

GL-527

COVERING STATEMENT
Hurtgen Forest
16-30 November 1944
1st Division

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Maj. Kenneth W. Hechler, 2d Information & Hist. Sv.

The main action of the 18th Inf., the capture of Hill 203, has been covered in previously-submitted interview forwarded by Lt. Fred L. Hadsel. The actions of five of the remaining six battalions in the 1st Division are covered in the attached accounts.

The most complete, clear and accurate covering statement has been written by the G-2 Section of the 1st Division, in the attached Intelligence Activities for the period 1-30 November 1944.

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KENNETH W. HECHLER
Maj., Inf.

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1ST INF DIVISION

Hurtgen Forest

16-29 November 1944

A collection of interviews at battalion level on action in advancing through extremely difficult terrain. Some small unit detail included along with comments on use of Tank Destroyers. Clear and accurate covering statement by G2 section.

1st Bn, 16th Infantry	6 pages	Bn. CO
2nd Bn, 16th Infantry	4 pages	Bn. S3
3rd Bn, 16th Infantry	4 pages	Bn. CO
1st Bn, 18th Infantry	7 pages	Bn. CO
1st Bn, 26th Infantry	5 pages	Bn. CO
2nd Bn, 26th Infantry	3 pages	Bn. S3 and Company Comm.
634 TD Bn.	4 pages	Bn CO, EX O Comp Officers
745 Tank Bn.	5 pages	Bn CO Ex O Various Bn Off.

Cross Reference: for 9th Inf. Division

1st Bn 47th Infantry	8 pages	Co. Off
2nd Bn 47th Infantry	7 pages	Bn. Co
3rd Bn 47th Infantry	4 pages	Bn. Co
2nd Bn Atch. K Company 47th Infantry	9 pages	BN. Co

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HURTGEN FOREST
16-30 November 1944
1st Bn., 16th Inf., 1st Div.

Interview with Lt. Col. Edmond F. Driscoll, Bn. Cdr., 1st Bn.,
16th Inf.

Place: FRANT LAZNE, Czechoslovakia. Date: 24 May 1945

No journals consulted

Maps Used: Germany, 1:25,000, DUREN (5104), LENDERSDORF (5204),
STOLBERG (5203), ESCHWEILER (5103).

1 overlay for all of 16 and 16 actions.

Interviewer: Major Kenneth W. Hechler, 2d Info & Hist. Sv.

After noon of 16 November, following an air strike and
artillery and rocket preparation, the 1st Bn., 16th jumped off
from the vicinity of SCHEVENHUTTE with the objective of taking
HAMICH with two companies abreast.

The enemy was defending HAMICH fanatically, and had all
the advantages of good terrain for the defense. The approaches
from the south were through very thick pine woods, in which the
enemy had built up a strong line of overhead-cover holes east
of GRESSENICH. From second-story windows in HAMICH, the enemy
could deliver grazing machine gun fire across the ground approach-
ing the town.

The night before the jumpoff, patrols went out and re-
moved friendly mines in front of the 1st Bn's positions. The
plan of attack for D-Day was to have A Co., the left Co., ad-
vance to secure the road junction (999432) southwest of HAMICH
and the woods overlooking the open ground west and southwest of
the town, while the right company, C Co., would secure the pitted
area southeast of HAMICH.

Both companies met determined opposition shortly after

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jumping off, as the enemy resisted stubbornly from his log and dirt-covered dugouts. By late afternoon, both companies had pushed forward as far as ^aline running east from the sandpit area. Just as Col. Driscoll started to bring up his reserve company to commence the final push into HAMICH, the enemy counterattacked with 50 enemy unsupported by armor. Close to dark this small counterattack was beaten off without very much trouble or casualties. Artillery fire, however, continued in large quantities.

About dark, the battalion started across open ground toward HAMICH, and was heavily shelled by dual-purpose AA guns. Then the tempo of the firing increased, and the enemy started to pour on some 210mm. against the attackers. "The artillery did not let up for two or three days," said Col. Driscoll.

In trying to move tanks up to support the attack on HAMICH, they became bogged down along the muddy trails in the heavy woods and had particular difficulty crossing a ditch at (000428). Hand-carried weapons and supplies enabled the infantry elements to hold their line, but the troops were severely handicapped by inability to use the GRESSENICH-HAMICH road, inasmuch as GRESSENICH was still in enemy hands.

All day on 17 November, the 1st Bn. attempted to crack the HAMICH defenses, and casualties were heavy. All companies had started the action with strengths of about 160, but after the HAMICH fight had concluded on 18 November, ~~the~~ A Co. had approximately 100 men and both B and C Cos. were down to 60-70 apiece. Col. Driscoll estimates that 30% of these casualties were from small-arms

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fire and 70% from artillery fire. The enemy had perfect observation on HAMICH from Hill 232.

During the night of 17-18 November, three enemy tanks and supporting infantry drove across open ground from the northeast to the front-line foxholes of B Co. on the right flank of the battalion. Artillery fire was brought down on both the enemy and some of the forward troops of the battalion, driving off the counterattack and damaging one of the tanks.

On the morning of 18 November, P47s "came in and dropped one bomb very close to us and scared hell out of us, but they went away when we showed our panels," stated Col. Driscoll. The same morning elements of the 3d Bn., 16th Inf. pushed forward into HAMICH, where they were met by a serious German counterattack "which came at us from seemingly all directions." A Mark VI tank in hull defilade fired methodically southwest down the road from its position at (007439), its rounds hitting the trees above the heads of the men. During early afternoon, the enemy commenced a more organized effort, supported by 10-15 tanks of various sizes, to drive the Americans out of HAMICH. The hero of the 1st battalion in repulsing these counterattacks was T/Sgt. Jake W. Lindsey of C Co.

Sgt. Lindsey was in position on the left flank of his platoon of C Co., armed with rifle, hand grenades and rifle grenades. By 1400 of the 18th, artillery and counterattacks had killed 3 and wounded 31 of his platoon, and there were only six men left when the enemy counterattacked with a company of infantry supported by 5 tanks. Rifle grenade fire drove away the tanks after they had penetrated to within fifty yards of Sgt. Lindsey's position, and all

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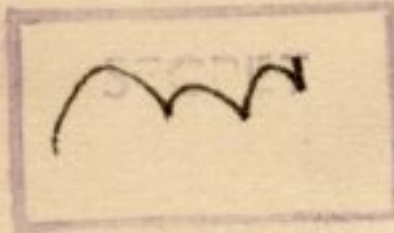
attempts to set up machine gun positions were driven off by grenades and rifle fire. After six enemy assaults, with fresh troops, had been repulsed, Sgt. Lindsey observed a group of eight enemy soldiers preparing to set up new machine gun positions in the vicinity of where he had previously destroyed two automatic weapons. Although carrying a piece of ~~ammunition~~ shell fragment in his knee from one of the earlier attacks, Sgt. Lindsey jumped out of his foxhole and ran 50 yards across open terrain with his bayonet fixed, killed two enemy and took three prisoners. Two Germans managed to escape. He captured the two machine gun positions and five burp guns.

The enemy was driven off with losses of 100 killed and 25 seriously wounded. Of this number, Sgt. Lindsey is officially credited with 10 by his rifle, 7 by hand and rifle grenades and 3 with his bayonet.* HAMICH was definitely in our hand by the close of the 18th, after three days of bitter fighting.

The 1st Bn. then proceeded toward LANGERWEHE, with a machine gun platoon under Lt. Roderic J. Ellis attached from D Co. Lt. Ellis went in and organized the first eight houses in LANGERWEHE and ordered his men to hold up there, inasmuch as LANGERWEHE was a huge town and it had not yet been cleared, nor was it the mission of the 1st Bn., 16th Inf., to clear it. However, Lt. Charles Wood, a "rashly daredevil platoon leader", decided to proceed into LANGERWEHE with his platoon from C Co. Lt. Wood apparently dropped one man off at each house along the streets, with instructions to clean out the resistance-- when in reality the number of enemy troops in

* See Sgt. Lindsey's citation for a Medal of Honor. Sgt. Lindsey was awarded the Medal before a joint session of Congress by President Truman because he was the 100th infantryman to receive the award. (See attached clipping from 30 May 1945 issue of THE STARS AND STRIPES).

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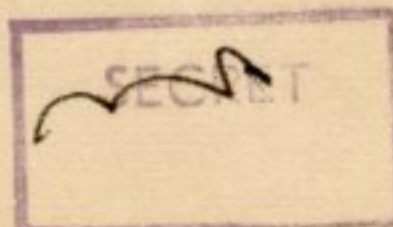


the buildings was high. Lt. Wood and his platoon were ~~never~~ ^{not} heard from until the survivors were liberated from German prison camps during the last weeks of the European war. Lt. Ellis remained in the eight houses on the outskirts of LANGERWEHE, supporting as best he could from sound defensive positions.

In the organized attack on LANGERWEHE on 27 November, the 1st Bn., 16th Inf., attacked on the left flank of the 18th Inf. The enemy had recently reinforced LANGERWEHE with elements of the 3d Parachute Division, and they forced determined house-to-house fighting before yielding. These reinforcements were mainly very young, but seemed to want to fight until almost the end. 50-60 prisoners were taken by the 1st Bn. in LANGERWEHE.

Three days after LANGERWEHE had been cleared, the 1st Bn. attacked LUCHEM (037490). "This was one of the best-executed attacks the battalion ever made," commented Col. Driscoll. The element of surprise was considered ~~was~~ one of the chief factors in the success of the operation.

With three days to plan for the attack, the 1st Bn. had ample opportunity to observe enemy activity in the area and to patrol to the enemy lines to determine his strongpoints. The enemy was defending LUCHEM with elements of two companies, supported by heavy weapons. On the main LANGERWEHE-LUCHEM road just southwest of LUCHEM, there was a log road block covered by fire. No mines were employed in the defense scheme. Many of the enemy's guns were placed in or behind haystacks as camouflage. The approach to LUCHEM was across flat, open ground.



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The attack on LUCHEM jumped off at 0400 under a fairly good moon. (NOTE: Date of attack was not clear; Col. Driscoll is certain this is in the after-action report). A platoon sneaked around west and north of LUCHEM and annihilated a six-man outpost on the autobahn, whose positions had previously been spotted. ^{Several} ~~A~~ good concentrations had been thrown on the town by combat team artillery and the cannon company, which continued to fire harrassing fire during the advance. However, the attack upon LUCHEM represented a change in tactics in the use of artillery ^{several} in conjunction with infantry attacks. Although ~~no~~ ~~x~~ concentrations were ~~was~~ placed on the town prior to the assault, ^{there was no} ~~it was not made an~~ obvious pre-jumpoff concentration which would alert the enemy.

A platoon from B Co., after rubbing out the autobahn outpost, sneaked into town from the northwest, while A Co. approached from the southwest. According to Col. Driscoll, they then proceeded to throw grenades into every cellar window. The opposition was further intimidated when the supporting tanks and TDs rushed up the road to LUCHEM, crashing through the log road block and going into ~~the~~ ~~town~~ ~~outside~~ the town. The armor paraded the streets and put rounds into building windows at periodic intervals. The town was cleaned out ~~and~~ with a battalion casualty list of about 30, after repulsing a feeble counterattack of a handful of infantry.

That night, the battalion was relieved by a battalion of infantry in a smooth operation without the loss of a man. "The whole operation of taking LUCHEM worked like clockwork," said Col. Driscoll, "and if I had it to do over again I'd use precisely the same tactics."

Kenneth W. Hechler

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Maj., Inf. (Armored)

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HURTGEN FOREST

16-30 November 1944

2d Bn., 16th Inf., 1st Division

Interview with Capt. Fred^{W.}/Hall, Jr., S-3, 2d Bn., 16th Inf.

Place: FRANT LAZNE, Czechoslovakia.

Date: 24 May 1945

No journals consulted

Maps Used: Germany, 1:25,000, DUREN (5104); LENDERSDORF (5204),
STOLBERG (5203); ESCHWEILER (5103)

1 overlay to accompany ~~11~~ and ~~12~~ accounts

Interviewer: Maj. Kenneth W. Hechler, 2d Info & Hist Sv.

At the start of the Hurtgen Forest operation, the 2d Bn., 16th Inf., was assigned the mission of seizing Hill 232 (997443), and the nose west of SCHERPENSEEL. The plan called for the 2d Bn. to move behind the 1st Bn., whose objective was HAMICH.

From an assembly area southwest of SCHEVENHUTTE, the ~~1st~~ 2d Bn. moved up through the town and toward an L.D. along the road running southwest out of HAMICH. The area of movement was congested; there was apparently no satisfactory route for the tanks and the 1st and 3d Bns. were having evacuation troubles.

The plan was to have E and F Cos. attacks northwest, abreast, from the road running southwest from HAMICH. About 1600, two hours late, E and F Cos. moved out. F Co. had initial difficulties in HAMICH and became embroiled in the western outskirts of the town, when held up by fire from enemy in several houses, but tanks were brought up and reduced these strongpoints.

One tank supporting F Co. was knocked out when it attempted to move on past HAMICH; an enemy tank in HAMICH knocked it out.

The capture of Hill 232 ((997443) was not in itself difficult. G Co. pushed through the left flank of the battalion and

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secured the knoll at (991449) with no opposition but light artillery fire. The other two companies of the battalion, accompanied by two machine gun platoons, secured the hill itself. Hill 232 was considered a necessary prize by the 16th Inf., because it commanded perfect observation on HAMICH, 800 yards to the southeast. After its capture, G Co. was put into position to block against an attack from the northwest and ~~the~~ the other two companies blocked toward the east. Because of the mined area south of the hill, it was impossible to bring tanks up to support the troops on the hill.

On 19 November, the enemy, employing infantry ^{and tanks} / from the 116th Rcn Bn. and 104th Regt., counterattacked in an attempt to recapture Hill 232 and HAMICH. Unfortunately for the enemy, their tanks became lost and separated from the infantry and the result was a straight two-company infantry assault on the hill. (See attached Intelligence Activities, 1 December 1944, 1st Inf. Div., for a pointed analysis of this and other enemy activities during the period.)

Before daybreak, prior to the receipt of any clear details on the enemy counterattack on the hill, wounded began to drift back to the battalion CP with tales of enemy infiltration and a stiff resistance being offered by the heavy machine gunners attached to the three companies. The enemy ~~max~~ commander, unable to find his tanks and unsupported in any but an erratic fashion by artillery which he could not control himself, resignedly launched a suicide attack which was mowed down by the heavy machine guns. Graves registration men took over 250 German bodies out of the area east and

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northeast of Hill 232 after the counterattack had been beaten off. The machine gunners set up on the crest of the hill, and overlooked about 300 yards of slightly rising, open ground, across which the enemy had to advance. The ground was soft, weather wet, and road net vile-- factors which in this case redounded to the benefit of our troops. Losses were heavy in H Co., which engaged in hand-to-hand fighting when the enemy tried to storm their machine guns.

From Hill 232, the 2d Bn. moved out to HEISTERN (014452), and thence proceeded northeast toward the LANGERWEHE railroad. E Co. proceeded on the right and G on the left, while F drew up the rear and protected the flanks. Heavy artillery fire slowed the advance to the northeast, but small arms fire was light. Greater opposition was received on the 26 November advance to the railroad, because the 2d Bn. was proceeding at right angles to the 47th Inf., which was attacking southeast.

F Co. had the mission of cleaning out the woods to the east of the Rosslerschoss castle (012473). The 3d Bn. extended its flank to the northeast of the castle in order to provide left flank protection for F Co. The chief difficulty which F Co. encountered was the artillery fire, which caused 20 casualties prior to reaching the line of departure for the attack.

Meanwhile, E Co. was directed to swing to the east and then attack to the west to subdue the opposition in GUT MERBERICH (020475). However, according to Capt. Hall, "E Co. really f--ked the dog that day," and the enemy pushed them back before they could get near "The GUT."

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Following the repulse of E Co., the 1st Bn., 16th Inf., moved in and took "The GUT", and the 3d Bn. went on to HUCHELN, while the 2d Bn. pulled into position in the vicinity of (005483) in a reserve role prepared to help the 1st Bn. if necessary. The 2d Bn. remained in reserve and did no further fighting.

Relatively speaking, the 2d Bn. did not do as much fighting as the other two battalions of the 16th Inf. Its one hard engagement was the repulse of the counterattack which the enemy launched at Hill 232, during which most of the two machine gun platoons attached to the rifle companies were wiped out. The 2d Bn. had less casualties than the others in the regiment.

The battalion had its share of discomfort resulting from the cold, rainy weather, however, and suffered the usual quota of casualties which come to a unit which in reserve is exposed to a greater amount of artillery.

Kenneth W. Hechler
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Maj., Inf.

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HURTGEN FOREST
16-30 Nov. 1944
1st Bn., 26th Inf., 1st Div.

Interview with Capt. Thomas W. Anderson, Bn. S-3, 1st Bn., 26th Inf.

Place: SCHONBACH, Czechoslovakia;

Date: 24 May 1945

Maps Used: Germany, 1:25,000, DUREN (5104), LENDERSDORF (5204),
STOLBERG (5203), ESCHWEILER (5103)

1 overlay for III/16 and III/26
No journals consulted

Interviewer: Maj. Kenneth W. Hechler, 2d Info & Hist. Sv.

On the night prior to the jumpoff, the battalion commander slipped and fell in the rain and mud, had to go to the hospital, and the executive officer, Capt. Edward Crawford, took command of the battalion.

The first mission of the battalion was to move through SCHEVENHUTTE following the 2d Bn., 26th Inf., and secure the road between SCHEVENHUTTE and HEISTERN. The battalion advanced with companies in column-- A, B and C in order. It was discovered that the trails and firebreaks in the battalion's area of advance were inaccurately depicted on the map, and crosscountry advance through the woods was very difficult. Initially, the tanks could not accompany the 1st Bn. because of the boggy ground.

Because of the danger of loss of contact and poor visibility in the woods, mortar smoke was used in the woods as a pathfinder for the advancing companies. Also, assault wire was immediately laid as an additional guide for bringing up rations and supplies and for evacuation.

The battalion made a wide flanking movement through Hill 270 (018430) before turning northwest toward the SCHEVENHUTTE-

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HEISTERN road. From the hill, the battalion proceeded up the SCHEVENHUTTE road to the road junction at (018448) northeast of WENAU, thence southeast and east ^{through the 3d Bn.} to the crossroads at 254 (039446).

Initially encountering no resistance, the battalion began to meet artillery fire in the vicinity of (013441). From east of a water tower ~~XXXX~~ HEISTERN, observed artillery fire was dropping on the crossroads at (018448). Therefore, the foot troops took a short-cut which avoided the road junction and the armor ~~XXXX~~ buttoned up and tore around the corner.

The 1st Bn. made contact with the 3d Bn. at the SCHLOSS LAUFENBERG castle (029445), while the 3d Bn. was still having a small-arms battle east of the castle. 150mm ^{enemy}/artillery was falling in the area in four and five-round salvos. The lead company of the 1st Bn. was sent east along the road toward the crossroads 254.

After advancing 300 yards, ^{B,} the lead company was pinned down by machine gun, machine pistol and rifle fire. Throughout the advance, the troops were hampered by a cold, steady rain. The mud was sloppy and thick. The men had been moving hard, and were tired.

When B Co. was pinned down, it was decided to send A Co. to the top of Hill 272 to work its way around the right flank and take the pressure off B Co. "In this advance, casualties were moderate, but steady," estimates Capt. Anderson.

To defend the crossroads, the enemy was cleverly dug

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in around the bases of trees and shrub growths. The foxholes were deep and provided with overhead cover. Lanes of fire had been cleared carefully, and these and all firebreaks were covered from all angles by automatic weapons. In many spots, the woods were so thick that it was impossible to advance without proceeding along the firebreaks.

By this time, the men were starting to show the effects of the strenuous campaign. Cases of combat exhaustion and trenchfoot began to show up, and morale was low.

After taking a number of compass shots from all angles, it was finally concluded that the correct 254 crossroads had been captured. The feat was accomplished by maneuvering a platoon around to the south of the junction.

From this point, the 3d Bn./26th Inf. proceeded north to take Hill 237 (039454), and C Co. was attached to the 3d Bn. with the mission of holding Hill 244 (040451), a triangulation tower. The 1st Bn. was then assigned the mission of pushing east through to the edge of ~~xxxx~~ the woods southwest of MERODE. This mission was accomplished by pushing through three companies abreast, in order to extend the front and clean more thoroughly.

"This was very tough going," said Capt. Anderson, "and involved the laborious job of digging the enemy out of his holes one by one. Two and three-man groups, mutually supporting, slowed the advance. Artillery fire interdicted the roads and intersections."

Two days of fighting carried the 1st Bn. to within 100-200 yards from the edge of the woods before MERODE, at which point the 2d Bn. was ordered to pass through the 1st Bn. and take MERODE.

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Before this occurred, the 1st Bn. experienced considerable difficulty on the dark and rainy night of 28-29 November. It started shortly after dark when Capt. Chas. Robertson, commanding A Co., which was south of the crossroad, called Capt. Anderson and warned him in a low tone of voice that enemy had infiltrated all around his CP and that he should not ring back A Co. lest the CP be detected. Capt. Anderson informed regiment, B Co. (which was north of the crossroads), and the 2d Bn. which was then in reserve around SCHLOSS LAUFENBERG. The 2d Bn. warned its tanks in the castle area to be on the lookout for bazookamen. Further contact with A Co. revealed that the crisis, for the time being, had passed, and Capt. Anderson went back to sleep.

About 0300 on the morning of 29 November, the 1st Bn. staff was awakened with the startling news that B Co. couldn't locate two of its platoons. In the rain and darkness, the enemy had simply moved in and appropriated the men's positions. Many of the men were ~~replacements~~ recent reinforcements, and a large group of them had been sent out after dark without supper just after arriving that very night. All night these "displaced persons" wandered in to the battalion CP. 35 straggled in to the regimental CP. The next morning, the front line companies counterattacked and restored their original positions, and then the 2d Bn. went on through in their disastrous attempt to capture MERODE.

The Hurtgen fighting was unlike any which the battalion had experienced before or since, according to Capt. Anderson. Tanks could not render close support because of the dense woods and boggy trails; in addition, they rarely had an opportunity to fire their

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big guns for fear of causing tree bursts over the heads of friendly advancing infantry. Small parties of enemy artillery observers were scattered throughout the forest in well-concealed and protected spots from which they could call down artillery on previously-arranged locations. Wounds were rarely of the small-arms type suffered in "normal" fighting, but an unusually high percentage of wounds were head, chest and abdomen wounds from tree bursts of mortar and artillery shells.

"In this type of fighting, high ground did not make any difference and there wasn't much sense striving for it," said Capt. Anderson, "because when you got it you usually couldn't see much for the trees anyhow."

In the dense woods, contact was frequently lost and it was impossible to do any night fighting. Generally, the day's fighting was concluded at about 1600, when the men started digging in for the night and collecting as much overhead cover as was available for their foxholes.

Kenneth W. Hechler
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Maj., Inf.

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HURTGEN FOREST
16-30 November 1944
2d Bn., 26th Inf., 1st Div.

Interview with Capt. James Libby, S-3, 2d Bn.
Capt. Besor B. Walker, CO, G Co.
Capt. Gilbert H. Fuller, CO, H Co.
Lt. Ray Smith, plat. ldr, 3d plat., F Co.

Place: SCHONBACH, Czechoslovakia. Date: 25, May 1945

No journals used

Maps Used: Germany, 1:25,000, DUREN (5104), STOLBERG (5203),
ESCHWEILER (5103), LENDERSDORF (5204).

Interviewer: Maj. Kenneth W. Hechler, 2d Info & Hist. Sv.

The stiffest fight which the 2d Bn. had in the HURTGEN Forest was at MERODE, where almost all of E and F Cos. were encircled and captured. Up to that point, which occurred at the close of the Hurtgen Forest operations for the battalion, bitter opposition was encountered in the battalion's eastward progress from SCHEVENHUTTE five kilometers to the edge of the woods just short of MERODE.

The enemy's defenses were cleverly conceived to take full advantage of the easily-defended dense forest country. Dugouts with overhead cover, fronted by logs and often by barbed wire, provided good protection against artillery fire and also excellent concealment for machine gun and panzerfaust positions.

The 2d Bn. generally used a box formation in its advance. G Co. was the assault company initially; E Co. on the flanks of the square; and the tanks inside of the box, so the infantry protected them against anti-tank weapons.

The enemy resisted strongly from small strongpoints frequently scattered throughout the forest. Schu-mines were liberally

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scattered in front of these positions.

The main LANGERWEHE road and the small river which paralleled the road furnished the ~~xxx~~ axis of advance for the battalion from SCHEVENHUTTE to a point about 1 km. east of HEISTERN and southwest of SCHONTHAL.

On 19 November, when the 3d Bn. was starting to pass through the 2d Bn. on the LANGERWEHE road, the enemy chose this opportunity to launch a counterattack. A battalion from the 115th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, unsupported by armor, circled around the right flank of the ^{2d} battalion in an attempt to hit their positions from the rear. The counterattack was repulsed only after determined resistance, supported by numerous heroic stands by individuals in the 2d Bn.

Pfc. Roland J. Littleton, outpost of the 1st platoon of G Co., spotted the first wave of enemy infantry. Manning his BAR, he started firing at the advancing infantry and alerted his mates. Although wounded in the stomach, he kept on firing. "At least 20 dead Germans were piled up around his foxhole," said Capt. Walker. Pfc. Francis X. McGraw, machine gunner from H Co. on the left flank of the battalion, fired until he ran out of ammunition and then sneaked back for more while the enemy artillery was dropping heavily around him. Because the artillery was dropping numerous trees in front of Pfc. McGraw's position, soon his tripod was too low to give him a good field of fire and he threw his machine gun over a log to get more effective results. A shell exploded against the log, tossing his gun into the air, but he retrieved it and continued firing against the enemy armed with panzerfausts, burp guns and hand

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grenades. Pfc. McGraw died on his weapon.

Capt. Walker states that there were 80 enemy bodies in front of a platoon and a half of G Co., and F Co. also accounted for a number of enemy. The battalion losses for the counterattack were light-- being approximately seven men for each company.

The 3d Bn. then passed through the 2d Bn. and proceeded to attack the castle at Schloss LAUFENBERG (029445), while on 22 November E Co. captured Hill 261 (033434) and G Co. took the road junction (026443) southeast of WENAU. E Co. was counterattacked after taking Hill 261, but held its ground ~~the~~ and artillery aided in repulsing the counterattack. G Co. met a dug-in company near the crossroad, hit their flank, and overran their positions with the assistance of friendly artillery. Hill 272 at (022443) was then subdued.

MERODE-- the scene of the 26th Inf's most bitter fight in the HURTTGEN Forest-- was a strongly fortified village blocking several eastern exits from the forest leading to the Roer River and the approaches to the Cologne plain. The town was easy to defend because all approaches afforded the enemy good visibility, and it was simple to zero in artillery on the edge of the forest. Leading out of the forest and toward MERODE was an inferior road which always seemed to be muddy ~~xxxx~~ and rutted, even in dry weather.

Troops of the 2d Bn., 5th Parachute Regiment, were defending MERODE. On 29 November, F Co. on the left and E Co. on the right moved out to the edge of the woods west of MERODE without strong opposition. As soon as the companies started to emerge from the woods,

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and mortar/fire
barrage after barrage of artillery/descended on them. About 100 yards from the edge of the woods, the assault platoons were stopped by a chain of enemy bunkers. These were reduced by plodding, slow advances and man-by-man elimination of the enemy. Both companies eventually pushed into the town of MERODE after the enemy had determinedly opposed their advance. The Division G-2 Report on the action makes the comment that "resistance.... was stubborn at first, but collapsed under pressure, or possibly on direct orders."

It is difficult to conclude whether the enemy was deliberately springing a trap for E and F Cos. After dark on 29 November, the 2d Bn. of the 5th Parachute Regiment launched a powerful counterattack, preceded and accompanied by artillery support. The artillery curtained the western approaches to MERODE in such a way that the American troops in MERODE were cut off from armored/support. Early in the counterattack, communications were cut, preventing the support of friendly artillery. The last contact with the companies, which soon became completely surrounded, was a series of plaintive radio messages in which a radio operator described the hopeless situation of the companies: "There's a Tiger tank coming down the street now, firing his gun into every house," the radio operator reported. "He's three houses away, now, and still firing into every house. .. Here he comes...." With that, all contact with friendly elements in MERODE ceased.

Approximately ¹⁵~~50~~ men, under the leadership of Sgt. John Parker of E Co., succeeded in sneaking out of MERODE under cover of darkness on the night of 30 November. All the others from the two companies were killed or captured.

T/
Kenneth W. Hechler
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Maj., Inf.

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HURTGEN FOREST
16-30 November 1944
3d Bn., 16th Inf., 1st Div.

Interview with Lt. Col. Charles T. Horner, CO, 3d Bn., 16th Inf.

Place: FRANT LAZNE, Czechoslovakia. Date: 24 May 1945

Maps Used: Germany, L:25,000, Sheets 5104 (DUREN), 5204 (LENDERSDORF),
5203 (STOLBERG), 5103 (ESCHWEILER).

1 overlay for ~~16~~ and ~~26~~
Journals not consulted

Interviewer: Maj. Kenneth W. Hechler, 2d Info & Hist Sv.

From assembly positions southwest of SCHEVENHUTTE (006422), the 3d Bn. of the 16th Inf. was to seize Hill 232 following the seizure of HAMICH by the 1st Bn., and then continue northwest toward NOTHBERG (985467).

The battalion was well up to strength at the start of the operation; of the companies, I Co. had had perhaps the toughest fighting in recent days in the vicinity of Verlautenheide Ridge northeast of AACHEN in the Siegfried Line. The battalion was disposed generally along the 40-gridline near KINDERHEIM (983397) when the 1st Bn., 16th Inf., attacked HAMICH on 16 November. While the 1st Bn. was still fighting to capture HAMICH, the 3d Bn. moved up to an assembly area northwest of SCHEVENHUTTE.

I Co. was initially placed in position near the crossroads (999432), south of HAMICH. It had been originally planned to use I Co. in attacking Hill 232, but due to the heavy casualties in the 1st Bn. and its hard time in HAMICH I Co. was given a sector in the line and attached to the 1st Bn.

Artillery fire and counterattacks harrassed the attackers of HAMICH. I Co. was soon reinforced by K Co. on the southwest corner

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er of the town and they assisted the attack with the support of the tanks and TDs. Col. Horner judges the 3d Bn. casualties in the taking of HAMICH "moderate."

Because of the commitment of the 3d Bn. in the HAMICH area, the 2d Bn. was used for the taking of Hill 232 rather than the 3d as originally planned. The 3d continued with the defense of HAMICH against counterattacks, and the rain and sticky mud, combined with the lack of shoe-paks, caused trenchfoot to crop up among the men.

After the 18th Inf. had seized HEISTERN, it became the mission of the 3d Bn. to take the high ground 1000 yards southwest of LANGERWEHE. This ground, in the vicinity of ⁽⁰¹³⁴⁷³⁾ ~~SCHONTRAL~~, was a high, wooded piece of ground topped by a castle.

At 0730, K Co. on the right and L Co. on the left, moved out of HEISTERN along the east side of the HEISTERN-LANGERWEHE road. The companies swung west and northwest at the base of the castle hill. After they had moved within 400 yards of the top, both companies received heavy mortar and artillery barrages. Three drives up the hill were halted by the shell fire, and losses were estimated at 25% of the fighting strength of the attacking companies.

Of two tank and two TD platoons accompanying the 3d Bn., only one platoon of tanks got to the top of the hill. The tank and TD officer were officer /commanding the force ~~was~~ wounded and evacuated, as were the company commander and another officer from L Co.

At 1430, Capt. Everett L. Booth, commanding K Co., reorganized the survivors of K and L Cos, which numbered about

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115 men. The group assaulted the enemy across about 200 yards of open terrain, and captured 100 PWs. S/Sgt. Donald E. Lee, of Co. K later stated: "At first I was under the impression that our platoon was to lead the attack, but all of a sudden Capt. Booth charged ahead of the entire combined force, firing his tommy-gun as he ran across the open terrain."

Bringing up his heavy weapons platoon to defend the captured positions, Capt. Booth then split his remaining 45 men-- all that remained after they had taken the castle-- into two platoons, one under his direction and the other under the only other remaining officer. Capt. Booth and his runner, after his group's positions had been established, went to look over those of the other group and discovered that the other platoon had been captured, leaving his flank open to attack. Just then 50 enemy infantry, supported by a self-propelled gun, advanced on the depleted force around the castle.

Capt. Booth, who later was awarded a DSC for his action in the castle area, sent his runner back to call ~~XXXX~~ the field artillery liaison officer for a barrage on the area. He then held off the enemy advance with fire from his tommy-gun until it was shot from his hands by a ~~kk~~ concussion grenade, and continued to fire his M1 until the friendly artillery came in. Sheltered by no more than a foxhole, he remained in position until the artillery forced the enemy to withdraw.

Because of the depleted condition of the 3d Bn., it was used in no further offensive operations during the Hurtgen

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fighting, and was withdrawn to the SCHEVENHUTTE area, where artillery dropped sporadically during their entire stay. I Co. assisted in the relief of the 2d Bn. of the 47th Inf. after the latter had captured the FRENZERBURG castle (019489).

"Combat exhaustion cases were very high during the days when we were under constant artillery fire, and were sitting rather than attacking," commented Col. Horner. "A lot of my older veterans cracked under the strain of the Hürtgen Forest."

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HURTGEN FOREST
16-30 Nov. 1944
745th Tk. Bn.

Supporting 1st Inf. Div.

Interviews with: Lt. Col. Wallace J. Nichols, CO
Maj. Howell H. Heard, Exec. Officer
Capt. Thomas Carroll, CO, Co. A
Lt. Donald English, plat. ldr., 2d plat
Capt. Wallace Wardnen, CO, B Co.
Lt. Leonard Novak, plat. ldr, 2d plat
Lt. John Lefeber, plat. ldr., 1st plat
Capt. Frederick F. Chirgotis, CO, D

Place: CHEB, Czechoslovakia

Date: 23 May 1944

No journals consulted

1 overlay
Maps Used: Germany, 1:25,000, DUREN (5104); LENDERSDORF (5204),
STOLBERG (5203); ESCHWEILER (5103)

Interviewer: Maj. Kenneth W. Hechler, 2d Info & Hist.

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SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
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The 745th Tk. Bn. during the Hurtgen Forest operation had A Co. operating with the 16th Inf., B Co. with the 18th Inf., and C Co. with the 26th Inf. One platoon of each tank company constantly operated with each infantry battalion.

On 16 November, A Co. did not firing in the advance toward HAMICH, but lost two tanks from the heavy shelling which they received. The following day, when the 3d Bn./16th was committed in an effort to seize HAMICH, the tanks accompanied the infantry to the right of the SCHEVENHUTTE-HAMICH road, while the TDs went on ahead along the road. After entering the town, the TDs took the left side to clear and the tanks the right side, taking positions prepared to fire on anything which came into HAMICH from the northeast.

During the determined series of counterattacks which the enemy launched at HAMICH, the tanks played a leading part. In the first counterattack on 17 November, a tank knocked out an enemy SP; shortly thereafter a Mark V planted itself about 60 yards from

the leading elements of A Co. The gunner of the lead tank spotted the Mark V, but before he had gotten off a round, the enemy tank shot through 10-inch armor plate (4 inches of the E-2 gun-shield and 6 inches of the turret). The Mark V was finally bazookaed and driven off.

On the night of 17-18 November, the enemy counterattacked with 200 infantry and five tanks from the north and northeast. The enemy tanks were firing many flares for coordination with their attacking infantry, and soon a tank and TD ablaze lit up the entire HAMICH area. The situation was extremely fluid during the night, and strange, unbelievable developments occurred. One Mark V drove within eight yards of a Sherman; swinging its power traverse as quietly as possible, the Sherman slugged a round through the enemy's turret, blowing out its tank commander and destroying the Mark V.

One Tiger Royal and one ^{enemy} SP gun were casualties when they fell into bomb craters along the road. While friendly artillery was called down on HAMICH in an effort to repulse the invaders, the enemy launched four separate counterattacks ~~during~~ ^{during} the night and destroyed three M4 tanks and two TDs. The German losses were three tanks and two SP guns. This was the hardest fighting which A Co. had during the whole Hurtgen Forest operation.

The 2d platoon of A Co. then went up with the 2d Bn., 16th Inf., to take Hill 232. Lt. English's tank was knocked out by an enemy tank on the way up, with one man killed and two wounded as a result. After the infantry and tanks had secured the hill, the

enemy counterattacked strongly with two battalions. The 3d Armored Division did not help matters much by calling down artillery which ~~rdrenched~~ the hill, although it caused no casualties.

In taking Hill 232, the 2d platoon fired 1000 rounds of .30 caliber and 30 rounds of HE. Three tanks actually went up the hill, about 350 yards behind the infantry. The biggest thorn as they advanced was an enemy SP gun firing from (998457); that night after the hill had been secured, several enemy tanks firing from (990459) threw AP over the heads of the hill's occupants down toward HAMICH.

Jumping off from HAMICH with the 3d Bn., 16th Inf., toward the northeast, six tanks carrying infantry advanced across open ground firing their machine guns and HE at the ridges to the front. When the tanks reached (010456), they held in place and ducked behind houses while the infantry pushed on dismounted.

The next engagement which the tanks had was in the capture of the ROSSLERSCHOSS castle (011472). Six tanks started out for the objective, but were bogged down by the mud and tangled underbrush in the vicinity of (015465). Lt. James W. Sullivan, an A Co. platoon leader, according to the infantry commanders did an almost superhuman job in bringing the tanks through to support the infantry. Despite frequent artillery fire and many tree bursts, Lt. Sullivan dismounted and pulled the tanks through the woods, stopping to cut logs to aid in the traction, encouraging infantrymen and aiding in the evacuation of the wounded as he proceeded with his task.

The tanks fired their 75s at the walls of the castle, and stormed through the castle gates with the remnants of K and L Co. of the 16th Inf.

A Co.'s attack into LUCHEM with the ^{1st Bn./16th} ~~18th~~ Inf. was described as one of the most successful of the entire operation. Capt. ^{Carroll} ~~Ward~~ said that the swift movement of the tanks and TDs after the infantry had entered the town escaped the enemy artillery and flat trajectory fire which ordinarily would have been embarrassing.

In its advance from HEISTERN to LANGERWEHE, ~~K~~ B Co. lost three tanks knocked out by AT guns, with personnel casualties of 1 killed and 8 wounded. The most serious fighting was in the advance up to Hill 203 with the 18th Inf., and the enemy had anti-tank guns covered with machine guns emplaced in the houses which commanded the approach to Hill 203.

C Co., working with the 26th Inf., was slowed considerably by mortar fire during the initial stages of the operation, in the vicinity of SCHEVENHUTTE. Machine guns, wire and a road block impeded progress at (010420). In advancing toward the WENAU castle (013443), one tank had a track blown off by a panzerfaust, and another tank was disabled when it hit a mine in the vicinity of (012443). During this advance, the tanks did little firing.

C Co. ran into repeated mud troubles, and tanks were finding it next to impossible to negotiate the poor trails without getting mired down. The sorriest experience was during the attack of the 2d Bn. of the 26th Inf. on MERODE. Two tanks succeeded in negotiating their way to the edge of the woods in the vicinity of

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(046450), but the sharpness of the artillery and mortar fire caused their decision to pull back. As they started back, a shell hit the track of the lead tank, locking it and preventing much movement. As the tank attempted to get out of the predicament, it went over on its side in the ditch, completely blocking any further vehicular traffic on the road to MERODE; there was no opportunity because of the heavy trees which lined the road to bypass the ditched tank. The enemy eventually worked through and completely destroyed this tank with hand grenades after the Germans had recaptured MERODE.

D Co. had little activity during the operation, but absorbed quite a beating from the artillery and mortar fire in the forest. In the HAMICH and Hill 232 area, D Co. had two tanks destroyed and three damaged by artillery and 120mm mortar fire which penetrated their turrets.

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HURTTGEN FOREST
16-30 Nov. 1944
634 Tank Destroyer Bn.
(supporting 1st Div.)

Interview with Lt. Col. Henry L. Davisson, CO;
Maj. Karl F. Herd, Exec. Officer
Capt. James B. Armstrong, CO, G Co.
Lt. Norman Bays, plat ldr., 1st plat., A Co.
Lt. Sam L. Daniels, plat ldr., 2d plat., A Co.

Place: LOBZY, Czechoslovakia. Date: 25, May 1945

Maps Used: Germany, 1:25,000, DUREN (5104); LENDERSDORF (5204),
STOLBERG (5203); ESCHWEILER (5103)

No journals consulted

Interviewer: Maj. Kenneth W. Hechler

The companies of the 634th TD Bn. were about 10% under-strength, as a result of the Battle of AACHEN, when they went into the Hurtgen Forest fighting. Asked about the condition of their equipment, Col. Davisson and his company officers were unanimous in their opinion that the M10, even when in good shape and in sufficient numbers, was an unsatisfactory piece of equipment.

"It is thin and vulnerable to artillery," said Col. Davisson. "The open turret top makes tree bursts as in the Hurtgen fighting play hell with the crew. The turret sides are lightly armored, and that is the first thing the enemy sees and shoots at.

"The basic principle of the tank destroyer is use for static defense, but the American army is never in static defense. Even in a defensive position, when enemy tanks are running up and down across the infantry lines trying to crush the infantry in place, do you suppose an infantry commander would leave his TDs 100 yards back in static defense; no, he'd bring them up and use them as tanks, just as we are always used.

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"Give me a T26 tank with a Diesel motor and make me organically part of an infantry division, preferably the 1st Division, and our outfit would play a more effective part in the war. Call me a tank destroyer battalion if you want, but give me something besides that M10 with which to operate. With a Diesel motor, you have a quieter operation, with less fuel consumption and 50% less mechanical troubles, and no flash from the exhaust at night."

Warming up to his subject, Col. Davisson discoursed for a minute on the question of awards and the Hurtgen Forest fighting. "Why is it?" he demanded, "that somebody in the Army Air Forces should get a Congressional Medal of Honor for picking up a flaming bomb in his bare hands? And when a sergeant of mine crawls into a flaming M10, not once but twice, to save the lives of two men burning to death in that inferno-- they slap it down from a D.S.C. to a Silver Star."

During the Hurtgen fighting, C Co. supported the 16th Inf., B the 18th Inf., and A the 26th Inf. The usual practice was to split the companies so that one platoon worked with each infantry battalion.

In the initial attack on HAMICH by the 16th Inf., three TDs from the 3d platoon of C Co. actually led the infantry into town and reached the edge of town five minutes before the infantry. There the TDs met heavy small arms, bazooka and artillery fire. Artillery fire hit one M10 on the turret, disabling the traversing mechanism and wounding two men. A bazooka from one of the basement windows caught another of the TDs, killing the driver. The TD started to blaze and the men were evacuated, the racks emptied of ammunition, and the fire finally put out.

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Sgt. Roland H. Urbohm then took the TD whose traversing mechanism had been damaged by artillery fire up to the intersection in HAMICH at (002438), aimed it by siting down the tube of his 3-inch gun and jiggling the tracks to right and left, and fired and disabled two enemy tanks. Col. Davisson termed this the most remarkable piece of TD marksmanship he had ever witnessed. The TD which had been set on fire, although unable to move, covered Sgt. Urbohm's TD from a stationary position, and the third TD covered from the right flank.

After holding HAMICH "with I and K Co. depleted", the TDs were ordered to withdraw to the vicinity of (999434) to undergo repairs.

In the taking of Hill 232, four M10s operated in pairs, two abreast. 100-150 yards behind the advancing infantry, two TDs would move up, firing as they moved and the infantry hit the ground as they fired. The other two TDs would then pass through the leading pair, and the leapfrog process continued. At the base of the hill, the vehicles stopped and Lt. Alistair McKay and his platoon sergeant went forward to reconnoiter firing positions; both were cut down by machine gun fire.

Moving northeast out of HAMICH, the TDs operated six abreast along an infantry skirmish line. The destroyers were 100 yards apart, and operated by moving 100 yards, firing their 3-inch and machine guns, and then moving forward another 100 yards. One Mark V tank was knocked out by a TD at (007446), and one TD was knocked out on this advance. "This was the first time the TDs were ever in a skirmish line along with the infantry," said Col. Davisson, "and

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it worked very successfully."

The TDs operated much differently with the 18th Inf., and in the opinion of Col. Davisson, this was the best way to use them in the forest country. Instead of furnishing close support, the TDs remained behind until needed and then rushed up. This was ~~best~~ ^{also} demonstrated in the taking of LUCHEM (037490) ^{with 1st Bn/16th} when the tanks and TDs both barreled up in a hurry after the infantry had started to penetrate the town. Col. Davisson feels that this worked in a superior fashion because it enabled the TDs to get some protection from the artillery before moving up.

The TDs did not have a very fortunate experience in working with the 26th Inf., because most of their activity was confined to "sitting and taking it." When the 2d Bn. of the 26th had its disastrous experience in attempting to capture MERODE, the TDs were unable to advance to support them because a bogged-down tank blocked the only trail through the woods toward MERODE.

Casualty Report for the Period				
Co.	KIA	WIA	MIA	WIA and Ret to Duty
A	2	20	2	2
B	0	1	0	1
C	2	8	0	14
Rcn.	3	5	0	0
Med.	4	1	0	2

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BATTLE OF HAMICH RIDGE
16-29 Nov. 1944
47th Inf., 9th Div.

-Covering Statement-

On 10 November 1944, the 47th Inf. was attached to the 1st Division for administration and operations. This attachment lasted until 30 November. The attack waited until 16 November in order to secure favorable weather for an air strike in the vicinity of ESCHWEILER and WEISWEILER.

The air preparation commenced at 1215 and continued until 1245. Concentrations of VII Corps Artillery were fired on GRESSENICH with 3 Bns of 155 howitzer, 1 Bn. of 8-inch howitzers, and 1 brigade of 8-inch and 240mm howitzers.

The plan was for the 1st Division with the 47th Inf. attached to attack at 1245 on 16 November to seize crossings of the Roer River north of DUREN.

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THE BATTLE OF HAMICH RIDGE
16-29 Nov. 1944
1st Bn., 47th Inf., 9th Div.

Interview with Lt. Col. James D. Allgood, CO, 1st Bn., 47th

Place: TORTEN, Germany.

Date: 15 May 1945

Maps Used: Germany, 1:25,000, Sheets 5203 (STOLBERG), 5103
(WEILER), 5104 (DUREN).

OVERLAY TO ACCOMPANY ACCOUNTS OF 1-2-3 47
After-Action Report of 47th Inf. used to check dates; journal
not used.

Interviewer: Maj. Kenneth W. Hechler, 2d Info & Hist Sv.

The 1st Bn. was well up to strength and in fair physical condition at the commencement of this campaign. The battalion had been sitting in the woods near GRESSENICH for close to two months since the attacks to penetrate the Siegfried Line. Activity during these months had been confined to patrolling and several minor brushes with the enemy. For a brief period, approximately four days, the battalion had an opportunity to plan for the coming operation.

Weather contributed to making this type of fighting much harder than under ordinary circumstances. Snow and rain filled individual foxholes often to within six inches of the top. It was cold, wet, and generally uncomfortable for the men throughout the campaign.

For an extended period prior to D-Day, the enemy had been shelling the positions of the battalion at frequent intervals. A captured German fire control map listed two of the company CPs at their exact locations, and designated them as primary artillery targets.

From positions southwest of SCHEVENHUTTE (005420), the

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battalion was to attack on 16 November to seize GRESSENICH.

The company plan of attack was to have C Co. take BUSCHHAUSEN (989417), and then attack GRESSENICH's northwest and west sections; A Co. was slated to clean out the eastern and northeastern portion of GRESSENICH; while B Co. was to stay in reserve on the edge of the woods overlooking GRESSENICH. Two platoons of TDs and one platoon of tanks were firing from KREMINKEL (980410) into the houses on the edge of GRESSENICH.

Just before the infantry jump-off, a five-battalion TOT was placed on ~~GRESSENICH~~ GRESSENICH; PW information revealed that the enemy intended to defend from the houses in the town. At the same time, mortar concentrations from the 81mm and 4.2s were placed on GRESSENICH. From H-5 to H-plus-10 the artillery, mortar, and tank and TD fire continued on general areas and on a few well-known OPs within the town, such as the church steeple.

Co. C on the left and Co. A on the right jumped off at 1300; Co. C took BUSCHHAUSEN without difficulty and both companies met very little fire initially. As they approached GRESSENICH, small arms and self-propelled guns firing from the town slowed the advance. A Co. received the stiffest opposition on the battalion right flank. After the companies left the woods, the ground was open and sloping downward toward GRESSENICH.

Tanks of the 3d Armored Division advanced on GRESSENICH from the southwest, attacking from MAUSBACH (970418). The advance of the 3d Armored occupied the enemy and drew fire away from the 1st Bn., but after the 3d Armored had skirted the edge of GRESSENICH and proceeded to the northeast the opposition in the town

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started to make a determined stand. When C Co. reached the outskirts and ~~xx~~ received heavy opposition, a tank platoon from the 746th Tk. Bn. was shot down to assist C Co. The tank platoon leader got through BUSCHHAUSEN without incident, and then became engaged with some anti-tank guns in GRESSENICH. After the 4.2s had given the anti-tank guns a working over, the tank platoon leader called for the rest of his five tanks to come up; however, the first two hit riegel mines which the platoon leader's tank had failed to explode. The one tank helped the situation somewhat with supporting fire, but it could not move because it was pinned down ^{between BUSCHHAUSEN and GRESSENICH} by an anti-tank gun which it could spot but not knock out.

The situation at the end of the day on 16 November was that the 1st Bn. had succeeded in penetrating the southern edge of town, and had ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ seized several houses. Positions were consolidated for the night, and the battalion positions were harrassed by artillery fire until morning. The casualties for the day's operation were 6 killed and 22 wounded; most of these were in A Co., which suffered 20 casualties-- a large proportion from small-arms fire.

The enemy defending GRESSENICH were from the 1st Co., 48th Regt., 12th Division. Approximately 100 men were defending GRESSENICH. They were a good type of troops, better than most that the battalion had met while crossing France. 19 PWs were captured on 16 November in GRESSENICH.

At 0800 on 17 November, the 1st Bn. completed the clearing of the town with companies abreast. ~~xx~~ C Co. went up the west side, A up the center and B cleaned the eastern portion. There

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was only scattered opposition from small-arms fire as the companies methodically mopped the built-up area. By 1030, the opposition was completed quelled, although long-range artillery fire continued to fall within the town limits all day and caused six casualties in the battalion. Patrols dispatched to contact the 16th Inf. (1st Div.) on the right and the 33d Armored Regt. (3d Armored Division) on the left had some difficulty getting through. The first patrol to the 33d Armored Regiment tried to get through to KOTTENICH (992438), but was checked by self-propelled guns firing from the ridges running northwest and northeast out of HAMICH. A second patrol finally got through; the difficulty was that the armor had gone through the area, and there had been insufficient opportunity to clean it all out. Four PWs were bagged by the patrols of ¹⁷~~18~~ November.

Late in the afternoon of 18 November, the battalion received orders to move two companies to the vicinity of Hill 232 (998443), to go into an assembly area near GRESSENICHER (990445), preparatory to attacking and seizing Hills 187 (985456) and 167 (991462). Hill 232 had previously been taken by the 16th Inf. of the 1st Division.

The plan for 19 November was to have the 16th Inf. move out from Hill 232, and when they had secured their objective at (990448), the 1st Bn./47th would seize Hill 187 in a coordinated attack with the 3d Bn./47th on the right flank. This being done, the 1st Bn. was then to send one company to take Hill 167.

At 1020 on 19 November, A Co. moved out, initially behind K Co. of the 3d Bn., and then up toward Hill 167. B Co. headed toward the quarry at (991449) and then toward Hill 187. A Co's chief difficulties were reaped from those of the 3d Bn., which had

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to cope with considerable flanking fire from the woods to the battalion's right in the area of the 16th Inf. It had been planned to wait until B Co's seizure of Hill 187 before A proceeded to 167; therefore 167 was not captured on 19 November.

B Co. had considerable difficulty attempting to storm Hill 187, which was strongly defended and also afforded the enemy direct observation on any troops advancing across open ground leading up to the hill. B Co. was also receiving ~~fire~~ machine gun fire along its left flank, although elements of the 104th Division were presumed to be in VOLKENRATH (977454) and BOHL (974458). Five men from B Co. reached the top of the hill, but were driven back, and B Co. took heavy casualties in attempting to subdue the enemy in his well-dug-in positions.

Casualties for the operations of the 1st Bn. on 19 November were 10 killed, 37 wounded and 5 missing-- most of them in B Co. For the night B Co. took up positions generally along the line (987452)-(986453)-(989451) and prepared to renew the attack the following morning. A Co. held a line generally from (995455) to (996458), and C Co. was in battalion reserve.

Problems of evacuation became more acute on 20 November, as the tired medics could not handle the large number of wounded, and the cold and rain hampered evacuation efforts. The battalion A & P platoon was pressed into service and used for evacuating the wounded, after the battalion medics had worked ~~2~~ incessantly for 24 hours.

At 1015 on 20 November, B Co. resumed the attack on Hill

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187 after a 15-minute artillery preparation climaxed by two minutes of intense fire. An attempt was made to have the preparation include ~~105~~ 155mm., but because of the proximity of elements of the 104th Division it was kept down to 105mm. Determined resistance by the enemy of Hill 187 again prevented B Co. from securing their objective on 20 November. Small arms, mortar, and observed, flat-trajectory fire from 88mm guns on the hill checked the attack, and B Co., down to a strength of 90 riflemen at the close of the day, took up positions along the line (983456)-(988458).

The plan for 21 November was to have C Co. pass through B and attack ~~the~~ Hill 187 again, while the 3d Bn. attacked northeast through the woods toward BOVENBERG (998468). C Co. jumped off at 1000 after an artillery preparation, and advanced as far as the western edge of the objective but were stopped by the same type of resistance which B Co. had met in preceding days. The enemy artillery and mortar concentrations seemed to be getting heavier and more accurate. Roads were not only interdicted, but made impassable because of the trees which were felled ~~throughout~~ all along the routes.

About 1330, the battalion received a telephone call from regiment ordering C Co. to withdraw from the hill in order to allow additional artillery to be fired on the hill. C Co. withdrew about 500 yards, and then all the artillery available in the VII Corps--17 battalions-- fired a three minute TOT. The results were good. "It killed all the Krauts on the hill, except a few who came out screaming and moaning; they were more than tired of the war at that point," commented Col. Allgood. One-third of the TOT was delivered

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by 105mm, one-third by 155mm, and one-third by 8-inch and 240mm. Time, some AP, and delayed action fuzes were all fired. "It just literally made the ground bounce. Col. Clayman (Lt. Col. Donald C. Clayman, CO, 3d Bn.) got excited and asked me why they were bombing so close to his troops." Casualties for the Bn. on 21 November were one killed and 26 wounded; 25 PWs were captured.

On 22 November, patrols from C and A Cos. were sent to both hills, and although the enemy sent down an artillery barrage on the C Co. patrol to Hill 187 no infantry opposition was received on either hill. Patrols captured 82 PWs.

In the next few days, the 1st Bn. held their positions and waited for the 2d Bn. to pass through. Continuous rain added to the unpleasantness, and one man died of exposure.

On 24 November, the battalion moved into NOTHBERG (979462), where the battalion was attached to Task Force Richardson of the ³²33d Armored Regt., 3d Armored Division. *on 26 November* ~~The following day~~ at 1140, B Co. attacked WILHELMSHOHE (002478), and engaged in severe house-to-house fighting around this enemy strongpoint. Three men were killed and eight wounded in taking WILHELMSHOHE, and the company captured one officer and 18 men. The plan ~~then~~ called for B Co. to continue in a generally southeasterly direction and clean out the area between the railroad and LANGERWEHE road, with particular attention to strong points and houses at (013480) and (021477). In ad-
^{planned}~~dition~~, an infantry-tank attack was ~~launched~~ with the 3d Armored Division task force to capture a small patch of woods in the vicinity of (020482). Col. Richardson and Col. Allgood decided against attacking this area with a "wide-open formation", and instead decided to infiltrate infantry slowly across the open ground to the woods.

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With the ~~air~~ tanks delivering supporting fire, the infantry advanced under a smoke screen and took all assigned objectives with the loss of only 1 killed and 3 wounded. One officer and 15 men were captured by the 1st Bn. At the close of the day, B Co. was situated at (022478); C Co. had platoons at (013480), (016480), and (01954832); and A Co. was in the vicinity of (007479).

This action of 26 November ended the ~~action~~ ^{active assignments} for the 1st Bn. during the operation. After holding in position for one day, the battalion was relieved at 2100 on 28 November and withdrew to NOTHBERG. On 29 November, the battalion left for the VII Corps rest area.

Col. Allgood had previously rated the HAMICH Ridge fighting of the 1st Bn. with the REMAGEN bridgehead and the advance to the St. LO breakthrough line as the three toughest fights which the battalion had ever experienced. After reviewing in more detail the action of the battalion during this period, Col. Allgood concluded that it was not quite as severe as the fighting at REMAGEN and up to St. LO. "It seemed tougher at the time," he explained, "for two reasons: first, we had not been actively committed for two months, and second, the cold, rainy weather made any kind of fighting tough."

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