

Fried, Leon W.
2nd Lt. ASN 0-1053606

Mrs. Lois E. Fried,
600 Fish St., Winnetka, Ill.

Houck, William C.
2nd Lt. ASN 0-1045116
Mrs. Alice M. Houck,
Niagara Falls, Ontario.

Miles, Seward P.
1st Lt. ASN 0-1044621
Mrs. Jane K. Miles,
5909 Craciososa, Drive,
Los Angeles, Calif.

Mullin, Hugh J.
1st Lt. ASN 0-1286168
Mrs. Clarinda Mullin,
30 Amsby St.,
Binghamton, N. Y.

Postlethwait,
Richard H.

2nd Lt. ASN 0-1327175
Mrs. Helen Postlethwait,
2750 Hampden Court,
Chicago, Ill.

Sahlin, Axel E., Jr.
2nd Lt. ASN 0-2008485
Mrs. Ester T. Sahlin,
29 Linden Avenue,
Kenmore, N. Y.

Saunders, Harry A.
1st Lt. ASN 0-25517
Mrs. Ida S. Saunders,
1211 Colley Ave.,
Norfolk, Virginia.

Zetterberg, Arvid P., Jr.
1st Lt. ASN 0-547158
Winifred I Zetterberg
705 Hawthorne Rd.,
Newcastle Jud.

ENLISTED MEN

and next of kin

Headquarter's
Company

Creps, Robert J.
Pfc. ASN 33440203
Mrs. Margaret R. Creps,
265 Magnolia Place,
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Hartzell, Richard L.
T/4 ASN 35322985
Mrs. Anna E. Hartzell,
2215 W. 33rd St.,
Cleveland, Ohio.

Lindsey, Hermon L.
T/Sgt. ASN 7004470

Mrs. Lunie A. Lindsey,
Box No. 151,
Swainsboro., Ga.

Webb, Carl J.
Pfc. ASN 32753716
Mrs. Sarah Webb,
541 Highland Ave.,
Westville, New Jersey.

Company I

Adams, Manley D.
Pfc. ASN 32934019
Mr. Manley D. Adams Sr.,
112 4th St.,
Little Valley, N. Y.

Anderson, Robert A.
S/Sgt. ASN 37273644
Mrs. Charles G. Anderson,
1631 Charles Ave.,
St. Paul, Minnesota.

Baekl, Howard, J.
Pfc. ASN 36651478
Mrs. Florence Baekl,
2539 Spaulding, Chicago, Ill.

Baker, Orville A.
Pfc. ASN 38679605
Mrs. Edna Duncan,
General Delivery,
Harlington, Texas.

Bane, John B.
 Pfc. ASN 39591943
 Mrs. Fern M. Bane,
 No. 3 La France Apt.,
 Ogden, Utah.

Barefield, James A.
 Pfc. ASN 34926695
 Mrs. Dorothy H. Barefield,
 901 A. Street,
 Meridian, Miss.

Bayles, Marion E., Jr.
 Pfc. ASN 36470325
 Mrs. Lucille A. Bayles,
 No. 83, Stillwell, Oklahoma.

Beidel, Paul M.
 Pfc. ASN 33794418
 Mrs. Laura Beidel,
 Rte 2 c/o Clarence Hamilton,
 Newville, Pa.

Berry, Carl C.
 Pfc. ASN 33794418
 Mrs. Frances E. Berry,
 247 W. Hansberry St.,
 Philadelphia, Pa.

Bilowich, John
 T/5 ASN 33285480
 Mrs. Julia Bilowich,
 34 Bredinville St., Box 652,
 Lyndora, Pa.

Bishop, Horace H.
 Pfc. ASN 34210217
 Mrs. Annie C. Bishop,
 Route No. 3, Chesnee, S. C.

Bozochovic, Edward J.
 Pvt. ASN 33948747
 Mrs. Mary Bozochovic,
 Smokeless, Pa.

Brown, Paul E.
 Pfc. ASN 33704724
 Mrs. Veronica J. Brown,
 c/o Collier Store Rte 3,
 Uniontown, Pa.

Burnett, Albert
 S/Sgt. ASN 33589482
 Mrs. Marcella Burnett,
 3rd & Massasoit St.,
 Lester, Pa.

Clayton, Richard F.
 S/Sgt. ASN 32069823
 Mrs. Nina Clayton,
 8036 West Chester Pk.,
 Upper Darby, Pa.

Collins, Robert W.
 S/Sgt. ASN 37665559
 Mrs. Gwenith E. Collins,
 225 Benton St., Boone, Iowa.

Columbus, George C.
 Sgt. ASN 33452379
 Mrs. Bertha Columbus,
 Berea, Virginia.

Crane, Ira J.
 Pvt. ASN 6928650
 Mrs. Edna E. Crane,
 706 Forrest Ave.,
 Alabama City, Ala.

Erickson, Harold A.
 S/Sgt. ASN 37273589
 Mrs. Dorothea Erickson,
 1536 Taylor Ave.,
 St. Paul, Minn.

Figus, Irvin B.
 Pfc. ASN 37413022
 Mr. Daniel Figus,
 1420 N. Union St.,
 St. Louis, Missouri.

Funk, Norman A.
 Pvt. ASN 39930828
 Mrs. Sarah R. Funk,
 RFD No. 1,
 Smithfield, Utah.

Gates, Victor W.
 T/Sgt. ASN 32338681
 Mrs. Mary C. Gates,
 122 Rosedale Rd.,
 Tuckahoe, N. Y.

Gust, Edward A.
 Sgt. ASN 36812295
 Mrs. Adela Gust,
 Rte 3, Mayville, Wisconsin.

Hyott, Henry J.
 Pvt. ASN 34982128
 Mrs. Elizabeth Hyott,
 McLam, Mississippi.

Jennings, Charles G.
 Pvt. ASN 33813266
 Mrs. Anna C. Jennings,
 2621 Sandeland St.,
 Chester, Pa.

Kershaw, Robert E.
 T/5 ASN 33588951
 Mrs. Edith A. Kershaw,
 550 Swain St., Bristol, Pa.

McGough, Robert F.
 Pfc. ASN 39472899
 Mrs. Kathryn I. McGough,
 St. Maries, Idaho.

Meadows, Grover G.
 T/Sgt. ASN 15324062
 Mrs. Lavonne Meadows,
 431 Alexander St.,
 Akron, Ohio.

Mettert, James R.
 Pvt. ASN 35415514
 Mrs. Florence C. Mettert,
 Rte No. 1., Galion, Ohio.

Motter, Henry C.
 S Sgt. ASN 33575500
 Mr. Robert Motter,
 414 Laura St.,
 Philipsburg, Pa.

Norman, Harold J. Jr.
 Cpl. ASN 32803955
 Mrs. Luella Norman,
 121 Jersey Ave.,
 Port Jervis, N. Y.

Ohler, Adolph G.
 Pfc. ASN 37635911
 Mrs. Rita C. Ohler,
 6766 Roberts Ave.,
 St. Louis, Mo.

Quinn, William F.
 Cpl. ASN 32279637
 Mrs. Mary O. Quinn,
 550 Elk St., Buffalo, N. Y.

Redick, William
 S/Sgt. ASN 33431957
 Mrs. Margaret V. Redick,
 Rte 1, Washington, Pa.

Robakowski, Norbert S.
 Pvt. ASN 35227500
 Mrs. Evelyn N. Robakowski,
 1001 N. Brookfield St.,
 South Bend, Indiana.

Robinett, Reginald P.
 S/Sgt. ASN 38053861
 Mrs. Dovia O. Robinett,
 Gen. Delivery,
 Livingstone, Texas.

Ruggiero, Armando
 Pvt. ASN 31465015
 Mrs. Frances Ruggiero,
 30 Union St.,
 Revere, Massachusetts.

Sacco, Anthony J.
 Pvt. ASN 6977697
 Mrs. Wava L. Sacco,
 445 Mullett St.,
 Schenectady, N. Y.

Stevenson, Niel D.
 Pvt. ASN 37590967
 Mrs. Clara R. Stevenson,
 Searing, N. D.

Taylor, Lee F., Jr.
 Pvt. ASN 32453941
 Mrs. Lorraine Taylor,
 609 E. 2nd St.,
 Plainfield, N. J.

Wallace, James E.
 Pvt. ASN 35435990
 Mrs. Dorothy M. Wallace,
 483 S. Ogden Ave.,
 Columbus, Ohio.

Wiley, William B.
 Pfc. ASN 36968564
 Mrs. Annie Wiley,
 9615 Burnette St.,
 Detroit, Michigan.

Company K

Barbee, Sam S.
Pfc. ASN 34868606
Mrs. Maude T. Barbee,
Rt. 3, Box 847,
Monroe, N. C.

Bartolotta, Settino F.
Pfc. ASN 31313024
Mrs. Julia Bartolotta,
RFD Box 41, Marlboro St.,
Portland, Conn.

Bennett, Lloyd S.
Pvt. ASN 31351488
Mrs. Alice Bennett,
105 Main St., Dexter, Maine.

Bindreiff, Laurence W.
Pvt. ASN 39196564
Mrs. Theresa Hazelmyer
1403 Dalton Ave.,
Spokane, Washington.

Blinks, David A.
Pvt. ASN 37697712
Mrs. Emily Blinks,
Lisbon, Iowa.

Boshell, William H.
Pfc. ASN 34837497
Mrs. Vera H. Boshell
Rt. 2, Carbon Hill, Alabama.

Branson, Thomas G.
Pfc. ASN 32917768
Mr. Harry Branson,
Palver Ave.,
Belford, New Jersey.

Burbach, Harold J.
Tec. 5 ASN 36220104
Mrs. Mary Burbach,
Rt. 2, Banger, Wisconsin.

Bushey, Charles E.
Pvt. ASN 31357344
Mrs. Madeline Drinkwater,
31 Thurman Park,
Everett, Mass.

Camp, Francisco
Pfc. ASN 38672516
Mrs. Ascencion Rodriguez,
416 W. Nopal St.,
Uvalde, Texas.

Carlberg, Robert E.
Pvt. ASN 31432614
Mrs. Jennie Carlberg,
Main St.,
Hopkinton, Mass.

Chiljian, Masis G.
Pfc. ASN 39578260
Mrs. Lillian D. Chiljian,
2272 W. 24th St.,
Los Angeles, California.

Cieminski, Kenneth J.
Pfc. ASN 37589827
Mrs. Renelda Cieminski,
712 E. 3rd St.,
Winona, Minnesota.

Creety, Edmond P.
Pvt. ASN 39211552
Mr. Edmond L. Creety,
6232 26th Ave., N.E.,
Seattle, Washington.

Dale, Wayne W.
Pvt. ASN 20750441
Mrs. Nettie D. Felkey,
Armstrong, Iowa.

Etter, Paul L.
Pfc. ASN 33956716
Mrs. Sarah Etter,
158 S. Harrison Ave.,
Chambersburg, Pa.

Fillingim, Harry T.
Pfc. ASN 34809990
Mrs. Sarah E. J. Fillingim,
857 S. Scott St., Mobile, Ala.

Fischer, Robert J.
Pvt. ASN 36984475
Mrs. Freida E. Fischer,
Box, 35, Troutlake, Mich.

Foster, James A.
Pfc. ASN 35847356
Mrs. Fleda F. Foster,
Falling Waters, W. V.

Gisclair, Raoul D.
Pvt. ASN 39597976
Mrs. Edola M. Gisclair,
Box, 89, Cut Off, La.

Gutierrez, David L.
Pvt. ASN 39597976
Mrs. Josephine Gutierrez,
715 N. Brannick Ave.,
Los Angeles, Calif.

Hartz, James A.
Tec. 5 ASN 32841816
Mrs. Helen Hartz,
1428 South Park,
Buffalo, N. Y.

Huenefeld, William E.
Sgt. ASN 35792065
Mrs. Jane Huenefeld,
3532 Bevis Ave.,
Cincinnati 7, Ohio.

Huggins, John E.
Sgt. ASN 18039496
Mr. John Huggins,
Mulberry, Arkansas.

Lawrence, Barton R.
Cpl. ASN 38380984
Mrs. Laurencia Lawrence,
801 Derbigny St.,
Gretna, Louisiana.

LeVan, Daniel
Pvt. ASN 42095738
Mrs. Helen M. LeVan,
318 N. Oak St.,
Summit Hil, Pa.

Linderman, George O.
Pvt. ASN 35419981
Mrs. Lula M. Linderman,
924 Hart Road,
Columbus, Ohio.

Marshall, John J., Jr.
Pfc. ASN 12230653
Mr. John J. Marshall, Sr.,
565 Warwick Ave.,
West Englewood, N. J.

Masters, Harold S.
S/Sgt. ASN 20510285
Mrs. Gertrude Masters,
713 Gilman St.,
Marietta, Ohio.

McCauley, Paul C.
Pfc. ASN 35375520
Mrs. Clara V. Hall,
202 S. Georgia Ave.,
Martinsburg, W. Virginia.

McClellan, Frank A.
Pfc. ASN 37255138
Mr. Ambrose E. McClellan,
604 E. Magnolia St.,
Girard, Kansas.

Pasquale, Alexander A.
Pvt. ASN 35930128
Mrs. Nancy Pasquale,
15779 Mandalay Ave.,
Cleveland, Ohio.

Pickering, Kelton P.
Pfc. ASN 36961593
Mrs. Ruth L. Pickering,
2921 Broick Ave.,
Detroit, Michigan.

Rangel, Gilbert P.
Pfc. ASN 38578976
Mrs. Clotilde P. Rangel,
Box 693, Bayard, N. M.

Rankins, Omer W.
Pfc. ASN 6975186
Mrs. Pearl M. Rankins,
Box 1232 Wewoka, Okla.

Rogers, Harry K.
Pfc. ASN 34634825
Mrs. Jewel N. Rogers,
726 Jefferson St.,
Paducah, Ky.

Sauer, Allen C.
Pvt. ASN 6977317
Mrs. Anna Sauer,
21 Morton Ave.,
Albany, New York.

Sielski, Lester S.
S/Sgt. ASN 35094597
Mrs. Wanda Sielski,
3547 Jefferson St., Gary, Ind.

Simon, Wayne E.
Pfc. ASN 39472863
Mrs. Ethel C. Abel,
Route 2, Okanogan, Wash.

Sloan, Horace E.
Pvt. ASN 6921946
Mrs. Lucy A. Sloan,
Hobbs Island, Alabama.

Stafford, James C.
Pvt. ASN 38658135
Mrs. Zula Stafford,
Route 4, Franklinton, La.

Wilson, Harry A.
Cpl. ASN 35061256
Mrs. Ethel N. Goe,
4128 Bucklea Ave.,
Cleveland, Ohio.

Yakerson, Irving S.
Cpl. ASN 31037475
Mr. Simon Yakerson,
51 Mead St.,
New Haven, Conn.

Yee, Chow H.
Pvt. ASN 42064280
Mr. Yat S. Yee,
32 Pell St., New York, N.Y.

Company L

Adcock, Elbert M.
Tec. 5 ASN 34738627
Mrs. Vuna M. Adcock,
Rt. 1, Whites Creek, Tenn.

Alo, Anthony J.
Pfc. ASN 33435069
Mrs. Lena Alo,
406 Parade St., Erie, Pa.

Barter, Maurico H. Jr.
Tec. 5 ASN 11016527
Mrs. Elizabeth Barter,
217 Water St., Gardiner, Me.

Bennet, LeRoy E.
Pfc. ASN 6931570
Mr. Guy H. Bennet,
1014 E. Garfield St.,
Clarinda, Iowa.

Bone, James H.
Pvt. ASN 38669837
Mrs. Rachel Bone,
Rt. 1, Box 72, Sidney, Ark.

Boore, Milton P.
Tec. 4 ASN 33574539
Mrs. Carrie Boore,
Rt. 3, Bedford, Pa.

Bradley, Frederick P.
Pfc. ASN 32065746
Mrs. Marie C. Bradley,
37 Colyman St.,
Newark, N.J.

Buchanan, Harry R.
Pvt. ASN 34997618
Mrs. Nellie Buchanan,
General Delivery,
Spear, North Carolina.

Bullock, Thomas W.
Sgt. ASN 35792284
Mr. George Bullock,
Louellen, Kentucky.

Cass, Robert T.
Sgt. ASN 39288715
Mrs. Constance S. Cass,
204 Silver St., Elsinore, Cal.
Chodynicky, Edward J.
Sgt. ASN 31453736
Mrs. Nelly Chodynicky,
84 Summer Hill Rd.,
Maynard, Mass.

Connell, Hermann E. Jr.
Pfc. ASN 35841746
Mrs. Hattie L. Connell,
1352 Indianola Ave.,
Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Crawford, Glenn A.
Pfc. ASN 34972520
Mrs. Ethel P. Crawford,
1118 15th St., Columbus, Ga.

Davenport, James H.
Sgt. ASN 35813188
Mrs. Maude E. Davenport,
Hodgenville, Ky.

Davis, Lowman R.
Pfc. ASN 33925118
Mr. Harry Davis,
426 Main St.,
South Fork, Pa.

Delasandro, Leonard J.
Sgt. ASN 32897371
Mrs. Mildred Delasandro,
615 Caswell Ave.,
Staten Island, N.Y.

DeLoach, Robert M.
Tec. 5 ASN 34357711
Mr. Joseph B. DeLoach,
Rt. 3, Eatonton, Ga.

Dobbs, Milton S.
T/Sgt. ASN 13144985
Mrs. Mory L. Dobbs,
Boaz, Alabama.

Dziepak, Henry J.
Cpl. ASN 31373241
Mrs. Salomea, Dziepak,
RFD 3, 741,
Manchester, N.H.

Ferrara, Eugene
Tec. 4 ASN 6719911
Mr. Alfred Ferrara,
1038 Freeman St.,
Bronx, New York.

Garcia, Charles A.
S/Sgt. ASN 38560558
Mrs. Ursula Garcia,
314 Hansford St.,
San Antonio, Texas.

Gladdish, Lee P.
Pvt. ASN 35881734
Mrs. Nattie I. Parker,
Fonde, Ky.

Gleim, Ernest J. Jr.
Pvt. ASN 33950491
Mrs. Helen Gleim,
1811 McNary Blvd.,
Wilkesburg, Pa.

Glunt, Robert E.
Pvt. ASN 35907099
Mr. Charles I. Glunt,
Route 4, Richmond, Indiana.

Gordon, Robert H.
Tec. 5 ASN 34778913
Mrs. Sophie D. Gordon,
301 Rowan Ave.,
Spencer, North Carolina.

Hart, William F.
Pvt. ASN 39480106
Mrs. Winifred M. Hart,
Gen. Delivery,
Wenatchee, Washington.

Jordan, Venable V.
Pfc. ASN 34636392
Mrs. Patsy R. Jordan,
Rt. 1, Bogue Chitte,
Mississippi.

Judy, Marvin D.
Pfc. ASN 35843267
Mr. Leonard Judy,
10 1/2 E. Main St.,
Trotwood, Ohio.

Knight, William W.
Pfc. ASN 31322380
Mrs. Dorothy H. Knight,
61 Tarhuna Ave.,
Jersey City, New Jersey.

Krause, Calvin L.
Pfc. ASN 36773504
Mrs. Ida Krause,
6251 Waveland Ave.,
Chicago, Ill.

Krentkowski, Arthur J.
Pfc. ASN 32847901
Mr. Clemons G. Krentkowski,
639 Park Ave.,
Syracuse, N.Y.

Lake, Herbert
Cpl. ASN 32361930
Mrs. Dalla Lake,
Runyons Corner Rd.,
Hopewell, N. J.
Mattis, LeRoy W.
Pfc. ASN 33812873
Mrs. Mary Oversdorf,
346 Washington St.,
Royersford, Pa.
McCombie, Claude J.
Pvt. ASN 13147086
Mrs. Jane McCombie,
RD., Loretto, Pennsylvania.
McCoy, Virgil E.
Pfc. ASN 39235068
Mrs. Mattis McCoy,
215 W. Ocean,
La Mabre, Calif.
McNally, Robert T.
Pfc. ASN 42016532
Mrs. Dona E. McNally,
132 N. Grove St.,
East Orange, New Jersey.
Miller, Truman L.
Pvt. ASN 37733474
Mr. Ira T. Miller,
150 1/2 N. Main St.,
Wichita, Kansas.
Millin, Wilbur
S/Sgt. ASN 36272165
Mrs. Bessie Millin,
PO Box 107,
Patch Grove, Wisconsin.
Nevitt, Robert R. A.
S Sgt. ASN 11050028
Miss Alice Dugan,
28 Fremont St.,
Nashua, N. H.
Oi, George
Pfc. ASN 31355727
Mrs. Chin Toy Oi,
16 Tyler St., Boston, Mass.
Orosz, Joseph M.
Sgt. ASN 33070875
Mrs. Helen Orosz,
746 Pine St., Whitaker, Pa.
Pazdan, Martin J.
S/Sgt. ASN 33592038
Mrs. Sarah Selepak,
138 Wendover St.,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Pritikin, Jerome
S/Sgt. ASN 20238518
Mr. Philip Pritikin,
2191 Creston Ave.,
New York, N. Y.
Repich, George L.
Tec. 5 ASN 32841992
Mrs. Rose Repich,
83 Elmview Drive RFD,
Tonawanda, New Jersey.
Rosenbaum, Harold
Pfc. ASN 31459706
Mrs. Leah Rosenbaum,
60 Curtis Road,
Revere, Massachusetts.
Salazar, Albert D.
Pvt. ASN 39051661
Mrs. Eva Salazar,
26 Tanglar St.,
Oakland, California.
Schneidewind, Raymond
Pfc. ASN 39088240
Mrs. Lena Schneidewind,
301 Washington St.,
Vallajo, California.
Stokes, Lester J.
Pfc. ASN 34795771
Mrs. Nina J. Stokes,
Haines City, Florida.
Tester, James D.
Pfc. ASN 34981334
Mr. John W. Tester,
R 5 c/o J. P. Baird,
Johnson City, Tenn.
Torres, Jose R.
Pfc. ASN 38579137
Mrs. Maria R. Gomez,
3710 Tularosa St.,
El Paso, Texas.

Company M

Boyer, Arlan A.
Pvt. ASN 33950729
Mrs. Amy Boyer,
RD 1, Auburn, Pa.
Coffey, James J.
Cpl. ASN 33580629
Mrs. Catherine Coffey,
6246 Oakles St.,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Foister, James L.
Pfc. ASN 34966514
Mrs. Alice M. Foister,
Rt. 5, Greenville, S. C.
Head, Cecil F.
Cpl. ASN 36599239
Mrs. Emma Head,
921 W. Kearsley,
Flint, Michigan.
Malinchak, Steve
Pfc. ASN 33705393
Mrs. Vera Malinchak,
111 Knox Ave.,
Monessen, Pa.
Roper, Erby H.
Pfc. ASN 36458353
Mrs. Lannie Roper,
Keith, Ky.
Sarantopoulos,
Charles J.
Pfc. ASN 31378189
Mrs. Stella S. Sarantopoulos,
PO Box 4,
Danielson, Conn.
Snipes, Jack W.
Pvt. ASN 34965875
Mrs. Kate Todd Snipes,
Rt. 3, Seneca, S. Carolina.

Third Battalion Medical Detachment

Brandenburg,
Calvin C.
T/5 ASN 37665676
Mrs. Jennie E. Brandenburg,
Box 222, W. Side,
Waterloo, Iowa.
Ficht, Henry C.
T/5 ASN 35052459
Mrs. Emma Ficht,
506 Franklin Ave.,
Amherst, Ohio.
Kallenberger,
Edward
Pfc. ASN 37554577
Mr. Fred Kallenberger,
Whsiek, North Dakota.
Rodrigues, Rudolfe
Pfc. ASN 39831093
Mr. Fabian Rodrigues,
Penasco, N. M.



MAJ. GEN. RAY W. BARKER
DIVISION COMMANDER
16. SEPTEMBER 1945

MAJ. GEN. EDWIN P. PARKER, JR.
DIVISION COMMANDER
15. AUG. 1942 — 16. SEPT. 1945





COLONEL T. H. HAYES
REGIMENTAL COMMANDER
9. FEBRUARY 1945



CLIFFORD W. ROBINSON
RED CROSS
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CAPT. PAUL J. MC GOVERN
REGIMENTAL CHAPLAIN

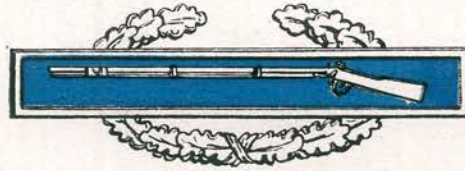


CAPT. OSCAR W. VOELZKE
REGIMENTAL CHAPLAIN





THIRD BATTALION



Prologue to Combat . . .

The Third Battalion of the 310th Infantry Regiment, 78th Infantry Division was activated on the 15 August 1942 and began its training at Camp Butner, N. C. This training consisted of general Infantry subjects such as tactics, weapons firing, infiltration, village fighting, bayonet training, hand to hand combat, and, lest we forget, long tiresome hikes. On the 15 November 1943 the Third Battalion moved to the Carolina Maneuver Area in South Carolina. After two weeks of rugged maneuvering the battalion returned on the 7 December 1943 to Camp Butner. At this time equipment was checked and new equipment issued in preparation for the Tennessee Maneuvers. While the battalion was preparing for the coming maneuvers, a POR shipment altered the course of events in the 78th Division. Men were picked from the different companies and placed on the overseas replacement shipment list. On the 2 January 1944 these men departed for Fort Meade, Maryland and from this camp were shipped to combat theaters in various parts of the world. On 20 January 1944 the battalion moved to the Tennessee Maneuver Area where they maneuvered against the 17th Airborne Division and the 106th Infantry Division. After six weeks of thorough training, with little rest the battalion returned to Camp Pickett, Virginia where the majority of the time was spent qualifying the men for overseas shipment. Another group of men was sent overseas 23 April 1944. The remainder of original men left in the battalion were the non-commissioned officers and a few of the officers. New replacements came to the organization and were trained by the remaining cadre. On 5 October 1944 the battalion moved to Camp Kilmer, N. J., the Port of Embarkation for the 78th Division. After eight days in Camp Kilmer they departed for England, 13 October 1944, on the General George S Squire, an American troop ship, sailed to Plymouth, England and landed after nine days at sea. Boarding a troop train at Plymouth, 26 October 1944 they journeyed to Bournemouth, England, where they did last minute training before crossing the English Channel. Three weeks later the battalion embarked for France. After landing at Le Havre they were convoyed to Yvetot, France, 21 November 1944. The battalion was issued new equipment and essentials necessary for successful combat. Upon arrival in Tongres, Belgium, 7 December 1944, the battalion began a review of training with emphasis placed on the importance of each individual doing his job correctly. Here the men witnessed their first V-2 buzz-bomb. Many of these were seen frequently flying overhead and at this time the men realized that it would not be very long before they would be seeing combat. Finally, the battalion was making its last move before its initial attack. They left Tongres, Belgium, 11 December 1944 and moved to the vicinity of Lammersdorf, Germany. Artillery fire was heard here for the first time as it was being delivered on the enemy they were prepared to fight. On the night of 10 December 1944 a group of officers and men assembled from the various companies and were oriented as to the situation confronting them. The morning of 11 December 1944 the advance party moved to the front lines and prepared positions for the remainder of the battalion. On the morning of 13 December 1944 the Third Battalion proceeded to the front where they relieved the 102 Cavalry by making their first attack of the war on the town of Rollesbroich, Germany.



*"Into the jaws of death, into the mouth of hell"
... , Tennyson*

Blue Baptism in Battle . . .

The view east from Lammersdorf was beautiful to the eye, rolling hedgerowed fields broken by an occasional farmhouse, ravines and steep pine hills. But it was ugly ground for offensive fighting. The wooded hill-crests made natural strongpoints for the enemy and gave them observation over all the natural or easy routes of attack. Those routes that remained were difficult, involved working through heavy brush and climbing steep and muddy heights. In addition the enemy had adjusted in on every possible target, thoroughly mined the roads and trails, and chosen its defensive positions with great care and wisdom. The 310th mission was to advance across this terrain, capture the town of Rollesbroich, the high ground north of Rollesbroich, and a road junction and commanding ground south of Rollesbroich.

The early morning of December 13 was extremely cold and the snow which had fallen intermittently for three days was in places waist deep. Already thoroughly wet, the troops had spent a miserable night preparing for the attack, trying to keep warm, and wondering what the real thing would be like and how well they would fight. At 0400 the men of the Third Battalion moved forward, worked their way up a nearly vertical 200 foot slope and passed through the 102nd Cavalry which had been holding the line. Meanwhile, to the north, the 311th Infantry and the 78th Reconnaissance Troop were firing everything they had, in order to deceive the enemy as to the 310th's direction of attack. The Third Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Harry Lutz, attacked at 0600: Co K on the north, Co L on the south, Co I in reserve. Struggling over slippery terrain in intense darkness, stumbling into foxholes, scratched by branches, the men advanced undiscovered by the enemy until 0625, when both companies received their first fire. Co L men quickly learned the noiseless approach of the mortar shell and the sound of rapid-fire German automatic weapons, while Co K saw its first Kraut soldiers, who fired at them until out of ammunition and then surrendered. The companies continued to advance and at 0730 seized their initial objectives, small hills overlooking Rollesbroich from the north-west and south-west. At this point the enemy showed its strength.

Machine-gun fire from a concrete troop shelter atop a steep hill north of Rollesbroich pinned down most of Co K while heavy artillery and mortar fire fell in its midst. There was no need for instructions — to dig in. The men dug quickly and automatically as they had hit the ground when the first shells fell. But a few elements of the company managed to work their way south and were able to enter Rollesbroich.

Co L too, ran into a tough obstacle. The company was astride a hill just west of the crossroads at the southern end of Rollesbroich when it received intense machine-gun fire from one of the crossroad houses. One platoon was pinned down. When it became apparent, from the ineffectualness of L Co's return fire, that this was no ordinary house they were facing, the still mobile platoons bypassed the crossroads to the north and entered Rollesbroich. By noon, with the assistance of those Co K elements which had entered the town, they had cleared most of Rollesbroich's 50-odd battered buildings. The resistance was primarily from snipers with burp guns who fired until their ammunition was exhausted and then came out shouting "Kamerad" Co's K and L had taken Rollesbroich and were mopping up, but the crossroads-house, which was in reality a disguised troop shelter with thick concrete walls, was still a problem. Two men made a gallant attempt to destroy it by creeping to its very walls and placing charges against them.

However, the long trek and constant falling in the snow had thoroughly wet the charges and they failed to explode. An artillery concentration might have been affective, but Capt. Barton H. Hunter, Co L commander, refused to chance injuring further the wounded men lying near the fort. Tank Destroyers were unable to approach, because the road, which had already been dubbed "88" Lane, was heavily mined and covered by artillery, mortar and automatic weapons fire which prevented removal of the mines. One platoon of Co I which had the mission of protecting an engineer squad attempting to clear this road had already suffered heavy casualties. Co B attacked at 1345. It advanced rapidly along the Lammersdorf-Rollesbroich road, "88 Lane" toward the Rollesbroich crossroads from where it expected to turn south to seize the road junction and high ground south of town. But fire from the camouflaged fort which had pinned down the L Co platoon, and from other crossroads houses, forced the company to dig in after suffering 13 casualties. At 1400, after making personal reconnaissance, Lt. Col. Lutz committed Co I with the mission of swinging around Co K's left flank and securing the hill and troop shelters which were holding up Co K. The newly-committed unit advanced through sporadic resistance, capturing 20 prisoners, to a group of houses just southwest of Co K. There, severe opposition from groups which had infiltrated back to their positions, forced the company to dig in. Meanwhile the elements of Companies L and K which had cleared Rollesbroich dug defensive positions on the eastern outskirts of the town. The Third Battalion, 310th Infantry had gained its primary objective, Rollesbroich.

Now the problem was to hold it.

There were enemy to the front, to the right and left and even to the rear. Men had to be fed and resupplied with ammunition, casualties had to be evacuated. This seemed an almost impossible task in view of the fact that no vehicles could enter Rollesbroich because of the mined roads and artillery bombardment. This meant that all supplies and casualties would have to be carried by hand for distances, ranging up to two miles, and this in darkness over extremely rough and difficult terrain. But the impossible was accomplished. All available men pitched in regardless of rank or of position. Lt. Col. Lutz personally led and worked with several of the carrying parties. After dark the garrison of the crossroads fort picked up our casualties and gave them first aid. Three uninjured men Pfc Biggs, Warren W. Hartwell and Sandford Brooks, who were pinned down near them were also taken. But later that night when six of the Krauts attempted to take these men to the rear they were intercepted by Pfc Crighe Vandergrift and Pfc Carey F. Everitt who with their BAR lay concealed in a clump of bushes. Vandergrift signalled to Biggs, Hartwell and Brooks to duck and opened fire, killing two of the Germans and causing the rest to surrender. All Rollesbroich was cleared except the southern tip, and the battalion was engaged in holding the town, evacuating casualties and resupplying ammunition. The enemy garrison abandoned the troop shelter during the night leaving behind the Co L wounded who had spent much of the night trying to convince the Germans to surrender. The enlisted men had been willing but their officer refused. Companies K and L mopped up in the northern part of Rollesbroich. Company I mopped up north of Rollesbroich and after dark, one platoon led by Lt. Maghran secured the high ground and troop shelter which had given Co K so much trouble. Anti-tank Co. under cover of darkness, sent two platoons into Rollesbroich to give support if needed. The Medical Aid men and Litter bearers continued to work without appreciable rest, treating casualties under fire without thought of their own safety, entering and carrying wounded from mine fields and hand-carrying litter cases across thousands of yards of the roughest kind of ground. The 3rd Battalion had decisively won its first engagement, gained approximately a mile into the Siegfried Line and had killed or captured more than 150 of the enemy.

The following day, December 15, the units cleaned out snipers who had infiltrated the lines during the night, improved communications and consolidated positions. Capt. Owens, K Company Commander, personally led a combat patrol composed of part of the first platoon and the light machine-gun section whose mission was to capture a group of buildings located north of Rollesbroich and between the north end of the village and the bald hill which I Company had captured and outposted the night before. After a terrific fight, they captured an enemy command post and a 75 mm gun position. Pfc Chilgion was killed in this action and Lts. Baskett and Maloney, the two fighting buddies of Company K were both seriously wounded. Co I made contact with the 78th Recon. Troop on the left and set up an OP to maintain contact. One platoon of Co 310th Infantry Regiment returned to the minefield which had inflicted so many casualties upon it and, with an A-T Co mine squad and a squad of Engineers, cleared a path through it. The platoon passed through the opening, contacted Co I and then returned with the rest of the company to 1st Bn control. That night it was learned that, several miles to the south massed armored divisions under Field Marshal Von Rundstedt had smashed through the American front line on a broad front and were racing into Belgium.

The days that followed were tense and uneasy ones. Not more than five miles to the south Von Rundstedt's armor had already penetrated deeply into American lines. However by 25 January 1945 the Ardennes Bulge no longer existed and American troops had fought their way back to their original lines. It was time to get moving again. During the attack on Konzen on 30 January 1945 a German officer captured by the Third Battalion described the attack as the most excellent and tactically sound he had ever witnessed. Co. I, supported by one platoon of Tank Destroyers, jumped off at 0530, while Cannon Co., working their 105's at better than 5 rounds a minute, fired a 10 minute concentration of 320 rounds into Konzen. The high ground east of Konzen (Konzen Hill) fell without resistance and Co I moved toward Konzen from the east. Co L with a platoon of tanks in support moved forward at 0800 and entered the town from the northeast. Resistance was light at first and the troops advanced rapidly through the shell-shattered village whose only remnant of former inhabitants were the horse and cow carcasses which lined the roads. At the center of town however, two platoons and the headquarters group were held up by heavy rifle and machine fire from a large stone house.

Several direct bazooka hits set afire the lead supporting tank which had approached to within a hundred yards of the house. T/5 Henry C. Ficht, Co L aidman, immediately



PFC. TONY VUCICH
ROLLESBROICH, GERMANY

rushed across the fire-raked field in front of the house, climbed the flaming tank turret, and was attempting to extricate the wounded tankers when he was killed by Burp gun fire. Ficht, was wearing a white snow suit with a large red cross painted on it as well as the red crosses on his helmet. Seeing this Pfc Richard L Lussier, who was returning to his platoon, after having successfully carried under fire an important message to the Company Commander, rushed directly toward the house. Surprised by the suddenness and daring of his attack 14 of the enemy surrendered when he entered the building, and the remaining 15 who were in the cellar, were taken by four Co L men who assaulted the house immediately behind Lussier. The company also overcame determined resistance from a factory at the northwestern end of town and contacted Co I at 1300. During the afternoon Co L mopped up in the outskirts and at dark dug in on the southern tip. A total of 62 enemy were captured by the battalion whose total casualties for the operation were 10 wounded and two killed.

On 31 January Company K was attached to the 311th Infantry Regiment and moved to Kesternich to assist the 3rd Battalion of the 311th Infantry Regiment in holding the town. K Company cleaned out the eastern end of Kesternich, defended it, but suffered heavy casualties in the action. The remainder of the battalion closed into billets in Simerath at 0200 1 February and remained there until the morning of 5 February.

The Third Battalion attacked Steckenborn on the morning of 5 February under the temporary command of Combat Command R of the 7th Armored Division. Company K was relieved the same morning and moved back to Simmerath where it remained throughout the Steckenborn action. Attached to the battalion for the attack on Steckenborn was a company of tanks and a platoon of tank destroyers. The general plan called for part of Combat Command R to seize the town of Steckenborn while the other part seized Strauch.

At 0630 Company L took up positions, prepared to fire on Strauch with MG's and 60's. Due to the poor visibility Company L was unable to fire on Strauch and dug in to await orders to advance. Both Company I and Company L were prepared to advance on Steckenborn on order of the CO of CCR. Company I was on the right and Company L on the left of the battalion sector.

The 18th Field Artillery fired 4000 rounds of rocket tubes into Steckenborn which it was later discovered completely terrified the Germans. At 0800 the Commanding Officer of Combat Command R ordered the task force to begin its advance from the vicinity of Kesternich. At the same time Company L began its advance. At 0845 two platoons of tanks moved out from their line of departure at Kesternich leaving one platoon in reserve in the vicinity of Kesternich. Two tank destroyers were also assigned to each of the two infantry companies.

Company I moved from its line of departure 200 yards south of Steckenborn at 1015. The company reached the edge of town at 1030 without encountering enemy resistance. On the left the task force from Kesternich including Company L had started into the town. At 1040 Company I reported artillery falling on their positions from east of the Roer River and counter-battery fire was requested by the Battalion Commander on all known positions east of the river.

Company L encountered its first enemy resistance soon after entering the town. S/Sgt. Campbell, Co L's 1st platoon, led a successful assault on a pillbox, running at full speed with a beehive charge to blast open the door. S/Sgt. Essex of the 2nd platoon of Company I cleared the roads of mines so a tank destroyer could be brought up to blast a pillbox. He completed the removal of the mines even though the enemy kept firing



SGT. KIRSCH SGT. COLUCCI S/SGT. SESSUMS
NEAR KONZEN, GERMANY



Pfc. SANFORD BROOKS
NEAR KONZEN



PFC. W. L. CORNETT S/SGT. WM. SESSUMS
NEAR KONZEN, GERMANY



S/SGT. MARTIN PAZDAN
NEAR KONZEN



M-7 FIRING ON SCHMIDT



Pfc. ROSS I COMPANY
ROLLESBROICH, GERMANY



PART OF I COMPANY NEAR KONZEN



SGT. DREHER PFC. REIFFE
NEAR KONZEN



"THE VIEW EAST FROM LAMMERSDORF"



PFC. FRIEDMAN PFC. GARMA
NEAR KONZEN, GERMANY



PFC. WARREN HARTWELL
NEAR KONZEN

at him all the time. S/Sgt. Collins was killed when an "88" hit the building from which he was shooting at the enemy. Company I was approximately two-thirds of the way through the town in its sector to the right and reported one casualty in taking its objectives while Company L reported that it had suffered no casualties at this time.

Company I reached the far side of the town and discovered three pillboxes beyond their position. Shaped charges and flame throwers were requested to be brought up to destroy the pillboxes. However, Engineers were working on the roads to clear them of mines and two to three feet of snow, and delivery of the flame throwers and shaped charges from the Kesternich Ammunition Supply Point was delayed until late afternoon. At 1400 the Battalion Commander requested that the two reserve tank destroyers be brought forward to assist in the capture of the pillboxes at 1500. By 1645 Company I reported one man killed and one wounded but had taken the pillboxes with the aid of the TD's. The Company continued to mop up in the northeast part of the town with the tanks. It was necessary to clean out the three pillboxes since they would leave the Germans in a position to infiltrate back into town that night.

At 1745 instructions were received from the Commanding Officer of Combat Command R to consolidate and hold the positions taken, paying particular attention to the north and northeastern positions of the town.

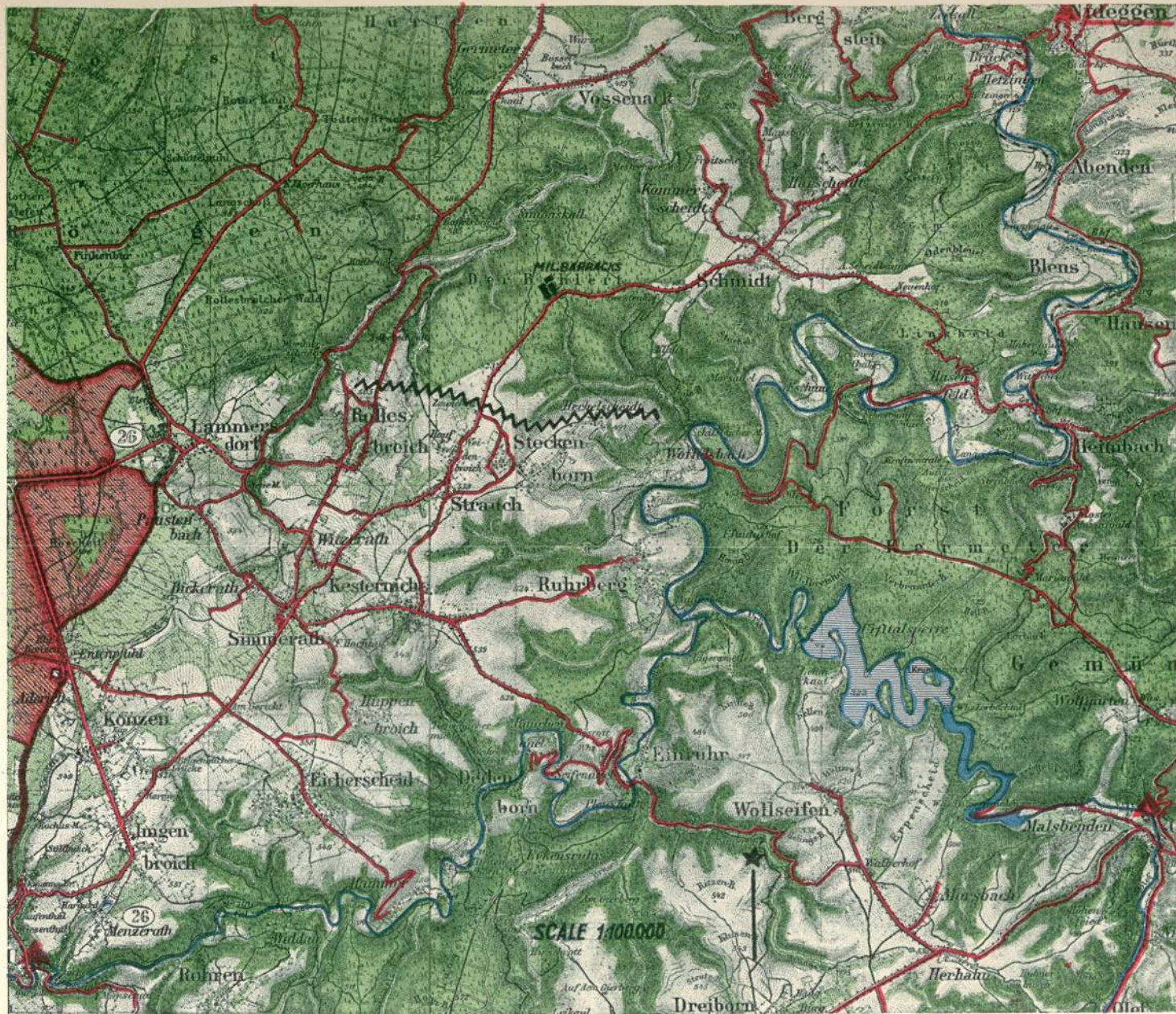
During the days operations Company I took 14 prisoners and Company L 41. During the operations on Steckenborn two companies with two platoon of tanks and one section of tank destroyers had been used. Company L suffered no casualties but Company I had two enlisted men killed and one Officer and 12 Enlisted Men wounded during the day. A "moderate" amount of shelling took place during the operation but some casualties were incurred from it as well as from the small arms. Both companies held their positions and were passed through on 6 February by elements of the 7th Armored Division which moved up to Hechelscheid.

The battalion moved from Steckenborn into an assembly area among several blown up pillboxes north of Strauch just before dark on the 6th of February. Having fought all day and into the night the day before, the men had little trouble falling asleep after a good hot meal brought up by the faithful kitchen crews. The night was wet and cold, but the men managed to get a little sleep in their foxholes which they lined with straw to keep from lying in the mud. During the night the battalion received orders to



"SHELL-
SHATTERED
VILLAGE"

attack astride the road toward Schmidt, passing through the 1st and 2nd battalions whose exact location in the woods was not known, but who had been reported to have reached a well prepared road block that consisted of a steel gate backed up by a huge crater which covered the whole width of the road. The battalion was to attack east just before daylight and capture the fortifications and wooded areas at the base of the high ground which overlooked the fortified town of Schmidt. The 311th Infantry was to attack from the south on the right of the 3rd Battalion to seize the high ground overlooking Schmidt and the capture Schmidt itself. The plan of attack was as follows: Company K was to lead the attack, attacking astride the road and capture the pillboxes located all along the road at the front of the hill overlooking Schmidt. L Company echeloned to the left rear was to clean out the woods north of the road and protect the battalion left flank. I Company echeloned to the right rear was to clear out the woods south of the road and protect the right flank. Co A of the 774th Tank Battalion and two platoons of Co B 893rd Tank Destroyer Battalion were attached to the battalion for the operation. One platoon of tanks and tank destroyers were to attack the pillboxes with the leading elements of Co. K. Moving through the area, which was once a German Military encampment but now a mass of shattered buildings, K Co with the 3rd platoon leading started the attack astride the road. The woods on either side of the road were studded with pillboxes, and the first light of day revealed the bodies of wounded and dead from the previous days fighting. The woods, once thickly planted pine groves, were now a mass of splintered poles, the ground covered by shattered limbs and whole parts of trees. As the men moved on they came upon a pillbox which was converted into a hospital during the night before by an English speaking German Army doctor who was caring for more than a score of both wounded enemy and American soldiers. A few yards further down the road was the cratered road block. Lt. Blackburn and his engineer platoon cleared a path to the right of the road for the tanks, which a few minutes later caught up with the riflemen, who had just made a welcome contact, at Gelensberg, with the remnants of G Company who had been out of contact with their battalion throughout the long night before. First enemy fire was drawn when the men moved east from Gelensburg. The 3rd Platoon aggressively outflanked an enemy group defending a pillbox on the left of the road and in a few minutes 13 enemy with their hands locked behind their heads were marching to the rear. About this time the Kraut artillery fire started coming in. The leading tanks deployed off to the left of the road to join the fight, but were halted when they came upon a minefield. Capt. Owens had already dispatched Pfc Norwood back to the roadblock where the engineers were working and as a result work was begun to clear a path just about the time when the tanks were halted. Pvt Falk of the Engineer squad, dissatisfied with the progress of the work put himself in charge and the men inspired by his example began pulling mines out of the ground like mad. Artillery shells were whistling in but the men kept right on working. Only one mine was left and the path would be clear. Someone remembered at this time that they were taught to pull mines with a long rope because the Germans sometimes booby trapped them—so they used a rope on this last one. As they yanked the rope there was a terrific explosion — no one was scratched — the rope had saved their life. Pvt Falk was wounded a few minutes later while he was removing mines from the road because he was too busy to duck when a Kraut shell whistled in. The attack moved swiftly when the tanks came up — only one more pillbox and the right half of the battalion objective would be secured. A few rounds from the tanks and a rush by the 3rd platoon took this one. The platoon with the tanks inspired by their own success did not stop and went on toward Schmidt capturing pillbox after pillbox. Capt. Hope, Bn S 3, was riding in the lead tank in order to co-ordinate their efforts with those of



the 3rd Platoon. He was wounded while leaning out of his tank going over plans with Lt. Friedberg, 3rd platoon leader, when a terrific artillery concentration fell on their position. Sgt. Jack Rogers, noted for his exploits with his grenade launcher was wounded at the same time along with several others. T/Sgt. Daniels, Plt. Sgt. of the 3rd Platoon, who began the attack at the rear of his platoon was now leading the assault along with Lt. Applegate, Mortar Observer. T/Sgt. Sahlin led the 3rd platoon around to the left recapturing Capt. Murphy, Co G, who was captured the night before, but who in the meantime had talked the bewildered Kraut soldiers into surrendering. Prisoners were swarming in droves to the rear as the 1st platoon pulled up abreast of the third platoon. When the Company halted to reorganize they were sitting on the high ground overlooking Schmidt six-hundred yards away. They had captured what was to have been the initial objective of the 311th Infantry.

L Company moving through the woods on the left suffered many casualties from one of the heaviest enemy artillery concentrations ever witnessed. Among the wounded was Lt. Schenck, the fearless leader of the 3rd Platoon. The Company captured a number of pillboxes in the woods taking the confused Germans by surprise and moved abreast of K Co on the left and occupying the high ground overlooking Kommerscheid. Co I cleared the woods south of the road and to the right of K Co. They too came under terrific artillery fire, but were more fortunate than Co L. Lt. Fields, the popular section leader of Co M, Mortar Observer with Co I, was killed when a Kraut mortar shell fell beside him. The battalion halted on order and was passed through in the late afternoon by the 3rd Battalion, 311th Infantry whose objective was Schmidt. The Battalion C. P. was established in the first pillbox captured by K Co's 3rd platoon. It served as Regimental C. P. and was visited by General Parker, Division Commander, and General Collins the Corps Commander the following day when the battalion was fighting for Schmidt. Casualties for the days operations were 4 killed and 38 wounded.

The night was cold and wet just like the night before and the men hardly slept at all. Orders were received during the night that the 310th Infantry with 3rd Battalion leading would clear the road from Schmidt to Heimbach, seizing the high ground over the Roer River, thereby cutting off the troops in the vicinity of the dam. It was reported that Schmidt had been captured and that the 3rd Battalion would pass through the 311th Infantry and start the attack some where east of Schmidt. The battalion moved out at 0530 and a few minutes later were met by Major Kennedy who commanded the 1st Battalion, 311th Infantry at the western entrance of the town. He reported that friendly troops of the 3rd Battalion 311th Infantry were dug in a hundred yards ahead and that the enemy was still holding out in the town. This information proved to be correct because the third platoon of I Company drew fire from houses on three sides at daylight as they started moving into the town. Lt. Kelley, 3rd platoon leader rose firing his "Grease Gun" in an effort to rally his men forward, but he was quickly cut down with a few others who followed his example. Lt. Perrin who brought the tanks and TD's up to join the attack of the 3rd platoon tried to point out the houses where the fire was coming from to a tank commander but each time he crawled up on the tank a sniper would try to pick him off. The first platoon of Co I was thrown in on the north flank of the third platoon while the 2nd platoon worked along the south flank to reduce the resistance on the flanks of the third platoon. With the three platoons abreast the Company began a slow, but steady advance through the town. The Germans defended practically every house and stubbornly fell back to help defend succeeding houses. Many dead enemy were found in the houses and the moaning of the enemy wounded could be heard interspersed with the firing. The first platoon working with the light machine-gun section on the north side of the town was under continual enemy machine-gun fire

coming from Harscheidt, the village northeast of Schmidt which supposedly had been taken by American troops but apparently now had not. Using the piles of rubble for protection against this fire the men kept right on fighting the enemy in Schmidt. Private Norman A. Funk, leading scout of his platoon distinguished himself, by aggressively leading his platoon from house to house, blazing away with his M-1 and pitching grenades into windows and doorways, but his luck didn't last and he paid the supreme price. Sergeant Erickson was killed with a hand grenade while leading his squad through the piles of rubble. T/Sgt. Carlson' along with Sgt. Simmons squad, shooting out of windows in a house they had just entered had a field day shooting Krauts, at a range of one-hundred yards. They picked them off one by one as they tried to escape to the shelter of a pillbox from a house which was under attack. Seventeen bodies were counted later along the path that they ran for shelter. Finally at 1430 after fighting their way through the many pillboxes and fortified houses and piles of rubble, the men reached the eastern end of the town. Schmidt, the key to the defenses of the Schwamman Dam, was now captured and the remainder of the battalion moved forward through the town to gain its mission, that of clearing the road, Heimbach, and capturing the high ground overlooking the Roer River.

When the medical section of the 3rd Battalion moved into Schmidt it was necessary to establish the aid station in a cellar. Evacuation there was a problem since the troops were exposed and had to be evacuated by Weasel. Capt. Colwell made the rounds like a regular country doctor, visiting each company under enemy observation.

Pfc. Charles T. Kelley found two ambulances at a Nazi aid station at Schmidt. One of these he got running and evacuated many with it.

Lt. Janes, the Battalion S 2, observing from the upper story of a house in Schmidt a few moments after its capture located several enemy machine gun positions astride the road on the high ground in the vicinity of Nuennhof about 2000 yards east of Schmidt. With this information a coordinated attack was planned for 1600 with Co L advancing east from Schmidt, attacking astride the road to capture the high ground in the vicinity of Schiedbaum about 1500 yards east of Schmidt. K Co was to take a covered route through the woods to the right of L Co and capture the wooded knoll southeast of Scheidbaum and then envelope the enemy positions in the vicinity of Nuennhof. Plans for artillery and mortar fire to be delivered on the enemy positions located by Lt. Janes were made. At 1530 elements of the 2nd Battalion 311th Infantry were seen advancing east in K Co's zone of attack. This called for a change in plans which resulted in L Company attacking alone with K Co to follow in column. At 1545 word was received that the artillery would not fire because friendly troops of the 311th Infantry were located in the area. This was found later to be incorrect, but Company L jumped off at 1600 without artillery support. Two platoons of tanks started with the attack but after advancing about five hundred yards, three tanks were hit by fire from a group of five enemy tanks located on the road between Scheidbaum and Nuennhof. That ended the tank support for L Company. The 1st and 3rd platoons personally led by Lt.'s Barzeley and Ober continued the attack in spite of withering machine gun fire. With a handful of men they reached the few buildings which comprised the settlement of Scheidbaum where they came under fire from the five enemy tanks which a few minutes ago had knocked out their friendly tanks. Pfc. Garcia with Pfc. Lussier assisting, fired a few bazooka round at the leading tank, setting it on fire from the upper story of one of the houses. A few seconds after they clambered down the steps with one precious bazooka round left, the house collapsed from a barrage fired by the tanks. At this time men from the First Battalion coming up on the left with marching fire were a most welcome sight. It was almost dark now, the enemy tanks and machine guns were still blazing away, and



SGT. STRASBURG, PFC GLEIM, T5 HENRY FICHT



EASTERN END OF KESTERNICH



PFC OTT PFC MORRIS
ROLLESBROICH



"the piles of rubble"



TANKS AND TDs WAITING TO ATTACK SCHMIDT



PFC THOMAS KONZEN



DEMOLISHED CHAPEL SCHMIDT



T/SGT. HOUSTEN AND PART OF HIS
FIRST PLATOON - NEAR KONZEN



T/3 PIETZMAN PVT WYLIE
ROLLESBROICH



SGT. SMITH AND SQUAD KONZEN



COMPANY I COOKS NEAR KONZEN



LAMMERSDORF GERMANY



COFFEE AND DOUGHNUTS ROTGEN

no artillery fire on them could be obtained because of faulty information of friendly troops being located there. The men dug in when darkness set in. During the night word was received that the 60th Infantry of the 9th Division would pass through our lines east of Schmidt prior to daylight in the morning and proceed down the road to Heimbach. Hot chow and ammunition were brought up during the night and plans were made resuming the attack the following morning on the left flank of the 60th Infantry to secure the high ground overlooking the Roer River at Aberden and Blens, thereby securing the left flank of the 9th Division. At 0700 the 60th Infantry passed through L Companies positions and were stopped by machine gun fire from the positions which held up Co L the night before, but the enemy tanks had pulled out during the night. At 1000 men from Co C, 310th Infantry outflanked these positions from the north allowing the 60th Infantry to advance. In the meantime the battalion with Co K leading was pushing out to the northeast entering the woods north and east of Scheidbaum. The woods was filled with fanatical enemy who had just destroyed their own artillery pieces and had taken up firing positions in dugouts manning machine guns and rifles. The fire was deadly accurate and took a heavy toll in lives. Within a five minute period, Sgt. Sielski and Pvts. Siemon, Carlberg, and Pickering fell mortally wounded. Privates Benreiff, Pasquale, Bennett and Fisher also of K Co died in this action. Lt. Saunders, Co K's fighting executive officer arrived in a nick of time with the third platoon and two tanks which had become separated from the company as a result of the intermingling of units of the 1st Bn 310th and the 60th Infantry with those of the 3rd Battalion. The tanks zigzagging their way through the trees with the 3rd platoon close at hand soon broke up the fanatical enemy defenders, many of whom fought to their death. K Company reached its final objective and shortly after noon the men were looking down at the river below and were viewing the destroyed bridges over the river at Blens and Abenden. L Company with Lt. Ober in Command as a result of Capt. Hunter being wounded and evacuated in the morning, pulled up on K Companies left overlooking the town of Blens. The woods which K Co had fought through was littered with enemy dead, but among the enemy dead there lay the bodies of several men of the 3rd Battalion. In addition to K Co's dead there was Lt. Mullins and Pvt. Robabowski of Co L who were ambushed while reconnoitering their position. Through the tireless efforts of Major Pierce, the A & P Platoon and the Anti-Tank Platoon, a road was built through mine fields and mud holes and with the aid of Company carrying parties the men got a little hot food the first night. By noon of the following day, Pfc. Dragon drove his weasel loaded with hot chow and ammunition to the company positions, some of which were difficult to reach even on foot. Nobody slept at all the first night on account of the rain and the fact that holes had to be dug. By dark of the second night, bed rolls had been brought up and the men had covers constructed over their holes to protect them from the weather and from the deadly enemy artillery.

Under cover of darkness on the night of February 12, the first and second platoons of Co L preceded by a patrol led by Sergeant Pologi slipped into Blens and occupied the town without firing a shot. The few enemy who were left in the village were captured by surprise the following morning. The occupation of this town remained unknown to the enemy. The one rifle platoon from Co L and the machine gun platoon of Company M which comprised the occupying force was fed and supplied by carrying parties at night. They supplemented their rations by milking a cow every night which they had found in a barn. However one night Lt. Nolph and Sgt. Pologi, who never bothered to be scared by the enemy, got a big scare when they tried to milk a bull in the darkness. From their positions in Blens the men would call down artillery and mortar fire on enemy positions just across the river a few hundred yards away.

On the morning of February 14, Company L's Command Post was subjected to the most deadly and accurate mortar concentration ever encountered, causing over twenty casualties. Lt. Saunders, who had just taken command of L Company when Lt. Ober left the Company to take command of Company B in the first battalion, was mortally wounded. Also mortally wounded were: Corporal De Loach, the courageous communications sergeant, and Pvts. Buchmann, Rosenbaum, Torres and Tester.

The remainder of the month of February was spent in recuperating from the fighting which carried the battalion from Konzen to the Roer River and in training for the fighting to come. The men worked on small unit problems, bayonet training, and firing of the BAR, Bazooka, and rifle grenades. During this period two patrols from Co I, both led by S/Sgt. Field crossed the Roer River to capture a prisoner for the Division G 2. On their first try they ran into too many of the enemy and had to shoot their way out killing a number of the enemy in doing so. On their second attempt, they came back empty handed because the enemy had taken off into the hills. Lt. Perrin, Bn S 3, Sgt. Sloop, second platoon of K Company and Pfc. Wheeler crossed the river at dusk in an assault boat to reconnoitre and clear a path through an enemy anti-personnel minefield in the vicinity of "Blue". The patrol removed home made box mines which were brought back to the 3rd Bn for training purposes.

The "Blue" Battalion, "Blue" being the code word used for the 3rd Bn of Infantry Regiments, had not only tasted combat but had taken several good swallows. They were seasoned combat Infantrymen now and in their hearts was love, admiration and respect for their fellowmen, their officers and an undivided loyalty to their duty.

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ROER RIVER VALLEY

Roer to Rhine . . .

The 3rd Battalion, 310th Infantry, because of its persistent gallantry, exceptional heroism and esprit de corps in the face of unusually difficult and hazardous conditions made an invaluable contribution to the success of the Allied offensive on the Western Front. It never failed to accomplish an assigned mission and because of its consistent record of achievement it was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for its combat action for the period 1—15 March 1945.

The following record of action is a summary of the operations of the 1st to the 15th March 1945.

The 3rd Battalion, attached to Combat Command A, 9th Armored Division, crossed the Roer River in the early morning of 2 March and marched 9 miles to capture Langendorf and the strongly defended Wollersheim woods. The following day it attacked and captured Merzenich, Sinzenich and Florin.

On 4 March after a gruelling 5 mile advance through deep mud under continual artillery and small arms fire, costing 57 casualties, the battalion captured Euskirchen, key road, rail, supply and communications center for the German forces west of the Rhine. By midnight advanced elements of the battalion, two miles forward of friendly troops on the left and four miles forward of friendly troops on the right, made possible the crossing of the Erft Canal east of the city the following morning.

On 5 March, without having had any rest, one company, against determined, skillful opposition, battled across the Erft Canal and secured Roitzheim, south of Euskirchen,

after a 12 hour battle. 165 prisoners, including 3 SS Captains and SS non-commissioned officers were captured, 62 enemy were killed, 4 concrete gun emplacements and 30 machine-guns were destroyed, and a route over which supporting armor could negotiate the Erft Canal and continue the advance to the Rhine was secured.

On 7 March the battalion captured Bad Neuenahr, secured 4 bridges and crossed the Ahr River on 8 March, taking the high ground to the south, which controlled the main supply route to the newly-won Remagen bridgehead.

After marching all night, the battalion crossed the Remagen bridge under heavy artillery fire early on March 10. That afternoon, it advanced through withering artillery fire and air strafing and bombing, to secure high ground south of Kretzhaus. This high ground overlooked the Remagen bridge and the area for miles around and was the key point from which the enemy directed artillery and mortar fire on that area. In order to reach the enemy observation posts on the top of the hill it was necessary to scale nearly vertical cliffs in the face of direct fire from these enemy positions at the summit. This was undertaken without hesitation, the enemy equipment, including three radios was destroyed and the defending enemy were killed or captured.

This salient was held for 3 days before friendly troops closed in on the flanks. During this time, a strong enemy counterattack toward the Ludendorff bridge was repulsed. The counter-attacking force consisted of at least a battalion of infantry supported by heavy artillery fire and spearheaded by seven enemy tanks.

On 15 March, Major General Louis A. Craig, Commander of the 9th Infantry Division, assigned the battalion the mission of capturing and holding at all costs, Kretzhaus and the Kallenborn road junction. The battalion was made responsible for accomplishing the mission regardless of the other units in the vicinity. This high ground and road junction which controlled eight roads and a railway line was the last enemy strongpoint covering the Remagen bridge, and had already been attacked four times without success by other units.

Despite the fact that its commander had been wounded, and with greatly reduced strength, the battalion took this ground and held it against the most determined resistance by tanks, artillery, automatic weapons and small arms.

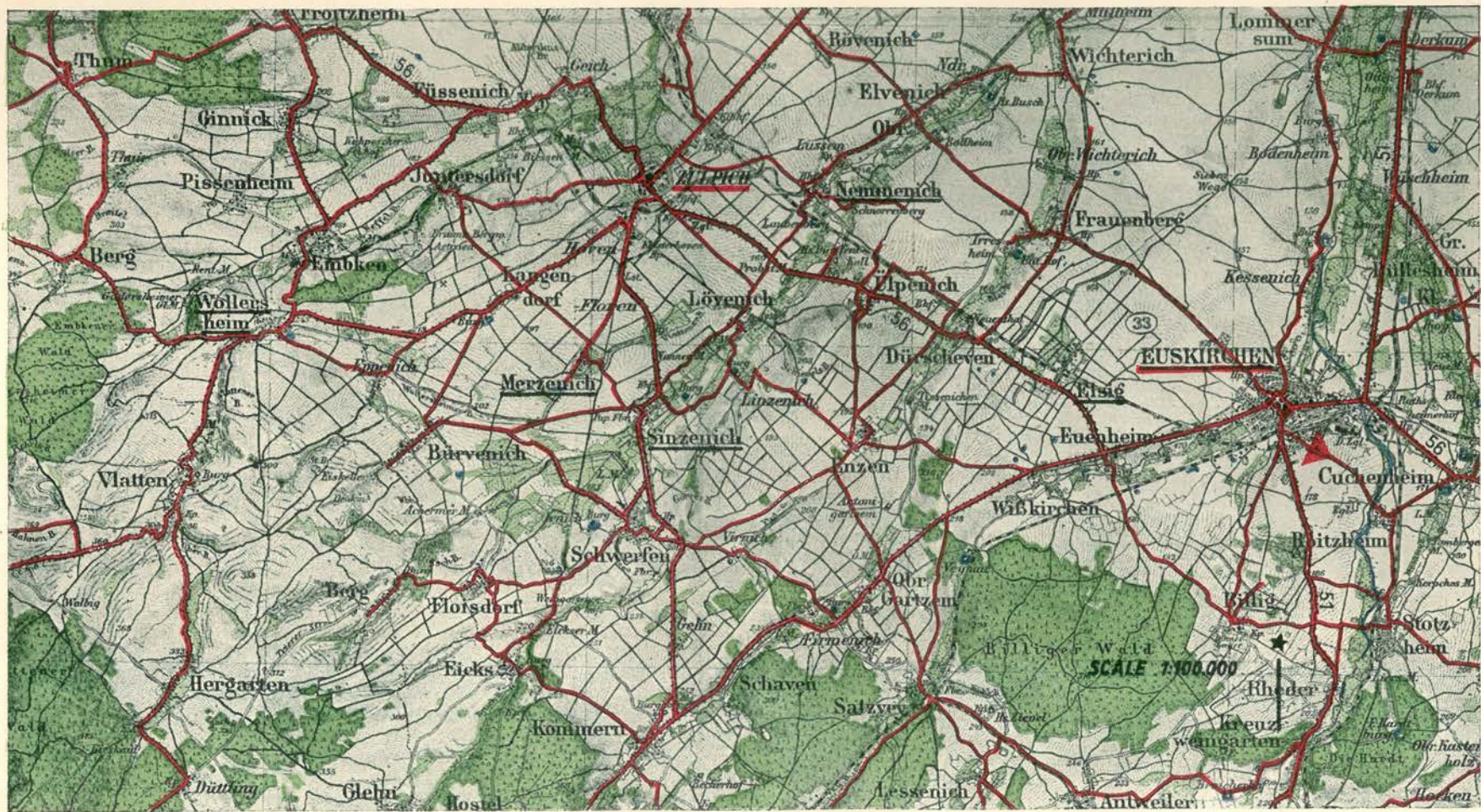
For this action the Third Battalion, 310th Infantry received a commendation from Major General Louis A. Craig, Ninth Infantry Division Commander. The commendation read in part:

"It is particularly desired to emphasize the fine combat work of the Third Battalion. It was engaged at one of the most hotly contested areas encountered and its participation at 150 530 March to secure the vital road junction finally cracked the last determined stand of the Germans near the observation line closest to the bridge. This is a fighting organization and is a credit to itself and to any organization it teams with."

The battalion was also commended by Major General John W. Leonard, Commanding General, Ninth Armored Division and Colonel Thomas L. Harrold, Commanding Officer, CCA, Ninth Armored Division who wrote in part:

"During the succeeding seven days, the battalion seized all objectives assigned to it, pressing the attack both day and night. The success of this battalion was due to the courage, unrelenting effort, and determination of all ranks."

But to fully document the extraordinary heroism, gallantry and magnificent esprit de corps shown by the Third Battalion, 310th Infantry in the face of extremely difficult and hazardous conditions, and its continued determination despite severe exhaustion and depleted personnel, it is necessary to tell the complete story of its actions from the



crossing of the Roer River to its attack and capture of the last enemy-held height overlooking the Remagen bridge.

On the night of the 1st March 1945 the 3rd Battalion moved out of its defensive positions west of the Roer River and crossed an Engineer treadway bridge at Blens in the order of I, K and L Companies, single file with interval of two yards between men. They marched from Blens on the east side of the Roer to Abenden where the men dropped their blanket rolls and continued the march at 0200 to Berg. In the little town of Berg the 3rd Battalion was attached to Combat Command A, Ninth Armored Division, which consisted of light and medium tanks and half tracks. After a briefing, orders were received to move out to an assembly area. There were no administrative casualties. CCA moved toward Wollersheim at 0900. The Third Battalion mission was to march through Wollersheim upon its clearance by the 60th Armored Infantry Battalion, which was attacking it at that time, and take Langendorf, Merzenich and Sinzenich. The battalion, marching in order K, Hq, I, L was halted on the road west of Wollersheim because the 60th AIB was unable to advance due to enemy resistance in the wooded area north of town. This enemy group in the woods was also holding up elements of the 60th Infantry Regiment in Embken to the North.

The battalion was delayed for sometime near Wollersheim and "dug in" in an open field in full view of enemy snipers. At this point the battalion received approximately 20 rounds of enemy 88 MM fire, however, they suffered no casualties at this time.

At 1330 orders were received to be prepared to seize the wooded area north-east of Wollersheim and to seize the town of Langendorf, 3000 meters east of Wollersheim. Reconnaissance was made immediately, the attack planned and the following fragmentary attack order issued:



TREADWAY
BRIDGE
OVER THE
ROER



DUG IN ALONG THE
ROER RIVER

"The battalion attacks at 1530 with Company K seizing the wooded area north and east of Wollersheim, Company L echeloned to the left rear, mopping up the woods behind Company K and protecting the left flank of the battalion. Company I to attack, bypassing Wollersheim to the south and seize Langendorf. Company I to attack on order when the western edge of the woods has been cleared by Company K. Attachments: Company K, 1 Light Tk Plt, 1 Med Tk Plt, 1 Plt Company M; Company I: 1 Med Tk Plt. 1st Plt Company M supports attack of Company K with fire into enemy positions in woods. When fire is masked, change positions and fire in support of Company I with fires on high ground west of Langendorf. 1 Med Tk Plt in reserve firing initially in support of Company I. Mortar Plt in general support."

The battalion moved forward while the Company Commanders were at the Battalion CP receiving the order.

At this point the enemy held Wollersheim, and was entrenched in the woods to the northeast, which gave them fire control over the open terrain west and north of town.

Companies K and L attacked at 1530. Heavy mortar, artillery and sniper fire from Wollersheim and the outskirts of Embken covered the 800 yards of open terrain which had to be crossed to reach the woods. But the companies advanced without hesitation and covered the ground by platoon rushes between terrain features. Upon entering the woods, 1st and 2nd platoons leading, 3rd platoon in support, Company K immediately encountered extremely heavy small arms and machine gun opposition. Two casualties were suffered, one of whom refused to be evacuated and continued the attack. The enemy was well dug in and determined, and advances could be made only after killing the gunners who were exceptionally well supplied with ammunition. The advance was

made by assault or marching fire, although on several occasions enemy resistance compelled the attackers to resort to the bayonet. Dusk fell when the attacking platoons were about midway to their objectives, but the attack was pressed. Contact was maintained by connecting files and at 2030, after suffering 12 casualties, Companies K and L were on their objective. This action brought about the fall of Wollersheim and enabled the 60th Infantry Regiment to attack the following morning and capture Zulpich without resistance. Positions were consolidated and the troops dug in. Sixty-five prisoners were captured in the operation and an estimated 20 enemy soldiers were killed. The intense darkness, and danger inherent in exposed rear and flanks made necessary an almost continual guard by all personnel and permitted little sleep for the troops who had already been sleepless for more than 40 hours.

Company I moved east from the hill southwest of Wollersheim at 1630. Sniper fire from the last two houses in Wollersheim and machine-gun fire from a haystack were encountered and overcome. A heavy mortar and artillery barrage fell on the company. In spite of this resistance and the fact that three of the tanks became stuck and had to be towed, by 1924 the company had secured Langendorf and dug in on the eastern perimeter. Eighty-five prisoners were taken and more than forty-five killed.

At 0330 a battalion runner brought Company L a written order from the battalion S-3 to attack the town of Merzenich and be prepared to assist by fire, Company K which was to attack Sinzenich. No enemy information was available although it was known that Burvenich, to the southwest, was in friendly hands. Company L was to meet a platoon of medium tanks, 1 section of heavy machine guns and a litter squad along the Wollersheim-Langendorf highway. The Platoon Leaders were oriented at 0400 by the Company Commander and the Company moved out at 0630. The proposed attachments were not found upon reaching the highway, never the less the company went into the attack as ordered. A guide was left behind for the attachments and the Battalion Commander was notified of the action decided upon. Moving past the highway into open terrain, artillery, mortar, and automatic weapons fire from the right were received. The company continued to move forward while half a squad quickly outflanked the enemy machine-gun position, neutralized it, captured 3 and killed 2 enemy and returned to the platoon. Under constant mortar and artillery fire, the company moved to within 500 yards of Merzenich, and following an artillery TOT at 0745, assaulted the town, the tanks arriving just in time to take part in the assault. Although clearing the town was made difficult by large numbers of civilians, by 0815 it was secure. At 1115 two platoons moved to a point northwest of Sinzenich to support the Company K attack. Company L suffered 5 casualties. T/Sgt. Lindsay, anti-tank platoon Sgt. was killed by artillery fire during the attack. The 1st platoon of Co M led by Lt. Barnett joined Company L as they entered the town of Merzenich and assisted in setting up a defense of the town after it was captured.

The 1st platoon of Company M then prepared to fire into Sinzenich to support Company K's attack on that town.

Company K which had assembled in a draw southwest of Merzenich, moved to an area of departure at 1145 and under an extremely heavy artillery barrage and heavy small arms fire from Sinzenich launched its attack, accompanied by a platoon of medium tanks. Two hundred yards from the town, the 3rd platoon, led by Lt. Durk, was pinned down by small arms fire from a tower on the west edge of town and machine gun fire from the left flank. Several rounds of 88 mm fire were directed at the platoon while they lay pinned down in the open field. The tanks were slow in moving up but upon arriving liquidated the enemy opposition from the tower and machine gun position. S/Sgt

Cornelius J. Coughlin, a squad leader in the 3rd platoon, although seriously wounded, retained consciousness long enough to direct the tank fire. S/Sgt Charles F Mason, wounded in the hand, crawled 20 yards to another wounded man, dressed his wound with his one hand and then, with another man, carried him to a shell crater.

The 3rd platoon, which at this time consisted of about 13 men assaulted the town under the fire of the machine guns from the tanks. Heavy enemy artillery fire fell on the town as the platoon proceeded through the northern sector, attacking the houses with grenades, and small arms fire, many of which were strongly defended. Rocks were used to simulate grenades when the supply of live grenades was depleted. The effect on the Krauts was the same, they would come running out of their houses shouting "Kamerad". Both male and female civilians who had been supplied with weapons offered so much interference that finally, all of them, 1650, had to be taken prisoner and placed under guard. The 3rd platoon reached the eastern limits of town at 1330 with 12 men, after killing more than 20 and capturing 32 enemy soldiers. The 1st and 2nd platoons advanced through the southern sector of the town mopping up as they went and organized in the defense of Sinzenich. Company K assembled the civilian people in the church, priest's home and attempted to put them in positions protected from the still heavy artillery concentrations landing on the town. The company then received a hot meal and was resupplied with ammunition. Enemy casualties in this operation were 10 killed, number of wounded unknown. Company K's casualties were 18 wounded and 4 killed, unusually heavy due to heavy artillery fire and the small arms fire received upon entering the village. A perimeter defense was set up around the village that night and the Company continued to round up civilian and military personnel until approximately 2100. Little rest was received by any of the personnel during the evening.



T/SGT. HERMAN LINDSEY



LT. PERRIN, SGT. TUREK
CAPT. MASTERPOLE AND
CAPT. SMITH

At 1400, Company I without attachments, attacked and captured Florin against light resistance. Four enemy were captured. The 1st platoon of Company M was prepared to support Company I by fire but as there was no resistance they didn't fire, joined Company I in Florin and then reverted to M Company control in Nemmenich.

The town of Lovenich was taken by elements of the 310th Infantry Regiment simultaneous with Company I's attack on Florin.

The battalion marched to Nemmenich, closed in at 1300, checked equipment and briefed personnel for the attack on the vital road, rail and communications center of Euskirchen. Euskirchen, which had a peacetime population of 30,000 was an important army supply center.

The Company Commanders were oriented at 1300 near the line of departure at the eastern edge of Nemmenich and received their orders. The plan was for Company I to lead the attack, with one platoon of light tanks to assist in finding and neutralizing enemy resistance in the battalion zone of advance. Upon reaching the western outskirts of Euskirchen, Company I would be joined by one platoon of medium tanks and would proceed to the southeast and secure the bridges over the Erft Canal at Roitzheim. Company L, initially echeloned to the left rear with the mission of protecting the battalion left flank, and as Company I approached the western outskirts of Euskirchen, to move to the left and abreast of Company I and secure the bridges at the eastern end of Euskirchen. Company K was to follow Company I at 500 yards, protecting the battalion right flank and mop up along the main street and the railroad tracks running east and west through Euskirchen. The 1st MG platoon of Company M would move by bounds in direct support of Company I. The 2nd MG platoon was attached to Company L. The Mortar Platoon was to be in general support, displacing when necessary to keep within supporting distance of the rifle troops. The medium tank company was to move by bounds behind Company I, prepared initially to attack in mass, and when Company's I and L were ready to assault the western outskirts of Euskirchen, the company would deploy and the tank platoons would join in the assault with the respective companies to which they would be attached. In order that the advance be made as rapidly as possible, the leading elements of the battalion were ordered not to engage in any mopping up operations and to bypass, if possible, any determined resistance.

One section of heavy machine guns was attached to each of the attacking rifle companies as the battalion moved forward at 1400 and began the difficult and hazardous 5-mile cross-country advance through enemy resistance to Euskirchen. The flat terrain had been recently plowed and movement in the thick mud and steady rain was difficult and exhausting. The entire route was under incessant observed artillery and mortar bombardment and several times direct 88 mm fire was encountered. Machine-gun fire from the railroad tracks above Ulpenich and Durscheven, and sniper fire from Irresheim was encountered almost immediately upon crossing the LD. The 81 mm Mortar section was in direct support of the Battalion during the attack across country. It was not known what was in front so it was necessary to reconnoiter for positions as the unit moved along. The M Company Commander moved in front of the mortars and picked suitable positions for them as they advanced and led them into those positions. The Mortars were very mobile and ready to move at a minutes notice all through this attack. Northwest of enemy-held Elsig, small arms resistance from snipers became too severe to be bypassed and one platoon from Company I and one from Company L entered northern Elsig. They cleared the northern part of town, killing 5 and capturing 11 enemy soldiers while the battalion continued its advance.

Even when the enemy fire was most heavy and casualties highest the men kept moving toward their objective, seldom hitting the ground, and urging one another on with shouts and humor. Not one squad scattered, and not a man dropped out unless severely wounded. Most of the weapons became clogged with mud, and the men attempted to clean them while marching.

It was raining very hard and it was difficult to see very far ahead due to the haze. Company I was moving very fast and since it was desired to give the company direct support a section of mortars was attached and followed the company by 1000 yard bounds. This attached section of mortars was fired on by burp guns north of Elsig. It was necessary to stop the mortar fire at this point and the opposition was overcome with M 3 grease guns and a Thompson sub-machine gun. The section had an ammunition supply problem since it was necessary to hand carry all supplies across country from Nemmenich.

Upon reaching a point 500 yards east of the barracks area in Euskirchen, Company I was joined by medium tanks. After moving forward another 100 yards heavy A-T gun and machine gun fire was encountered. Although one light and one medium tank were knocked out and the remainder withdrew 700 yards, Company I continued forward approximately 200 yards where it came under heavy small arms fire from a group of the barracks buildings which covered the eastern approaches to town. The troops had advanced so rapidly that the artillery was out of range. Upon learning this the company assaulted the barracks without artillery support, and passed through the area toward its objective. By this time it was dark. Progress within the city was extremely difficult because of shell craters, rubble-blocked streets and snipers, but finally a route was found. The company and supporting armor reached the southeast edge of town at 2100 and prepared to continue toward Roitzheim. At this time an order was received to consolidate and await further orders. The company established guard posts and began to clean its equipment which by this time had become so mudcaked as to be nearly unserviceable. 14 casualties had been suffered.

M Company's mortars displaced to the barracks area on the west edge Euskirchen while the rifle companies were still fighting in the town. The mortars took four prisoners in the barracks area and consolidated positions in the east end of the area. It was apparent that close continuous support by the mortars would be difficult since the men would have to stop firing their mortars to defend themselves against enemy snipers.

Meanwhile Company L reorganized under fire inside the barracks area. Casualties had been extremely heavy, particularly among officers and non-commissioned officers. The platoon leader and 2 squad leaders in each of the attacking platoons, the 1st and 3rd, were casualties. Upon reorganization the company cleared the barracks area, dug in and sent patrols to probe deeper into the city.

Capt. Owens, Company Commander of K Company, when interviewed on the Euskirchen action remarked in part: "It was raining hard and the day was miserable. At this time it was 1700 (near Elsig) and we knew it would be dark by the time we reached our objective. We were thankful it was getting dark because we knew it would reduce the chances of the jerries hitting us with sniper or 88 fire. We were held in this position for approximately 10 minutes and pushed ahead, using turnip patches and dung heaps for concealment. Company L pushed off to the left to enter the town and they suffered quite a few casualties from small arms fire. We pushed to the right of Company L to enter the barracks area and there met the S-3 who told us how to enter the village. Then he wanted two platoons to enter the village and one platoon to go along the railroad, at the edge of town. The men were so exhausted they had to force themselves to advance.

It was dark by this time. The platoons moved on into the barracks area. I put them under the command of Lt. Durk and told him to enter the center of the town and I was going with the 2nd platoon along the railroad. We found in the barracks area, in mopping it up, about 10 German prisoners. The town was in shambles. Our air corps had one this previously. Streets were littered up with rubble. It was impossible to search out the houses as most of them were huge structures. We entered the town with little or no opposition. I took my Hq. group and my communications Sgt with me and also my mortar FO from M Company. In moving along the RR track I bypassed my 2nd platoon. We had previously designated the rendezvous point and there, where to set up a perimeter defense in our own small sector in the town itself. Upon arriving at the rendezvous point we immediately took the personnel we had and sent them on patrols to locate the bulk of the company and to find out if anything had happened. During this phase of the operation, Lt. Col Harry Lutz found the 1st and 3rd platoons under the command of Lt. Durk. The 2nd platoon bypassed the rendezvous point and entered a hotel approximately 200 yards beyond there and set up a defense. In searching this house we found two Jerries very comfortably set up with their mistresses in the basement of the building. Before being removed one of the Jerries was extremely cooperative in showing T/Sgt Tracey his P 38 pistol he had hidden in the cupboard. Here we finally reorganized and attempted to get dry, but there was no heat and it was impossible to get our bed rolls to us. The night was miserable and black as the gates of hell. We shivered all night and even though the town was at one time a wealthy city, it was very obvious the Gertmans had taken all their bedding and blankets. The men were exhausted but we still set up our defenses. The following morning we received a hot breakfast. The cooks had come into the town in jeeps with the food under actual fire. Major Pierce, Battalion-Ex. Officer in trying to locate the company CPs during the night, captured 9 prisoners himself. Casualties in this operation were surprisingly light. We sent out four patrols to the railroad bridge and the highway bridges on the east edge of the city. Each time the patrols came under sniper fire from a factory in the edge of town. The patrols discovered that all three bridges had been demolished."

The night was intensely dark, cold and stormy, and since it was impossible to clean out the city, because of its size and the great number of rubble-blocked buildings, it was necessary for all personnel to remain alert and on guard throughout the night. This required exceptional endurance and spirit, for the men were completely wet and suffering severely from exhaustion. Since 1 March, they had marched more than 18 miles, at least 8 of which had been under fire, fought 3 battles and had barely managed 8 hours of sleep.

150 prisoners were captured during the attack on Euskirchen. The battalion suffered 56 casualties, primarily from shell fragments, which brought the 3-day battle casualties total to 96.

From Elsig to Euskirchen the Medics pushed and pulled their vehicles almost all the way because the tanks and TDs had chewed the road so thoroughly.

When Lt. Knell Battalion Medical Administrative Officer was evacuated because of injuries received, Capt. Colwell, Battalion Medical Officer, went into Euskirchen. He was told by an enlisted man that the town had been cleared through the barracks area so he went there with two enlisted men. The medics combed the battle field in the dark. Contact was established by means of fires at haystacks and the wounded men were brought to these points by T/5 B. E. Bowman. Some of the wounded men were badly in need of plasma and there was an urgent need for more than there was on hand. The Capt. did not know if the roads were open back to Nemmenich where the aid station was



CLEARING OUT EUSKIRCHEN

located. Pfc. Stella, a company aid man from CCA of the 9th Armored Division took a light tank and brought up 15 units of plasma to the barracks. Capt. Colwell stated that the plasma probably saved the lives of several of the men. Some of the wounded were then placed on three light tanks and two half-tracks and sent back to Nemmenich. There was a total of 41 casualties treated that night.

When morning came three ambulances were brought into Euskirchen to evacuate the wounded and operated from there two days and nights.

At 0100, Company I dispatched a 12 man combat patrol led by S/Sgt. Davis and S/Sgt. Spyker, to reconnoiter a route for the advance of the company and attached armor on Roitzheim. The patrol received heavy fire from buildings and after unsuccessfully attempting to continue, returned at 0300. At 0400, the patrol was sent out again. The patrol went down the 3rd grade highway from Euskirchen to Roitzheim to reconnoiter it as a possible route for Co L's advance. The patrol reported back that this road would not be suitable for the tanks since there was a large crater located at a point just before the 2nd grade highway crossed it. While on the mission the patrol was ambushed and pinned down by automatic weapons fire and sniper fire. One of the enemy threw grenades at the patrol from a second story window. Two men were wounded but the patrol moved back and down the 1st grade highway running almost due south. The patrol found this route suitable for armored vehicles but warned the company that the Germans had dug in along the road during the night.

At 1100 Company I jumped off from Euskirchen with four light tanks, a platoon of medium tanks and two tank destroyers. The company mission was that of seizing the town of Roitzheim and securing the bridge over the Erft River in the northwestern edge of the town in case it was still usable. In the event the bridge was not usable the company was to withdraw and assist in mopping up Euskirchen south of the railroad tracks.

Company I with the armored vehicles moved down the 1st grade highway to the crossroads where it turned due east toward Roitzheim. In the vicinity of the crossroads the Company received machine-gun and small arms fire from entrenchments in the area

and from one anti-tank gun firing from a position south on the road. This anti-tank gun was knocked out with 57 mm gun from one of the light tanks. The Infantry fought with the tanks making a reconnaissance with fire. The attackers moved to a point some 200 yards from the Erft Canal after killing an estimated 10 to 15 Germans on the way. At this point the Company and the armored vehicles stopped for twenty minutes waiting for a TOT which had been planned to be fired on Roitzheim. It was discovered finally that the TOT had been fired 30 minutes early. As soon as this was discovered the Company, together with the tanks and tank destroyers, moved out to seize the town and the bridge. The men came under considerable artillery and small arms fire from Roitzheim but pushed on.

When the Company got to the town the lead scouts found that the bridge had been destroyed. The small arms fire continued and, in addition, Company I was now receiving very heavy artillery concentrations. The Company Commander, Capt. Olson reported to the Battalion Commander that the bridge was impassable and requested counter-battery fire and smoke so that the Company would withdraw and continue with the mission that had been planned at Euskirchen. The Company was ordered instead to continue on and capture Roitzheim.

The advance of the Company was made very difficult as a result of several factors, the first of which was the terrain. About 150 yards west of the Canal was a ditch which had to be crossed. Next came the Canal with banks five to six feet high. The 1st platoon with the commanding officer moved into the stream in a line of skirmishers and crossed in rushes. The water came up to the necks of the men and since it was very cold they suffered considerably from shock.

There were concrete machine-gun emplacements north and south of the town and the men were fired on from all sides as they jumped the ditch, waded across the stream and crawled and ran from cover to cover. T/5 Carroll E. Pomplin, Company Aid Man, rushed from the canal to give aid to two wounded men. He was hit in the side after crawling about 20 yards, but continued until he was hit again. S/Sgt. Meadows, against the advice of his comrades, went to the aid of the medic and was mortally wounded.

The Company tried to find a place where the tanks could cross the stream but did not succeed. The 3rd platoon then crossed the Canal moving in rushes like the 1st platoon. The platoon crossed at a point south of where the 1st platoon crossed and the water there was found to be knee deep.

Just after the 3rd platoon crossed the enemy counterattacked with 12 men first and then with 15 more. Company I's ammunition supply was down at this time to one clip per man. "We were really getting worried — that was some tight spot", the Company Commander commented. By working through the Battalion Commanders radio the company succeeded in getting one tank to the rear and then back up to the bridge with ammunition.

The five medium and three light tanks and the two tank destroyers fired into the town in an effort to dislodge the enemy there from his positions. At this time a number of Germans could be seen moving up from Stotzheim and the Company Commander was convinced that he must try and get one of the tanks across the stream. Finally a suitable spot was found a little south of the spot where the 3rd platoon had crossed. By 1630 one of the tanks went across. The remainder followed in short order. The Company with the tanks then moved into the town and cleaned it out. In the fight for Roitzheim the mortar forward observer was wounded together with the leader of the platoon of heavy machine guns who fought in the town with Company I.

Company I took from 165 to 200 prisoners from the machine-gun emplacements. There were three SS Officers and several SS non-commissioned Officers in the group and it was learned that they had directed the Volkssturmers and other regular army personnel in the stubborn defense of the town. A woman was found in one of these emplacements where she had manned her weapon until she was killed. A total of 40 to 50 machine-guns were destroyed.

The enemy held on as long as it could and Company I had to kill a large number of the men in their positions. Two of the SS Captains thought they saw an opportunity to escape and started to run whereupon the tankers opened up and shot them both. The Germans fought hard to keep open the north-south highway to the east of Roitzheim. Another platoon of tanks and a platoon of tank destroyers were brought across the Erft Canal and helped to defend the area during the night.

While Company I sweated it out at Roitzheim, Company L was engaged in the mission of clearing one-half of Euskirchen. Capt. Barzelay pointed out that Euskirchen is a large city and that half of it was a rather large objective for one company. Town plans were issued the preceding day while the Company was engaged in mopping up the barracks area. The Company moved out and a platoon of tanks and a platoon of Infantry leap-frogged from building to building. The Company Commander had planned the attack with the town divided into three parts. The company's radio would not work because of the buildings so the Company Commander pointed out the three sectors to those concerned. According to the plan there were three platoons, each of which was assigned two tanks and made responsible for a sector of the town.

The company had available a section of machine guns from Company M and another section from the Company's own weapons platoon. A section was given to each of the two flank platoons.

Since the radios would not work the Company Commander used a jeep for the purpose of control. He really sweated out the snipers as he rode down the streets with a map in his hand. About noon Capt. Barzelay contacted Capt. Owens, the Company K Commander, who said that his company had taken its sector.

That night Company L set up local security in its sector and two platoons were sent out to the roads to the southwest. Before these platoons arrived at their destination a scout from the tank destroyer outfit reported that there were 200 men advancing from the south behind Company I's positions at Roitzheim. Company L then received the mission of setting up a defensive line to the south. Company K was also to move up.

Capt. Barzelay went out on reconnaissance to find defensive positions for the Company leaving the first sergeant in charge. The Captain had gone only a short time when Lt. Col. Lutz, the Battalion Commander, met the First Sergeant at the railroad tracks. He told the Sergeant that there was no counter-attack but that 60 men from Company M were moving up to Roitzheim. He instructed the First Sergeant to put outposts on the two roads leading south from Euskirchen. This was accomplished. During the course of the night one man was killed and two wounded by mortar fire on the western most of these outposts.

Company I at Roitzheim had cleared the town by 2130. The company set fire to half the town with white phosphorous grenades. The company heard the previously-mentioned rumor to the effect that the enemy was massing tanks and infantry at Stotzeheim. The Battalion Commander set up a defense of Roitzheim on the south and east leaving the north and west open. Then at 2300 a report was received that 200 of the enemy were advancing on the town from a westerly direction. A platoon was then placed on the

western edge of Roitzheim while elements of Company M manned two knocked out American tanks to the north.

When Lt. Col. Lutz heard the story of the counter-attack from the west he scratched his head and thought for a minute. Then he said, "Well what would the krauts be doing coming in from that side?" and went out on a reconnaissance with five men to see if the story was true.

The Colonel and the men did not find any counterattacking enemy. It developed that the rumor had been started by men from the tank destroyer unit who had seen a platoon from Company M moving up to join Company I at Roitzheim.

The men of the 3rd Battalion were alerted for any possible counter-attacks and little sleep was had all through the night. Company I had fought continuously for more than 30 hours with less than 8 hours sleep in 5 days.

The battalion marched to Cuchenheim and closed in at 1150 where the men were fed and given a few hours to clean equipment, themselves and get a few minutes rest. At 1800 the battalion was motorized and moved to Rheinbach, where it closed in at 1900 and all units were billeted for the night.

At 0130 the battalion was given the mission of passing through the 60th AIB which was dug in on high ground in the vicinity of Lantershofen and to seize the crossings over the Ahr River at Bad Neuenahr and Heimersheim. Information was received that the 60th AIR had advanced from Rheinbach to Lantershofen, a distance of about 10 miles, during the afternoon and evening before, encountering practically no opposition and that the same could be expected from Lantershofen to the Rhine, about 10 miles away. The City of Bad Neuenahr was a hospital center and was reported to be an open city. By obtaining a few trucks and half tracks and mounting the remainder of the infantry on tanks and TD's it was possible to motorize the battalion and to move to Lantershofen and continue the advance, motorized from that point. A hot meal was fed at 0300 and at 0335 the Battalion Commander gave the Company Commanders the movement and attack order.

Company K with 1 light, 1 medium tank platoon and 1 machine gun platoon of Company M attached, was to proceed down route 266, bypassing Bad Neuenahr to the south and seize the bridge at Heimersheim. Company L, with 1 platoon of medium tanks and 1 platoon of TDs attached, was to move to the south behind Company K and seize the bridge over the Ahr River at Bad Neuenahr. Company I was to follow Company L and be prepared to assist either Company K or Company L if necessary.

The battalion moved out in darkness and heavy fog at 0600 A and the leading elements of Company K had reached Lantershofen at 0800. As soon as they had passed the town, they came under small arms and artillery fire and direct fire from self-propelled guns which knocked out 2 leading tanks. A reconnaissance was made and it was found that the city, although marked by Red Crosses on the roofs of buildings, was heavily defended. The battalion was dismounted immediately and reconnaissance and plans were made for a coordinated attack to accomplish the mission previously assigned. Word was received that the battalion was to seize only the bridges in Bad Neuenahr and that the bridge at Heimersheim would be seized by another unit attacking from the North.

Fragmentary orders were issued at 1030 as follows: Company K with 1 Platoon of light tanks, 1 medium tank platoon and 1 section of MGs attached, would move out at once to the high ground north of Lantershofen, move down behind the ridge paralleling highway 266 to a position 500 yards north of the eastern end of Bad Neuenahr, there to continue the advance on order, seizing the factory area between Bad Neuenahr and

Heppingen, thereby cutting off the retreat of the enemy to the east. Company L with 1 platoon of medium tanks and 1 platoon of TDs attached, to attack from the hill southeast of Lantershofen and seized the 4 bridges over the Ahr river. Company I to follow Company L and mop up the town. 1st MG platoon, Company M to support the attack of Company L by fire from positions north of Lantershofen. Company L to attack on orders as soon as Company K was in position north of the factory area.

The machine gun platoon in battalion support was set up on a hill looking down into Bad Neuenahr to open fire on order. While at the observation point on the hill some Germans were observed moving up the road in a truck to remove an Anti-tank gun. The mortars followed the truck as it moved back down the road. Some of the Germans got out and ran and effective fire was placed on them. Company K moved southeast from the high ground southeast of Carweiler at 1100. Two tanks and 5 half-tracks were bogged down but a route was found and the remaining 3 medium and 3 light tanks were brought through. Following a 5 minute mortar and assault gun preparation, the company attacked at 1435 and secured the north-east part of Bad Neuenahr against moderate opposition. Patrols contacted Company L in the town and secured the bridge on the Ahr River. Due to the number of small bridges across the River in Bad Neuenahr each was given a number. Company K captured a Gestapo Headquarters that contained enough armament and equipment to equip a Regiment.

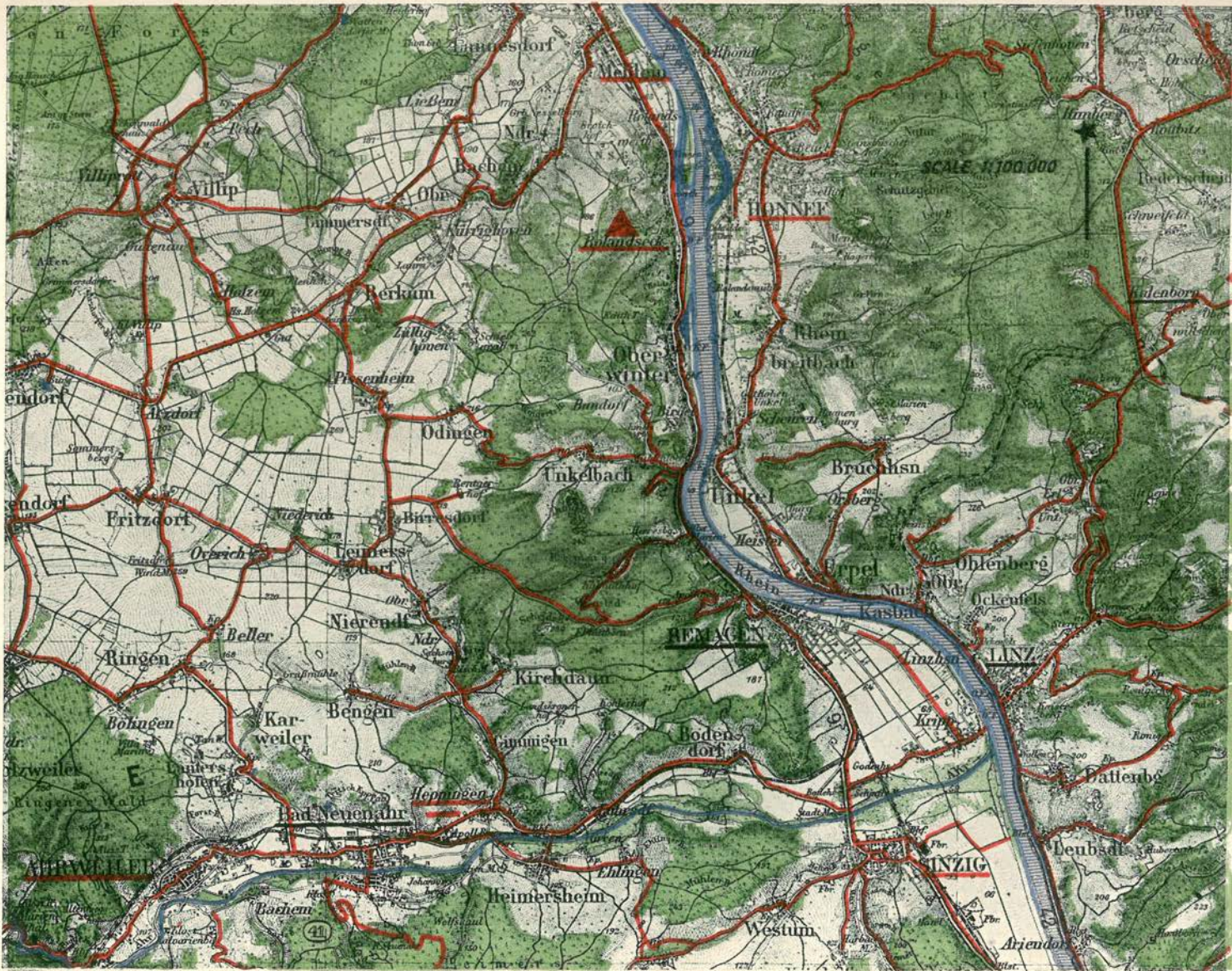
At 1330 Company L attacked from the hill southwest of Lantershofen. A-T fire from the outskirts of Bad Neuenahr knocked out 3 tanks and the other armored vehicles were unable to continue over the rough terrain. The company entered the eastern outskirts of Ahrweiler on foot, secured bridge 1 and moving along the main street into Bad Neuenahr under persistent sniper fire, secured Bridge 2. Enemy small arms fire prevented the crossing of the bridges, but defenses were set up to prevent the enemy from destroying them.

Company I moved into town as planned behind Company L. At 1800 a 9-man patrol crossed bridge 3. It received a counter-attack almost immediately, and though driven back to the northern bank of the river prevented the enemy from blowing the bridge. When the rest of the platoon had moved up the bridge was recrossed and heavy machine guns were set up on the south bank. A counter-attack at 0500 was driven off easily and the remainder of the enemy covering the south bank of the river withdrew. Cpl. Bilowich, Company I's transport corporal and driver was killed by artillery fire while bringing up a supply of ammunition.

At Bad Neuenahr the Medical section located a large hospital which they used as an aid station. In addition to the Germans, Capt. Colwell found one American PW from the 35th Division, one from the 4th Division, one Captain from the Air Corps, one Canadian pilot and three or four others. Arrangements were made for their evacuation. The wounded men said they had received excellent treatment there. The Captain noted however, that there was only one German doctor and some enlisted men to act as a staff and that the hospital was lacking in equipment.

The battalion cleared the section of Bad Neuenahr south of the Ahr River and secured the high ground to the south which overlooked the city and route 266, the main supply artery to the Remagen bridge. Roadblocks and outposts were set up, contact with adjacent units was established through patrols, and reconnaissance patrols were sent several miles to the south. Company K captured an enemy outpost manning a 75 mm A-T weapon which was placing direct fire on the highway leading to the bridge.

The battalion held defensive positions. Outposts were pulled in at 1300 when the battalion reverted to Regimental control and was alerted for a possible foot movement to Remagen.



At 2400 the battalion was ordered to move out on foot at 0100. It proceeded on foot to the Remagen bridge where it was met by the Regimental Commander Col. T. Hayes who ordered the battalion to assemble in Linz and await orders for further employment. The march over the heavily damaged bridge was made in darkness under intense artillery fire. The bridge was very weak and several vehicles had been lost through the gaping holes in the bridge just prior to the battalions crossing.

While the battalion was assembling in Linz, a small town south of the Remagen bridge, a strong enemy counter-attack had driven back a battalion of the 47th Infantry and reached a point 1500 yards from the river at the northeast edge of Ohlenberg. The 2nd Battalion of the 310th Infantry was immediately deployed in the vicinity of Ohlenberg. Orders were received at 1100 to attack at 1330 from the vicinity of Kasbach and seize the high ground to the east. The seizure of this ground would eliminate an important enemy observation post and would cut off enemy forces which had attacked Ohlenberg. In order to avoid enemy observation and because no enemy information was available it was decided that the battalion would attack in a column of companies and would move along the southern fringe of the wooded area north of Ohlenberg. This necessitated a longer route over very rough terrain. The Company Commanders were assembled while troops were on the move into a forward assembly area just north of Kasbach. Fragmentary orders were issued as follows: Battalion attacks at 1330 from its present assembly area and seizes the high ground overlooking Ohlenberg. Formation: Column of companies L, K, I. Company L with 1 Mg Platoon attached advance along the fringe of the woods and seize the top of the hill. Company K follow Company L at 200 yards, protect the south flank and seize the road junction immediately south of the high ground. Company I follow Company K, protect the north flank and set up defenses on the northwest side of the high ground. Wiremen were to follow the companies on foot and lay wire as they moved.

Jumping off at 1330, the column of companies, supported by HE and smoke from 81 mm mortars of Company M, advanced along the fringe of woods south of the railroad tracks. The enemy situation was unknown as was the exact nature of the objective which could only be determined roughly from the map. In addition to receiving extremely heavy artillery and moderate sniper fire throughout the advance, planes swooping up from attacks on the bridge strafed the battalion and a 500 pound bomb dropped by one of them knocked out an entire squad of the attacking platoon of Company L. Courage and a will to continue despite losses was prevalent throughout and Pfc. De Armoned helped greatly in maintaining this degree of morale among the men with whom he fought.

The terrain was extremely difficult. Generally the advance had to be made single file and in several places a loss of foothold would have resulted in serious injury or death. Upon reaching the edge of the woods immediately west of the objective, Company L bore the full brunt of an artillery TOT which fell short of the objective and lost the major part a squad in its other attacking platoon. Despite the severe casualties Company L attacked at 1835 A, surprised 25 enemy, including 5 officer artillery observers, secured its objective and dug in on the southern and eastern portion of the objective. Company K set up defenses along the edge of the road just northeast of Ohlenberg. The 1st platoon made five attempts to place a road block but each time was driven back by tank and machine gun fire from concealed positions in a woods. Lt. Postlethwait, 1st Platoon leader, and Pfc. Creety were killed during one of these attempts.

Initially in reserve, Company I reached the woods immediately west of the battalion objective at dark without having had a chance to reconnoiter its attack route in daylight.



EAST END OF REMAGEN BRIDGE BEFORE COLLAPSE

The company worked its way through extremely thick underbrush to a point half-way to the summit of the height in its zone. The 2nd platoon climbed to the summit where it set up defensive positions. The 1st and 3rd platoons dug in on the slope to the left flank of the 2nd platoon. Positions were selected in darkness and troops dug in under heavy artillery fire. Four casualties were suffered.

The Battalion aid station was established in a brewery at St. Savernsburg. The aid men operated from this point and were subjected to constant fire while carrying the wounded to the aid station. The wounded men were carried by litter to the aid station and then evacuated by jeep.

On the forward slope of the high ground that Company I was occupying one of I Company's men was severely wounded. Even though this area was still under considerable fire, a litter squad was sent down to try to evacuate him. As the men approached him they saw the Germans coming down on the side of another hill and were forced to leave. That night Pvt. William Rooney, an aid man with Company I, went down and treated the man. When he came back he got a volunteer litter squad to go back with him to evacuate the man. The Germans could see the squad as they evacuated the man but didn't fire on them. The man was brought back to the edge of the quarry for first aid and then was sent back to the aid station.

Under heavy artillery fire the area was searched and several prisoners were rounded up. At 1330 the enemy counter-attacked with 7 tanks and a battalion of Infantry. The 1st platoon of Company I immediately moved to the summit on the 2nd platoon's right flank and after a fire fight drove back the enemy which had managed to break through between Company I and its 2nd platoon. At the same time elements of Company I on the far left flank knocked out an enemy machine gun crew as it was setting up its gun in an extremely threatening position. S/Sgt. Lambert and Pfc. William P. Lambert of Company I waited with bazooka until the approaching enemy tanks were less than 40 yards from them. They then scored 2 hits on each of the two lead tanks. The tanks were damaged only slightly, but upon receiving this fire turned around and retreated with the

others toward Kretzhaus. When the Battalion Headquarters Company, which was ordered forward, to reinforce the defenses when the counter-attack started, arrived, the counter-attack had been broken. Approximately 40 enemy had been killed and 20 taken prisoner. During the entire counter-attack which lasted more than two hours, the 3rd Battalion was subjected to heavy artillery fire and direct fire from tanks, suffering 6 casualties. The battalion occupied and improved its defensive positions. Enemy artillery fire inflicted 13 casualties. Instructions were received on the 14th of March that on 15 March, the battalion was to make a pre-dawn attack to seize the network of roads, the railroad and the high ground at the western end of Kalenborn. The enemy located in these positions had been holding up the advance of the 47th Infantry on the south and the 60th Infantry on the north for 2 days. Four attacks by the 2nd Battalion, 310th Infantry and the 52nd AIB were repulsed over a period of 3 days, each time forcing the attackers to withdraw.

The plan was for Company I with 1 platoon of tanks and 1 platoon of TD's attached, and supported by both machine gun platoons and the mortar platoon of Company M, to assault the enemy position at 0530, seizing the Kalenborn road junction, securing the southern end of the railroad yards and to make contact with the 52nd AIB which was reported to be holding the northern end of the railroad yards and the road junction to the north. Company L was to follow Company I, protect the right flank and establish road blocks to the south. Because of the report that 6 enemy tanks were in the vicinity of the objective, 4 bazooka teams of the battalion A-T platoon were attached to Company I. These were instrumental in driving the tanks to the rear.

Company I and Company L moved north along Route 2 under heavy fire to Kretzhaus. From there they jumped off unsupported. The 2nd Platoon of Company I, led by Lt. Hermann J. Carlson, crossed the railroad tracks at daylight and entered the woods immediately southeast of the road junction. Heavy artillery fire and 4 enemy tanks supported by infantry were encountered. Undeterred, the platoon held its position and fought back. They were so close to the tanks that two men were injured by the muzzle blasts. Continued bazooka hits, though only able to damage the tanks slightly, finally forced them to withdraw, and the enemy Infantrymen retreated into houses along the west side of the road. The 2nd Platoon followed and cleaned out the houses, capturing 25 and killing 10 enemy. By 0900 the 1st and 3rd platoons converged at a road junction where bazookas were advantageously located and the platoons supported by a platoon of tanks, cleaned out the railroad station and the dozen houses opposite it, capturing 8 snipers. At this time, heavy mortar and Nebelwerfer fire fell upon the area, wounding Lt. Cos. Lutz, Battalion, Commander, and Lt. Steele of I Company.

Meanwhile Company L dug in under heavy shelling on either side of the road below Kretzhaus and at 0830 cleared the portion of woods north east of the road junction. Major General Louis A. Craig, in command of the ninth Division, made the Third Battalion responsible for the entire Kalenborn junction, regardless of what other troops were in the vicinity.

Company I with Company C, 52nd AIB attached, attacked at 1430, and secured the remainder of Kalenborn junction. Company I suffered 12 casualties. The capture of this road junction and the high ground overlooking Kalenborn, after 4 unsuccessful attempts by other units, knocked out the last enemy position with good observation on the Remagen bridge and cracked the enemy's last determined stand in that sector.

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Acknowledgements

Anti-Tank Platoon

The tactical situation seldom dictated the use of the A-T platoons three 57 mm guns, but the platoon furnished 2-man bazooka teams to the rifle companies which proved instrumental in breaking up numerous tank attacks, helped bring up supplies and several times volunteered its services as litter-bearers. In addition A-T men swept roads for mines and cleared road-blocks. During the period from the Roer River to Kalenborn the platoon suffered 8 casualties.

Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon,

Despite the fact that ammunition supply points were often located so far to the rear that it took a full day and night for trucks to effect resupply, and though ammunition often had to be hand carried long distances over rough terrain, the platoon constantly supplied the companies with sufficient ammunition and maintained its basic load almost without exception.

In addition the platoon cleared road blocks, swept road mines and assisted in bringing forward supplies and food. On several occasions men of the platoon volunteered their services and were employed as litter-bearers.

From 1 March until 15 March this platoon functioned without an officer platoon leader, and its activities were directed by T/Sgt Thomas R. Jushinskas. In spite of this additional handicap, it continued to perform its functions uninterruptedly under adverse conditions of terrain and weather, and often in the face enemy fire, rendering invaluable support and service.

Casualties sustained were 1 killed and 3 wounded.

Communications Platoon

Wire crews followed closely behind the rifle companies, and upon consolidation of an objective, wire was always laid, regardless of the hour or the difficulty of terrain. The work of this group in the battalion first hours on the Remagen bridgehead was vital to the notable successes achieved in subsequent attacks.

While units were on the move communication was maintained primarily by means of SCR 300 radios.

In addition to suffering 2 casualties, the communications platoon immediately replaced from its own ranks, casualties to communications personnel in the letter companies.

S-4

The entire kitchen and supply personnel demonstrated exceptional determination and in many cases heroism in carrying out their functions. With but 2 exceptions, when vehicular movement was for bidden or restricted, the battalion received 2 hot meals daily.

At no time was any unit of the battalion ever permitted to run out of ammunition or vital supplies. Casualties suffered in this record of notable service and achievement were 1 armorer artificer killed and 1 supply sergeant wounded.

COMBAT ACTION 3RD BATTALION

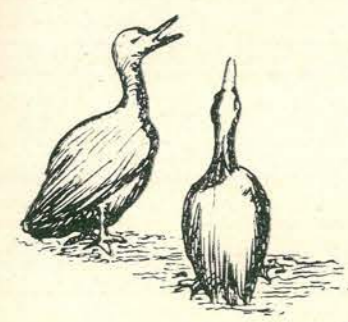
INCLUSIVE DATES
11 DEC. 1944 - 17 APRIL 1945

...ROER
...RHINE
...RUHR

APPROXIMATE
SCALE
1:500,000

11 DEC. 44 - 15 MARCH 45
LT. COL. HARRY LUTZ
COMMANDING

16 MARCH - 17 APRIL 45
LT. COL. WALTER H. PIERCE
COMMANDING



BELGIUM

EUPEN



BLUE BN CROSSED
ROER RIVER, 1 MARCH



3RD BN DOUGHS
TOOK EUSKIRCHEN,
RAILROAD HUB CITY,
4 MARCH



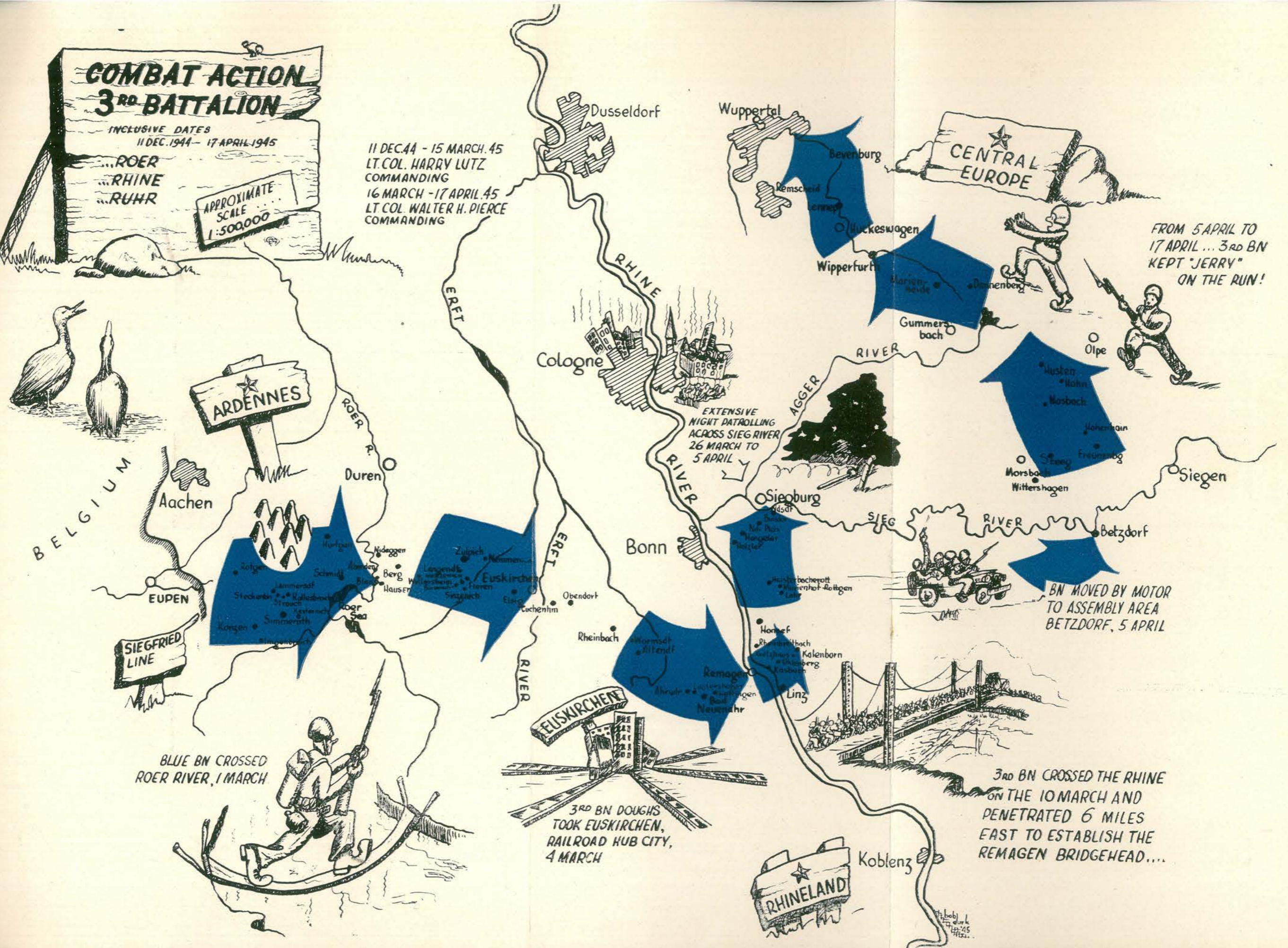
FROM 5 APRIL TO
17 APRIL ... 3RD BN
KEPT "JERRY"
ON THE RUN!



BN MOVED BY MOTOR
TO ASSEMBLY AREA
BETZDORF, 5 APRIL



3RD BN CROSSED THE RHINE
ON THE 10 MARCH AND
PENETRATED 6 MILES
EAST TO ESTABLISH THE
REMAGEN BRIDGEHEAD....



Medical Detachment

Throughout the entire action the men of the Third Battalion Medical Detachment demonstrated extraordinary heroism and exceptional gallantry under extremely difficult conditions. Despite reduced personnel and continual depletion because of casualties, evacuation was accomplished swiftly and effectively, generally during a battle rather than after it was over. On only 1 occasion, and then only after two attempts under enemy fire had been made to locate the wounded man, was a casualty left out overnight.

At all times was the task of giving medical aid and evacuating casualties speedily put above the personal safety of the entire staff. The Aid Station always moved with the battalion C. P., or with the companies, and on one occasion, during the march to Euskirchen, it functioned while moving, under sporadic enemy sniper and artillery fire, by means of a chest especially designed for that purpose.

To insure immediate evacuation, litter teams which evacuated as the battle progressed, always accompanied the attacking companies.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that every Third Battalion Aid Man administered first aid under fire without thought of personal safety and showed heroism beyond the call of duty.



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Kalenborn to Sieg River . . .



At 1000 on the 16th of March the battalion was relieved by the 60th AIB. The men left the wooded hill-land around the Kalenborn Junction and moved by truck to a reserve area northeast of Honnef.

It was a warm sunny day and for a while the men were free to enjoy it. The Diploma Blue CP was established in a roadside inn and the companies dug in along the side of the hill. There was a small pond beside the inn and some of the GIs supplemented their midday K Rations with fried trout. There was also a little Rhein wine from the abandoned inn's diminishing supply.

The rest period was sweet but it only lasted a few hours.

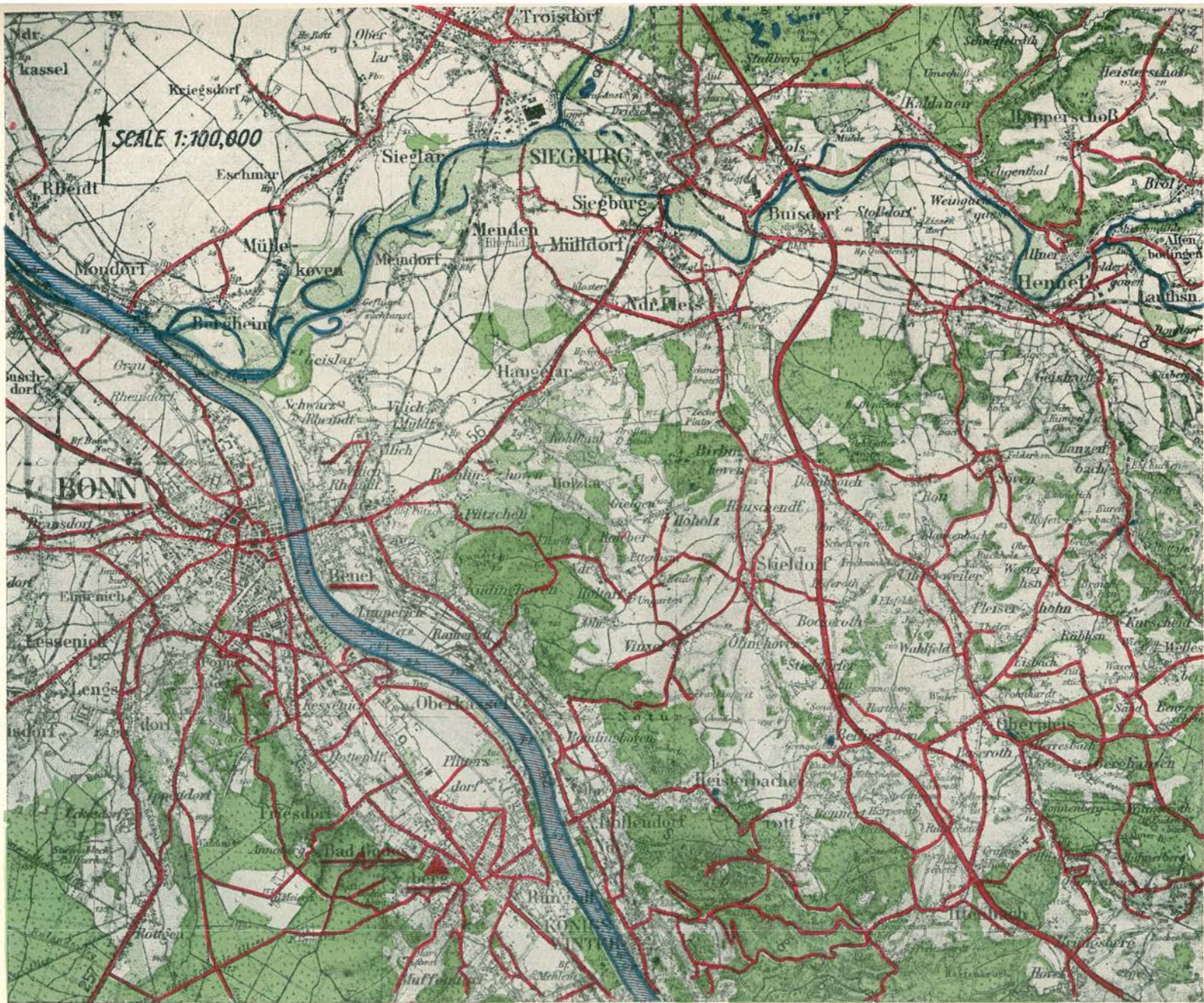
Early in the afternoon, the battalion was alerted again and moved out on foot with L Company in the lead. It was a grueling two-hour climb over a narrow winding road with sporadic artillery falling on the leading elements. The column reached the assembly area near Warenhof and Rottgen before dusk, and Company L moved up to relieve I Company of the 311th Infantry.

The changeover was made at 1730.

Platoons of the 311th were dug in just below the summit of a large hill and the road leading up was subjected to heavy enemy shell fire. L Company had to climb through the fire and there were several casualties before it reached its objective.

The rifle platoons were placed in a semicircle covering three sides of the hill and Lieutenant Julian Miller, 4th platoon leader and acting company executive officer, led the headquarters personnel up to establish a company command post in a house on the summit. They had just moved up when the krauts threw in a heavy mortar barrage, cutting them off from the men who were dug in below the house.

It was dark by this time and the intensity of the shell fire made movement on the hill almost impossible. The company's radio operator was with the CP group but all attempts to contact him failed and it was assumed that his radio had been knocked out by the mortar barrage. Staff Sergeant Verne Peterson put an SCR 300 on his back and started up toward the house from the 3rd Platoon's positions. He climbed along the same route the CP group had followed. He was half-way there when he was halted by fire coming



from the direction of the house. It was too dark to see but it was obvious by this time that the top of the hill was occupied by German soldiers, who evidently had infiltrated while L Company was taking over the positions from the 311th's Company I. Peterson made another attempt to reach the house but was again stopped by small arms fire. He returned to his platoon to report what had happened.

The company commander, who had been absent during this action, returned and reorganized the company's positions half-way up the hill. It was extremely dark and a heavy fog reduced visibility so much that it was deemed inadvisable to advance further that night. No word was received from the men who had moved up into the house. There were eighteen men missing including Lieutenants Miller and Blum, First Sergeant George Lynch, and Communications Sergeant Robert T. Bryan.

It was almost a skeleton company that waited through the night there on the side of the hill above Rottgen. The CP group was lost and the platoons had suffered numerous casualties from the enemy shell-fire.

Daylight finally came and at 0530 the remaining men of Company L started out to take the top of the hill. Lieutenant Mosely's platoon climbed straight up toward the house and received frontal fire from three machine-guns manned by an estimated fifteen men and supported by several dug-in enemy riflemen. While the ensuing fire-fight was in progress, another platoon moved along the side of the hill and came up on the enemy positions from the east flank. The Germans were trapped between the two platoons. Fifteen enemy were killed and fifteen taken prisoner.

The house was empty save for the web equipment and rifles of the missing men and it was learned later from the PWs that the eighteen men had been captured as they entered the house the night before.

I Company reported that 3 prisoners had been taken by a patrol sent out to contact friendly troops on their flank.

On the 18th of March the battalion was ordered to attack Heisterbacherott and the hill to the west of the town. The plan was for K Company to secure the southern end of the town and I Company to take the hill on the left as soon as Company K had completed its mission.

Supported by one TD and two tanks, K Company moved toward the town under cover of heavy woods. The approach followed a trail leading to the right of the town and the men intended to make their attack from the right flank.

At the edge of the woods they entered a shack and surprised twenty-six krauts eating breakfast there. The group surrendered without a fight and K Company moved on.

When the company reached a point in the woods directly opposite the town, it halted. The first platoon was left at the edge of a grove of scrub oak and the rest of the Company swung left to enter Heisterbacherott with the armor.

The men of the first platoon were spread out through the woods guarding what had become the company's left rear. Behind them were a section of machine guns and a section of mortars from M Company.

Staff Sergeant Paul T. King of M Company was the first to spot the Germans. They were coming down the trail through the woods and there were a lot of them. He set up his machine guns to cover and waited.

K's first platoon, under Sgt Lang, was lying facing the Krauts but couldn't see them because of the density of the woods. The first sign of the enemy the men had was the sudden rattle of two machine guns that began throwing lead from the shadow of the trees directly to their front.

Sergeant King opened up then with his machine guns and Lang sent two BARs around through the woods to the left of his platoon. King directed the fire of his section with an M1 rifle and the BARs and machine-guns formed an effective cross-fire. The enemy advance was halted but the Germans were on higher ground than the men of K Company and they continued to throw a screen of lead which kept most of the first platoon pinned down.

Lang and T-5 Joseph B. Zeigler were hugging the ground side by side when Lang decided to do something about the Krauts. He got up, yelling for his platoon to advance, and started walking into the German positions. In a matter of seconds, every man in the platoon was on his feet and moving up the slope. As they walked they fired and the woods shielding the attacking krauts were raked by a hail of 30 and 45 caliber slugs. They kept going for a hundred yards and the enemy fire began to decrease.

When the fight was over the GIs had captured twenty Germans and had killed between forty-five and fifty. There were dead Germans lying within six feet of the first platoon's positions.

M Company had suffered three casualties and K Company, eleven.

S/Sgt King received the silver star for his work that day and Sgt Lang received a bronze star.

The Kraut attack had been broken up and those Germans that had not been captured or were not lying in the woods retreated back along the trail that divided K's sector from that of Company L.

The first platoon then joined the rest of K Company in clearing out its section of Heisterbacherott.

As soon as K accomplished its mission, I Company attacked the hill west of the town. There was a lot of resistance by small arms and automatic weapons but it was eliminated after ten Germans had been killed and fifteen captured. The hill was secured.

Meanwhile, Company L knocked out some resisting automatic weapons with counter-fire from machine-guns and M1s and cleared the woods on the battalions right flank. I Company then moved into the southern end of Heisterbacherott and K Company secured the northern part of the town.

The next day, the battalion received word that it was to move to Oberdollendorf.

Early on the 20th, the battalion marched into the town and assembled there ready to spend a restful night. Orders to move again came before dawn and the battalion marched out of town after eating breakfast in the dark.

Holzlar was reached on the afternoon of the 21st and there the battalion became regimental reserve. Several men were sent to the rest center in Verviers, Belgium and all had an opportunity to rest their weary bodies, bathe, and write letters.

During the next few days the battalion reorganized and considerable time was spent in the cleaning of equipment. 75 reinforcements were welcomed to the battalion on the 23rd and soon became an integral part of the Blue Infantrymen.

Orders were received on the 24th of March to move up and relieve the 2nd Battalion, 310th Infantry along the Sieg River. L Company moved up on the 25th followed by the rest of the battalion on the 26th. The mission assigned to the battalion was to maintain defensive positions along the river and to keep close watch on the Germans, being ready to repulse any counterattack.

The next week the training program continued during the daytime and extensive patrolling was conducted at night. Considerable enemy activity was observed but little aggressive action developed. Additional men were sent back to the rest centers and several men a day were afforded the opportunity to take showers and procure clean clothes.

On the 3rd of April orders were received to prepare to be relieved on the following night. Blue Battalion was relieved during the hours of darkness on the 4th by elements of the Infantry Division and assembled in the town of Hangelar. Chow was served at 0400 the next morning and the battalion departed from Hangelar in trucks enroute to Betzdorf, Germany.



RHINE BRIDGE
AFTER COLLAPSE



PART OF COMPANY K AT
NIEDER PLEIS



*"the first of the tanks
lumbered into view"*

Day by Day in the Ruhr Pocket ...



6 April 1945

The morning was black, the moon was hidden and the dawn had not yet shown its face. Blue Battalion was assembled in the town of Betzdorf on the Sieg River, had been there all night and though little rest was available the men made the most of the few hours. As was customary, they had cooked their own fried potatoes and eggs the night before, ate their regular chow in addition, and in all, satisfied "ever growing" appetites. Equipment had been cleaned, some rested while others pulled guard, each man had his individual job to do and each was duty bound.

The Company Commanders had been on a reconnaissance the night before, had issued orders to all attachments, distributed overlays and possibly bowed their heads in a moment's sleep and a long prayer. At 0630, the 6 April 1945, the battalion once again began its relentless attack, against what was not just an enemy because the people represented upheld ideals and beliefs contrary to G. I. Joe's, but because to each G. I. had come a personal reaction. Perhaps his best buddie had been killed, his brother, his father or he himself had been wounded once or twice, maybe none of these. Perhaps he was just tired, tired of sleeping in dirty, wet, cold foxholes, tired of dragging, pushing, forcing himself onward day after day through mud, briars and water, tired of being shot at and wondering whether his was to do or die — or both. He was determined to end all this; to finish the fighting; to be able to think freely of the things he loved most; to sleep; to relieve his tired body and mind of all that had been torturing it for such a long time. That was the G. I. Joe who once again put his pack on his back, checked his ammunition, adjusted his helmet and with his faithful rifle groped his way into the darkness to form in the approach march with his buddies.

Company K was leading followed by L Company. Company I was in battalion reserve. The winding road from Betzdorf followed the Sieg River westward and as the men moved along the road to the line of departure near Kalteich the dawn was breaking. Company K with four tanks and one tank destroyer echeloned its platoons from terrain feature to terrain feature — or objective to objective. Kalteich, which consisted of only a few houses fell without resistance to the 1st Platoon while the 2nd platoon of K Company advanced with Capt. Owens to the next small town, Elkhausen. The town of Kalteich was located on a bald hill affording the enemy good observation of all movement in the town. Troops from Companies I and M were also in the town with those of Company K and a good target was presented to the enemy. Artillery zeroed in on three houses where many of the men were congregated causing several casualties. Capt. James R. Bonner was mortally

hit while reconnoitering in Kalteich to determine the best route to advance his company, Company I. Lt. Irving Ochs, Jr. assumed command of I Company at this time and led the company in the attack on the town of Hohnhahn. The town was small and there was little opposition. Having taken Hohnhahn Company I advanced to the town of Hecke and after capturing about 50 prisoners had cleared the town by 1015. Intermittent enemy artillery fire fell in the town a short while later but inflicted no casualties.

At Kalteich, where the enemy artillery was falling, it was only possible to move a few men out of the town at one time. Company K's remaining two platoons, less ten casualties, managed to get out of Kalteich and move on to join the 2nd platoon which had gone on ahead. Two platoons were then put on tanks and the third followed on foot. The town of Linden surrendered without resistance and approximately ten prisoners of war were taken. Company K, advancing next toward Wittersshagen, was fired on from a draw to the east, however, they overcame the Germans and entered Wittersshagen with little resistance from the enemy. An aid station was set up in one of the houses near by and as the aid men would enter and leave the house with casualties the Germans would zero in with artillery.

K Company next moved to the west along the edge of a wooded area to escape from enemy observation. The lead tank lost a track at Wittersshagen and then K Company set up a perimeter defense of the town. While there, the mortar observer sighted a machine gun nest and scored a direct hit on the enemy emplacement. As soon as all the men of K Company were together and the remaining tanks were brought forward the company reorganized and pushed on again to Stentenbach.

I Company which was receiving light artillery fire in Hecke moved out of that town along the right flank of the battalion zone to the high ground beyond. A little sniper fire and artillery fire was received but I Company moved on to the high ground. The Battalion Commander, Major Walter Pierce, then instructed I Company to send a patrol to contact Company L.

Company I proceeded on order to the high ground near Diedersshagen encountering no resistance as they advanced. Company L could be seen by Company I as they were fighting in the small town to the left of Diedersshagen. The Germans however were not too desirous of resisting and surrendered willingly.

"Jerry", the name G. I's gave the German soldier, was on the run and the Blue Battalion intended to keep him moving. The leading platoon of Company K moved into Stentenbach with two tanks and, other than sniper, fire met no resistance. They then advanced into Stockshoke encountering a few enemy soldiers whom were found dead the next morning.

The remaining tanks threw their tracks in the mud and narrow roads and were unable to proceed to Stentenbach.

Company K had taken the last two towns for the day. Company I had organized in a defensive position to the right of Company K. Company L was echeloned to the left rear and had not been able to tie in with the rest of the battalion. The mortars of M Company were prepared to fire from positions to the rear of Company K and the heavy machine guns were used to assist in the defensive fire lines. The night was cold and dark. Chow was served at about 2300 hours after being transported to most units by hand carrying parties.

German soldiers were entering the battalion's lines that night and surrendering, rather than fight. It was learned from these men that several hundred German soldiers had been brought up in trucks that day to establish a defense for the highway which ran

east-west through Morsbach and to patrol the wooded areas south of the road so as to harass the Americans as they approached and delay their advance. However, the prisoners also stated that the Germans were not too desirous of fighting.

The situation the night of the 6th April was an uncomfortable one, both physically and mentally and every one waited eagerly, patiently, cautiously for the dawn of a new day.

7 April 1945.

At daybreak I Company sent a patrol down the dirt road to its left to contact K Company and bring chow forward. A group of infiltrating Germans were encountered and after a few were killed the rest surrendered.

Chow was distributed to all companies, prisoners taken during the preceding night were evacuated and ammunition was resupplied by the Battalion Ammunition and Pioneer platoon, capably led by Lt. James Hilmar.

From the prisoners, who seemed almost eager to give information, it was learned that the Krauts had moved two companies into the area during the night and were planning to attack the ground occupied by Companies I and K. It was apparent that the Germans did not know that their objectives were held by American troops.

The influx of surrendering Germans continued during the day and all told the same story. There was a definite lack of organization in the enemy forces and small groups or individuals were found wandering aimlessly in the woods looking for a place to surrender. Though the GIs were glad to see the Germans giving up, it was hard to watch their enemies go back to the safety and relative comfort of a PW enclosure.

At 1555 hours the battalion was once more ready to attack. All three companies jumped off to the northeast as planned, with L Company heading for the little village of Alzen, I moving into Hofferhof, and K Company attempting to get control of the road between the towns of Morsbach and Steeg.

K Company's immediate objective consisted of two sections of high ground overlooking Wisser Bach which was a small creek that followed the road from Steeg to Morsbach. The two sparsely wooded knolls were separated by a dirt road that joined the highway less than a mile east of Morsbach. Two platoons were sent forward; one with the mission of taking the high ground to the right and setting up a road block on the highway, and the other with the mission of securing the high ground to the left.

Both platoons reached their objectives shortly after jumping off but while they were still digging in the enemy began throwing direct artillery fire from the front and right flank. In addition the GI's began receiving sporadic but effective machine gun fire. The concentration of enemy fire eventually made the exposed positions untenable, and word was sent back that it was inadvisable to try to hold the ground and would be better to pull back and consolidate the day's gains by forming a unified defense.

Meanwhile, L Company was moving north from K's left rear. The town of Alzen lay huddled in an open draw surrounded on three sides by thick woods. Heavy machine guns from M Company were set up on the line of departure and the mortars began firing from a little farther back as targets presented themselves. The two forward observers had a clear view of the objective from an OP near the woodline about 350 yards from the town, and the softening up process began.

The first platoon had moved off on the left flank, and the second platoon was on the right with the light machine guns. The third platoon was in support.

The first counter action by the enemy came as the scouts leading the first platoon were

about half-way across the open area. A 20 mm gun began sending a stream of explosive shells into the fringe of woods and the first platoon was forced to double-time across the field and down into the town where it was engaged in a fire fight. It was either remain in the deadly fire of the 20 mm gun or close with the enemy.

The second platoon moved through direct 88 fire to the north end of town and set up a defense on the reverse slope with the light machine guns. By this time the first platoon had chased the Krauts out of its section of town and Capt. Barzelay had followed in with his radio operator.

The support platoon cleared the woods to the east and southeast searching for the 20 mm gun but was unable to find it. Using one or two squads to a house the company cleared the buildings one by one and reassembled to set up the night's defenses.

The heavy machine-guns were placed by the machine-gun platoon leader in such a position as to take some of the pressure off K Company which had suffered heavy casualties before pulling back to a position out of the ring of relentless Kraut fire.

While K and L were fighting for their objectives, Company I, on the battalion's right flank, ran into stiff opposition on the road to Steeg. Leaving the woods in the vicinity of Dietershagen, Lieutenant Ochs' men had moved down across a stream and into Hofferhof where only a little resistance was met in two of the houses. The town was quickly cleared and four German riflemen were captured.

At 1700 the company started off to the east with one of M Company's platoons trailing the column. The enemy intelligence section was evidently not functioning as well as Lieutenant Janes' "I & R" men. On several occasions the company ran into Germans who thought the road still belonged to Deutschland. Two Krauts approaching on motorcycles were ambushed and killed, an another was taken alive when he came riding down the road on a bicycle. A little later a Volkswagen came up the road behind the column of American soldiers and the driver was killed.

The company had barely started moving again when still another German jeep approached from the rear. This one was carrying two captains and a lieutenant. One of I Company's bazookamen stopped the vehicle with a direct hit and there was a short exchange of small arms fire that ended with the death of one of the officers and the capture of the other two.

The first platoon, which had been leading the attack, moved off to the left to clear a group of buildings, and the second platoon moved on through. About 600 yards from Steeg the first squad had arrived at some houses on the right when two German tanks were spotted coming onto the highway.

Immediately, two bazooka teams took up firing positions in the ditch at the side of the road. There was a bend in the highway several hundred yards in front of the bazookas and the GIs in the ditch lay very still and waited. The wait was not long.

The first of the tanks lumbered into view and the long gun began to belch flame and high explosive. The bazookas opened up at the same time but the first round whistled down the middle of the road and missed. Another dark hulk rolled up beside the first and both tanks directed their fire at the buildings that sheltered men of I's first and second platoons.

The red tile-roofed houses stood behind small trees that lined both sides of the road and the tank gunners began throwing shells at the trees. The shells ripped into the new spring foliage and exploded against the twisted branches sending hot shell fragments in all directions. A tree-burst is the most wicked type of artillery fire. GIs hugging the damp earth beside the houses had no protection from the descending fragments.

In an attempt to take some of the pressure off his men, Lieutenant Ochs brought the company's 60 mm mortars into play. Within a matter of seconds the mortarmen had zeroed in and were lobbing shells at the two tanks. The increase in fire forced the Germans to back up.

Enemy machine gun and sniper fire from the right flank had increased and casualties in the two groups of buildings had mounted to eight wounded and two killed.

The 60's began to run low on ammunition and were forced to lift their fire. The tanks started down the road again and gray-coated German Infantry could be seen coming over the rise of ground in front of Steeg. There were an estimated 130 enemy riflemen in the counter-attacking force.

Some of the second platoon got out from under the fire and moved into a creek bed on the left. The "536" radios had failed, but the company commander managed to get word out for his men to fall back to a hill southwest of the village and reorganize for another attempt.

The GIs had to cross 300 yards of open country through a hail of deadly fire from the "88's" and machine guns on the Kraut tanks, and two men were cut down by direct hits as they raced for cover in the woods on the other side of the field.

Most of the company got across to the high ground and permission was requested to return to the first objective taken that day.

When Company I moved back into the woods around Hammer to set up its defenses that night, the list of missing men was a large and bitter thing. Because of the heavy concentration of enemy fire, the company had been unable to evacuate its wounded. Others were cut off by the enemy counterattack and some never received word to leave town.

There were fifteen men, including the 4.2 mortar observer, who had been cut off but managed to keep contact by 300 radio. While trying to get back to the American lines, they sent patrols out from time to time to keep track of the enemy and radioed their location to battalion headquarters. The mortar observer even directed artillery fire by radio. It was three days before they found their company again and by that time they had picked up twenty prisoners. Twelve of the original 15 Americans returned safely.

That night, L Company found its town difficult to defend because of the numerous draws and depressions in the surrounding terrain. Light machine guns were set up on the high spots under the direction of 2nd Lt. Robert Hibbard who led a squad of his own up under heavy enemy mortar fire to establish a strong outpost. Wire was laid to him there and all night there was a protective ring of machine guns around the company area.

's 60 mm mortars put in their usual overtime. During the long hours of darkness they fired half of their basic load, making the night as uncomfortable for the Krauts as possible.

The Battalion's 105s, under Captain M. L. Smith, FA, fired a few supporting rounds, and the only counter fire came from some enemy self-propelled artillery that was silenced between 0200 and 0300 hours.

When I Company's soldiers moved back to dig in for the night, they discovered Germans in the positions they had taken the evening before. At 2300, twenty three prisoners were taken and more came strolling in at intervals throughout the night.

As darkness thickened into deep night on the 7th of April, 1945, there were several hundred American men scattered through the wooded hill-land southwest of the German village of Steeg. For a few, the night had brought peace, forever. But for the living the night was to be only another long wait for the new day. A new day and a new list of dead and wounded and missing.

8 April 1945

Shortly after dawn, I Company jumped off again, moving over the same ground they had covered the day before and picking up prisoners as they went. It was a crisp cool morning and the freshness of the air helped clean the haze out of the fogged minds of the tired GIs as they marched down the slope toward Steeg. The company column swung left before reaching Steeg and began moving northwest.

A patrol was sent off to the left flank and found 13 unarmed Germans and about 150 Russian and Polish slave-laborers. A little later, engineers, coming up behind the company to establish a two-way road chain, ran into a dozen Germans who had slipped into a farmhouse after the company had moved through. Two were killed and the others took off on the run toward Steeg.

The advancing GIs passed newly laid German communication wire and cut it before the Wehrmacht ever got a chance to use it.

While Item's first and third platoons were nearing their objective to the northwest, Company L moved out of Alzen to meet three tanks and a tank destroyer that had been released by K Company. When the armor arrived a half hour later, L Company advanced into the wooded hills overlooking Morsbach and waited there for orders to attack. As usual the troops had dug in and were partially protected from the intermittent enemy shell fire.

Morsbach lay clustered around the road junction in a triangular hollow below L Company's position. The forward observers moved up to high spots along the edge of the forest



S. SGT. JOHN BABCOCK



"LOVE'S 60 MM MORTARS"

and began to pick out targets. In a few minutes M Company's mortars and the 903rd FA's 105 howitzers were blasting holes in the town .

An enemy tank was spotted and its location relayed to the TD commander. He brought his Tank Destroyer up with only the barrel of the gun pointing out of the green shadow of the trees. Eight rounds were fired and five connected. The tank began to burn and the Jerries hauled it away under cover of a smoke screen. Later in the day the knocked-out tank was captured about 580 yards south of Ober Warnsbach. The Germans had salvaged the ammunition and destroyed the gun.

Orders finally came for Company L to attack and the riflemen started down the slope toward town with M Company's mortars and heavy machine guns covering their advance from fixed positions. The second platoon, with light machine guns attached, moved under cover of the woods to the road junction. The trees were so dense as to make observation impossible and a two wire team went with the platoon for communications.

The third platoon climbed onto the three tanks and the TD and traveled down the road to hit the enemy from the west flank in a coordinated push with the second platoon. They moved through Lt. Hibbard's men, dismounted at the road junction, and began clearing the houses one by one.

Contact between platoons was maintained by "536" radio. The second platoon was clearing the high ground on the west side of town. It ran into two buildings filled with Germans and there was a short but vicious exchange of fire in which the GIs used bazookas, rifle grenades and mortars as well as small arms. Ten Germans were killed and ten captured.

With Morsbach cleared, the company climbed into the hills north of town and began the approach march on Birzel. The armor had to crawl up a narrow dirt road and one squad went with it as protection. The second platoon was traveling on the left side of the road with the other two clearing the high ground on the right.

Contact with the enemy came just before the lead scouts reached Birzel. The advance was held up while mortars and artillery threw shells over the GIs' heads into the German positions.

Engineers had come up behind the infantry to get the road in shape for use as a supply route. They discovered German plastic mines in front of the company and dug out eight of them so that the advance could continue.

There was a house filled with German soldiers a few hundred yards from town and the tanks opened up on it. Krauts could be seen scurrying out of the house and diving for cover. The tanks held their fire while Company L's riflemen stormed into the house and killed a few Germans who had stayed behind.

Heavy fire from the woods behind the house forced the GIs to get out and the Germans returned.

Again the Blue Infantrymen poured bazooka and machine gun fire into the rapidly deteriorating building and regained it this time for keeps. The Germans had enough. White flags appeared and about a hundred prisoners were taken.

The 4.2 and 81 mm mortars then laid a terrific barrage into the town itself and 180 more Krauts came out with their hands in the air. The little village of Birzel was now in American hands.

As the company moved into town, and artillery liaison plane swooped in low, dipping its wings. It circled back and the pilot dropped a note saying there were two German tanks 1500 yards to the north and that one of them was apparently disabled. The pilot's information proved to be completely accurate.

The second platoon led the advance on Ober Warnsbach while Captain Barzelay and the rest of the company remained in the woods. The disabled German tank was found by the GIs just before they reached the town.

Resistance in Ober Warnsbach was light. Seven PWs were taken and the entire company moved in with orders to dig in and hold.

Company K had waited until Company L crossed the Auburn phase line at Morsbach before beginning its attack. Up to that time, K's CP was used as an observation post for directing mortar and artillery fire on possible enemy strong points and on actual German traffic around the autobahn.

When the jump-off came at 1650, the company was without its armor and moved out on foot. They left Stentenbach once more and cleared the woods to the northeast. German patrols had been reported in the area but none were contacted.

The first mission, establishment of a road block on the Steeg-Morsbach highway, was accomplished under fire. Two Germans were killed and eleven captured.

Machine-guns, riflemen, and one anti-tank gun were left at the road block and the remainder of the company followed the first platoon into Wasser. There was some resisting machine-gun and semi-automatic fire as the company passed through and the first platoon stayed behind to clean up the place while the others infiltrated into Steeg under cover of darkness.

The platoon in Wasser suffered a few casualties before silencing the enemy weapons but accomplished its mission and remained there until ordered to rejoin the rest of K Company. The few scattered houses designated on the map as the town of Hammer offered little resistance. While going through the buildings, the GIs found wounded soldiers who had been left behind when Company I was driven back the day before. The Germans had given them neither trouble nor assistance.

One GI had had a leg shot off and was treated by the Germans and left to die. For 16 hours, he lay in the farmhouse keeping himself alive by pure guts until K Company picked him up.

A squad was placed in Hammer to maintain a road block, and the force that had established the other road block earlier in the day came up the main road on foot to rejoin the main body of the company in Steeg. Tanks which had joined Company K at Wasser followed along behind the foot troops.

It was quite dark by this time and Steeg was not actually cleared of Germans until the following morning. A perimeter defense was set up and the GIs sweated out the night, getting what sleep they could while cautiously awaiting the dawn.

I Company, in Ober Warnsbach, had sent a patrol back to contact the 309th's G Company in Morsbach. Contact was made and Lt. Wright of the 309th returned with the patrol. Shortly after dusk, Lieutenant Ochs, leading I Company in its advance to the northwest, contacted Captain Barzelay, and informed him that Company I was going to move through the town. At 2210 the company came walking in and stopped just long enough to have chow before proceeding on to Kappenstein. There were supposed to be enemy tanks between Ober Warnsbach and Kappenstein so one tank and one TD left L and followed I Company up the road. However, the armor was blocked by another vehicle and the infantry had to continue alone.

The night was dark and eight of the enemy stumbled through the company's lines and were captured by the second platoon which was spread out through the woods flanking the road on either side.

A lone German sentry tried to stop the company's advance about 25 yards from the first building in Kappenstein. He was killed.

Immediately, the silent darkness was shattered by the sharp popping of small arms fire as the Krauts opened up from houses on both side of the road. The company advanced into the fire and took fifty prisoners of whom a dozen were officers.

The Krauts had plenty of weapons and ammo but were caught napping, and I Company took the town with only one casualty.

The third day in the Ruhr Pocket ended with the situation much brighter than it had been the night before. The battalion had covered a lot of ground with casualties relatively light, and the Jerries were being driven back toward the center of the pocket where they would be forced to surrender or be completely wiped out by the American troops that were relentlessly closing in from all sides.

9 April 1945

When the first gray streaks of dawn drifted into Steeg from the east, K Company awoke to find itself practically bedded down with the enemy. Intense sniper and machine-gun fire greeted every movement the GIs made.

Lt. Axel E. Sahlin, who had received a field commission only three days before, went up into the barn being used as an observation post to try to locate the snipers. As he stepped in front of the loft window there was the sharp crack of a German rifle and the Third Battalion lost one of its best men.

Another man was hit in the leg and had to be evacuated. The Krauts were causing too much trouble. Captain Owens, Company C. O., ordered the tanks to fire into the fringe of woods where most of the enemy fire was originating. The thick groves of fir and birch were raked by fire from the tanks' 76 mm guns and 50 caliber machine-guns and by fire from K Company's bazookas and machine-guns.

An enemy machine-guns position was spotted by a GI who notified his squad leader. In a few moments, the squad's bazooka team blasted the nest and two of the Krauts who had been manning the gun were killed.

The company occupied the entire morning cleaning the last snipers out of the town. Up in the hills around Kappenstein, where Company I had spent the night, the morning was very quiet.

At 1000, Company L of the 311th came marching into town and relieved Lieutenant Ochs' men, who walked out of town and through what the 311th said were the enemy lines back to Morsbach, where the Third Battalion CP was located. The march was unhampered by contact with Kraut infantry.

When they reached Morsbach they formed in a march column with L Company and part of battalion headquarters and moved to a new assembly area at Solbach. The column marched up the same old highway through Steeg and was fired on by snipers and machine-guns as it passed K Company's right flank. Two platoons of I Company got past the road junction before the fire became so severe that it held up the rest of the column. Item's first two platoons swung back to protect the battalion's flank while King Company's second platoon went out to clear the woods in which the by-passed Krauts were hiding. The GIs returned with forty prisoners, and the column moved out again with K Company and the forty Germans marching along behind.

The new assembly area was a peaceful stretch of woods and meadows and the battalion spread out to wait for new orders. By this time it was afternoon and the sun was shining bright and warm.



The forty prisoners were herded into a little shack. One had received a nasty bullet wound from the rear and he was treated by Pfc. Mike Harkovi, medic runner with the battalion CP group.

That afternoon, the commanders of the companies and of the attached TDs and tanks met in the battalion command post which was a slightly damaged farmhouse on the side of a muddy hill. There they received their orders and the battalion moved out, still on foot, to Hohenhain.

A new battalion CP was set up at 1920 on the hill overlooking Hohenhain in a German post office. The rest of the outfit established defensive positions and settled down once more to wait out the night.

Armored units of the 5th German Panzer Division were reported massing on the highway to the north and a counter attack was expected. The battalion was ordered to hold its position until Corps sent word to attack.

Even with the threat of counter attack hovering in the blackness, the night was the most restful since the battalion left Betzdorf.

10 April 1945

The orders from Corps were not long in coming. The counter-attack failed to materialize and at 0800 on the 10th Battalion pushed off through the morning toward the little villages north and west of Hohenhain.

Company L, with the second platoon in the lead and mounted on three tanks and a tank destroyer, smashed into Romershagen and stopped only long enough to pick up a hundred prisoners before continuing on toward Doringen.

Company I reached its first objective, a little place called Rothenborn, without meeting resistance and, during the advance, captured a kraut tank and crew without a shot being fired. The only trouble was caused by the sloppy terrain. There were two tanks and two TDs attached to the company; however, one of the TDs foundered in the mud and was unable to advance with the infantrymen.

Company K had started out in reserve but was soon fighting its way into Dornscheid on the battalion's right flank. The first and third platoons took the town while the second cleaned out a 2000-yard stretch of woodland. When members of the second platoon joined the rest of the company in Dornscheid, they brought with them twenty-seven Germans.

L Company's attacking platoon took twenty PWs on the way to Doringen and ten more after it got there. The stream of Germans marching down the road away from the war was already growing into a sizeable river and the Third Battalion was advancing steadily with increasing momentum.

A little enemy artillery greeted Company L just outside of Doringen but there was no damage except to the scenery and the GIs had little time to enjoy scenery anyway.

A column of about thirty Germans tried to march over an open field in plain view of the company's tanks. The tanks let loose and twenty-nine kraut soldiers were either killed or seriously wounded.

While L Company's second platoon moved into Doringen, the rest of the company remained in the woods and contact was maintained by SCR 300 radio.

In Rothenborn, I Company's first and second platoons set up defensive positions in front of the town. Three German tanks were spotted to the right front in the town of Rothe-muhle. The company called for TDs but they had been assigned to another company and were not available.

After waiting around to see if any trouble would develop with the enemy tanks, the first platoon moved over and secured the road junction at the entrance to the town. The second and third platoons climbed to the high ground overlooking the village from the southeast where they could see that the Jerries were beginning to slip out the back way.

Captain Smith, acting as liaison for the battalion's supporting artillery, directed heavy fire onto a German motor column that was attempting to withdraw, and everyone on the hill could see that the enemy was beginning to crack. The Krauts were leaving equipment ranging from knapsacks to horse-drawn artillery in the wild scramble to get away.

Company I captured Rothemuhle at 1500 and cleaned out Vahlberg, Brun, and Wendenerhutte in rapid succession. There were road blocks at each of these towns but the civilian villagers were told to dismantle them and did so almost eagerly. The German civilian population, such as it was after being depleted to fill the ranks of the rapidly disintegrating Wehrmacht, was at last beginning to realize the overwhelming strength of the forces that opposed Deutschland.

After K Company had taken Dornscheid, Captain Owens sent patrols to the high ground on both sides of Ottingen. With the town completely outflanked, the company moved in and established road blocks. At 1500 Company K jumped off again, capturing two SP guns and moving forward without resistance.

Over on the battalion's left flank, L Company was smashing on toward its next objective. The town of Heid hugged the side of the hill just across the valley from positions where Lieutenant Applegate, of M Company, had set up his observation post. The lieutenant had a beautiful view of the village and his 81 mm mortars began lobbing in shells.

L Company's second platoon was still leading the attack with the armor. They rolled down out of the woods to the railroad track where the tanks were stopped by a low underpass. With their passage blocked on the road, the tanks tried to ford the stream that paralleled the railway. One of them bogged down in the soft bottom and the others had to maneuver 900 yards south before they could get across.

The light machine-gun section moved in on foot behind the second platoon and by the time the leading elements reached the village it was quiet and empty. The enemy soldiers had slipped away into the woods behind the town.

When the TD fired a few rounds into their hiding place, fifty Germans came out yelling "Kamerad". The TD then moved up along the railroad tracks and knocked out a Jerry tank.

The second platoon dug in to the company's right front while the third moved up on the left. The positions were on high ground and offered excellent observation of the entire front for a distance of over three-thousand yards. Retreating enemy foot troops and horse-drawn artillery could be seen moving into the woods to the northwest. There was no contact with the artillery at the time so the company threw out as much mortar fire as possible and the TDs fired their 90 mm guns. The combination proved rather effective and the German lost heavily in troops, material, and horses.

Heid was now officially added to the list of conquered towns and the company climbed onto half-tracks and rolled forward into Büchen — still without overtaking the enemy. While in Büchen, the company was shelled by German self-propelled guns and a few men were wounded.

Although the day was swiftly dragging on into night, there was still time to take a few more towns, and the GIs once more mounted the half-tracks and rolled off across the German countryside.

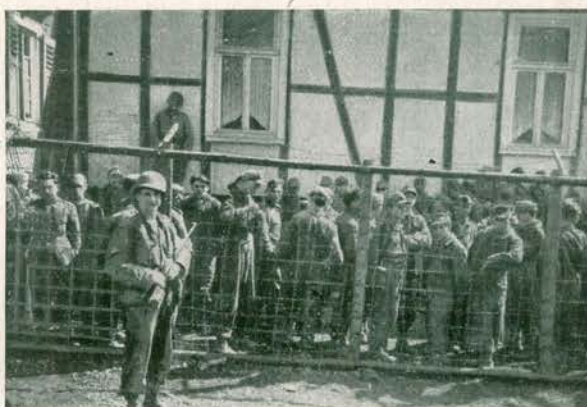
Halbhusten was entered at dusk, but the half-tracks rumbled on until they reached Husten. While the company was being oriented, ten more Germans were captured.

I Company had left the empty village of Wendenerhutte and started out toward its next objective which was Hillmicke. The road was effectively zeroed in by kraut artillery and the company had to advance through heavy shell-fire.

Hillmicke was evidently a hot spot.

Sniper fire caused several casualties and the GIs holed up in some buildings in front of the town where there was a railroad underpass and some large military barracks. Company headquarters stayed on the left side of the left side of the railroad tracks while the rest of the company crossed over. As the second platoon tried to move into the buildings, it received German mortar fire.

Twenty-two men of the second platoon were wounded and one was killed before the company could reach cover.



S/SGT. MCELWEE GUARDING
PWs IN BETZDORF

Lieutenant Ochs was unable to locate the mortars. They could have been firing from the town or from the high ground that surrounded his company's positions.

The GIs were very uncomfortable that night. An infiltrating enemy patrol killed one of the company's sentries and wounded another. The wires between platoon and company headquarters were cut in to places — presumably by the same patrol.

L Company's location was also rather precarious. Captain Barzelay's men had moved so deep into the enemy lines that they were almost completely isolated from other friendly troops. It was too dark to do much about clearing Husten so the men established a perimeter defense and held tight.

A patrol led by Staff Sergeant Eloroy Runyon of the third platoon was sent to the nearby village of Tillkhausen. The patrol took the town with no trouble at all and returned with seven prisoners.

Maintenance of supply contact proved rather difficult during the night. Two wire jeeps from battalion headquarters and the company's chow jeep were ambushed on their way up to L Company's location.

They were travelling blacked out over the little road leading from Hahn to Husten when the Kraut weapons opened up right in front of them. The jeeps stopped and everyone dove for cover — everyone, that is, except T/5 Frank Maker and Pfc. Kenneth Armstrong.

Armstrong, manning the machine gun on the chow jeep, was hit in the chest by one of the first bursts of fire. Maker took over and fired an entire box of ammunition into the

attacking Germans. Five of the enemy were killed and ten surrendered. The rest of them decided they had ambushed the wrong jeeps and ran off into the darkness.

Armstrong was seriously wounded so aid-man T/5 Justus Luzader moved him to a nearby house and stayed with him till dawn. Two riflemen remained in the house as protection against wandering German soldiers, and battalion wire-men laid a line to the house so the men would be able to call for help if any trouble developed.

The jeeps went on to complete their mission and the wounded man was picked up the next day.

11 April 1945

Early in the morning, before leaving Husten, Company L captured 150 German soldiers who had been hanging around the town all night. The main body of the company then moved out through Tillkhausen while Lieutenant Sweezy's platoon was out on a separate mission.

At 0550, I Company left its positions just outside of Hillmicke and began clearing the big hill south of the town. At 0800, the company walked into town to find that all but fifteen of the Germans had left during the night. The fifteen surrendered without resistance. The GIs also found an enemy ambulance loaded with weapons ranging from Lugers to machine guns.

Company K jumped off that morning at 0930 and cleared some more of the woodland north of Ottfingen. With this accomplished the men mounted jeeps, half-tracks and tanks, and swept through the towns of Benolpe, Gerlingen, and Brucken, taking several hundred prisoners and releasing one First Division infantryman who had been captured by the enemy.

At Brucken, Captain Owens received orders to move west to Wiedenest to prevent the withdrawal of several thousand enemy troops from the rapidly diminishing pocket. The first platoon, led by 1st Lt. John H. Higgins, took off first and entered Wiedenest in early afternoon.

The only threat in the town was an SP gun along the highway. The TD moved up and quickly knocked the gun out, allowing K Company to capture the town and 150 enemy soldiers.

At midday, Battalion Headquarters piled into jeeps and trucks and left Hahn for the hills to the north. The long convoy raced over the twisted roads at top speed, moving so fast that the jeeps became strung out in a line a mile long.

One enemy soldier was encountered on the way. He was standing by the side of the road with his family gathered about him and they were all watching the American jeeps go by. He was trying to get someone to stop and capture him, but the GIs were in too much of a hurry to give him a second look. His family had come along to see him off and say "auf wiedersehen" and now they were being disappointed. They stood there with puzzled, unhappy expressions on their faces until the last jeep had gone by.

About five miles from its destination, the convoy passed a group of several hundred liberated Ukrainian slave-laborers. They were gathered in a field just off the highway and it looked like a community outing. A few of them had guitars and accordians and they played while the others sat on the sunlit grass singing songs of their homeland in beautiful happy harmony.

As the jeeps swept down through the forest into Wiedenest, they went through a kraut prison camp. Italians and French lined the road and cheered and clapped their hands and shouted greetings as each jeep-load of GIs went by.

It left a strange, warm feeling inside and made the war seem perhaps not so bad after all. A battalion command post was established in Wiedenest in late afternoon and all companies assembled there.

At 1715, I Company moved up the highway northeast from Wiedenest and took the town of Pernze. Anti-tank guns were placed at the road junction there to protect the battalion's flank in the event that a concentration of enemy troops should appear in the area.

I Company held its positions in Pernze through the night, sending a patrol out at 0100 to contact elements of the 8th Infantry Division. The 8th sent a rifle company down from the north on tanks to open the road into Pernze.

Company K left Wiedenest at 1900 and had set up a defense in Nieder Rengse by nightfall.

12 April 1945

The pocket was crumbling rapidly. By morning of the twelfth, which was the battalion's seventh day in the pocket, all organized enemy forces were withdrawing toward the center of the industrial Ruhr, presumably to make a last ditch stand and pray for a miracle.

Company I moved out first. They left Pernze on trucks and passed through K Company's positions in Nieder Rengse. On the way through Lieberhausen, they picked up twenty-four PWs and kept right on going.

A sort of leap-frog system was used. A platoon would drive into a town and start cleaning it up while the next platoon swept on through to the next village. As soon as the first platoon finished, it would move through the other one and enter still another town.

At Kreppenberg, the company captured thirty-three SS troops. Four were officers. Some of the German enlisted men were surprised while in a barn still operating their radio.

As it moved north, I Company spotted some unidentified tanks moving down from the north. Thinking they were enemy, the men dove for cover in the woods and took defensive positions. As the lead tank rounded the curve in the road, a bazooka team fired one round and then discovered that the tanks belonged to the American 8th Division. Luckily, the rocket missed.

Meanwhile, L Company had taken Driebershausen and 200 prisoners.

K Company was in reserve all morning.

In early afternoon, the entire battalion moved to a general assembly area in Dannenburg, which was about ten miles northwest of Wiedenest. There, all men were mounted on tanks, tank destroyers, jeeps, half-tracks, anti-aircraft vehicles or trucks and the battalion left in a long convoy at 1600.

The convoy moved slowly along the highway over high fields and the night came drifting in, cold and wet. At dusk, the vehicles stopped in the rain just outside of Marienheide and the men ate hot chow. It was almost dark when they mouted up and moved off again. Anti-aircraft crews had set up their guns along the highway on the outskirts of Marienheide — not as protection against the Luftwaffe because there was none. The ack-ack guns were aimed down the road in positions to forestall any possible chance of an enemy breakthrough, and they looked like formidable anti-tank guns.

The battalion moved on to within a few miles of Wiperfürth and set up positions in the dark.

Company I cleared Listringhausen and three other small, closely-bunched villages that night. There was no resistance and twelve prisoners, including two majors and a lieutenant, were captured. At 02000, a Jerry infantry colonel stumbled through the darkness to one of the company's machine-guns and gave himself up.

13 April 1945

The Germans had retreated from Wipperfürth by dawn, but the Third Battalion's advance was helped up until afternoon by corps order.

While the other companies sat tight and waited for permission to cross the phase-line west of Wipperfürth, K Company moved out and cleared the high ground around the town. Patrols were sent down into the village itself to reconnoiter and they returned to inform Captain Owens that the Krauts had left. One platoon moved in and occupied a sector of the town until orders came through for the battalion to attack.

Late that afternoon, I Company climbed on trucks and started out. After the third platoon cleared Jestberg and Kleineichen, the entire Company fell in behind L Company in the approach march to Hückeswagen.

Hückeswagen was the largest single objective the battalion had been given in the Ruhr Pocket. It was a small manufacturing city straddling the hills at a bend in the Wupper River.

L Company reached the outskirts at dark and was met by the Burgermeister and several other citizens of the town. They came out carrying a white flag and spouting polite words of greeting.

"Come on in," they said, "we don't want to fight. All the soldiers have left and we hereby surrender our town to you."

The speech was good and it was convincing.

L Company accepted the surrender and the column of infantry and tanks began moving down the main street between the rows of large buildings. The night was dark and everything was very peaceful.

The column had moved maybe a hundred yards into town when the Krauts opened up from the deep shadows of windows and doorways with everything they had.



STARTING BACK TO
THE PW CAGE



*"the company climbed onto
halftracks and rolled forward"*

The lead tank was knocked out by German bazookas and the infantry swarmed off the main drag into the buildings, firing as they ran. The fighting moved quickly through the town. Lieutenants Sweezy and Applegate, with the third platoon, battered down the doors of one building and found eight enemy soldiers. Five of them were killed and three were taken as PWs.

The first platoon swung up onto the high ground to the east and began driving the enemy down toward the center of town. The platoon took thirty prisoners, jammed them into one building, and went on with the work of clearing the rest of their section.

Sergeant John Babcock set up his section's 60 mm mortars, and shells began blasting the kraut positions. The fighting continued until enemy resistance was completely broken shortly after midnight. Germans were encountered occasionally after that but most of them surrendered willingly and the battalion's PW bag was overflowing.

When it was all over, L Company was scattered through town and the darkness made reorganization very difficult. There were still houses to clear and defenses to be established, and of course there were the casualties. The TD commander had been killed when his TD was knocked out and the company itself had lost a large number in wounded and killed.

While L Company was getting reorganized, I and K Companies moved in and cleared the sectors to which they had been assigned, and a Battalion CP was set up in the offices of a factory at the entrance to the town.

All had quieted down by 0300 and there was time for a few of the men to get a little rest before daylight.

14 April 1945

Morning found Hückeswagen seething with activity. Germans had been surrendering all night and the highway leading out of town was jammed with PWs going back and American troops coming up.

The GIs were advancing so rapidly that the town was frontline in the morning and rear-echelon in the afternoon. The PW Collecting Point was moved up at noon and long columns of PWs that had marched down the highway out of Hückeswagen were forced to turn around and march back into the town.

Elements from all three battalions moved into Hückeswagen that day and a regimental CP was set up in the town in early afternoon.

The factory housing the battalion CP stood in front of a large German ammo dump. Just before the companies left, two kraut artillery shells hit the dump and set it afire. The ammunition began to explode and hot shrapnel was falling all over the east end of town, knocking holes in the buildings and scaring the wits out of the civilians who thought the war had returned.

M Company's vehicles had used the ammunition dump as shelter and when the place began to blow up T/Sgt William Boucher and Corporal Grover P. Bivin volunteered to evacuate the jeeps and trucks. They worked fast, moving through the falling shrapnel, and were able to get the vehicles to safety. Not a single jeep was scratched.

Shells and rockets were still exploding when Captain John Masterpole, Hq. Co, Commander, organized the Battalion's CP group into a march unit and led them to the west end of Hückeswagen where they were out of the radius of the falling metal.

The town was left behind at about 1400 and the battalion marched along the highway in a column of companies with Headquarters trailing. The men could see German artillery falling up ahead on their destination. A report came back from the intelligence section that the battalion's proposed assembly area was under heavy artillery fire and the companies were held up in Krowinklerbrücke.

There was a lot of reconnaissance activity in the evening and it was plain that the fighting in the Ruhr Pocket was almost over. The Germans had been compressed into a small area and were surrendering in wholesale lots.

The companies got some sleep that night. It was probably their first real opportunity to rest since Blue Battalion jumped off from Betzdorf on the upper Sieg river on the 6th of April.

15 April 1945

The pocket was almost wiped out and still the enemy had shown no desire to make a stand and fight to the finish. The Germans had given battle all the way but it was a retreating battle, and resistance was never up to expectation. They had the weapons and the ammunition, and they always had enough observation to derange the battalion's troop movements — but never was the artillery harassment as severe as it had been on the other side of the Rhine.

The enemy troops in the Ruhr Pocket were mostly old men and young boys. The old men had no desire to die for what was obviously a hopeless cause and the young boys were just too green. Besides, the Krauts were beaten and they knew it.

Early on the morning of the 15th, the entire battalion left Krowinklerbrücke with the companies fanning out as they neared the first of the day's objectives. K Company was in the lead with I staggered to the left rear. L moved along behind K and mopped up. The objectives were numbered on all the commanders' maps — numbers were easier to handle than the names Germans gave their towns — and as the companies advanced they radioed the number of each objective as they took it.

The numbers came in swiftly.

K Company moved west to clear a small village on the outskirts of Lennep. Intermittent mortarfire was received all the way into the town but ceased once the objective was taken. The Company then swung north and moved swiftly through several towns until it reached Bevenburg, on the Wupper River three miles southeast of Wuppertal. The enemy garrison commander surrendered the town to Lieutenant Robert Durk, then K Company's Commanding Officer.

All bridges across the Wupper river had been blasted and the company's advance was held up temporarily.

Meanwhile, I Company came up to the left of K Company. Motorized patrols, mounted on half-tracks belonging to the 552nd Armored Anti-aircraft Battalion, were driving from town to town while the rest of the company took its objectives the harder way — on foot. At Weffelpuft, the company was met by a German captain who surrendered himself and his entire company of over a hundred-and-eight men. The Germans had been dug in with machine-guns and mortars and could have held out for twenty-four hours, but they preferred to live.

In Herbringhausen, forty more prisoners were taken and I Company set out for the large manufacturing city of Wuppertal.

Although officially in reserve, Company L had captured over a hundred prisoners before it reached the Wupper River at Bevenburg. The company crossed the river on foot using ladders on the bombed-out bridges and took Ehrenburg and the high ground overlooking Wuppertal without firing a shot. Twenty-five Germans were captured as the GIs entered the town and a German first sergeant later surrendered his company to Captain Barzelay. I Company's foot troops were the first to reach Wuppertal. They had crossed the stream and marched on down the highway while the mounted elements were looking for a place

to get their vehicles across. They stopped in the outskirts of the city and were joined later by the vehicles.

K Company forded the stream at Bevenburg and moved through I Company with the lead elements on tanks. They secured the battalion's sector of Wuppertal without difficulty. That evening the battalion CP was set up in the southeast corner of Wuppertal and the 2nd Battalion of the 310th moved in to help control the city. All night the 3rd Battalion's positions were subjected to time-fire from enemy artillery located on the other side of town. The Krauts were getting rid of the last of their ammunition. The fire could have been deadly but most of the shells were exploding so high in the air that they looked like flak-bursts and there was very little damage.

16 April 1945

By morning all artillery fire had ceased and the companies were waiting for new orders. There was a German department store down the street a few blocks from the battalion CP. It had been knocked open by shell-fire and all day there were streams of liberated slave-laborers moving noisily up and down the street. Going one way they were dressed in their ragged laborer's clothing but coming back they wore the sharpest in German suits and dresses. It was their big day, and the sudden release from oppression made them seem like little children on Christmas morning.

The battalion's riflemen were expecting to move on in and clean out the rest of the city but they waited till noon and no order came. The hours went by, slowly.

Finally, just before dusk, the awaited word was received. But it was not an order to attack.

All the Germans had surrendered and the Ruhr Pocket was nonexistent. The job was done. The battalion mounted trucks and rode out of Wuppertal, moving south over battleground that was now peaceful German countryside. It was a warm spring evening and the quiet villages and sleeping fields were more like home than anything the GIs had seen since they crossed the German border on December 12th. The men riding the trucks that night were tired but they were able to really relax.

They may have had no idea of where they were going but they knew one thing for sure. — There was no more combat within a hundred miles.



SGT. REYNICK and SGT. CORREL
TALKING OVER THE SITUATION



GERMAN PRISONERS IN THE CAGE
AT GUMMERSBACH

Post Combat . . .



At noon on the 16th of April in Wuppertal, the Third Battalion received orders to move to Gummersbach, where they were to be under 18th Corps (Airborne) control and assigned the mission of guarding the PW enclosure there. That afternoon the battalion traveled by truck to Gummersbach. They arrived there at 2300 and immediately assumed the duty of guarding the 60,000 prisoners. At 1120 on the 17th battalion received orders to be prepared to move to Dierdorf the following day. The new mission of the battalion was to guard communication lines and supply routes. They reverted to regimental control and on the 18th of April proceeded by motor to the vicinity of Dierdorf and were billeted in the town of Herchbach. Blue Battalion, in addition to accomplishing its security mission, instituted a training program which was in operation for three days when further orders altered the new program. They were to command a large area, part of which was then occupied by the 112th Infantry. On April 22nd the movements necessitated by these orders were completed and the battalion was attached to the 311th Infantry. Company M moved to Bonn, Company L to Königswinter, Company K moved to Horhausen, and Company I remained with Headquarters in Herschbach.

The companies set up check points and maintained road patrols in their respective areas. The movements of all civilians and civilian vehicles were closely watched and numerous arrests were made for violations of security regulations.

On the 27th of April the battalion once again assembled at Herschbach, entrucked and departed for a new security mission in the vicinity of Frankenburg. Company M was not included in this move, having been ordered to remain in Bonn for another week.

Late afternoon on April 27th Battalion Headquarters was established in Fritzlar, Germany, a fair size town 18 miles south of Kassel. Headquarters Company and Company I were also billeted in Fritzlar. Company L was assigned to the town of Borken and Company K was located in the resort town of Bad Wildungen. Checkpoints and patrols were established and the battalion assumed responsibility for the security of a large area of Kreis Fritzlar—Homberg. On the 29th two CIC teams reported to the battalion and plans were made to screen all the towns in the area. Company M was relieved in Bonn and returned to the battalion on the 3rd of May, and was billeted in Homberg. Training, screening, and sundry operations continued until May 7th, during which time the battalion was responsible for the arrest and detention of many security violations and prisoners of war.

General Parker announced on May 7th that Germany had surrendered. The news was greeted calmly by all. The men paused briefly to think of all that had happened during the last six months and then applied themselves to the new tasks before them.

On the 8th 2030 a German plane landed near Wehren with 21 German soldiers and 1 civilian. Battalion Headquarters Company men captured the plane and its occupants and determined after questioning that the prisoners had escaped from Czechoslovakia and attempting to go to Cologne, along the Rhine River.

The war with Germany ended officially at 0001 on the 9th of May but it was necessary that training and security missions continue. The battalion observed V-E day on the 13th with an appropriate ceremony. Lt. Col. Lutz, then acting Regimental Commander, delivered the principle address followed by Chaplain Voelzke and Mr. Robinson, the Regimental Red Cross Director. Music was furnished by a quintet from the Regimental Glee Club.

On May 14th the battalion moved from Fritzlar to the Kreis Waldeck area. Gen. Parker visited the area on May 20th and was present at a battalion review. Chaplain Voelzke officiated at the Memorial services held in Waldeck on the 30th of May.

The Third Battalion inaugurated a sports program with company teams in volleyball and softball organized into a battalion league. Battalion and Regimental field meets were held on successive Saturdays.

The first week in July Blue Battalion again changed their location, this time to Kreis Wolfhagen. L Company occupied Breitenbach, K Company, Martinhagen; M Company, Balhorn; I Company, Altenstadt; Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Ippinghausen. A full time training program was instituted to prepare the men for eventual participation in the fighting in the Pacific.

On Sept. 2nd World War II ended. The men of the Blue Battalion were able to completely relax once more. Happiness was in the hearts of all but it was sobered by the memory of all they had been through and by the memory of all their fallen comrades. Emphasis was now placed on occupation duties and eventual return to civilian life. Training time was cut down and a full I and E program and athletic program were carried out. A Battalion Newspaper was published weekly and the appearance of the men was improved with the issue of ETO jackets to all. Recreational facilities were increased and the sports program augmented to include boxing, basketball and football.

During the last week in September the men were told that the next move would be to Berlin. Instruction in various occupation duties was carried out with particular emphasis placed on riot and guard duties. This movement was postponed several times, but finally on the 12th of November, the Third Battalion with the 1st Battalion of the 310th relieved the 504th Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division in Berlin, Germany.



MEMORIAL SERVICES
30 MAY 1945



HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

15 SEPTEMBER 1945

IPPINGHAUSEN, GERMANY

TOP ROW FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: S/Sgt A. Malsbury, Pfc E. Pelloth, Pfc M. Daniels, Pfc A. I. Tompkins, Pfc J. H. Kunburger, Pfc M. Taravisky. — EIGHTH ROW: T/5 J. Lemon, T/5 P. E. Bowman, T/5 A. Sailors, Pfc G. Anderson, Pfc D. Moutoax, Pfc J. Lewandowski, Pfc C. Kelly, T/5 D. Davis. — SEVENTH ROW: Cpl S. A. Waltermire, Cpl G. J. Freed, Pfc S. H. Bashein, Pfc E. Cacalloni, Pfc F. Kemp, T/4 J. Zeigler, T/5 H. Sloss. — SIXTH ROW: Pfc V. A. Angiolette, Cpl S. L. Adams, Pfc G. E. Klind, T/Sgt D. E. Nutter, T/5 C. Moon, Cpl E. J. Groger, Pfc C. E. Rountree, Pfc F. Penner. — FIFTH ROW: Pfc W. D. Edwards, Pfc S. R. Brooks, Pfc C. W. Sanders, Pfc G. C. Bichler, Pfc E. W. Cornelius, Pfc E. R. Shirey, Pfc M. O. Hocker, S/Sgt J. Karas, Pfc Hall, T/Sgt A. M. Lincoln, Pfc H. J. Spatchek. — FOURTH ROW: Pfc G. L. Dragan, Pfc W. J. McCarthy, Pfc J. M. Lowe, Pfc J. L. Whitson, Pfc R. L. Burtch, Pfc D. J. Ryan, Pfc B. L. McKinney, Pfc M. L. Crosby, T/Sgt F. E. White. — THIRD ROW: S/Sgt V. O. Wilson, Pfc R. R. Karn, Pfc D. J. Steiner, T/5 A. D. Hardison, S/Sgt J. Giordano, T/5 S. V. Hiatt, Pfc F. C. Wszeborowski, Pfc J. W. Colette, Sgt L. H. Curths. — SECOND ROW: Pfc L. W. Starkey, Sgt G. R. Woods, Pfc L. S. Lindblad, Pfc E. E. Cones, Pfc R. K. Herring, T/5 M. H. McCall, T/5 J. Sanders, S/Sgt W. M. Moore, Pfc M. L. Nelson, Pfc R. G. Edwards, Jr, Pfc W. J. Cummins. — BOTTOM ROW: Pfc H. T. White, T/Sgt B. J. Grzybowski, S/Sgt J. N. Costas, T/5 D. J. Lopopalo, 1st Sgt E. A. Connell, 1st Lt P. McGill, 2nd Lt J. W. Carlson. — MEN'S NAMES WHO DO NOT APPEAR IN THE PICTURE: S/Sgt L. F. McElwee, S/Sgt M. Smith, Sgt N. O. Boedeker, T/4 A. J. Langevin, T/4 E. A. Kirchert, Cpl L. A. McHenry, T/5 H. E. Hosner, T/5 R. E. Short, Pfc J. E. Edling, Pfc P. W. Johnson, Pfc A. L. Norwood, Pfc S. Riffe, Pfc C. F. Roderick, Pfc W. Weaver, T/5 C. B. Doyle, S/Sgt L. Kasmerski, Pfc B. J. Alzman, Pfc C. D. Atkins, Pfc H. Austin, Pfc C. W. Hill, Pfc D. L. Reilly, Pvt B. E. Epperson, Sgt N. H. Breen, Sgt J. T. Fahey, Sgt W. B. Lindsay, Sgt R. D. Stewart, T/4 W. W. Wisnowski, Cpl R. J. Kroszer, T/5 G. M. Dias, Jr., T/5 F. R. Mercurio, T/5 J. J. Somoya, T/5 E. H. Wiseman, Pfc P. Aquilino, Pfc G. E. Bailey, Pfc C. H. Barbour, Pfc W. J. Barkes, Jr., Pfc R. F. Bartley, Pfc R. E. Berkley, Pfc G. W. Greimes, Pfc H. J. Griffin, Pfc T. Jones, Pfc M. T. Tippin, Jr., Sgt F. R. Williams, Sgt S. L. Zemont, Pfc E. Boudreaux, Pfc R. C. Brown, Pfc H. H. Zagorin.

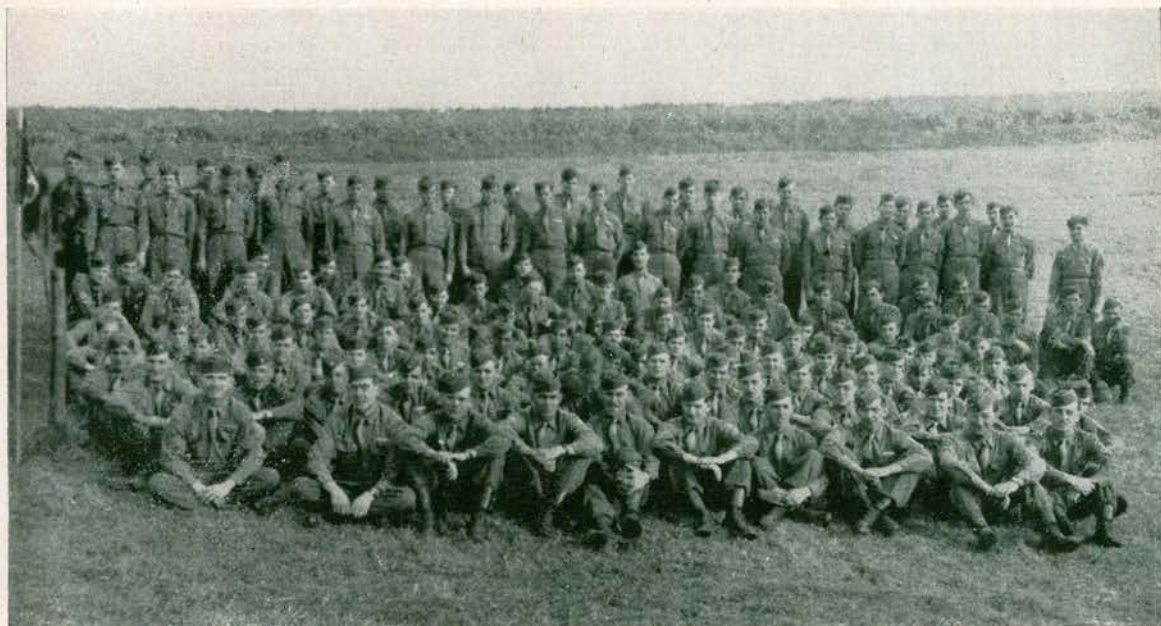


ITEM COMPANY

15 SEPTEMBER 1945

ALTENSTADT, GERMANY

TOP ROW FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Sgt M. Stoddard, Sgt P. Logan, Pvt K. Prather, Pvt W. Quinn, Pvt V. Barr, Pfc J. King, Pfc B. Przyby, Pfc N. DuBlanica, Pfc L. Fenn, Pfc A. Hoffpauir, Pvt M. Rosenblatt, Pfc J. Pearson, Pfc P. Leonard, Pfc P. Slack, Cpl M. White, Pfc H. Stidham, Cpl D. Muscattello, Pfc S. Kalmanowitz, Pfc H. Kennemer, Sgt C. Spelliotis, Pfc F. Morris. — SIXTH ROW: Pfc E. Geminez, Pfc W. Stewart, S/Sgt W. Campbell, Pfc W. Kuczynski, Pvt S. Miller, Pvt W. Wright, Pvt G. Richmond, S/Sgt W. Lambert, S/Sgt T. Dozier, Pfc S. Rodriguez, Pfc S. Edwards, Pfc M. Ott, Pfc E. Compton, S/Sgt G. Smith, Pfc J. Dawson, Pfc H. Lundy, Pfc C. Puckett, S/Sgt J. Schaffer, S/Sgt V. Greenwood. — FIFTH ROW: J. T. Livesay, Pvt C. Rhodes, Sgt R. Powell, Pvt L. Stewart, T/5 C. Scaggs, Pfc A. Garner, Pfc J. Gillespie, Pvt S. Albanese, T/Sgt E. Randal, Pfc F. Rubits, Pfc W. Makarczyk, Pfc R. Sloss, Pvt J. D. Hester, Pfc L. Singer, Pfc J. Fannon, Sgt R. Powers, Pfc C. Nygaard, Cpl L. Klopschinski, Pfc F. Swingle, S/Sgt H. Loudermilk, Pvt M. Bufkin, Pfc R. M. Stubblefield. — FOURTH ROW: S/Sgt V. McCartney, S/Sgt L. Blasius, S/Sgt C. Gallagher, Cpl L. Johnson, Pfc F. Martinez, Pfc A. Henderson, Pfc W. Hylton, Pfc G. Henson, Pfc G. Antley, Sgt A. Sanders, Pfc Cleburne Martin, Pvt J. Diaz, Pvt D. Vanston, Pfc M. Breaux, Pfc C. Turney, Sgt P. Mericle, Pvt W. Goodman, Pfc L. Melchor, T/Sgt W. Stahl, S/Sgt R. Essex, T/Sgt J. DuRant. — THIRD ROW: Pfc J. C. Eudie, Pfc Sivanich, Pfc G. Yavor, Pfc P. Rapp, Pfc P. Salkauskas, Pfc J. Bomber, Pfc C. Meeker, Sgt R. Braun, Sgt C. Conkle, 2nd Lt Campbell, 2nd Lt H. Carlson, Pvt L. Colley, Pfc W. Vaughn, Pfc W. Drongstad, Pvt W. Honea, Pvt E. St Hilaire, Pfc G. Shields, Pfc H. Boyd, Cpl F. Woods, Sgt M. Catalano, Pvt G. Michelson. — SECOND ROW: S/Sgt M. Brown, Pvt J. Massie, Cpl L. DePalma, T/Sgt J. Daly, Pfc H. Frier, Pfc W. Hill, Pfc V. Goodwin, Pfc H. Cockrell, Pfc C. Oliver, Pfc C. Ginger, 1st Lt Brewer, 1st Lt Moore, Pfc J. Dunnaway, Pfc J. Braswell, Pfc C. Vaughn, Pfc L. Garrett, Pfc J. Clark, Pfc W. Vest, Pfc J. Brosnan, Pvt R. Simpson, Pfc F. Christenson, Pfc R. Jones. — BOTTOM ROW: S/Sgt W. Multer, T/4 V. Baird, Pfc W. Gardner, Pvt K. Gulbrandson, Pfc R. White, S/Sgt E. Bachman, Pfc F. Sinclair, 1st Sgt J. Gallagher, Pfc T. Starling, Pfc C. Spiker, Sgt R. Hanley, Pfc L. Shimek, Pfc C. Smith, S/Sgt J. Willing, Pfc G. Paratore, Pfc P. Hunt. — MEN NOT APPEARING IN THE PHOTO: Lt Graves, Lt Spyker, S/Sgt Blasius, S/Sgt Harper, S/Sgt Wesaw, Sgt Bryant, Sgt Butterly, S/Sgt Gazda, Sgt Greer, Sgt Junker, Sgt Mulcahey, Sgt Rangel, T/4 Kamen, T/4 Keneipp, T/4 Moulas, Cpl Blakely, Cpl Bond, Cpl Gibson, Cpl Liverman, Cpl Lutts, T/5 Cox, T/5 Kriak, T/5 Kuhry, T/5 R. Smith, Pfc Brokaw, Pfc Bugher, Pfc Conter, Pfc Davis, Pfc Dorfner, Pfc Drobiak, Pfc Dyjak, Pfc Erdei, Pfc Eudy, Pfc Eagle, Pfc Ferris, Pfc Friedl, Pfc Gossert, Pfc Holt, Pfc D. Hunt, Pfc Jarman, Pfc Lee, Pfc Martin, Pfc Morley, Pfc Novak, Pfc Pagano, Pfc Prather, Pfc Ratashak, Pfc Rhoades, Pfc Roemer, Pfc Ross, Pfc Ruiz, Pfc Shewczyk, Pfc Shrader, Pfc Skoien, Pfc C. Smith, Pfc Williams, Pvt Dewberry, Pvt Hileman, Pvt Lippmann, Pvt Paleschi, Pvt Potter, Pvt Russell, Pvt Witherbee.



KING COMPANY

15 SEPTEMBER 1945

MARTINHAGEN GERMANY

TOP ROW FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Pfc C. E. Bailey, Pfc W. C. Bruckerhoff, Pfc C. H. Powell, Pfc D. W. Brooks, Pfc R. L. Barnhart, T/Sgt R. J. Heyob, Pfc D. T. Beady, Sgt H. W. Hazard, Pfc L. R. Pierce, Pfc T. L. Hornbaker, Pfc T. J. Ferringer, Pfc H. L. Canary, Pfc R. J. Lutz, Pfc W. J. Fields, Pfc W. Hanson, Pfc V. L. Taylor, Pfc A. O. Haygood. — SEVENTH ROW: T/5 A. A. Plankar, Pfc A. J. Wheat, Pfc J. L. Phillips, Pfc D. L. Sporrer, Pfc A. S. Caselman, Pfc C. F. Buechele, Cpl F. Richardson, Sgt J. A. Dell Antonio, Pvt W. G. Freeman, T/5 L. L. Russell, Pfc H. C. Hoover, Cpl P. J. Spizzica, Pfc S. A. Lennox, Pfc D. R. Church, T/5 J. V. Jaskula, Pfc S. G. Johnson, Pfc J. S. Sandora, S/Sgt T. Ciotti. — SIXTH ROW: Sgt S. H. Bartle, Sgt J. D. Metz, Pfc G. E. Dundore, Pfc F. E. Berry, Pfc E. J. Nieuwenhuis, Pfc B. D. Caston, Pfc E. R. Adams, Pfc J. M. Burton, Pfc B. W. Ringer, Pfc A. M. Bradley, Pfc L. H. Nivison, Pfc W. R. Simerl, Pfc C. L. Bissinger, Pfc J. F. Vincer, Sgt G. C. Elkins, T/5 F. Nitkin, Sgt E. J. Reniycck, Pfc G. F. Morrell, Cpl A. Bombace, Pfc G. A. Huerta, Pfc J. C. Arent, Pfc C. L. Zahn, Pvt S. H. Smith, T/Sgt W. Williams, Pfc T. J. Marshall, T/5 H. Schunkewitz, Pfc M. A. Cole, Pfc L. A. Herrick, Pfc E. E. Millholland. — FIFTH ROW: Pfc H. Pouncey, Jr., Pfc S. E. Reams, Pvt J. F. Noonan, Pfc A. F. Cataldo, Jr., Pfc R. W. Deweese, Pvt J. D. Arnold, Pfc H. F. Birkhold, Pvt R. N. Harder, Sgt G. L. Sanchez, Pfc H. D. Kilpatrick, Pfc R. C. Osborn, Pfc C. L. Pond, Pfc J. H. Cornelius, Pfc E. W. Mount, Jr., Pfc H. L. Israelson, Pfc V. Randour, Pfc G. D. Moore, Pfc G. E. Larrabee, Pfc G. Rusnak, Pfc A. B. Johnson, Jr., Pfc J. L. Day. — FOURTH ROW: Pvt W. A. Moor, Pfc J. W. Pruett, Cpl E. E. Collins, Cpl J. A. Cronin, Pfc W. T. Fletcher, Cpl N. A. Christiansen, Pfc T. J. Gones, Pfc J. R. Perea, Cpl T. W. Rawlins, Pfc A. R. Dinallo, S/Sgt O. H. Spice, T/Sgt B. D. Upton, S/Sgt J. J. Constantine, Pfc P. P. Sabella, Pvt C. R. Stroop, Pfc A. Jacobucci. — THIRD ROW: Pfc W. P. Stevens, Sgt T. J. Rossman, Pfc A. R. Tetrault, Pvt M. B. Martin, Pfc L. W. Wriston, Pfc C. McDaniel, Pfc F. Montoya, Pfc M. C. Olson, Pfc M. V. Liberatore, S/Sgt J. Jasenec, T/Sgt F. M. Reardon, S/Sgt J. F. Corbett, S/Sgt L. W. DeMaagd. — SECOND ROW: 1st Lt J. H. Higgins, 1st Lt L. K. Spear, 2nd Lt. R. Donnelly, 1st Lt P. S. Mooney, S/Sgt D. L. Correll, S/Sgt O. J. Sloop, S/Sgt R. J. Brown, T/5 R. J. Kryzan, Pvt C. R. Holder, Sgt P. V. Edwards, T/Sgt W. R. Falkin. — BOTTOM ROW: First Sgt D. J. Tracy, Pfc H. L. Latterman, Pfc C. Seeger, Jr., Pfc G. T. Young, Pfc C. L. Andrejewski, Pfc D. Brown, Pfc C. L. Blanton, Cpl J. J. Schuck, Cpl E. M. Zallar, Sgt W. McNutt, Sr. — NAMES OF MEN WHO DO NOT APPEAR IN THE PHOTO: Pvt W. G. Fox, Pfc F. A. Forcina, Pvt R. N. Harder, Pfc C. E. Sye, Pvt B. S. Ullrey, Pfc J. Nieznany, Sgt W. R. Kurz, Pfc V. F. Strausbaugh, Pfc R. L. Miles, Sgt A. Scolaro, Pfc H. L. Israelson, S/Sgt C. G. Swistak, T/4 C. R. Martin, T/4 J. C. Jankowski, S/Sgt D. H. Brown, Pfc S. P. Stauffer, Sgt C. O. Evans, Pfc W. H. Thompson, Pfc G. A. Baker, S/Sgt W. M. Eitemiller, S/Sgt E. A. Lang, Jr., S/Sgt A. P. Manfredi, Pfc M. E. Nolan, Pfc D. C. Sorezza, Pfc D. W. Kennada, Pfc J. W. Tubbs.



LOVE COMPANY

15 SEPTEMBER 1945

BREITENBACH, GERMANY

TOP ROW FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Pfc W. La Rue, Pfc W. L. Brite, Pfc M. Poole, Pfc J. M. Stanley, Pfc M. E. Boiseau, Pfc H. Boguszewski, S/Sgt P. M. Mesney, Pfc K. L. Toney, Pfc J. D. Withrow, S/Sgt B. I. Heeke. — NINTH ROW: Pfc J. A. Towell, Pfc W. H. Harreus, Jr., Pvt J. E. Murray, Pfc. F. I. Nash, Pfc F. Cantos, Pfc W. C. Croxen, Pvt J. W. Vrijmoet, Pfc H. J. Regal, Pfc R. R. Alexander, Cpl B. M. Turner, Pvt P. L. Lightfritz, Sgt W. C. Law, Pfc R. Nunez, Pfc D. L. De Armond, Pfc B. L. Shook, S/Sgt J. F. Hogg, Sgt S. L. Czach. — EIGHTH ROW: Pfc R. S. Wilk, Pfc C. P. Dogett, Pfc N. C. Kasirof, Pfc N. J. Carr, Pvt J. M. Wilkerson, S/Sgt K. C. Campbell, Pfc J. R. Oriando, S/Sgt W. J. MacDonald, Sgt T. D. Connors, T/5 W. B. Barnes, Pfc J. E. Bryan, Pfc D. T. Piskoran, Pfc H. Shevrin, Sgt J. J. Kirsch, Pfc R. L. Clevenhagen, Pfc A. C. Perry, Sgt H. T. Hoey. — SEVENTH ROW: Pfc J. M. Hrenyo, S/Sgt S. J. Riccobono, T/4 L. H. Jacobson, Pfc R. O. Opheim, Pfc G. A. Sijesta, Pfc C. B. Elliot, Pfc R. F. Bechtell, Pfc S. L. Barth, Pfc L. D. Harris, Pfc M. E. Perkins, Pfc P. S. Bonaventure, Cpl M. Furimsky. — SIXTH ROW: S/Sgt V. J. Peterson, S/Sgt C. J. Redling, S/Sgt O. H. Joiner, Jr., Pfc J. T. Westbrook, T/Sgt L. C. Smith, Jr., Pfc R. McCloud, Cpl J. W. Barwick, Pfc J. E. Martin, Pfc M. B. Sprung, Pfc H. G. Kinzey, Pfc C. Mackey, Pfc C. W. West, Pfc M. Zilbertuler. — FIFTH ROW: Pfc J. E. Engle, S/Sgt W. D. Presnell, Sgt C. F. Everritt, S/Sgt J. M. Grace, Pfc H. L. Johnson, Pfc W. R. Campbell, Pfc B. C. Wade, Pfc J. C. Morris, T/5 J. Mester, Pfc W. E. McCorkle, S/Sgt J. E. Ferguson, Pfc D. Y. Everly, Pfc J. A. Niska, Pfc H. Risner. — FOURTH ROW: Sgt S. J. Martka, Pfc C. C. Giles, Pfc J. C. Foster, S/Sgt E. Runyon, Jr., Pfc A. R. Howitt, Pfc D. K. Utley, Pfc R. V. Wheat, Pfc C. J. Anderson, Pfc M. F. Harrison, Pfc B. Curry, Pfc W. W. Brooks, Pfc L. Keffer, Pfc W. H. Duncan, Cpl M. E. Schinke, Pfc A. B. Quirey, S/Sgt O. R. Dorn, Cpl V. J. Margro, Jr.; — THIRD ROW: Pfc J. R. Snodderly, Pfc E. Viglo, Pfc I. Zambrano, Pfc A. E. Massey, Pfc L. V. Sypien, Pfc R. J. Powers, Jr., Pfc V. E. Errico, Pfc F. J. Pioer, Pfc L. G. Sikkenga, Pfc S. D. Lesser, Pfc D. L. Shupe, Pfc B. H. Owens, S/Sgt C. P. McKenzie, Cpl R. W. Green, Pfc J. R. Meng, Pfc L. Costellow, Pfc R. J. Bogard, Pfc G. J. Zemaitig, Pfc T. D. Shea, Pfc N. Calamia, Sgt H. W. Hayden, Jr. — SECOND ROW: Pfc G. F. Furimsky, Pfc A. M. Collins, Sgt W. A. Kisman, Pfc F. P. Cosgrove, Pfc J. B. Baucom, T/5 S. J. Vasel, T/3 J. F. Bartolick, Pfc A. Zamora, Pfc T. E. Vucich, Pfc E. C. Kittleson, Pfc M. P. Custode, Pfc L. E. Stratton, First Sgt H. Conzales, Jr. — BOTTOM ROW: 2nd Lt Peter J. Colligan, 2nd Lt Charles P. Felton, 1st Lt Robert Hibbard, Captain Ross Barzelay, 1st Lt Richard L. Sweezy, 1st Lt William G. Harill. — MEN NOT APPEARING IN THE PHOTO: T/Sgt W. Yount, S/Sgt L. N. Holdridge, S/Sgt W. H. Sessums, Sgt T. W. Tenkins, T/4 G. M. Balch, T/4 C. Dutcher, Sgt W. S. Hayes, Pfc E. C. Agles, Pfc M. Agles, Pfc T. L. Rhoades, Pfc K. Allman, Pfc T. L. Anderson, Pfc H. Berndt, Pfc I. Del Principe, Pfc V. Dysinger, Pfc T. Guarniccio, Pfc W. Gryncewicz, Pfc G. Tanelle, Pvt R. W. Wiseley, Pfc F. Kimbell, Pfc R. Knapp, Pfc O. Mase, Pfc V. Merl, Pfc T. Miller, Pfc H. Millisack, Pfc P. Rinesmith, Pfc T. Roe, Pfc H. Root, Pfc E. E. Santos, Pfc C. Sferlozza, Pfc C. Sims, Pfc L. Sypien, S/Sgt D. Thomas, Pfc E. Tobin, Pfc H. Tolson, Pfc Wallinger, Pfc K. Yu, Pfc B. Bonner, Pfc H. Calder.



MIKE COMPANY

15 SEPTEMBER 1945

BALHORN, GERMANY

TOP ROW FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Pfc D. Smith, S/Sgt J. V. Malek, Pvt W. W. Yelton, Pfc J. G. Conway, Pfc H. L. Rhodes, Pfc R. P. Carrocce, S/Sgt E. Page, Pfc E. J. Frisbie, S/Sgt M. E. Morrison, Pfc C. Feret, Pfc H. C. Foster, Pvt N. H. Folop, Pfc S. H. Roberts, T/Sgt R. E. Pependick, T/Sgt B. H. Haney, T/5 K. W. Schwarz. — EIGHTH ROW: S/Sgt H. E. De Hoff, Cpl A. F. Flemming, T/5 Hagen, Sgt L. A. Remondini, Pfc M. E. Turner, Pfc C. R. Reed, Pfc N. L. Jones, Pfc W. C. Terry, Pfc M. G. Hoekstra, Cpl B. G. Chew, Pfc R. E. Purcell, Pfc R. E. Barton, Pfc J. A. MacCartney, Pfc Persinger, Pfc R. G. Vache, S/Sgt B. W. Rutkowski. — SEVENTH ROW: S/Sgt C. L. Dings, Pfc R. W. Wilmont, Pfc D. Crawford, S/Sgt R. C. Gerber, Sgt A. E. Paciorkoski, Pfc J. L. Heintzmann, Pfc R. K. Read, Pfc G. B. Weber, Pfc H. L. Wolfe, S/Sgt E. C. Muscott, Pfc W. S. Horn, Pfc K. J. Williams, Sgt D. L. Meyer, Pfc C. K. Friend. — SIXTH ROW: T/4 W. W. Graves, S/Sgt R. J. Fink, Pfc R. C. Scoggins, Pfc V. G. Sulton, Pfc T. W. Zembruski, Pfc J. J. Malek, Pfc A. Rosas, Pfc R. C. Pugh, Pfc A. K. Wright, Sgt F. E. Dixon, T/4 A. A. Vargas, S/Sgt D. M. Taylor, Sgt W. C. Smotherman. — FIFTH ROW: Sgt R. H. Kinnamon, S/Sgt J. J. Werwie, S/Sgt F. P. Lusk, T/5 D. W. Arnold, T/5 L. A. Choiniere, Pfc H. C. Smith, Pfc H. P. Ford, Pvt H. J. Obermiller, T/5 V. J. Annunziata, Sgt M. H. Kern, Pfc A. J. Polmanteer, S/Sgt J. Mead, Pfc E. G. Showers, Pfc C. I. Wheeler. — FOURTH ROW: Pfc H. Hernandez, Pfc E. H. Gordney, Pfc D. A. Tanner, Pfc C. M. Malley, Pfc H. L. Sjoquist, Pfc F. Storms, Pfc F. Dunkin, Sgt G. H. Lewellyn, Pfc M. Wiseman, Pfc A. R. Gallagher, Pfc P. K. Cooke, Pfc F. Schneider, Pfc R. V. Taylor, Pvt F. D. Grace. — THIRD ROW: 1st Lt Raby, Pfc N. A. Leos, Pfc R. Corey, Pfc B. B. Thacker, Pfc W. F. Young, Pfc C. P. Davis, T/4 J. J. Reilly, Pfc H. J. Golembiewski, Pfc A. W. Wood, Pfc F. W. Durnell, Pfc W. F. Lancaster, Pfc S. A. Wolsefer, Pfc E. L. Van Meter. — SECOND ROW: Cpl L. W. Black, Cpl S. H. Runyon, Pfc P. C. Pressimone, Pfc J. F. Paulausky, T/4 E. F. Fuller, S/Sgt W. W. Van Tine, Pfc E. W. Lehman, Pfc R. W. Cormney, Pfc J. J. Eaves, Pfc L. P. Zambino, Pfc C. J. Smith, 1st Lt S. Zanolli. — BOTTOM ROW: 2nd Lt S. A. Zelenka, 1st Lt W. H. Applegate, Pfc B. A. Paradis, Pfc J. A. Windt, Pfc J. F. Ricci, Pfc G. B. Davis, Pvt D. R. Stokes, Pfc R. W. Franz, Pfc F. Monaco, Pfc G. E. Glover, Pfc B. R. Coldwell, Sgt L. Frutschey, Sgt A. F. Venezia, 1st Lt Finley. — NAMES OF MEN WHO ARE NOT THE PHOTO: 1st Lt Moseley, 1st Lt Sloop, 1st Lt Netzley, Sgt J. A. Bolek, Cpl W. P. Baker, Pfc J. Augarten, Pfc R. Clements, Pfc W. R. Stewart, Cpl F. X. Dufour, Pfc T. E. Hood, S/Sgt P. T. King, Pfc E. C. Finlaw, Jr., Cpl R. W. Kielhofer, Pfc P. A. Hughes, Pfc M. Hedglin, Sgt H. A. Heltsley, Pfc M. F. Yates, Pfc T. L. Noble, Sgt E. P. Mechura, Pfc J. R. Avis, Pfc E. J. Johns, Jr., Pfc J. D. Bryers, Sgt E. J. Prindville, Pfc P. H. Claims, Pfc E. L. Canter, Pfc M. N. Porter, Pfc C. W. Fout, Pfc J. Fallek, Pfc R. Taylor.

An Editorial

The Captain . . . And the Squad



CAPT. B. H. HUNTER commanded the company. The squad didn't call him Hunter. They called him Captain Hunter. Not just to his face, behind his back as well.

* * *

That was the way the men in the squad felt about the captain. Somehow, when they said "Sir," they seemed to mean it. That's how things were between the brass and the men in the squad.

Wherever there were bul-



lets and danger and men who needed help—there was the captain. The men went one way—forward. The captain went forward, too. But he had to move from side to side as well. Directing the flanks. Coaching the men. Pointing out the targets. Pushing through deep, wet snow that dragged at the feet and sucked a man down. And dragged and sucked until you just wanted to lay there, tired and breathless. And the war could go to hell.

* * *

The captain was 39 years old. As old as the two youngest kids in the squad put together. But there he was. Up there. Moving around. From side to side. And always forward.

And when the last sniper was snuffed, there was the captain. Scouting for a new CP. Getting in wire. Ordering out patrols. Checking on the TDs, the tanks, the company down the hill and in the next town. Reporting back to battalion. Checking

his men. Noting their mood and condition.

* * *

And when chow came the captain pushed the men forward. Just as he had up the hill, with this difference: In the fight he'd been first. In the chow line he came last. He and the lieutenant.

* * *

Up in the house the boys found a mattress. They brought it down. Laid it on the cellar floor. "Here, sir," they said. "Here's a soft spot for you to sleep." The captain said "Thanks." But the men who slept on the mattress that night were the men who came back from patrols.

* * *

The radio buzzed from dusk to dawn. The captain woke and answered. He fought to get the men their rest. The men knew it. The men loved the captain. The men called him Sir. They called him Captain Hunter. To his face. And behind his back.



Lt. Col. Harry Lutz
1964 E. 72nd Pl., Chicago, Ill.
C. O. 3rd Bn., C. O. 1st Bn.,
C. O. 310 Inf. Regt.

The officers of this Third Battalion 310th Infantry proved to be real leaders of men. No risk was too great, no task too difficult, nor duty too hazardous. Their chief concern was that of the men they led and they never rested until they were certain that their men were safe and secure. Many times they risked their lives to save the lives of their men—sometimes they died doing so. They were loved and respected by their men with whom they shared their hardships and their foxholes.

Coming from all parts of the United States, those officers of men of practically every nationality and religion thrown together by the war because of their unselfish devotion to their comrades became united as one with the bonds of friendship stronger even than the steel which made up their gun barrels.

Lt. Col., Infantry



Pierce, Walter H.
Lt. Col. ASN O-349594
117 Park Ave., Raleigh, N. C.
Ex. O. 3rd Bn., C. O. 3rd Bn.



Olson, Lester K.
Major ASN O-291827
15 Austin Ave., Vermillion, S. D.
C. O. Ex. O. Hq. 1st Bn.



Hunter, Barton H.
Capt. ASN O-1289430
Meadowbrook Lane,
Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, Pa.
C. O., Adj. Hq. 310th, - S - 3,
3rd Bn.



Owens, Emlyn S.
Capt. ASN O-1287228
1421 Poplar Grove St.,
Baltimore, Md.
C. O., S - 3



Masterpole, John T.
Capt. ASN O-365060
324 2nd St. N. W.,
Oelwein, Iowa
S - 1, C. O., Ex. O. 3rd Bn.



Knell, George P.
1st Lt. ASN O-1541094
115-232th St., St. Albans, N. Y.
Ass't Bn. Surg.



McGill, David P.
Capt. ASN O-1298417
Waverly, Nebr.,
MTO, C. O., S-1



Kantor, Harry
1st Lt. ASN O-1716636
709 Summit Ave.,
Union City, N. J.
Regimental Dental Surgeon



Barzelay, Ross
Capt. ASN O-546807
69 Campbell Ave., Revere, Mass.
Platoon Leader, C. O.



Applegate, William H.
1st Lt. ASN O-551465
1140 Locust St., Topeka, Kansas
Platoon Leader



Colwell, Miles O., Jr.
Capt. ASN O-516822
3839 Powelton Ave.,
Philadelphia, Pa.
Medical O., Bn. Surg.



Mosely, Robert E.
1st Lt. ASN O-1061193
Box 122, Windsor, N. Y.
Platoon Leader, C. O., SSO



Carlson, John W.
2nd Lt. ASN O-2005671
1815 N. 155th St.
Seattle, Washington
Comm. Officer



Zelenka, Stephen A.
2nd Lt. ASN O-2025292
1650 W. Gd. Blvd.,
Detroit 8, Mich.
Platoon Leader, S—2



Mooney, Paul S.
1st Lt. ASN O-1048109
608 Straight St., Sewickley, Pa.
Platoon Leader, C. O.



Raby, Kenneth N.
1st Lt. ASN O-548866
201 W. Vermont St.,
Knoxville, Tenn.
Platoon Leader, Recon. O., S—3,
C. O.



Nolp, William H.
1st Lt. ASN O-1057836
704 S. Lomard St., Oak Park, Ill.
Platoon Leader, MTO



Hibbard, Robert
1st Lt. ASN O-546709
East St., Doylestown, Pa.
Platoon Leader, Lison O, C. D., S-3



Sweezy, Richard L.
1st Lt. ASN O-1330981
61 School St., Northport, N. Y.
Platoon Leader, Ammo. O.



Brewer, Beacher H.
1st Lt. ASN O-1312272
986 Raymond St., Akron, Ohio
Platoon Leader, C. O.



Durk, Robert A.
1st Lt. ASN O-1325876
3 Secor Road, Hartsdale, N. Y.
Platoon Leader, Ex. O., C. O.,
S-2, S-3, A. C. of S. G-2



Netzley, Jerald E.
2nd Lt. ASN O-1327173
Route 2, Greenville, Ohio
Platoon Leader



Steele, Eldo M.
2nd Lt. ASN O-2000600
Route 2, Halslead, Kansas
Platoon Leader



Donnelly, Charles R., Jr.
2nd Lt. ASN O-1332587
2928 N. American St.,
Stockton, Calif.
Platoon Leader



Pruzan, Howard P.
2nd Lt. ASN O-1328743
2619 Washington St.,
Seattle, Washington
Platoon Leader



Campbell, Lawrence G.
2nd Lt. ASN O-1332578
454 Landfair Ave.,
W. Los Angeles, Calif.
Platoon Leader



Higgins, John H.
1st Lt. ASN O-1048407
400 9th St., Monett, Missouri
Platoon Leader, C. O.



Bain, Gerald E.
1st Lt. ASN O-1307354
Van Horn Ave.,
Brownville Junction, Me.
Platoon Leader



Bulkowski, George
2nd Lt. ASN O-2000612
13 Pakachoag St., Auburn, Mass.
Platoon Leader



Spear, Lester K.
1st Lt. ASN O-1825786
Route 1, Box 5, Parm Harbor, Fla.
Platoon Leader, C. O.



Green, Edward W.
1st Lt. ASN O-1294462
147 Baldwin St., Laconia, N. H.
Platoon Leader



Carlson, Hermann J.
2nd Lt. ASN O-2005650
Starbuck, Minn.
Platoon Leader



Sloop, Ronald C.
1st Lt. ASN O-1825715
301 S. Blanchard St.,
Findlay, Ohio
Platoon Leader



Felton, Charles P.
2nd Lt. ASN O-1330053
3438 E. St., San Bernidino, Cal.
Platoon Leader



Finley, Roland W.
1st Lt. ASN O-548333
1818 W. Koenig St.,
Grand Island, Nebr.
Platoon Leader



Zanolli, Stelvio
1st Lt. ASN O-1062322
Willow St., Fredrickton, Pa.
Platoon Leader



Spyker, Don W.
2nd Lt. ASN O-2008695
1009 Madison St., Saginaw, Mich.
Platoon Leader



Moore, James F., Jr.
1st Lt. ASN O-1238505
116 Salisbury Ave, Spencer, N. C.
Platoon Leader



Moore, William C.
1st Lt. ASN O-1042956
Brookston, Indiana
S-4



Sands, John J.
Capt. ASN O-1303204
1215 Sims Ave.,
San Antonio, Texas
C. O., Platoon Leader, Ex. O.
Hq. Co.
310 Inf., C. O. Hq. Co. 310 Inf.



Baskett, John W.
2nd Lt. ASN O-548297
626 12th St., Bowling Green, Ky.
Platoon Leader



Larson, Donald G.
Capt. ASN O-326207
211 Garfield Ave., Galesburg, Ill.
C. O.



Barnett, Burnice E.
1st Lt. ASN O-2000599
Idabel, Oklahoma
Platoon Leader



Graves, Elmer W., Jr.
2nd Lt. ASN O-1328029
2201 W. Market St.,
Greensboro, N. C.
Platoon Leader



McLennan, Ronald
2nd Lt. ASN O-513839
543 State St., Shelby, Mich.
Platoon Leader



Miller, Julian
1st Lt. ASN O-523232
2913 W., 30th St., Brooklyn, N. Y.
Platoon Leader



Magham, Irvin C., Jr.
1st Lt. ASN O-536734
925 Delaware Ave.,
Buffalo, N. Y.
Platoon Leader

Names of officers whose pictures do not appear

<p>Bell, Robert J. 1st Lt. ASN O-1320923 P. O. 15, Oxbow, N. Y. Platoon Leader</p> <p>Blackmar, Charles B. 1st Lt. ASN O-1183815 806 W. 60th Terrace, Kansas City, Mo. Platoon Leader, S-2-1st Bn.</p> <p>Burnett, Jack C. 2nd Lt. ASN O-927895 207 N. Converse, St. Sparta, S. C. Platoon Leader</p> <p>Busse, Frank J. 2nd Lt. ASN O-1328462 234 W. Third St., Minster, Ohio Platoon Leader</p> <p>Colligan, Peter J., Jr. 2nd Lt. ASN O-2008669 348 Hancock St., Quincy, Mass. Platoon Leader</p> <p>Cosby, Warren G., Jr. 2nd Lt. ASN O-540112 1452 Copeland Ave., Philadelphia, Pa. Platoon Leader</p> <p>Friedberg, Robert 1st Lt. ASN O-1051129 248 Livingstone Ave., South Minneapolis, Minn. Platoon Leader</p> <p>Hamner, Benjamin A. 1st Lt. ASN O-1312305 Box 34, Somerton, Arizona Platoon Leader</p> <p>Henry, Joseph P., Jr. Capt. ASN O-1315063 Vincent St., Philadelphia, Pa. C. O.</p>	<p>Hilmar, James E. 1st Lt. ASN O-1316754 225 8th Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y. Platoon Leader</p> <p>Hope, Mitchell E. Capt. ASN O-393723 2910 Downing Pl., Jacksonville, Fla. S-3, C. O. — Co. B., Ex O. — Hq. 1st Bn.</p> <p>Hughes, William R. Capt. ASN O-24802 56 E. Ravenwood, Youngstown, Ohio S-3</p> <p>Janes, William D. 1st Lt. ASN O-1325899 2429 N. E. Thompson St., Jamica Plain, Mass. S-2</p> <p>Lehmann, Charles A. Capt. ASN O-314008 3518 S. Washington St., Vicksburg, Miss. S-3, Orient. O. Sv. Co., C. O. Sv Co.</p> <p>Maloney, Ted W. 2nd Lt. ASN O-1326213 1437 R. I. Ave., N. W., Washington D. C. Platoon Leader</p> <p>Masterson, William 2nd Lt. ASN O-1300507 169 Loring Ave., Salem, Mass. Platoon Leader</p> <p>Ochs, Irvin G., Jr. Capt. ASN O-1292049 325 Craven Ave., Salem, N. J. Platoon Leader, C. O., Ex O., Co C., C. O. Co. C.</p>	<p>Perrin, Virgil C. Capt. ASN O-1312326 2006 Miami St., Omaha, Nebr. Platoon Leader, S-3, C. O.</p> <p>Ross, Joseph W. 2nd Lt. ASN O-1331665 1495 Nostrand Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y. Platoon Leader</p> <p>Schenck, Fredrick L. 1st Lt. ASN O-1300717 164 E. Main St., Port Jervis, N. Y. Platoon Leader</p> <p>Shanok, Maurice A. 1st Lt. ASN O-1046950 3735 Leland Ave., Chicago 111. Platoon Leader</p> <p>Sloss, Russel M. Capt. ASN O-453161 215 South 5th St., Dugunese, Pa. S-3</p> <p>Stout, David F. Capt. ASN O-1325417 52 E. Vist St., Marshall, Miss. Recon. O., C. O., Recon. O.</p> <p>Taylor, Edward B. Capt. ASN O-447097 Brandywine Blve., Wilmington, Del. C. O.</p> <p>Tideman, William J. 1st Lt. ASN O-1544260 615 Marinette Ave., Marinette, Wis. Med. O.</p> <p>Worth, Brazillai, G. 2nd Lt. ASN O-1080912 1 Park Ave., West Orange, N. J. Platoon Leader</p>
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IN MEMORIAM



LT. SEWARD P. MILES



LT. HUGH J. MULLINS



CAPT. JAMES R. BONNER



LT. ROBERT W. FIELD



LT. HARRY A. SAUNDERS



LT. AXEL E. SAHLIN, JR.



LT. WILLIAM C. HOUCK



LT. RICHARD H. POSTLETHWAIT



LT. ARVID P. ZETTERBERG



LT. LEON W. FRIED



LT. JACK BLUM

The following lines of poetry titled "Rainbow's End" were written by S/Sgt. Erickson Co. I, and St. Paul Minn. Sgt Erickson was killed in action with I Co. while in the attack on Schmidt, Feb. 8, 1945.

The poem was found by his mother four months later when going through his school books. It was written when Alan was around sixteen years old. The significance of such writing proves that Sgt. Erickson was imbued with aggressive spirit in thoughts and action.

RAINBOW'S END

What is in store for me at Rainbow's End,
What waits for me beyond the horizon!
A pot of gold with plenty of things to spend
Or a bootless box with little to live upon.
Will I have power and force to dominate,
Or will I grovel along with all the lot?
A man among many, is that my fate
Or just one more Babitt, a live robot.
Oh, any one of these I'm apt to be,
The stage is set, the whole world lies ahead
And everything depends upon mere Me,
To become some one of whom it can be said,
"There was a man who did not live for fun
He made the most of what he had and won."



An Editorial

The Men in the Squad



THESSE were the men in the squad: Sgt. James H. Davenport, Pfc Calvin L. Krause, Pfc Floyd V. LaRue, Pfc Thomas V. Roe, Pvt. Frank A. Maestas, Pvt. Albert Solezar, Pvt. Mike Custode, Pvt. John Boucom, Pfc Saad Lesser.

A German, a Frenchman, a Spaniard, a Mexican, an Italian, a Jew—and guys with names like Roe.

They helped to take a little town called Konzen. Part of the Siegfried Line—but it never made the news. They started off one morning in waist-deep snow. Slipped, staggered, fought up the hill. Poured in their M1 and BAR fire. Chucked grenades wherever they did most good. Cleaned out the snipers. Moved the line another millimeter forward on the map.

Then they blasted foxholes and took turns standing guard. Through the cold grey day. Through the bitter night. Went off on patrols. Sought out the enemy. Came back wet with snow and sweat. Bone-weary and spent.

They shucked straw from a nearby loft. Cleaned out the cellar of a wrecked barn.

Built a small stove. Made a home for the squad for the night. Volunteered for a dozen details. For wire. For chow. For bedrolls. For ammo. Ran errands. Made reports. Stood by for signals. And slept fitfully in odd moments in between.

They were infantrymen. A mongrel crew. Dirty. Tired. Hemmed in by death and danger. Kids. Old and grim and taut.

But the squad had something to teach the world. A sense of belonging to a unit—and a family. What man can do when teamed with others. An understanding of life. The meaning of misery and sacrifice. The desire to help the other guy to live. So that thereby he himself might stay alive.

Too bad everyone can't belong to one small squad in one small battle. To learn how men of different breeds and creeds can live and work together when they must. How real are things like life and death. How unreal are the luxuries, privileges, prejudices and politics that separate men. And make war. And divert eyes from victory and peace.

ROSTER OF ENLISTED MEN

Abell, Joseph L., Pfc, 1312 Dixie Highway, Louisville, Ky.
 Adams, Carl L., S/Sgt, 1448 Past Ave., Torrence, Calif.
 Adams, Charles W., Pfc, 705 N., Ottawa Ave., Dixon, Ill.
 Adams, Emmett R., Pfc, Box 584, Forest Hill, La.
 Adams, Stanley H., Cpl, Sumner, Iowa.
 Agin, Calvin G., T/Sgt, Gen. Del., Woodfield, Ohio.
 Agles, Edward C., Pfc, 311 S., Benton, Edwardsville, Ill.
 Agles, Marion J., Pfc, 311 S., Benton, Edwardsville, Ill.
 Albanese, Sam A., Pvt, 1110 Maple Ave., Barnesboro, Pa.
 Alderman, William W. Jr., Pvt, 605 39th St., Bradenton, Fla.
 Alexander, Robert R., Pfc, New Madison, Ohio.
 Allman, Leonard, Pfc, 601 W., 21st St., Wilmington, Del.
 Almeida, Manual, Pfc, 49 Mitchell St., New Bedford, Mass.
 Alsmann, Billie J., Pfc, 536 E., Jackson St., Sullivan, Ind.
 Ames, Leslie D., Pfc, 9 Belmont Ave., Camden, Maine.
 Aman, Alfred F., Pfc, 94 Manhattan St., Rochester, N. Y.
 Amundson, Alan K., Pvt, Circle, Montana.
 Anderson, Carter J., Pfc, Sidell, Ky.
 Anderson, James L., Pfc, Novelty, Mo.
 Anderson, Norman V., S/Sgt, 207 East Ave., West Haven, Conn.
 Andoscia, Earl W., Pfc, 32 Aresdale Rd., Cranston, R. I.
 Andrews, Albert H., Pfc, 143 Moreland St., Roxbury, Mass.
 Andrews, Elmer F. Jr., Pvt, 164-28 97th St., Howard Beach, N. Y.
 Andrzejewski, Charles L., Pfc, 1929-B. S. 13th St., Milwaukee, Wis.
 Angioletto, Valentine A., Pfc, 103 Maple St., Bridgeport, Conn.
 Annunziata, Victor J., T/5, 130 Spruce St., Providence, R. I.
 Antley, Gleason R., Pfc, Star Route 1, Groveton, Texas.
 Arent, Jack C., Pfc, 1031 Morrison St., St. Joseph, Mich.
 Armitage, Roy E., T/5, 1304 N. 22nd, Waco, Texas.
 Armstrong, Bennie H., T/3, Box 217, Kelly Lake, Minn.
 Armstrong, Kenneth M., Pfc, Rt 4, Limestone, Tenn.
 Arndt, Charles H., Pfc, RFD 1, Lime Hollow Road, Verona, Pa.
 Arnold, Dick W., T/5, 2115 Washington St., Iola, Kansas.
 Arnold, John D., Pvt, Rd. 1, Bassett, Virginia.
 Asbury, Henry J., Pvt, Welch, West Virginia.
 Atkins, Carl D., Pfc, 128 E. Cedar St., Burbank, Calif.
 Aquilino, Patsy, Pfc, 400 Frandlin Ave., Cannsburg, Pa.
 Augarten, Joseph, Pfc, 1196 Nelson Ave., Bronx, N. Y.
 Auker, Eugene R., Pfc, Route 4, Logansport, Ind.
 Austin, Henry, Pfc, 112 Greenwood St., Dorchester, Mass.
 Avellino, Reter J., Pfc, 816 Chesnut St., Kulpmont, Pa.
 Avis, John R., Pfc, 27 Fells Road, Verona, N. J.
 Awalt, Harry H., Pvt, 2301 East 31st St., Minneapolis, Minn.

Babcock, John B., T/Sgt, Sunnysables, Ithaca, N. Y.
 Bachman, Edd, S/Sgt, Route A., Henrietta, Texas.
 Backhus, John B., Pfc, 8229 Bayard St., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Bailey, Charles, Pfc, 3903 Pascal St., Baltimore, Md.
 Bailey, Flether W., Pvt, 902 W. Walnut St., Monrovia, Calif.
 Bailey, Grady E., Pfc, Rural Route 2, Carthage, Texas.
 Baird, Vondon D., T/4, Box 65, St. Augustine, Ill.
 Baker, Clarence, Pvt, 133 Chestnut St., Midland Park, N. J.
 Baker, George A., Pfc, 630 S. E. 21st St., Oklahoma City, Okla.
 Baker, Harry R., T/5, RR 1, Box 52-A, Tarentum, Pa.
 Baker, William P., Cpl, Rogersville, Mo.
 Baksi, Joseph J., Cpl, 111 21st St., Munhall, Pa.
 Balch, Glenton M., T/4, 5161 Las Flores, Lynwood, Calif.
 Ball, Lewis Z., S/Sgt, Route 2, Beebe, Ark.
 Ballard, James W., Pvt, Rt. 3, Covington, Tenn.
 Balmes, Mark E., Sgt, Route 1, Box 230, Waukegan, Ill.
 Balter, Jerome, Pvt, 1027 Walton Ave., Bronx 52, N. Y.
 Banks, James E., T/4, Eutaw, Ala.
 Barb, Gail L., Pfc, Gen. Del., Akron 12, Ohio.
 Barbour, Charles H., Pfc, Route 1, Chewelah, Wash.
 Bardes, Walter J. Jr., Pfc, 206 Miami Club Drive, Mishawaka, Ind.
 Barent, John C., Pfc, 5075 Kendal Ave., Dearborn, Mich.
 Barnhart, Richard L., Pfc, 452 Beacon St., St. Paul, Minn.
 Barker, Tilman F., T/4, Damascus, Va.
 Barnes, William B., T/5, 904 N. Oak St., Danville, Ill.
 Barr, Alvin, Pvt, 3843 Elsinore St., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Barr, Vernon E., Pvt, 1109 W. 9th St., Grand Island, Neb.
 Barrett, Robert C., T/5, Route No. 5, Penn Yan, N. Y.
 Barrus, Chester J., Pfc, Regent Bldg. c/o N. A. Cobb, Battle-Creek, Mich.
 Barth, Saul I., Pfc, 372 Central Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Bartle, Stuart H., Sgt, 990 5th Ave., New York, N. Y.
 Bartlett, Carl J., T/5, 904 Harshon Lane, Fair Oak Pk., Danville, Ill.
 Bartley, Ray F., Pfc, Box 435, Morton, Wash.
 Bartolick, Joseph F., T/3, 165 Lodi Way, Pittsburg, Pa.
 Barton, Robert E., Pfc, 105 Grafton Avenue, Newark 4, N. J.
 Barwick, John W., Cpl, 14164 Ilene, Detroit, Mich.
 Bashein, Samuel H., Pfc, 649 Alabama Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.
 Bastian, Theodore B., Pvt, Box 94 Burne, Wyoming.
 Baswell, Robert W., Pvt, Route 2 Box 76, Thomasville, Ala.
 Battaglia, Charles S., Pfc, 1209 W. Fayette St., Baltimore, Md.
 Baucom, John B., Pfc, Rt. 2, Marshville, N. C.
 Baughn, Roland N., Pvt, 40 U. S. Ave., Plattsburg, New York.
 Baxter, T. H., Pfc, Ferris, Texas.
 Beady, Dartmouth T., Pfc, RR 6, Huntington, Ind.
 Bebout, Homer E., Pfc., Route 4 Golconda, Ill.
 Beca, Steve, Pfc, 96 Wilhelm St., Struthers, Ohio.
 Beck, Leroy, Pvt, Route 3, Scottsboro, Ala.
 Beckler, Guy R., Cpl, 650 Jefferson St., Motairie, La.
 Becktell, Richard F., Pfc, 4362 Connors Ave., Chicago, Ill.
 Beckman, Jay R., T/Sgt, Pisch, Iowa.
 Benson, Charles W., Pfc, 503 South Hamilton St., Hope, Ark.
 Bell, Stanley M. Jr., S/Sgt, 4404 Ethland Ave., Baltimore, Md.
 Bellinger, Daniel E., Pfc, 120 N. Mill St., Clio, Mich.
 Benfield, Millard I., Sgt, Lincoln, N. C.
 Berg, Leland C., Pvt, Taylor Falls, Minn.
 Berkley, Ralph E., Pfc, 2204 2nd Ave., Richmond, Va.
 Berndt, Harold P., Pfc, 2179 N. 45th St., Milwaukee, Wis.
 Berry, Frederick E., Pfc, Route 1, Fincastle, Va.
 Bertugli, Rudolph, 1st Sgt, Box 571, Carmichael, Pa.
 Bichler, George C., Pfc, 208 Elmwood Drive, Highland Park, Ill.
 Biebert, Alfred, Pfc, 6105 Catalpa Ave., Ridgewood, L. I. N. Y.
 Bietka, Dominic E., Cpl, 1601 E. 4th St., Ashland, Wis.
 Biggs, Dewey L., Pvt, 502 Cedar St., Covington, Va.
 Biggs, Harley V., Pfc, Box 115, Man, W. Va.
 Bilotta, Vincent J., Pvt, 2637 Tasker St., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Birkhold, Harlan F., Pfc, Payne, Ohio RFD 2.
 Bissinger, Carl L., Pfc, 2370 Springwells Ave., Detroit, Mich.
 Bivin, Grover P., Cpl, Gen. Del., Tahlequah, Okla.
 Black, Louis W. Jr., Pfc, Gen. Del., Effingham, Ill.
 Black, Paul C., Pvt, Unknown.
 Blach, Benjamin F., Pvt, 1759 W. 25th St., Cleveland, Ohio.
 Blain, Grives E., Pvt, RFD 1, Avery, Texas.
 Blakley, Samuel J., Cpl, RFD 2, Lancaster, S. Carolina.
 Blankenbeckler, Bryon B., Cpl, Route 2, Chilhowie, Va.
 Blanton, Collis L., Pfc, Route 3, Shelby, N. C.
 Blasius, Lawrence G., S/Sgt, Round Lake, Ill.
 Bloomquist, George H., T/5 1015 7th Ave. W., Ashland, Wisconsin.

Bocchino, Charles, Pvt, 1738 S. 12th St., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Bock, Herbert J., T/5, 3818 N. Kimball, Chicago, Ill.
 Boedeker, Norman O., Sgt, 1213 S 73rd St., West Allis, Wis.
 Bogard, Robert J., Pfc, 619 E. 5th St., Barwick, Pa.
 Boguszewski, Henry, Pfc, 10 Walling St., Snyreville, N. J.
 Bohn, Albert E., Pfc, 108 Lemon St., Buffalo N. Y.
 Bolek, John A., Sgt, 221 Fanny St., Grafton W. Va.
 Bolin, Orville R., 1st Sgt, Albion, Nebr.
 Bombace, Alexander, Cpl, 175 Chestnut St., New Haven, Conn.
 Bomber, Joseph F., Pfc, 613 Water St., Marinette, Wis.
 Bonaventure, Peter S., Pfc, 207 Denver Ave., Bridgeport, Conn.
 Bond, Cassie H., Pfc, Route 1, Muldrow, Okla.
 Bond, William A., Cpl, 1431 N. E. 21 Ave., Portland, Oregon.
 Bonner, Vernon P., Pvt, Box 14, Buttonwillow, Calif.
 Boisseau, Marvin E. Jr., Pfc, 6625 Pershing Ave., University City, Missouri.

Borow, Edward J., Pvt, Box 523, South Fork, Pa.
 Boucher, William K., Pvt, 101 Bond St., Monett, Mo.
 Boudreaux, Elray, Pfc, 112 Guidon St., Thibedaux, Pa.
 Boutwell, Willie W., Pfc, Route 1, Lawrence, Miss.
 Bowen, Jeanie H., S/Sgt, Box 42, Davenport, Fla.
 Bowen, Willard R., Pfc, RRI, Jackson, Ohio.
 Boyd, Harvey, W., Pfc, Route 1, Byington, Tenn.
 Bradley, Adron M., Pfc, 2004 S. Maple St., Little Rock, Ark.
 Brady, Roy E., T/Sgt, 138 Gautier St., Johnstown, Pa.
 Brammer, Clifford O., Sgt, Box 1303, Beaumont, Texas.
 Brand, Norman A., Pfc, Route 1, Acworth, Ga.
 Braswell, James T., Pfc, Route 2, Sylvestor, Ga.
 Braun, Robert J., Pfc, 116 W. Wheelock Pkwy, St. Paul, Minn.

Breaux, Moise, Pfc, Box 14, Greta, La.
 Breen, Nathan H., Sgt, 7717-13th Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.
 Brenneman, Abraham, Pfc, 353 N. William St., Nappanee, Ind.
 Bridenbecker, Gerald I., S/Sgt, 212 Caroline St., Herkimer, N. Y.
 Briscoe, Herschell R., T/5, 519 Oak St., Apt 7, Chattanooga, Tenn.
 Britz, William L., Pfc, Rt. 1, Lynn Haven, Va.
 Brodner, Bernard R., Pfc, 4711 Greenwood Ave., Chicago, Ill.
 Brokaw, Harry W., Pfc, 249 57th St., Pittsburgh, Pa.
 Bronakoski, Leo S., Pfc, 556 E 12th St., Erie, Pa.
 Brooks, Douglas W., Pfc, Rosiclare, Ill.
 Brooks, Sanford R. Jr., Pfc, 2200 North Palm, Little Rock, Ark.
 Brooks, Warren W., Pfc, 439 N. Broadway, Scottsdale, Pa.
 Brooks, William S., Pfc, 193 E. Tallmadge Ave., Akron, Ohio.
 Brosman, James J. Jr., Pfc, 1060 Eddy St., Providence, R. I.
 Brothers, Leo J., Pvt, 5 Springfield St., Three Rivers, Mass.
 Brown, Darrell D., Pfc, RR 2, Mitchell, Ind.
 Brown, Donald H., Sgt, 2325 S. W. 6th St., Miami, Fla.
 Brown, James C., Pvt, Route 3, Paule Valley, Okla.
 Brown, Manuel S., S/Sgt, 502 Sconticut Neck Rd., Fairhaven, Mass.
 Brown, Robert C. Jr., Pfc, 206 Clermont Drive, Greenwood, Ala.
 Brown, Robert J., S/Sgt, 1174-5th Ave., S. Faribault, Minn.
 Bruckerhoff, Walter C., Pfc, RFD 1 St. Marks, Mo.
 Bruss, Lowell S., Pfc, 509 Sweutzer St., Greenville, Ohio.
 Bryan, John E., Pfc, 213 S. Jackson St., Glendale, Calif.
 Bryan, Robert T. Jr., Sgt, 1020 W. 2nd St., Little Rock, Ark.
 Bryant, Eulice A., Sgt, 3601 Kendrick St., Memphis, Tenn.
 Bryers, James D. Jr., Pfc, 2143 Richmond St., Chicago, Ill.
 Buckley, John W., S/Sgt, 231 Indiana, Sullivan, Ind.
 Budish, Bernard, Pfc, 275 Renner Ave., Newark, N. J.
 Buechele, Calvin F., Pfc, 832 S. 35th St., Louisville, Ky.
 Bufkin, Melton W., Pvt, Rt. 3, Belzoni, Miss.
 Bugg, Carl W., Sgt, Pleasant View, Tenn. RR 1.
 Bugher, James R., Pfc, 11 Moore Ave., Greensburg, Pa.
 Buhman, Glenn W., Sgt, Smithsburg, Md.
 Bullis, Albert W., Pfc, 712 N. 13th St., Corvallis, Ore.
 Bunn, John C., Pfc, Rural Route 3, Galax, Va.
 Burnett, Leroy M., S/Sgt, Route 2 Box 97, Stockton, Calif.
 Burrell, Grady L., Sgt, Route 1 Box 29, Canton, N. C.
 Burtch, Robert L., Pfc, 617 W. Keyser St., Garrett, Ind.
 Burton, John M., Pfc, Norline, N. C.
 Butterly, Edwin J., Sgt, 143 Alexander St., Newark, N. J.
 Butts, Clarence, Pvt, 437 McMechen St., Benwood, West Va.
 Cagle, James A., Pfc, Box 1935, Abilene, Texas.
 Calamia, Nunzio, Pfc, 1008 S. May St., Chicago, Ill.
 Calder, Alexander B., Pvt, 24 Gramercy Park, New York, N. Y.
 Callis, Marvin L., Pfc, RFD 1, Bunker Hill, Ind.
 Calvert, Howard F., Pvt, Red Star, West Va.
 Campbell, Don R., Pfc, Box 22, Sacramento, N. M.
 Campbell, Hyrmon W., T/5, Route 2 Box 231, Amherst, Va.
 Campbell, John N. Jr., Pvt, 407 North Oak St., Union, N. Y.
 Campbell, Kenneth C., S/Sgt, 512 Cunningham Ave., Danville, Ill.
 Campbell, William R., S/Sgt, 1945 Lothrop, Detroit, Mich.
 Campbell, Wilson R., Pfc, 3620 N. 11th St., Dist 7, St. Louis, Missouri.
 Camper, Lee O., Pfc, Park Station, Waynesboro, Va.
 Campion, Daniel, T/5, 43-77-157 St., Flushing, L. I., N. Y.
 Canary, Herschel L., Pfc, Route 2 Dogwood Rd., Louisville, Ky.
 Cannon, Cecil C. Jr., Pvt, 211 Hamilton St., Johnson City, Tenn.
 Canter, Earl L., Pfc, 205 W. 10th Ave. Johnson City, Tenn.
 Cantos, Frank, Pfc, 4111 W. Monroe St., Chicago, Ill.
 Carey, George N., Pvt, 15 Walnut St., Hillsboro, N. H.
 Carey, Raymond, Pfc, 1025 Sycamore St., Washington, Pa.
 Carley, Edward W., Sgt, 297 N. Boadway, Linden Hurst, N. Y.
 Carlson, Melvin G., Pvt, Route 2, Creighton, Nebraska.
 Carlson, Robert E., Pvt, 604 Lexington St., Covington, Va.
 Carmney, Reece W., Pfc, Route 1, Marion, N. C.
 Carr, George, Pvt, 311 North 7th St., Bend, Ill.
 Carr, Norman J., Pfc, 276 Courtdale Ave., Courtdale, Pa.
 Carrocce, Ralph P., Pfc, 2137 Mr. Vernon St., Youngstown, Ohio.
 Carter, Donald L., Pfc, Unknown.
 Carver, Lloyd E., Pvt, 1360 East 62nd St., Los Angeles, Calif.
 Cascaden, George T., Pfc, 5 Colonial Ave., Roslyn, Pa.
 Case, Norman L., Pfc, 17 Burr Ave., Norwich, N. Y.
 Caselman, Arlis S., Pfc, Route 2 Box 71, Winslow, Ark.
 Cass, Robert H., S/Sgt, 263 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, N. Y.
 Cassell, Joseph J., Pvt, 1004 West Ontario St., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Caston, Bryan D., Pfc, General Delivery, Spray, N. C.
 Catalano, Michael A., Sgt, 390 Townsend Ave., Newhaven, Conn.
 Catalido, Alfred F. Jr., Pfc, 261 Hyde Park Ave., Jamaica Plain, Mass.
 Cattani, Joseph M., Cpl, McCloud, Calif.
 Chalmers, Henry, Pfc, Gen. Del. Fort Louderdale, Fla.
 Champ, George H., Pfc, Box 436, Logan, Utah.
 Champlin, Charles D., Pfc, Box 17, Cleveland, N. Y.
 Charles, Arthur L., Pvt, 7012 Idlewild St., Pittsburg, Pa.
 Check, Charles S., Pfc, 1038 W. Fern St., Shamokin, Pa.
 Chesney, Joseph J., Sgt, 420 West 4th St., Mt. Carmel, Pa.
 Chew, Billy G., Cpl, RR 1 Burrton, Kansas.
 Chilholm, James C., Pfc, 43 Milk St., Providence, R. I.
 Chizook, Stephen, Pfc, 127 Heard St., Chelsea, Mass.
 Choiniere, Lawrence A., T/5, 192 Santa Barbara St., Springfield, Mass.
 Christensen, Floyd F., Pfc, Six Lakes, Michigan.
 Christiansen, Norman A., Cpl, 39 Home St., Metuchen, N. J.
 Church, Donald R., Pfc, 1102-2nd St., E. Hastings, Minn.
 Cimball, Robert L., Pvt, 102 S. Main St., Ellensburg, Wash.
 Ciotti, Tullio, S/Sgt, 543 Columbia St., Salem, Ohio.
 Cipelin, Buddy P., Pvt, 1920 Leishman Ave., Arnold, Pa.
 Claesson, Fred R., S/Sgt, Akron, Iowa.
 Claim, Peter H., Pvt, 44 Collspring St., Uniontown, Pa.
 Clark, James P., Pfc, 41-11 Vernon Blvd., Long Island City, New York.
 Clarke, Lee T., Pfc, 624 South Johnson St., Macom, Ill.
 Clayton, Maurice A., Pfc, 231 Rosemont St., Haverhill, Mass.
 Clements, Richard H., Pfc, 657 S. President St., Jackson, Miss.
 Clevenhagen, Robert L., Pfc, Route No 1, Crane, Mo.
 Cline, William G., Pvt., Route No 1, Trenton, Georgia.
 Cockrell, Harley B., Pfc, 210 Marion St., Greenwood, S. Carolina.
 Coe, Wilbur, Pfc, 513 S. 8th St., West Terre Haute, Ind.
 Coggins, Fred O., Pfc, 14 1st St., Woodside, Greenville, S. C.
 Coldwell, Boyce R., Pfc, Route 2 Box 41, Laurens, S. C.
 Cole, Alfred F., Pfc, 66 South St., Westboro, Mass.
 Cole, Mervin A., Pfc, Route 1, Millington, Mich.
 Collette, James W., Pfc, 710 n. 4th Ave., Knoxville, Tenn.
 Colley, Lewis F., Pvt, Rt. 2, Blackshear, Georgia.
 Collins, Albert M., Pfc, 2303 Loticse St., Pittsburg, Pa.
 Collins, Eugene, Cpl, 18 Borden Blvd., Riversdale, R. I.
 Colts, Joseph R., Sgt, 4782 Howell, Detroit, Mich.
 Colucci, Salvatore J., Sgt, 193 Seymour Ave., Derley, Conn.
 Compton, Earnest S., Pfc, Dungannon, Va.
 Conaway, Charles E., Pfc, Hanover, Ind.
 Cones, Edgar E., Pfc, 1110 Harvard St., Galens, Kansas.
 Conkle, Clarence L., Sgt, RFD No 3, Hudland, Missouri.
 Conley, Addie C., Pfc, Marensico, Michigan.
 Connell, Edwin E., 1/Sgt, 64-88 83rd St., Elmhurst, N. Y.
 Connelly, Arthur E., S/Sgt, 904 First Ave., Middletown, Ohio.
 Connors, Thomas D., Sgt., 10 Union St., Brighton, Mass.
 Constantine, James J., S/Sgt, 415 N 12th St., Fort Dodge, Iowa.
 Conter, Carl W., Pfc, Flushing, Ohio.
 Conway, John G., Pfc, 7818 85th St., Glendale, N. Y.
 Cooke, Palmer K., Pfc, Route 2, Ridgeway, S. C.
 Cooper, Arthur B., Pfc, Route No 4, Jasper, Alabama.
 Corbett, John M., S/Sgt, 2567 Memphis St., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Corbin, Franklin B., Pfc, Box 112, Worthington, West Va.
 Cornelius, Edmund W., Pfc, RR 16 Box 281, Indianapolis, Ind.
 Cornelius, James H., Pfc, 312 McGregor St., Cincinnati, Ohio.
 Cornett, Winfred L., Pvt, 245 S Gray St., Indianapolis, Ind.
 Correll, Donald L., S/Sgt, Lamarr, Colorado.
 Corwin, James H., Pfc, 1060 Roosevelt St., Linton, Ind.
 Cosgrove, Francis P., Pvt, 44 Chadwick Ave., Hartford, Conn.
 Costas, John N., S/Sgt, 51 Elliot St., Brookline, Mass.
 Costellow, Lee, Pfc, Box 247, Silsbee, Texas.
 Cottrell, John J., Pfc, 915 6th St., Muscatine, Iowa.
 Couch, Jacob B. Sr., Pfc, Mareland, Georgia.
 Coughlin, Cornelius J., S/Sgt, 115 Osgood Ave., Stapleton, N. Y.
 Covert, Howard, T/5, RFD No 1, South Pocatello, Idaho.
 Cox, William G., T/5, 330 Main St., Rodgeway, Pa.
 Craddock, John P., T/5, Box 384, Douglas, Georgia.
 Craig, Jess H., T/5, R R No 5, Valparaise, Ind.
 Crawford, Donald R., Pfc, 18 Midland Ave., Bronxville, N. Y.
 Cronin, James A., Cpl, 5020 47th St., Woodside, Long Island, New York.
 Crook, Delbert C., S/Sgt, 202 W. Thomas St., Bay City, Mich.
 Crosby, Melvin L., Pfc, Wood St., Woodville, Mass.
 Cross, Warne R., Pfc, 438 South Humphery Ave., Oak Park, Ill.
 Crowley, Ambrose J., Pvt, 316 Pine St., Athens, Pa.
 Croxen, William C., Pfc, 488 N. Austin Blvd., Oak Park, Ill.
 Cudnea, Jordan P., Pvt, 1414 Brookview Blvd., Parma, Ohio.
 Culver, Robert K., Cpl, 432 N. Second St., Wormleysburg, Pa.
 Cummins, William J., Pfc, 201 E. Elm St., Sherohoe, Iowa.
 Cuniff, Thomas F., Pfc, 37 Dunster Rd., Jamaica Plain, Mass.
 Curry, Bill, Pfc, Napier, Ky.
 Curry, Robert B., Pfc, Maxbass, North Dakota.

Curtis, Leonard H., Sgt. R R 1, Grandville, Michigan.
Curtis, Dudley M., Pfc, 1038 1/2 N. White St., Manford, Calif.
Custenborder, Donald J., Pfc, 434 S. Ohio St., Sidney, Ohio.
Custode, Michael P., Pfc, 35 Court House Pl., Jersey City, N. J.
Cuthill, George H., Pfc, Eggeyston Rd., Aurora, Ohio.
Cyprian, Rudolph S., S/Sgt, 223 West Kiowa Ave., Fort Morgan, Colo.
Czach, Stanley L., Sgt, 3883 Lawndale, Detroit, Mich.

Dailey, Gerald R., Pfc, 720 Liberty St., Eric, Pa.
Dalton, John E., Pfc, 1519 N. Kildare Ave., Chicago, Ill.
Daly, John J., T/Sgt, 237 Plainfield Ave., Floral Park, N. Y.
D'Amice, George J. Jr., Pfc, 1750 63rd St., Brooklyn, N. Y.
Daniele, Kenneth B., Pvt, Smithland, Iowa.
D'Aniello, Frank, T/4, 354 Montanuk Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.
Daniels, Charles L., T/Sgt, 451 N. Cranger St., Granville, Ohio.
Danner, Gilbert R., S/Sgt, Boone, N. C.
Davenport, Rex, Pfc, 98 Chariter St., New York, N. Y.
Davidson, John C., T/5, Rt. 1, Buffalo, Texas.
Davin, Peter, Pvt, 1 New Heath St., Roxbury, Mass.
Davis, Burnam, T/Sgt, Naugatuck, West Va.
Davis, Claude P., Pfc, Old Fort, N. C.
Davis, George B., Pfc, Route 2, Goldsboro, N. C.
Davis, Joe W., Pfc, Rural Route 1, Rockmark, Ga.
Davis, John L., Pfc, Route 1, Leesburg, Ala.
Dawson, James A., Pfc, 1595 Anita, Grosse Point, Mich.
Dawson, Ransom C., Cpl, Stearns, Ky.
Day, John L., Pfc, Box 82, Waterford, Pa.
Day, William F., Pvt, 1164 Birmingham, Tulsa, Okla.
Day, Woodrow W., Pfc, Big Island, Va.
De Armond, David L., Pfc, Box 1150, Lakeview, Ore.
De Hoff, Harold E., T/Sgt, 3039 9th St., S. W., Canton, Ohio.
Delarosa, Thomas L., Pvt, 1521 B-N Jefferson St., Milwaukee, Wis.

D'Elia, Alphonse F., Pvt, 422 W. 47 St., New York, N. Y.
Dell'Antonio, John A., Sgt, 1374 E. 41st St., Cleveland, Ohio.
Del Merico, John E., Pfc, 27 Bradley St., Dobbs Ferry, N. Y.
Del Principe, Thomas S., Pfc, 782 E. 14th St., Ashtabula, Ohio.
De Maagd, Louis W., T/Sgt, 1240 Edith Ave., N. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

De Palma, Louis J., Cpl, 81 Sylvan Ave., New Haven, Conn.
Derrick, Loal D., T/5, General Delivery, Brady, Texas.
Dessloch, John C., Pfc, 611 Genesee St., Rochester, N. Y.
Derwiler, Paul R., Pfc, 416 Perkiomen Ave., Lansdale, Pa.
Devillars, Lawrence J., Pvt, 709 Morgan St., Meadville, Pa.
Devin, Robert K., Pfc, 721 S. E. 20th Ave., Portland, Ore.
Dewberry, Jesse B., Pvvt, Rt. 1, Kennesaw, Ga.
Deweese, Robert W., Pfc, 2503 Acklen St., Nashville, Tenn.
Dias, Gil M. Jr., T/5, 189 Hamlet St., Fall River, Mass.
Diaz, Jose M., Pvt, 571 Richmond St., Los Angeles, Calif.
Dinallom, Andrew R., Pfc, 23 Vanderbilt Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.
Dings, Calbert L., T/Sgt, 2157 S. 84th St., West Allis, Wis.
Diorio, Michael L., Sgt, 201 Logan Mingo Junction, Ohio.
Dirks, Ernest E., Pvt, General Delivery, Goltry, Okla.
Di Sarro, John T., Pfc, 1925 Kenneth Road, Glendale, Calif.
Dixon, Franklin E., Sgt, 221 Fanny St., Grafton, Va.
Dleland, Ray J., Pfc, 318 Linn St., Jamesville, Wis.
Doggett, Charles P., Pfc, 11 900 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill.
Domanisky, Frank J., Pvt, 910 Adams St., Monroe, Michigan.
Donoghue, Egune, F., Pvt, RFD 3, Columbus, Nebraska.
Donohue, Charles E., Pvt, Box 125, Vesta, Minn.
Dorfner, George P., Pfc, 2418 Patterson St., Pittsburgh, Pa.
Dorn, Orlan R., S/Sgt, Hendricks, Minn.
Dorris, Howard G., Pfc, Rt. 5, Hartville, Mo.
Dorsey, Jack C., Pvt, 572 Lincoln Way East, Chambersburg, Pa.
Dorwatt, Henry W., Cpl, 140 East New St., Lancaster, Pa.
Deivris, Andrew J., S/Sgt, 2137 N. Lakewood Ave., Chicago, Ill.
Downs, Robert J., Pvt, 47 Mill Road, Maple Shade, N. J.
Doyle, Charles B., T/5, 401 E. North Ave., Anderson, S. C.
Dozier, Tully C. Jr., Pfc, Box 87 Brunswick, Georgia.
Dragan, George L., Pfc, 638 E. 101st St., Cleveland, Ohio.
Dragon, Nicholas, Pfc, 206 E. Clifton Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio.
Dreher, Glenn A., Sgt, Rt. 2, Dover, Ohio.
Dreslinski, Chester J., Pfc, 1 Thomas St., Buffalo, N. Y.
Drew, John B., Pfc, 46 Evergreen St., Kingston, Mass.
Drobiak, Fred J., Pfc, 30 St. James Row, Danielson, Conn.
Drogstad, William D., Pfc, 893 Russell St., St. Paul, Minn.
Dubel, Edward J., Pfc, R. D. 3 Cayager Creek Rd.
Cheektowga, N. Y.
Dublanica, Nicholas, Pfc, Gatfield, N. J.
Duckworth, Rufus C., Pvt, Pickens, South Carolina.
Dufour, Francis X. Jr., Cpl, 1582 Pleasant St., Fall River, Mass.

Duncan, William H., Pfc, Rt. 1, Nauloo, Ala.
Dundore, George E., Pfc, 339 N. 6th St., Reading, Pa.
Dunkin, Frank, Pfc, 1913 2nd Ave., Terre Haute, Ind.
Dunlap, Henry M., Pvt, 10 Bailey Ave., Yanders, New York, N. Y.
Dunn, Ernest A., Pfc, 703 Pine St., Hood River, Ore.
Dunn, Fredrick J., Pfc, Kurtansi, Idaho.
Dunnaway, James J., Route 1, Laurens, S. Carolina.
Du Rant, Joseph A., T/Sgt, 313 N. Salem, Sumter, S. Carolina.
Durnell, Fred W., Pfc, 131 McKinley Ave., Jamestown, N. Y.
Dutcher, Cornelius G., T/4, 157 E. 62nd St., New York, N. Y.
Duty, Lexon C., Sgt, 3921 N. Simsboro, La.
Dyas, Robert N., S/Sgt, Route 1, Boone, Iowa.
Dyjak, Charles W., Pfc, 11 Kosciusko St., Indian Orchard, Mass.
Dysinger, Vernon C., Pfc, RFD 3, Paulding, Ohio.

Ebers, Jewell J., Pfc, Sparta, Mich.
Eckmann, Robert O., Sgt, 519 E. Knapp St. Milwaukee, Wis.
Eddings, James C., Pfc, General Delivery, Montovallo, Ala.
Edgeworth, Goldie P., S/Sgt, Sulligent, Ala.
Edling, James E., Pfc, 1921 Birch Ave., San Carlos, Calif.
Edwards, Clarence W., Pvt, 22 E 2nd Ave., Lexington, N. C.
Edwards, Paul V., Sgt, 393 Nolan St., S. E., Atlanta, Ga.
Edwards, Roger G., Pfc, S. Yarmouth, Mass.
Edwards, Wayne O., Pfc, 18 Ogden St., Walton, New York.
Eisenman, Vernon L., Pfc, 216 E 2nd St., Grand Island, Nebr.
Eitemiller, William M., S/Sgt, 165 W Harrison Ave., Ventura, Calif.

Elder, Chester W., Pfc, Vandalia, Ill.
Elkins, Guy C., Sgt, Box 554, Canadian, Texas.
Elliott, Curtis B., Pfc, 1709 4th Ave., North Great Falls, Mont.
Mont.

Elliott, Leslie C., Pvt, Route 6, Mt. Vernon, Ill.
Elliot, Ted D., S/Sgt, 4007 Ave M., Galveston, Texas.
Elmore, Frank E., Cpl, Route 2, Thayer, Kansas.
Enfinger, William M., S/Sgt, 419 Clark St., Bainbridge, Ga.
Engle, James M., Pfc, 503 Oakley St., Evansville, Ind.
Errico, Vincent E., Pfc, 151 West St., New Haven, Conn.
Esparza, Jesus, Pfc, 661 1/2 Smelter St., Pueblo, Colorado.
Estala, Benino B., Pvt, Route 2 Box 32 A, Amarillo, Texas.
Essex, Regis R., S/Sgt, 721 Pine St., Essexville, Michigan.
Eubank, Duane E., Pvt, 206 Electric Ave., Battle Creek, Mich.
Eudy, J. C., Pfc, Gen Del, Gold Hill, North Carolina.
Evans, Charles O. Jr., Sgt, 212 W. South St., Jackson, Ohio.
Evans, Sam D., Pfc, Route 1, Box 24, Nathalie, Va.
Erdei, Charles J., Pfc, 2072, W. 19th St., Cleveland, Ohio.
Everly, Dallas, Pfc, Island, Ky.
Everitt, Carey F., Sgt, Route 1, Ariton, Ala.

Fagan, Osee R., S/Sgt, 1228 East Blvd, Gainesville, Fla.
Fagle, Fredrick J., Pfc, R. D. 4 Washout Road, Scotia, N. Y.
Fahey, John T., Sgt, Avoca, Mich.
Falkin, William R., T/Sgt, 354 Fern St., Hartford, Conn.
Fallek, Joseph, Pfc, 209 Bay 34 St., Brooklyn, N. Y.
Fannon, Jake D., Pfc, Riverbank, California.
Farrell, Patrick J., S/Sgt, 37-37 83rd St., Jackson Heights, N. Y.

Faucette, Henry A., Pfc, 711 Kivet St., Burlington, N. C.
Feley, Coleman C. Jr., Sgt, 361 Main St., Winchester, Mass.
Felice, Raymond, T/5, 25 Arnold St., Providence, R. I.
Felts, Jimmie H., Sgt, Star Rt., Joiner Ark.
Fenn Lewis E. Jr., Pfc, Orange, Florida.
FERENCE, George C., Pvt, 825 Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, Ill.
Ferguson, James E., S/Sgt, Rt. 1, Kerens, Texas.
Ferr, Chester P., Pfc, 533 Samuel, Youngstown, Ohio.
Ferrare, Leonhard P., Pvt, 430 Elizabeth Ave., Elizabeth, N. J.
Ferringar, Theodore J., Pfc, 120 Taylor St., Brookville, Pa.
Ferrid, James R. Jr., Pfc, 6408 Saybrook Ave., Philadelphia, Pa.
Fetterman, Daniel L., T/4, Shamekin, Pa.
Fields, William J., Pfc, 10 962 16 Mile Road, Warren, Michigan.
Fierro, Jesus V., Pfc, East Washington St., Artesia, N. Mex.
Fincham, Kelvin A., S/Sgt, Adolph, W. Va.
Fine, J. D., Pvt, Box 70 Carlsbad, New Mexico.
Fink, Russell J., S/Sgt, Lushton, Nebr.
Finlaw, Elmer C. Jr., Pfc, RFD 1 Harrisonville, Ohio.
Finnegan, Albert F. Jr., Pvt, 8122 Willow St. New Orleans, La.
Fisher, John J., Pfc, 80 Prospect St., Kingston, N. Y.
Fisher, William E., Sgt, 125 Highland Ave., Middletown, N. Y.
Field, Alvin, S/Sgt, Goodridge, Minn.
Fleming, Albert F., Cpl, 25 Haviland Ave., Glen Falls, N. Y.
Fletcher, Willis T., RFD 2 Eldorado Springs, Mo.
Fogle, Glenn H., Pfc, Rt. 1, Woodsboro, Md.

Folop, Norman H., Pvt, 482 Columbus Rd., Bedford, Ohio.
 Forbes, William J. Jr., Pvt, 233 E Theo St., San Antonio, Texas.
 Forcina, Francis A., Pfc, 20 3 rd St., Cambridge, Mass.
 Ford, Harold P., Pfc, Route 1 Nichols, S. C.
 Forman, Robert I., T/5, 426 Naval Place, Portsmouth, Va.
 Foster, Harry C., Pfc, 1207 Pennsylvania Ave., Charlestown, W. Va.
 Foster, Jeff C., Pfc, Rt. 4, Huntingdon, Tenn.
 Fout, Carl W., Pfc, Route 1, Londonberry, Ohio.
 Fowler, Philip E., Pfc, 607 Alabama Ave., Washington, D. C.
 Fox, James J., Pfc, Route 1, Fewnmo, Michigan.
 Fox, Warren G., Pvt, 712 W. Commerce St., Lewisburg, Tenn.
 Franklin, Albert L., Pfc, 1732 E Wheeler St., Kokomo, Ind.
 Franks, Alvin L., Sgt, 496 Inman St., Akron, Ohio.
 Frany, Raymond W., Pfc, 107 Franklin St., Mount Vernon, Ohio.
 Frederico, Leon J., Pfc, RFD 1 Box 174 A, Blue Island, Ill.
 Freed, George J., Cpl, Lowell, Washington.
 Freeman, Warren C., Pvt, 35 Vincent St., Dayton, Ohio.
 Friedl, Francis L., Pfc, RFD 1 Box 115, St. Marys, Pa.
 Friedman, Joseph, Pfc, 648 Danner Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.
 Friend, Claude K., Pfc, Accident, Md.
 Frier, Henry P., Pfc, Box 105, Tatum, New Mexico.
 Frisbie, Edward J., Pfc, 687 Naugatuck, Devon, Conn.
 Frutchey, Leslie, Sgt, 416 Union St., Taylor, Pa.
 Fuller, Edwin F., T/4, E. 12 Pendleton Homes, Macon, Ga.
 Funk, Paul R., S/Sgt, 249 E Catherine St., Chambersburg, Pa.
 Furimsky, George S., Pfc, Rt. 3, Nokomis, Ill.
 Furimsky, Michael, Cpl, Rt. 3, Nokomis, Ill.
 Futrell, John H., Pvt, Summerfield, N. C.
 Gardner, William A., Pfc, 801 E. Market, Searcy, Ark.
 Garner, Archie H., Pfc, S. Church St., Union, S. C.
 Garretr, Lloyd W., Pfc, Gen. Del. Bellmead, Texas.
 Gazda, Stephen G., S/Sgt, Box 524, Mahwah, New Jersey.
 Gajkowski, Harry P., T/Sgt, 3463 North Fifth St., Milwaukee, Wis.
 Geiger, Robert K., Sgt, 42 E Wheeling St., Washington, Pa.
 Gerber, Richard C., S/Sgt, RR 4, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.
 Gibson, Samuel W., Cpl, Gaylord, Kansas.
 Gilbert, William I., S/Sgt, 1535 S. Mckee Way, Beaumont, Texas.
 Giles, Claude C., Pfc, Box 63, Arnold, Calif.
 Gillespie, Michael D., Pfc, Sharon, West Va.
 Gilliam, Rolland F., Pfc, Route 1 Box 106, Barnwell, S. C.
 Gillespie, Jason L. Jr., Pfc, Route 1, Brevard, N. C.
 Gilsean, Philip J. Jr., Pfc, 563 Heath St., Chestnut Hill 67, Mass.
 Gimenez, Ernest, Pfc, 70 Park Terrace W., New York, N. Y.
 Ginger, Curley C., Pfc, c/o Mrs. H. B. Gillingham Rt. 1, Spokane, Wash.
 Gionata, Dante, Pvt, 226 E 7th St., New York, N. Y.
 Giordano, James, S/Sgt, 3841 Pennsylvania Ave., Detroit, Mich.
 Giustino, Cosmo A., Pfc, 314 Otis, Akron, Ohio.
 Glasscock, Tommie L., Pfc, Route 1, Box 188, Clarksville, Va.
 Gloeckl, Charles M., Cpl, 1402 Fernleaf St., Pittsburgh, Pa.
 Glover, Grady E., Pfc, 1230 25th St. N., Birmingham, Ala.
 Goldsworthy, Wilson C., Pfc, Route 2 Box 62, Racine, Wisconsin.
 Golembiewski, Henry J., 784 Beatty St., Trenton, N. J.
 Goltra, Robert J., Pfc, 605 South Lowman St., Fort Scott, Kansas.
 Gomes, Theodore J., Castroville, Calif.
 Gonzalez, Arthur J., S/Sgt, 1694 Clay Ave., Bronx, N. Y.
 Gonzalez, Henry Jr., 1st Sgt, 1815 Morris Ave., Bronx, N. Y.
 Gooden, Harvey J., T/5 Rt 1, Barnesville, Ga.
 Goodman, Walter M., Pvt, 100 High St., Buffalo, N. Y.
 Goodwin, Wernon L., Pfc, 27 Ave. A., New Bern, N. C.
 Gordon, Henry, S/Sgt, Rt 2, Zebulon, N. C.
 Gordtney, Eric H. Jr., 5606 Madison Ave., Ashtabula, Ohio.
 Gorman, Francis J., T/5, Box 88, Clarksville, N. Y.
 Gossett, James E., Pfc, Box 163, Glendale, S. C.
 Grace, Joseph M., S/Sgt, 1899 Jefferson Ave., Memphis, Tenn.
 Grady, Jack L., Pfc, Route 1, Mt. Olive, N. C.
 Grace, Frank D., Pvt, RD 1 Chemung, N. Y.
 Gabuzda, Stephen J., S/Sgt, 718 Ingham St., Freeland, Pa.
 Gallagher, Albert R., Pfc, Woodruff, Wis.
 Gallagher, Claude A. Jr., S/Sgt, 4802 Othello St., Seattle, Washington.
 Gallagher, James W., 1st Sgt, 966 Glenoake, Glendale, Calif.
 Gambaro, Pat, Sgt, 3119 40th St., Brooklyn, N. Y.
 Gance, James R., Sgt, Box 153, Scranton, Iowa.
 Garlock, Lawrence E., Kinsman, Ohio.
 Garma, Richard R., Pfc, 112 Burton Ave., Winslow, Ariz.
 Grafhorst, James, Pfc, 1167 Bittake St., Akron, Ohio.
 Gramza, Albert Jr., Pvt, 1118 Broadway, Buffalo, N. Y.
 Grant, Fred, T/4, Route 3, 121 O Street, Thomaston, Ga.
 Grasing, Edward F., Cpl, 309 W. 21 St. New York, N. Y.
 Graves, Kenneth H., Pvt, Chula, Missouri.
 Graves, Wilbur W., T/4, 147 1/2 N. Main St., El Dorado, Kansas.
 Gravitt, Ray, Pfc, RFD 1 Bearcreek, Ala.
 Gray, Frank, T/5, Keiser, Ark.
 Greco, Anthony F., S/Sgt, 120 7th Ave., N. W. Celwein, Iowa.
 Greeley, George J., Pvt, 90 Wappanocca Ave., Rye, N. Y.
 Green, Raymond W., Cpl, 403 N. Port Crescent, Bad Axe, Mich.
 Greene, William C., Pfc, Morristown, Tenn.
 Greenwood, Thomas W., Pfc, Route 3, Elberton, Ga.
 Greenwood, Virgil D., S/Sgt, 1307 D. Ave., N. E., Cedar Rapids, Iowa.
 Greer, Orlan B., Sgt, 511 Edwards St., Bossier City, La.
 Greimes, Gordon W., Pfc, 1146 N. 78th St., Seattle, Washington.
 Grguric, Thomas, Pfc, Box 1058, Braddock TWP Rt. 1, Wilkensburg, Pa.
 Griffin, Harold J., Pfc, 214 6th Ave. S. E., Jamestown, N. D.
 Griffin, Willis E., Pfc, Route 3, Houston, Miss.
 Grimes, Paul R., Pfc, Bivins, Texas.
 Groger, Ernest J., Cpl, Route 2, Conneaut Lake, Pa.
 Groleau, Lawrence J., T/4, Rapid River, Mich.
 Gross, Harold L., Pfc, Balanche, Ala.
 Gross, Kenneth P., S/Sgt, 1134 Nelson St., Fort Wayne, Ind.
 Gryncewicz, Boleslaw B., Pfc, 2 Goddard St., Webster, Mass.
 Grzybowski, Benjamin J., T/Sgt 61—45—55 Drive, Maspeth, Queens, N. Y.
 Guarniccio, John A., Pfc, 994 E. 54th St., Brooklyn, N. Y.
 Gulbranson, Kenneth L., Pvt, 1025 Dunham St., Albert Lea, Minn.
 Gunter, John C., T/Sgt, 10 Church St., Lonaconing, N. Y.
 Hack, Walter E., Pvt, 321 Summit Ave., Youngstown, Ohio.
 Haerle, Richard J., Pfc, 2471 A N. 4th St., Milwaukee, Wis.
 Hague, Joseph F. Jr., Pfc, Clark Lane, RFD No 2, New London, Conn.
 Hahn, Carl G., S/Sgt, 1628 Nay Ave., Coshocton, Ohio.
 Haines, James B. Jr., Pvt, 1632 N. Calvert St., Baltimore, Md.
 Haise, Robert H., Pvt, Box 52, Temperance, Mich.
 Hale, Lee M., Pfc, 202 E. King St., Shippenburg, Pa.
 Hall, John, Pfc, 1341, Capouse Ave., Scranton, Pa.
 Hall, Kenneth T., Pfc, 743 Ashland, Chariton, Iowa.
 Hall, William A., Pfc, Rt. 3, Humboldt, Tenn.
 Hamrich, James C., Holcomb, W. Va.
 Hampton, J. C., Pfc, Route No 1, Midland, Ark.
 Haney, Bennie J., T/Sgt, Smile, Ky.
 Hanley, Robert F., Sgt, 2619 Memphis St., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Hanson, Willard, Pfc, 3106 22nd Ave., So. Minneapolis, Minn.
 Harder, Ralph N., Pvt, 3291, N. 10th S., Milwaukee, Wis.
 Hardison, Albert D., T/5, Route No 1, Catoosa, Okla.
 Hargis, John M., Sgt, 1219 Sandusky Ave., Kansas City, Kansas.
 Harper, Rolfe C. Jr., S/Sgt, 6 Studio Arcade, Bronxville, N. Y.
 Harreus, William H., Jr., 102—44, 85th Drive, Richmond Hill, N. Y.
 Harrington, Charles M., Pfc, 1827 Brooklyn Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.
 Harris, Carson C., Pvt, Route 1, Butler, Georgia.
 Harris, Lonie D., Pfc, Route 2, Horton, Ala.
 Harrison, Michael, Pfc, 831 73rd St., Brooklyn, N. Y.
 Hartley, Glen M., Pfc, 107 S Dicks St., Muncie, Ind.
 Hartshorn, John L., Pfc, 126 Maple Shade Ave., Hamilton Square, New Jersey.
 Hartwell, Warren W. Jr., Pfc, 99 Rugby St., Cranston, Rhode Island.
 Hatch, Lerleen M., Pfc, 84 Castle Blvd., Akron, Ohio.
 Hathaway, Thomas, Pvt, 2 Greystone Rd., Nahant, Mass.
 Hayden, Henry W. Jr., Sgt, 7372 Hazel Ave., Maplewood, Mo.
 Hayes, Preston J., T/5, 554 E. Railroad St., Newcomerstown, Ohio.
 Hayes, Willard F., Sgt, Route 1, Allegan, Mich.
 Haygood, Alden O., Pfc, Route 1, Ranhurs, Ga.
 Hazard, Hubert W., Sgt, RR No 1, Seymour, Ind.
 Hazelwood, Raymond M., Pfc, Narrows, Va.
 Heanue, William F., Pfc, 1006 Norman St., Bridgeport, Conn.
 Hedglin, Marlin, Pfc, Gen., Del., Bogue Chitto, Miss.
 Hedrick, Leslie A., Pfc, Route No 2, Thomasville, N. C.

Hecke, Bernard J., S/Sgt, Star Route, Bristow, Ind.
 Heintzman, Joseph L., Pfc, 1934 Rutherford Ave., Louisville, Ky.
 Heltsly, Harold A., Pfc, RR 1, Island, Kentucky.
 Henderson, Adna H. Jr., Pfc, 1107 Amgerst Ave., Alta Vista, Va.
 Henson, David W., Sgt, Sharon, W. Va.
 Henson, Donald E., Pvt, 901 Sycamore St., Centralia, Ill.
 Henson, Grover E., Pfc, 719 McBrayer St., Shelby, N. C.
 Henderson, Dudley B., Pfc, Box 660, Roxboro, N. C.
 Herman, Auther A., Pfc, 1665 53rd St., Brooklyn, N. Y.
 Hernandez, Hipolito, Pfc, Gen. Del., Box 670, San Benito, Texas.
 Herob, Robert J., T/Sgt, 1875 Hewitt Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio.
 Herring, Rufus K., Pfc, 26 Fisher Ferry, Thomasville, N. C.
 Herron, Samuel H. Jr., Pfc, 730 Park Ave., Collingswood, N. J.
 Hester, J. D., Pvt, 208 Ogilvie St., Bossier City, La.
 Hester, William D., S/Sgt, Route 3, Woodlawn, Tenn.
 Hiatt, Arthur E., Pvt, Route 17, Box 501, Milwaukie, Oregon.
 Hiatt, Shirley V., T/5, E Main St., Stanford, Ky.
 Hiemstra, Charles S., S/Sgt, 1223 Wealth, S. E., Grand Rapids, Mich.
 Hileman, Elmer J., Pvt, Route 2, Lewisville, Indiana.
 Hill, Carl W., Pfc, Route 4, E. View Ave., Ashtabule, Ohio.
 Hill, Jack E., Pfc, 1225 N. W. 28th St., Oklahoma City, Okla.
 Hill, Obie, Jr., Pfc, Route 2, Dover, N. C.
 Hill, Walter, Pfc, 600 Pine St., Laurens, S. C.
 Hinkle, Donald I., S/Sgt, 6535 Hartwell, Dearborn, Mich.
 Hirschman, Charles, Sgt, 135-01 62nd Ave., Flushing, L. I., N. Y.
 Hite, Charlie J., Pfc, Kenbridge, Va.
 Hiitt, Arthur O., Pfc, Route 4, Tuscaloosa, Ala.
 Hively, Dale E., T/Sgt, Route No 1, Larwill, Indiana.
 Hocker, Morgan O., Pfc, Morgantown, Ky.
 Hoekstra, Marvin G., Pfc, 2531 N. Westnedge Ave., Kalamazoo, Mich.
 Hoey, Harold T., Sgt, 55 E. Amora St., Bloomfield, N. J.
 Hoff, Morris M., Pvt, 3807 Duane St., Detroit, Mich.
 Hoffpavir, Albert, Pfc, Rt. 1, Box 38 A, Ragley, La.
 Hogg, Joseph F., S/Sgt, 1718 N 19th St., Richmond, Va.
 Hogg, Richard P., Pfc, Cedar Ave., W. Orange, N. J.
 Hogins, Jack N., Pfc, Rt. 3, Dover, Ark.
 Holbrook, Robert L., Pvt, Route No 1, Clarksville, Georgia.
 Holcomb, Hoyr, W., 1/Sgt, R. No 1, Leonard, Texas.
 Holder, Claude R., Pvt, Box 304, Brooklyn, Miss.
 Holdridge, Lawrence N., S/Sgt, New Berlin, Chenango, N. Y.
 Hollick, Frank, T/Sgt.
 Holmes, John S., Pfc, 215 South Ave., Glenelden, Pa.
 Holmes, Noel, W., Sgt, Route 1, Eva, Alabama.
 Holmes, Wallace M. Jr., Sgt, 349 Sea St., Hyannis, Mass.
 Holt, Earnest L., Pfc, Chaplin, Ky.
 Holt, Framon C., Pfc, Route 4, Bentonville, Arkansas.
 Honea, Wendell A., Pvt, Rt. 3, Boaz, Alabama.
 Hood, Thomas E., Pfc, Box 55, Inglis, Fla.
 Hoover, Harold C., Pfc, Loyalton, Pennsylvania.
 Horn, Walter S., Pfc, Box 116, Lebanon Junction, Ky.
 Hornbaker, Ted L., Pfc, Route No 1, Stafford, Kansas.
 Hosner, Herald E., T/5, Route No 3, Lapeer, Mich.
 Howard, Robert, Pfc, 1925 SE Pershing, Portland, Oregon.
 Howe, Robert J., Pvt, 6414 Park Ave., W. New York, N. Y.
 Howitt, Andrew R., Pfc, 4424 W Fulton St., Chicago, Ill.
 Howlett, Woodrow, D, Pfc, 5318 N E Wistaria St., Portland, Ore.
 Hrenyo, Joseph M., Pfc, 146 South Water St., Poughkeepsie, N. Y.
 Hughes, Patrick A., Pfc, 2711 Cleveland St., McKeesport, Pa.
 Hubbard, James E., Pfc, South Milford, Ind.
 Hubbard, Woodhull, R., T/Sgt, 89 Main St., Sayville, N. Y.
 Huerta, Gilbert A., Pfc, 154 S Convent St., Tucson, Arizona.
 Huether, Robert A., T/5, 32 Nassau St., New Brunswick, N. J.
 Huff, Elmer L., Pvt, Box 41, Munferville, Ky.
 Hughes, Clay J., S/Sgt, Lascar, Colorado.
 Hughes, Virgil C., Pfc, 315 Columbine St., Denver, Colorado.
 Hulkowski, Robert M., Pvt, 3717 South 91st St., West Allis, Wis.
 Humphrey, Howard, Pvt, 39 Mead St., Manchester, N. H.
 Hunley, Theodore, T/4, 149 Dameron Ave., Knoxville, Tenn.
 Hunt, Daniel H., Pfc, 17 Arnold Rd., N. Attleboro, Mass.
 Hunt, Pete, Pfc, Route 1, Farimont, North Carolina.
 Hurlley, John W., Pvt, 6306 Broadway, West New York, N. J.
 Husek, Michael J., T/4, RFD 3, Bellaire, Ohio.
 Hylton, Walter R., Pfc, Rt. 1, Box 512, Leaksville, N. C.
 Irish, Louis A., Pvt, 542 N. Alexandria, Los Angeles, Calif.
 Isabell, Norman K., T/Sgt, 22 Hamilton Ave., Owensboro, Ky.
 Israelson, Harold L., Pfc, 34 E. High St., Union City, Pa.
 Jacobson, Louis H., T/4, 207 W. 106th St., New York, N. Y.
 Jacobucci, Anthony, Pfc, 46 Howe St., Methuen, Mass.
 Jagodzinski, Stanislaw J., S/Sgt, Elm St., Hatfield, Mass.
 James, William H., Sgt, 429 Martin St., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Janelle, Gerard J., Pfc, 18 Golder St., Lewiston, Maine.
 Jankowski, Joseph, C., T/5, 221 Brown St., Wilkes-Barre, Pa.
 Janov, Edward A., Pvt, 638 N Washington St., Wilkes-Barre, Pa.
 Jarman, Edward W., Pfc, Rt. 3, Jacksonville, North Carolina.
 Jaseneck, John, S/Sgt, Box 284, Empire, Ohio.
 Jaskula, John V., T/5, 405 Delaware St., Mafield, Pa.
 Jenkins, Jack W., Sgt, 1095 St. Louis Ave., Long Beach, Calif.
 Jenkins, Simon S., Cpl, 640 South Main St., Los Angeles, Calif.
 Jerina, Andrew J., S/Sgt, 7315 Agnes St., Swissvale, Pa.
 Johns, Belland B., Pfc, Route 3, Box 125, Lake Butler, Fla.
 Johns, Ernest J. Jr., Pvt, Avon Park, Fla.
 Johnson, Arthur B., Jr., Pfc, 24 Parker Place, Roosevelt, New York.
 Johnson, Harold G., Pfc, 152 East Main St., Orange, Mass.
 Johnson, Herschel, L., Pfc, 2531 Emerald St., Philadelphia, 25, Pa.
 Johnson, Leonard G., Cpl, Wakefield, Michigan.
 Johnson, Martin J., Sgt, 2973 Doris Ave., Detroit, Mich.
 Johnson, Perry W., Pfc, 717 Gibbon St., Alexandria, Va.
 Jognson, Steve G., Pfc, 103 Grand St., Hoboken, N. J.
 Johnston, Daniel W. Jr., Pfc, 13 611 Linnhust Ave., Detroit, Mich.
 Jones, Alfred, Pvt, 54 Tracy St., Buffalo, N. Y.
 Jones, Coke A. Jr., Pfc, 206 S. Orange Ave., Dothan, Ala.
 Jones, Jesse L., Pfc, Rt. 3, Jackson, Ga.
 Jones, Leonard K., S/Sgt, 5533 Crane St., Houston, Texas.
 Jones, Noel L., Pfc, 216 2nd St. N. E., Crosby, Minn.
 Jones, Ralph B., Pvt, Dandridge, Tennessee.
 Jones, Thomas, Pfc, Sartaria, Miss.
 Jordan, William J., Pfc, 55 De Kalb St., Bridgeport, Conn.
 Joyner, Oscar H. Jr., S/Sgt, 613 Manistigue St., Detroit, Mich.
 Junker, Anthony, Sgt, 95 Waverly St., Everett, Mass.
 Jushinskas, Thomas R., 68 Hillside Ave., Oakville, Conn.
 Kalick, Leonard L., Pfc, 3029 Berks St., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Kalmanowitz, Sam, Pfc, 609 Amboy St., Brooklyn, N. Y.
 Kamen, Joseph, T/4, 1026 Orange St., Youngstown, Ohio.
 Kamp, Fred W. Jr., Pfc, 39 W. Ohio Ave., Rittman, Ohio.
 Kanady, Delmer D., Pfc, Gen. Del., Hagerman, New Mexico.
 Karas, Joseph Jr., Cpl, 1128 Maryland Ave., Duquesne, Pa.
 Karn, Richard L., Pfc, 438 North St., Meadville, Pa.
 Karukin, Jack, Pvt, 254 East 165th St., Bronx, N. Y.
 Kasiror, Nicholas G., Pfc, 5503 Chancellor St., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Kasmerski, Leonard, T/5, 15 Newport St., Glen Lyon, Pa.
 Kauffman, De Wayne, Sgt, 1405 Linwood Blvd., Kansas City, Mo.
 Keffer, Leroy, Pfc, Rt. 2, Fincastle, Va.
 Keegan, George L., Pfc, 2424 Greenwich St., San Francisco, Calif.
 Keilhofer, Robert W., Cpl, Rt. 4, Madison, Wisc.
 Kennipp, Jack R., T/4, 407 W. 4th St., Mt. Carmel, Ill.
 Kennada, David W., Pfc, 308 Hogan St., Houston, Texas.
 Kennedy, William, Pvt, 312 River Rd., West Mansyunk, Pa.
 Kennemer, Harry C., Pfc, 657 Trinity, Cleburne, Texas.
 Kern, Martin H., Sgt, 331 Ann St., Saginaw, Mich.
 Key, Howard R., Pfc, Marengo, Ind.
 Killion, Richard J., Pfc, 15 Hillview Ave., Rensselaer, N. Y.
 Kimbell, Alfred S., Pfc, Gen. Del., Harrison, Ark.
 King, Carl D., Pfc, 905 W. Oakland St., Sumpter, S. C.
 King, James L., S/Sgt, 445 New Dorwart St., Lancaster, Pa.
 King, John F., Pfc, Route 2 Box 118, Edmond, Okla.
 King, Morris R., Pfc, RFD 1, Aldrich, Missouri.
 King, Paul T., S/Sgt, Glencroft Ave., Chillicothe, Ohio.
 Kiniolek, Anthony P., Pfc, 113 S. 7th., St., Scranton, Pa.
 Kinnamon, Russel H., Sgt, 3401 Cleveland Ave., Kansas City, Mo.
 Kinzey, Howard G., Pfc, Wamic, Oregon.
 Kirsch, John J., Sgt, Box 55, Bradley Junction, Pa.
 Kisman, William A., Sgt, 536 W. 12th, Port Angles, Wash.
 Kithcart, Ernest W., Pfc, 6 Duane Ave., Union, N. Y.
 Kittelson, Elmer C., Pfc, Holler, Minn.
 Klein, Edward W., Cpl, 203 S. Burgess Ave., Columbus, Ohio.
 Klind, George E., Pfc, Rt. 2 Box 90, Cloquet, Minn.
 Klopschinski, Louis G., Cpl, 4545 Hammond Ave., Detroit, Mich.
 Knapp, Paul J., Pfc, 301 Holly St., Brainerd, Minn.
 Knapp, Paul K., Pvt, Unknown.
 Koshak, Larry H., T/4, 277 Third Ave., Durango, Colorado.
 Kosko, Edward J., Sgt, 180 Muir Ave., Hazelton, Pa.
 Kozar, Wlaksylaw, Pfc, 22 Merrill St., Methuen, Mass.
 Krahnke, Stanley G., T/5, 264 W. 8th St., Erie, Pa.
 Kramer, Cletus J., Pvt, New Vienna, Iowa.
 Kriak, Francis M., T/5, 223 Star St., Johnstown, Pa.
 Krowchena, George, Pvt, 146 Fairmount Ave., Philadelphia, Pa.

Krozser, Robert J., Cpl, 22 Linden St., Morristown, N. J.
 Kryzan, Richard J., T/5 8132 N. 9th Ave., Birmingham, Ala.
 Kuczynski, Walter, Pfc, 122 W. 25th St., Bayonne, N. J.
 Kueher, Robert J., Sgt, 1539 S. 74th St., West Allis, Wis.
 Kuthry, Anthony, T/5, Oriska, North Dakota.
 Kunberger, James H., Pfc, 3426 W. 95th St., Cleveland, Ohio.
 Kurz, William R., Sgt, 6805 Bergenline Ave., Guttenburg, N. J.
 Kushner, Mike, Pfc, Box 215 Aiken Ave., Moon Run, Pa.
 Laaksmieme, Waino W., Pfc, Rt. 2 Box 142, Iron River, Mich.
 Lambert, William F., S/Sgt, Saltville, Va.
 Lamp, Vernon D., Sgt, Neffs, Ohio.
 Lancaster, William F., Pfc, 2327 Salutaris Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio.
 Landes, Ivrel M., Pfc, Danville, Iowa.
 Lane, Robert L., S/Sgt, 3701 Meade St., Denver, Colo.
 Lang, Edward A., S/Sgt, 516 West 1st St., Sanford, Fla.
 Langevin, Arthur J., T/5, 13 Merrill St., Providence, R. I.
 Larrabee, George E., Pfc, 313 N. Geddes St., Syracuse, N. Y.
 Larson, Paul K., Pfc, Elgin, Iowa.
 La Rue, Floyd V., Pfc, Gen. Del. Corning, Ark.
 La Rue, William V., Pfc, Columbus, Neb.
 Latterman, Hartlay L., Pfc, RR 4, Waudon, Iowa.
 Law, William C., Sgt, 413 Oak St., Ludlow, Ky.
 Lawrence, Albert F., Pfc, 928 Camelia St., Berkley, Calif.
 Lawrence, Joseph M., Pvt, 10 E. Fell St., Summit Hill, Pa.
 Lawrence, Troy O., Pfc, 2204 6th St., Lubbock, Texas.
 Leahy, John V., Pfc, 4029 Flad Ave. St. Louis, Mo.
 Leaprot, Hubert M. Jr., Cpl, 702 Holt Ave., Macon, Ga.
 Le Blanc, Leonard J., Cpl, Weeks, Island, La.
 Lee, Felce O., Pvt, 1 Jaynes St. Walhalla, S. C.
 Lee, Henry N. Jr., T/4, Grassy Hill, Oldlyne, Conn.
 Lee, Rox L., Pfc, Gridley, Calif.
 Lehman, Earl W., Pfc, 447 Marshall Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa.
 Leibbrandt, Albert W., Pfc, 806 Swede St., Morristown, Pa.
 Lennox, Samuel H., Pfc, Route 1, Germfask, Mich.
 Leonard, Paul T., Pfc, 427 N. Emporia, Wichita, Kansas.
 Leos, Narciso A., Pfc, 308 S. Concho St., San Antonio, Tex.
 Lesser, Sam D., Pfc, 2405 S. W. 2nd Ave., Portland, Ore.
 Lewellyn, Gregg H., Sgt, 68 Union St., Uniontown, Pa.
 Lewis, James W., Pvt, Box 516, Goliad, Texas.
 Lewis, Richard L., Pfc, Hallstead, Pa.
 Liberatore, Munfred V., Sgt, 601 W. Virginia Ave., Morgantown, W. Va.
 Lightfritz, Paul L., Pvt, RFD 4, Marietta, Ohio.
 Limone, Thomas R., T/Sgt, 9 Headly Terrace, Irvington, N. J.
 Lincoln, Alan M., S/Sgt, Ridgewood Drive, Rye, N. Y.
 Lindblad, Leonard S., Pfc, Rt. 2 Box 88, Stanchfield, Minn.
 Lindsay, William B., Sgt, S. Congress St., York, S. C.
 Linko, Albert D., Cpl, 2815 Fourth St. N. E., Washington, D. C.
 Lippman, Theodore E., Pvt, 1453 Clinton St., St. Louis, Missouri.
 Liptay, Martin L., Pvt, 2074 W. 33rd St., Cleveland, Ohio.
 Liveram, Garland D., Cpl, Sneads Ferry, N. C.
 Livesay, J. T., Pfc, Clarkrange, Tenn.
 Liwock, Henry W., Pfc, 1912 Fillmore St., Camden, N. J.
 Logan, Paul F., Pfc, 106 Pteat St., Morgantown, N. C.
 Long, Silas N., Pvt, Box 161, Clay City, Ill.
 Longan, Kenneth R., Pfc, Route 3, Stillwater, Okla.
 Lopopole, Dominic J., T/5, 2285 Brown St., Brooklyn, N. Y.
 Lopez, Mario, Sgt., Unknown.
 Loudermilk, Herchel W., S/Sgt, 606 1st Ave. E., Mow-
 bridge, S. D.
 Louvorn, Barney, Pvt, Burwell, Ga.
 Louzon, Albert E., Pfc, 19 405 Hasse, Detroit 12, Mich.
 Love, Thomas E., Pvt, Box 774, Oak Hill, W. Va.
 Lowe, John M. Jr., Pfc, 1567 Lee St., Charleston, W. Va.
 Lowey, Ray G., Pvt, 2301 Greer St., Dallas, Texas.
 Lozano, Jesus, Pfc, 1712 Garcia St., Lavedo, Texas.
 Lucas, James R. Jr., S/Sgt, Orofino, Idaho.
 Lund, Kenneth A., Pfc, 819-19th St. S. E., Cedar Rapids, Iowa.
 Lundy, Hardy L., Pfc, Rt. 2, Box 135 A, Mobile, Ala.
 Lusk, Francis P., S/Sgt, Route 1, Comstock Park, Mich.
 Lussier, Richard L., Sgt, 6 Devereaux St., Salem, Mass.
 Lutts, Bob C., Cpl, 4651 Palm St., St. Louis, Missouri.
 Lutz, Robert J., Pfc, 2922 Milwaukee St., Madison, Wis.
 Lynch, George T. Jr., 1st Sgt, 106 Race St., Georgetown,
 Delaware.
 MacCartney, John A., Pfc, -125 16th Ave., S. E., St. Peters-
 burg, Fla.
 MacDonald, William J., S/Sgt, 3315 LeMoyné Ave., Chicago, Ill.
 Maes, Antonio H., Pfc, 2328 San Bruno Ave., San Francisco,
 Calif.
 Maestas, Frank A., Pfc, Gen. Del., Durango, Colo.

Makarczyk, Walter, Pfc, 351 E. Washington St., Nanticoke, Pa.
 Maker, Frank, T/5, Aybridge, Pa.
 Makowski, Frank J., Sgt, 536-40 St., Brooklyn, N. Y.
 Malek, Joseph V., S/Sgt, 5402 W. 24th St., Cicero, Ill.
 Malek, John J. Jr., Pfc, 5402 W. 24th St., Cicero, Ill.
 Mallery, Cole M., Pfc, 3010 Halland St., Erie, Pa.
 Mancourt, Fredrick, Pvt, 2223 Iroquois Ave., Detroit, Mich.
 Mandano, Tony, Pfc, 31 Marker St., New York, N. Y.
 Manfredi, Albert P., S/Sgt, 209 McBride Ave., Paterson, N. J.
 Mann, Walton E., Pfc, Wisner, Neb.
 Margo, Vincen J. Jr., Cpl, 3044 Kingsbridge Ave., Bronx, N. Y.
 Mark, Seymour, Pvt, 634 E. 238 St., New York, N. Y.
 Markowich, Joseph, Cpl, 541 N. Main St., Waterbury, Conn.
 Marshall, Robert P., Pvt, 48 Bridge St., Fairhaven, Mass.
 Marshall, Thomas J., Pfc, 220 Feltus St., South Amboy, N. J.
 Marti, John L., Pfc, 3731 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo.
 Martin, Charles E., Pvt, 195 Claremont Ave., New York, N. Y.
 Martin, Charles R., Pfc, Route 5 Box 160 K, Dallas, Texas.
 Martin, Cleburne R., Pfc, Box 494, Mineral Wells, Texas.
 Martin, Jesse W., Pfc, Rural Route 1, Centerville, Tenn.
 Martin, Leonard E., Pfc, RFD 1, Henry, Va.
 Martin, Melvin B., Pvt, Mos Hannon, Pa.
 Martin, Richard O., Pfc, 4734 Latona, Seattle, Wash.
 Martin, William H., Pvt, Abbot, Texas.
 Martinez, Fred J., Pfc, Montrose, Colo.
 Martka, Stanley J., Sgt, 205 Speer Ave., Clifton, N. J.
 Mason, Charles F., S/Sgt, 379 Virginia St., New Martinsville,
 West Va.
 Mason, Frank L., T/5, 6239 Catherine St., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Massey, Alfred E., Pfc, 6000 Missouri, E., St. Louis, Ill.
 Massie, James H., Pfc, RR 1 Fayetteville, W. Va.
 Marxmiller, Leo D., Sgt, 1044 Sierra Vista Ave., Alhambra, Calif.
 Matherson, John H., Pfc, Route 1 Vincent, Ala.
 May, Berl, Pfc, McAndrews, Ky.
 Mays, Carl H., Pvt, Route 2 Box 1, Mathews, Mo.
 Mays, James C., Pfc, Route 2, Louisville, Miss.
 McBee, Harry L., Pfc, 1700 S. 23rd St., Kansas City, Kansas.
 McCall, Elbert, Pfc, Route 1, Cantonment, Fla.
 McCall, Marion H., T/5, 503 McNair Ave., Lawrinburg, N. C.
 McCallum, George, Pfc, 9052 Exchange Ave., Chicago, Ill.
 McCarthy, William S. Jr., Pfc, 41-12 23rd Ave., Astoria
 L. I., N. Y.
 McCartney, Vaughn F., T/5 604 Cedar St., Ottawa, Kansas.
 McCloud, Ray, Pfc, Whirlwind, W. Va.
 McCorkle, Edmond W., Pvt, 1726 Hicks St., Augusta, Ga.
 McCorkle, William E., Pfc, Rt. 3, Winona, Miss.
 McCoy, Elmer F., Pfc, 506 Government St., Greenville, Ala.
 McDaniel, Lawrence J., T/5, Louisburg, Missouri.
 McDanile, Carl, Pfc, 229 Back Alley, Knoxville, Tenn.
 McDowell, Arthur C., Pvt, Worthville, Ky.
 McElwee, Leonard F., S/Sgt, 419 Ewing Ave., Lima, Ohio.
 McEntee, Charles J., Pfc, Box 86, Dixon, Mo.
 McFall, James R., Pvt, Route 3 Box 228, Mexia, Texas.
 McGehee, Wiley A. Jr., T/5, McGehee, Ark.
 McGinley, William B., Pfc, 869 N. Woodstock St.,
 Philadelphia, Pa.
 McGinn, James, Pfc, Rt. 2 Port Hill, S. C.
 McGovern, Thomas J., T/5, 1921 Morris Ave., Bronx, N. Y.
 McHenry, Lee A., Cpl, 108 Scotland Ave., Punxsutawney, Pa.
 McInerney, James F., Pfc, 611 Ridgewar, Trenton, Missouri.
 McKenzie, Charles P., S/Sgt, 27 Alder St., Waltham, Mass.
 McMickle, Robert E., T/5, 4623 N. Clark St., Chicago, Ill.
 McNeese, Georgia W., Pvt, 356 Redstone Park, Huntsville, Ala.
 McNutt, Charles E., Sgt, Box 582, Poteau, Okla.
 McNutt, William Sr., Sgt, RFD 1, Croden, Pa.
 Mead, Jessie O., Cpl, Route 1, Mc Kinney, Texas.
 Mechura, Earnest P., Pfc, Rt. 1, Buck Grove, Iowa.
 Meeker, Clarence E., Pfc, 7055 Florence Pl., St. Louis, Missouri.
 Meier, Alfred A., Sgt, 85-42 101st St., Richmond Hill, Queens,
 New York.
 Meier, George A., S/Sgt, 1019 W. 10th St., Winona, Minn.
 Melchor, Luis S., Pfc, 103 Fronton St., Brownsville, Texas.
 Melkum, Benjamin J., Sgt, 149/13 16th Rd., Witestone, Queens,
 N. Y.
 Mellinger, Ralph D., Pfc, 3715 St. Margaret St., Baltimore, Md.
 Meng, Joseph R., Pfc, Church Rd. and Coles Ave.,
 Merchantville, N. J.
 Mercurio, Frank R., T/5, 401 Ogden Pl., Perth Amboy, N. J.
 Mericle, Pat N., Sgt, Woodlake, Texas.
 Merl, Urban I. Jr., Pfc, 300 N. 20th St., Beech Grove, Ind.
 Mesner, Peter M., S/Sgt, 518 3rd St., Brooklyn, N. Y.
 Mester, John, T/5, 25 Tillman St., Barstun, N. J.

Metz, James D., Sgt. 333 N. West St., Lima, Ohio.
 Metzger, Jesse, Pfc, RR 1, Goshen, Ind.
 Meyer, Dale L., Sgt. Route 2, Clarington, Ohio.
 Mickelson, Gordon M., Pvt, Box 367, Big Piney, Wyoming.
 Mikelson, John B., Pvt, 1232 N. 30th St., Billings, Montana.
 Miles, Robert L., Pfc, RFD 2, Box 167, Meridian, Mass.
 Miller, Charles W., Pfc, 2816 N. Apaté St., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Miller, Edward N., Pfc, 54 Gorton St., Corning, N. Y.
 Miller, Eddy C., Pvt, 410 West 11th St., Willensburg, Wash.
 Miller, Sidney, Pvt, 1927 Pingree, Detroit, Mich.
 Millholland, Ernest, Pfc, Star Route, Marysville, Wash.
 Millisock, Howard W., Pfc, Elverson, Pa.
 Milner, Wayne A., S/Sgt, 1904 K. St., Lincoln, Nebr.
 Minkoff, Murry, Sgt, 104 Center St., Ellenville, N. Y.
 Mitchell, Arnold, Pfc, 715 East Ook St., Enid, Okla.
 Mitchson, Charles T., Pvt, Route 7, Benton, Ky.
 Mobley, Wilson T., Pvt, Box 371, Jasup, Ga.
 Mofield, Lamont C., Pvt, Carthage, N. C.
 Mohr, Alfred E., Pvt, 940 Woodsdale Ave., Toledo, Ohio.
 Montag, Bobby L., Pvt, 27 W. 53rd St., Murry, Utah.
 Montagna, Virgilio G., Pfc, 122 Hampton St., Marquette, Mich.
 Montoya, Felipe, Pfc, Route 2, Box 561, Los Lunas, New Mex.
 Mood, John H., Cpl, Rural Route 2, Belle Vernon, Pa.
 Moon, Chester F., T/5, Pillager, Minn.
 Moor, William A., Pfc, Lima, Pa.
 Moore, Elmer F., T/4, RR 1, Jeddo, Michigan.
 Moore, G. D., Pfc, Route 14, Box 100-B, Houston, Texas.
 Moore, John B., Pvt, 364 East 146th St., Bronx, N. Y.
 Moore, Walter M., S/Sgt, 3928 Wabash Ave., Kansas City, Mo.
 Moore, William A., Pvt, 30-8233rd St., Long Island City, N. Y.
 Morallia, Bennie, Pfc, Manchester, Calif.
 Moran, Charles E., Pvt, 904 W. Chelan, Spokane, Washington.
 Moran, Limon E., Sgt, 109 30th Ave. South, Nashville, Tenn.
 Moret, Harold K., Pfc, Borden, Iowa.
 Morfin, Abelardo G., Pfc, Janideros 12, Mexico City, Mexico.
 Morgan, Carl W., Pvt, 111 High Street, Lebanon, Ohio.
 Morgan, George E., Pfc, 4401 S. E. 14th St., Des Moines, Iowa.
 Morganti, Thomas V., Pvt, 1971 Seneca St., Buffalo, N. Y.
 Morley, William H., Pfc, 1622 Georgia Ave., Bristol, Tenn.
 Morrell, George P., Pfc, 902 S. 17th Place, Phoenix, Ariz.
 Morris, Fred, Pfc, Route 1, Wadley, Ala.
 Morris, Jay C., Pfc, 317 N. 35th St., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Morris, Paul J., Sgt, Route 1, Blandville, West Va.
 Morrison, Loyd, Pfc, Star Route, Rogers, Ark.
 Morrison, Milford E., Route 1, Wedowee, Ala.
 Morse, Auther E. Jr., Pfc, 1714 Wyoming Ave., Forty Fort, Pa.
 Morse, Walter T., T/5, 42 Oakland St., Newberryport, Mass.
 Mosca, Achille, T/4, 3276 Reservoir Oval, Bronx, N. Y.
 Motley, Vivian C., S/Sgt, Rt. 2 Box 145 Omaha, Texas.
 Moulas, George J., T/4, 101 Stenson St., Manchester, N. H.
 Mount, Edmond W. Jr., Pfc, 318 W. Park Ave., Houma, La.
 Mulcahey, Orloff M., Sgt, 134 S Locust St., Ottawa, Kansas.
 Mullins, John, Pfc, Millard, Ky.
 Mulyck, Alan D., Pfc, 2871 Irvin Ave., South Minneapolis, Minn.
 Multer, Wayne A., S/Sgt, 1904 K. St., Lincoln, Nebr.
 Murry, Gail W., Pvt, Route 2, Galena, Kansas.
 Murray, John E., Pvt, 2270 Byron Ave., Waterloo, Iowa.
 Muscatello, Dominick, Cpl, Box 216, Welch, W. Va.
 Muscott, Ernest C., S/Sgt, Route 6, Saginaw, Mich.
 Myszka, Jack L., Pvt, 1015 W. Fulton St., Grand Rapids, Mich.

Nabors, Henry L. Jr., Pfc, Box 64, Hughes, Ark.
 Napier, Donald N., T/Sgt, 1034 17th Ave., Honoula, T. H.
 Nash, Francis I., Pfc, Prospect St., North Dennington, Vt.
 Neal, Lawson E., Pvt, 1015 7th St., Altavista, Va.
 Nealy, Robert, S/Sgt, 4216 N. 2245th St., Fairview Village, Ohio.
 Neely, Howard F., S/Sgt, 1529 N. 73rd St., Chicago, Ill.
 Neighbors, Lloyd W., Pvt, Gen. Del., Blythe, Calif.
 Nelson, Charles F., Pfc, 811 Burrill St., Eureka, Calif.
 Nelson, Eugene, Cpl, Box 211, Shelbyville, Tenn.
 Nelsen, Milton L., Pfc, 5337 N. 35th St., Milwaukee, Wisc.
 Nichol, Weldon D., Pfc, RFD 1, Marion Center, Pa.
 Nicklin, Lawrence L., Cpl, Gaston, Ind.
 Nicoletti, Vincent A., Cpl, 209 Sandes St., Brooklyn, N. Y.
 Nieuwenhuis, Everett J., Pfc, A Summit Ave., Hawthone, N. J.
 Nieznany, Joseph, Pfc, 440 Cole Ave., Akron, Ohio.
 Niska, James A., Pfc, Squaw Lake, Minn.
 Nitkin, Frederick, T/5, 1975 Sedgewick Ave., New York, N. Y.
 Nivison, Lloyd H., Pfc, 317 E. 12th St., Holland, Mich.
 Noble, Tommie L., Pfc, Box 234, Mt. Park, Okla.
 Noe, Charles L., T/Sgt, 93 Bush St., Ashland, Ore.

Nolan, Michael E., Pfc, 8046 S. Green St., Chicago, Ill.
 Noonan, James F., Pvt, 56 Park Ave., Bay Shore, N. Y.
 Norman, Howard R., Pfc, 818 Leydon St., Pittsburgh, Pa.
 Norton, Chester L., S/Sgt, 4201 Arch Drive, No. Hollywood, Calif.
 Norwood, Arthur L., Pfc, 15 Willow Brook Place, E. Hartford, Conn.
 Novak, Theodore, Pfc, 562 Wythe Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.
 Noyce, Robert A., Pvt, 31 Mangles St., Medford, Mass.
 Nozkowski, Harry, Sgt, RFD 1 Chester, N. Y.
 Nuney, Richardo, Pfc, Gen. Del. Ruidosa, Texas.
 Nutter, Dale E., S/Sgt, Peru, Kansas.
 Nygaard, Clyde R., Pfc, Halstad, Minn.

Oard, Louis R., Pfc, Youngs, Calif.
 Obermiller, Harold J., Pvt, 222 E. 17th St., Kearney, Nebr.
 Oberkamp, Kendell H., Pvt, 531 E Walnut, New Braunfels, Texas.
 O' Cain, James L., Pvt, Cathage, Miss.
 O'Connell, Francis, Cpl, 88 Alden St., Whitman, Mass.
 O'Donoghue, William F., Pvt, 650 W. 204th St., New York, N. Y.
 O'Donnell, Dominic F., Pfc, 1643 L. St., Washington, D. C.
 Ogdan, Dee G., Pvt, Route 1 Box 1927, Stockton, Calif.
 Oliotti, Milion C., Pvt, 1340 N. Emerson St., Portland, Ore.
 Oliver, Charles, Pfc, 431 Emslie St., Buffalo, N. Y.
 Olson Maynard C., Pfc, 8209 S. E. 13th St. Portland, Ore.
 Onderchanin, Dimitry M., Pfc, Hamtramck, Mich.
 Opheim, Rex Zo., Pfc, Opheim, Montana.
 Orlando, Jacob R., 24 Arlington St., Lynn, Mass.
 Ortega, Jose, Pfc, 3008 E. San Antonio, El Paso, Texas.
 Osborn, Roy C., Pfc, P. O. 1174, Walnut Creek, Calif.
 Osman, Wesley H., Pvt, 114 West 1st St., Long Beach 2, Calif.
 Ostrowski, Joseph G., Sgt, 3781 E. 54th St., Cleveland, Ohio.
 Ott, Melvin W., Pfc, 118 S. Jefferson St., Casper, Wyo.
 Owen, Billy H., 110 Willow St., Pine Bluff, Ark.
 Owen, Leamon J., Pfc, Box 233 Rt. 1, Delhi, La.
 Owers, Louis, Pfc, Rt. 1 Box 36-B, Hornbeck, La.
 Ozaluk, Max, Pvt, 1242 E. 11th St., Edderstowne, Pa.

Paciorkoski, Albert, Sgt, 504 S. Farragut St., Say City, Mich.
 Padgett, Russell H., Pvt, Route 1 Box 38, Gainesville, Fla.
 Pagano, Patsy, Pfc, 229 Hunterdon St., Newark, N. J.
 Page, Edgar, S/Sgt, Route 3, Abbeville, S. C.
 Page, Joseph L., Pfc, 342 Circle Ave., Charlotte, N. C.
 Pallechi, Louis C., Pvt, 9 Buena Vista Ave., Lawrence, I. I. N. Y.

Paniketti, John, Pfc, 102 Dillis St., Solvay, N. Y.
 Paradis, Bernard A., Pfc, 124-15 152 Ave., S. Ozone Park, N. Y.
 Paratore, Frank A., Pfc, 124-15 152 Ave., S. Ozone Park, N. Y.
 Park, William E., Pvt, 58 North Second St., Dudson, N. Y.
 Partello, Melvin C., Pfc, 1216 Schuyler St., Utica, N. Y.
 Pastor, Culver J., Sgt, Route 2, Cotton Port, La.
 Patria, Leon H., T/4, Box 71, E. Windsor Hill, Conn.
 Patterson, W. J., Pvt, 1615 N. E 30th St., Oklahoma City, Okla.
 Patton, Charles I., Sgt, 684 Berryville Ave., Winchester, Va.
 Paul, John W. Jr., Pvt, 716 Jordon, Mt. Vernon, Ill.
 Paulausky, John F., Pfc, 8 Sumner St., Marlboro, Mass.
 Paulson, Edward J., Pfc, 325 Logan St., Lemont, Ill.
 Pawluk, Edward J., T/5, 4337 Germantowne Ave., Philadelphia, Pa.

Payne, Bernie F., Pvt, Route 5, Mt. Airy, N. C.
 Paypas, George, T/5, 390 Burkhard Ave., Mincola, N. Y.
 Pearson, Jefferson W. Jr., Pfc, Box 24, Calhoun Falls, S. Carolina.

Penkacik, John, Sgt, 78 Grove St., Buffalo, N. Y.
 Penner, Floyd, Pfc, Boe Spring, Ky.
 Perea, Jose R., Pfc, Cochiti Pueblo Star Rt., Bernalillo, New Mexico.

Perkins, Marquist E., Pfc, Kaysville, Utah.
 Perry, Albert C., Pfc, Rt. 1, Statesville, N. C.
 Perry, Arthur F., Pfc, 2301 A St., Bakersfield, Calif.
 Perry, Jackson C., Pfc, 2508 South Walnut St., Muncie, Ind.
 Petrock, Harry C., Pvt, Box 715 c/o Byers, Imperial, Pa.
 Petersen, Verne J., S/Sgt, RFD 1, Princeton, Ill.
 Peterson, Walter C., Pvt, Box 446, Kellogg, Idaho.
 Pettit, Alan W., Pfc, Verdale, Minn.
 Phillips, James L., Pfc, 407 Annapolis Ave., Sheffield, Ala.
 Phillips, Stanley, Sgt, 2627 N., Kimball Ave., Chicago, Ill.
 Pieper, Fred J., Pfc, 2054 1/2 Logan Ave., San Diego, Calif.
 Pierce, Lee Roy, Pfc, Box 393, Heavener, Okla.
 Pietruch, John, Cpl, 2246 Highland Ave., Yorkville, N. Y.
 Piggush, Fred, Pfc, Route 1, Dwight, Ill.

Pigman, Leonard R., Sgt, Coshocton, Ohio.
Pisdoran, Demeter T., Pfc, Cleveland, Ohio.
Plankar, Albert A., T/5, 75 E. Dakota St., Detroit, Mich.
Plier, James J., Pvt, Route 2, Jemison, Ala.
Poates, James B., Pvt, Route 12, Richmond, Va.
Polmanteer, Arthur J., Pfc, 766 6th St., Grand Rapids, Mich.
Pologi, Carl G., T/Sgt, 585 Corice St., Arkon, Ohio.
Pond, Clyde L., Pfc, 1504 Yates St., Omar, Nebr.
Poole, Mack, Pfc, Rt. 2, Rockwood, Tenn.
Pope, Russell G., Pfc, Box 87, Valdese, N. C.
Popendick, Ralph E., T/Sgt, RFD 2, Steubenville, Ohio.
Porter, Mervin N., Pfc, RR 4, Cresco, Iowa.
Poser, Leon, Pfc, Washougal, Wash.
Poth, DeForest E., Pfc, 431 Longview Place, Decatur, Ill.
Potter, Arthur, Pvt, Praise, Ky.
Pouncey, Harry, Pfc, 590 Camden St., Ferndale, Mich.
Powell, Charles H., Pfc, Box 223, Sandoval, Ill.
Powell, Robert F., Sgt, Villa Rica, Ga.
Powers, Ralph M., Sgt, Moyock, N. C.
Powers, Robert J. Jr., Pfc, 64 Willow Ave., Pelham, N. Y.
Prather, Firman L., Pfc, 1861-A Cass Ave., St. Louis, Mo.
Prather, Kenneth F., Pvt, Oak Hill, W. Va.
Pratt, George E., T/4, Rt. 1 Box 197, Bridgeport, Ind.
Presnell, William D., T/Sgt, Gen. Del., Hermondale, Mo.
Pressimone, Philip C., Pfc, 557 W. 187 St., New York, N. Y.
Price, Harold C., Pfc, Route 1, Box 206, Auburn, Wash.
Price, Voris V., Pfc, Brazil, Ind.
Prindaville, Edward J., Sgt, R. D. 4 Livingston Ave.,
New Brunswick, N. J.
Pronesti, Frank J., Pvt, 1826 West Ave., Elyria, Ohio.
Pruett, Johnny W., Pfc, Route 2 Ashville, N. C.
Pryor, James E. Jr., Pfc, Arizona, La.
Pryor, Joseph E., Pfc De Soto, Ga.
Pryor, Roland M. Jr., Pfc, 3412 Long 7th St., Little Rock, Ark.
Pryzbys, Ben, Pfc, 6704 Rogers Ave., Cleveland, Ohio.
Puckett, Charles H., Pfc, Munfordville, Ky.
Pugh, Roy C., Route 1, Dadeville, Ala.
Purcell, Robert E., 800 Stuydesant Ave., Trenton, N. J.

Quinn, William S., Cpl, 103 N. Main St., Wilkes Barre, Pa.
Quirey, Alla B., Pfc, 913 Kalsey St., Sturgis, Ky.

Rabon, William G., Pfc, Route 1, Mitchell, Ga.
Radcliff, Murray L., Pvt, Rt. 1, Leicester, N. C.
Radke, Leonard C., T/Sgt, 12 140 Vaughan, Detroit, Mich.
Rainwater, Robert W., Sgt, Rt. 1 Box 10, De Quincy, La.
Randall, Robert C., S/Sgt, Rfd 1, Skowhegan, Maine.
Randal, Edward G., T/Sgt, 108 W. 95th St., New York, N. Y.
Randour, Victor, Pfc, 504 Jefferson St., Streator, Ill.
Rangel, Rosendo G., Sgt, Box 230, Lamont, Calif.
Rapp, Paul E., Pfc, 2310 W. Franklin St., Evansville, Ind.
Ratashak, Clarence R., Pfc, RFD 1, Grosold, Iowa.
Raun, Peter H., Pfc, 228 E. Church St., Frederick, Md.
Rawlins, Townsend W., Cpl, 156-06 Northern Blvd., Flushing,
L. I., N. Y.

Read, Raoul K., Pfc, Route 2, Louin, Miss.
Reams, Stephen E., Pfc, 4 Alegi Ave., Taunton, Mass.
Reardon, Francis, T/Sgt, 314 Osage St., Leaverworth, Kan.
Reeves, Alaha R., Pvt, Route 1, Winnsboro, La.
Regal, Howard J., Pfc, 3109 Barber Ave., Cleveland, Ohio.
Regan, Leo J., Pvt, 2 Landon St., Salem, Mass.
Regetta, William S., S/Sgt, 1854 E. Venango St.,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Reid, William M., Pfc, 604 N. 3rd St., Columbia, Mo.
Reilly, Donald L., Pfc, Dansville, N. Y.
Reilly, Jame J., T/4, 8 Hampstead St., Saugus, Mass.
Refroe, Lonnie P., Pfc, Lena, Miss.
Renyck, Edward J., Sgt, 121 Jewel St., Brooklyn, N. Y.
Redling, Charles J., S/Sgt, RFD 1 Fultonham, N. Y.
Reynolds, Amon, Pfc, Route 3, Greenbrier, Ark.
Rhoades, Charles E., Pvt, Box 48 Rt. 6, Memphis, Tenn.
Rhoades, Joseph C., Pfc, Black River Falls, Wis.
Rhoads, Joseph L., Pvt, 370 S. West, Shenandoah, Pa.
Rhoads, Walter C., T/5, 98 Oakland Road, Maplewood, N. J.
Rhodes, Harold L., Pfc, 159 North St., Henderson, Tenn.
Ricci, John F., Pfc, 4 Milk Place, Somerville, Mass.
Riccobono, Sam J., S/Sgt, 4145 Buckingham Rd., Detroit, Mich.
Richards, Debs, Pvt, 1513 So Tacoma Ave., Tacoma, Wash.
Richards, Walter D., Pvt, 223 East 6th St., Dallas, Texas.
Richardson, Estes D., Sgt, 1902 N. Main St., Danville, Va.
Richardson, Frank, Cpl, Woodville, Texas.
Richmond, Glenn E., Pvt, Oakwood, Texas.

Riffe, Stanley, Pfc, Bownemont, W. Va.
Rigenary, Robert G., Pfc, 1045 Greenwich St., Reading, Pa.
Rinesmith, Paul M., Sgt, 213 Bristol St., Paris, Ill.
Ringer, Bobby W., Pfc, RR 2, Camden, Ind.
Risner, Hurl, Pfc, 1923 Bigelow St., Cincinnati 19, Ohio.
Risoli, Anthony, Pvt, 42 Geraldo St., Belville, N. Y.
Rix, Rex L., Pfc, Newton, Ga.
Roach, Donald W., Pfc, 413 West Walnut St., Lock Haven, Pa.
Roach, Gerald P., S/Sgt, 6 Cayuga Ave., Bellemore, L. I. N. Y.
Roach, Robert M., Pfc, 413 West Walnut St., Lock Haven, Pa.
Robbins, Charles N., Pvt, 701 North Court St., Sullivan, Ind.
Robert, Samuel H., Pfc, Box 101, Cottonport, La.
Robinson, George B., Pfc, Route 1, Box 144, Cannada, N. C.
Roche, Donald J., Pfc, 5 Howard Ave., Carbondale, Pa.
Rodgers, Warren L., Pfc, 105 W. Lincoln St., Medicine Lodge,
Kansas.
Roderick, Charles F., Pfc, West Lebanon, Ind.
Rodriguez, Joseph C., Pvt, Gen. Del. Santa Fe, New Mexico.
Rodriguez, Santos M., Pfc, Box 425, Eloa, Texas.
Roe, Thomas V., Pfc, 215 E. Second, Cushing, Okla.
Roemer, Elmer O., Pfc, RR 3, Dayton, Ohio.
Rogers, Jack, Sgt, Route 2, Box 300, Seminole, Okla.
Rogers, Leonard S., Pfc, 281 Ward St., Newton Center, Mass.
Rogich, John R., Pfc, Route 1 Box 57, Mason, Wisconsin.
Rohrbaugh, Richard S., T/5, Pleasant St., Glen Rock, Pa.
Root, Lawrence R., Pfc, 311 Erie Ave., San Antonio, Texas.
Rootham, John R., Pfc, Oakgrove Ave., Detroit Lake, Minn.
Rosas, Adam, Pfc, Gen. Del., San Marcos, Texas.
Rosebaum, Theodore, T/Sgt, 3081 23rd St., Astoria, N. Y.
Rosenberg, David A., Pvt, 2319 18th St., Sacramento, Calif.
Rosenblatt, Morris, Pvt, 119 Cannon St., New York, N. Y.
Ross, Robert E., Pfc, Orrick, Missouri.
Ross, Wayne M., Pfc, Gen. Del., Gary, Okla.
Rossman, Thomas J., Sgt, 815 W. Cumberland St.,
Philadelphia, Pa.
Rountree, Charles E., Pfc, 80 006 Dudley Ave., Nashville, Tenn.
Roybal, Tranquilino, Pfc, Gen. Del., Santa Fe, New Mexico.
Rubins, Francis, Pfc, 53 Clinton St., Yonkers, N. Y.
Rubsmith, Arthur R., Pfc, Rt. 2, Rupert, Idaho.
Ruiz, Eriverto E., Pfc, 718 S. Record Ave., Los Angeles, Calif.
Runyon, Eloroy Jr., S/Sgt, RFD 1, Warren Center, Pa.
Runyon, Stanley H., Cpl, West Broad St., Hopewell, N. J.
Rushing, Walter L. Jr., Pvt, Box 12 Route 1, White Castle, La.
Rusnak, George, Pfc, 629 Neal St., Duquesna, Pa.
Russell, James D., Pvt, Rt. 1, Box 22, Hutrig, Ark.
Russell, James F., Pfc, Route 4, Newman, Ga.
Russell, Lloyd L., T/5, 900 W. High St., Mt. Vernon, Ohio.
Rutkowski, Boleslaw W., S/Sgt, 213 Rockingham, Toledo, Ohio.
Ryan, Dennis J., Pfc, 110 Bowen St., Fall River, Mass.
Ryan, Francis D., Pfc, 1825 Lovejoy Road, Linden, Mich.
Ryder, Woodrow V., Pvt, Red Hook, N. Y.

Sabella, Paul P., Pfc, Route 4 Box 92, Greenwell Springs Road,
Baton Rouge, La.
Safarczyk, Walter J., Pfc, 624 S. Illinois St., Streater, Ill.
Salkauskas, Peter, Pfc, 25 Hamlet St., Athol, Mass.
Sallack, Paul F., Cpl, 314 Water St., Johnsonburg, Pa.
Sanchez, Savas B., Pvt, 735 West 18th St., Port Arthur, Texas.
Sanchez, Guadalupe L., Sgt, Route 2 Box 677A, Victoria, Texas.
Sanders, Alvis L., Pfc, Route 1, Belmont, Miss.
Sanders, Jerome, T/5, 133 Winston Rd., Buffalo, N. Y.
Sanders, Charles W., Pfc, Gen. Del., Charleston Navy Yard, S. C.
Sandora, John S., Pfc, 2479 Atkinson Ave., Youngstown, Ohio.
Sandullo, Frank, Pvt, 622 4th St., Union City, N. J.
Sanseverino, Thomas, S/Sgt, Route 2 Box 467, Durham, N. C.
Santos, Everett J., Pfc, 1009 89th Ave., Oakland, Calif.
Sapin, Jack, Pfc, 219 T. St., S. E. Washington, D. C.
Scaggs, Curtis, T/5, Gen. Del. Louisville, Ky.
Schaffer, John G., S/Sgt, RFD 1, Spearville, Kansas.
Schallitz, Frank C., Cpl, 3120 A-S-Herman St., Milwaukee, Wis.
Schaumann, John E., Pfc, 1713 Montpelier St., Baltimore, Md.
Schinke, Melvin H., Cpl, Wells, Minn.
Schradler, Eugene, Pfc, 407 Oriole Drive, Chattanooga, Tenn.
Schrett, Richard J., Cpl, 35 Natrona St., Natrona, Pa.
Schuck, Joe J., Cpl, 828 3rd Ave., N. E., Aberdeen, S. D.
Schultz, Charles F., Pfc, 5740 S. Maple Wood Ave., Chicago, Ill.
Schuman, Alfred C., Pfc, 20 Alandale Rd., Philadelphia, Pa.
Schunkewitz, Herman, T/5, 4307 12th Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.
Schwary, Karl W., T/5, 645 E. 231 St., New York, N. Y.
Scobie, Edwin E., Pfc, 1828 Cornelia St., Ridgewood, N. J.
Scoggins, Rollin C., Pfc, 1511 Hardwick St., Long Beach, Calif.
Scolaro, Anthony, Sgt, 1315 Coplin Ave., Detroit, Mich.

Scott, Arvil C., Pfc, 1017 Sewanee Rd., Huntsville, Ala.
Scripka, Joseph P., 1/Sgt, 22 Woodland St., New Britain, Conn.
Searey, James J., Pvt, 222 N. Main St., Lawrenceburg, Ky.
Seeger, Chester, Jr., Pfc, 67 Post Ave., Rochester, N. J.
Seifert, Edmund J., Pfc, 3210 Scranon Rd., Cleveland, Ohio.
Seifferlein, Gerald L., S/Sgt, 15 764 Cander Ave., East Detroit, Mich.
Seitzinger, Stanley W., Pfc, 20 S. Mill St., Clair, Pa.
Senft, Henry H., T/5, 25-01 37th St., Long Island City, N. Y.
Sessums, William C., S/Sgt, 213 Woods St., Cleburne, Texas.
Sferlazza, Carl S., Pfc, 402 1/2 E 15th St., New York, N. Y.
Shanks, Morris B., Pfc, 509 East South St., Frankfort, Ind.
Sharp, Berney H., S/Sgt, General Delivery, Concord, Tenn.
Sharp, Harold G., Cpl, 246 Highland St., SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan.
Shaw, Erwin, Pfc, Melsone, Montana.
Shea, Thomas D., Pfc, 44 Whipple St., Lowell, Mass.
Shealy, Maxie H., S/Sgt, Rt. 1, Little Mountain, S. C.
Shevrin, Howard, Pfc, 43 Essex St., New York, N. Y.
Shenk, Malcolm L., T/5, 86 N. Washington St., Scottsburg, Ind.
Shewczyk, Nicholas A., Pfc, Rd. No 4, Auburn, New York.
Shields, Gerald J., Pfc, 4329 Trenton, Detroit, Mich.
Shimek, Lawrence F., Pfc, Rt. 1, Crosby, Texas.
Shirey, Erman R., Pfc, Route 3, Sheloceta, Pa.
Shirk, Forest A., Pfc, RFD, Polo, Mo.
Shive, James C., Pfc, Edmonton, Ky.
Shook, Basil L., Pfc, 5163 Grant St., Memphis, Mich.
Short, Rexford D., T/5, 2418 Jaccard, Joplin, Mo.
Showers, Edgar G., Pfc, Box 242, Jenkins, Minn.
Shrader, Eugene N., Pfc, 407 Oriole Drive, Chattanooga, Tenn.
Shupe, Delbert L., Pfc, Newman Grove, Nebraska.
Siegel, Sam, Pfc, Waltherboro, S. C.
Schneider, Frank, Pfc, 1325 Highland Court, Alliance, Ohio.
Sijesta, George A., Pfc, 693 Madison St., Brooklyn, N. Y.
Sikkenga, Louis G., Pfc, 682 McLoughlin Ave., Muskegon, Mich.
Silkworth, Donald C., Pvt, 504 Burt St., Syracuse, New York.
Silver, Alex, Pvt, 801 E. Tremont Ave., New York, N. Y.
Silverberg, Gerald A., Pfc, 722 South Aldon St., Philadelphia, Pa.
Simerl, William R., Pvt, Gen. Del., Berry Creek, Calif.
Simmone, Clyde W., Pvt, Box 82, South Mansfield, La.
Simmons, John W., Sgt, Route 1, West Hickory, Pa.
Simpson, Glenn R., Pfc, Route 2, Ulrich, Missouri.
Simpson, Richard M., Pvt, 287 W. Miller Ave., Akron, Ohio.
Sims, Clay A., Pfc, Rt. 3, Winder, Ga.
Sims, Roy C., Pfc, Rainelle, W. Va.
Sinclair, Finis E., Pfc, 214 Waje St., Cincinnati, Ohio.
Singer, Bernard, Pvt, 813 Holly Ave., St. Paul, Minn.
Singer, Louis R., Pfc, Box 124, Glenmore, Louisiana.
Singleton, William P., Jr., Pfc, Route No 2, Bastrop, La.
Sivanich, John J., Pfc, Rd. No 3, Punxsutawney, Pa.
Sippie, George, Pfc, 172 Harrison St., Passaic, New Jersey.
Sjoquist, Henry L., 4232 29th Ave., Minneapolis, Minn.
Skees, Bruce W., Pfc, 608 So 1st St., Monmouth, Ill.
Skerenchak, Andrew J., T/4, 1170 Wisner Ave., Akron, Ohio.
Skinner, Robert R., Pfc, Romulus, RFD No 2, Romulus, N. Y.
Skoeim, Edwin C., Pfc, 418 5th St., N. Moorehead, Minn.
Skowronek, Karol J., Pvt, 2613 Swain St., Philadelphia, Pa.
Slack, Paul H., Pfc, Rt. 6, Cleveland, Tenn.
Sloop, Otto I., T/Sgt, RR 1, Bargersville, Indiana.
Sloss, Robert D., Pfc, 3123 Allen Ave., St. Louis, Mo.
Smith, Carlyle L., Pfc, Star Route, East Burk, Vermont.
Smith, Clarence J., Jr., Pfc, Route 4, Dalton, Ga.
Smith, Donald H., Pfc, Route 3, Nicholls, Ga.
Smith, Gordon C., S/Sgt, Brooklin, Maine.
Smith, Harry C., Pfc, 722 Knollwood St., Winston-Salem, N. C.
Smith, James R., Pfc, Rt. No 2, Box 237 F, Port Arthur, Texas.
Smith, Lafayette C., Jr., T/Sgt, 895 Kilbourne Rd., Columbia, S. C.
Smith, Mack, S/Sgt, 1409 Meridan St., Nashville, Tenn.
Smith, Sam, Pfc, 1508 So Spaulding Ave., Chicago, Ill.
Smith, Raymond, 1/Sgt, Route 1, Gilmer, Texas.
Smith, Raymond P., T/5, 710 West Front St., Wilmington, Del.
Smith, Samuel H., Pvt, Route 3, Oxford, Ohio.
Smith, Wesley C., Pfc, 407 W. Cumberland St., Philadelphia, Pa.
Smith, William H., Pfc, RR 1, Wickerson, Kan.
Smotherman, Walter C., Sgt, 1772 S. 15th St., Miles, Mich.
Smoliga, Joseph, Pvt., 826 Amboy Ave., Fords, New Jersey.
Snell, Johnnie B., T/Sgt, 811 4th St., Columbus, Ga.
Snodderly, John R., Pfc, Rt. No 2, Box 224, Lenoir City, Tenn.
Soard, Milford, Pvt, 1313 High St., Paris, Kentucky.
Sorezza, Dominick C., Pfc, 2446 W. 1st St., Brooklyn, N. Y.
Souza, Julio, Pfc, 178 Reney, Fall River, Mass.
Spatchek, Harold J., Pfc, Route 2, Brillion, Wisc.
Sperling, Harvey A., Pfc, Iron Ridge, Wisc.
Spelioria, Charles J., Sgt, 66 1/2 Walnut St., Peabody, Mass.
Spice, Orville H., S/Sgt, 58 Front St., Port Jervis, N. Y.
Spiker, Chester R., Pfc, RR 2, Burns, Kansas.
Spizzica, Peter J., Cpl, 33 W. Main St., Millville, N. J.
Sporrer, Donald L., Pfc, 817 Salinger Ave., Carroll, Iowa.
Sprock, John M., Jr., Cpl, 2702 Mura St., Baltimore, Md.
Sprung, Martin B., Pfc, 49 Tapscott St., Brooklyn, N. Y.
Squire, Homer J., T/5, 6685 Wingate Rd., Waterford, Mich.
Stahl, Wallace R., T/Sgt, RFD 7, Petersburg Pike, Richmond, Va.
Stanczak, Frank S., T/5, 112 16th St., Beaver Falls, Pa.
Stanley, James M., Pfc, 507 E. Valentine St., Tyler, Texas.
Stapinski, Henry, T/Sgt, 220 Kline Ave., Turtle Creek, Pa.
Stapleton, James A., Jr., Pvt, Rt. 1, Pound, Va.
Starkey, Leland W., Pfc, Jasper Route, Harrison, Ark.
Starling, Thomas H., Gen. Del., Magazine, Arkansas.
Statton, Joe W., Pfc, Box 163, Cumberland, Wis.
Stauffer, Samuel P., Pfc, 397 N. Grant Ave., Calumbus, Ohio.
Steadman, Oliver J., Pfc, 317 Lankford St., Spartanburg, S. C.
Stekley, Harold J., Pfc, 219 Roslyn Ave., Canton, Ohio.
Steiner, Daniel J., Pfc, 750 E. 6th St., Erie, Pa.
Stern, James C., Pvt, 445 Beach 128th St., Bell Harbor, Queens, New York.
Stewart, James W., Pfc, Route 1, Moss, Miss.
Stewart, Leonard A., Pvt, RD 3, Delta, Pa.
Stewart, Roy D., Sgt, 323 S. Fountain St., Wichita, Kansas.
Stewart, Wallace R., Central State Hospital, Indianapolis, Ind.
Stewart, William J., Pfc, 439 West 28th St., New York, N. Y.
Stevens, Willie P., Pfc, 754 Bayou Road, Thibodaux, La.
St. Hilaire, Edmond, Pvt, RFD 1, Moira, New York.
Stidham, Howard M., Pfc, Rt. 2, Dennis, Mississippi.
Stiers, Jerome W., Pvt, 38454 Glenwood, Detroit, Michigan.
Stone, Kenneth G., S/Sgt, 3 Oak St., Bellows Falls, Vt.
Strasburg, Merle J., Sgt, 721 Vermont St., Gary, Ind.
Strickland, James R., Pvt, Laurel, Miss.
Stroop, Charles R., Pvt, 404 E Gay St., Harrisonberg, Va.
Stubblefield, R. M., Pfc, Box 661, Humble, Texas.
Studzinski, Joseph F., Cpl, 2822 S 13th St., Milwaukee, Wis.
Stoddard, Bruce L., Pfc, Route 2, Watertown, N. Y.
Stoddard, James O., S/Sgt, 1809 Cypress, Kansas City, Mo.
Stokes, Dalton R., Pvt, 622 Nome St., Florence, S. C.
Stormes, Floyd Jr., Pfc, 51 Main St., Sussex, N. J.
Stratton, Lester, Pfc, 7 Bigler Ave., Sprangler, Pa.
Strausbaugh, Vernon, Pfc, 950 Imperial Dr., Salem, Oregon.
Stromberg, William E., Pfc, 169 Rugby St., Providence, Rhode Island.
Sudberry, Thomas W., Pfc, Route 1, Larraine, Texas.
Sullivan, Daniel, T/5, 114-29 123rd St., Ozone Park, LI, Jamaica, New York.
Sullivan, Robert H., Pvt, 345 W Franklin St., Otesego, Mich.
Sumerlin, Adrian E., S/Sgt, Atmore, Alabama.
Suminski, Edward J., Pvt, 4518, Turney Rd., Cleveland, Ohio.
Sweezy, Frank S., Pfc, 381 Lakewood St., Detroit, Mich.
Swingle, Floyd R., Pfc, Box 254, Costa Mesa, California.
Swistak, Chester C., S/Sgt, Box 232, Franklin-St., Bundsville, Massachusetts.
Syc, Casmir E., Pfc, 422 E. Main St., Bridgeport, Conn.
Sylvester, Gordon D., Pfc, 2469 Cleveland Ave., Niagara Falls, New York.
Synoground, Ole G., Pvt, Box 115, Premont, Texas.
Sypien, Louis V., Pfc, 35-37 98th St., Corona, N. Y.
Takemoto, Jack S., Sgt, 510 E 24th St., Minneapolis, Minn.
Tanner, Dean A., Pfc, 59 E 5th St., Mitchell, S. Dakota.
Taranowicz, Victor, Pfc, 2708 Salina St., Dearborn, Mich.
Taylor, Donald M., S/Sgt, Box 142, Middlesbranch, Ohio.
Taylor, Earl H., Pfc, 608 Walnut St., Fayetteville, N. Y.
Taylor, James E., Pvt, 2620 8th Ave., Nashville, Tenn.
Taylor, James W., T/Sgt, RFD 1, Emporia, Kansas.
Taylor, Raymond V., Pfc, Rt. 1, Republican City, Nebraska.
Taylor, Virble L., Pfc, McMinville, Tennessee.
Taylor, Wallace G., S/Sgt, 1325 E 14th St., Oakland, California.
Teel, Walter C., Pvt, Route 1, Paducah, Texas.
Terry, William C., Pfc, 616 S 7th St., Mayfield, Ky.
Tetraut, Auther R., Pfc, 37 Goodwin St., Indian Orchard, Mass.
Thacker, Billy B., Pfc, Box 306, Austinville, Va.
Thomas, Donald E., Sgt, 1349 Manchester Rd., Akron, Ohio.
Thomas, Eugene C., Pfc, Rd. 2, Peru, N. Y.
Thomas, Howard A., Pfc, Route 1, Chester, Maryland.
Thomas, Melvin O., Pfc, RFD 2, Newcomertown, Ohio.
Thomas, Robert J., Pfc, 650 Emerald St., Harrisburgh, Pa.

Thompkins, Carey D., Pvt, 303 East Lee St., Plant City, Fla.
 Thompson, Joe G., Pfc, 2643 Brandon St., Dallas, Texas.
 Thompson, Wilburn H., Sgt, Rt. 3, Grand Saline, Texas.
 Tibbs, Jess W., Pfc, 2600 Adams St., Little Rock, Ark.
 Tilden, John D., Pvt, 1007 Brookridge Ave., Ames, Iowa.
 Tippin, Milton T., Jr., Pfc, 1302 N Broad St., Rome, Ga.
 Tobin, Edward C., Pvt, 122 Caroline Ave., Solvay, N. Y.
 Tolson, Herbert B., Pfc, 2041 Olive St., Indianapolis, Ind.
 Thomasovich, John S., Pfc, 453 N Harding Ave., Chicago, Ill.
 Tompkins, A. J., Jr., Pfc, Gen. Del. Edna, Texas.
 Toner, Joseph, Pfc, 530 Brock Ave., Bronx, New York.
 Toner, Kenneth L., Pfc, Townsend, Montana.
 Toomey, Lawrence H., Pfc, 6507 Kennedy Ave., Hammond, Ind.
 Tootelian, Jack, Pfc, 2903 Central St., Evanston, Ill.
 Towell, John A., Pfc, RD No 1, Harborcreek, Pa.
 Tracy, Donald J., 1/Sgt, 1313 N Broad St., Mankato, Minn.
 Trifonoff, Mike, T/Sgt, Box 207, Empire, Ohio.
 Troha, Joe, Pfc, RFD 2 Box 36, Winnsberg, La.
 Troy, Vincent J., Pvt, 4853 N Western Ave., Chicago, Ill.
 Trubach, John V., Pfc, SO 15th St., NW., Barbarton, Ohio.
 Trull, George W., Pfc, Odum, Ga.
 Tucker, Alton C., Pfc, Route 1, Cusaeta, Alabama.
 Turek, George E., T/Sgt, 820 W 6th St., Sioux City, Iowa.
 Turnbill, Edward A., Sgt, Box 54, Englewood, Tennessee.
 Turner, Byron M., Cpl, RR 1, Gravity, Iowa.
 Turner, Carl H., S/Sgt, 675 E 25th St., Paterson, N. J.
 Turner, Milton E., Pfc, Divine Corners, New York.
 Turney, Carl C., Pfc, Rt. 2, Pierce City, Missouri.

Upton, Bobbie D., T/Sgt, 132 Anna St., Dayton, Ohio.
 Urfter, George S., T/5, 208 Bane St., Schuykill, Pa.
 Ulrich, Edward P., T/4, 511 Reese St., Memphis, 11, Tenn.
 Ulley, Donald K., Pfc, Stapleton, Neb.
 Ulloay, Billy S., Pvt, 111 Nelson Ave., Kalamazoo, Mich.
 Ullreas, Joseph V., Cpl, 280 Middle Road, Hanover TWP, Pa.

Vaccari, Bruno A., Pvt, 150 Anderson Ave., Fairview, N. J.
 Vache, Robert G., Pfc, 1848 N 27th St., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Vail, Raymond H., Sgt, North Windham, Maine.
 Vandergrift, Creighton H., Pfc, Bristol Pike, Edington, Pa.
 Van Meter, Elmer L., Pfc, 821 S 5th St., Lafayette, Ind.
 Vanston, Donald G., Pvt, 251 Academy Street, Jersey City, N. J.
 Van Til, John M., Jr., Pfc, 9257 Penrod, Detroit, Mich.
 Van Tine, Woodrow W., S/Sgt, RR 3, Elmwood, Ill.
 Vassel, Stephen J., T/5, 14 Perry St., Cambridge, Mass.
 Vaughan, Cloudy S., Pfc, Hales Point, Tennessee.
 Vaughn, William B., Pfc, Rt. 2, Bogard, Missouri.
 Venezia, Albert F., Sgt, 254 6th Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.
 Vesey, Frederick P., Pfc, 234 Elm St., Lawrence, Mass.
 Vest, Warren P., Pfc, Check, Virginia.
 Viglo, Edward, Pfc, 107 N Martin St., Titusville, Pa.
 Vincer, Joseph, Pfc, 1321 S Church St., Rockford, Ill.
 Vitale, James J., Pfc, 654 N Monticello St., Chicago, Ill.
 Voorhees, John J., Cpl, 2020 Race St., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Voth, Herman R., Pfc, 701 W 5th St., Newton, Kan.
 Vrijmoet, Jules W., Pvt, 33 Charlton St., New York, N. Y.
 Vucich, Tony E., Pfc, 430 Antisburly St., Rankin, Pa.

Wade, Benjamin C., Pfc, RR 2, Silverlake, Kan.
 Wahistrom, Leonard, Pfc, 1441 N Laramie, Chicago, Ill.
 Walda, Robert E., Pfc, 130 West Jackson St., Knightstown, Ind.
 Wallace, Ballard, T/5, 424 Forest Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio.
 Wallace, Marshall H., Pvt, Main St., Corbin City, N. J.
 Wallinger, William A., Pfc, 247 Pine St., Jersey City, N. J.
 Walsdorf, Joseph L., T/5, 927 June Ave., St. Paul, Minn.
 Walsler, Odus T., Sgt, Star Rt., Tokio, Texas.
 Waltermire, Sam A., Cpl, Route 1, Earlsten, Kansas.
 Walton, Robert, Pvt, Rt. 5 Box 580, Jacksonville, Fla.
 Ward, Frank B., Pfc, Box 303, Badin, North Carolina.
 Warren, Albert A., Pfc, Philadelphia, Miss.
 Warren, Daryl C., Pfc, Rt. 1, Clearfield, Utah.
 Watson, William M., Pfc, Fruitland, Md.
 Weaver, Warren, Pfc, Erwinna, Pa.
 Weber, George B., Pfc, 28 Valley St., Binghamton, N. Y.
 Weber, Keith B., Sgt, 1930 A North 2nd St., Milwaukee, Wis.
 Weekz, James J., Pfc, 50-23 47th St., Woodside, New York.
 Weich, Donald J., Pfc, Rt. 4 Box 22, Red Wing, Minn.
 Weick, James A., Pfc, 410 W Malvern, Fullerton, Calif.
 Weiner, Bennie, Cpl, 408 8th St., N.E., Atlanta, Ga.
 Weiner, William, Pfc, Galvaston, Texas.
 Weisenell, Paul G., S/Sgt, 10 300 Ignatius Ave., Cleveland, Ohio.

Wendler, Frank, Pfc, RFD 4, Buck Hill Rd., Waterbury, Conn.
 Werhrich, Kenneth P., Sgt, 6 Steinmetz Court, Pekin, Ill.
 Wertz, Joseph L., Sgt, Teague, Texas.
 Werwie, Jacob J., S/Sgt, 24 Rhodes Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa.
 Wesaw, Francis G., S/Sgt, 120 E Dutton St., Kalamazoo, Mich.
 West, Charles W., Pfc, Gen. Del., Dake Park, Fla.
 West, Paul G., Pfc, Gen. Del., Harrison, Ark.
 Westbrook, John T., Pfc, Box 87, Nelson, Ga.
 Wheat, Amos J., Mudlick, Ky.
 Wheat, Robert V., Pvt, 606 C. St., Lenoir City, Tenn.
 White, Alfred F., Pfc, Pittsville, Md.
 Wheeler, Charles F., Pvt, 213 Adams St., Norfolk, Nebr.
 Wheeler, Charles I., Pfc, 30 Bowdoin Ave., Waltham, Mass.
 White, Frank E., T/Sgt, Rural Route 1, Ralston, Okla.
 White, Glen A., Cpl, Riverton, Iowa.
 White, Herbert T., Pfc, 793 Lake Ave., N. E., Atlanta, Ga.
 White, Robert L., Pfc, 9486 Ridge Blvd., Brooklyn, N. Y.
 White, Robert W., Pfc, 1445 S. Maryland St., Springfield, Mo.
 White, Samuel D., Pfc, Gen. Del., Oden, Ark.
 White, William M., Pfc, 229 S. Harris St., Sandersville, Ga.
 Whitlow, James R., Pvt, 4409 Vermont, Detroit, Mich.
 Whitney, Robert F., Pvt, Gen. Del. Moss Landing, Calif.
 Whitson, Joseph L., Pfc, Rural Route 2, Lumber City, Ga.
 Wigren, William G., Cpl, 101 Wescoto St., Jamestown, N. Y.
 Wikle, John M., Pfc, Bryson City, N. C.
 Wilk, Raymond S., Pfc, West Rutland, Vt.
 Wilkerson, John M., Pvt, 108 Orange St., Sweetwater, Texas.
 Wilkins, Richard C., Pvt, 96 James St., Keyser, West Va.
 Williams, Billy K., Pfc, Berea, Kentucky.
 Williams, Clyde, Pvt, Milan, Ga.
 Williams, Frank R., Pfc, 1844 South Ninth St., Salt Lake City, Utah.
 Williams, Grady H., Pfc, RFD 1, Tabor City, N. C.
 Williams, James E., Pfc, Box 54, La Grange, N. C.
 Williams, Richard W., Pfc, Box 6, Armonco, Calif.
 Williams, Robert N., Pfc, Route 1 Box 463, S. Milwaukee, Wis.
 Williams, William, T/Sgt, RFD 1 963 Averill Ave., Mansfield, Ohio.
 Williamson, Joseph P., Pfc, Route 1, Grenada, Miss.
 Williamson, Willie W., Pfc, c/o H. L. Miller Route 2, Ashboro, N. C.
 Willing, Joseph M. Jr., Sgt, 14 181 Eastwood, Detroit, Mich.
 Wilson, Jack R., Cpl, 11 262 Tiara St., North Hollywood, Calif.
 Wilson, James F., Pvt, 903 S. Main St., Santa Anna, Calif.
 Wilson, Vernon O., S/Sgt, 308 N. Madison, Woodstock, Ill.
 Wilson, Woodrow, Pfc, East Prairie, Mo.
 Wilt, William W., Sgt, 967 Washington Ave., Bronx, N. Y.
 Wiseman, Edward H., T/5, Hastings, Iowa.
 Wisnowski, William W., T/4, 65 Meserolo Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.
 Witherbee, Walter H., Pvt, Box 632, Camas, Washington.
 Withrow, Carl C., Pvt, 402 McKinley St., Middletown, Ohio.
 Withrow, James D., Pfc, Box 23, Henryetta, Okla.
 Wilmot, Richard W., Pfc, 14 Forrest St., Montclair, N. J.
 Winchell, Robert G., Pfc, RD 1, Oneida, N. Y.
 Windt, James A., Pfc, Mt. Forest, Mich.
 Wiseley, Raymond W., Pvt, Rt. 1, Buena Vista, Tenn.
 Wiseman, Morris, Pfc, 1559 N. 11th St., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Wojcik, Stanley, S/Sgt, 5544 S. Karlov Ave., Chicago, Ill.
 Wojciechowski, John M., Pvt, 4629 S. Sewyer Ave., Chicago, Ill.
 Wolf, George H., Pvt, RFD 2, Stewartstown, Pa.
 Wolf, Robert, Pvt, 7 South 4th Ave., Harrisburg, Pa.
 Wolfe, Hubert L. Jr., Pfc, Rt. 2, Edinburg, Va.
 Wolsefer, Stanley A., Pfc, 662 Millikin St., Hamilton, Ohio.
 Wood, Allen W., Pfc, 312 W. Monroe St., Salisbury, N. C.
 Wood, Lyman, Pfc, Route 3, Elden, Miss.
 Woods, Floyd E., Cpl, 283 Main St., Brawley, Calif.
 Woods, Glendon R., Sgt, R. R. 2, Red Oak, Iowa.
 Woodall, Jack D., Pfc, Route 1, Vienna, Louisiana.
 Woods, Talmadge, Pvt, Wolf Mountain, N. C.
 Woolfolk, Richard G. Jr., Cpl, Zachary, La.
 Wright, Aberham K., Pfc, Rd. 1, Lawrenceville, Pa.
 Wright, Elbert L., Pvt, Rt. 1, Simms, Texas.
 Wright, Neil H., Pfc, Box 110, Central Point, Oregon.
 Wright, William F., Pvt, 28 E. Pitt St., Cannonsburg, Pa.
 Wriston, Lionel W., Pfc, Box 216, Kingston, W. Va.
 Wszyborowski, Frank C., Pfc, Rt. 1, Mingo Junction, Ohio.
 Wylie, William G., Pvt, R. R. 5, Xenia, Ohio.

Yacishino, Peter, Pfc, 327 River St., Bridgeport, Conn.
 Yates, Morris F., Pfc, Marion, Ky.
 Yavor, George, Pfc, Rt. 1, Irwin, Pa.

Yelton, Wayne W., Pvt, Cleghorn St., Rutherfordton, N. C.
 Youell, Forrest D., Pfc, Rand, W. Va.
 Young, Shirley L., Pfc, RFD 1, Bowdoinham, Maine.
 Yount, Morris W., T/Sgt, RFD 4, Lamar, Mo.
 Yoder, Jake W., Pvt, 1712 E. 27th St., Chattanooga, Tenn.
 Yoffe, David V., Pvt, 5 West Main St., Palmyra, Pa.
 Young, Guy T., Pfc, Nashville, Arkansas.
 Young, Walter F., Pfc, 6 Champlain St., Port Henry, N. Y.
 Yu, Ki Ok, Pfc, P O Box 761, Wahlaw, Oahu, T. H.

Zagorin, Henry H., Pfc., 21 Schuyler Ave., Newark, N. J.
 Zahn, Clarence L., Pfc, Shellsburg, Iowa.
 Zallar, Edward M., Cpl, 52 Oakwood Ave., Bedford, Ohio.
 Zalman, Sherwin, Pfc, 5529 Bryant St., Pittsburgh, Pa.
 Zambino, Louis P., Pfc, 110 Bodwell St., Lawrence, Mass.
 Zambrano, Isaac, Pfc, 891 S. 17th St., McAllen, Texas.
 Zamora, Abel, Pfc, 115 South 16th St., Edinburg, Texas.
 Zeller, Melvin H., Pvt, Corvallis, Montana.
 Zemaitis, George J., Pfc, 10645 Indiana Ave., Chicago, Ill.
 Zemruski, Julius W., Pfc, 201 Lincoln St., Waterbury, Conn.
 Zemon, Stanley L. Jr., Sgt, 951 W. 34th St., Chicago, Ill.
 Zepp, Clarence L., Pfc, Rt. 5, Westminster, Md.
 Zgliczynski, Arnold L., Pvt, 19300 Sunset, Detroit, Mich.
 Zilbertuler, Morris, Pfc, 2215 Center Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa.
 Zilian, James A., Pvt, 553 Chautauqua St., N. S., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
 Zimmerman, Robert V., Sgt, 1231 Ulster St., Denver, Colorado.
 Ziolkowski, Edward, T/5, 168 Metcalf St., Buffalo, N. Y.
 Zirolli, Salvatore, Sgt, 72 Winsor, Thompsonville, Conn.
 Zlydaszyk, Henry J., Pfc, 1116 Second St., N.W., Grand Rapids, Michigan.
 Zocolo, Albert C., Pfc, 530 Columbia St., Salem, Ohio.
 Zoignewich, Adam S. Jr., Sgt, Ernest, Pa.

MEDICAL DETACHMENT

Anderson, George R., Seville, Ohio.
 Barnett, William D., Cabot, Vermont.
 Baxter, Sam, 2047 West Euclid, Detroit, Mich.
 Belisle, Wilbur B., Somerset, Wisc.
 Bellinger, Clarence N., Minetto, N. Y.
 Baetcher, Gus H., Box 393, Rt. 1, Bow, Washington.
 Bowman, B. E., 319 N. Main St., Benton, Ill.
 Bridgeman, James J.
 Curtiss, Alfred H., 408 So. Leavitt St., Brazil, Ind.
 Daniels, Mather V., Roundmountain, Ala.
 Darwin, Junius B., Rt. 5, Box 824, Waco, Texas.
 Davis, Johnny C., Rt. 4, Red Boiling Springs, Tenn.

Di Gennaro, Anthony, 401 E. 122 St., New York, N. Y.
 Dominquez, A. H., 129 Berkley Ave., Claremont, Calif.
 Fabbiano, Cyril, 3246 N. Walton, Chicago 13, Ill.
 Fitzgerald, Eugene G., Newberry, Mich.
 Fortuna, Edward, 13 409 Keystone Ave., Detroit, Mich.
 Gawans, Roy M., 108 N. Miller St., Sweet Springs, Mo.
 Glover, Clarence Y., Booneville, Ark.
 Hagen, Laurence, 1415 Highland Ave., Eau Clair, Wisc.
 Hallaway, John R., Rt. 1, Box 149, Zion, Ill.
 Kemp, Fred J., Debuque, Iowa.
 Kelly, Charles T., 5 Clinton St., Albany, N. Y.
 Lemons, James, Box 148, Manstone, Mo.
 Lewandowski, John J., 2009 Genesee St., Buffalo, N. Y.
 Lane, Kenneth, Mr. Kisco, N. Y.
 Luzader, Justus, 624 Plainwood, Nutter Fort, W. Va.
 Mackey, Clair W., Naples, Idaho.
 Malsbury, Albert, Bastwick, Neb.
 Mask, Ira D., RFD 2, Granite Falls, N. C.
 Matoux, Donald H., 1425 Linder Ave., Chicago, Ill.
 Mitchel, David E., R. R. 1, Greenfield, Iowa.
 Me Coy, James R., R. 1, Grand Rapids, Minn.
 Napier, Green, Verda, Ky.
 Nelson, Ernest L., R. D. 1, Bel Air, Md.
 O'Donnell, John R., 6234-75th Ave., Summit, Ill.
 Oie, Maynard W., 2305 Penn. Ave., Superior, Wisc.
 Oligino, Ralph, 312 Exeter St., Bridgeport, Conn.
 Ostengnen, Richard, Penfield Hill, Portland, Conn.
 Peitzman, Carl F., Moscow Mills, Mo.
 Pelloth, Earl H., Buffalo, N. Y.
 Pelsma, Robert, 701 So. 2nd St., Oregon, Ill.
 Persinger, Lloyd, 230 E. Main St., Covington, Va.
 Pomplin, Carall, Westfield, Wisc.
 Rou, James, 46 Popular St., Lawrence, Mass.
 Roach, Vincent R., 5358 Cobnilliant, St. Louis, Mo.
 Rooney, William, 40 Columbia Place, Brooklyn, N. Y.
 Sailors, Allan, La Fontaine, Ind.
 Shepard, Albert J., 2850 E. 91st St., Cleveland, Ohio.
 Sloss, Harold, 226 Custer Ave., Youngstown, Ohio.
 Smalley, Zeige Z., 699 Jenkins Ave., Columbus, Ohio.
 Stewart, Paul A., R. R. 6, Kalamazoo, Mich.
 Szano, Stanley J., 273 Warren St., Falls River, Mass.
 Tarhaviskey, Michael, 121 Salaignac St., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Vangas, Adolfo A., 1802 So. 9th St., Alhambra, Calif.
 Wilkes, Elmer, 11 114 Parkview Ave., Cleveland 7, Ohio.
 Zeigler, Joseph B., 1136 Grant Ave., Fort Wayne, Ind.

