

a building to our left front, and one in a crater along the track to our right. Every time that we raised a rifle to fire, the Jerries would rake the log that we were behind with machine gun fire.

In the meantime the rifle and machine gun fire across the track had ceased, so I knew that the rest of my men  must have gotten away successfully or had been killed.

Haswell asked me what I intended to do; my reply was that I intended to sweat it out for a while.

Just about that time the mortar shells and rifle grenades began to fall around us, and a piece of shrapnel cut my left thumb. The firing ceased for a while and Haswell asked again what I intended to  do. I gave him the same reply, because I thought maybe they would figure that we were dead and would cease firing; then we would be able to make a get-away after dark.

A few more mortar shells and rifle grenades landed close by, so Haswell tied an OD handkerchief on a stick and began waving it and shout "Kamerad." The firing ceased and Haswell started to rise with his hands over his head. He was fired on, so he dropped again behind the log and started waving the handkerchief again. They ceased firing again, so Haswell raised with his hands over his head; this time a German soldier motioned us forward, so we hid our weapons behind the log and went toward the German soldier.

We were taken to the company CP where we gave them our name, rank and serial number, and they searched us, taking our wallets, money, knives and pay book and sealing them in a large envelope. A medic then entered the room, who could speak fluent English, and asked that we sign a statement saying that we had received no serious injuries due to the previous action. This we did.

In searching us they had overlooked a hand grenade that I had in my back pocket, but in going through the door as we headed for the Bn Cp, the guard's hand accidentally hit the grenade in my pocket, so he relieved me of it, and at first he seemed angry, but he was soon smiling.

When we arrived at the Bn CP, which was in a large bomb-proof shelter, we were put into a small room with two guards that could speak excellent English. We tried to talk the guards into hiding out with us and returning to our lines that night, but the guards told us that there wasn't anything that they could do to help us. We were never questioned while at the Bn CP.

From here we started toward the Garrison CP; when we were approximately 50 yards from the door of the Bn CP we met an SS officer and an SS trooper; the officer halted us and  evidently not trusting the two guards behind us, he put the trooper behind us in a guard also. We continued on toward the Garrison CP, and as we made a right turn around the corner of a building a young girl was knocking on the door--when she turned and saw us she jumped into the air laughing and shouting, "Amerikan Swine, Amerikan Swine." The SS trooper

immediately quieted her, so then she turned her back to us, but the trooper made her turn around and face us again. We later found out that German civilians are not allowed to mock, harass or turn their backs on American prisoners of war.

We arrived at a very large fort, which was the Garrison CP, at approximately 1500 hours. Haswell was then taken to the Intelligence Officer, who could speak fluent English, and I was taken to another room where I was given something to eat. Haswell returned after about three hours, and then I was taken to the Intelligence Officer.

I was given a seat and he began to return my money, billfold, pay book and knives. He asked for my name, rank, serial number and mother's address.

He then said, "I see you don't wear a division insignia, so it would do no good to ask you your division."

I said, "No, it would do no good."

He said, "Give me your regiment; that won't hurt anything."

I thought, well, if I gave him a regiment or group number, he could trace that and get my division, so I said, "I have no Regt."

He said, "Well, how about your battalion."

I thought, well, the same question, so I said, "I have no Bn."

He said, "Give me your company."

I replied, "I have no company."

He hesitated a moment and then asked, "What in hell are you anyway? You have me stumped."

I stated, "That is exactly what I intended to do."

Further questioning on this point ceased, so he then asked my occupation in civilian life, to which I gave the reply as structural steel worker.

His reply was "Well, that explains your taking so many unnecessary chances."

He asked, "Have you ever led a patrol into AACHEN before this time, and in what direction did you come from?"

I replied, "I don't know what direction I came from, but I have led a patrol into AACHEN before and have taken prisoners also."

There were no further questions at this time and he began to talk about the war in general. His opinion was that for them the war

was lost, because the Germans were making their last organized stand at the border, and if our armor could make a breakthrough, their lines before it turned cold and started snowing, the war would be over in two months; but if we did not make a breakthrough before that time, the war would go on until next spring.

He asked my opinion of the war, but I told him that I did not wish to express my opinion.

I was taken back to the room, and Haswell was again taken to the Intelligence Officer. This time the officer again tried to find out what unit we were from, but he failed. So he started talking about his life and the United States. He said that he had a cousin in New York on the Police Force. The officer also stated that he hated Hitler and he predicted that the war would soon be over, but that the Germans would not surrender as long as Russia had anything to do with the peace terms. He wanted to know how the German prisoners were treated. He stated the fact that the German soldier highly respected our artillery. He also stated that many of the German officers, especially on the Russian front, were killed by Nazi agents because they attempted to give orders that were contrary to the belief of the Nazi party.

After about 30 minutes Haswell and the officer returned, and he showed us to our beds. He warned me against using my knife on guards in attempting to try to escape, because it would go down on our PW record and if we were captured again that we would be killed, but if we could escape without killing anyone, well and good. The officer left and we went to sleep.

When we awoke the next morning at 0930 we were taken to another shelter where there were 31 other American Prisoners of War.

They had just served dinner and we were taking a few bites when they called us out of our rooms, lined up in a column of twos and were counted. At this time we could hear very clearly the small arms fire outside. We were told that we were going to move out and to walk with our hands clasped behind our head. We moved out and were returned to the Garrison CP.

On the third day the German soldiers were sent in with rain water for us to bathe in and shave with.

Food was running out and everyone's rations were being cut down. Finally all of their water ran out, and each time that they gave their soldiers a ration of wine for water, each PW was given the same share of wine and food.

All the soldiers and officers seemed to be very calm during the entire stay there; Just before each meal the Intelligence Officer would always come up to the room and get a different PW each time to go to his room with him to eat. But he would always refrain from questioning at that time. He also talked about his personal life and his opinion of the war.

On the morning of the 21st of October, Lt. George Schwabb, the German Intelligence Officer, came into the PW room and was talking to a small group of men for about five minutes, when Haswell came over to me in the far corner of the room and asked to borrow my cartridge belt. When I asked him why he wanted to borrow it, he said that the Germans had two men killed trying to get out with the white flag  for the surrender of the fort, and Lt. Schwabb wanted a volunteer from one of the PW's to carry the flag out. So Haswell volunteered, and Lt. Shipley, a PW, told him to wear a cartridge belt in order to look more like an American soldier. So I put on the belt and said that I was going ~~with~~ him.

Lt. Schwabb and the executive officer led us to the pillbox door, where a German soldier was unrolling the flag; I took the flag and we ran to the middle of the street and started waving it. There was a great deal of small arms fire at first, but I continued to wave the flag until the firing ceased and an American soldier leaned out of a window of a house 100 yards away and motioned me to him. We called the two officers and they followed us. We had gone about 50 yards when a mortar shell landed by the pillbox door. The two officers took cover in a ditch, but we continued to walk forward, waving the flag, when two more shells landed about 20 yards away. The mortars then ceased firing and the two officers continued to follow us again until we reached an American soldier, who led us to his platoon officer, who gave us 45 minutes to have the entire garrison in a column of fours marching to him.

At 1100 hours we returned to the CP with the white flag, and we were returned to our room to get our equipment. We were giving our instructions to Lt. Shipley when Lt. Schwabb returned and ~~told~~  us that Col. Wilk requested that we lead him and his staff out ahead of the rest of the garrison. Lt. Shipley told us to go ahead and he would stay and see that all the orders were carried out.

We were  led to the colonel's room where he and his entire staff had assembled with their equipment. We asked the colonel for his pistol, so he removed it, threw the clip under the bed, laid the pistol on the table, smiled and left the room. Lt. Schwabb said that was the way he had of giving us the pistol, because he could not hand it to us.

As we left the pillbox with the white flag and ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> staff, a few shots were fired behind us, so I told him to have ~~them~~ stop firing or we would all be killed, and Col. Wilk gave the order that all firing would cease.

We marched up the street where we were met by the American officer who gave us the terms, and then we were carried to the Bn CP. Upon our arrival here, Col. Wilk ordered his entire staff to come by and shake our hands. He then came up, shook our hands, snapped to attention and saluted; we returned the salute and he then saluted again and said something in German, which Lt. Schwabb quoted to us, "He and his staff wish to thank you for your display of gallant bravery in carrying out the white flag, when two of his

men were killed while trying to get out with the white flag. He would also recommend us for some high award for such action."

We were then loaded on some trucks and taken to the Regimental CP, where Lt. Griffith of our company was waiting for us. We returned to the spot at which we were captured, regained our hidden weapons and returned back to our unit.

(Source: S-2, 1106 Engr. Gp.)

S-E-C-R-E-T

9

GL-117

1106th Engineer Group South of Aachen

The 1st Inf Div could not do much until the XIX Corps advanced east at least to the 83d grid line. Then the 1st Div had to have one regiment free to attack to the north, about 2 kilometers east of AACHEN, thus sealing it off. Consequently, as the XIX Corps moved east, on 29 Sept 44 the 18th Inf Regt was relieved for that assignment by moving in the 1106th Engr Group and superimposing the engineers on the 18th's positions. The front thus taken over by the 1106th Engr Group was about 9,000 yards long, extending from (793413) south of VAELSERQUATIER on the Holland border, southeastward to (845400) in the vicinity of STEINBRUCK, a German village about a mile south of the city of AACHEN. The right flank of the 1106th Engr Group thus extended to the vicinity of the left flank of the 26th Inf Regt.

Previously the 1106th Engineer Group had moved into a bivouac area in the woods on both sides of the road leading from HERGANRATH (7936) to HAUSET (8236). Their mission had been to prepare for the bridging of the Rhine.

This was the first time the 1106th had ever done any real infantry duty, and so for the next three days they learned "how" from the men of the 18th Inf Regt. They accompanied the latter on patrols, learned the positions of the enemy, and in general learned the rudiments of infantry ~~in~~ tactics.

It should be remembered that an Engineer Group does not have many of the weapons organically belonging to, or attached to, an infantry regiment. The former had no ~~heavy weapons company~~, no AT guns, no ~~cannon company~~, no tanks, no TD's and no assault guns.

In view of the above absence of weapons and armor, the 18th Inf was pulled out of the line with the greatest secrecy, and every effort was made to keep the enemy from knowing about the shift. The men were instructed to remove all identifications of the unit to which they belonged. They kept the enemy partially fooled by very aggressive patrolling. These patrols extended well into the outskirts of AACHEN, one patrol reaching (837417), and others to the road from VAALS to AACHEN.

The line held by the 18th was on the reverse slope of the hill running northwest to southeast in grid squares (8139) and (8140) -- see overlay -- with the enemy "looking down our throats." The 18th moved forward generally northeast over the crest of the hill and the 1106th dug in right in back of them, thus gaining the commanding ground. Part of this line had been held by a company of

Belgians and French who were removed before the adjustment took place. At about 011930 Oct 44 the 18th pulled out with all their weapons and armor, leaving the Engineers, with their first mission as infantry being to hold the line south of AACHEN.

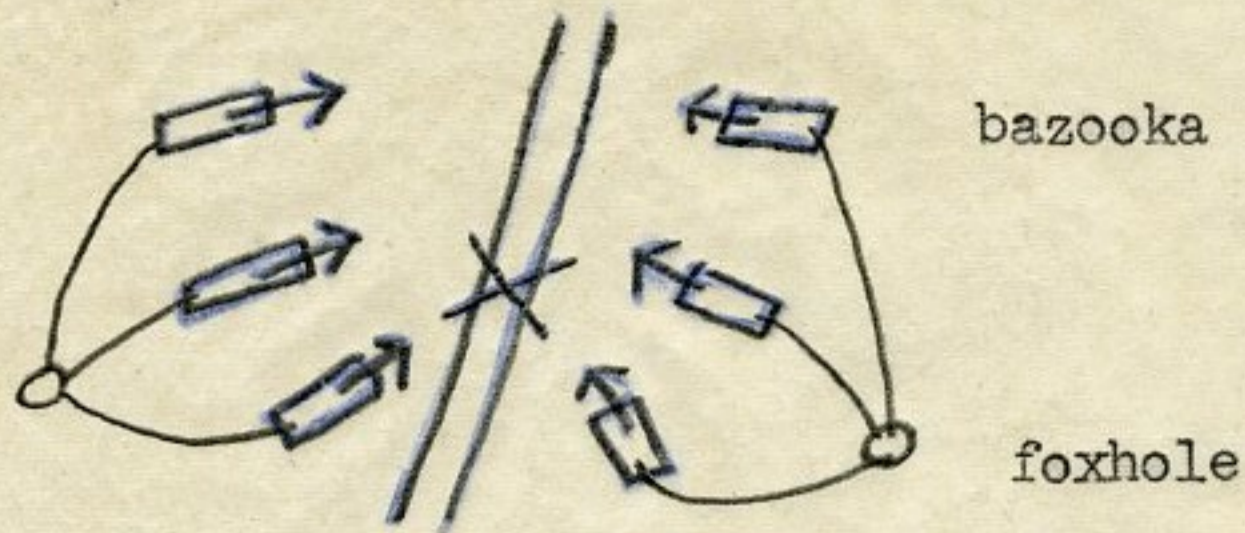
The 238th Engr Bn was placed on the right flank and the 237th on the left, the dividing point just east of the 81st grid line. The most important action of the 238th Engr Bn was located in the vicinity of Hill 203 (873405). On the map this hill appears to be commanding ground, but on the ground itself the house in STEINBRUCK at (839404) proved of much greater importance.

1st Lt. Stuart C. McArthur was assigned the mission of taking the hill.

*date?* With a combat patrol of one squad he proceeded to the hill at 0200 Oct. He found barbed wire and trip wires on the forward slope. The enemy permitted the patrol to cut the wires and infiltrate into their positions, and then opened fire. Lt. McArthur was wounded in both legs. The patrol was withdrawn, evacuating the officer. That evening 1st Lt. John B. Wong was ordered on the same mission, this time with two squads. The patrol proceeded to the house mentioned above where they remained for the night, proceeding to the hill at dawn. Again the enemy allowed the patrol to enter their position before opening fire. One EM was killed, two wounded, and the patrol withdrew, evacuating the dead and wounded.

The same afternoon Lt. Wong and Lt. Latchow went back to the house, this time with a platoon. They then directed artillery fire on Hill 203 and on the area just east of it in which the enemy had set up several AA guns, vicinity (840405). They then moved forward and occupied 203, boxing in the area with mortar and arty fire. This gave the Engineers a commanding position, and in addition, 203 was to serve as a hinge about which they would move as the 26th moved west thru AACHEN.

In protecting themselves from possible enemy counterattacks, the 1106th Engr Grp used road blocks on all avenues of approach into their positions. These road blocks were generally comprised of a concertina in front, then a series of mines, followed by bazookas. The 238th Engr Bn used a novel method. The case of the bazooka was used as a launcher, was fixed firmly to a post or a tree and sited on a possible target. A wire was attached to the igniter and to a battery, then run to a foxhole where an observer could discharge them by merely pressing a button. They were usually laid in series and sited as the situation demanded. Any

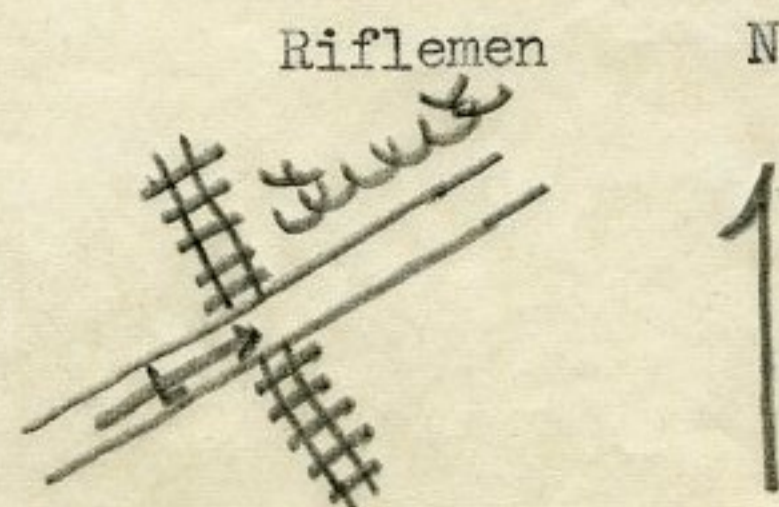


arrangement desired could be worked out. The 237th Bn did not use the indicated arrangement, but preferred to use a man in a foxhole firing the bazooka on the target directly.

In addition to roadblocks, both Bns used large numbers of booby traps, both pressure and pull type, using M-3 A. P. mines. To some of them flares were attached so they would have an opportunity to know when the enemy penetrated their positions. While they did not have a single counterattack, there were many enemy patrols, all of which came at night and resulted in considerable firing on both sides.

As mentioned earlier, vigorous patrolling was conducted by both Engineer Bns. Some of them bear mention. The day the 18th moved out, the men of Company "A" 238th Engr. Bn were busily engaged laying wire when they were sniped at by the enemy. Locating the positions from which the fire came, they laid down an 81mm mortar barrage. Immediately afterwards a combat patrol moved out, and before they had gone 100 yds they ran into enemy fire. They killed one, a staff sergeant, and took 6 PW's, one of whom was wounded.

Another patrol from "A" Co moved out at 080400 Oct from (819397) to a RR underpass at (827404). The patrol was led by Lt. W. J. Shepard and consisted of 12 men. Lt. P. A. Geffhan, who had been over the route previously, accompanied it. One LMG was set up to fire under the underpass, and the riflemen were placed in back of the hedgerow on the left side of the road.





The enemy allowed the patrol to get in position and opened fire at approximately 0600. The fire fight lasted <sup>about</sup> ~~approximately~~ 15 minutes, ~~and~~ the enemy killed one and wounded one man, while the patrol put one MG out of action. It was then withdrawn without further difficulty, the dead man being left behind.

Lt. J. G. Draganza and (1) sqd established an outpost 2,000 yards to the front at (828410). He moved out at 161400 Oct and returned 172000. While there he directed arty fire on the enemy.

Like the 238th, the 237th Engr. Bn. engaged in active patrolling, which extended N to the road between VAALS and AACHEN. Their left flank was exposed, the 1st Reconnaissance Trp providing a screen to the W of AACHEN. The right platoon of this troop was located in the vicinity of (791409) where Belgium, Holland and Germany join. An average of one patrol per night made contact with this platoon.

The patrols generally moved out at dusk and returned around midnight. In order to vary the procedure they occasionally were sent out around midnight, return-at dawn. Daylight rcn patrols were sent to the vicinity of VAALS every two or three days.

For one of these, a sniper patrol, three men volunteered. These men, Sgt. Kellan, Pvt. Pagano and Cpl. Clapp, moved out at 061430 Oct, shot up a MG met in VAALSQUARTIER and moved on to VAALS. They were unable to leave the town because they had been sighted by the enemy. So they went into a barber shop and got a shave while "waiting for things to cool down", after which they got out of town without trouble.

Two reasons for the success of the 1106th in holding the S flank of AACHEN have been the 58th FA Bn and Co "A" of the 87th <sup>Cml Mortar</sup> ~~87th~~ Bn (4.2). The former worked so closely with the Engineers that Col T. De. F. Rogers, CO of the Engineer Group, says they, the Engineers, consider the FA Bn a part of them. The 4.2 mortars in conjunction with the 81mm mortar crews trained by each Bn ~~have~~ provided accurate and ready support 24 hrs a day. Each Co CO had fields of

12  
fire previously registered by both arty and mortars, and on which they could call fire by number.

One of the interesting sidelights of the engineer units in this area was the street car bomb. Three of these were sent into AACHEN. The plan was to send the car in, have it stop, attract attention, and then ~~explode~~ explode it (according to Major Martin F. Massoulia, Ex. Off. of the 238th Engr Bn).

The first car was pulled to the top of the hill (819400) by truck. It was expected that the momentum would carry it beyond the 41st grid line. It was loaded with approximately a ton of enemy explosives made up of six German rockets, fifty 88mm shells, two boxes 20mm shells, two boxes 37mm shells and hand grenades and rifle grenades.

It was well booby trapped and set with a time fuse for <sup>(5)</sup> five minutes. It was released the 9th Oct and apparently caused the enemy considerable concern, because they opened fire on it. Unfortunately, the motor had not been disconnected, and acting as a brake, slowed the progress of the car down, and It stopped at about (816405) where it exploded. It did not do much damage other than to cause the enemy to expose their positions.

The second car was loaded about the same as the first and released on 10 Oct. The time fuses were set for thirty<sup>(30)</sup> minutes. The car stopped at the wreckage of the first, which was about 300 yards in front of the Engineers' outpost. The latter then went down and cleared the track of the wreckage preparatory to sending down a third.

The third was loaded about the same as the other two, but the time fuses were set for 10 minutes (which Maj. Massoulia considered about right). This one was released 16 Oct and reached the built-up area around the 41st grid line. (No report on damage done was available at the time this was written.)

In view of the length of the front, its lack of depth and the lack of reserves everybody had to pitch in and help. This included the Hdqts Co of the Engineer

Grp., about 80 strong. Every day a few of them were sent into the line for 24 hrs. During the cigarette shortage around the 1st of Oct some of these men were in the line. Realizing the desire of the men in the line for a smoke, they sent them almost a barracks bag full of cigarettes out of their own limited supplies.

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Persons interviewed in connection with the section on the 1106th Engr Grp:

Col. T. De F. Rogers, CO 1106th Engr Grp  
Lt. Col. John W. Coffee, Ex. Off., 1106th  
Capt. James W. Hutson, S-2, 1106th  
Lt. Col. Jay P. Dawley, CO 238th Engr Bn  
Maj. Martin F. Massoulio, Ex. Off. 238th  
1st Lt. Stanley Bass, Asst. S-3, 238th  
1st Lt. Lawrence Cane, Ex. Off., Co C, 238th  
Capt. R. S. Richmann, CO Co A, 238th  
Lt. Col. Hershel E. Linn, CO , 237th Engr Bn  
Maj. Robert P. Tabb, Ex. Off., 237th

# # #

BATTLE OF AACHEN

745th Tank Battalion, B Company, 1st, 2d and 3d platoons

Attached to 18th Inf Regt.

8 - 19 October 44

GL-117

(20)

Interviews:

1st platoon: Sgt. Robt. (NMI) Miksa, driver  
Pfc. Edward N. Hardesty, asst. gunner  
Pvt. James M. Bolton, asst. driver  
Cpl. Wesley L. Waters, gunner

2d platoon: Sgt. Erwin G. Hajek, driver  
Cpl. Eben H. Jacobs, driver

3d platoon; Sgt. Archie C. Ross, tank commander  
Sgt. Earl R. Jacobson, tank commander  
Sgt. Jas. E. Mathes, platoon sergeant  
Pvt. William Sam, asst. gunner  
Pvt. Geo. T. Jones, asst. driver

Note: The following are fragmentary accounts of some of the actions of B Co medium tanks during the VERLAUTENHEIDE-RAVELS B. Hill fighting, 8 - 19 Oct 44. None of the officers who led the platoons at the time of the actions was available; and there was no opportunity to see the company commander. Lt. Samuel O. Hernandez, 1st platoon leader, was replaced 24 Oct. Lt. Harold H. Owenstein, 2d platoon leader, was wounded Oct. 11 and replaced. Lt. Keller, 3d platoon leader, was not available. A considerable number of non-coms were knocked out during the fighting, while some of those available could only account for actions of their own vehicles, and then were often uncertain about dates and units with which they were fighting. The information obtained about the fighting in VERLAUTENHEIDE 8-9 Oct, when all the available tanks were in that vicinity, is less incomplete than that pertaining to the later period when most of them were in the vicinity of HAAREN and Ravel's B. Hill.

Prepared by: T/4 Ridgely C. Dorsey, 2d Info & Hist Serv, 1st U. S. Army

8 Oct 44 - Ten Sherman tanks of the 2d and 3d platoons and four tank destroyers of the 634th TD Bn (see interview with Lt. Duffy) were expected to give support to elements of the 18th Inf Regt in the attack on VERLAUTENHEIDE. The assault infantry companies, E and F, of the 18th pushed off from the ID south of VERLAUTENHEIDE, vicinity (891449), about 0400, and the attached armor followed about daylight. What happened to the Sherman tanks of the 2d and 3d platoons, and of the 1st which followed a little later, is indicated by the following:

MM

SECRET

Three of the 2d platoon Shermans came through the RR underpass (88704425) south of VERLAUTENHEIDE early that morning, one of the others having gotten stuck in the mud near EILENDORF, and another having been knocked out just south of the RR underpass, apparently by artillery fire. Sgt. Hajek did not know the details. One of the three remaining hit a mine and fell out ~~at the~~ just south of the RJ (887453) below VERLAUTENHEIDE. This stopped the column, and an enemy bazooka-man from a house on the left of the road got a hit on another 2d platoon tank, penetrating and putting that vehicle out of action. That left only Sgt. Hajek's tank in the 2d platoon. He pulled off the road into an orchard on the right, and said he waited 3 or 4 hours while the area ahead was being swept for mines. He said he got into VERLAUTENHEIDE about 1500, but did no firing. Later that evening the 2d platoon tank driven by Cpl. Jacobs, and previously stuck near EILENDORF, joined that driven by Sgt. Hajek.

Meanwhile, of the five 3d platoon tanks, one fell out with a broken part (not enemy action) while still in the EILENDORF vicinity, while another was put out of action just after daylight by a mine just north of the RR underpass. After an hour's wait south of VERLAUTENHEIDE, for mine sweeping, the 3 remaining 3d platoon Shermans reached VERLAUTENHEIDE about 0900, encountering there "the worst artillery fire", Sgt. Jacobson said, "he had ever seen." The tanks had scarcely any opportunity to return fire. "They couldn't move."

SECRET

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VII Corps -

The Fall of Aachen

G-4-117

10

Prepared by: HARRY D. TICONDRON, 1st Lt, 2nd Info & Hist Serv, 1st U.S. Army

"At 1206A Col. Wilks, commander of Aachen, surrendered the garrison and installations of the enemy pocket to Gen. Taylor, Asst. CO of 1st Inf. Div."

So read the message announcing the fall of Aachen, 21 Oct 44.

Aachen was a city of some 165,000 population in 1939. It was an important railroad center for Germany, France, Belgium and Holland. Numerous industries were located there, including factories for the manufacture of clothing, electric motors, other machines, glassware and radio parts. The city also had one of the largest needle factories in the world, a railroad car factory, sugar factory, and nickle works. It is located in a valley and surrounded by hills. Most of the buildings were of stone or brick, with only a very few being of wood.

Many of the civilians left after the British warned them that the city was to be bombed. The first raid on 11 April 44 demolished about half the buildings, and subsequent raids on 26, 27, and 28 May practically finished it. (The writer visited the city on the morning of the surrender and saw the complete gutting of buildings over the route he travelled. It was rare indeed when a building was found that was still usable.) By the time the Americans began their attack on Aachen it was estimated that not over 15,000 to 20,000 civilians were left in the city. Most of these were women and children, or those who remained in an effort to protect their property.

The city of Aachen was not important to the German Army because it ~~is~~ was neither a natural nor an artificial fortress. The railroads ~~was~~ <sup>were</sup> all destroyed and the factories ~~was~~ <sup>were</sup> either ~~been~~ destroyed or moved east of the Rhine.

In the attack of VII Corps elements across the German border 12-13 Sept 44, our army directives stated the Siegfried Line and the city of Aachen as the objective of attack, since the city was considered a part of the line. Since, however, the city was of no value to the American Army other than as a route

for vehicular traffic, and even then not essential, it was initially planned to sweep around and envelop it.

While the XIX Corps moved forward north of the city, the VII Corps was to attack northeast to crack the outer defenses of the Siegfried Line south of AACHEN, moving through the partly wooded terrain and gaining the high ground that commands the southern and southeastern approaches to the city. The immediate objective was to take ESCHWEILER about 6 or 7 miles on the other side (north-east) of AACHEN, connecting with the XIX Corps and thus cutting off the city; and to seize the road center of DUREN on the right flank, 15 miles east of AACHEN, preparatory to moving to the Rhine River.

On the VII Corps' left flank, its 1st Division was to attack and envelop AACHEN from the south and to seize the high ground to the northeast. The 3d Armored Division in the center was to penetrate to ESCHWEILER; and the 9th Division was to outflank the enemy on the right and take the DUREN road center.

On 12-13 Sept 44, Corps elements crossed the German border and successfully cracked outer Siegfried Line defenses; by 16 September elements of the 1st Division had seized the high ground around EILENDORF, immediately east of AACHEN, and good progress was made on the right. But by 20-21 Sept the enemy had assembled enough resistance to counterattack on favorable terrain. The 3d Armored in the center was hit heavily and stopped in and around the factory town of STOLBERG, 5 miles east of AACHEN; and the 9th Division on the right was unable to come up farther than SCHEVENHUTTE.

By 8 Oct 44, after more than 3 weeks of stubborn enemy resistance, the Siegfried Line had been penetrated, and AACHEN enveloped, but a small gap to the northeast was still open, through which the enemy was supplying the holding forces left in the city. These enemy forces, though small, were a potential threat to our rear, requiring the tying up of a considerable number

of troops. Before further attacks eastward, it was decided to close the gap out of AACHEN, and clean out the city. The bulk of the job fell to the VII Corps, and in particular on the 1st Division, as will later be described.

#### Enemy Forces in AACHEN

On 10 Oct 44, Lt. Cedric A. Tafley, S-2 of the 26th Inf. Regt. estimated that there were between 3,000 and 4,000 enemy troops in AACHEN. This figure was subject to fluctuation due to the fact that a gap between the 30th Div and the 18th Inf Regt had not been closed, and the enemy could move either in or out of the city. A further difficulty in estimating the enemy strength was the fact that some of the PsW had been juggled around so much they did not know the unit to which they had belonged. It was estimated that elements of at least 52 company strength units were in the city. These were reshuffled to form the major units noted below.

The 246th Division included the following:

352d Inf Regt including two battalions. The 13th Co which was an AT Co but used bazookas. The 14th Co had four 75 mm Inf Howitzers. Two platoons of 120 mm mortars, each having four guns. Total strength 900 - 1,000 men.

689th Inf Regt., composed of about the same. It was supposed to have three battalions, but PsW were taken from only two.

404th Inf Regt. This regiment was moved north to GEILENKIRCHEN (8664) to meet the threat of the 30 U. S. Inf Div., about 7 Oct 44 where it was committed, suffering terrific casualties. It returned to AACHEN in the vicinity of the northern railroad station the night of 12-13 Oct. After its return its strength was estimated at 500 men.

The 19th Fortress Battalion, estimated at 500 men.

The Diendl Battalion, made up of odds and ends from other units, around 500 men, but fluctuated from time to time.



246th F. A. Battalion, made up of six horse-drawn 105 mm Inf. howitzers. At least six 75 mm S. P. assault guns and two Mark IV tanks.

About 150 men from the 1st SS Panzer (Hitler) Division came in through the "gap" on the night of 17-18 Oct. They gap had been held by friendly patrols by this time and was thought closed; but this group got through. They brought in an AT plat. of 75's, one Inf. Howitzer plat. of two 75's, an AT plat. of three 20 mm AA, and the rest infantry. These troops were promised to the defenders of AACHEN for several days before they arrived. They were probably sent in to bolster morale and staged a counterattack on the 3d Bn, 26th Inf Regt, on 19 Oct (on which they were congratulated by Model, according to a captured document.) No ground was lost in the counterattack.

An estimated 125 AACHEN police were given rifles and put in the line, using their police uniforms. They were broken down into squads of eight, each squad being given a machine gun. The chief of police, Major Zimmerman, was in charge.

On the night of 15-16 Oct about 80 police from the Cologne area came through the gap and joined the fight. About the 16th Oct., Lt. Tafley estimated that the PsW already captured plus the enemy still in the city totaled 3,350 men. Actually, during the whole campaign, 3,444 PsW were taken, as follows:

11 October	-	81 PsW, including	6	Officers
12 October		70 "	no	"
13 October		307 "	6	"
14 October		279 "	9	"
15 October		26 "	no	"
16 October		172 "	5	"
17 October		81 "	1	"
18 October		213 "	2	"
19 October		120 "	1	"
20 October		416 "	3	"
21 October		1,626 "	48	"

The above figures include 193 evacuated thru medical channels as litter cases and about 600 walking wounded. G-2 estimated one dead to four wounded. (The above table of figures includes only PsW captured in the city of AACHEN by the 26th Inf Regt.)

When Col. Gerhard Wilks, commander of AACHEN, surrendered at 1200, 21 Oct., he estimated he had about 500 men left. Actually, 1,626 were captured that day alone.

While the enemy was a long way from being <sup>composed of</sup> crack troops, approximately 50 percent of them being over 35 years old, they had mostly 1944 equipment. They were all Germans with the exception of about 15 Russians.

In addition to being reinforced as noted above, the enemy attempted to drop supplies by air. On one attempt, a plane was shot down, and on another a box of bazookas and an 81 mm mortar were dropped between the enemy and friendly lines and <sup>was</sup> captured by the Americans. The latter used the mortar but not the bazookas against the men <sup>for whom</sup> they were intended. ~~for~~

#### The Ultimatum to the City

The plan for taking AACHEN was first to encircle the city; then issue an ultimatum demanding its surrender; and third, if the ultimatum was rejected, to take the city. The XIX Corps moved east to the north of AACHEN. The 18th Inf Regt. moved north to the east of the city to join with the XIX Corps. On 10 Oct the movement of both units was complete except for a gap between the two through which movement to and from AACHEN could continue.

At 101050A Oct 44, the ultimatum was delivered. Not receiving an answer by the end of the 24-hour period allotted, the military plan of taking the city went into execution. No terrific bombardment was planned (the city was already demolished), but a steady use of dive bombers on pre-selected targets irregularly spaced plus artillery to inflict casualties, soften up defenses, and cover the entrance of American troops into the city. It was to be a gradual encirclement with slow, steady pressure, thus taking the city. American casualties would thus be held to a minimum.

### Air Preparation

Important points in the city, mostly on the perimeter, were selected, and from these, targets to be hit were picked, as well as those to be avoided, such as hospitals. These targets were then grouped, three to an area. Groups of planes were briefed on primary and secondary targets. They would hit the primary if possible and if not, then the secondary. The targets on which each group was briefed and which they hit are shown on overlay. The targets for 12 Oct are different from those on the 11th. On the 13th AACHEN became a secondary mission for all groups.

The targets were marked with red smoke by the 1st Div. Arty. Aerial observation indicated that all bombs hit the target areas as marked. On the 11th Oct the following groups (a group consisted of 36 - 40 planes) made one bombing run each on AACHEN.

367th Group	P-38's
404th "	P-47's
368th "	P-47's
370th "	P-38's

The tonnage of bombs dropped by these units of the Ninth Air Force on AACHEN was as follows:

11 Oct	-	62.25 tons
12 Oct	-	99.00 tons
13 Oct	-	<u>11.50 tons</u>

Total - 172.75 tons

On 11 Oct all of the above indicated groups participated in the bombing; on 12 October the following groups participated, 367th Group of P-38's, 373d Group of P-47's, and the 404th Group of P-47's. On 13 Oct., AACHEN became a secondary mission and about 6 squadrons bombed the city. (A squadron consists of 12 planes, and a group of 36 - 40 planes or three squadrons, the 4 extras being sent along to take the place of any lost before reaching the bombing run.) After the 13th Oct no bombing was done except on call from the infantry in AACHEN. During the bombings of 11-13 Oct., the planes normally strafed with their machine guns during their dives.

Persons interviewed in connection with the preceding section:

Col. O. C. Troxel Head of G-3 Section, VII Corps

W. H. Geman, Under-burgomaster of KORNELIMÜNSTER; lived in AACHEN from  
1939 to 1944

Pfc. Frank W. Ursan, acted as interpreter with Mr. Geman

Maj. R. J. Rosa, G-3 Air Officer, VII Corps

Maj. K. P. Lord, Asst. G-3, 1st Inf. Div.

Capt. T. E. Bennett, Asst. G-3, 1st Inf. Div.

TROOP LIST  
16 Oct 1944

Combat Team 16

16th Inf  
1st Plat, Co A, 1st Engr C Bn  
Co A, 1st Med Bn  
Det 1st Sig Co  
745th Tk Bn (- Cos B & C)  
Co C, 634th TD Bn

Combat Team 26

26th Inf  
1st Plat, Co C, 1st Engr C Bn  
Co C, 1st Med Bn  
Det 1st Sig Co  
Co C, 745th Tk Bn  
Co A, 634th TD Bn  
Co G, 33d Armd Regt (with 1st Bn as  
Div reserve)

1106th Engrs:

1106th Engr C Gp  
237th Engr C Bn  
238th Engr C Bn  
Co A, 87th Gnl Wpns Bn

Combat Team 18

18th Inf  
1st Plat, Co B, 1st Engr C Bn  
Co B, 1st Med Bn  
Det 1st Sig Co  
Co B, 745th Tk Bn  
Co B, 634th TD Bn  
Co B, 87th Gnl Wpns Bn

Division Artillery

Div Arty Hq & Hq Btry  
5th FA Bn (Btry A, 103d AAA Bn)  
7th FA Bn (Btry B, 103d AA<sup>A</sup> Bn)  
32d FA Bn (Btry C, 103d AAA Bn)  
33d FA Bn (Btry D, 103d AAA Bn)  
957th FA Bn  
Hq 103d AAA AW Bn  
58th Armd FA Bn  
Btry C, 991st FA Bn (SP)

Division Troops

Div Hq & Hq Co  
1st Sig Co (- dets)  
1st Med Bn (- Cos A, B & C)  
1st Engr C Bn  
701st Ord LM Co  
1st QM Co  
1st Ren Tr

Supporting Troops

2d Bn, 110th Inf (28th Inf Div)  
CCB, 5th Armd Div

3d Bn, 33d Armd Regt (- 1 Co)      CO: Lt Col Hogan  
2d Bn, 36th Armd Inf                      )      3d Armd Div

26 INF

(11)

Evacuation of Civilians from Aachen

GL-117

The immediate evacuation of civilians from AACHEN was considered of primary importance by the unit commanders from the regiment down. All of them cooperated to completely clear the city of all enemy, both military and civilian, as quickly and as efficiently as possible. Of primary concern was the protection of their rear from any possible enemy action.

Raid shelters, both public and private, had been built throughout the city. The largest of these held around 600 persons, the middle size about 100 and the smaller ones about 25. Many small private shelters had also been built.

Each area had a public shelter and the people in the area were assigned to a particular shelter. Families were assigned rooms where they could cook and sleep. Food, cooking and sleeping facilities were brought with them. In the event of an air raid the people would immediately proceed to their respective shelters. After the Americans started into the city the civilians just stayed inside them.

In the big air raids of last April and May some of the shelters were so covered by debris that those inside never did get out.

As a result of information gained from PsW we knew the location of many of the shelters and the approximate number of people in them. Consequently, as the infantry moved thru the city, the approximate number to be evacuated would be known in advance.

As the infantry took an area in which a shelter was located, the civilians would surrender. They would be organized and the march to the rear would commence under infantry guard, to be taken over after a few blocks by the military government and the MPs. Normally the people marched to the rear on foot, carrying what personal belongings they could. However, at times they were loaded on empty trucks going to the rear, so that they would not interfere with transportation going to the front.

During the 12 and 13th October some 609 were evacuated. Of this number some 200 were Poles and Russians, some of whom were in German uniform. The latter were sent thru military channels. All of this group was sent to HOMBURG where the Poles and Russians were segregated and sent on to a camp outside of LIEGE where they were handled by their own people.

When the group reached the cage an announcement was made that all soldiers in civilian clothes would step forward. Any soldier who did not give himself up would be treated as a spy. Seven young men stepped forward and gave themselves up. Afterwards a careful screening was made by the C I C.

By this time the Regiment Military Government officer had secured some barracks outside of BRAND in which to house the civilians. From the 14th October on, they were sent there. The number evacuated by days follows: 14th October, 1600; 15th, 275; 16th, 300; and 17th, 400. From the 18th on, all civilians were sent directly to the cage and were not counted day-by-day by the Regiment Military Government officer. As of 28 October there were 3,742 in the barracks.

Here they are assigned rooms, keeping families together as much as possible. They are in seven barracks in excellent condition (except for a few shell holes which they are patching up themselves under the direction of the Military Government officer.) A leader is appointed for each barracks and instructions are passed out each morning. The billeting of the people is left entirely up to the German committees. They take up their troubles with the German block leader. There is no heat in the building, as of 31 October, except for that provided by individual stoves some of the civilians brought in. Wood which they pick up is the only fuel burned in them. The women work in the kitchens, and keep the place clean while the men work on surrounding farms.

Each person is given an identification card and is restricted to the barracks area unless he has good reason to go outside. They are permitted to

go into AACHEN for personal belongings but must return at night.

By far the great proportion of them are old men, women and children. Approximately 1300 are men varying in age from 14 to 90; 1800 women of the same age group; and 400 children under 14 years of age. There are very few young women (between the ages of 20 and 35). Some of the women were dressed in furs while others were in rags, which was a rather good indication of the closeness of their connection with the Nazi party.

The place is guarded by MP's but the civilians/police themselves to a great extent. From the standpoint of discipline they have been no trouble at all with the exception of two persons caught signaling one night and who were taken into custody by military authorities and handled through military channels.

Medical attention is provided by German doctors and nurses and supervised by American medical officers. Drugs were taken from AACHEN. Extreme care has exercised in order to prevent the outbreak of an epidemic if possible.

The people brought what food they had with them. Thirty tons of captured enemy food supplies were sent from LIEGE. They are being fed entirely from food supplies captured in France, Belgium and Germany. Not a single American ration has been furnished them. In addition they are being fed from the products of the land. They require about 1700-1800 calories a day. Coffee and 200 grams of bread in the morning and soup and 200 grams of bread in the evening. The food is prepared in two messes, one serving 2,000 and the other the balance. The people bring their own containers, receive their food, have their cards punched and generally take the food back to their rooms to eat it. When they need meat (for example) they requisition it. An I O U (or bill) is tendered and accepted as payment. This bill will be paid by the city of AACHEN when it begins to function as such again.

Most of them brought clothing with them but those who have insufficient clothes for the winter will be issued some of the German uniform clothing captured when the barracks were taken by the infantry.



When the time comes to release them from the barracks area it is expected to be done on a priority basis. Doctors, nurses and farmers will be among the first. All of them will be released to return to AACHEN when the tactical situation permits.

These people had been led to expect harsh and cruel treatment. They expected to be put in barbed wire enclosures with no shelter of any kind. They had expected to have their families broken up. Needless to say they were happily amazed at the humane treatment they have received by the Americans.

Most of them are very glad to get out of AACHEN, and are resigned to the fact that Germany has lost the war. They want the war to end so that they can start life over again.

Major J. J. Kohout, Military Government officer of the 26th Infantry Regiment, was high in his praise of the unit commanders, from regiment down to company, for their cooperation and efficiency in the evacuation of civilians. He also praised very highly the Military Government Team FIG2 (the permanent AACHEN team) who "have done a great job". When the fighting ended in AACHEN the city was turned over to them and has been under their control ever since.

~~SECRET~~

GL-117

12

BATTLE OF AACHEN:

3rd Battalion, 33rd Armd Regt, 3rd Armored Division.

Interviews with: Lt.Col. S.M.Hogan, Commanding Officer.  
Major William S. Walker, Ex. Officer.

Prepared by: Frederick P. Cooper, T/Sgt. 2nd Info & Hist Service,  
1st U.S.Army. 1 Dec 44

18th Oct.

The 3rd Bn., 33rd Armd Regt., commonly known as Task Force Hogan, ~~was~~ with accompanying troops, the ~~2nd~~ 2nd Bn, 36th Armd Inf Regt and plus one platoon of Engineers, attached to the 26th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division to assist in the clearing of AACHEN.

The Task Force was given as ~~their~~<sup>its</sup> mission, the north part of Lousberg Hill(830447) and the Road Junction(825454).

The task force moved from an assembly area in the vicinity of Busbach, on orders, and reached the Brand-Aachen road about dark. As the road was under enemy observation, they closed in for the night.

19th Oct.

Task Force Hogan moved up to the Line of Departure(the road and RR track northwest of the factory district at (854450)). The attack started forward at 0730 with the tanks leading the way and the infantry following in half-tracks. They crossed phase lines A and B without meeting enemy opposition. Upon reaching phase line C the task force split with "E" & "F" companies, 36th Armd Inf Regt, plus "H" company of the 33rd Armd Regt swinging south to take Lousberg Hill(Objective RED). The remainder of the force, "C" of the 33rd AR and "D" of the 36th Armd Inf Regt, swung north to take RJ(Objective BLUE). "G" company, 33rd AR, at this time ~~were~~<sup>was</sup> manning road blocks at Haaren(865455).

As the task force moved forward between phase lines A & B it came under some artillery fire from a 150mm howitzer which had an observation post on the forward slope of Lousberg Hill. Though a number of rounds were fired, no casualties occurred.

19th Oct.

The terrain was open and slightly rolling, the ground was very soft and many of the tanks stuck in the mud. T-2 (Recovery vehicles) spent the entire day in pulling first one and then another free.

"D" company, 36th <sup>AIR</sup> and "C" company, 33rd AR, moved past phase line C, advancing approximately 300 yards to <sup>a</sup> line of trees where they came under fire from ~~Anti-tank~~ guns from the north nose of the hill. This fire was very inaccurate and caused no damage.

The two companies continued their advance, reaching factories on line D (827456) where they came under heavy fire from the ~~Road Junction~~ (825454). The main road running in a northwestern direction was of a very high embankment, 20 to 30 feet high and well manned with machine gun nests, bazookas, and infantry, both on top of the embankment and also at the base.

The advance for the blue objective was stopped at this point and could not continue until the Red objective had been taken, as the enemy had excellent observation from the north slope of Lousberg Hill.

At 1600 "F" company located the A/T gun that had been firing on them and upon firing one round got a hit on the enemy gun, cutting off the barrel.

The battalion CP was set up in a house at (835459). The enemy had observed the move and for three or four hours kept "plunking" in shells which did not cause material damage.

"D" company, 36th Armd Inf Regt, pushed forward to Rahe Chateau (826458) at dusk and took up positions there, ~~Approximately~~ approximately 200 yards short of <sup>its</sup> ~~their~~ objective.

Much enemy ammunition for 150mm howitzer, mortar and bazooka was captured in the Chateau grounds. There were also a great deal of empty bottles lying around the grounds. One of the officers said "instead of fighting to the last round, they fought to the last bottle".

19th Oct.

At 1030 with the Red objective force swinging south to take Lousberg Hill, "E" & "F" companies of the 36th Armd Inf Regt and "H" co of the 33rd Armd Regt, they advanced south from St Rafael Cloister (835450) thru a wooded area to the base of the Hill. The tanks were unable to move through the woods and "H" company proceeded west of the woods where they remained for the night.

The infantry moved slowly thru the woods, which were lightly defended, to the base of the hill where they came under fire from four or five pill-boxes on the slope. Two of these were cleaned out in the afternoon, and at dusk they had reached the crest of the hill and established contact with the 3rd battalion of the 26th Infantry Regiment. (Note: See "F" co. account).

20th Oct.

About daylight "H" company captured the A/T gun crew and also the observation crew for the 150mm howitzer.

From "H" company's position could be seen the underpass (825454) of the Blue Objective. They laid a barrage of fire on and about the underpass, and also on the embankment, which kept the enemy positions from firing on the Blue task force.

About 0830 Lt. Col. Hogan received word that a enemy column of half-tracks ~~were~~ <sup>was</sup> moving out from the underpass. This column of half-tracks came forward to surrender, and seven half-tracks loaded with wounded were placed under a guard of one light tank at the rear of the column and one at the head of the column and were sent to the rear. No sooner than the first column had moved out than another column of horse-drawn vehicles approached to surrender also. It was estimated that 145 pw's were taken, most of them wounded.

About 1030 the battalion CP moved forward to the Rahe Chateau.

20th Oct.

With the Blue objective force holding their positions, the Red objective force continued clearing ~~the~~ Lousberg Hill and consolidating ~~their~~ <sup>its</sup> position. ~~Cleared~~ <sup>was cleared</sup> The slope of the remaining pillboxes, which were all taken from the rear, making the job easy.

Late in the afternoon "G" Co, 33AR, and "D" Co, 36th Armd Inf Regt., made contact with patrols from the 1126th Engr Gp, ~~who were~~ <sup>which was</sup> holding a part of the 19th Corps section approximately 1000 yards north of the Blue objective.

At 2100 "G" Co., 33rd AR, rejoined the battalion.

21st Oct.

Ordered to take the Blue objective in the morning. With "F" co moving north from Lousberg Hill and the 1126th Engr Gp moving south from ~~their~~ <sup>its</sup> position north of Blue Objective. The Road Junction was taken about 1000.

The task force was then ordered to swing south to Hill 219 (807441). Then if necessary, if Aachen had not fallen, to continue on south to the ~~road junction~~ cemetery (812427).

The enemy resistance had crumbled and the Blue objective was taken at 1040.

While consolidating ~~their~~ <sup>its</sup> position and cleaning up, the battalion received word that negotiations were in progress, and at 1215 were notified that Aachen had surrendered.

During this action the task force lost no tanks and had only a few casualties in the infantry.

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HEADQUARTERS 3D BATTALION  
18th INFANTRY

31 October 44

SUBJECT: Journal for 3rd Battalion, 18th Infantry

TO : Commanding Officer, 18th Infantry

1. Following is Record of events of 3d Battalion, 18th Infantry for the month of October 1944:

During the period of 1-7 October the 3d Battalion was in defensive position in and around Eilendorf, Germany. Usual patrolling and artillery fire during the period. Enemy artillery very active also. No serious threat was offered to the Battalion positions by the enemy.

At 0800 hours, 8 October, a friendly artillery barrage consisting of artillery pounded Crucifix Hill and Verlautenheide for an hour prior to the attack of the 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry. After the 2d Battalion had taken Verlautenheide the 1st Battalion passed through to seize and secure Crucifix Hill. At the same time (1330) the 3d Battalion with Companies I and K in the assault pushed forward to seize Hill 192 which extends from Aachen to Crucifix Hill. The Companies received intense mortar and small arms fire all the way to the objective, but the Companies closed on the objective so swiftly that the ridge was taken in two hours time. At 1600 hours Company "L" was ordered to clean out the factory town of Rothe Erde. This was all street fighting and by night one platoon of Company "L" occupied one-half of a large rubber factory and the Germans the other half.

During the night Companies "I" and "K" sent patrols forward with the mission of determining enemy strength in and around Haaren (Haaren was proposed objective for 3d Battalion on the 9th of October). The Company "K" patrol got within 500 yards SE of objective when they ran into an assembly area that the enemy was using to form a counter-attacking force. A short but terrific fire fight ensued with unknown results. Our patrol suffered no casualties. Meanwhile, the Company "I" patrol reached the edge of Haaren without incident. Forty seven prisoners were captured during the day.

At daybreak, 9 October, enemy mortars and artillery began shelling "I" and "K" Companies positions. The shelling lasted about one hour and after it lifted the enemy was seen to be infiltrating forward from pillboxes and a draw which ran along the flank of our position. The enemy was immediately taken under fire by 81 and 60 mm mortars in as much as the enemy was too close to our lines that friendly artillery fire was impossible. The machine guns of Company "I" firing on final protective line delivered a murderous cross fire as the enemy came towards the Battalion positions. Enemy casualties were very high with twenty-five known dead and many wounded. Twenty seven enemy prisoners were taken during this action. The attack was successfully beaten off and by 0800 hours Company "L" had completely cleared the town of Rothe Erde and was in position overlooking the center of the city of Aachen. Approximately 1000 rounds of enemy mortar and artillery fire fell on the Battalion positions during the day. At 1700 hours Company "I" was detached from the 3d Battalion and attached to 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry to assist in taking the last enemy-held hill in 1st Division sector (Ravels B Hill.) Thirty three prisoners were taken during the day by the 3d Battalion.

During 10 October Company "L", employing a flanking move from the direction of Verlautenheide, advanced and captured the Northern outskirts of Haaren without very much trouble. Meanwhile Company "K" sent one platoon reinforced with tank destroyers up to the lower or Southern edge of HAAREN where they captured 6 enemy officers and 83 EM. Company "I" took a terrific pounding from artillery and mortars after they had occupied Ravels B Hill. Eighty nine prisoners were taken during the day by the 3rd Battalion, 18th Infantry.

During the 11th October 3d Battalion consolidated and mopped up areas captured during previous day. Battalion was under constant and heavy enemy fire all day. Patrol from Company "K" attempted to make contact with 30th U. S. Infantry Division pushing down from the North but without success. 70 prisoners were captured during the day.

On 12 October the composite ~~Company~~ consisting of 18th Inf. Mine Platoon, I and R Platoon, 18th Inf. and Recon. Platoon of 634th TD Battalion was brought into 3rd Battalion defensive position to strengthen the left flank of the Battalion. The Battalion again took a terrific pounding from enemy artillery and mortars. Company "K" tried to contact the 30th U. S. Infantry Division but without success. One officer and 19 men were captured during the day.

On 13th October Company "L" reinforced by tanks and TD's captured and destroyed three enemy-held pillboxes. Company "K" also captured three pillboxes. Battalion area still under heavy mortar and artillery fire. 7 prisoners captured during the day.

On 14th October Company "K" moved up on line with Company "I" and took defensive positions on Ravels B Hill. Enemy shelled the whole Battalion area, especially Company "I" all day. One platoon from Cannon Company, 18th Infantry was attached to the Battalion to strengthen our defensive positions. Company "K" attempted to contact 30th Division but ran into such a fire fight before going 100 yards from their positions that they had to return. One prisoner captured during the day.

During 15th October Battalion was in defensive position near Haaren, Germany. Same heavy artillery and mortar fire. Patrol from the Composite Company laid a wild-cat mine block on the only road leading from Aachen and destroyed three enemy vehicles. No prisoners captured during the period.

At 1600 hours 16th October Company "K", 18th Infantry made contact with Company "F", 119th Infantry and completely encircled the city of Aachen. At 1700 hours Company "L" was ordered to make physical contact with 119th Infantry. Eight pillboxes were in our hands after a terrific fight. Company "L" continued the attack all during the night, fighting under the worst of conditions. The Battalion was shelled so heavily all day and night that movement was a tough proposition. Nine prisoners captured during the day.

During the 17th October Company "L" continued to assault the pillboxes blocking their way to 30th Division. The attack continued throughout the day with fierce close-in fighting. Company "L" was under vicious mortar and artillery fire all during the assault as well as German tank fire. Two enemy tanks were destroyed in the attack and 6 more pillboxes were captured during the day by Company "L". At 1700 hours the assault reached a successful conclusion with Company "L" controlling the nine pillboxes and cutting the last road from Aachen. 5 officers and 107 EM were captured during the day. Company "L" casualties for the two days were 4 killed and 20 wounded.

For action during 18 and 19 October see attached account of defense of Ravels B Hill by Company "K", 18th Infantry.

During period of October 20-26, 3rd Battalion, 18th Infantry remained in defensive positions on and around Ravels R Hill. On night of October 20th Company "K" went into reserve and reorganized. Large numbers of replacements came in during this period and the Battalion was built up. Period was fairly quiet, the only enemy activity being artillery and mortar fire. 3d Battalion was relieved by 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry during afternoon and night October 26th. 3d Battalion spent the next three days in Regt'l rest area between Aachen and Haaren. On night of October 29th the 3d Battalion relieved the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry and went into position on Crucifix Hill and vicinity.

During the whole month of October the 3d Battalion, 18th Infantry was on the line and in constant contact with the enemy. Artillery and mortar fire during this period was the most intense that this Battalion has yet seen in two years of combat and enemy resistance was on a more stubborn and fanatic scale than ever before with every gain being stiffly contested and followed by determined counter-attacks. During the month the 3d Battalion captured 434 prisoners and killed and wounded untold numbers.

Our casualties during the same period were 26 killed, 180 wounded and 67 missing in action.

For the Battalion Commander:

J. P. GURKA  
Capt., 18th Inf.

HEADQUARTERS 3RD BATTALION  
18th Infantry

GL-117

13.

31 October 1944

SUBJECT: Journal for 3rd Battalion, 18th Infantry.

TO : Commanding Officer, 18th Infantry.

1. Following is Record of Events of 3rd Battalion, 18th Infantry for the month of October 1944:

During the period of 1-7 October the 3rd Battalion was in defensive position in and around Eilendorf, Germany. Usual patrolling and artillery fire during the period. Enemy artillery very active also. No serious threat was offered to the Battalion positions by the enemy.

At 0800 hours, 8 October, a friendly artillery barrage consisting of eleven battalions of artillery pounded Crucifix Hill and Verlautenheide for an hour prior to the attack of the 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry. After the 2nd Battalion had taken Verlautenheide the 1st Battalion passed through to sieze and secure Crucifix Hill. At the same (1330) the 3rd Battalion with Companies I and K in the assault pushed forward to sieze Hill 192 which extends from Aachen to Crucifix Hill. The Companies received intense mortar and small arms fire all the way to the objective, but the Companies closed on the objective so swiftly that the ridge was taken in two hours time. At 1600 hours Company "L" was ordered to clean out the factory town of Rothe Erde. This was all street fighting and by night one platoon of Company "L" occupied one-half of a large rubber factory and the Germans the other half.

During the night Companies "I" and "K" sent patrols forward with the mission of determining enemy strength in and around Haaren (Haaren was proposed objective for 3rd Battalion on the 9th of October). The Company "K" patrol got within 500 yards SE of objective when they ran into an assembly area that the enemy was using to form a counter-attacking force. A short but terrific fire fight ensued with unknown results. Our patrol suffered no casualties. Meanwhile, the Company "I" patrol reached the edge of Haaren without incident. Forty seven prisoners were captured during the day.

At daybreak, 9 October, enemy mortars and artillery began shelling "I" & "K" Companies positions. The shelling lasted about one hour and after it lifted the enemy was seen to be infiltrating forward from pillboxes and a draw which ran along the flank of our position. The enemy was immediately taken under fire by 81 and 60 MM mortars in as much as the enemy was too close to our lines that friendly artillery fire was impossible. The machine guns of Company "I" firing on final

protective line delivered a murderous cross fire as the enemy came towards the Battalion positions. Enemy casualties were very high with twenty five known dead and many wounded. Twenty seven enemy prisoners were taken during this action. The attack was successfully beaten off and by 0800 hours Company "L" had completely cleared the town of Rothe Erde and was in position overlooking the center of the city of Aachen. Approximately 1000 round of enemy mortar and artillery fire fell on the Battalion positions during the day. At 1700 hours Company "I" was detached from the 3rd Battalion and attached to 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry to assist in taking the last enemy-held hill in 1st Division sector (Ravels B Hill). Thirty three prisoners were taken during the day by the 3rd Battalion.

During 10 October Company "L", employing a flanking move from the direction of Verlautenheide, advanced and captured the Northern outskirts of Haaren without very much trouble. Meanwhile Company "K" sent one platoon reinforced with tank destroyers up to the lower or Southern edge of Haaren where they captured 6 enemy officers and 83 EM. Company "I" took a terrific pounding from artillery and mortars after they had occupied Ravels B Hill. Eighty nine prisoners were taken during the day by the 3rd Battalion, 18th Infantry.

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For the Battalion Commander:

J. P. GURKA,  
Capt. 18th Inf

26<sup>th</sup> Inf. - Battle of Aachen. - 8-21 Oct 44.

GL-17

14

Clearing Area South of the Rail Road Tracks

During the days 8 - 10 October 44, after the 18th Inf Regt had moved northward to close the gap out of AACHEN and the 1106 Engr Grp had taken over the sector southwest of the city, elements of the 26th Inf Regt then holding the sector to the southeast readied themselves to move in and clean out the resistance in the city proper. The 2nd Bn of the 26th, attacking from the southeast, was assigned the job of clearing approximately the southern half of AACHEN; while the 3rd Bn, after circling around to the northeast, was to drive in eastward and clean out the resistance in the northern part.

At that time the 2nd Bn was holding on a front that extended from the wooded area in the vicinity of SCHONTHAL northeast along a series of roads that led across TRIERER ST. (the BRAND road), and west of the slag pile at (868422) to near the railroad yards south of ROTHE ERDE, a distance of nearly a mile. The Bn CP was at SCHONFORST several hundred yards to the rear of the center of this sector. Elements of Co C, 745 Tk Bn, which worked with the 26th Inf., and Co A of the 634th TD Bn., also attached to the regiment, were doing covering and roadblock work in various positions to the rear and on the flanks of the Bn's line. One of the jobs of the tanks during the holding period was doing "sniper" work. An enemy MG nest would be spotted along the front line; a tank would go up and shoot it out, and withdraw to the rear. The TD's, in addition to their routine roadblock work, were called on from time to time to go up and fire on houses in the southern outskirts of AACHEN which were serving as enemy OP's. About thirty to thirty-five houses, usually detached, were blasted during these missions in the few days just prior to the attack on the city proper.

The initial move toward taking the city was to clean out the enemy



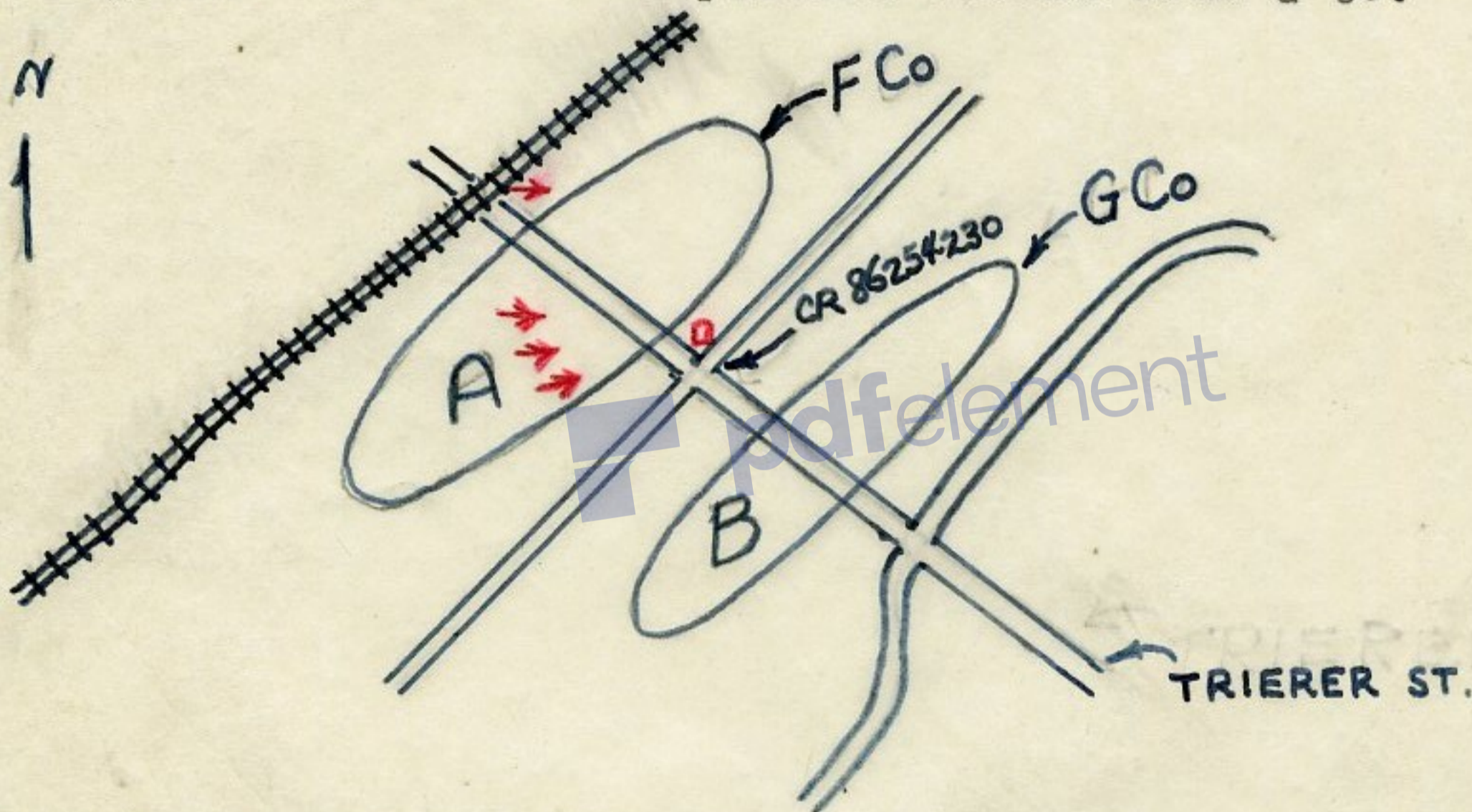
resistance remaining in the 500 to 750 yard strip of residential and factory area, extending from the main railroad tracks on the northwest and the front line of the 26th Inf on the southeast. On the left (W) end of this area is the high ground of the BEVERAU community, and on the right end the railroad yards beyond the slag heap. Bisecting this area almost exactly is the main road into the city from the southeast, the BRAND road, and known in the vicinity as TRIERER Street.

On 8 Oct 44 elements of the 26th Inf attacked objectives on both flanks of this area. At 0400 L Co moved out to clear the area of BEVERAU. They pushed two platoons of infantry straight thru the town, leaving a shell. They then worked back cleaning it out house by house. The Co hqs group was deployed on the near side, thus providing rear protection.

In the afternoon of the same day, at 1330, one platoon of F Co moved out to secure the area just southwest of the RR junction at (863427), adjoining the RR yards referred to. They moved up from southeast of the slag pile and went along the RR tracks on the right supported by a platoon of (3) medium tanks and two tank destroyers. The force cleaned out most of the resistance between the RR junction on the right and TRIERER St on the left, encountering only light opposition. There was some occasional small arms fire from the city proper, across the RR tracks, and it later developed that a pocket of enemy with sniper fire remained at the CR (86254230). After the area had been occupied, the infantry and the two TD's remained along the RR tracks facing the city, on positions from (864428) near the RR junction on the right, to RJ (861426) on the left. The medium tanks were ordered back to the rear, after the area had been secured. One of them backed through a hedgerow and fell into a bomb crater. It could not be extricated until the fighting had moved on. The balance of F Co remained in Regt reserve in the vicinity of the 2nd Bn CP.

The following day, 9 Oct 44, F Co and G Co, supported by tanks

and TD's and attacking from the foothold secured the previous day, were ordered to take the entire mile-long strip south of the RR tracks, from the vicinity of the RR yards near ROTHE ERDE on the right, to the vicinity of BREVERAU and GRUNTHAL on the left. F Co was assigned the northwestern half of the area, toward the city (marked A area on the sketch); and the G Co infantry's left, near TRIERER St. F Co <sup>was to</sup> swing ~~ing~~ on the outside; and the entire force would sweep left, tying in with L Co on the 2nd Bn's left. Supporting F Co was the 2nd platoon of 5 medium tanks as well as two TD's brought up from the rear -- the other two being left on their previously-occupied positions to guard the right flank of the battalion with the attack was in progress. The 1st tank platoon worked with G Co.



The attack began at 0930, F Co moving off with its extreme right flank on the RR tracks, and closely supported by the tanks and TD's, the entire attacking force working as an infantry-armor team. At first encountering little resistance, F Co circled through the previously occupied area; came up with G Co elements on the left; and then advanced abreast toward the CR(86254230) on TRIERER St. The medium tanks cruised the center of the area, blasting the buildings ahead of the infantry, while one of the destroyers was on the extreme right of F Co along the RR tracks, and one on the company's left along ZEPPELIN St., vicinity (864425). By 1030 the force had come up close to TRIERER St. expecting to find a reported enemy anti-tank

gun at CR(86254230). If it had been there it had gone; but an enemy machine gun nest, or bunker, at the position slowed up the infantry.

1st Lt Sam L. Daniels, leader of the 2nd platoon TD's, said that the tanks and TD's had the usual pre-arranged infantry protection, but because of the enemy small arms fire the doughboys were moving cautiously, from house to house and from hole to hole. When the tank destroyer on the extreme right, moving along EISENBAHN St parallel and close to the RR tracks, was about 25 yards from TRIERER St an enemy bazookaman, apparently concealed about 25 to 30 yards away behind a pile of logs along the tracks, scored a direct hit on the destroyer's right side. The projectile penetrated and burst inside the vehicle, although none of the complete crew inside was seriously hurt, with possible exception of one man, who however apparently was hit -- and killed -- by small arms fire after he got out of the vehicle. The destroyer burned about 30 minutes later, around noon. One of our doughboys "got" the enemy bazookaman with a BAR.

Meanwhile, by noon, the infantry and tanks had knocked out the bunker at the crossroads, and advanced across TRIERER St., but encountered heavy small arms fire at the first parallel (ALT) street(859425) to (864421). However, the remaining TD with F Co and platoon of tanks with the company-- all of which had moved across TRIERER St, at the crossroads intersection-- made close contact with the tanks supporting G Co; and together they blasted ahead of the infantry, driving the enemy to the cellars, and generally "scaring hell out of them". Their fire, as ordered, was toward the right, and during the afternoon the armored vehicles "fired all down" the RR tracks and beyond them toward the city proper, enabling the infantry to move forward. There was no enemy arty or AT fire.

In the early afternoon, to outflank the resistance at the above indicated street (ALT) parallel to TRIERER, several tanks and the one TD with F Co turned right at CR (861422), but one tank got its dozer blown off by a

mine while trying to push through the rubble and obstacles at (RJ860423); and the infantry found more mines ahead covered by small arms; so the armor went back to CR (861422) and turned right. The resistance was gradually cleaned out; and at the end of the day the objective had been reached, in the vicinity of GRUNTHAL (858419). The mission accomplished, AT guns were positioned to support the occupying infantry; the railway tracks embankment formed an effective barrier to any enemy armored attack; so the tanks and the TD's were pulled back to the SCHONFORST area for maintenance and repair. F and G companies had sustained only a few casualties during the day's fighting.

The 2nd Battalion thus occupied the south side of the RR tracks from (863428) southwestward to (853426), where F and G companies remained until 13 Oct. when their attack on the city proper began. Until then they tied in with L Company on the left flank and with the 18th Infantry Regiment on the right. The latter had secured VERLAUTENHEIDE (8845) two miles to the northeast and RAVELS B. HILL but had not cut the main road northeast out of AACHEN.

The above indicates the position of the 2nd battalion of the 26th Inf Regt when given the order to take the city. The regt was told that they could clear the town but were not to be committed to such an extent that they could not assist either the 16th or 18th Inf Regts in case a counter-attack broke through. As Major Henry N. Clisson (26th Regiment S-3) put it, "They went in with one eye cocked over their right shoulder".

### 3rd Battalion Moves Around to the Northeast

On 10 October 44 the ultimatum was issued to AACHEN. It was hoped (by the 26th Inf Regt at least) that it would be accepted. The same day the I & R platoon plus the mine platoon (later reinforced by a platoon from the antitank company of the 1st Battalion in Division reserve) took over the

sector of the 3rd Bn (less L Company) which withdrew to an assembly area in the rear of the front line. Attached to the 3rd Bn was the 3rd platoon of C Company of the 745 Tank Battalion; and the 3rd platoon of 5 destroyers of A Company of the 634th Tank Destroyer Battalion. The entire force moved by the route shown, in the rear of the 2nd Battalion, to an area just west of EILENDORF. At 1700 they attacked to the west, securing the ground shown

They met a little opposition going into the area which "Wasn't worth much," ~~but~~ but was chosen to protect the flank of the troops fighting in HAAREN.

The terrain over which the battalion moved from the vicinity of EILENDORF toward their objective was open and marshy, badly pocked with shell and bomb craters and soaked with recent rains, causing several cases of combat exhaustion. There were no roads in the direction the battalion advanced; it was exposed to enemy observation and shellfire; and at least a part of the force moved through it under cover of smoke. Finally, taking the railroad bed, they had the engineers fix it up as a road, while still under fire from the enemy to the northwest. By 11 October the road was usable and supplies were brought in over it.

During the remainder of the 10th, the 11th and the early morning of the 12th, the 3rd battalion sat tight while the Air Corps and artillery pounded the perimeter of AACHEN. (Prior to the attack 101700 October, the mortars had been set up at (867430). A composite company of the 18th Infantry Regiment held the ridge line from (873439) to (876443).

At 121100 October the 3rd battalion attacked to take the factory district. K Company led out and I Company started to follow, but was "jerked back" and sent in as shown. The heavy machine guns followed in support and the mortars stayed in position. I Company reached its objective but K did not quite make ~~theirs~~ <sup>its</sup>. The latter ~~were~~ <sup>was</sup> moving in a column of twos, column of platoons. They had planned on moving down to Duppel

street, turning right there, to go to the factory district. They ran into

heavy machine gun fire (1) and (2).

The tanks fired about 12 rounds in-

to them and silenced them. K Co.

then turned right as shown, moving

down the street <sup>and</sup> cleaning it out as

~~they~~ <sup>it</sup> went. They knocked out a

machine gun (3) and ran into fire from the enemy 75 by the railroad station.

They pinned the crew down with rifle fire while a tank came forward and knocked it out.

I Company moved as shown (see overlay). Each platoon took a street, one squad on each side, the third squad to be deployed in the rear when resistance was met. If they were not drawing fire from a building they entered it on the alert. However, if fire was coming from a building then tanks (or tank destroyers) fired on it, forcing the enemy down (for protection) and then hand grenades were thrown in. With that, most of them would surrender, but some would attempt to run. The latter would be shot by rifle or machine gun fire.

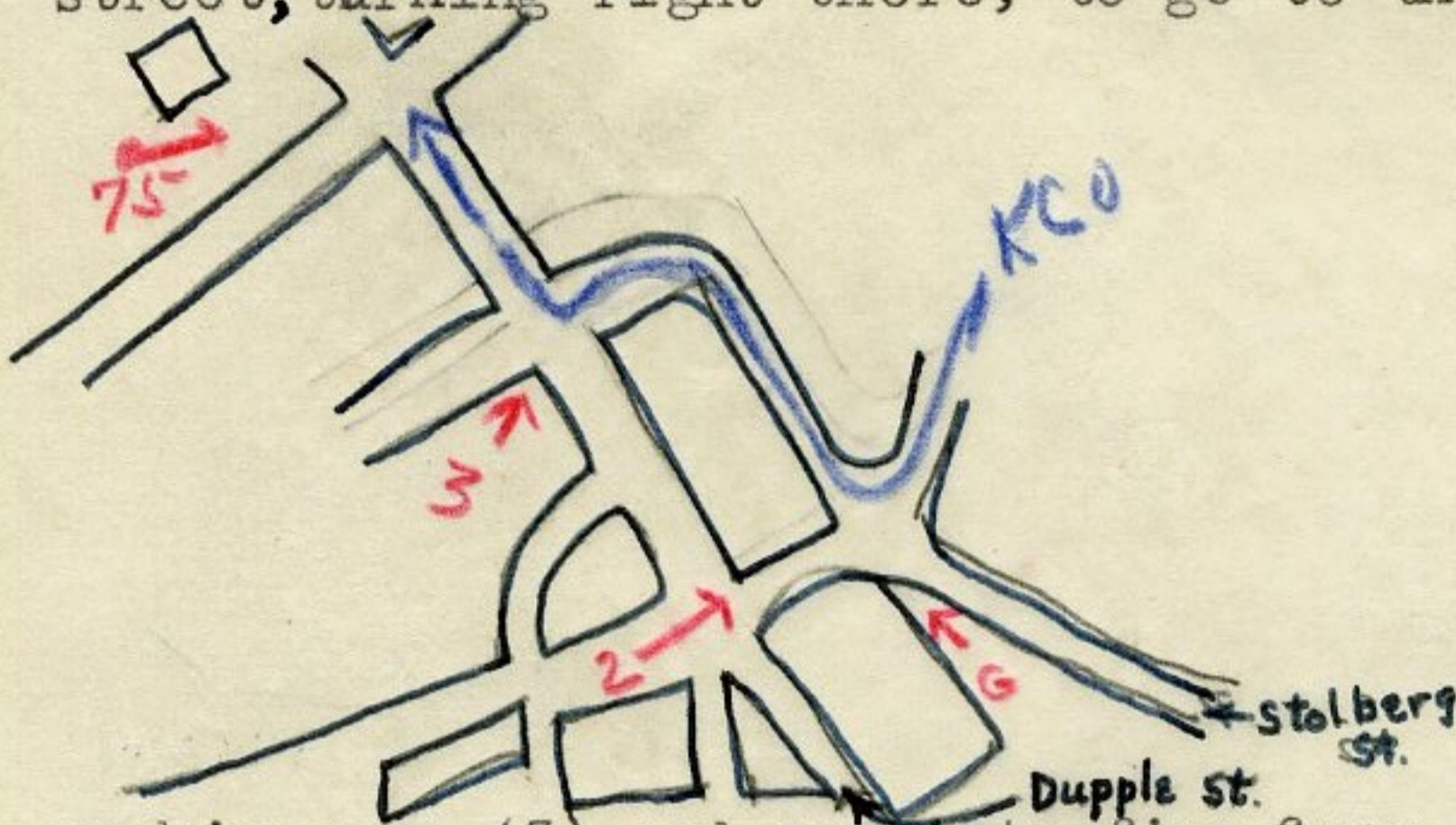
Since K Company did not quite make ~~their~~ <sup>its</sup> objective, M Company moved in to fill the gap. K and I made contact at RJ (855443).

During the day C Company took over L Company's position on the southeast part of AACHEN, L followed the same route the 3rd Bn had followed and joined them that night. The 2nd Battalion remained in place.

#### Taking the City of AACHEN itself

130930 October the two battalions began taking the city with a limited objective plan. The 2nd Bn was to take the area northeast of ADELBERTSTEINWEG,

and tie in with the 3rd in the vicinity of (849433). The 3rd Bn was to take OBSERVATORY HILL (843439).



The 2nd Battalion cleared the area above and moved west with VIKTORIA Street as the objective. F company was on the right flank, then E, then G Company on the left. E and F companies reached VIKTORIA Street but G was forced to halt one block short due to stiff enemy resistance in the triangle at (856427) where they captured 50 PWs.

E and F Companies had three tanks and one tank destroyer each, while G company had three tanks and two tank destroyers attached. Those attached to E and F companies got on the railroad tracks without difficulty but were unable to find a way down the embankment, at least 10 feet high. Finally they slid down the bank at (863430) without mishap. Those attached to G company came under the tracks through the AACHEN-ROTHE ERDE railroad station, about 15 yards left (west) of the main underpass. Both underpasses had been prepared for demolition, but were not blown. Also by not using these underpasses, the tanks and tank destroyers were able to get across the tracks without coming under direct enemy fire.

Since the problems of the 2nd Bn (unlike those of the 3rd) were almost identical each day, the overall tactics will be discussed first.

Originally the city was divided into **two** parts and the 3rd Bn was expected to take the north and western portion of the city and the 2nd the balance. The first portion of the dividing line was PELISERKER Street. The orders were for the 3rd Bn to take the street and the first row of buildings on the south side of it. Lt.Col. Daniel decided that would not work, so he ordered F company to clear all the buildings to the street itself.

According to Lt.Col. Daniel, the secret of street fighting is to search every building from cellar to attic, being certain that nobody, civilian or soldier, is left behind. The other secret is to coordinate the movement of the units so that they are kept approximately on line and one unit never gets very far in front of or behind the other.

The 2nd Bn had a series of check points on street intersections and also in the larger buildings so that each unit knew where the adjacent units were on its flanks. Each company was assigned an area and generally each platoon a street. On cross streets each platoon would go down about half way, meeting in the middle so that every possible hiding place was cleared.

In general a tank or a tank destroyer moved down each street with a platoon of infantry firing at the 2nd or 3rd house ahead. When a house was cleared the infantry would signal that they were ready (and protected from the muzzle blast); then and then only would the tank or tank destroyer fire its next mission. As a result they worked as a team, each gaining considerable respect for and confidence in the other.

As the tracked weapons fired into a building they would force the enemy down to the cellar where the infantry would toss hand grenades and immediately follow in. Most of the ammunition used was HE delayed fuse, to put the projectile through a window, door or light wall, and explode on the inside. At <sup>one</sup> time AP ammunition was used to knock a hole in the building to be followed by HE. Vehicles used an average of 50 rounds of HE per day. Machine guns would also be sited down the street firing at targets of opportunity and also into buildings ahead of the infantry at possible sniper positions. In addition bazookas, rifle grenades and any other weapons available were used to knock out enemy resistance.

This battalion made a habit of opening up fire without waiting for actual targets to appear, hoping to scare them out or pin them down. Light artillery was laid two or three blocks in front of advancing troops while heavy <sup>artillery</sup> was laid in the rear of that. The purpose of this was to cut communications and demoralize the enemy.

The ammunition and pioneer platoon supplied the entire Bn with ammunition. Originally the rear ammunition dump was at the battalion with the ammunition.



Originally the rear ammunition dump was at the battalion command post (872408) and the forward one at (862422). The rear dump was moved to (858427) on 16 October and remained there. The forward dump was kept practically in back of the troops. The ammunition supply worked exceptionally smoothly due to keeping the dumps well forward, according to Lt. L. F. Jelinek, commander of the Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon.

The type of fighting is rather clearly indicated by the types and amount of ammunition used by this battalion in taking the city as listed below:

81 mm mortar	L	1500 rounds
81 " "	H	800 "
81 " "	S	800 "

60 mm mortar HE 2000 rounds

20 boxes M1 8-round clips, 1344 rounds per box  
40,000 rounds 30 cal. machine gun

2200 Fragmentation Grenades  
1500 Offensive Grenades  
600 Rifle Grenades

The total expended during the taking of the city does not include ammunition expended before the attack started.

A team of one demolition man and one flame thrower operator worked with each company. Assistants were furnished by the company. These teams stayed at the company command post until called for. When a steel door was encountered it was covered by infantry fire while the demolition man worked his way to it. At the same time, the flame thrower would work his way to a window through which he would throw a two-or three-second stream of fire normally 30 - 40 yards, thus forcing those inside to keep down, or driving them out. While this was going on the demolition man would attach a German bee hive to the door. (German bee hive weighed about five pounds, and were used because they had a magnet which held them to the door).

A fuse of five seconds was usually long enough to allow the team to reach a point of safety.

The beehive would blow a hole thru concrete 18 to 36 inches thick (depending on the quality of the concrete) or through<sup>ugh</sup> a steel door two to six inches thick. In addition to blowing a hole thru the door, it would blow it off, thus permitting passage thru the opening.

A good flame thrower could get about ten, two-or three-second bursts out of one filling. The filler "fras" was almost as thick as jelly. One filling took five gallons of fras. During the taking of the city fifty gallons of filler was used.)

Hydrogen is used to build up the pressure to 2200 pounds per square inch. Nitrogen is used as the igniter.

The enemy had set up three underpasses for demolition, none of which was blown. When one was found, the demolition team would first be called; ~~and~~ they would cut the fuses. The platoon commander would then be notified and he with a team of three men would remove the dynamite. One underpass was prepared with at least 600 pounds of explosives.

Captured large calibre weapons were disposed of either by using incendiary grenades or by attaching beehives to the barrel. In one case the beehive blew a hole clear through<sup>ugh</sup> both sides of the barrel of an 88mm gun.

For the most part during the first three days the men were fed hot meals twice a day. The meals were prepared back at the battalion command post and brought forward in marmite cans to the company command post. From there they were moved forward by platoon carrying parties.

After the third day hot chow was dispensed with, and C rations were used entirely. This method was preferred by the company commanders because of the time and difficulty involved in serving hot chow. Also the men, being inside the buildings, could make coffee and heat their rations.

The wounded were evacuated as early as possible. Major Dulligan (battalion executive officer) paid high tribute to the medical men "who would go anywhere, anytime". They were first evacuated to the platoon

or company command post from which place the litter men would take care of them.

Due to the debris and rubble in the streets, the jeeps and aid trucks were getting flat tires faster than they could repair them. They called in the M-29, light tracked vehicles, in which the wounded were successfully evacuated.

The 3rd battalion had as their objective for ~~the~~ 13 October the taking of Observatory Hill. I Company moved out, column of platoons along the railroad tracks clearing the area to the right (northwest). They ran into about 30 enemy in the vicinity (848455). Killed five or six and captured the rest, including four or five wounded. The 3rd platoon turned right just southwest of the bend in the tracks (849442), the rest of the company going on south to LOMBARDEN Street and then turning right toward OBSERVATORY HILL. The company buttoned up for the night just across PASS Street.

K was to move down JULICHER Street, turn right on THOMASHOF with the objective of taking the Palast Hotel. The enemy <sup>was</sup> ~~were~~ firing a 20mm AA down JOSEPH Von GORRES Street. They knocked out a friendly tank with a bazooka just before it reached THOMASHOF Street. The tank men were incapacitated by the shot and got out of the tank with some burns. Sgt. Wise, Pve. Brown and Pvt. Gafford mounted the tank, fired up all the .30 calibre ammunition, turned the tank around and drove it back down the street to safety. These men had ~~never~~ been in a tank before.

K company did not reach ~~their~~ <sup>its</sup> objective but "buttoned up" on the near side of PASS Street with an outpost on the far side.

L company was to move down JULICHER Street and clear the buildings between JULICHER and TAL Streets, as far as PELISERKER Street. They moved thru the area three platoons abreast. There was ~~somuch~~ fire down JULICHER street that they had to take the buildings from the rear, climbing over wall,

or through holes in them. They stopped for the night at BLUCHER Street.

Mortars were set up in the vicinity of the road junction LOMBARDEN and UNGARN streets. A mortar observer was with each company command post and mortar fire was available on call. 1st Lt Walter F. Nickey, commander of M company, stated that 81mm mortars were too small for street fighting, needed more 4.2's which were able to cause sufficient destruction to the buildings to force the enemy down. The heavy machine guns were set up, giving all-around defense.

The 14th October, the 3rd battalion had the same mission as the preceding day. I company took OBSERVATORY HILL and deployed barely over the top of it. L company cleaned the balance of their area to PELISERKER street. K company did not quite reach their objective but occupied an area from OBSERVATORY HILL to a point (845436) along ROBENS street. A composite company from the 18th Regiment took over part of the factory district there protecting the rear.

On the morning of the 15th October, the 3rd platoon of I company was pulled out of its position to the left (east) of OBSERVATORY HILL and sent to clean up the area along KREFELDER street between PASS and MARGRATEN sts. The 1st platoon improved their positions on ROLAND street. They were so short of men that they had no depth, so they left only skeleton crews at the 60mm mortars and used the rest of the mortar men as riflemen.

At 1030 the enemy attacked OBSERVATORY HILL with one platoon which was repulsed. At 1530 a general attack was made consisting of approximately a battalion of infantry and six tanks or self-propelled guns. It was preceded by an intense 120mm mortar barrage. M company fired 300 rounds of 81mm mortar trying to locate and knock out the enemy mortars but failed.

The main effort was against OBSERVATORY HILL and on the right flank of I company. The enemy overran OBSERVATORY HILL, forcing a 300-yard gap between

I and K companies. A heavy attack was also made on the left flank of K Co.

When the enemy forced the gap between I and K companies, one platoon of L company (followed with<sup>in</sup> three quarters of an hour by the rest of L company) was pushed in to fill the gap, retake OBSERVATORY HILL and push on and take KURHAUS. Darkness fell before they could take the latter, but they did manage to retake the former. One platoon became lost and drifted over toward K company, leaving a gap between the Greenhouse and OBSERVATORY tower. By this time the Ammunition and Pioneer platoon had been thrown in, and the platoon of Engineers was committed, but a gap still existed.

During the 15th October the tank destroyers operated in two sections. One section of two destroyers was in the area of ROLAND CIRCLE(842443). The other section of three destroyers under Sgt. Leo F. Samek were moved from the battalion left flank to the vicinity of battalion headquarters (846439) to cover the park area. One destroyer out of this section was placed several hundred yards to the north in the factory district(84454427). The other two supported the effort of L company by blasting OBSERVATORY HILL ahead of them.

Two Mark VI tanks loaded with infantry plus a company of infantry on foot moved to the right(southeast) of KURHAUS and attacked the left flank of K company. Bazookas were fired at them but failed to knock them out. Mortar and artillery fire were laid on the enemy plus rifle and automatic rifle fire. One BAR man fired 59 magazines of ammunition .

One of the tanks got past the greenhouse(845437) to within 200 yards of the Battalion command post. The two TD's engaged them not being able to see them clearly, but firing at their muzzle blasts. Cpl. Wenzlo Simmons, the assistant gunner in one of the destroyers (the gun commander being absent with a toothache) fired 13 rounds at one of the enemy tanks and was credited with knocking it out. (K co. did not mention that a tank was knocked out, nor did we see it when we were on the ground). The other tank turned and

~~and~~ ran; <sup>thus</sup> ~~and~~ this part of the attack was stopped.

Two Mark VI's plus a company of infantry came around the northwest part of OBSERVATORY HILL against the right flank of I company, driving I company off of the hill. The officer from I company interviewed said that the TD's fired 15 rounds at the tanks, driving them off, but the officer in charge of the TD's said that they didn't see the tanks, although he said they were firing down the street in which direction the tanks had been heard.

The artillery and the 60 and 81mm mortars had OP's in the tower on OBSERVATORY HILL. The enemy scored 36 direct hits on it. During the attack the mortar observer stayed in the tower and called for mortar fire right on top of his position. I company fired 300 rounds of 60mm mortar, the 4.2's fired 200 rounds and M company fired 300 rounds of 81. The other companies fired almost as much.

After the attack had been broken, I company moved to the near side of KREFELDER street. They strung mines across the street at (84154427) and at (84304456). That night three enemy 75's and three lorries came southwest along KREFELDER street. They got past the first string of mines without trouble but the first 75 hit the second string and was disabled. The other two stopped. Next a lorry tried to go around the disabled 75 and struck a mine and was put out of action. Another and still the third tried and suffered the same fate. One 75 and three lorries were thus lined up across the road, all out of action. The other two 75's turned and fled.

Part of the importance of OBSERVATORY HILL is that fact that from it one has observation over the whole city. As Lt.Col. Corley (CO 3rd Bn) put it: "He who holds Observatory Hill holds the town".

During the 16th October there was continual probing of OBSERVATORY HILL by enemy patrols and incessant mortar fire. A friendly tank was run to the top of the hill and fired at the enemy, driving <sup>him</sup> ~~them~~ out.

On the 17th the battalion ~~just~~ sat in place, rested up, <sup>received</sup> ~~got~~ replacements and got set for the attack the following morning. All of LOUSBERG HILL(8344) was given to the battalion as an objective and Task Force Hogan of the 3rd Armored Division was assigned the mission of taking LAURENSBERG but were not to move until LOUSBERG HILL was secure.

K company had been erroneously reporting ~~their~~ <sup>its</sup> position. They were supposed to get MONHEIMS ALLEE which they finally reached about 1600. During the night word was received that the gap northeast of the city had been closed at (860472).

Lt.Col. Corley requested one company of tanks and one company of armored infantry to secure his rear. The armored infantry moved in at 180700.

Jumping off at 140605 hours, G Co, 2nd Bn, advanced one block by 0930, bringing them on line with E and F companies. As they jumped off they ran into deadly sniper fire. Five of the eight infantry men assigned to the two tanks became casualties. These tanks were on the left flank, just north of the church at (85354225). They concentrated their fire on the church site, which was then taken and "blasted ahead" at the railroad tracks and at the enemy bunker at (84904220) near the site of the old castle.(8490-4225). After heavily shelling these targets and advancing 300-400 yards west of the church site, by mid-afternoon, PWs and civilians began to come out of the bunker, which was also an air raid shelter. All together about 180 PW's and 2000 civilians were taken. Toward dusk an enemy chow wagon showed up, apparently to feed the now captured enemy, and it too was taken.

The 2nd Bn moved forward as shown, encountering small arms fire and one 75 firing from the position marked #2(843431).

On the morning of the 15th, just as the 2nd Bn was ready to push off, the crew of a TD, working with E Com., was loading ammunition on it, when the 75 above put a round <sup>n</sup> through the gas tank. One man <sup>i</sup> was killed and the rest were casualties. The TD did not burn. The progress of day, as shown, was characterized by small arms fire, machine gun and bazooka fire.

16 October gun # 2 was fired on by a 57mm A/T gun, and it did not fire again. The next morning a tank shot it up. An attempt was made to get a 57 A/T gun into position at the corner of JULICHER and PELISERKER streets (846436) to knock out the # 3 gun. However, every time they started pushing it around the corner, the enemy 75(3) would fire at it, forcing it to withdraw. For the second day, mortar fire was laid on the enemy gun position. By the time F company reached its objective, HEINRICH-ALLEE, the crew had left.

Just after reaching its objective, the same street, G company had a counterattack at (843424). The attack was made by infantry supported by two tanks and and SP 75 # 1 gun.

The TD with G company had been knocked out by enemy bazooka fire at (844424) - southeastern end of HINDERBERG street. The projectile fired from about 50 yards (west), struck the gun counter-balcone, thus putting it out of action. The shrapnel from the projectile hit two men standing in the turret, killing one and wounding the other.

The enemy infantry and tanks got to the corner of HINDENBERG and WILHELM. A friendly tank had a swelled round in the chamber and had to back around the corner (one block east) until <sup>the crew</sup> they could extricate it. A bazooka team fired at one of the enemy tanks but failed to knock it out. The tank then fired on the bazooka team, knocking them out.

Two friendly TD's, or tanks, one block to the east were working into position to fire when the enemy tanks left. The two opposing infantry forces were firing at each other across WILHELM street. Hand grenades were also tossed back and forth. Some of the enemy men got across the street but were driven out.

As two friendly tanks were advancing west along AUGUSTA street, and while about one half block east of WILHELM they were fired upon by the 75 # 1 gun. Neither was hit, the projectile passing between them. They returned the fire, knocking out the enemy gun.

17th October F Co sat tight waiting on the 3rd bn on its right flank.



During the day the enemy moved an SP 150mm gun into position, just north of the 75 # 3, on ALEXANDER street. Mortar fire was laid on it, driving it off. The mortar <sup>(crews)</sup> claimed a direct hit.

E and G Co moved forward as shown. G Co infantry and armor was now approaching the RR station(840423) and industrial area where the enemy had better fields of fire; and "caught hell", according to Lt. Bays, leader of the TD platoon operating with the company. The lieutenant now had only one destroyer with G. It started out in the morning from a position at (844424) but was held up near(843424) by direct enemy A/T and 150 SP gun fire coming down HINDENBERG street from the vicinity of the STATE THEATER(837428). The TD could not get in effective firing position without exposing itself, due to the layout of the streets. A Bn 155 SP gun was brought up to the point where the southeast end of HINDENBERG street runs into the wall of a partly demolished house; the TD fired 16 rounds at 15 yards into the wall, making a hole through with the 155 fired 6 HE toward the STATE THEATER. Apparently the enemy 150 SP gun withdrew. G Com advanced (west) across the fought-over street intersection at (843424); and one friendly medium tank knocked out an enemy Mark IV tank in the vicinity of the railroad station.

On 18th October 2nd Bn <sup>was</sup> assigned one objective which they reached about 1100. G company had not quite reached <sup>its objective,</sup> ~~the~~ being held up by machine gun fire coming from a convent(839426). They tried to knock it out with bazooka fire and rifle grenades but failed, <sup>they</sup> so brought up a tank which did the job about 1330. Another objective was assigned which the Bn reached by night.

The 2nd Bn still bent its right flank back to the corner of HEINRICHS ALLEE and JULICHER street to maintain contact with the 3rd. However, as will be shown later, the 3rd cleaned the area northeast of MONHEIMS ALLEE to KREFELDER street that day.

That same night (18-19) the battalion boundary was changed to include the city north to LUDWIGS ALLEE (just north of the 44th grid line). C Co was attached to the 2nd Bn and given the mission of taking the portion just

direction?

of the boundary line. C Co and the composite group (I & R platoon plus) were relieved by the 2nd Bn, 110th Regiment, who <sup>was</sup> ~~were~~ to be used purely defensively but to whom was assigned the area just north of the RR tracks. New company boundaries were designated as shown.

In the morning of the same day (18th October) the 3rd Bn attacked at 0645 with the mission of taking KURHAUS, the PALAST HOTEL and the circle just across KREFELDER street (840441). The attack <sup>jumped</sup> ~~was~~ off smoothly ~~as hell~~. Artillery fire did not fall until after the attack had started in order to catch the enemy by surprise and also to catch them as they moved out. I Co moved out on the right, L Co in the center, K Co on the left and M Co in support.

The 155 was placed on the edge of ROLAND CIRCLE (844444) and fired southwest on ROLAND street giving initial support to the attack of I Co. It was then withdrawn and sent around to the other side of the park.

Two tanks and two TD's supported K Co's advance. The tanks "fired the houses to the front" (west) at ROLAND CIRCLE (842442) and then shot down ROLAND street to the southwest. One went straight south through the circle, while the other turned right across KREFELDER street to (841443). The two TD's advanced with I Co down through ROLAND CIRCLE and down ROLAND street to MONHEIMS ALLEE firing two houses ahead of the infantry. About 1300 1st Lt Charles F. Burlando's TD knocked out an enemy 47mm AT gun at (8444). By nightfall I Co had attained its objective.

One platoon of L Co was to go over OBSERVATORY HILL and take KURHAUS. It was supported by two tanks and two TD's. In addition, the 155 was moved to the area southeast of KURHAUS (844438) from which position it fired on both KURHAUS and the PALAST HOTEL and was then withdrawn. The TD's and tanks fired on KURHAUS both at the same time as the 155, and afterwards, enabled L Co to take the buildings by mid-morning.

Two platoons of K Co moved northwest on MONHEIMS ALLEE, clearing the buildings on both sides. After L Co had taken KURHAUS, the other platoon

of K Co moved through it and attacked the PALAST HOTEL. This platoon, under 2nd Lt Wm. D. Ratchford, took the lobby of the hotel without much difficulty. They immediately set up a defense and blocked the three entrances to the basement which they had found. Most of his men were green replacements, but Lt. Ratchford sent patrols through the building, finding several more entrances to the basement. They threw captured potato masher grenades in on the enemy who was throwing his own out. Machine gun fire was also turned on the enemy who by this time had had enough and was trying to get out of the building, pausing only long enough to set his ammunition on fire. At the same time, K Co was spraying the enemy across the street with machine gun fire. The enemy lost 25 killed and 12 captured in the hotel.

By nightfall all three companies had reached their objectives. The whole area between MONHEIMS ALLEE and KREFELDER street plus the circle west of KREFELDER was firmly in American hands. The KURHAUS and the PALAST HOTEL turned out to be the headquarters for the German forces in AACHEN and also the storehouse. Large quantities of food and ammunition were found. A 20mm AA gun had been carried to the second floor, piece by piece, and put together prepared to fire on OBSERVATORY HILL.

In the push, L Co was pinched off and became the reserve. On the 19th they led the attack with the mission of securing SALVATOR HILL. The 155 had fired on the church on SALVATOR HILL and BELVEDERE HOTEL.

L Co was supported by two TD's of Sgt. Samek's section. The former secured the high ground around the hotel in the morning. The TD's and tanks moved up about noon. The TD's took positions on KUPFER street at (83654440) about 50 yards east of the hotel, in order to fire on anything going past on LUDWIG street. At noon just as Sgt. Samek was "getting his beans", the other crew members having eaten, two enemy half-tracks went east on LUDWIGS ALLEE. They were about 300 yards from the nearest destroyer. Cpl. Clifford L. Schommer, gunner, scored a "beautiful hit" on the 2nd half-track, "splattering the enemy vehicle and personnel across LUDWIGS ALLEE." The other enemy

half-track got away. L Co reached its objective.

I Co mission was to push thru the woods south of SALVATOR HILL and clean out the area bounded by KUPFER street and LUDWIGS ALLEE. The destroyers could not get through the rough terrain, so Lt Burlando left one destroyer on KREFELDER street at approximately (8444) and the other in the little park island on MONHEIMS ALLEE at the KREFELDER intersection (839439) in the bushes, affording some concealment. From this position the destroyer kept up harrasing fire on the south side of LUDWIGS ALLEE, firing about 15 rounds per hour. That night the destroyer pulled back around the north and west of SALVATOR HILL to a position from which it could fire down KUPFER St at anything moving in that direction.

K company remained in place prepared to take over the circle occupied by I Co, SALVATOR HILL and the BELVEDERE HOTEL after L Co had taken them. One platoon moved in about 1400 and the balance later in the day.

All companies reached their objectives for the day. The same day, the 30th Inf Div was reported in LAURENSBERG. Therefore the mission of Task Force Hogan was changed to securing the northwest half of LOUSBERG HILL.

On ~~the~~ 19<sup>th</sup> Oct the 2nd Bn plus the 2nd bn 110th Regt and C Co moved out as shown. There was a "good bit" of enemy mortar fire during the day. In the morning C Co mortars "flushed out three enemy squads of mortarmen with five 81mm mortars" and infantrymen captured the enemy personnel and weapons. E Co moved out to a point as shown rather than stop half way through the block.

On ~~the~~ 20<sup>th</sup> Oct the 2nd Bn., plus <sup>attachments,</sup> moved out as shown. F and C Co's ran into very stiff machine gun, rifle and mortar fire. (During the two days C ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ was attached they received more mortar fire than the whole 2nd Bn did during the same period). Also strong sniper fire was coming from the southeast corner TEMPLERGRASBEN and EILFSCHORNSTEIN Street. (83254344).

Stiff opposition was also coming from the TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL (831434). One platoon of F Company built up the fire fight from across TEMPLERGRABEN. A TD on the left flank fired at the school, another one was working its

way around to flank the building from the rear. However, the enemy, after holding out for about an hour, had had enough and surrendered, 75 -80 PWS being taken from the high school.

About the same time E Company was engaging the building to the south (831434) about noon an officer and two enlisted men came over to E Company carrying a white flag. The officer stated that if an American Officer would go back with him they would surrender. However, before they got back to the building the enemy started falling out through the doors and windows. About 125 PWS were taken.

By nightfall the battalion had reached its objective for the day, the RR tracks on the western edge of the city.

The 3rd Bn pushed off on the 20th Oct at 0630 hrs. L Co was to finish clearing out the eastern half of LOUSBERG HILL. K Co was to clean out an area between LUDWIGS ALLEE, RUTSCHER St. and NIZZA ALLEE. I Co was to rest and not be committed unless necessary.

However, K Co ran into strong enemy resistance in the hospital at (834440), so I Co was sent into assist. K Co was then given the block north of FORSTER St and I Co the triangular block south of LOUSBERG St. (831440).

On the 21st October Lt.Col.Daniel was asked what he wanted to do. He suggested moving on west including the ridge line toward Sustern(820438). ~~However,~~ Later the boundry was changed and he was ordered not to go north of MAASTRICHER and MELATENEX Sts. The companies were given the mission shown on overlay, which they accomplished without difficulty.

The same day the 3rd battalion had the mission of securing the north west end of LOUISBERG HILL and the area south of it. (See overlay for objectives for each company).

The day started off with the 155 firing from a position on LOUSBERG street into the bunker at (82954430).

I and K Companies were progressing satisfactorily, but K Company was meeting rather stiff opposition around the bunker noted above.

About 1100 two hundred enemy marched up to surrender. The information was brought in that Col. Wilhe, the commander of the German forces, wished to surrender. Captain Bott, I Company commander, went into the bunker.

General Taylor, Assistant Division Commander, and Col. Seitz, 26th Inf Commander, were at the 3rd Bn CP at the time. The surrender was negotiated, and at 1206 the surrender of the German forces was complete except for the mopping up of elements in the outlying districts. This was accomplished during the afternoon, and both Bns. withdrew from the city to their original area that night.

Officers of the 3rd Bn stated that the taking of their section of the city was the hardest, toughest and longest steady fight they had ever had.

The account of the last day is considerably lacking in detail because of lack of interviews. It will be rewritten if and when additional interviews have been accomplished.

Persons interviewed in connection with foregoing account:

Major Henry N. Clisson, S-3, 26th Inf.  
Capt. James W. Rennie, Asst S-3, 26th Inf.  
1st Lt. Cedric A. Lafley, S-2, 26th Inf.  
Lt. Col. D.M. Daniel, CO, 2nd Bn, 26th Inf.  
Major John F. Dulligan, Executive Officer, 2nd Bn, 26th Inf.  
1st Lt. Ladimer F. Jelinek, A & P commander, 2nd Bn, 26th Inf.  
Captain Ozell L. Smoot, CO, E co, 2nd Bn, 26th Inf.  
1st Lt. Webb W. Chesnut, Ex Officer, E co, 2nd Bn 26th Inf.  
1st Lt. Beasor B. Walker, CO, G co, 2nd Bn, 26th Inf.  
Captain Gilbert H. Fuller, CO, H co, 2nd Bn, 26th Inf.  
Lt. Col. Corley, CO, 3rd Bn, 26th Inf.  
1st Lt. John E. Reynolds, S-2, 3rd Bn, 26th Inf.  
2nd Lt. William D. Ratchford, CO, 2nd Pla, K Co, 3rd Bn, 26th Inf.  
1st Lt. William J. Groll, CO, Wpns Platoon, L Co, 3rd Bn, 26th Inf.  
1st Lt. Walter F. Neckey, CO, M co, 3rd Bn, 26th Inf.  
2nd Lt. Robert E. Readle, Executive Officer, I Co, 3rd Bn, 26th Inf.

HEADQUARTERS FIRST BATTALION  
18TH INFANTRY  
A.P.O. #1 U.S. ARMY

2 November 1944.

Record of Events for the month of October 1944.

The curtain lifted on October to find the Battalion preparing to leave its defensive position in the dripping forests south of Aachen. The seige of the German city was to be lifted shortly, and the 18th Infantry had been selected to play a major role in this undertaking. On the morning of the 2nd, the Battalion was relieved by the 237th Engineer Battalion and moved to a bivouac area approximately 2 miles behind the front lines. This was the first break for the troops since the blitz had been resumed in western France in the latter part of August. The Siegfried Line had been penetrated, a great enemy city besieged, and summer turned to autumn.

Remaining in the bivouac area for six days, the Battalion accomplished two things. The troops were cleaned and rested, and the limited recreational facilities of a front-line Division placed at the disposal of the men. At the same time the plan for the complete encirclement and reduction of the defenses of Aachen was unfolded. To us fell the mission of seizing "Crucifix Hill", a key terrain feature northeast of the city. This ridge, heavily held and well organized for defense by the enemy, was a bulwark of the Siegfried Line in the Aachen area. Studded with pill boxes and observation posts along its 1000 yards of length, it was a stronghold that had to be removed before anyone could successfully penetrate the defenses of Aachen or even move freely in areas already held by our forces. A sharp rise on the western part of the ridge, surmounted by a huge cross that could be seen for miles around, gave that portion of the ground its dramatic name. 1,000 yards east of "Crucifix Hill" lay the village of Verlautenheide, another integral part of the enemy's defense system. At this point the ridge took a bend to the southeast, and 400 yards from Verlautenheide lay the forward outposts of the 2nd Battalion of the 16th Infantry.

The master plan called for the 18th Infantry to seize Verlautenheide and "Crucifix Hill" and to push out to a low-lying ridge northwest of Eilendorf on the south side of the valley in front of the positions of our 3rd Battalion. When this had been accomplished, the 26th Infantry was to swing out from its positions to attack Aachen proper and force the capitulation of the city. Before the latter part of the plan was to be effected, however, the enemy commandant was to be tendered an opportunity to surrender. In event of refusal, the city was to be reduced to rubble by our bombers and artillery pieces prior to the jump-off of the 26th.

The 18th's role in this quick stroke was to be as follows: After an artillery preparation of one hour's length on known enemy targets, the 2nd Battalion would attack through the 16th Infantry's left company position and seize the village of Verlautenheide. Upon the consolidation of this objective, the 1st Battalion would jump across the ridge through the village and push on out to "Crucifix Hill", organizing the ground thereabout for defense. At the same time the Weiden-Haaren road was to be cut by fire, and its use as an escape or reinforcement route for the forces in Aachen denied to the enemy. Then the 3rd Battalion would jump from its present position to the bare ridge to its front,

diverting some of the enemy's attention from "Crucifix Hill." The whole plan was one of speed, daring, determination and coordination. It was not an easy job; on the contrary, it was one of the most difficult objectives ever assigned us. Cover was very limited from the word "Go"; opportunity for maneuver did not exist. It was to be a straight power drive through the center of the line, and that line contained all those pill boxes filled with stubborn fighters and artillery observers. Therefore, everything was carefully planned to furnish the man with the rifle and pole charge the maximum amount of support from the ground and air. An air-ground liaison officer was to accompany each battalion. He would have a 510 radio, installed in a tank, and could call on supporting squadrons for missions on targets anywhere in our sector. In addition to our own tanks and tank destroyers, one battery of 155mm self propelled guns was on hand to furnish direct fire against any enemy pill boxes or other installations that should prove a tough nut to crack. 11 battalions of field artillery stood ready to smash everything in our way, break up the inevitable enemy counter-attacks, and counter-battery the German's artillery and mortar positions. The men themselves were armed with pole charges, satchel charges, flame throwers, beehives, and bangalore torpedoes, this in addition to their normal infantry weapons, to enable them to assault this huge "fort". Assault teams were organized overnight and the company officers worked frantically to whip their platoons into shape for the bold attack. A large percentage of the men making the attack had only had their induction to combat a week or so before. They were not finished soldiers in any sense of the word and wonders had to be worked during the six days of planning, briefing, training, etc.

The attack was set for the early morning hours of October 8th. Accordingly at 20 00 hours of the evening of the 7th, the Battalion moved in trucks to arrive at a rear assembly area in the vicinity of Brand at 2300 hours. At 0045 the Battalion marched in column of companies to the forward assembly area at Eilendorf. There the troops were dispersed among the cellars of the eastern section of the town, to await the order to move out and attack. At 0400 hours the 2nd Battalion jumped off and, after a bitter struggle and some trying moments, took its objective. This was at approximately 0700. It took considerably longer to mop up, however, and our Battalion did not commence to move from Eilendorf until 0900.

The Battalion Commander and Forward Command Group were the first elements of the Battalion to move across the open ground to our jump-off positions in Verlautenheide. By this time the enemy was aware of what was going on and had registered heavily on Verlauterheide as well as the approach to it from the 16th Infantry positions. As the Command Group picked its way through the hail of death that enveloped it, it became obvious that the Battalion would have to be infiltrated into Verlautenheide by platoon groups. Orders to this effect were given and reorganization points in the western part of the village designated for the two assault companies, "C" and "A" Companies. Moving through the heaviest artillery and mortar fire encountered by the Battalion since the breakthrough at Marigny, the companies did not reach their jump-off positions until 1500 hours.

The order to attack was given at 1530 in the afternoon and "C" Company, reinforced by the "Ranger" Platoon and 1 platoon of heavy machine guns attached from Company "D", sprang forward along the crest of the ridge leading to "Crucifix Hill". In spite of the most intense artillery, mortar and machine gun fire, these gallant men pressed their attack into the face of the foe. Pill box after pill box fell before the inspired drive of these immortals, as they went to work with demolition charges and flame throwers to drive the enemy from



his strong positions and destroy or capture him. The huge crucifix, which proved to have been an enemy observation post, was reduced to rubble, even as our men were approaching it. The Company Commander of "C" Company, Captain Bobbie E. Brown, was wounded three times by enemy fire but continued to drive forward at the head of his men. By 1630 "Crucifix Hill" belonged to the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry.

Echeloned to the left rear of "C" Company came "A" Company, reinforced by a platoon of heavy machine guns. The mission of this force was to reduce the defenses on the south slope of "Crucifix Hill" and link eventually with "C" Company. "A" was not so fortunate. Reaching a point 300 yards southwest of Verlautenheide, they ran into 2 platoons of the enemy who were well entrenched and apparently willing to die for the Fuhrer rather than surrender. After a bitter struggle that raged back and forth until dark, it was decided to hold "A" Company until direct artillery fire could be brought to bear upon the enemy strong points.

"B" Company was held in reserve in Verlautenheide throughout the first night. Throughout the day the Battalion had captured approximately 60 prisoners and inflicted heavy casualties on two German companies. A vital objective had been seized and the enemy knocked out of one of his strongest positions. It had not been accomplished the easy way. Our men had had to fight for every inch of ground and had to dig new positions under continuous heavy shell fire. 60 officers and enlisted men fell on the battlefield that day and more were to follow in the face of desperate enemy counter-attacks. The Battalion Command Post, set up in Verlautenheide, was subjected to shell fire that fell upon the area like rain. It was rugged going but "Crucifix Hill" no longer looked down menacingly upon our front lines and rear areas.

Dawn of October 9th broke with the enemy saturating our newly-won positions with shell and mortar fire. At approximately 0615 the enemy attempted to retake "Crucifix Hill" by storm, and 3 waves of infantrymen and assault engineers moved up its northern and western slopes. The men of "C" Company held their fire until Jerry was almost upon them. Then they opened up with a murderous grazing fire that piled the onrushing Germans in front of their very fox holes. One section of "D" Company's heavy machine guns particularly distinguished itself, the gunners swinging their guns with ree traverse and blazing away at every German in sight. The enemy (or whatever shattered remnants were left) withdrew as suddenly as they had attacked, leaving forty-some-odd dead strewn on the bloody slopes of "Crucifix Hill". 35 prisoners were taken.

Later on in the morning two self propelled 155mm guns were brought up to Eilendorf to engage the enemy strong points still holding out against "A" Company. They succeeded in smashing two pill boxes completely and laid a deadly fire on the rest of the enemy in the area. "A" Company assisted by 1 platoon of "C" succeeded in dislodging the enemy from many of his positions. Heavy casualties were inflicted and 12 prisoners taken. However, many still held out fanatically against our pressure on all sides.

On the evening of October 9th, "B" and "I" Companies pulled one of the great "sneak" plays of the war. They were ordered to move out from "Crucifix Hill", head to the northwest and seize Ravels-B, a prominent hill 1500 yards northwest of "Crucifix Hill." Moving in the dead of the night, the two companies slipped quietly through the dark and reached their objective several hours later. The Company Commander of "B" Company, Captain Jesse R. Miller, Jr., wisely decide to avoid any scrap with the enemy if it could be helped. In order to do this, he had to skirt many pill boxes. While crossing the main Haaren-Weiden Road, The column broke many times to allow enemy convoys to move up and down the road. This daring move was the final stroke in springing the trap upon the encircled foe in Aachen. Now the Germans had no recourse other than to stand and fight the 26th Infantry or attempt to break out through the 18th Infantry.

On the morning of the 10th, "A" Company finally broke the enemy resistance on the south slope of "Crucifix Hill" and seized a German Officer and 30 of his men. That evening the company moved to fill the gap between "Crucifix Hill" and the forces on Ravels-B. No enemy resistance was encountered and the company organized the western slope of the now famous hill as well as setting up a road block on the last escape gap. In the meantime "B" and "I" Companies were nosling on their objectives, undetected by the enemy until the afternoon when a German Lieutenant and 25 of his men stumbled unwittingly into the arms of #B# Company. A short time later a Lieutenant Colonel and his staff fell prey to the same treatment. All day long "C" Company was subjected to devastating barrages of artillery and mortar fire. Casualties were mounting in the Battalion, 16 on the 9th and 47 on the 10th.

On the 11th the 3rd Battalion moved "L" and "K" Companies into the vicinity of Haaren. At the same time the 1st and 3rd Battalion Command Posts moved into the town and the latter Battalion took over the sector from Ravels-B to the main road. "I" Company was extended to tie in with "A" Company, the latter being responsible for the main road. "B" Company which was now attached to the 3rd Battalion, began to receive heavy shell fire early in the afternoon that increased to a terrific rate in the evening. At 1730 German Infantry, supported by tanks, launched a heavy counter attack to retake Ravels-B. The "B" Company men, battered incessantly in their fox holes and pill boxes held their ground and withstood several repeated onslaughts. When darkness fell, the enemy desisted for the time being. His artillery did not lift, however, and it was fairly obvious that he would try again to take this important terrain feature. Throughout the day heavy vehicular movement had been observed on the Weiden-Merzbruck Road from the observation posts on "Crucifix Hill". Enemy reinforcements were reported to have been brought up hastily from the east and south, either to stop what looked like an attempt at a breakthrough on our part or to relieve the besieged troops in Aachen. Enemy artillery continued to exact a toll on our battalion and 18 casualties were sustained.

The 12th heralded further artillery fire on all our positions and another desperate counter-attack against "B" Company, whose gallant men held their ground and inflicted further casualties on the enemy. Two enemy motorcycles came barrelling down the main road into "A" Company's road block, two Germans being killed and one taken prisoner. The same road block netted ~~four~~ four horse-drawn carts the next day, 10 of the enemy being killed and 6 captured through the alert action of our BAR men and machine gunners. This

process was again repeated on the 14th, resulting in the death of 1 enemy soldier and the capture of another. On the same day "B" Company was relieved by "K" Company and moved back to a reserve position in Haaren. During these three days our Battalion suffered 30 casualties at the hands of the undiminished enemy artillery.

On the morning of the 15th "A" Company launched a strong raid against three enemy held pill boxes. The enemy surrendered one of the pill boxes after hand placed charges had been set off against it, and 24 prisoners were gathered up by our sudden blow. The other pill boxes proved too strong to crack by our limited action, and after a sharp fight in their vicinity our men withdrew. In the afternoon of the same day, "B" Company was again released from Battalion control to assist the 2nd Battalion in making a counter-attack against a strong enemy force that had infiltrated into the houses on the eastern edge of Verlautenheide. "B" Company did a creditable job and then moved a reinforced platoon into the gap between the 2nd Battalion and the 16th Infantry. Mortar, artillery and tank fire continued to pound our positions unmercifully day and night.

On the 16th we were informed that the 18th Infantry would be holding down this hot corner for some time to come and ordered to take every step conceivable to improve our defensive position. That night the division engineers laid a hasty mine field in front of "C" Company's position, and the following night the companies commenced to string defensive wire. Anti-personnel mines and booby traps were laid down along the Battalion's front. Our men accomplished this work and continued to improve upon it on subsequent nights in spite of no let up in the enemy's artillery pounding. During the night of the 17th the enemy added personnel bombs to his harassing fire when several planes flew low over our positions.

After dark on the 18th "A" Company sent a patrol to the pill box that had yielded the 24 Germans, with orders to destroy it. This time the enemy were very much on the alert and offered stubborn resistance to our efforts. The patrol was forced to withdraw after having killed one German. On the same day the enemy launched a heavy attack against "K" Company on Ravels-B and overran a portion of the position, resulting in the capture of three of our pill boxes. "B" Company, the old standby, was ordered to assist "K" Company in restoring the position by launching a strong counter-attack against the pill boxes that had been seized by the enemy. This order was carried out at dawn of the 19th; the position was restored and 50 prisoners were taken. On the next day the enemy made his last effort to take this bloody piece of ground and was again driven off with heavy losses. The gallant men of "B" Company had been fighting bitterly day and night for several days running and were beginning to show signs of weariness. Accordingly on the 21st "A" Company had been sent to relieve "B", and the latter took up positions on the western slope of "Crucifix Hill" as well as taking over the road block on the main road. Almost as soon as the company took over its new sector, an enemy patrol of 4 men attempted to infiltrate into its line. 3 were killed and 1 captured.

The three pill boxes north of "Crucifix Hill" were irksome thorns in our side. They were passive enough in so far as small arms fire coming from them was concerned. But it was suspected by many that these pill boxes, or at least one of them, had better observation on our sector than previously imagined. On the night of the 24th-24th, accordingly, a strong force comprising

a platoon of "A" Company and one of "C" was sent out to destroy the enemy in this area, and if possible, extend our line to include the pill boxes. The force went out at 2330 but failed to accomplish its mission because of heavy enemy resistance, loss of control due to fog, and a number of new men failing to close with the enemy. The next night the same platoons were sent out again to close with the enemy on the same mission. This time they succeeded in destroying one pill box. 24 prisoners were taken. Our men succeeded in surrounding one other pill box but could not force its capitulation because of very heavy enemy fire and an abundance of mines and booby traps on the ground. The job was well done, however, with minimum losses to our platoons. In addition to the 24 prisoners, 6 of the enemy were left dead on the field when our men withdrew to their original positions.

Deciding not to send any additional men after the pill boxes, the Battalion Commander determined to drive the enemy out by another method, direct fire. On October 28th two tank destroyers and two tanks were maneuvered into firing positions in the 3rd Battalion's sector where they engaged all three of the enemy's pill boxes with direct fire. Hits were scored on every box and the enemy was seen to scamper from the boxes into the open emplacements about them. At this point we threw heavy mortar fire into the ground all about the area and inflicted severe casualties, as was evidenced by the frenzied activity on the part of the enemy first id men after our fire had been lifted. Later on in the afternoon a similar dose was administered and this time five of the enemy, unable to stand any more of this murderous fire, turned themselves into our lines. Just before dark one tank fired again. From then on, the effectiveness of the enemy in that area was greatly reduced and the enemy denied the use of this ground for observation purposes.

On the night of the 29th-30th, the Battalion was finally relieved of its stand on "Crucifix Hill" after a vigil of three weeks standing. "A" Company had been returned to Battalion control on the night of the 27th and the whole unit moved quietly to a bivouac area located on the Haaren-Aachen Road. Another era had come to a conclusion for the Battalion, and our men could well feel proud of this addition to their glorious record in World War II. "Crucifix Hill" and Ravels-B will always be a standing tribute to those gallant men, living and dead, who fought so well against endless odds and inflicted such terrible losses on a vicious foe who had to be turned back by blood and iron, sweat and tears, and the sheer "guts" that have characterized our army throughout its history.

For the Battalion Commander:

E. W. MC GREGOR,  
Captain, Infantry,  
S - 3.

~~SECRET~~

"F" Company, 2nd Battalion, 36th Armd Inf Regt., 3<sup>rd</sup> ~~Armored~~ *Armored* Division

Interview with: 1st Lt. Norman C. Streit, CO.

Prepared by: Frederick P. Cooper, T/Sgt, 2nd Info & Hist Serv.,  
1st U.S. Army.

~~SECRET~~

19th Oct.

As a part of Task Force Hogan, "F" company moved up to Line of Departure on the morning of the 19th. Jumped off at 0730, advancing in a column of platoons with the 1st leading, the 2nd following and the 3rd in support.

The company advanced without meeting enemy opposition thru phase lines A, and B. Upon crossing phase line B the company deployed into a line of skirmishers, with the 1st platoon on the left (south), 2nd platoon in the center and the 3rd on the right flank. The company advanced to St. Rafael Cloister (836451) where the task force was divided into two separate forces. "F" company being assigned the mission of taking Lousberg Hill (830445).

(Note: At this period Lt. Streit was 3rd platoon leader).

The company advanced south from the Cloister with platoons on a line, about 1000. The 1st platoon worked their way southeast to a trail (839448) ~~XXXX~~ down which they could make their way to the base of the hill. The 2nd and 3rd platoons moved south and entered the woods (835449) working their way to the base of the hill where they were pinned down for approximately a hour by small arms fire from the pillboxes on the slope. <sup>They</sup> also received fire from emplacements on road embankment at 829448.

The 1st platoon in the meanwhile had advanced down <sup>the</sup> trail where they came under heavy fire from enemy positions on the north slope of Lousberg Hill. They could not advance and withdrew to the Cloister.

The 3rd platoon withdrew to the road at north edge of the woods and made their way west to the edge from where they again worked south to the base of the hill.

The 2nd platoon remained in the south edge of the woods (834447) engaging the enemy with small arms and BAR fire.

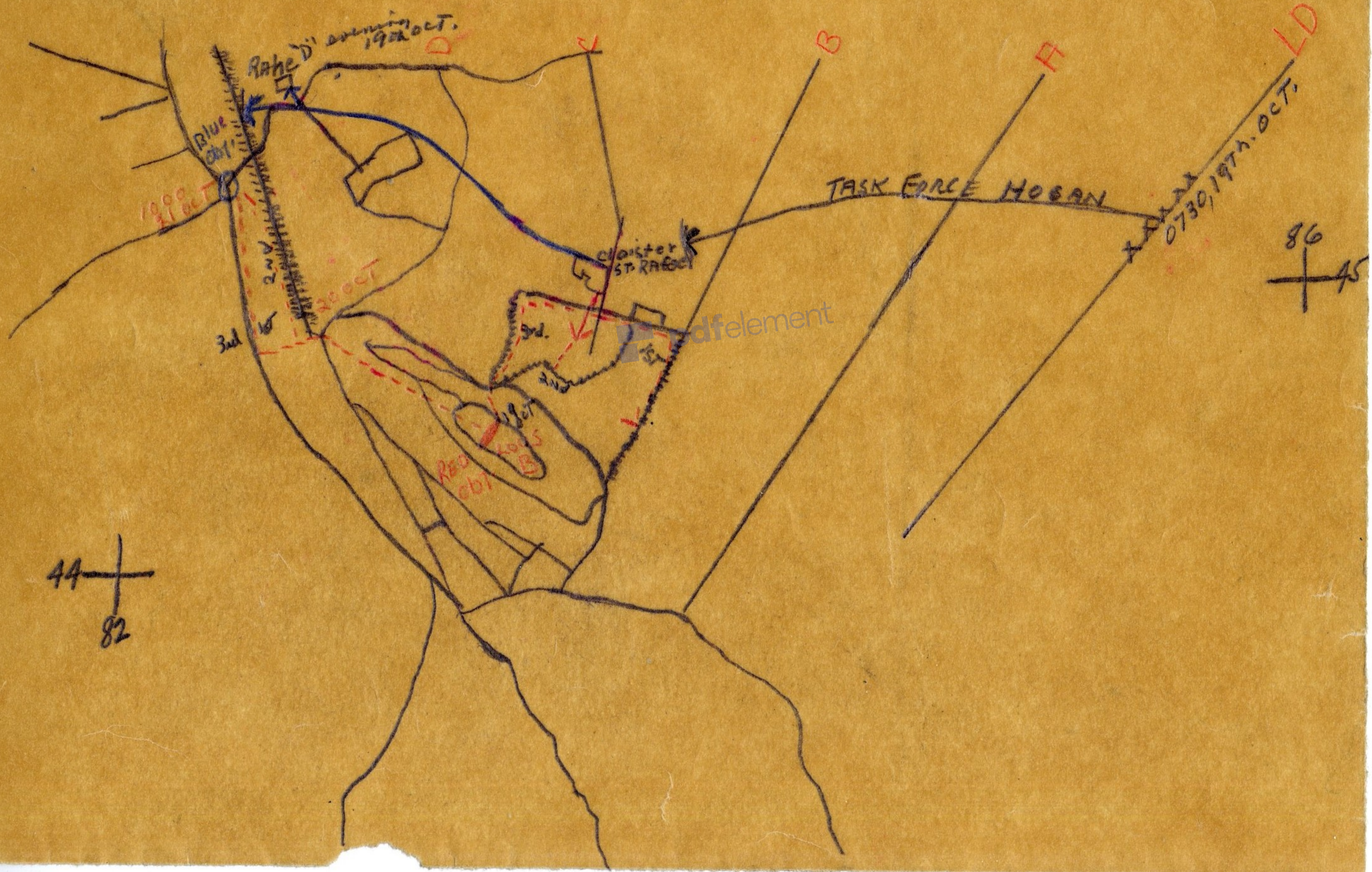
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CO. "F" and BN. 36th AIR. And 3rd Bn., 33rd Armd Regt.

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— = TASK FORCE  
— = "C" 33rd + "D" 36th AIR  
— = "E+F" 36th AIR + "H" 33rd AIR



19th Oct.

The 3rd platoon, working their way along the edge of the woods, met some small arms fire and captured a few prisoners in the wood. Worked their way to the base of the hill and continued on to the crest, which they reached about 1300. Set up an all around defense and notified company Hqs by runner that they had reached their objective.

The 2nd platoon withdrew from their position(834447) and followed along the same route of the 3rd platoon, reaching the crest of the hill at 1430.

The two platoons set up their defenses for the night with the enemy still dug in on the northwest part of the hill. Some small arms fire received throughout the night but no other enemy activity.

20th Oct.

The 1st platoon joined the 2nd and 3rd about 1200 on the crest of the hill. The company was then ordered to advance on down the northwest slope of the hill and assist in taking the objective of "D" company (RJ 824454).

The company jumped off about 1430 and worked their way down the slope, meeting light resistance, arriving at the bottom of the hill about dusk. The enemy positions on the northwest slope of the hill were all facing to the north and as "F" company advanced they were found to be unoccupied. The company took up a defensive position for the night at (827448).

21st Oct.

Company moved out at 0800 with the 1st platoon on the right of road and the 3rd on the left with the 2nd in support. Advanced north meeting light resistance from the houses along the road. Reached the objective around 1030 and manned roadblocks there until relieved on the 23rd Oct.

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