

COMPANY "K"
APO #1

16TH INFANTRY
U.S. Army

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SUBJECT: Company History

TO : 3rd Battalion Training Officer

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FOR INFORMATION OF THE BATTALION TRAINING OFFICER

HISTORY * COMPANY K

To write a history of any combat organization is a difficult task; a task that would ordinarily require the efforts of a competent writer and much time in research. Not being a person of extraordinary literary talent, I find it even more difficult to correctly record the events of this company, and because of the length of service this organization has spent overseas many of the actual records have been lost. However, from the records we have been able to find, and from talking to the "old regulars" of the company we have managed to find out much of interest. We are proud, and we hope that we can give you enough facts to make you proud of our organization. Company "K" of the 16th Infantry has seen much action, and has taken part in many historical events. But let us try and start nearer to the beginning and follow through to the present.

No records, date of embarkation to Nov. 7. 1942

On November 7, 1942 company K arrived off Port of Arzew, Africa at 2300 hours and at 0100 hours of November 8 they landed in six assault boats just 2 miles east of Arzew. The company reorganized, and since no hostile fire was encountered proceeded inland for a distance of ten miles along a previously prescribed route, in order to reach the company objective. The objective was reached at 0630 hours and a defensive position was taken up. At 2100 hours orders were received to move to Fleureus and Assi Ameurs to occupy and patrol those towns. At 2400 hours, as the company was halted along the road on the outskirts of Fleureus, orders were received to remain at that position until 0415 of November 9, and at that time to proceed to St. Cloud to make an attack in conjunction with the 18th Infantry.

At 0415, November 9, the company was alerted for the move on St. Cloud. At 0420 a detachment of the First Reconnaissance Troop arrived and took the lead of the column with the mission of reconnoitering ahead for enemy positions. At 0715 hours Company K launched its assault with two platoons abreast, keeping a rifle platoon and the weapons platoon in support. The company came under enemy rifle fire which pinned the two assault platoons to the ground. The support platoons were thrown in on the left flank, but further enemy fire, including small arms, automatic weapons and mortar fire prevented the company from making further advancement. However, some men managed to reach buildings in the town and attempted to clear snipers by throwing hand grenades at these positions. Despite the action encountered the company positions were held until 1700, at which time orders were received to withdraw from the position and proceed behind the 2nd battalion to Oran.

At 0115 on November 10 the company was subjected to enemy artillery fire along the road from Assi-Bou-Nif to Oran. The column commander ordered the company to remain

along the road until daylight. At 0930 the company moved out along the axis of communication toward Oran and went into an assembly area about 12 miles distant. At 1500 hours word was received that an armistice was signed and all rifles were unloaded.

On November 11, at 1200 hours the company left the assembly area for a new assembly area about 11 miles away. Three prisoners were captured enroute and the area was reached at 1800 hours.

The company left this assembly area at 0900, November 13 for a new assembly area near the town of Fleureus, and arrived there at 1300.

No records: Nov. 18 to Mar. 4, 1943.

March 4, 1943 found company K in Tunisia in the Kasserine Pass. However, the company left the Pass at 0900 by truck to move to a bivouac area near El Meridj, Algeria. The distance moved was 60 miles, and the new area was entered at 1530 hours. From March 5 to March 13 this bivouac area was left behind and the company moved again. The move was made by truck to an assembly area four miles south of Ben Chekba, Tunisia, and the assembly area was reached at 0230 hours March 14.

In this area the company spent the day of March 15 in usual camp duties. Records show the morale of the troops was excellent. On March 16 another move was made. This time to a final assembly area six miles northwest of Gafsa, Tunisia. Final orders were issued for the attack on Gafsa, which began at 0900 hours March 17. Company K met no resistance and marched into Gafsa at 1300. The mission of the company, to capture and clear the town, was accomplished at 1430 hours.

On March 18 the company was seven miles northeast of Gafsa on Maknassy Rd., and had, as a mission: Holding Force. These positions were abandoned at 0800 on March 21, and the company moved by truck to new positions four miles east of El Guettar, attaining said positions at 0100 hours on March 22.

The enemy attacked these positions at dawn, March 23 with tanks. The attack was repulsed by our forces, and the enemy was forced to withdraw, abandoning several damaged tanks. Between 1630 and 1645 we were under heavy artillery fire and aerial bombardment. We were also strafed by enemy aircraft, and at 1645 the enemy again attacked, this time with infantry and tanks. The attack was again repulsed by artillery and small arms fire, inflicting heavy casualties and forcing the enemy to withdraw and retreat to the southeast. Company K suffered two casualties as a result of enemy action on this date.

The company retained defensive positions four miles east of El Guettar until 0300 hours, March 28, at which time the defended area was left and a march was made five miles east to attack enemy held positions. The enemy was contacted at 0500 hours when our forces met with heavy artillery and small arms fire, resulting in a withdrawal at 1130 hours. We withdrew about two miles and when reorganized the company found it had suffered nine casualties in the action. However, the attack was resumed by the company at 0030 hours March 29th and the enemy was

was pressed until a retreat was forced at 0500 hours. At this position the company took up defensive positions.

The company attacked enemy held ground three miles east of its former position at 0730 hours on March 31. The assault was met with fierce enemy fire and consequently the company was forced to halt, unable to advance, and remained pinned down for the remainder of the day. Under the cover of darkness, however, the enemy retreated and left Kcompany with 5 killed, 16 wounded, and one missing from their actions.

April 1st to 8th was spent in the mountain range 14 miles southeast of El Gaettar, near the Gafsa-Gabes road. The objective was reached and activity was confined to patrols.

No records from April 8 to July 5, 1943.

On July 5th first call was at 0400 hours and after breakfast rolls were made up and loaded on trucks one mile from the area. Then the company was loaded on English trucks and carried to within two miles of the point where L.C.I.'s were docked and waiting. Those two miles were made on foot, the men carrying their individual rolls plus battle equipment. The company was loaded and aboard by 0800 and at 0900 we shoved off from the docks into the harbor. The company was allowed to go swimming in the afternoon and the Mediterranean was quite refreshing.

We sailed from Tunis at 0700 July 6, and everyone was wondering where we were going this time. Several places were mentioned and some of the more optimistic men were even willing to back up their own rumors with wagers. At 2130 anchor was dropped just out of the harbor at Sousse, and there we stayed until morning.

The next morning, July 7, we pulled in nearer the harbor and spent most of the day swimming. Later we were told we would go ashore at Sousse the next day.

On July 8th, company K pulled into the docks where the personnel filed off the ship, formed, and hiked out through town to a British camp which was a little over a mile away. After two hours for dinner (which consisted of "C" rations and hot tea) the company started back to the harbor. Loaded back on the ship at 1500 hours, company K left the harbor and stopped outside, where again the company went swimming. The convoy left the harbor at 2300.

The morning of July 9 found a clear day and the convoy well out on a choppy sea. Almost everyone was seasick, including the Company Commander and the Executive Officer. Later in the day we met with a convoy of LSI's and sailed past the island of Malta. Rations and ammunitions were issued, and we were told we were headed for Sicily!!

July 10 at 4 O'clock in the morning we pulled up near the coast of Sicily, two miles west of Gela. The beach had been cleared by the First and Second Battalions and very little firing was going on. Here the company unloaded, reorganized, and moved into an assembly area where the night was spent watching the naval craft catch hell from enemy aircraft. This was also the day 2nd Lt. Brandt received notice of his promotion to first.

July 11 we went into position south of Niscemi where we received some artillery fire and watched the 2nd Battalion battle desperately with enemy tanks. The tanks broke through our left and pushed down through the valley almost to the beach and almost surrounded us. The Cannon company and the Navy broke up this enemy tank drive, forcing them to withdraw, leaving many tanks burning in the valley. That night Lt. J.L. Robinson took a patrol with Cpl. R.R. Buel as second in command, and contacted the 2nd battalion on our left, and later led our battalion into the position the second had just vacated. Also, some friendly paratroopers were dropped just to our left.

It was almost daylight of July 12 when we were getting located in our new positions. Some enemy aircraft flew very low and dropped bombs on M-4 tanks near our right flank. We were under heavy artillery fire all day, and saw a fuel dump to our rear receive a hit which started it afire. Five men received wounds and were evacuated, except for S/Sgt. Klaus, who stayed with the company although wounded below the left eye.

About 0830 on July 13 the company began a forced march into the town of Niscemi, a distance of about 15 miles. No enemy resistance was encountered so we moved so we moved through the town and went into a defensive position three miles out and contacted the enemy that night. A report came in that 100 enemy tanks were in our vicinity so the company and attached anti-tank was alerted to repulse this attack. Lt. A.A. Godwin took his platoon to establish an O.P. on hill 393. One squad was left there under the command of Sgt. K.N. Walter and the remainder of the platoon returned to the vicinity of the company CP.

The morning of July 14 found the squad on O.P., supposedly on hill 393, was in reality on a hill about 500 yards west of hill 393. The squad was left on the original OP and Lt. Godwin took the remainder of his platoon and moved towards hill 393. However, this unit came under small arms, artillery and mortar fire, and was unable to reach the hill. The O.P. reported enemy tanks approaching their position and brought artillery fire to bear on them. It is believed one tank was destroyed---and it is known that the others were driven off. Then "K" Company was ordered to attack and take the hill that night. The second platoon, commanded by Lt. M.E. Stepson, was sent to accomplish this mission and moved onto the hill without meeting any resistance. The enemy had moved out again!!

The company spent most of the day of July 15 on the

march, and quite a few of the men were sick from the heat. We stopped in an assembly area outside of Barra-Franca. On July 16 the company moved out for an attack on Barra-Franca, but no opposition was met, so we had breakfast in town just as dawn was breaking. Moved on after a two hour break and went into position just outside of Pietrapterzia. Moved out that night and marched till dark when positions were taken up about ten miles west of hill 609 for an attack on the 17th of July. We the hill without meeting resistance and staued there all night.

We stayed on hill 609 during July 18 and 19th and at 1300 on July 20 we moved off down the hill without a break until dark, when positions were taken up about ten miles west of the town of Enna. During the night a patrol was sent into town, but met no resistance.

July 21st a motorized patrol under Lt. Robinson was sent to contact the Canadians on our right. This patrol was able to contact the most forward company of the 1st Canadian Division just outside of Leonforte, and brought back reports that Leonforte was still in enemy hands. The company stayed in its present location. The men finally had a chance for some rest, sleep and hot chow.

At about 2000 on July 22nd the road blocks were called in and we moved out on foot toward Petralia to the northwest. Just before dawn of July 23rd, after an all night march, we went into position southwest of Villadore. An outpost was sent to the hill in front of us, and the remainder of the company was allowed a little rest. The company remained in position during the day of July 24, and during this time patrols were sent out to Villadore and preperations were made for another move. Just after midnight of the 24th we moved to a new position one and a half miles east of Gangi. This position was reached just before dawn, and the company spent the day there moving forward about two miles to a new positon for the night.

On July 26th at about four in the afternoon orders came up preparing us for the next move. This time we were to move forward in the attack. Just before dawn of the 27th Lt. A.A. Godwin, with the first platoon reinforced, moved forward to Hill 882 to set up an outpost. No resistance was met during this mission, and three enemy soldiers were captured on the hill. The remainder of the company moved into a wadi and received artillery fire at this position. at about 1700 the company moved in to reinforce the platoon on hill 882. After dark we moved from this hill to a position just west of Sperlinga, arriving there just before dawn of July 28th. Some records make the remark, "The men were hungry, tired, and out of smokes".

July 28th: That morning Lt. Brandt went to the rear and brought up "C" rations, the first food that the company had in about 36 hours. The company was

again ordered to move, and was moved by vehicles into the town of Nicosia to strengthen "I" company, which has taken the town that morning. "K" Company remained in the town, setting up a CP in the city hall, and policed the town by rounding up all prisoners, many of which were Italians in hiding. Guards were placed at the bank, the hospital and the abandoned ammunition dump. This guard was continued during July 29th and 30th. July 31st saw the company moving to a new position across town, and the company remained there August 1st. However, on August 2nd, at about 1300 the company moved to an assembly area more forward, and at this time a platoon of heavy machine guns from "M" company was attached to the company. The new assembly area was entered just behind the 39th Division at dusk. Hot chow was brought up and preparations were made for the attack on hill 1034.

This attack began about 0100 August 3rd, and at about 0300 we prepared to move on to hill 1034. The first platoon, with Lt. Godwin in command, moved up a wadi on the right and the 3rd platoon, commanded by Lt. E.J. Griffin, moved to the left. These platoons came under heavy machine gun fire and sniper fire, and were pinned down. The 2nd platoon, in command of Lt. M.E. Stepson, was sent to assist the 3rd platoon, and a light machine gun squad under the control of Cpl. E.M. Moxley was sent to protect the right flank. These units got half way up the hill, but were then forced to withdraw. In this action Lt. Griffin was seriously wounded and had to be evacuated. Three enlisted men were killed and four were wounded. By this time daylight was approaching, and the company was in a "tight spot". The company commander, Capt. Morehouse, decided to move onto the hill just in the rear of our objective. They were subjected to artillery fire all during the day. Quite a few were found to be missing when reorganization was accomplished on this point. That night we were withdrawn, and sent to the right flank of the battalion to follow "I" company in general support.

Just at dawn on August 4th we moved through "I" Company's position to attack hill 1025, but were pinned down on the forward slope of hill 1034 by enemy fire. The second platoon, Lt Stepson in command, was sent forward to try and reach the objective. This platoon was driven back by heavy enemy machine gun fire. Just at dawn the heavy machine guns of the company were in position and heavy fire was delivered on the enemy, forcing them to retreat along the road. At approximately 0800 Lt. J.L. Robinson, with elements of the 1st and 3rd platoons started moving to flank our objective from the left. At the same time Lt. Godwin started moving with the remainder of the 1st platoon to attack the objective from the front. The weapons platoon and heavy machine guns were left in place to deliver supporting fire from hill 1034. The Company Commander with company headquarters moved to a small hill just forward of hill 1034. There they took 16 German prisoners. The unit moving to attack the

objective from the left moved onto the left slope of hill 1025, and received enemy sniper, machine gun and mortar fire, causing them to withdraw to a covered position. At this time heavy machine gun and mortar fire was placed on hill 1025. Using this fire as covering fire, Lt. Robinson advanced his men and was able to move onto the objective. After moving into position on the objective, Sgt. G.W. Weeks was fired upon by the enemy at close range. From his O.P. near the top of the hill he exchanged rifle fire, and caused the enemy to surrender. The the company began rounding up prisoners, and the "take for the day" numbered 53 German prisoners. The company prepared defensive positions, established O.P.'s and tried to get some well earned rest. While on position on Hill 1034 the weapons platoon and heavy machine gun platoon of "M" company received heavy enemy artillery fire. In this action two enlisted men were killed. Word was also received that Lt. Griffin had died of the wounds he received on August 3rd.

August 6th we moved out to attack the town of Troina and after a three hour hike across the country we reached the town. Troina had been cleared of the enemy already, so we moved on through and took up positions on the high ground north of the town. We took two prisoners at this position, stayed there all night, and also had hot chow.

August 7th, early in the morning, the 47th Infantry, 9th Division, started passing through our positions. We were told that we were being relieved. We were withdrawn to an assembly area, about two miles west of Troina for rest, recuperation and replacement of equipment.

August 8th to 14th was spent in usual camp duties around the rest area, and on the 14th of August, 1943, and the company moved a distance of about 25 miles to an assembly area west of Randazzo. August 15th to 19th was spent in usual camp duties--hikes, lectures, and recreation. After supper on the 19th of August we broke up camp, and started packing for a move the next morning. On August 20th we moved by truck from west of Randazzo to Licata, where we set up camp and prepared for a training schedule. There the company stayed until September 9th when the company moved just outside of Agrigento to guard the airport.

On September 12, 1943 the company moved to the same area that they had occupied just before going to the airport.

October 20th found the company leading equipment and making ready for another move. Left of the area of Licata, Sicily by truck at 0100 hours October 21st and arrived at Augusta, Sicily at 1000, where they went aboard HMS Maleja at 1800 hours. The ship pulled out of the harbor at Augusta at 1100 on October 23 and headed out to sea. The boat docked at the harbor of Algeria at 1800 on October 25th. Then on the 27th the ship left the harbor once more, and again headed out to sea.

November 5th, 1943 was the day the ship docked at Liverpool harbor, at 830 hours. The distance traveled since boarding the ship was 3814 water miles. Most of the day was spent in changing into O.D.'s.

The company disembarked at 0300 hours, assembled in a platoon formation on the docks and marched about a mile from the docks to board a train. The train pulled out of the station at 0700 hours. Arrived at permanent change of station per secret authority, travelling by rail for approximately 300 miles. The train pulled in at the station at Dorchester, England at 1930 hours. Disembarked from the train and boarded trucks and rode to Abbotsburg, England a distance of about 15 miles. Company moved into small British made huts, had hot supper, and were restricted until further notice!!!

From the records I have been able to locate where the company spent their time from this date until sometime near D-Day doing training of all sorts, problems and drill.

Then along came the mightiest military invasion in history, and the 1st Division was right in front. And of course company K couldn't be left behind either. "K" company disembarked from HMS Empire Anvil at 0325, 6 June 1944 in LCA's and the stage was set for their part in the greatest invasion in world history. Immediately the LCA's took off for their rendezvous area, awaiting the hour to head for the coast of France. The ocean was very rough, and soon everyone was drenched from the high waves that were splashing in and over the front of the craft.

At approximately 0615 hours six craft loaded with tense, but anxious soldiers headed straight for the beach "Fox Green", on the Normandy coast of France, in the vicinity of Colleville Sur Mer.

At Hplus 30 (0700) all boats reached the shore safely, but two were blown up by mines shortly after they had put their passengers safely ashore... Machine guns were constantly chattering and the cross fire was sweeping up and down the beach. By this time the enemy mortar and artillery fire had started in to zero the men thrown flat on the sands, and heavy casualties were being inflicted.

"K" company, the reserve company of the battalion, landed before one of the assault companies, and was pinned down immediately. The riflemen took up positions behind the embankment at the high tide mark, but targets were hard to find due to the enemy's well-covered and well concealed positions.

Lieutenant Brandt, the company executive officer, was seriously wounded, and was later killed by the same shell that mortally wounded the Company Commander, Captain Fruenal, while he was trying to reorganize the company. Lieutenant Zyblut was seriously injured while coming in from the landing craft, but he managed to reach the cover of a small cliff to get first aid.

Lt. Robinson was killed by a sniper while he was trying to direct orders for the attack.

At this time Lt. Tumbaugh and S/Sgt. Barbeiri regrouped the first and second assault groups and moved across terrain swept by enemy fire, but they gained first contact with the enemy, inflicted casualties and forced them to withdraw. On top of the hill they joined "L" company and set up a defensive position on their left flank. Here they were told that the remainder of K company had occupied the village of Cabourg. Lt. Stumbaugh sent out a patrol of three men to see if they could contact the enemy. From this mission the men never returned.

A few minutes later one of the men stationed at an outpost came back and told him he had seen 15 Jerry soldiers in Cabourg, so Lt. Stumbaugh moved his section up to contact the enemy, but were fired upon from the flank. The section was forced to move back to the cover of a hedgerow.

The company, less the 1st and 2nd assault groups, under command of Lt. Hallissey--fourth section on the left, fifth on the right, and third to the front center, moved up the hill on the left flank. Three of an enemy machine gun crew were captured and one killed--the remainder of the enemy withdrawing to the safety of the surrounding hedgerow.

On the first objective Lt. Giles joined the company, and assumed command. The third section, under Lt. Silver, was given the mission of clearing a path through a mine field, and sending out a patrol to try and contact I or L companies. About mid-way across the open terrain over which they were advancing they came under fire from the enemy and were pinned down. Lt. Giles, Lt. Silver, Sgt. Buel, and three riflemen advanced to the head of the company, moved on ahead for about 500 yards, and contacted elements of L company. The remainder of the company moved up and advanced with L company to where the battalion was reorganized.

It was decided the defensive positions for the night would be in this sector. Lt. Stumbaugh and the second assault section rounded up the inhabitants of the village and placed them under guard. The first, fourth and fifth assault sections sent out patrols to La Vallee during the night, but no enemy was contacted.

When a check was made at the end of the day 51 casualties, most of them on the beach, had been suffered by company K.

On July 29 the company was 800 yards west of La Chevalerie. On the afternoon of that day the company received orders from battalion for company K to attack Lauberieri with company L. Company K went into the attack at 1100 hours, and had taken its objective at 1600 hours. No enemy was encountered during the attack.

The area occupied by the company on 1 August, the area north of Gavray bombed from about 0005 until 0030. Several bombs hit in the company area, but there were no casualties. Orders were received that we would move out and be rear guard for the regiment. At 0800 the company left with the second platoon leading, followed by the third platoon, company headquarters and the weapons platoons. The first platoon was to move out late with the regimental train to arrive 6 miles east of La Haye Pesna. The platoons were assigned areas and dug in. There was no enemy action during the trip. Several enemy planes flew over our positions shortly after our arrival.

Company K left its positions at 0636 22 August by motor convoy and arrived at La Tellerie at 0745 to go into forward posts and prepared for the attack. The battalion moved out with companies I and L in the lead, and K in reserve. Company moved out at 0945. The battalion took the objective without meeting enemy resistance. The company then moved into another assembly area at la Chaple Uree at 1245. Platoons were assigned areas and dug in; outposts were established. Information was received from a Frenchman that there was a German officer and three enlisted men just south of our position. A patrol was sent out to capture them. The patrol proceeded south about two miles when they came upon a group of Germans who began to run when they were challenged. One German was wounded and captured and two others surrendered, including a German officer. The patrol proceeded in order to capture the otherman, besides two more. The wounded man and two others were turned over to battalion and the patrol returned at 2000.

On Friday, August 18, orders were received that the situation was no longer tactical, so the platoons were pulled into an assembly area and paid. The company left the area 1/2 mile east of La Haye, to set out marching at 1630 for a rest area 3/4 mile northeast of La Haye, arriving there at 1705. That night the company had a party and a movie.

On the third of October while the company was in Eilendorf, the enemy laid a terrific barrage of artillery on the company position at approximately 1145. This barrage lasted about 35 minutes, and during that time about 400 rounds were thrown into our area. Immediately following the barrage enemy infantry, and engineers attacked. The heavy barrage knocked out all communications to platoons and battalion. Therefore, the commanding officer did not know the exact situation. However, communications were soon reestablished with battalion when one of the men maneuvered the 300 set through an aperture in the CP pillbox. Battalion was informed that we were being counter-attacked, and we requested division artillery. The company was supported by 15 battalions of artillery. The company was supported by 15 battalions of artillery, personally directed by General Andrus.

The story finally came back that the enemy had forced the 1st squad of the first platoon from their position by moving a tank up to the position, followed by engineers who used demolitions and flame throwers on their pill-box. The squad was able to withdraw with no casualties to a position closer to the platoon CP. At the same time this occurred in the 1st platoon area, the third platoon had to withdraw for the same reason. The 57mm AT gun was knocked out by a direct hit. When the enemy came in they turned the flame thrower on the gun.

The attack continued until daylight, when it was discovered that the second squad of the first platoon had been captured. However, the attack was successfully repulsed and the company was in its original position shortly after daylight.

On Thursday, 19 January the company was alerted at 0300 hours and moved from the assembly area 0545 to a jump off spot about 600 yards southeast of Fayonville. At 0645 the last and second platoons boarded light tanks and headed for the objective. The third platoon, company headquarters, and the weapons platoon followed up on foot. Captain Booth rode one of the light tanks so that he could direct the attack and control the fire of the tanks. The company objective was some woods about 1500 yards east of Fayonville. The enemy had pulled out by the time the company got there so no trouble was encountered, and the company was on the objective by 0830 hours.

While the company was taking the objective I and L companies were attacking the town of Scheppen, Belgium. After our objective was taken orders were received to move down to Schoppen and to stand by for orders. About 1430 the company drew a mission to clean out some houses in front of L company. For this job the second platoon was selected. They started out in good shape, but on arriving at a crossroad in front of I company they found that Jerry had zeroed in on them with a heavy artillery barrage. In this barrage eight men were wounded and three killed.

In the evening of the 25th of January the first platoon was given the mission of establishing an outpost in a small wooded section 8000 yards out to the front. A patrol was sent to the woods, and after capturing 13 enemy without resistance, established positions on the east fringe of the road. At about 0130 on the morning of the 27th of January the position received mortar fire and, shortly after, another counter-attack. The first platoon was forced to withdraw from the woods, but they established another outpost in a hedgerow a hundred yards from the woods. During the next day, the 27th, K company again received orders from battalion to secure the woods in order to protect the flank of the 18th Infantry, who were moving into Heppenbach the following morning.

At about 2330 hours a squad of the third platoon attempted to secure the woods, but were pinned down by small arms fire. The remainder of the platoon, riding medium tanks, attacked the woods, and after captur-

ing 23 enemy again established an outpost in the woods. About 0530 this position received an enemy counter-attack supported by a direct fire weapon, probably a light tank, and again the outpost was forced to withdraw.

On the morning of the 28th of January, a patrol was again sent to the woods, for it was thought the enemy had withdrawn because of the attack and capture of Heppenbach by the 18th Infantry. This patrol found the woods to be clear of any action and to contain two somewhat wounded enemy and numerous enemy weapons. The company remained in a static position. On the 29th the battalion was called in for divisional reserve.

On the 25th of February, after a hot breakfast the company crossed the Ruhr river and went into an assembly area at Neidereau. The company remained at this assembly area during the time the company commander went on a reconnaissance. We moved out in the attack at 1200 hours and crossed the line of departure without any trouble except an occasional round from one light enemy gun. After an advance of about 800 yards through the woods the company was held up by small arms and machine gun and tank fire. The first and second platoons were in the assault. The third platoon, unable to dislodge the enemy, held up the company for the night. We received harassing fire and suffered three casualties. Two men were missing in action. On February 27th the company received orders to pull back and pass through the 2nd battalion at Soller. From Soller we were to attack and take part of the town of Vettweiss. The company moved out at 0900 hours, following I company to an assembly area 1000 yds west of Soller. With I company on the left, the company jumped off 1200 hours and cleared the left edge of a woods between Soller and Vettweiss. After emerging from the woods the company continued on into Vettweiss, receiving some artillery, mortar and small arms fire. After gaining an entrance into the town, little opposition was encountered until the company was within a short distance, about 300 yards, of its final objective. This objective was a large factory on the extreme edge of town. Due to heavy enemy tank, S.P. and small arms fire the company was unable to continue its advance. Our position was consolidated and the company tied in with the companies on our flanks. The attack was slowed down largely due to the fact that only two of our tanks were successful in reaching the town. The casualties suffered were three in number.

On the 28th of February the company continued the previous day's attack at 0530 hours, and was successful in reaching its objective. Harassing artillery fire was received on our positions. At 1000 hours the company received orders to attack the town of Gladbach, three kms. distant, at 1100 hours in conjunction with L company. The company moved out on foot and under the cover of a smoke screen was successful in consolidating the objective in a short time. The enemy laid a very heavy artillery concentration on the entrance to Gladbach, but only three casualties were suffered. Heavy

artillery fire was continued on the company throughout the day. At 1730 hours the company received orders to attack and hold the town of Eggeraheim, about two and a half kms. north of Gladbach. Company was to move out on battalion order, after L company siezed a town about half way from the objective. The company moved out at 2100 hours and received a heavy artillery barrage just as the head of the column left Gladbach. Three men were wounded, one killed, and a few were lost due to darkness and confusion. The company moved out quickly, however, and reached its objective without further mishap or opposition. One prisoner was taken in the town. By 2400 hours the town was secured, all positions consolidated, barricades removed from the street and a mine field checked.

Hot breakfast was served at 0600 hours on the fourth of March, and the company moved out on trucks at 0800 to an assembly area in Freisheim, a distance of ten miles. At 2130 hours the company moved out on foot to a new assembly area in Weilerwest and arrived at positions at 2330 hours. The distance covered was about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The company received orders for the attack to be made on the following morning.

The company was alerted to move out at 0400 hours into the attack for the wooded area north of Weilerwest. No opposition developed throughout the morning and the company reached their first objective. At 1400 the company moved forward about 3000 yards to the edge of the woods west of Merten. There the company held up until darkness, and at dusk the company moved out into the town of Merten against light small arms fire and had its positions consolidated by 2100 hours. No casualties were suffered, but the men were becoming very tired from the continuous advance without let up.

At 1700 hours on the 6th of March, 1st Lt. Raymond H. Smith led a motorized patrol out to the town of Sechtem. When the patrol was within 200 yards of the town limits they drew small arms fire and were forced to withdraw to our own lines. One man was killed on this patrol. At 2100 hours the 1st platoon with a section of medium tanks moved out and occupied the town of Trippeldorf, about 1000 yards to the left of the company. A counter-attack was expected but did not develop.

One of the most successful attacks made by this company in the European campaign was the attack on Bonn on 8 March 1945. Although unorthodox in many ways, and somewhat unusual, it is an example of aggressiveness and of taking advantage of the situation. By 2400 hours, 7 March, orders were received for the attack on Bonn. All officers were briefed immediately, and the company with attached units, attacked towards Bonn at 0400 hours. The company marched on the road in a column of two's. The order of march was the 1st platoon with Lt. R.H. Smith leading, the 3rd platoon under Lt. Thomas, the 2nd platoon under Lt. Brauer, a platoon of tanks made up of four mediums and one assault gun, commanded by Lt. Spencer. Also, there

company headquarters and the weapons platoon under Lt. F.H. Smith and Lt. Shaw, and a regimental anti-tank platoon under Lt. Shultz. The light machine gun section was attached to the 1st platoon and an engineer team with a mine sweeper rode the lead tank.

The jump-off was at 0400 hours from the IP at point 62. When the company had passed point 77, machine gun fire came up from point 94 and flares continually came up from point 78. The machine gun fire was too high and passed over the company and the marching formation was maintained in spite of the flares directly overhead. The company crossed the railroad between points 78 and 79 and arrived at the traffic circle at 0500 hours.

Sentries at intersections, billets, and so on, were disarmed and marched right along in the column. At 545386 two groups of German soldiers were encountered. There were about six in each group and one group gave up immediately. The other failed to halt when challenged, so rather than have unnecessary gunfire, the lead platoon marched side by side down the street with them.

One of the soldiers asked in German, "What Panzer Division is this?" The company turned left at Rosental Strauss and the small group of Germans continued to march straight ahead on Koln Strauss. There were very few people who were up and around, who were very confused and evidently thought we were friendly troops. Things were very quiet as we marched the company into the very heart of the city and the enemy defenses. It seemed that things were almost too quiet, but a change was just about to take place.

Just as the company reached its assigned sector in the city, Lt. R.H. Smith and Sgt. Jacks went down to the river's edge at 0530 and reported to the company commander that the bridge was intact. Shortly afterward, all hell broke loose. Traffic began pouring in from the north and it became apparent that there was a ring of tanks and SP guns guarding the approaches to the bridge.

The infantry crowded into doorways, windows, alleyways and other places from which they could fire into the streets. The assault gun was placed at the intersection of Rosental and Wachsbleicher. Within an hour, on Mark VI tank, one 88mm SP gun, two weasels, two trucks, three cars and one ambulance carrying food and ammunition were knocked out. The 105mm assault gun knocked out the tank, and a Sherman got the SP. The cars and weasels were full of soldiers who fired from the vehicles. The traffic from the north stopped when the Germans had learned that the Americans were in the town.

Lt. R.H. Smith led a group of five volunteers that were to clean the buildings on Rosental down to the river. Sgt. Jacks was killed by a machine gun during this action, and was the only casualty suffered by the

company during this attack.

The remainder of the day was spent in clearing the original sector assigned to the company. Artillery and rockets fell in the area throughout the day and night.

Resistance ended officially at 1410 hours and the company had taken 137 prisoners.

On the 18th of March, the company crossed the Rhine river on a pontoon bridge under the cover of a very efficient smoke screen, and reached an assembly area in Rheinbreitbach at 0930. From this assembly area, the company moved out to the northeast corner of the Remagen bridgehead and relieved elements of the 78th division. The company went into positions at Ittenbach with the first platoon occupying an outpost position in Dottschied, about 1500 yards north of the company.

At 0230 hours on the 20th of March, the company moved out and as they reached the Autobahn, the 2nd and 3rd platoons were pinned down by machine gun fire and suffered three casualties. The opposition was taken care of and the company continued the advance, crossed the Autobahn, and reached its final objective at Billingshausen without further incident. Some small arms fire was received while in this position, and artillery fire was brought to bear on a German tank that was laying direct fire on elements of I company to our left. The tank withdrew under cover of a very skillfully laid smoke screen. Later that day, the enemy made another withdrawal across open ground exposed to direct fire. The smoke screen was used for this movement expertly in this operation, also.

As this expansion of the bridgehead continued, all elements were on line and covering a very large front. Company K was division reserve for three hours one afternoon, but moved up and took over L company's positions and went into the attack again at 0300 hours on the 24th of March.

The company moved out behind I company into the attack for Kunzenhohn. Shortly after crossing the LD, I company encountered heavy machine gun and anti-tank fire. K company was on the reverse slope of a ridge and the fire passed over them. As casualties and confusion began to mount in I company, the order was received to seize the objective at all costs!!! K company deployed to the left and started to maneuver around to hit the enemy from the rear, but dawn was just breaking and only the 1st platoon got across the open ground that was covered by direct fire from the enemy's flank. The first platoon moved up a ravine to the edge of the village. One anti-tank gun crew was killed, several infantrymen were killed, and several prisoners were taken as the platoon moved up this draw. When within 50 yds of the buildings, the platoon held up at the edge of the ravine while Lt. Smith and Sgt. Deaton scouted the vicinity and found out that the platoon was completely surrounded by both tanks and infantry. The platoon was immediately reorganized and twelve men were missing.

It was decided that the platoon would work back down the gullie the same way it had come up and try to locate the casualties and the remainder of the company. Nine men were wounded and three dead were taken care of. Sgt. Turner located and led the other rifle platoons up. For a time, the situation appeared very critical, but the company was able to continue the advance and gain its objective by 1100 hours. The pressure was relieved by a platoon of medium tanks attached to I company, and a total of 45 prisoners were taken. Highly concentrated barrages of artillery and rockets had been coming in almost continually for the past 48 hours, and this was continued as the company attacked Lichtenberg at 1300 hours. Lst Lt. Raymond H. Smith performed an excellent job in moving his platoon onto the objective and holding it in the face of enemy counter-attacks. Many enemy were killed by small arms fire. Battalion was asked to send up ammunition for the anti-tank weapons, but none was received.

The company received orders to attack at 0400 hours on the 25th of March, but the enemy changed the plans with a strong counter-attack. Enemy tanks approached within 200 yards of our position. Two tanks were knocked out and the remainder were driven off. The attack was resumed at 1400 hours towards the town of Leschied. With the aid of tanks, the objective was taken against light opposition. Once on the objective a TOT of our own artillery came in on us and killed one man, and wounded six others. Later in the evening enemy artillery was received and also direct 20mm fire.

When the break was made out of the bridgehead, this organization had the mission of leapfrogging to the east and sweeping from the 3rd Armored division's left flank north to the Sieg river. A typical action was the movement on tanks, tank destroyers, and half-tracks from Ukerath to an assembly area in Ndr Irsen and the attack toward the city of Hamm at 0030 hours on the 28th of March. The company was supported by medium tanks, tank destroyers, a platoon of heavy machine guns, and an anti-tank platoon. The first phase line was Pracht where small arms, machine gun and tank fire held the company until daylight. Thirteen prisoners were taken. The company continued the advance toward Hamm and while enroute received orders via radio to attack the city of Roth instead. This move put K company 5 miles out in front of the rest of the battalion. The town was taken just as the enemy was withdrawing from his positions and artillery and mortars were the only opposition met. Two patrols were sent out, one to check the area to the company's front and the other to check the condition of the bridges across the Sieg river.

On the 31st of March, the company rode 125 miles on tanks and TD's to the city of Buren and then seized and occupied the town of Wiene. The tanks ran out of fuel enroute and together with the men on them, they didn't arrive until the next day. In this position, many prisoners, mostly in convoy, were taken as they tried to escape the Ruhr Pocket. Not knowing that the Pocket was closed, they rode right into our positions and tried to shoot their way out. All German officers and many

of the men had their wives with them, and were trying to get transportation, to break through anywhere, in order to move them out of the area taken by the Americans.

Word was received that the Germans were preparing an attack with their Panzer units to force their way out of the Pocket, and keep open the escape route. The company then moved out and took up excellent defensive positions about 2000 yards south of Geseke. The first platoon patrolled extensively to the front and captured several prisoners. Also, they destroyed four 20mm guns and six 40mm guns, discovered an air strip and a bomb dump in a heavily wooded area, and found a rainload of signal equipment, propaganda material, and spare parts for airplanes. The company later moved out and took up positions in this area patrolled by the 1st platoon. The men were in foxholes for four days and nights in the most miserable weather imaginable. It was very cold, and for some time they couldn't dry. The big picture about this time revealed that the 3rd Armored division had reached the Weser river but couldn't force a crossing. So as per usual, the 1st Infantry Division was called upon to make the assault crossing and establish a bridgehead that would allow the Armor to get going again. The river was a natural defensive barrier in itself and the terrain was ideally suited for the enemy to make a bitter stand. Everything was in his favor, but for reasons which we will probably never know, he did not take advantage of the situation and the initial crossing was made against relatively light opposition.

At 1700 hours on the 8th of April, the company engaged in a hot meal and most of the men received mail from home. 2nd Lt. John W. Baumgartner joined the company in this area, having been transferred from I company.

At 2100 hours, the 1st platoon crossed the river in assault boats and proceeded on to the company's objective about 2500 yards southeast of Furstenburg. Guides were posted at the appropriate places to insure the remainder of the company did not get lost going through the woods in the darkness. All of the company except the 1st platoon crossed the river later on a foot bridge that was thrown up after the original crossing. The company tied in with I company and was in position by 2300. After a cold, wet and very miserable night in holes, the company moved out at 1000 hours the next morning for their second objective, the town of Fohlen placken, a distance of 15,000 yards. This entire distance was through woods and at one point there were two roads running parallel to the east. K company was in column on one road, and the enemy infantry with S.P.'s were in column on the other road. The two roads were about 100 yards apart and both columns continued eastward, side by side. The enemy turned north just sort of our objective and we continued to take 35 prisoners, and the town, against small arms resistance.

At 0600 hours on the 10th of April, this organization was attached to the 4th Cavalry group. The company rode tanks that were part of the Cavalry Group to the town of Einbeck, and remained there for the night. The next day a 20 mile ride

on tanks brought us to Duderode another night's sleep. What a way to fight a war!!

At this stage of the game, the Germans were preparing for a stand in the Harz Mountains, and a lot of SS troops were brought in for that purpose. The Cavalry was unable to penetrate the fringe of the mountains, so it was April 13th that K company loaded on trucks for a 45 mile ride to an assembly area in Ellrich and filled up on the first ice cream that they had had in a long time. A two mile march brought the company to the jump-off spot at Sulzhaynand and the LD was crossed at 1600. Almost immediately, the assault platoons came under heavy small arms, machine gun and anti-tank fire. Sgt. Palmbad of the 3rd platoon was killed and one tank knocked out. Mortar fire and maneuvering of the 3rd platoon under Lt. Baumgartner cleared the situation up for a mile, and about 40 prisoners were taken.

About 220 yards up the road around a curve another delaying defense was met. Lt. Baumgartner led his platoon the low ground along the road, and Lt. R.H. Smith led the remainder of the company up on the road to the high ground on the left of the 3rd platoon. It was 6000 yards to the objective, so it was decided to dig in for the night and continue the advance at 0530 hours the next morning. The hills were so high and steep that the men went without chow rather go down and climb back up again. During the night, artillery fell into the positions and it was determined that it was our own stuff that was just not clearing the top of the hill.

The advance continued that morning at 0530 with the first and third platoons abreast. Roadblocks had to be removed as they were encountered, and resistance consisted mostly of 20mm guns and machine guns. At a road intersection the company ran head on into two German S.P.'s and about a platoon of infantry. A short skirmish ensued and we traded one tank for an SP, had one man killed and two wounded, and the enemy had all his infantry either killed or captured. The company reorganized and headed on to Hohegiess, the key to the Nazi defenses in that area. When, within 2000 yards of the objective, the company was subjected to direct fire from an SP. Lt. Baumgartner performed an excellent job in directing artillery and mortar fire while Lt. R.H. Smith led the 1st and 2nd platoons around the left flank of the SP gun. The SP was forced to withdraw and then the 1st, 2nd and 3rd platoons, in that order, moved to the edge of the woods just south of Hohegiess.

The supporting tanks moved into position and laid direct fire on the town. The rifle platoons went in just as darkness fell and the tanks failed to see the men move in. As a result, the tanks fired on their own men as much as they did on the Germans. A few rounds of artillery came in at the start of the assault and the Company Commander, Capt. Fred H. Smith, was wounded in the leg and wounded. 1st Lt. Raymond H. Smith, platoon leader of the 1st platoon, took over the company right in the middle of the assault. By 2300 the town had been cleared, roadblocks set up, and a total of 85 prisoners

taken. No sooner had this been done, than an order was received to attack the city of Benneckenstien. Hot chow was ready to be served, but the order was-"no sleep and no chow until the city was taken and cleared!" Fifty-six hours without food, water, or sleep and we were told to keep going! The men and the officers were out on their feet, but they did go on- deriving their energy from not-to-be-contained feelings toward those who issued the orders. Preparations went on just as if all was well. The attack toward Benneckenstien began at 0400 hours on the 15th of April with men riding tanks to the half way point and then going in on foot. The entrance was unopposed but small arms resistance was met in the center of the town. A personnel carrier was knocked out and several high-ranking officers, both Army and Navy were captured. The town was clear and the company in position at 0700 hours, and finally a hot meal was enjoyed by all.

That night at 2100 hours the company moved on foot behind I and L companies to the town of Sorge. As the platoons were going into positions, an SP came up the road and stopped between I and K companies. I company sent a bazooka team out to a firing position and then K company fired three flares over the suspected position of the Sp gun. The round hit the SP but did not knock it out, so additional flares were fired and the bazooka team tried it again. This, coupled with interdiction artillery fire on a curve in the road, resulted in another knocked SP for the Germans. The remainder of the night was rather quiet except for an occasional round of enemy artillery.

On the 17th of April, K company alone moved out and took the town of Tanne. A patrol proceeded the company into the town, and reported that three enemy tanks withdrew when they saw the company coming in. The second platoon got into the fire fight on the north side of the town near the woods. One man was wounded by a sniper and about twenty prisoners were taken in.

The next morning, the company covered about 6000 yards and held that night in Konishof. Enroute, small arms and tank fire were encountered, and we knocked out one tank, one truck, and two cars. Many enemy were killed as they tried to withdraw ahead of us. The direct fire of the enemy was particularly heavy as the company moved into the town and began to clear it. Defensive positions were taken up on a high ridge just out of town and a hot meal was served.

At 0800 hours the following morning, I and L companies attacked abreast from the south to the town of Elbingerode. K company swung about 2000 yards around to the left and came into the town from the north west, catching the enemy with pants down. The town was clear by 1100 hours, and we had 450 prisoners and no casualties. The first platoon attacked some woods further to the west of the town and came back with 120 more prisoners. Positions were occupied and guards put on hospitals and camps in the area. On the 20th of April, part of the third platoon and a section of tanks moved out east of the town to clear an assigned sector

of woods. Little resistance was met and 85 prisoners were taken. The next day this same area was swept again, and another 50 prisoners were brought in. The company remained in Elbingerode and continued to pick up prisoners here and there until April 25th, when a move was made to Bischofshausen. The distance was about 60 miles, and we were informed that the situation was non-tactical. Interior guard and a training schedule were set up and everyone thought the war was over as far as combat was concerned for this organization. But at 1600 hours on the 27th, we moved 120 miles southeast to Schönewald and became part of the Third Army. It was an overnight stay in Schönewald and the company moved on to Selb the next day. Motorized patrols operated about 3000 yards to the east and roadblocks and mine fields were cleared.

From then until noon on the 5th of May, the company again went "garrison". 1st Lt. James Muslow joined the company as executive officer, and the company entrucked for a 15 mile ride to the city of Cheb (Eger) in Czechoslovakia. There the bad news was received that we had to start pushing again. The thought was uppermost in everyone's mind that this was too late in the game to get it!!

K company jumped off at 0600 hours on May 6th and led the battalion the entire way from the LD to the day's final objectives at Kynsperk, a distance of over 12,000 yards. The company was supported by a platoon of tanks and a platoon of heavy machine guns. The first four villages were taken without a fight, and 35 prisoners were picked up in Reichensdorf, Sebnitz, Dornbach and Awa. As the company started across 2000 yards of open ground before the village of Kulsam, it came under grazing automatic fire and was pinned down. When the radio failed to operate, Lt. R.H. Smith went back to the rear of the company and gave the platoon leader of the tanks the position of the rifle platoons and the positions of the enemy weapons with instruction as to how to proceed. The tanks and infantry then advanced abreast using assault fire.

As the company reached the river at the edge of town the third platoon, with Lt. Baumgartner leading, captured the one and only bridge remaining intact in the entire area. A cache of nitro-glycerine was under the bridge and two 500 pound bombs were on top. The company waded across into the edge of town in the face of small arms fire, and then the bridge and vicinity were subjected to heavy mortar fire lasting until the town was completely cleared, and fire was directed into the wooded areas to the front. The capture of this bridge enabled the CCA of the 9th Armored Division to roll through and head for the city of Falkenau.

A total of 140 prisoners had been taken up to this point and the company turned them over to battalion and prepared to jump off for Kynsperk. Enroute the villages of Klingenberg and Döbrositz were cleared of the enemy without resistance. The advance continued and the company went into position on the high ground east of the town without any trouble. Many of the civilians were put to work clearing roadblocks while the men ate some hot chow and got a little well-earned rest.

The following morning at 0700 hours the company

moved out again and took the village of Kagerova and the town of Goldorf. It was at this point, when the company was preparing to continue to advance, that the order was received to halt all forward movement because the German Army to our front was surrendering. The only emotion expressed at the time was the fact that no casualties had been suffered by the company during the last push.

The company moved on up to Falkenau at 1900 hours that evening in order to handle a concentration camp containing over 1000 women. It was very obvious that many headaches and confusion galore were going to develop in the handling of displaced persons, refugees, and prisoners of war, both German and Allied. And so it was on VE day in Company K. That's the way it goes. Some days are like that.

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