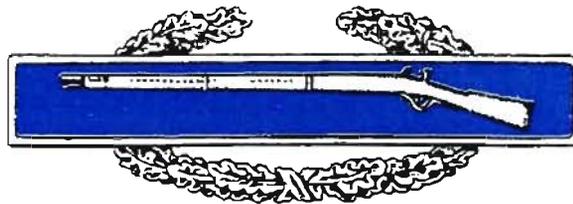




COMPANY I

WW II COMBAT HISTORY



Company I
3rd Battalion, 397th Infantry Regiment
100th Infantry Division

COMPANY I

WW II COMBAT HISTORY

October 1944 through April 1945

B. Lowry Bowman

Paul F. Mosher

COMPANY I COMBAT HISTORY

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COMPANY I COMBAT HISTORY

DEDICATION

This book is in remembrance of the then young men who faced one another in battle during the period from November 1944 until the end of combat in April 1945.

Born and raised thousands of miles apart, we were certainly not enemies by choice. However, we were adversaries by fate. And, to the extent possible under the conditions of battle, we acted honorably and conducted ourselves humanely.

Any evaluation of our success or failure should not be measured by the outcome of our often bloody confrontations as we fought over insignificant parcels of ground. But rather, from the lessons which were learned as the result of these deadly engagements in thousands of these small parcels. For certain, the total losses both by victors and vanquished were so staggering that this method of settling disputes on a world-wide basis has never been repeated in more than half-a-century.

More specifically, this book is dedicated to the fifty men of Company I, 397th Infantry Regiment, 100th Infantry Division who lost their lives during our time in combat. The bond established between men under the pressures of combat can not be explained nor duplicated. And, the death of any member can never be forgotten.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The illustrations which were created by Milford Apetz are identified on Page vii. Mil was a rifleman in Company I during some of our fiercest fighting. We wish to thank Mr. Apetz for making these "at the scene" sketches available for publication in this book.

Ken Brown's dedicated efforts in assembling the maps shown on Pages 91 thru 105 are gratefully acknowledged as well as his very interesting and most appropriate commentary.

Thanks also to Mr. Brown as well as Albert T. Klett and John L. Sheets for the assistance they provided in assembling and verifying the Company I Roster which appears at the very end of this book.

Finally, our thanks to all members of Company I for your participation-- this is, after all, a book about you and your involvement in some truly memorable events!!

BLB & PFM

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The illustrations appearing at pages 22, 29, 31, 46, and 57 were created by Milford Apetz. These sketches were made by Mil after the end of WW II and are based on his personal combat experiences as a rifleman in the second Platoon of Company I. Apetz joined Company I just before Ingwiller as related on Page 26 and following.

The other material is from Regimental and Division histories published in Germany before we returned to the States for discharge. Except, of course, the photo shown at Page 86 which is from a private collection.

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INTRODUCTION

This is an effort by former members of Company I, 397th Infantry Regiment of the 100th Division to put together an account of that company's service in Europe in World War II. It covers those six months from Nov. 5, 1944, when the regiment's third battalion, of which I Company was a part, relieved the third battalion of the 45th (Thunderbird) Division's 179th Regiment near Baccarat, France, until the war in Europe officially ended on May 8, 1945. The company was in the village of Altbach, Germany, when the firing stopped and in Salach when peace came. That is a total of 184 days.

It cannot be a definitive history for many reasons. The company commander, Capt. Ulysses J. Grant, died in 1987 at age 66 after a distinguished career as an agronomist with the Rockefeller Foundation. It's too bad no one ever asked him to write down his memories of that terrible winter of 1944-45. More than a half-century after the fact, those survivors who carried out his orders all are old men. Some still carry vivid memories of those times, while others buried their memories along with their friends, and some few have no memories at all. Some don't want to be reminded of the ultimate insanity that is war. Still others look back almost wistfully to the sense of friendship and purpose that also is a part of war -- Clyde T. Harkleroad of Piney Flats, Tennessee, remembers the good times. "Best times I ever had," he said.

One reason for sketchy memory of infantry warfare was suggested by James D. Blackwell of Shawnee Mission, Kansas, at a reunion of the 100th Division Association in Baltimore in 1993.

"After the war there was no one I knew who had been in the infantry, nobody I could talk to about it, so I guess many of my memories just withered away. Coming to this reunion helps to bring them back," Blackwell said.

Like a once close-knit family whose members move away and lose track of one another.

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Despite the fact that the infantry does most of the fighting and dying in war, during World War II it made up only about one-fifth of the total number in uniform while suffering roughly 75 per cent of the casualties. Unless the survivors kept in touch with old friends, they had no one with whom they could talk at war's end. A B-29 gunner, for example, had his own moments of fright but could not be expected to reminisce about how to construct a bed in a muddy hillside while dodging mortar shells.

Another factor which limits the scope of a proper history is that there is no account in the official division or regimental histories about I Company's single bloodiest day -- Nov. 14, 1944 -- and only a brief and erroneous account of its almost equally bloody encounter with a well-fortified German force atop Hill 296 near Ingwiller on Dec. 1-2. Probably the only official sources of information are the daily "morning reports" which were signed by Capt. William J. Bartus of Ambridge, Pa., the battalion personnel officer who was a member of the Provisional Battalion which included chaplains, surgeons and similar officers but no front-line troops. Copies of the morning reports have been obtained from the Army's record center in St. Louis, but, while helpful, they are incomplete, often confusing, and obviously not written by anyone who was actually on the scene. They deal more with the bookkeeping aspects of running a company than with the fighting itself. Each one concludes with the standard phrase "morale excellent," or, at the worst, "morale very good" -- rarely an accurate statement.

Albert Garland, former editor of *Infantry*, the publication of the Army's infantry school at Ft. Benning, commanded a rifle company in the 84th Division in northwestern Europe during World War II. In response to a question from the compilers of this document, he said the company clerk in the division headquarters wrote the morning reports from information supplied by the company commander who, in turn, got his information from platoon leaders and medics.

"Since the clerk had access to medical reports from the battalion and regimental aid stations, he often had more accurate information about casualties than I had," Garland

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wrote. "When we were not certain of a soldier's status, we would report him 'missing in action' and carry him as such until we could get more accurate information."

Whether Capt. Grant followed that same procedure with Company Clerk Silverman is not known, but it seems probable that he did. You don't crawl out of a frozen foxhole and type "morale excellent" on an official Army form. The morning reports had far more to do with personnel records and payroll information than with the war itself.

Lt. Col. Keith Bonn read all the morning reports he could find in doing research for his study of the Vosges campaign (*When The Odds Were Even*, Presidio Press, 1994). and found only a handful suggesting that morale might be less than excellent. In each such case, he told 100th Division veterans at their Louisville convention in 1995, the company commander risked being transferred to other duties. Morale might border on treasonous, but officially it was excellent. Bonn found the same thing true in the German Army's version of morning reports -- morale officially was high even when soldiers were surrendering en masse.

Of course, officers of high rank and GIs of low rank have differing ideas of how a war ought to be run. It probably is no accident that the 45th Division's official history makes no mention whatsoever of its most famous son, cartoonist Bill Mauldin, or that Gen. George S. Patton, commander of the Third Army, tried unsuccessfully to have Mauldin's Willie and Joe cartoons banished from the pages of Stars & Stripes as dangerous both to discipline and Patton's own dress code. Carlo D'Este, one of Patton's many biographers, said the general threatened to "have Mauldin's ass thrown in jail" if he ever strayed into Third Army territory. But the troops loved Mauldin, not the general.

Still another factor is that most histories of World War II generally ignore the role of the U.S. Seventh Army, of which the 100th Division was a part, in crossing the Vosges Mountains of Alsace in mid-winter against a well-entrenched and determined force -- the only time that ever has been done. The Vosges' dark forests and 30-to-40 degree slopes make a natural fortress, and the German Wehrmacht had no reason to believe it could be

breached. After all, even the mighty Wehrmacht had been unable to take Bitche until after France capitulated in 1940. The American high command seemed to share the German view that the Vosges would be a stalemate and thus of a secondary interest from a military point of view. No one predicted the Seventh Army would be the first to reach the Rhine.

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill was strongly opposed to the invasion of southern France by Gen. Alexander Patch's Seventh Army and predicted it would be a catastrophe. Churchill wanted all the force concentrated on the Normandy beachhead. In his 1948 book "Roosevelt and Hopkins," Robert Sherwood called Gen. Patch "brilliant...(and) one of the most widely unrecognized heroes of the war." But Patch had no entourage of reporters and photographers constantly with him as did some other commanders. Another factor was that Supreme Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower simply did not like Gen. Jacob L. Devers who commanded the Sixth Army Group that included Patch's Seventh U.S. Army and the French First Army. He rated Devers 24th in efficiency among his field commanders. During the so-called Battle of the Bulge Devers managed to defy Eisenhower's orders to pull the Seventh Army back from its hard-won territory to defensive lines deep in the Vosges Mountains.

A scrapbook of newspaper dispatches from Europe during the winter of 1944-45 (most of them datelined Paris where Eisenhower had his headquarters) mentions a few developments on the Seventh Army front but only a few. The presence of the 100th Division within the Seventh Army was not officially mentioned until Jan. 22, 1945, in an Associated Press dispatch that mangled the division commander's name as "Withers J. Burpress" rather than Withers A. Burress. The Germans, of course, had known since the previous fall that the 100th was there, but the news was kept from American families who were given only an APO number.

For these reasons, this attempt at a history of Company I will try to concentrate on only five major phases of those days: (1) the tragedy of Nov. 14, (2) Hill 296 at Ingwiller, (3) the defense of Rimling, (4) the mid-winter "vacation" at the sheep farm, and (5) the

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assault on Heilbronn in April, 1945. Even this slimmed-down approach won't be able to do full justice to events, but it may stimulate your own memories enough to write them down and share them. Official histories are full of generals and high strategy, but privates (and sergeants) fight the wars and do the dying.

Neither will this account deal with the training phase at Ft. Bragg, N.C., since at least half the men who finally served with Company I in combat came in as replacements and have no memories of Ft. Bragg. With the exception of the officers and non-coms of Company I who sailed Oct. 6, 1944, aboard the USS George Washington bound for Marseilles no more than a handful of the enlisted men had expected to be in the infantry in the first place. They came from much choicer assignments after the Army recognized it needed people who could shoot more than it needed specialists. Stated more grimly, it needed bodies. Seldom was the infantry anyone's first choice for service even at a time when national patriotism was at a high level.

The 100th Division was activated at Ft. Jackson, S.C., in 1942 and might have been among those in the Normandy invasion had it not been for the unexpectedly heavy losses in North Africa, Sicily and Italy in 1943 and early 1944. Instead it was cannibalized for replacements. According to the division history, this division of slightly less than 14,000 provided more than 16,000 officers and enlisted men between January 1943 and August 1944 as replacements for those fighting in the Mediterranean -- a theater of war which the U.S. high command had sought to avoid. But even those figures are deceptive since the basic 14,000-man division included artillery units and other units while the replacements were drained largely from the rifle companies. After winter maneuvers in Tennessee in 1943-44 as a single unit it moved to Fort Bragg as a skeleton division. It had to be rebuilt from the ground up.

U.S. forces under Patton and British forces under Montgomery had little trouble taking the island of Sicily in the summer of 1943 but ran into a meat grinder in Italy. Most histories agree that U.S. Gen. Mark Clark's obsession to reach Rome before the British did

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resulted in what Gen. Leslie McNair, chief of U.S. Ground Forces, called a "hemorrhage of manpower." What was supposed to be a quick roll-up of German defenses under Field Marshal Albert (Smiling Al) Kesselring turned into a bloody stalemate. Monte Cassino could not be cracked, and Churchill called for a seaborne invasion at Anzio just south of Rome. Clark sent the U.S. 36th (Texas) Division on what turned out to be a suicide mission -- a night crossing of the dangerous Rapido (Italian for "swift") River. Army engineers protested that the crossing was impossible, but it went ahead, anyway. The 36th Division was almost destroyed except for one regiment held in reserve. The few who made it across the river in small boats had to swim back, and many were drowned.

(There was a Congressional investigation of this action after the war, but Clark was exonerated and ultimately became commandant of The Citadel in Charleston, S.C., a school once attended by many ASTP students who found themselves eventually in the 100th Division).

Gen. John Lucas' 3rd (Rock of the Marne) Division and one British division made it ashore safely at Anzio but elected to dig in rather than try to expand the beachhead, thus allowing Kesselring to surround the beachhead and rain down artillery on the invaders. The result was four months of carnage which Churchill called "a story of high opportunity and shattered hopes." According to the Oxford Companion to World War II, Allied losses at Anzio came to 7,000 dead and 36,000 wounded or missing plus many more listed as "disabled" by illness. Those figures seem exaggerated -- the Encyclopedia Britannica puts Allied casualties at Anzio at "approximately 25,000". Gen. Lucas ultimately was relieved of command, but the losses by that time were almost irreparable.

It is against this background that the final stateside version of Company I, 397th Infantry was born. Charles E. Moore Jr. of Richmond, who served as assistant G-2 (intelligence), on Gen. Burrell's staff, told those attending the division's 1994 reunion that Burrell became so fed up with the unceasing drain of Centurymen to serve as replacements in Italy that he made a personal appeal to Chief of Staff George C. Marshall

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to put a stop to it. According to Moore, Gen. Marshall told Burress that the 100th was tapped harder for replacements than other units because its men were better trained, but this may have been snake oil used by one former VMI cadet to placate another. Moore said Marshall assured Burress that he soon would be receiving "high type trainees" who would remain with the 100th. To make the life of a rifleman seem glamorous, the first annual Infantry Day was celebrated in June, 1944, and Company I paraded in Wilson, N. C., the battalion commander's hometown. It may have been the only such celebration. Infantry Day no longer is with us.

Gen. Marshall's promised "high type trainees" came to Fort Bragg in early 1944 from all over. Air cadets, many with sergeant's stripes, suddenly found themselves acting as infantry privates although most were allowed to keep their stripes. (The Air Corps still was under Army command at that time -- it did not become the independent Air Force until after the war). The Coast Artillery and many anti-aircraft units which had been trained to defend U.S. cities found themselves no longer needed in their specialties. One such was Daniel R. Martin of Pembroke Pines, Florida, who had been trained to turn searchlights on enemy aircraft. Danny was a T-5 (not an infantry rating) and took a lot of kidding about his searchlight techniques but ultimately became a staff sergeant and squad leader. Some came directly from basic training, and a disproportionately large number came from quiet college classrooms.

The Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP), a pet program of Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson to blunt parental protests about a teen-aged draft, was designed to send bright high school graduates to college to train in various specialties needed by the Army. Gen. McNair strongly opposed it. Because of the enormous losses in Italy and the buildup of manpower for the coming Normandy invasion, McNair succeeded in having the program abolished in February, 1944, and about 4,000 ASTP students were sent to the 100th Division -- many from college but most from just a few weeks of basic training at

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Ft. Benning, Ga. Old hands referred to them derisively as "Quiz Kids" after a popular radio program of the time.

It is interesting to note that in July, 1944, Gen. McNair ventured too far forward in France to observe a massive "carpet bombing" by the U.S. Eighth Air Force which was supposed to destroy German defenses around St. Lo. Instead of hitting Germans, the bombers hit the U.S. 9th and 30th Divisions. Gen. McNair and 111 GIs were killed and almost 500 wounded. It was among the worst demonstrations of "friendly fire" in the war. The deaths were kept secret for a long time, and only five persons, including Generals Patton and Bradley, attended McNair's funeral. No one else knew about it.

In 1944, the official "Table of Organization" for a U.S. infantry company at full strength consisted of 187 enlisted men and six officers for a total of 193. This number included cooks, clerks, drivers and other ancillary but vitally necessary personnel. The number was fairly flexible since the infantry T-O of March 1, 1943, included such anachronisms from the old days as a company bugler, a company armor artificer, and 10 snipers armed with the old 1903 bolt-action Springfield rifle. Those positions weren't actually filled. Company commanders apparently had much leeway to arrange things to suit their own needs. Company I never was at full strength -- in war no infantry company ever is; names and faces change daily -- but from November, 1944, to May, 1945, a total of 339 enlisted men and 21 officers served at least a day with the company. At least ten of those officers were battlefield commissions from the enlisted ranks. (The number of enlisted men does not include the all-important medics who, technically, were members of the 325th Medical Battalion).

To put it in terms of manpower management, this is a turnover rate of about 150 per cent on an annual basis for enlisted men. In simple terms this means the original 187 men would all have been replaced once and then half of the replacements replaced. Of course that was not exactly the case since some came through without a scratch.

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Compare this turnover rate of 150 per cent to industry experience. In most businesses a turnover rate above 10 per cent is considered high. Company I's rate was 15 times that high. Coping with such a replacement rate clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of the training received and the willingness of the U.S. infantryman to assume responsibility not only for his own actions but also to assume positions of leadership when required.

With respect to officers, their turnover rate was even greater than that of the enlisted personnel. Capt. Gerald Wilson was the popular commander at Ft. Bragg, but he was soon replaced by Capt. Ralph W. Scott of Portsmouth, Va.

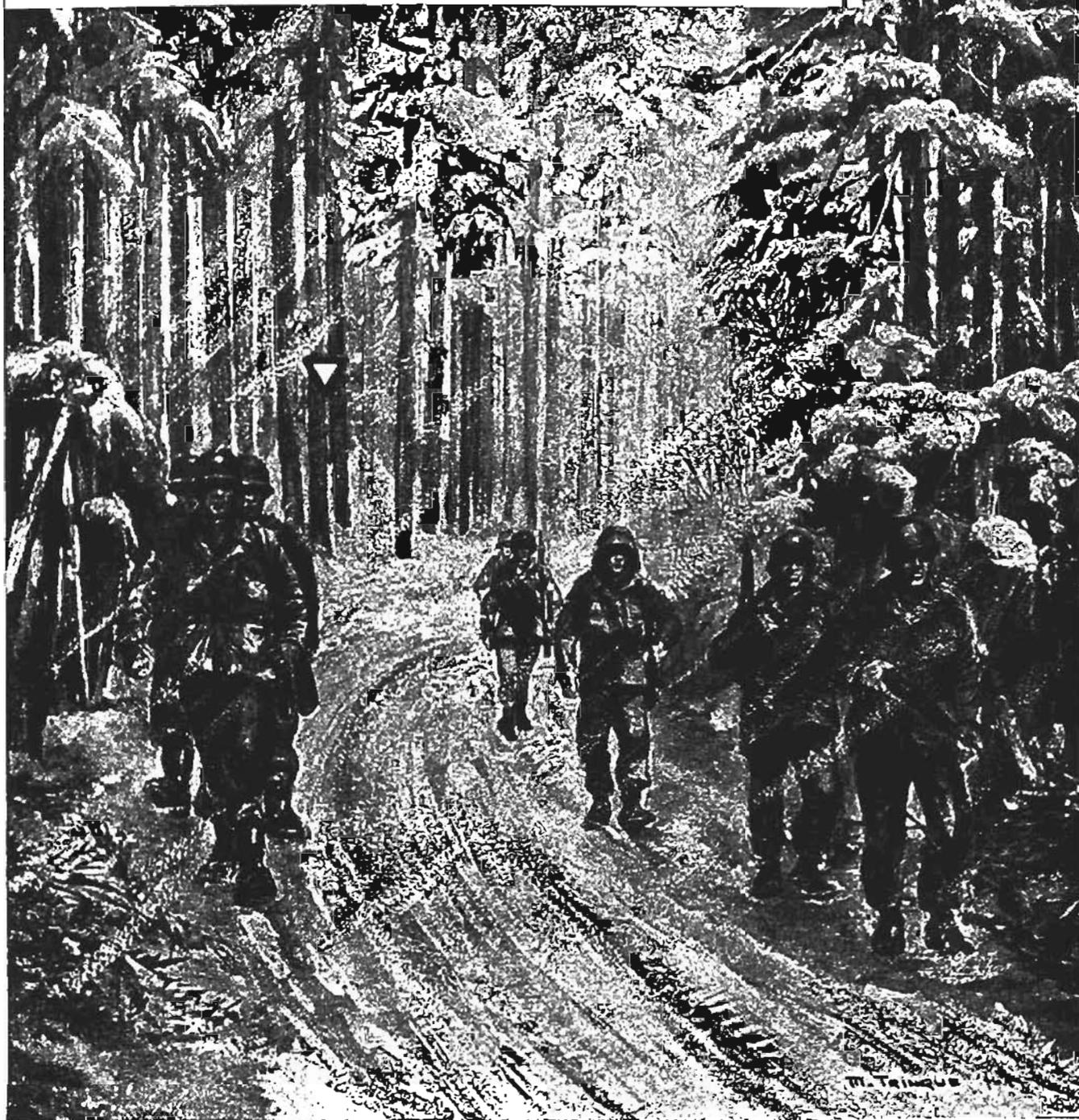
Wilson loved the physical challenge of obstacle courses, forced marches, bayonet training, and the like, but he scorned parade ground drills which were loved by those higher up. In its Ft. Bragg days, the 100th was a parade ground division, and that cost Company I the loss of a fine officer. At one formation for a visiting dignitary, the company was at the "present arms" position when Wilson gave the order "parade rest." Such a maneuver can't be done. It has to be preceded by the command "order arms." There was general confusion in the ranks, and although the company tried to cover for its commander, Wilson shortly was transferred elsewhere.

Scott took the company overseas but was stricken with appendicitis at the staging area in Marseilles and was replaced by Lt. Charles McDermid, a macho mass of muscle from Napa, California, who was wounded in the hand on Nov. 14 and never seen again. Grant commanded the company from Nov. 14 to the end of the war even though he was not given his captain's bars until the final big push of March, 1945. This continuity of leadership at the top doubtless helped to compensate for the high casualty rate.

Enough of prelude.

Fighting in the Vosges Mountains in north-eastern France, each day we faced two tenacious enemies--the weather and the German Army. Neither gave in easily. It was a constant struggle to keep warm. And even more of a struggle to keep alive during frequent enemy shellings. We were in a deep forests and the tree bursts were deadly.

The scene below is pretty typical. Narrow unpaved roads, tall snow-covered pines which blocked the sun. We were in continual gloom.



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NOVEMBER 14, 1944

From the morning report for November 14:

Company moved from formation position on hill outside Bertrichamps France to attack contacted enemy at 1205 at coordinate 555-819 I/2300 enemy artillery very heavy Company withdrew to rear 1000 yards dug in for the night casualties very heavy 2 officers and 14 EM wounded in action 17 EM missing in action. Company was shelled all night by enemy artillery no casualties during night shelling by enemy. Weather cold Morale very good. (Co. I Morning Report)

So much for the morning report. What actually happened and why? The *why* can never be fully known since the two officers primarily responsible -- Lt. Col. Oakley Beland of Wilson, N.C., the battalion commander, and Col. William Ellis of White Plains, N.Y., the regimental commander, were (indirectly) among the casualties of that action although in different ways.

Many Company I men who "withdrew to the rear" (i.e. ran) recall passing Col. Beland where he sat on a tree stump with his head in his hands. Kenneth Brown of Asheville, N.C., the runner from company to battalion, later saw him huddled over a small fire at the battalion aid station, oblivious of everyone around him. He was replaced as battalion commander by Maj. William Esbitt of New York City, an able officer. Col. Ellis was killed two days later under circumstances never fully explained.

The G-2 officer mentioned earlier told the 1994 division reunion: "when one of his regimental commanders performed badly and lost contact with his unit, General Burress directed the colonel to locate his troops, whereupon he drove off toward the front, got lost and was killed."

The reference apparently was to Col. Ellis.

There were at least two conflicting versions of the Nov. 14 tragedy. One was simply that someone at battalion headquarters misread the maps and sent Company I up the wrong hill. The other was that there were two hills with the same numerical

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designation (named for their height in meters), and that the company just got the wrong one. It may (or may not) be significant that there is no specific hill designation in the morning report for Nov. 14.

Whatever the reason, it was a bloody and costly mistake.

Time has dimmed all but the sharper memories of what happened on the ground, but it also has clarified other things that were not clear at the time. Memoirs have been written and positions explained, and what no one in I Company knew at the time was that there had been almost two years of high-level argument over what they were doing there in the first place.

Churchill had fought down to the wire to prevent the Allied landing in southern France in August, 1944. The operation was first code-named "Anvil," then changed to "Dragoon," and originally was supposed to take place at the same time as the Normandy invasion on June 6, 1944, (Operation Overlord). The continuing argument and a shortage of landing craft delayed it. The invasion force, primarily the U.S. 3rd, 45th and 36th divisions (all of which contained former 100th Division men sent over as replacements), had to be withdrawn from the fighting in Italy, and Churchill was intent on the Italian campaign. When overruled by President Roosevelt, he went directly to Gen. Eisenhower and proposed (according to his memoirs) that the invasion fleet, instead of heading toward the Riviera, sail through the Strait of Gibraltar and invade France at Bordeaux.

Eisenhower rejected this proposal, and Gen. Patch's newly constituted Seventh Army hit the Riviera beaches on Aug. 15 and quickly pushed the German 19th Army up the Rhone Valley to its prepared defenses in the Vosges Mountains of Alsace. No attacking army ever had crossed the Vosges, and the Germans were confident that no army ever would. The German plan was a defensive war of attrition designed to last through the winter and into the spring of 1945.

It is doubtful that many in the 100th Division knew this background when they landed at Marseilles on Oct. 20, 1944, and hiked the long 12 miles to the Calas staging

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area. For many the introduction to Europe and its bizarre customs was the sight of a middle-aged woman squatting on the curb to urinate as the 100th Division filed by. She ignored the soldiers.

The invasion had been so swift that the great port city of Marseilles was relatively unscarred. There were passes into the city for those willing to hike or use the antique trolley cars which rarely stopped for passengers to leap off or jump on. Given the city's sinister reputation, many who went into town carried concealed trench knives with them, but there were no reports of any knife fights.

Marseilles, known to the old Romans as Massilia, is the oldest of France's major cities and known as a fleshpot for centuries. The war had not improved it. The North African influence was visible everywhere as were houses of prostitution. Aggressive black market dealers besieged the fresh-faced young Americans with offers to buy and/or sell just about anything.

It was a short vacation, but it gave I Company men their first sight of German prisoners at work on the docks as well as a reminder of the deadly job ahead. A soldier from another company was killed trying to leap off one of the non-stop trolley cars. The Graves Registration (GRO) people came for his belongings and the mattress cover which everyone had carried from North Carolina. He would be buried in it. Then it hit home. Everyone had carried his own burial shroud to the war.

Patch's Seventh Army had linked up with Patton's Third Army northeast of Dijon on Sept. 11. The 100th Division mounted trucks to try to catch up. There were signs of destruction everywhere, but the war still seemed remote when the 100th finally caught up with the veteran 45th Division at Baccarat (home of the famed Baccarat crystal) and took over that division's foxholes. It had been raining, and most of those holes were mudpits. Many GIs chose to try to sleep on the ground rather than in those holes. They were not yet aware of what shrapnel and bullets do to human flesh.

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What the men of Item Company didn't know was that they had arrived just as "Operation Dogface" had run out of steam. It had begun in mid-October and was supposed to carry the VI Corps of the Seventh Army to the high ground overlooking a 10-mile stretch of the Muerthe River Valley and Route N-59 between St. Die and Raon l' Etape. But the 45th Division was exhausted, and German defenses had proved too strong.

It was cold, wet, miserable but not much worse than some of the training back at Ft. Bragg had been. There was no immediate contact with enemy troops, and the only casualty was a frightened young soldier who shot and wounded himself after telling several friends that was what he intended to do. From a purely physical standpoint the war even seemed to be improving on the evening of Nov. 11 when the company moved up from Baccarat to the village of Bertrichamps and took over houses from the few villagers who remained there.

The 4th platoon mortar section took over a house occupied by three elderly women who were promptly dubbed by Earl McKisson of Clearwater, Fla., as "the three witches of Bertrichamps." The first day in that house was almost festive. Ed Carell of Acton, Mass., recalls it this way:

"The witches had caged rabbits living in the cellar. The next thing I knew we were boiling rabbit in a pot on the kitchen stove. No one knows how to prepare boiled rabbit. We all promised to repeat this wonderful celebration each year on Nov. 12."

That promise was never kept. War arrived that night.

John Sheets of Gallipolis, Ohio, was standing guard outside the 2nd platoon billet about 8 p.m. Lowry Bowman of Abingdon, Va., was heading for the village well to get a bucket of water (for more rabbit boiling). At that moment German artillery targeted the village.

It was not a sustained barrage such as the company would experience two days later, but it was a frightening introduction to the German 88-millimeter artillery piece that was used for everything from anti-aircraft fire to anti-tank fire to anti-personnel fire.

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As the shells exploded on the village's one main street, shrapnel struck sparks from the walls of the stone houses. The 88 gave us the term "flak," an acronym for the German Fliegerabwehrkanone or aircraft defensive cannon. It was an awesome gun.

Bowman dropped his bucket and dived for the protection of the well's stone enclosure. On the way, though, he fell into a huge pile of cow manure and well-urinated straw. He was covered with the stuff and became an object to avoid.

Sheets, stuck outside the house his platoon occupied, said "I learned to pray with my eyes wide open."

Part of the machine gun section was in the kitchen of another house. Norm Nisick of Lead, South Dakota, and Bill McKeown of Allegan, Mich., had liberated some large candles from somewhere. Bill Wladecki of Lorain, Ohio, was suspicious and wangled an admission from Nisick and McKeown that the candles came from the village church. They were about to light them when the German artillery hit.

A tree burst sent steel fragments screaming through the window and into the packed kitchen. The only casualties from the shrapnel were the church candles. Wladecki said something grim about "warnings from on high."

A small armored unit in antiquated tanks armed with ridiculous 37-mm guns abandoned its sardine-can vehicles and headed for the cellars. Most I Company men, thinking that rooftops were adequate protection, learned a quick lesson from the battle-wise tankers.

There were no casualties from the shelling, but it put a quick end to any hopes of a short war. No one talked much on Nov. 13, and no one boiled any more rabbits. .

That day ended quietly with a silent snowfall. Word came down that the company would move out on the morning of Nov. 14. The immediate objective was the important communications center of Raon l' Etape at the juncture of the Muerthe and La Plaine rivers only about three miles from Bertrichamps. Company I would take the high ground

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while other units struck toward the town itself. Company I soon would become all too familiar with that command to "take the high ground."

The snow stopped, and the sun came out on the morning of the 14th as I Company started off through the woods. The heavily-wooded Vosges Mountains of Alsace closely resemble the Cumberland Mountains of eastern Kentucky -- not very high as mountains go but extremely steep and hell to climb, particularly on wet leaves, pine needles and melting snow.

The first hour or so was just a walk in the woods. Then the column slowed. There were German soldiers there -- dead soldiers. It took a few minutes for this to register because this was a new experience. They looked almost like figures in a wax museum, frozen, grey-faced but rosy-cheeked and noticeably smaller than live people. Dead people always seem smaller than live people, because something has gone out of them. How many there were still is a subject of debate.

Paul F. Mosher (an Ohioan turned Texan who had signed up in the Enlisted Reserve Corps while at Ohio Wesleyan University) said he saw only one.

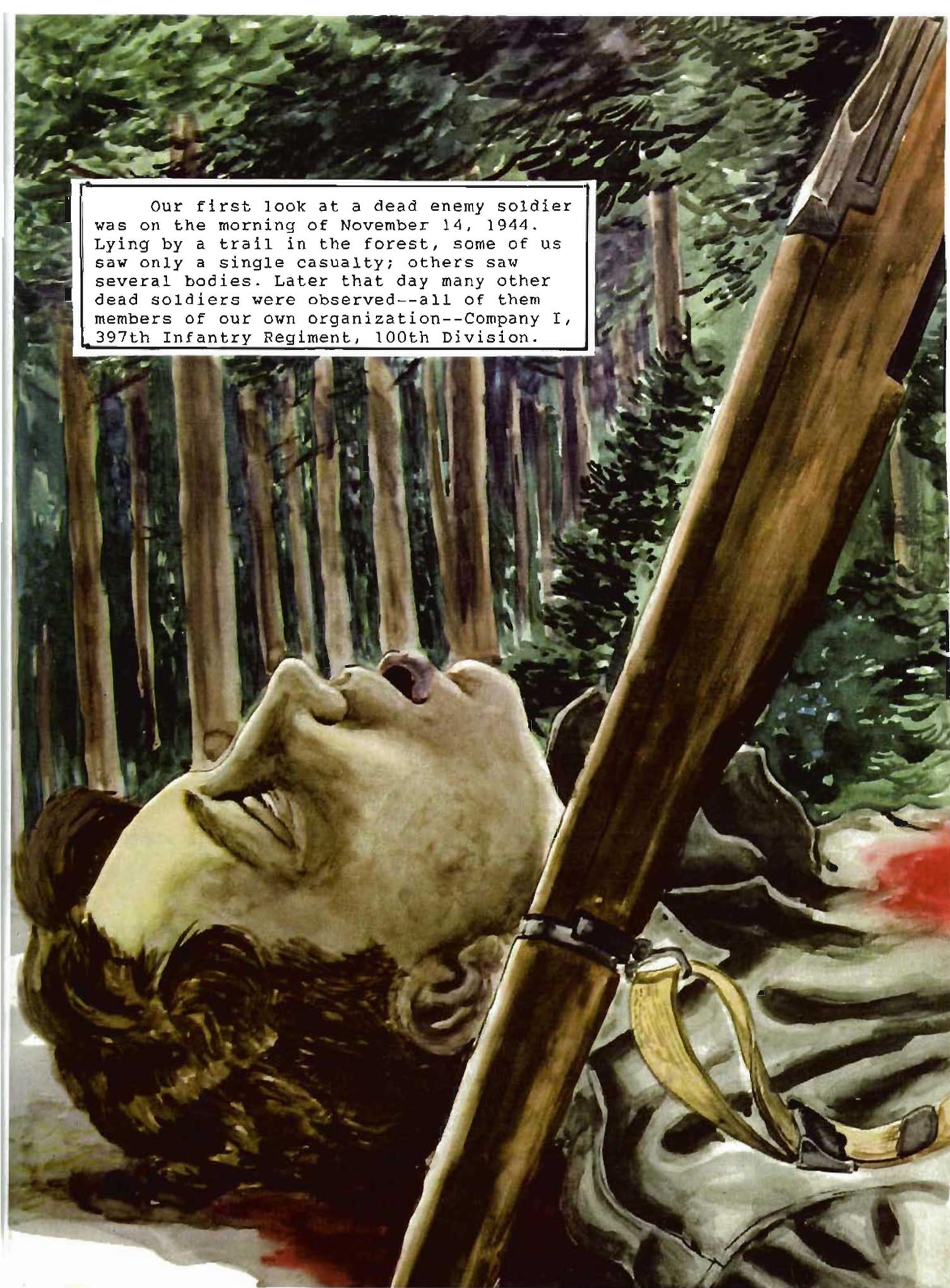
"His shirt and jacket had been opened, and there was a morphine syringe in his chest," Mosher said. "Apparently his comrades had provided this painkiller as they continued their retreat. How nice it is to have friends who care."

Albert T. Klett of Jamestown, North Dakota, reached that spot just as the column halted. He made no body count but guessed it may have been a German aid station that had been overrun.

"I had to stand there for half an hour or more before we pushed on," Klett said. "I tried not to notice those grey faces and bloody bandages. Wondered what got them. Why were they abandoned? I got the message a few hours later."

Others say there were three or four bodies there. Ed Carell wrote later: "what I remember of the German soldiers lying dead was the way the light snow cover was

Our first look at a dead enemy soldier was on the morning of November 14, 1944. Lying by a trail in the forest, some of us saw only a single casualty; others saw several bodies. Later that day many other dead soldiers were observed--all of them members of our own organization--Company I, 397th Infantry Regiment, 100th Division.



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marked by a distinct path arching in a broad swing around the bodies as if no one wanted to be too close to this."

This kind of delicacy of feeling would erode swiftly and bodies would become souvenir shops. Ernest Hemingway wrote in one of his books that dead soldiers always are surrounded by scraps of paper because someone has been through their pockets.

The company moved on. But Bob Tessmer of Dearborn, Mich., who kept a (forbidden) diary of the company's day-to-day movements said he had noticed something that bothered him.

"Normally scouts would have been sent forward to check out enemy positions, but for some reason this was not done," Tessmer wrote. He added this note: "Stupidity?"

The lead platoon had topped the crest of one low mountain when the first German shells screamed in and exploded in the trees on the back side of the slope where the 4th platoon still was climbing under its weight of mortars and machineguns. S/Sgt. Benjamin Arnold of Memphis, Tenn., the machinegun section leader, and Pfc. Malcolm A. Groff of Reidsville, N.C., were directly beneath that blast. Both were severely injured and out of the war.

The rest of the platoon was dazed and shocked. Until that moment no one had noticed the small plane circling overhead -- obviously a German artillery spotter plane that had given the German gunners an exact fix on I company.

"All I knew was I had to piss so bad I could hardly stand it," Mosher said later. "I remember saying to my pal Norman Nisick (of Benton City, Wash.) 'Norman, you and I are not going to live!'"

For a few minutes there were no more shells. Panting, sweating and even crying, the company struggled on up and over the mountain. The other side looked like any well-tended pastureland sloping down to a country road in the narrow valley. Across the road another small, heavily wooded mountain rose abruptly. There were only a few trees on the

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I Company slope. There was barbed wire down near the road, but it seemed at first to be just a part of the country scene.

Company I now was fully in the German gunsights with no place to hide.

Ed Eylander of Federal Way, Wash., (later to become platoon lieutenant) carried a Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) with Tessmer as his assistant and George Stout of Trenton, N.J., as the ammo carrier. Fred Baker was the squad leader with Jack McLean as his assistant. Tessmer's view of what happened:

"John Weimerskirch and Allen McLean, Jack's cousin, were moving together with us through an area that was fairly open. I was in the lead squad next to Jack McLean when we came to a wide dropoff with a hill up ahead rising above us. That was when we saw the barbed wire. At that point all hell broke loose. Mortar rounds were hitting the trees spraying shrapnel down on us. Then the German machineguns and rifles opened up on us from the hill in front. We had walked into a trap. The Germans were dug into trenches (across the road) and had strung barbed wire and mines in front of us. They started picking us off one by one as we tried vainly to hide behind trees. We couldn't see a thing to shoot back at as they were so well camouflaged."

Sheets, the rifleman who had learned to pray with his eyes open less than two days earlier, said the leadership seemed paralyzed.

"Instead of pulling back, mounting an attack or attempting a flanking movement we were left in place to be pounded by enemy artillery all day long," he said.

Klett, also carrying a BAR, said his squad, led by Sgt. Joe Funaro of Mechanicville, N.Y., was moving forward in a skirmish line. Richard C. Tobias of Pittsburgh carried the ammunition for the 19-pound BAR, and Walter Kane of Lynn, Mass., was up front as a scout.

"We hit the ground just short of the wire," Klett said. "Tobias, slightly ahead and to my left, said Kane was down. Everybody opened up. Tobias kept throwing BAR clips back to me. Can't bring up a simile for all that racket."

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"I heard First Sgt. DeVane say 'we have to move forward or go back. We can't stay here all day.' I looked at that wire and cleared field of fire and thought 'go back!' Sgt. Santiago Cintron, to my right front was sitting upright on a rock or log smoking a cigarette -- nobody picked him off. At last platoon Sgt. Edinson crawled up and told us to pull out."

The discipline instilled by training kept the men in place while waiting for orders despite the deadly artillery and machinegun fire.

There were, however, attempts by individual infantrymen to charge through the barbed wire barricade. Allen McLean of Okanogan, Wash., was one of them, and he was killed. His cousin, Jack, made it under the wire, and that was the last anyone saw of him until war's end.

"Jack McLean called out to me that he was going under the barbed wire and that we should follow," Tessmer said. "Just after he disappeared the order came to pull back. I jumped up and ran as fast as I could, stumbling over bodies and wounded men."

One of those bodies was that of T/5 Henry Lipschitz of New York City, one of the company's four medics. Lipschitz was shot in the head while tending to Kane who died despite his attention. Norman Redlich of New York City said he had crawled over to help the wounded man when Lipschitz waved him away. Sheets also saw Lipschitz killed.

Many years after the war John P. (Jack) Keelan of Livingston, N.J., wrote a tribute to his friend Aloysius L. Kujawski of Shenandoah, Pa., who died on Nov. 14 while charging through the barbed wire.

"You started through (the wire) stepping high with those long legs," Keelan wrote. "We tried to follow you, Al. I saw you go down. So many of us went with you."

Tobias recalls that McDermid, the young lieutenant who had taken over the company, also tried to rush the wire.

"He suddenly jumped to his feet and shouted 'this is no way to play football' and went charging forward," Tobias said.

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McDermid was promptly shot. He survived, but the company was leaderless. No one could see the enemy, and the company was dying. Word passed up the hill from somewhere to turn and run. That is often a necessary and proper order in infantry warfare, and it also can be a more frightening feeling to turn your back on a machinegun than to face it.

Danny Martin, the former searchlight operator, found that out quickly. As soon as he turned his back to leave the hill a German burpgunner followed him with a trail of bullets. One caught him in the foot. While the wound was (relatively) minor, his boot was destroyed, and to lose a boot in that weather was surely to lose a foot as well. In the macabre nature of war, Martin later took the boots from a dead soldier and wore them to the end of the war.

The company ran. How far it ran no one really knows. The morning report says 1,000 yards. That's more than a half-mile. Probably it was farther.

Those who survived that day still have feelings of guilt that the dead and wounded were left behind on that bloody hill. That is the only time that happened in I Company.

Carell, who had been carrying mortar ammunition, was one of those left behind. He had managed to dig a shallow hole, but when a shell exploded overhead "it felt like a 300-pound gorilla had jumped on my back."

The rest of the platoon already was on its feet and running when Sgt. Harold McAfee of Morrison, Tenn., stopped long enough to check on Carell.

"I said I was okay but I think I was hit," Carell said. "Then he says 'I know, I can see'. Mac says stay there, and the medics will be back to pick me up. That sounds good so I stay put. The afternoon turned into night. Kresa was laying dead a few feet away. I did some powerful praying that night."

The medics never came. Carell found he could walk, but his right arm wouldn't work. He fashioned a sling from his scarf and at daybreak stumbled back the way he had

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come and eventually spotted an American motor column. McAfee cried when word came that Carell had survived.

Harold McAfee was everybody's friend in I Company. He was one of those who had been yanked out of the Air Cadet program to become an infantryman, and he was hurt by that, but he kept those feelings to himself. On any long march you could hear McAfee singing one of the Gospel songs he had learned back at the little log Locust Grove Freewill Baptist Church. "You Gotta Walk That Lonesome Valley" was one of his favorites as well as "On the Jericho Road there's room for just two, no more and no less, just Jesus and you."

Frank Kresa of Utica, N.Y., was another favorite. Always laughing.

"What good is a empty glass?" Kresa would demand. "No good, dat's what good. T'row 'em away de dam tings."

Kresa apparently was killed instantly by the same shell that wounded Ed Carell. When Mosher passed his body he recalled that Kresa, who had come to the infantry via the coast artillery, steadfastly refused to buy the full \$10,000 worth of G.I. insurance offered to every soldier. He insisted that \$5,000 was good enough for him.

"As I passed him that day I thought to myself, 'Frank, you should have taken the higher amount'," Mosher said.

What happened to Jack McLean is a history in itself. His fate wasn't known until after the war when Eylander received a letter from him.

He made it under the barbed wire, across the road and into a ditch. But he was all alone.

"The way I fell made the Krauts think they had hit me, and brother I let them think so," McLean wrote. "I was so close I could hear the bolts clicking. It was no fun down there waiting for someone to join me. I figured that someone must have changed the order...so I just stuck my head in the mud and waited until dark. At 2200 I started up the slope again and cut my way back through the wire...George Stout and Weimerskirch were

still there. Stout was hit in the leg and Weimerskirch was hit in the head. Both were conscious. I asked if Allen had got away and they said they believed he had...they asked me to take off and see if I could find somebody to carry a stretcher."

McLean wrote that he walked until almost dawn and then stumbled into a tank trap. He tried to cover himself with evergreen boughs, but the camouflage didn't work. "When I awoke there was a Jerry and a machine pistol and several comrades inspecting me."

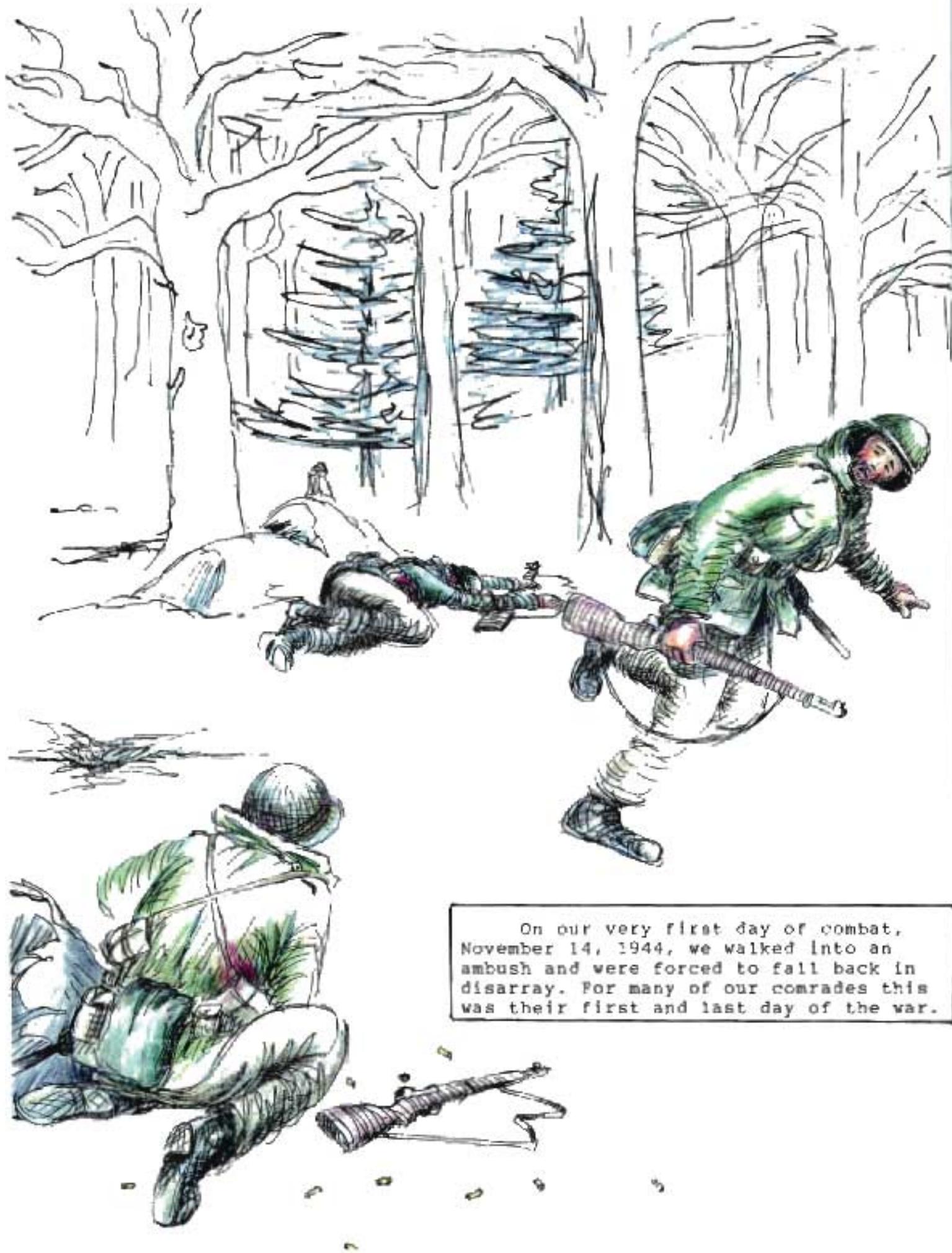
McLean spent the rest of the war in various POW camps. The conditions he describes were brutal.

Weimerskirch survived, but Stout died. Weimerskirch, of Fresno, Cal., said German artillery pounded the hill again that night and some of the wounded were hit again.

"Finally the quartermaster people came for the dead, and they heard my noise-making and took me on their truck loaded with our dead and dropped me off at the field station," Weimerskirch said in a letter to Mosher. "I am not sure how George Stout died. The shelling and exposure and his wound assured his demise. I was not able to help the soldiers as I was paralyzed."

The exact number of dead, wounded and missing may never be known, but the regimental history written immediately after the war and before the final figures were tallied indicates that I Company lost either 41 or 42 men killed or wounded on that bloody afternoon. McLean's fate was not known when the history was written.

Both Lt. McDermid and Lt. Frank McVeigh of Knoxville, Tenn., were among the wounded. New leaders always arise. Lt. Grant left the 4th platoon and took over command of the company. The 4th platoon rarely had an officer in charge of it from then on. Its leadership came from T/Sgt John Pellegrino of Lakehurst, N.J., until Pelly was wounded on Dec. 4, and then from T/Sgt Joe (Moon) Schonarth of Dorchester, Mass. Such battlefield "promotions" were a matter of course.



On our very first day of combat, November 14, 1944, we walked into an ambush and were forced to fall back in disarray. For many of our comrades this was their first and last day of the war.

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Mosher wrote much later that shortly after that first tree burst hit the machinegun section "I grabbed the machinegun, Norman picked up the tripod. Due to that shell burst both of us had received promotions -- I was now first gunner and Norman was second gunner. Of course, no one actually had to announce these changes...you simply moved in and took the other guy's place."

It was almost dark when the shattered remnant of I Company stopped its retreat. Despite near panic it had not scattered. It stayed together. Togetherness is what an infantry company is all about. There was no food, no blankets, no idea of what had gone wrong, so the survivors dug holes in the freezing mud and crawled into them to wait out the night. It started to rain. Some found holes that apparently had been dug by the 45th Division. Some were not so lucky. Klett spent the night sitting in the rain with his back to a tree. A German counter-attack might easily have destroyed the company, but the Germans were fighting a long-prepared defensive war. They knew no army had ever crossed the Vosges.

When morning came many of the men faced a new enemy -- they couldn't crawl out of their foxholes. Probably few of them ever had heard of hypothermia, but now they knew its effects. The cold ground had drained away their body heat, and they couldn't move. Water was frozen in their canteens.

Sgt. Bruce Larson of Bainbridge Island, Wash., finally made it to his feet. He helped another soldier up and walked him around until he was steady. Then the two of them helped two more, and so on. The woods were cold and quiet.

There is no morning report for Nov. 15, but there is one for Nov. 16. It goes like this: *Company moved from former position to a new position 1000 yards southwest and dug in for the night 355 716 no enemy encountered no enemy artillery. Country rough. Weather cold. Morale Excellent. (S.) William J. Bartus, Capt. Pers Off.*

No one has a clear memory of that, but *country rough* and *weather cold* are accurate descriptions even if *morale excellent* is not.

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The company sat on the high ground over Raon l' Etape which had been taken by another unit. No one knew what to expect, but everyone had learned a lesson the infantryman must master immediately in order to survive -- the sounds that different shells and bullets make when they are aimed directly at you. The infantryman who survives is a connoisseur of such sounds and never forgets them. He can't afford to. After only one day of war it was a company of veterans.

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A survey of known survivors of the events of Nov. 14, taken a half-century later, asked the question: "Do you feel your training equipped you for the first real shock of actual combat?"

Twelve of those who responded said "yes," seventeen said "no," and three said "maybe." The negative votes were emphatic. Howard Gorham of Stratford, Conn., the company mail clerk, noted that "we should have had at least one experienced combat officer with us." Joe Sullivan of Bryn Mawr, Pa., said the question itself was stupid -- no amount of training would have been enough.

Many of those who came to the company from the ASTP had only begun basic training at Ft. Benning when the program was scrapped, and they missed out on some of the essentials. Much of the summer at Ft. Bragg was spent on parade ground drilling and the manual of arms. But Kenneth Brown, who came from the ASTP, said he considered the training "excellent, including the psychological preparations."

Tessmer's observation that no scouts were out may have been true from his position, but Danny Martin recalls that Kenneth Cook of Bellevue, Pa., reported to Lt. McDermid that "the situation looked suspicious." Martin said McDermid gave the order to go ahead anyway.

Aside from the listing of casualties, there is no mention of I Company's Nov. 14 experience in the regimental history. The Army's official history of this phase of the war was not published until 1993 (*Riviera to the Rhine* U.S. Gov. Printing Office) and gives

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only the overall picture. It says the 100th Division originally was to have landed in northern France to become a part of Gen. Omar Bradley's 12th Army Group. This plan was changed on Sept. 26, just days before the Division sailed. The 100th became the first new division since the invasion to join Patch's Seventh Army.

According to this official history, the action was part of a planned November offensive all along the Allied front. Maj. Gen. Edward H. Brooks, commanding the VI Corps, "wanted the 100th Division to start its attacks as early as possible, and on 12 November he directed it to proceed immediately across the Muerthe against Raon l' Etape and the surrounding high ground."

Would it have made a difference had the men of Company I been told they were part of a general offensive from the Netherlands to the Swiss border? Who knows?

"Slashing against the enemy, exchanging shot for shot, man for man, and blow for blow, we advanced on the 14th," trumpeted the regimental history. That, to put it as politely as possible insofar as Company I is concerned, is hyperbole. Or mendacity.

In retrospect, a short course in Alsatian history might have saved a few lives, but since the division's destination was changed so late in the game from northern France to southern France, no one thought of that. The area known as Alsace-Lorraine to the French and Elsass-Lothringen to the Germans is a natural fortress that has changed hands more often than a card shark.

During the Thirty Years War of the 17th century Alsace was one of the oldest patrimonial provinces of the House of Habsburg. But Louis XIV of France, the "Sun King," managed to push his borders toward the Rhine at the expense of the Hapsburgs. His military architect was Sebastien Le Prestre de Vauban who revolutionized the art of siege warfare and defensive fortifications. Vauban, who invented the socket bayonet, fortified the Vosges for his king, and those zig-zag trenches were just as impregnable in 1944 as they were in 1644. The terrain made modern tank warfare impossible, and the weather held the air war to ground level most of the time.

NIGHT MOVE TO ST. BLAISE

Nearly every hilltop was an ancient but still formidable fortress. The men of Company I became bitterly aware of that in a matter of days. In addition to those ancient defenses, the Wehrmacht had had ample time to add more modern defenses such as mines, barbed wire and tank traps. All this, of course, was in addition to the massive forts of the French Maginot and German Siegfried lines -- those monstrous, costly, and finally useless monuments to the failure of Versailles.

Paul Mosher wrote about the few days immediately following the tragedy of Nov. 14 as follows:

"It had been raining for the last three days. Not hard, but steady. When I first saw the edge of the forest it was still nearly a half-mile away. Members of the rifle platoons had already progressed a couple hundred yards across the open field. None of us liked the looks of this. There was absolutely no cover until we reached the woods. Company I kept moving forward, and the enemy guns were strangely silent. No mortars, no artillery. Not even small arms fire greeted us as we entered the edge of the forest."

What the company found was elaborate -- but unmanned -- defenses. The nervous strain of crossing open ground often was almost as bad as meeting bullets.

"Construction had been completed on a series of trenches and bunkers by slave labor battalions (we were later told)," Mosher wrote. "The sides had been neatly interlaced with tree branches to prevent collapse. The bunkers had been constructed to withstand very heavy shelling. It would have taken many days for us to dig the Jerries out had these fortifications been adequately manned. But they weren't there, and we were."

This unexplained lapse on the part of the Wehrmacht left a huge hole in the defensive line, and the company took advantage of it. It was almost dark, but Grant and his platoon leaders decided to push on. There was a paved road nearby and no sign of German defenses. The rain had stopped.

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The night became a blur. At one point the weary GIs passed a blazing farm house by the side of the road. A dead American soldier lay face down on the pavement. His uniform was clean, so he was not a member of I Company. There was a bicycle near him. An old man paced back and forth in front of the burning house, ignoring the soldiers. Far down the valley to the right another town was burning, and shells were exploding there. It was a haunting picture that has stayed in the minds of all who saw it.

Still no sign of German defenses. Someone with a luminous dial watch said it was nearing midnight. Company I had been walking for nearly 18 hours and was dead tired. Shortly after midnight the company entered the village of St. Blaise. Again there was no resistance, but now it was becoming obvious that there had been a foul-up of great proportions on the part of the German command. German soldiers, mostly rear echelon troops, some in staff cars, began arriving. They didn't know their retreat had been cut off. Many of them surrendered that night.

The date was Nov. 24, 1944. Just ten days after its bloody initiation, Company I had arrived in St. Blaise for Thanksgiving.

Mess Sgt. Tom Carpino and his cooks brought up a turkey dinner that was devoured in the cold Alsatian rain. The townspeople welcomed the grimy Americans with open arms and what gifts of wine and bread they still possessed.

For the hardened veterans (10 days of infantry warfare is a lifetime) that brief Thanksgiving stay in the muddy little town was an occasion for exactly that: thanksgiving. The ancient stone houses were cold but dry, and there was no firing. The villagers were delighted to be rid of the Germans and showed their gratitude.

But for the replacements who began to arrive, St. Blaise was a shock.

Among the enlisted men named in the morning reports as replacements at St. Blaise were Milford P. Apetz of Rochester, N.Y.; Frank Catapano of Brooklyn; James Beggs of Carlisle, Ark.; Harvey Beerens of Lake City, Mich.; Alfred Banks of Crystal Lake, Ill.; Lawrence Alviti of Willow Creek, Pa.; Bernard Asman of Perth Amboy, N.J.;

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Walter Lucke of San Antonio; Aubrey Moore of Raleigh, N.C., and the Scotsman Robert Johnson of Montrose Angus. The morning report also lists Samuel Cohen and William Mehalik as replacements at this time, but their names are not found in the company roster in the division history. Bookkeeping in wartime is not an exact science.

Two new officers also reported: 2nd Lt. John Mullins of New York City and 2nd Lt. David A. Strough of Erie, Pa. Strough was wounded and gone within a matter of days.

The very word "replacement" has a pejorative ring to it. Who could possibly "replace" a fallen comrade-in-arms who became closer than a brother when the first shot was fired? The Germans sang a plaintive song: "ich hatt' einen Kameraden, einen bessern findst du ni't..." (I had a comrade; you couldn't find a better one.), American soldiers, for whom war was not a romantic business, didn't sing much.

The job of a replacement in the infantry in wartime may be the loneliest job ever invented. He is frightened. He knows no one. He does not know what to expect. He is shunned by his new companions who don't want to be anywhere near him until he has been shot at a few times, dodged a few mortar shells, stepped over a few mines and learned enough survival tactics to avoid causing his own death or the death of others. But even replacements eventually are replaced.

Cartoonist Mauldin, in his book *Up Front*, wrote that he could not help but feel more respect for the "old" divisions than for the new ones even though nowhere could he find in the line companies more than a few soldiers who had been there from the beginning. Almost everyone was a replacement.

There was no "typical" replacement -- they came from all backgrounds and situations -- but Apetz' story of his arrival in Company I at St. Blaise probably is typical.

Like most young American males of that era, Mil Apetz had been eager to get into the war. He had better training than most for the kind of war he eventually would see, because he loved camping and scouting. Too young at first to join the regular army or

national guard, he was able to join the New York State Guard composed of youngsters and old men.

"We even went on maneuvers on a Sunday now and then in a park and ran all over the place," he said. "The picnickers must have thought we were nuts."

Finally, in the fall of 1943, he made it into the real army, first as an engineer and then as a topographer. (A topographer might have come in handy on Nov. 14). By July, 1944, he was in England where he suddenly found himself in the infantry.

"Because of the overwhelming losses suffered by the infantry fighting in France," he said, "the Army re-shuffled the deck, and with minimal infantry training (8 weeks) converted me and all the other topographers into 'dogfaces.' The Army was not losing topographers."

Apetz was sent to a replacement depot (called "repple depple" by the troops) near Belgium about the time the 100th Division was trucking up the Rhone Valley toward Alsace. Then he and others were loaded aboard the French "40 and 8" railroad box cars for the ride to Epinal. There they boarded trucks.

"It was a cold, rainy truck ride," Apetz wrote. "I looked out the rear of the canvas cover and could see the black, rain-soaked hills on both sides and the valley in fog. No one said a word. This truck was delivering us to hell, and we knew it."

His group reached the Company I kitchen area as the company was boarding trucks for another fateful move. Apetz described the scene this way:

"The trucks and trailers were full of tired and muddy GIs. What a dismal and pathetic convoy! The soldiers were grim-faced and muddy. I couldn't believe how awful these guys looked.

"I had known for some time that being an infantryman would be a nightmare, but I never realized how bad it would be until this moment. I looked and felt so clean. These guys were dirty, needed a shave and seemed worn out. Dark rings under their eyes. We stared. Finally, without speaking, someone offered me a cigarette. Then, with this gesture,

and although I was still a replacement, I was no longer an outsider. Good Lord, I belonged to this group!"

Apetz and his fellow replacements became insiders three days later. The company was on its way to Ingwiller.



INGWILLER

Until St. Blaise it was generally assumed that the division's objective was the city of Strasbourg on the German border just west of the Rhine River. But the French 2nd Armored Division pulled a major surprise by entering Strasbourg on Nov. 23. Although the French were unable to take the Rhine bridges, their accomplishment changed the military picture.

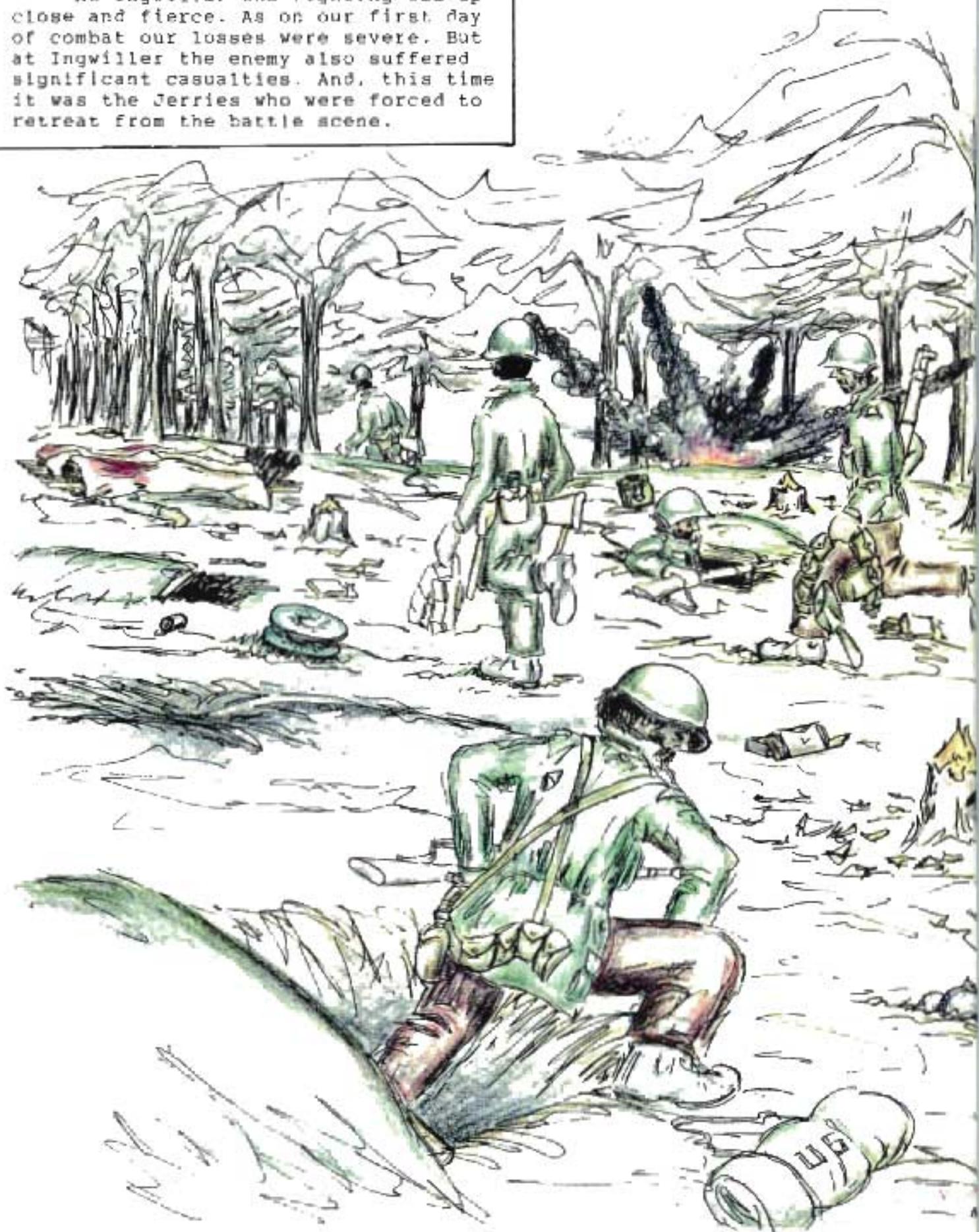
Patch's often-ignored Seventh Army had become the first to reach the Rhine and was ready to exploit what might have been a major breakthrough. But Eisenhower, the supreme commander, ruled out any Rhine crossing by the Seventh Army -- a decision the Army's own history calls "difficult to understand."

Riviera to the Rhine (page 439): "Somewhat stunned by the new orders, Devers was determined to challenge them. (Eisenhower) continued to insist that Devers halt all preparations for a Rhine crossing and turn the Seventh Army north to assist Patton's forces as quickly as possible. Furthermore, he proposed transferring two divisions from the 6th Army Group to Bradley's 12th and extending the boundary of (Maj. Gen. Wade) Haislip's XV Corps to the northwest. Devers objected bitterly to each of these measures, arguing that the Seventh Army was the force that ought to be strengthened and not the Third. If assisting Patton was the primary objective then, he contended, a Seventh Army Rhine crossing at Rastatt followed by a drive north to envelop the Saar Basin was the best solution."

On page 440 this official history says that Eisenhower "came out of the conference 'mad as hell' over Devers' open criticism of his operational strategy, while Devers emerged equally angry, wondering if he was 'a member of the same team.' Thus, instead of abating, the tension between Eisenhower and Devers seemed only to have grown."

There apparently was no warmth in the Patton-Devers relationship, either. When Haislip's two-division XV Corps was transferred from Patton's Third Army to Patch's Seventh Army at Devers' request, Patton wrote of Devers "may God rot his guts." In his

At Ingwiller the fighting was up close and fierce. As on our first day of combat our losses were severe. But at Ingwiller the enemy also suffered significant casualties. And, this time it was the Jerries who were forced to retreat from the battle scene.



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private papers, however, Patton wrote that the Seventh Army should have been allowed to make a Rhine crossing at that point.

It is interesting to speculate how the history of World War Two would have been changed had the 100th Division crossed the Rhine in November, 1944. The so-called "Battle of the Bulge" probably would never have happened, thus saving about 40,000 lives and shortening the war by several months. As it was, a Rhine crossing was delayed until March of 1945.

The men of Company I knew nothing of these high-level arguments, of course, and it made no difference to them at the time that they now were a part of XV Corps instead of VI Corps. They boarded trucks in the late afternoon of Nov. 26 for the 20-mile ride back to Raon l' Etape. "*Traffic very heavy, roads poor, weather cold, morale excellent*" said the morning report. From Raon l' Etape they moved on to Weitersweiler as part of the 397th Regimental Combat Team which was being detached to protect the left flank of the 45th Division attacking through the "Low Vosges" near the Saverne Gap, a natural passageway into Germany with the "High Vosges" on one side and the lower mountains on the other.

XV Corps now had four divisions from west to east -- the 44th, 100th, 45th and 79th -- all facing north toward a place named Bitche rather than eastward toward the Rhine.

According to *Riviera*, the mission of the 397th was to "outflank and overrun the German defenses on Route N-419 west of Ingwiller and then rejoin the rest of the division" moving toward key forts of the Maginot Line. However, the editors wrote in severely understated prose, the 397th "had been able to push only about a mile or so along N-419 northeast of Ingwiller by the evening of 2 December."

That is a colorless description of I Company's second bloodiest day which stretched into a week of unrelieved combat.

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The regiment's own official history is not much better. It says "when one platoon of Co. I was stopped by artillery fire at the base of Hill 296 north of Ingwiller, another platoon worked around the base of the wooded hill and attacked the enemy from the flank and rear, forcing his withdrawal." That is not what happened. The 45th Division history mentions "a formidable encounter...at a defense point thrown up northwest of Ingwiller" but gives no further details and does not identify Company I as the unit involved.

Only those who were there can begin to say what happened, and almost all the versions differ in some detail. That is natural and only serves to emphasize the unreliability of any attempt to put infantry warfare into a neat historical package. The morning report for Dec. 1 only reinforces that unreliability:

"Holding same position near Ingwiller, France. Enemy artillery very heavy, 3 EM casualties, sending patrols out, pinned down by enemy small arms fire, holding same position for night. Weather cold, morale excellent."

This is the way some of those who survived remember it:

On the last day of November, 1944, the scene was peaceful, bucolic. Hill 296 rose sharply above a narrow valley along the Moder River. A railroad bridge crossed the river. There was an unpaved road at the base of the hill and a few farmhouses in the valley. Some livestock remained, but the inhabitants of the houses had vanished.

Pete Korson of Suttons Bay, Mich., was Grant's personal aide-de-camp. Korson said he and two others (Sergeants Edinson and Jimison) were sent ahead to scout out the territory. They saw no Germans but obviously were seen by some because they began drawing artillery fire. They spent the night under a cliff.

"We were not too well organized," Korson said.

On the morning of Dec. 1 the reinforced 2nd platoon started up the hill as a combat patrol. It was accompanied by a forward observer for division artillery and his radioman who struggled under an enormous backpack radio with a long whiplash antenna.

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Eighteen-year-old John Sheets, the youngest member of Item Company, remembers in minute detail everything he saw on that patrol even though his version differs from others. That's the nature of infantry war -- all versions are false and all versions are true. The infantryman sees only his own square yard of ground.

"I was walking behind the artillery radioman," Sheets said, "when I looked up and saw 50 or 60 or more troops in American wool olive-drab overcoats spread out in single file on the flat above us. I pointed to them and asked the man behind me what outfit was up there. That was the last time I ever pointed in combat. Within five seconds a shot from an 8mm Mauser trashed the radio on the radioman's back. His burpgunner buddies came after me. They obviously mistook me for the leader or the artillery forward observer."

How German soldiers obtained American overcoats never was explained. No front-line American soldiers ever wore them because rain-soaked wool is worse than no coat at all.

Sheets said the patrol was forced to slide on its belly back down the hill while "the Spandaus, Schmeissers, Mausers, Panzerfausts and artillery plastered the side of that hill."

"Around 1300 orders were received to take the hill," Sheets said. "We went up in a well-spread-out skirmish line. We were met by a hail of bullets and artillery. Jerry must have cut loose on us at least 100 yards from the top of the hill. He was in his camouflaged positions, and I didn't see a thing."

Again the platoon was forced to slide back down the mountain, but again orders were received to take the hill.

"Intelligence was saying there were no enemy troops in numbers on that hill," Sheets said. "I guess they didn't count Krauts in GI overcoats."

BAR-man Klett, also on that patrol, didn't see it quite the same way Sheets did. He said the enemy gunfire came from behind the platoon.

"It was an ambush," Klett said. "They let the head of the patrol pass before they attacked. We fell back and took a position about halfway down the hill. I decided the BAR

might need a grease job on the bolt. To get at the grease cup in my breast pocket I removed my billfold which I forgot to pick up when we were ordered to fall back to the base of the hill near a road along the river. I heard that Carl Kucan of our platoon was killed and probably more."

Klett had not seen a German soldier and recalled no artillery fire. The combatants were too close to each other for that. He and most others had not fired a shot because they had seen nothing to shoot at. The forest was too thick, and the enemy was well hidden.

Sheets recalls three attempts by the patrol to take Hill 296 on that first day -- all ending in disaster and especially for him. In his memory, the final assault of the day began about 4 p.m. when dusk already was settling in.

"It was getting very dark in the woods as we neared the very top of that hill, and I was hoping the Germans had split," Sheets said. "I was passing through a small clump of pine trees when all hell broke loose. There were burpguns and Panzerfausts right in my face. I was covered up in ballistic cracks and pine needles raining on my helmet from a burpgun at extremely close range."

(The German Schmeisser machine pistol, nicknamed "burpgun" by the Americans, spewed out bullets at a fantastic rate and could easily cut a man in half in milliseconds. On the other hand, the cheaply made German 8mm bolt-action Mauser rifle was distinctly inferior to the American gas-operated Garand M-1 rifle).

S/Sgt. Howard N. Carter of Mangum, Okla., was the leader of Sheets' squad. The burpgunner mangled Carter's arm.

Although it was near dark, Sheets said some sort of "electronic zap" illuminated for him the burpgunner's head, and he killed him with one shot. The vision of that has stayed with him. The infantryman knows that when he takes aim at another man to kill him he also inflicts a wound on himself that is a long time healing. Those are the wounds for which no purple heart medal is given.

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The patrol again was forced to slide back down to the road at the base of the hill. Sheets helped Carter make it, and when an ambulance made its cautious way up after full dark Sheets crawled in with him. The enormity of what he had done had just begun to hit him.

He had killed a man.

"Breaking the sixth commandment was very traumatic for me," he said years later. "No amount of army propaganda or chaplain was going to make me forget my dear mother's Jesus training. I quit attending services because I didn't get any answers to this business of killing people. It would break my mother's heart if she ever found out I had killed that poor soul."

However, as it almost always happens in the infantry, loyalty to his companions was a stronger emotion than inner trauma. After a few days in the hospital he asked a nurse to point him the way back to Item Company.

Apetz, the replacement, also was on that patrol and recalls only two attempts to take the hill.

"We started up the hill on an angle and wound higher and higher," Apetz recalls. "No talking. The only noise was the clang of equipment occasionally. We were signaled to stop and hit the dirt facing up the hill, and (Sgt.) Baker proceeded to signal guys on the right and the left of him to go up in individual rushes.

"I ran up the hill across a dirt road and hit the dirt on the top bank. Just as I did this the Germans opened up with small arms killing Kucan, Lane and the medic who were off to my right too far for me to see through the trees and the underbrush. We were under intense small arms and grenade fire, and eventually Baker signaled us to get back down the hill."

By nightfall of Dec. 1 it had become painfully obvious that one platoon was not going to be able to run the defenders of Hill 296 off the summit. The 1st, 3rd and 4th platoons, waiting in muddy foxholes some distance away, were not really aware of what

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the 2nd platoon had gone through. Communications were difficult. The walkie-talkie radio was in its unreliable infancy. Its batteries usually froze. Sound-power telephones -- a sophisticated version of two tin cans and a string -- were the main instrument of communication between the company commander and his platoons, but they required a stable situation, and a single artillery or mortar shell could shatter the wires in dozens of places. The company radioman with his backpack radio could communicate with battalion headquarters but not with the individual platoons. The only reliable communications system was that of runners -- one man from each platoon assigned to carry messages back and forth between his platoon and the company commander. It was a lonely job out there in the woods.

Throughout the night of Dec. 1 division artillery and heavy mortars pounded the summit of Hill 296. It seemed highly unlikely that anyone could be left alive up there, but it is the infantry's job to make sure of that. Given the proper fortifications, which the Wehrmacht had in Alsace, troops can be almost impervious to artillery.

An all-out attack in company strength on Hill 296 began on the morning of Dec. 2. There are dozens of different stories about what happened. Richard Tobias likens it to the old fable about three blind men describing an elephant.

Tobias' version:

"We started up that damned hill, running and falling. I considered whether to throw myself down behind that tree to the left or the stump to the right. I elected the right. Then I heard a shot. I had heard it, and the shot you don't hear is the one to worry about. Klett said 'they got Tob.' Doom in his voice. I took a deep breath and found that I still breathed. I took off my jacket to see the four-inch wound just under my armpit. For the next couple of days I have only confused memory."

Halfway up the hill, Klett found the wallet he had lost the day before when he stopped to grease the BAR.

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Grant, the company commander, led the full company assault up Hill 296, but unknown to him things had begun to unravel behind him. At least part of the 3rd platoon was lost.

Henry Vogel was a member of the 3rd platoon.

"The 3rd platoon was climbing the hill when we lost contact with those ahead of us," Vogel said. "At the same time we came under heavy machinegun fire from the hill above us. Sgt. Cintron came up and took a position about 20 feet to my right. First Sgt. DeVane appeared shortly after this wanting to know what the holdup was. Apparently Sgt. Cintron thought he saw the location of one of the machine guns, grabbed a hand grenade and reared back with perfect form to throw it. At this precise point a German hand grenade landed in his lap. I do not know what killed Sgt. DeVane. He was sort of in between Cintron and me. All I know is that I suddenly became aware that he was dead."

Lt Mullins, the recent replacement, saw both men die but could do nothing about it.

"Sgt. Cintron was a short distance to my left on Hill 296," Mullins said. "Whatever he observed -- he called to me for a grenade -- I tossed one to him. As he rose up to throw it he was struck by I don't know what."

"I was surprised to see Sgt. DeVane walking up the hill slightly to my left as his job usually was to take up the rear to keep things moving. I said 'what the hell are you doing here?' The next thing I saw was holes in the back of his field jacket. He had been struck by machinegun or small arms fire and died instantly," Mullins said.

The shooting stopped, but Vogel could find only five other members of his platoon.

"With no map and no knowledge of what the objective was we decided to return to the foxholes where we had spent the night and wait for dawn," Vogel said.

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Lowry Bowman had just been tapped as Grant's runner to the 4th platoon and was with the company commander, radioman, other runners and a visibly nervous young 2nd lieutenant who had arrived a few days earlier.

"We were about halfway up the hill when there was suddenly a lot of firing from American M-1s, no German weapons," he recalled. "I couldn't see anything at first but suddenly I noticed two German soldiers lying on the ground maybe 15 or 20 yards away. I might have walked right into them if somebody hadn't spotted where they were hid out."

The two Germans apparently had been posted far down the hill as a sort of early-warning system for the troops on the crest. A real suicide mission. As they lay dying, one member of the headquarters group started to search their pockets -- an act which disgusted the company commander who told him to keep moving.

The company climbed on in silence. There was the unspoken hope that the nightlong bombardment had driven the defenders off the hill. Maybe intelligence was right and Sheets was wrong.

Then the world exploded.

Bowman's recollection: "They let us get almost on top of them before they started firing with everything. I hit the ground in a shallow depression, but bullets were going through the knapsack I had stuffed with K rations. I managed to squirm out of it and throw it away, but I knew I was dead. It is a strange feeling to know you are dead. There is an almost restful sense of resignation about it. I remember hoping it wouldn't hurt too much, but the only real regret I felt about being dead was that there was no way to let my parents know it was all right."

Grant yelled to the company to run. Get back down the hill. It was a precipitous retreat but not a rout except for the new lieutenant who panicked and threw away his carbine and Grant's field telephone.

The retreat scattered what already was a badly depleted company. Grant assembled those he could find, but the new lieutenant was not among them. He apparently had kept

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running. (Grant later sought to have him court martialed but was turned down by higher authorities who sent the lieutenant to a rear echelon job).

It was suddenly quiet again, peaceful, getting along toward dark. Most expected Grant to tell them to dig in for the night and call for more artillery fire, but the company commander had other ideas. He did not explain. He led them on a long circuit completely around the hill to a rugged slope that seemed almost perpendicular.

Then he told Bowman and another runner, Frank Hurrle of Clarksville, Ind., to make their way back around the base of the mountain and find L Company which was supposed to be waiting in reserve and tell its commander to bring his men up the hill the way I Company had just come down.

To their amazement, the two runners actually did find L Company, but the company commander refused to move. He was not going to take his men up that hill with night coming on and a formidable force at the top.

He told the two runners to dig in with L Company that night, but both figured that was not a good option. Grant needed to be told even though it meant yet another circuit of that damnable hill. They made the circuit.

"When we got back to where we had left the company it was gone," Bowman said. "Vanished. There were a couple of litter bearers there taking care of some wounded men, but they didn't know where I Company was. From where we stood the hill looked to be about 90 degrees straight up. It seemed impossible that Grant would have tried to take the company up that way. We climbed up a little way but saw and heard nothing at all."

It was almost full dark. The two runners, emotionally and physically exhausted, crept up on a farmhouse that looked deserted. Inside they found a half-dozen or more other members of I Company. Each had the same story. He had lost the company and had no idea where to look for it.

As it turned out, Grant had indeed taken what was left of the company up that steep slope without knowing that L Company would not be coming up the other side.

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They hung there all night while the defenders rolled hand grenades down on them. But they took the hill on the morning of Dec. 3 standing up. The only Germans there were dead. The rest had vanished before dawn, and that meant they would be waiting just up ahead on Hill 375.

"We reached the top seconds after another platoon," Klett recalls. "There were several dead Germans piled up in a trench."

Mortar fire began to pound the hill -- German mortar fire. Apetz noticed tripwires but too late to warn a nearby soldier who stumbled over one and detonated a mine which killed him.

As the remnant of Item Company came off the hill, walking silently with heads down, those in the farmhouse counted only 32 men. They fell in at the end of the column which continued to grow as more of the missing joined it.

Those in the 3rd platoon, lost the day before, started walking back toward the village.

"Our first encounter was with what we thought was an American sentry until he started yelling in German and shooting at us," Vogel said. "We changed course and pushed on finally coming to a road which we followed into what I assume was Ingwiller. As we entered the town from one end we met I Company entering from the other end. There was never a better sight."

Grant reorganized the company. Trucks pulled into the village, and the company was ordered to get aboard. A rumor spread swiftly that after the battering it had taken the company would go into reserve, and this caused a sudden rush of survivors' adrenalin. Everybody began talking at once, laughing as well, and then everybody fell silent at once. The rumor was worse than false.

The morning report for Dec. 3:

"Company was relieved from defensive position near Ingwiller France at 0730 and withdrew to Ingwiller France by foot arrived at 1000. Roads good, weather cloudy,

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morale very good. Company reorganized and moved by motor convoy to Rothbach France, distance covered 2-1/2 miles, roads good, weather rainy, morale excellent. Company moved to prepared position at Hill 375 at 1430. Enemy artillery very heavy."

When told the objective was another hill just like Hill 296, one sergeant who dreamed of going to West Point and on to a career in the Army went into shock. He was taken off the truck and sent back to the battalion aid station. He was able to return to the company a month later, but at the first sound of firing he collapsed in the snow and could not be pulled to his feet. He spent the rest of the war in the hospital.

The death of 1st Sgt. Thomas E. (Chubby) DeVane of Bovill, Idaho, was particularly traumatic for the company. DeVane was "old army" and had become something of a father figure to the company's many teen-agers. He carried a Thompson submachinegun like a Chicago gangster and seemed indestructible. It is odd that in war a particular man's death can be considered "unfair," but that was true in DeVane's case. It simply wasn't fair. T/Sgt. Joe Shovlowsky of Holdeb, Mass., was so bitter about it that he talked openly of shooting the next German prisoners taken. It was only talk, though, and Shovlowsky was recommended for a battlefield promotion to 2nd Lieutenant for his own actions at Ingwiller.

The morning reports for the three-day battle and the two days and nights of intense shelling that followed on Hill 375 indicated total I Company casualties of 36 --14 dead and 22 wounded. The surprising thing was that there were not far more than that since the Germans were firing at pointblank range from well-hidden positions. Many missed the action completely because of the general disorganization -- a situation which the company never allowed to happen again. Those who clung to that steep mountainside all night before the final assault will never forget it.

"It was the worst night of my life," Bruce Larson said. He had spent the night trying to care for a wounded replacement who died before morning.

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Among the dead were Jack Paterson of Detroit and James Tucker of Hamilton, Miss., both members of an already depleted machinegun section. Both were shot in the head while trying to set up their 30-caliber light machinegun. S/Sgt Homer Lester of Hornell, N.Y., already had been carried off with a bullet hole in his left leg inflicted by his own machinegun. The gun had mistakenly been set on full load instead of half load while Lester was trying to adjust it.

Machinegunners Paul Mosher and Bill Wladecki weren't there. Mosher had won a brief stay at a rest camp, and Wladecki was herding some German prisoners to the rear when he was wounded by a mortar shell fragment.

The impact on those who missed the battle was almost as severe as it was on those who were there.

"When I got back all those guys were dead," Wladecki said. "I couldn't believe it."

"When I returned from rest camp and saw and heard the impact of Ingwiller, I absolutely knew I would not remain unscathed," Mosher said. "None of us would."

Joe Sullivan had been sent back on another mission, and the replacement who took his place on the mountainside (Thomas P. Noone of Cochrane, Mass.) was the one that Larson tried unsuccessfully to care for. Long after the war Sullivan went back to Alsace and climbed that mountain. At the top he found and photographed one of Vauban's 17th century fortifications. No one else in the company had seen it.

Despite a constant stream of replacements (the official euphemism was "reinforcements," but nobody used that word), by Dec. 7 company strength had hit a low of 115 counting cooks, clerks and everybody.

The I Company mission at Ingwiller was only a small part of the whole, but neither the German generals nor many of the top American generals had anticipated that Patch's Seventh Army would be able to smash its way through the Vosges. But now it had. After one awful month there were no more mountains ahead. Only the rolling Alsatian plains and the German border.

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Not until long after the war did the troopers learn that they had come perilously close to having to fight their way through the Vosges a second time. Only Gen. Devers' risky defiance of Eisenhower's orders and Charles de Gaulle's sense of French national pride prevented it. The story was slow in coming out in its entirety. Franklin Gurley, the 100th Division historian, wrote about it in a French military publication in 1992, and it was reprinted in the *Journal of Military History* in 1994. Although Eisenhower glossed over it in his *Crusade in Europe*, it is a major part of the Army's own official history in *Riviera to the Rhine*.

Had the men of I Company been forced to retreat back into the Vosges, giving up that hard-won ground only to start all over again in mid-winter, morale would not have been excellent. But that's what the orders were.

RIMLING

The winter weather, never good for long in the area which is on the same parallel as the U.S.-Canadian border, began to turn bitter after Ingwiller as the 100th Division turned toward the Maginot Line fortresses at Bitche near the German border. That impregnable citadel gave the division its nickname -- "Sons of Bitche" -- but I Company and the rest of the 397th Regiment played only a small part in that action.

The 398th Regiment had received special training to try to take those fortresses while the 397th waited on the high ground to the north and west. Company I was "in reserve" for the week in mid-December that the Bitche action lasted. "Reserve" sounds restful, but it is only another name for crouching in frozen foxholes absorbing enemy artillery fire without being able to do anything about it. The result was one dead (Isadore Lewitter of Newark, N.J.) and at least six wounded without any contact with the enemy.

The morning reports also reflect much illness, mostly trench foot and diarrhea, during that period. Mess Sgt. Carpino's cooks kept the messkits clean, but each soldier carried his spoon in his boot against those times when the cooks were unable to make it up with hot food and only K-rations were available. Eat your little tin of "Corned Pork Loaf with Carrots and Apple Flakes," lick your spoon and put it back in your boot. The spoon soon acquired a fine patina of grease, and the user thereof acquired raging diarrhea. Known as "the GIs," of course. Hollywood never depicted that side of infantry warfare.

The first Christmas packages began to arrive at that time, and there were many tinned fruitcakes among them which only added to the general intestinal woes. Dale Noble's wife, Beulah, sent him a fine pair of bedroom slippers which he filled with Alsatian mud and returned.

The attack on the seemingly impregnable fortresses at Bitche was called off because of the surprise German offensive on Dec. 16 through the Ardennes in Belgium, but it was not until Dec. 21 that I Company left its frozen hillside and moved to the village

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of Hottviller a few miles away. News of the first German successes in what later became known as the Battle of the Bulge was slow in filtering down to the troops who were wondering if the division would be sent to Belgium. What the troops did not know -- and only found out years later -- was that Eisenhower had ordered Devers to give up all the hard-won ground in Alsace and pull back into the edge of the Vosges Mountains. Patton's Third Army would be the big relief force in Belgium, and the Seventh Army would have to fill the gap that left.

Generals Devers and Patch, already aware of an impending German attack in the Seventh Army area aimed at retaking the Saverne Gap, fought a delaying action with Eisenhower's headquarters in Paris. Eisenhower, however, was adamant. His order meant, among other things, that the city of Strasbourg would be given up without a fight to German re-occupation. When the French found out about that they were outraged.

Strasbourg was almost as great a symbol of French national pride as was Paris itself. It was in Strasbourg where the Marseillaise, the French national anthem, was composed and first sung in 1792. De Gaulle ordered the city held at all costs despite Eisenhower's orders. Eisenhower threatened to cut off supplies of food and ammunition to the French. De Gaulle responded with a threat to close French railroads and French ports to the Allies unless Eisenhower backed down. Eisenhower backed down.

In his *Crusade in Europe* Eisenhower wrote that de Gaulle was "very earnest" about the defense of Strasbourg and that he thus decided to "modify" his orders to Devers to pull back into the Vosges.

"This modification," Eisenhower wrote, "pleased de Gaulle very much, and he left in a good humor, alleging unlimited faith in my military judgment."

According to Gurley's account, that "unlimited faith" was expressed in one word: "Bah."

Gurley wrote that the real villain was British Field Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery who disliked the whole Vosges operation and wanted Seventh Army troops

added to his already swollen command. Gurley said Eisenhower adopted the Montgomery strategy even though many of his own American generals advised against it. Gen. Patton called it "disgusting."

None of this, of course, was known to the men of I Company who spent that snowy Christmas of 1944 in the hamlet of Bettviller opening a great Christmas gift from the Army -- reversible lightweight parkas, tan on one side and white on the other. Nothing could make living on the ground comfortable, but the parkas at least made it possible. The cooks were valiant about getting blankets and bedrolls up to the men after dark, but there were times when that simply was impossible. Sleeping in the snow is an art form. The cumbersome "shoe pacs" with their rubber bottoms and leather uppers helped cut down on the number of trench foot and frostbite cases during what turned out to be one of the worst Alsatian winters in decades.

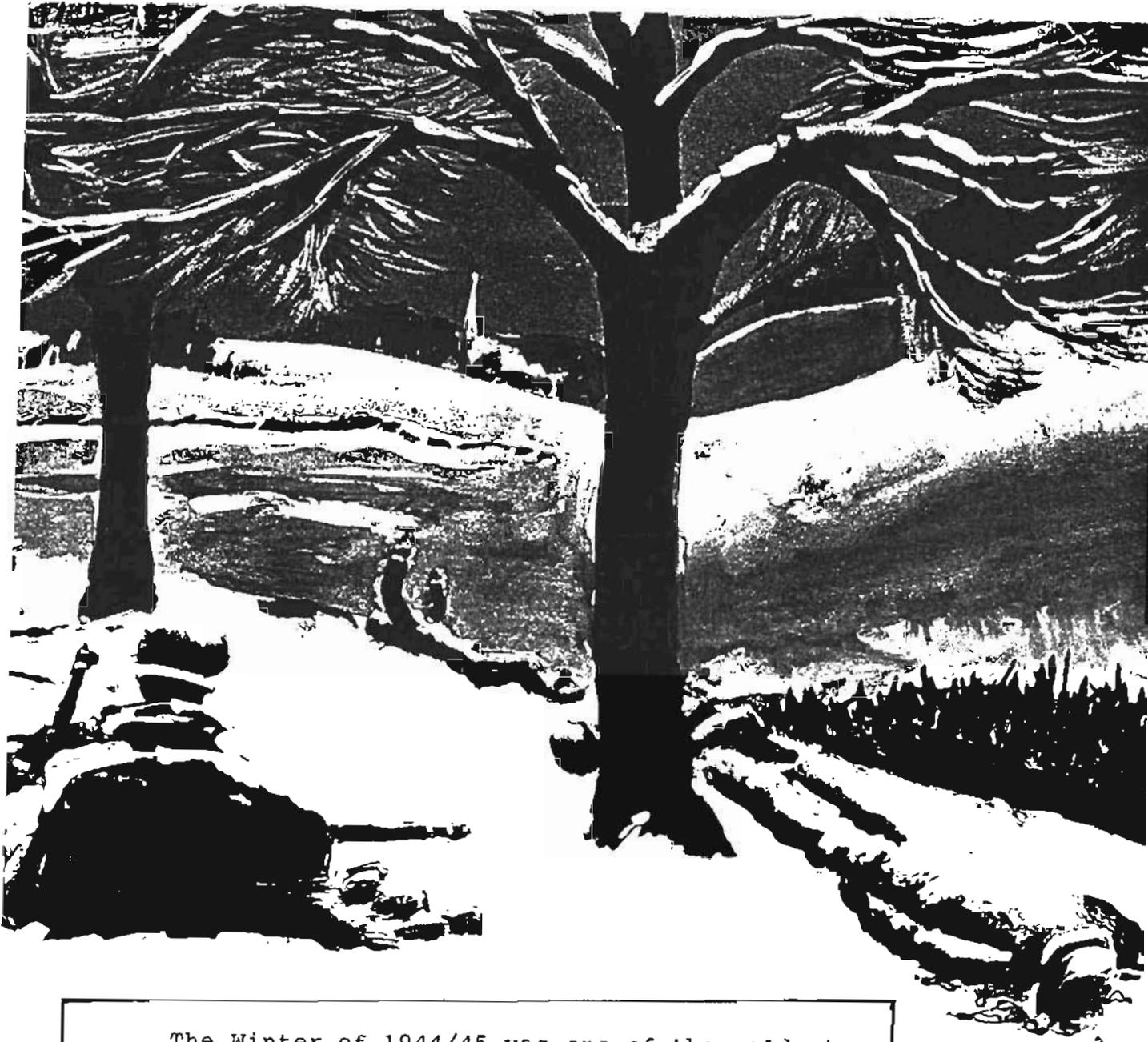
The morning report for 28 December, 1944:

Company moved from defensive position near Bettviller France to position near Rimling France. Distance covered 2 miles. Weather cold morale very good.

Still only vaguely aware of what was going on in the Ardennes, I Company and the rest of the 3rd battalion moved into the village of Rimling* near the German border, and, for the first time, tried to prepare defensive positions. Quarter-pound blocks of TNT linked with primer cord were used to blast foxholes in the frozen ground which was now knee-deep in snow.

Rimling was a new experience. Nobody knew what to expect. The diversion of Patton's Third Army to the relief of the U.S. forces in the Ardennes meant that Patch's Seventh Army found itself trying to cover a front of about 126 miles -- about 20 miles per division, six miles per regiment, two miles per battalion. The German high command naturally felt that this thin line could be easily breached and laid plans for what became known as *Entnehmung Nordwind* -- Operation Northwind.

*See Appendix for map of villages noted in this Chapter.



The Winter of 1944/45 was one of the coldest on record for the Alsace region of northeastern France and the snowfall was above normal. The snow, the bitter cold, the frozen ground made our lives miserable day after day. It was often difficult to believe you could survive the war.

Especially, when you were at a lonely outpost late at night surrounded by barren trees and silence.

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Gens. Devers and Patch thought at first that the German offensive in the Ardennes would allow the 6th Army Group to go on the offensive, but Eisenhower ordered a halt to all offensive operations in the sector. At the same time, both Hitler and Gen. Gerd von Rundstedt (*Riviera to the Rhine*) "realized that the Allies had greatly weakened their southern Army group to meet the Ardennes thrust and believed that a fresh German offensive in the south could exploit this weakness."

Hitler wanted an attack south of the Saarbruecken area toward the Saverne Gap to split the U.S. Seventh Army and clear northern Alsace. Von Rundstedt wanted an attack through the Bitche area into the Vosges since about half the Maginot fortresses still were in German hands. The result was a compromise plan for a German attack down the Sarre River Valley.

Gen. Patch saw it coming.

Riviera to the Rhine: "Expecting the main German attack down the Sarre River corridor (Patch) concentrated the bulk of his strength in Gen. Haislipp's XV Corps, west of the Vosges, with three infantry divisions -- the 103rd, 44th and 100th -- on line covering about 35 miles of total frontage." And that is where Entnehmung Nordwind hit on New Year's Eve, 1944.

In the Ardennes, von Rundstedt's forces overran a green and untried U.S. division, the 106th, and this attack led to the greatest mass surrender in the history of American arms. In Alsace, German forces ran into an immovable object -- the 100th Division. The Ardennes battle is remembered and celebrated while the Alsatian battle is not.

Shortly after moving to Rimling, someone in I Company got a letter from home that contained a newspaper clipping about one of his high school friends. The clipping said the friend had "been to the front several times." This became a standing joke in I company. "Let's get up and go up to the front," was a standard greeting. There was no "front" at Rimling. There were three fronts -- east, west and north -- and one very dangerous back door to the south.

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When the Third Battalion moved in, K company took the northwest segment, L Company the east, and I Company the south. The first platoon of K Company dug in on a bare hill called le Schlietzen north and west of Rimling. It was the highest point in the area and commanded all the ground to the north and west. The 44th Division's 71st Regiment was on the left flank. Grant put I Company's headquarters in the cellar of a ruined house at the extreme south end of the town of about 120 houses. There were two houses between the company headquarters and a church with a high steeple that was occupied by 2nd Lt. James S. Howard of Saratoga Springs, N.Y., the forward observer for Battery C of the 374th Field Artillery battalion. (Howard won the Distinguished Service Cross for his work in that dangerous steeple).

There was a full moon. The fields were covered with snow.

On the evening of Dec. 29 a 12-man patrol from Joe Shovlowsky's 1st platoon set out to try to silence enemy mortars firing from somewhere around Erching, about two miles away. Once again, the morning report gives only a distorted version of events:

"Patrol left CP at 1830 29 December 1944 to Urkin (sic) France, distance covered two miles, encountered enemy patrol estimated 40 men at 0600. Subject to heavy mortar fire and close contact with enemy. Two EM KIA , estimated enemy casualties heavy. Patrol relieved at 0630. No further contact with enemy. Weather cold, morale very good."

Shovlowsky, now a 2nd lieutenant, had the patrol unreel a sound-power telephone line as it moved out through the snow, and that fragile link with company headquarters turned out to be a lifesaver.

It was long after dark when the patrol reached Erching which was believed to be deserted. The patrol split up and moved into two houses on opposite sides of the town's one street. The encounter with a German patrol almost four times its size was unexpected and resulted in a wild firefight that cost the lives of Pfc Troy Carroll of Gordo, Alabama,

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and Pfc Max Toole of Yale, Michigan. Carroll received a posthumous Silver Star for his actions in that fight.

Shovlowsky also won a Silver Star. The phone line enabled him to direct mortar fire to within a few yards of his own position until the line was shattered. A rescue patrol from the 2nd platoon struck out for Erching shortly before dawn, unaware that Shovlowsky's patrol had broken off the fight and headed back to Rimling.

The rescue patrol was led by a newly commissioned 2nd lieutenant named Carl W. (Sandy) Sanderson who had joined I Company on Dec. 14.

John Sheets was on that rescue patrol and wrote about it in his memoirs. Here's a (slightly edited) portion of his account:

"Sandy plus 11 other guys left the base of le Schlietzen hill and went cross-country in foot-deep snow giving Guiderkirch a wide berth and came into Erching from the rear. This was a few minutes before daybreak. Joe's patrol was not to be found. They were back in Rimling, and here we are two miles behind enemy lines in broad daylight. We found two or three dead Germans and two wounded German officers. We never fired a shot."

(A decision was made to try to make it back to Rimling carrying the two wounded Germans. Sheets picks up the story).

"Eight men carrying two German officers leaves two people in front and two in the rear to scout for the enemy. Sandy was one bodacious leader. He headed straight down the road through German-held Guiderkirch! We discovered the officer with the head wound was not breathing, so we left his body along the road for German graves registration. As we were catching our breath, we noted the big German officer with the compound fracture of the left leg above the knee had dozens of condoms falling from his pockets into the litter. Here we were behind enemy lines laughing our heads off and telling the enemy officer he is not going to be needing those rubbers.

"We were dressed for living out in the snow, so the litter detail had us perspiring freely. With only one litter to carry we could switch off which helped tremendously. We

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were in our winter white parkas marching directly into the morning sun. The going was much easier than cross-country as the Germans had packed the snow somewhat. There were no vehicle tracks. Sandy was at the head of the pack and moved right along. Soon there were Germans on each side of the road in their positions in their white clothing. There were 15 to 20 in each group battling the breeze as soldiers do and only 30 to 40 yards away. We have one of theirs in grey uniform in plain view, and we just kept on marching.

"The patrol walked right through the German lines in Guiderkirch carrying one of their wounded in broad daylight, and they did not fire a shot. If they had opened up, we would have been in their crossfire. We continued marching down the snow-covered road until we came to the Love Company lines. Amazingly, they did not shoot at us, either. Getting back through our lines was sometimes the most hazardous part of the mission. The unexpected worked. Sandy said every man on the patrol had just won the Bronze Star. He was a man of his word. It made a mess of the facts in the book, but it got us 5 go home points."

For reasons unknown, Lt. Sanderson is not listed in the Third Battalion roster of officers in the division's official history. The morning reports indicate that he was transferred to L Company in early February, 1945. Sheets' reference to "go home points" is a familiar one to infantrymen who survived the fighting only to be stuck in Germany for a year or more while rear echelon troops who had amassed more "points" got to go home ahead of them.

The battalion aid station, which normally would have been some miles to the rear, was located within the town of Rimling, so the patrol turned the wounded German officer over to the American medics who not only cared for the wounded but also helped deliver two babies during the fighting. The medics named one baby "Halizone" and the other "Eighty-eight."

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Joe Sullivan re-visited Rimling in 1984 and met the town clerk who telephoned both those wartime babies, by then approaching middle age, and Sullivan was able to visit with them and share a bottle of wine.

The unexpected, which had worked so well for Sanderson's patrol, didn't work at all for the famed "Goetz von Berlichingen" Division, the 17th SS Panzer Grenadiers named for a medieval German knight. The 17th SS formed the main assault force at Rimling.

The night of New Year's Eve, 1944, was clear, quiet and bitterly cold. It was obvious that German forces were massing for an attack, but almost everyone expected it would be preceded by artillery and mortar fire, and there was none that night. Something closely akin to a New Year's Eve party was going on in the company commander's blacked-out cellar. It was Grant's 24th birthday that night, and Jan. 1, 1945, would be the 20th birthday for Clifford Jimison of St. Clair Shores, Michigan, who carried the big back-pack radio that made him a walking target. In honor of the occasion Gilbert Scolini of San Francisco, one of the cooks, had produced a fried rabbit and a mess of fried potatoes. Had Grant been warned by those higher up to expect an attack on New Year's Eve, he surely would have posted a strong guard outside his own headquarters. But he did not.

Bowman, just back from the hospital after a bout with severe diarrhea, was outside in the snow standing guard. Frank Hurrle popped out of the cellar to take over the guard duty and handed Bowman a greasy leg of rabbit which immediately triggered a recurrence of abdominal revolt. Precisely at that moment both soldiers noticed a long line of white-clad men walking into the town between Grant's headquarters and the church which served as an artillery observation point. German soldiers.

Lt. Howard, up in the steeple, spotted the Germans at the same time and dropped a hand grenade among them. Grant and the others in the cellar came racing out, and there was confused firing in all directions. Bowman ignored the bullets because of more important demands. He crawled down into the pitch-black cellar and cut off his longjohns

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with a trench knife. As he started back up the stairs, the feared GI Complaint hit again, and he cut off his wool trousers.

The Germans had disappeared. As it turned out, they had crossed the street and holed up in a vacant house. An I Company platoon surrounded the house the next day and about 20 German soldiers surrendered.

There was confusion on both sides.

K Company, on le Schlietzen hill, took the brunt of the first assault, and I Company's 2nd platoon was called to help. Despite some difficulties by the platoon sergeant in finding the way, the platoon took over some K Company foxholes by about 1:30 in the morning. Sheets' account:

"No matter how alert one is, the intense cold had its anesthetizing effect as the sweat turned to icicles. It was not long until I was shocked out of my reverie by ten very fast walking, white-clad SS troops. When I first spotted them they were coming around the curve in the hill to the south and I could see them all. They were bunched up in single file about three feet apart as in close order drill and moving rapidly. I had been standing, so I slipped my left arm into the sling, which I kept real tight, and assumed a kneeling, semi-prone position. I had my left arm and the M-1 resting on the snow-covered mound of earth that had been excavated and piled on the left side of the hole."

Sheets said he expected three K Company men in a nearby foxhole would be the first to fire, and then he would join in. It didn't happen that way. He waited until the Germans were only about 30 feet in front of the K Company position on his left and then opened fire. The German patrol disappeared.

"I was boiling mad because the troops I came to help never fired a shot," Sheets said.

A few minutes later he spotted a second German force farther away. It was a duplicate of the first one and following the same route.

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"Here they come, walking fast, all closed up, nice and straight, just like the first time," Sheets wrote. "I got into the comfortable firing position and let them come to the 40-yard marker. You can bet my heart was going a mile a minute with gobs of adrenaline gushing through my system. I trained the M-1 on the middle of the poor point man's chest and let her rip rapid fire. When I had reloaded and the smoke cleared, again I could not see a thing. The ghosts had vanished. The enemy did not return a shot. The brave American soldiers on either side had not fired a shot either."

Not long after that, still another ten-man German squad appeared following the same route, and the same scene played out again.

Bob Tessmer said the German forces which hit the 3rd platoon positions were "yelling and screaming."

"I looked down the road and saw a flamethrowing tank advancing toward us. We were sure we were about to be dead men -- no way out. The tank approached within 100 yards and I'm sure they knew we were there, but it suddenly stopped, turned around and went back. The Germans broke off the attack and pulled back," Tessmer said.

One of the company's two 30-caliber machine guns had been set up in a farm shed next to company headquarters in case of an attack from the southeast. As a replacement, the machinegun section acquired an unfamiliar 50-caliber weapon in its hedgerow position on the hill.

"I recall the 50-caliber gun being delivered by an officer. Not someone from our company," Bill Wladecki said. "I have no idea who decided to provide us with this weapon nor where it came from. We were already short-handed and could only man one gun. People available included Paul Mosher, Joe Lize, Earle Ellis, Bill McKeown, Joe DeVito and Leon Brooks. Also, there was a squad of riflemen there with us in the hedgerow which was perhaps 40 yards long from one end to the other. So, altogether, there were about 20 of us defending this important left flank. I had the light 30 on the left side of the

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hedgerow with Mosher in charge. I took charge of the 50-caliber gun on the extreme right."

The big 50 never worked, and Wladecki later thanked God for it.

About 30 or 40 members of the attacking force passed near that gun early on Jan. 1, and Wladecki told the crew to begin firing.

"The gun fired one shot and then stopped," he said. "We reloaded and tried again. One shot and stop. We never did get the gun to work."

"During the attack near our position I thought it was strange that although the soldiers were making a lot of noise as they rushed toward our lines they were not firing weapons," Wladecki said. "Early the next morning, Capt. Grant told me to come down to the company CP -- it seems they had captured 30 or so unarmed Polish guys in German uniforms and Grant wanted someone who could talk with them and find out what the story was."

They were Polish nationals who had been conscripted by the Germans for work in support positions. At Rimling they were put into German Army uniforms and ordered to attack the American lines without weapons.

"The spokesman for the group said they were told by the Germans 'attack and die there or stay and die here.' These guys were simply being used just to absorb U.S. Army bullets," Wladecki said.

Over the years Wladecki said he has thought a lot about that 50-caliber gun that refused to fire at Polish conscripts.

While the German assault that crisp, cold night failed to penetrate the 100th Division lines, it did achieve something else. The 44th Division regiment on I Company's left pulled back several miles without warning. On the right, Gen. Patch had inserted a small, mechanized screening force to cover the area between the 100th Division and the 45th Division. This force simply disappeared. The third battalion of the 100th Division's 397th Regiment was now surrounded on three sides, and the only escape route to the rear

was a bumpy road soon christened the "Skyline Drive" since anything that moved on it was silhouetted for German artillery.

Mosher, who had been back at a rest camp, missed the initial New Year's Eve attack but came back up the Skyline Drive in the kitchen Jeep and found the normal ruts and shell holes impossible for the driver to dodge. But there was still another road hazard -- frozen bodies of German soldiers.

"Early the next morning," he recalled, "I walked out looking for the 44th Division troops who were to our immediate left. Or, were supposed to be. There was no one there. Apparently the 44th had pulled out during the night. I alerted Moon Schonarth. Moon walked out even farther than I had and finding no one advised company headquarters. He was told not to worry about the exposed flank in that this withdrawal was likely only temporary. Just a part of a general troop rearrangement in this sector. None of us believed this bullshit. We were out there on that left flank all alone -- and would be until the Germans overwhelmed us or we were ordered to withdraw."

The (later) official explanation was that there had been a "failure of communications," but the withdrawal of the 44th's 71st Regiment without a word to the 100th caused a lot of bad feeling. Some I Company men began referring to the 44th as "the American Volksturm," and that was not a compliment.

Having failed in their midnight surprise attack, the Germans began pounding the American positions with artillery and mortar fire, and they were in a position to spot anything that moved. A single individual who stuck his head up too high could become the target of several artillery shells.

Sleep was almost impossible since there were too few men available to do a rotating guard duty. Everybody was on guard, and after two days and nights without sleep they began hallucinating. Trees and fence posts moved around like enemy soldiers.

Getting food and ammunition up to the troops became a major problem. The cooks were the company's only link to the rear, and they performed valiantly. In addition to

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Carpino and Scolini they included Joseph A. Jordan of Saratoga, N.Y. Charles Bouchard of New Bedford, Mass., John Acunzo of Brooklyn, and the workhorse, Charles J. (Whitey) Antczak of Pittsburgh..

In a letter written 50 years after Rimling, Carpino tells what it was like:

"The cooks of Company I were the greatest. They all did their jobs and they gave their best. It was not easy to load and unload those stoves. They were pretty heavy. I used to depend on Antczak. My other cooks were small, and it took two of the cooks on one side and Antczak would take the other side by himself. He was a good cook and a big six-footer and a good friend. He would always do a little more than was expected of him. It was hard work, but they never complained. Scolini, Bouchard, Jordan, they were all great.

"Worley (Herbert Worley of Memphis) drove the Jeep. A great guy. One thing I remember about Worley was the Rimling affair. S-2 called us together about a mile from the front line and told us it was bad and told us where our company was located and left it up to us if we wanted to go. One of the other sergeants asked me what I was going to do, and I said I don't know yet. We were told we could still wait awhile and maybe we could hope for a break and get word it was OK to go, and at that time something came to my mind.

"When Capt. Grant made me a sergeant he used to call me 'Carpy' when he wanted to make a point. He said 'Carpy, I don't want my company to ever miss a meal. If those guys are up there fighting there's no reason why you can't bring them a meal'. So I went to the lieutenant in charge and said I'm going up. He showed me on his map where he thought I Company was. I put my arm on Worley's shoulder and whispered if we don't go we better find a way to get to the U.S.A. Capt. Grant will skin us alive. He said OK.

"I said 'Worley, when we get on the road to our company I want you to put the pedal to the floor'. I expected some mortars to fall in because they told us they had that road zeroed in. We got in the Jeep and left. I said 'Lord, I'm giving this trip into your hands. Do with it as you want.'



There were no standard procedures within the Regiment with respect to bed rolls and food. In some organizations each man carried his own bedroll every day and usually ate canned rations. In Company I our bed rolls were brought up nightly by the kitchen staff. And, usually we got a hot meal or sandwiches delivered even under combat conditions. Mess Sergeant Carpino and "Whitey" Antczak certainly served the company well.

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"Company I got a meal, and when we pulled in our company spotted us, and the next thing was Capt. Grant coming to where we set up, and he sent word around one platoon at a time come in and get their food. He and the 1st Sergeant ate last. He looked at me and said 'I knew you would come'.

"Captain Grant has his reward in heaven."

Often, however, what food and ammunition found its way to Rimling stayed in the town because German artillery could destroy any one or any thing that tried to move it up the Schlietzen hill. And there were times when the Germans seemed a lesser enemy than the P-47s of the U.S. Army Air Corps. Four p-47s bombed the 397th regimental headquarters, and one threw two 500-pound bombs at I Company's headquarters.

Bowman and Hurlle again were on guard outside Grant's cellar when that P-47 flew over. They waved at it. Then they watched it peel off and start down in a screaming dive. Directly at them. They saw the bombs headed their way. There was no time to run and no place to run to. "Look," Bowman said. "Two bombs."

The bombs passed on either side of the church steeple and went through the roof and into the cellar of one of the two houses between the church and the company headquarters. The cellar was crowded with civilians. All were killed.

The official fiction at the time was that these were captured American planes flown by German pilots, but postwar investigations ruled out that explanation. "Friendly fire" was a major cause of casualties in World War Two as it has been in other wars. "Friendly fire" killed Stonewall Jackson just as dead in 1863 as it did Leslie McNair in 1944.

There was much confused fighting in the town of Rimling itself, but Company I was not involved in much of it. After that first attempt at infiltration on New Year's Eve the Germans did not again try to move into the town from the southeast even though there was only one lone machinegun there that would have barred their way. And on Jan. 6 the company was relieved by Easy Company from the 2nd Battalion.

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Mosher picks up the story:

"Soon after sunset the first soldiers from the organization which was to take over our positions made their appearance. There was a lot of them. Relative to our numbers at least.

"The changeover briefing was quick. Their sergeant noted right away that he would need a place to mount a second gun and would need to squeeze 6 or 8 more GIs into our limited area. He asked about my field of fire. Also, how far out in front was the enemy; what was the estimated strength of the opposing forces? Then he inquired about our flanks. I told him that there were Company I riflemen some 100 yards to the right and assumed that personnel from his organization would occupy these same positions.

"With respect to the left flank I told it to him straight. I explained that the organization which had previously been there had departed some time before but I had been informed that they were expected to return. The sergeant considered this last remark carefully but did not ask as to whether this expectation was realistic. I don't think he wanted to hear my opinion.

"The balance of the relieving troops arrived, and my machine gun squad and the other troops in the hedgerow joined the rest of Company I and formed up along a snowpacked road. We had a march of 5 or 6 miles ahead of us. Bright, bright stars, Cold as hell, but since there was little wind, it wasn't noticed. What a pleasure to be out of Rimling and away from that hedgerow.

"Walking down the moonlit road that night I believe many of us felt a sense of freedom. I know I did. Perhaps for the first time since we entered the Vosges Mountains we could detect a small ray of hope. Was it just possible that we could outlast this conflict? More and more U.S. divisions were arriving. So far, it had seemed that each week there were fewer and fewer of us to continue the attack. It was just logical as hell that one day none of us who came over on the boat together would be present when the

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remaining few were counted. But tonight we were alive. And I was certain the farther we got from Rimling the more our spirits improved.

"After we had walked a couple of miles we heard the sound of small arms fire. Mostly German. We recognized the distinctive rapid fire sound from their burpguns. The noise was coming from the direction of Rimling. More than one of us reflected on the fact that our departure from that village was very timely."

"Jan. 6, 1945. Record of events. Company was relieved at 2100 by Co. E and withdrew to position near Rohrbach France. Distance covered 6 miles. Artillery very heavy. Weather cold, Morale good."

Mosher's "sense of freedom" at leaving Rimling was short-lived. The next afternoon Company I was called back up the road to relieve F Company near Guising, a hamlet halfway between Rohrbach and Rimling.

The morning report for Jan. 8: *Company repulsed enemy attacks and moved to position on hill near Guising France. Weather cold and snowy, Morale Good.*

And for Jan. 9: *Company holding same position on hill near Guising France patrols out weather cold morale good. Under the provisions of WD Cir 408 this Company was designated a Combat Infantry Company off 2 Jan 45 per General Order #1 Hq 397th Inf Regt.*

For all practical purposes that was the end of Hitler's Entnehmung Nordwind. Gen. Patch had predicted the path down which the German attack would come, and he put the 100th Division there to stop it. That's the way it came, and that's where it stopped.

The 101st Airborne won, and richly deserved to win, praise and headlines for its stand at Bastogne in the Ardennes offensive while Gen. Patton hurried to its rescue. The 3rd battalion of the 100th Division's 397th Regiment won no headlines for its stand at Rimling and had no armies hurrying to its rescue, but it did win a Presidential Unit Citation which is something very special. A copy of that citation is included in the Appendix.

THE WINTER LINE

Had Adolf Hitler been a rational man (or, perhaps, had the Allies not insisted on "unconditional surrender") the war in Europe might have ended in the January snow with the defeat of his twin-pronged offensive in the Ardennes and in Alsace. But the German Fuehrer decided to bring Germany down in flames around him.

Shortly after the final Allied offensive began in March Albert Speer, Hitler's minister for armaments and war production, pleaded with Hitler not to further destroy the country's roads and bridges and particularly those bridges over which food flowed into Berlin.

Anthony Read and David Fisher record in their 1993 book *The Fall of Berlin* (W. W. Norton and company, New York) Hitler's contemptuous reply: "If the war is lost the nation will also perish. Besides, those who remain after the battle are only the inferior ones, for the good ones will have been killed."

Hitler then issued his notorious "Nero Order" calling for the destruction of just about everything left standing in Germany. That included such vital public necessities as gas works, water works, electrical works and even food and clothing stores if they seemed likely to fall into enemy hands. Those on Germany's western front were ordered to leave their homes, on foot if necessary. Doubtless some did, but most did not.

The men of I Company were unaware of this "Nero Order," but they ran into its bloody application later in the ruined city of Heilbronn just a few miles up the scenic Neckar River from the fabled university city of Heidelberg. That would come later. Now it was midwinter, and snow and cold were almost as dangerous as what was left of the German Army.

From the division history: "From 10 January until 15 March, the division remained in the static defensive positions of a winter line. Since the 100th had been the only division on the Seventh Army front not to fall back under pressure from the enemy, it was ordered

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to hold while other divisions on the Army front were regaining positions from which they could jump off in the spring offensive."

The authors of *Riviera to the Rhine* chose to end their history of the Seventh Army right there as though the later Rhine crossings and the final invasion of Germany were anticlimactic. The Seventh Army might have done it all the previous November had not Eisenhower ruled it out. In their book, Gens. Devers and Patch are the heroes while Eisenhower and his aide Bedell Smith fall far short. They found Eisenhower's criticism of Devers for the French failure to eliminate the Colmar Pocket "unfair and unjustified."

Hitler's Entnehmung Nordwind, they wrote, "proved a true test of the 6th Army Group, the Seventh Army, and the associated American (and French) corps, divisions and regiments. Although the attacking panzer, panzer grenadier, and infantry divisions may have been fewer in number than the German forces sent into the Ardennes counteroffensive...they clearly outnumbered their Allied opponents who were also defending less favorable terrain than the Americans in the north."

They praised the leadership of Gens. Patch, Haislip and Brooks in defeating the Nordwind attacks but added this proviso: "credit for the victory in the Vosges must go to the American and French small-unit commanders and their unheralded infantrymen. The campaign in the High Vosges from late September to early December was one of the bitterest contests of the war. There the American army, corps and divisional commanders had little room for maneuver, and their direct influence on the battles was limited. Waged in wet, cold and then frozen mountain jungles where the materiel superiority of the Allied forces had little impact, the mountain battles continually tested the skill and determination of the average soldiers and their small-unit leaders."

The veterans of Company I can attest to that. But they also can attest to the fact that the war did not end in January. Or in February or March or April. More blood had to be spilled, and their survival skills were as severely tested by heavy snow and sub-zero



This photo shows an infantry company "on the road" most likely moving from one sector to another based on actual or anticipated actions of the Jerries. (Some say this is actually Co. I)

Plenty of symbolism in this photo. In the center is a Medical Aid vehicle--a reminder of the wounded that may need care. And a cemetery for those whose wounds were fatal. As infantry soldiers we faced these two possibilities daily.

These soldiers are wearing their reversible parkas which were issued late in December, 1944. A most welcome holiday gift!

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cold as they were by those German soldiers who now had their backs to the wall and were defending their own home soil.

American GIs, of course, wasted no sympathy on the enemy *Landser*s (infantrymen), but it is interesting to note that in the closing months of the war the German soldiers were fighting physically on one kind of front line and emotionally on another kind -- the home front. Allied bombs were reducing their homeland to rubble.

Historian Stephen G. Fritz studied letters and diaries written by German infantrymen and wrote his conclusions in 1995 in a book entitled "Frontsoldaten -- the German Soldier in WW II" (Published by The University Press of Kentucky). He found that conditions had become so bad in the German heartland that German Army Group B issued this order: "It is necessary that every front soldier in his letters home radiate strength, confidence and trust." The average Landser found that hard to do and railed against "the criminal war methods" (the bombing of German cities) of the Allied forces.

German infantrymen also complained almost as bitterly about lice as they did about Russian tanks and artillery. The men of I Company never had that problem since they had spent much time rubbing DDT powder into the seams of their clothing to kill the infamous "cooties" which had so plagued Americans in the first World War. (DDT was banned for use as a pesticide many years after the war because of its buildup in body tissue, but apparently no World War Two veterans thought it worth filing any formal complaints about. They accepted it as just another risk of war).

From the end of the Rimling fighting to the start of the final offensive in mid-March, Company I fought the winter more than it fought the Germans. For the first few days it occupied blasted fortresses in the Maginot Line near Hottviller, and except for constant patrolling action there was little contact with the Wehrmacht. Even so, its men continued to suffer wounds, illness, death and captivity.

James I. McGovern, a recent replacement from Chicago, ventured outside one of those pillboxes and was promptly killed. His body froze there in the snow with one arm

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lifted toward the sky. A two-man team from GRO came up at dark to recover his body just as a blizzard hit the area. Because of that extended arm the body would not fit into the Jeep. The GRO team finally lashed him to the hood, and when they reached company headquarters about a mile away, Grant came out and stopped them.

The captain might have court-martialed anyone else who showed a light, but he struck a match and held it to McGovern's face until it almost burned his fingers.

"I never even knew what he looked like," Grant muttered before waving the Jeep on.

About the same time, T/Sgt. Ed Eylander led a night patrol out with the goal of capturing a prisoner who might give information about German positions. S/Sgt. Kenneth B. Cook, who had warned the company commander about the suspicious look of that hill on Nov. 14, was assistant patrol leader. However, instead of capturing a German, Cook was taken prisoner when he lost contact with the patrol and walked into a strong German position. Jack Keelan once described those night patrols as "the distilled essence of terror."

On Jan. 23, I Company moved to the area around the hamlet of Kapellenhof where it stayed until Feb. 8 before moving back to relieve K Company on "a hill north of Hottviller." That position, known to everyone in the company as "the sheep farm," was held until the mid-March offensive.

The sheep farm (and that's what it had been until war arrived) dominated the crest of a hill overlooking a wooded valley near the German border. Across the valley was the village of Dollenbach where German troops were entrenched. Company I took over the K Company foxholes on the ridge overlooking the valley. Artillery had removed most of the roof of the main farmhouse which, in European fashion, was just a part of the complex that included stalls and sheds for the livestock. Dead sheep lay everywhere, and departing German soldiers had tossed some of the carcasses down the farm's well to make the water

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unusable. Even in hard blue frozen winter the smell of sheep manure hung over the complex like a London fog. Later on, in the spring thaws, it grew thicker.

But the sheep farm was almost a vacation from the war. Almost. Not quite. Neither side was capable of an offensive at that point, but patrolling was constant, and more and more German soldiers were beginning to understand that surrender was the better part of suffering. Hardly a day went by without one or more crossing that valley with hands in the air even though they risked being shot in the back by their own officers.

There were no visible targets anywhere for riflemen to shoot at, but the company's three mortar squads kept up a sporadic barrage of Dollenbach from the safety of the farm complex just to keep the Germans on edge. German artillery and mortars responded, and there were casualties. But for the first time in months members of the company had time on their hands. All foxholes were fully manned at night, but only a small force was necessary during daylight hours. Though it had no roof, the farmhouse boasted a splendid fireplace around which those not on duty could write letters, play cards, doze, tell stories or just loaf in welcome warmth. The farm's sheds became firewood.

The farm was more of a listening post than a major defensive position, and the men soon became aware that food for the German defenders in Dollenbach came up each night in a horsedrawn wagon. The clip-clop of hooves echoing across the valley indicated chow time for the Wehrmacht. Company mortarmen promptly christened the horse "Whirlaway" in honor of the steed Eddie Arcaro rode to a Kentucky Derby victory in 1941. They made it their job to "get Whirlaway."

It was almost an even match. Whirlaway's driver obviously was highly skilled. Since a mortar gives away its position with a drumlike bong long before its shell hits the ground Whirlaway dodged danger for many nights. His end was inevitable, however, and it was signaled by a clanging of pots and pans. The next morning several Germans surrendered. Their food supply was gone. But there was a strange feeling of sadness on

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the part of the successful mortarmen. Amid the insanity of war they felt guilty about killing a horse. That feeling would be intensified just a few weeks later.

The mortars also were used to send up flare shells to illuminate the valley at night even though no one expected a major attack. These magnesium flares, floating down under nylon parachutes, were intensely bright and highly valuable in defensive positions but otherwise useless. They gave Dick Guttridge of Youngstown, Ohio, the idea for what some called the "ultimate horror weapon" of World War Two.

Guttridge, trained as a mechanical engineer, needed something to wrap up something-or-other he wanted to send home. No paper was available, of course, so he removed the nose cones from several mortar flare shells, removed the flares and then the nylon parachutes and used them as wrapping material. That left several empty mortar shells. Guttridge decided to pack them with the most abundant ammunition around -- frozen pellets of sheep manure. He put the nose cone timers back on and fired the shells over the German lines.

This particular war crime didn't cause the mass surrenders that Whirlaway's death did, but Stars & Stripes, the army newspaper, got wind of it and wrote a piece about Guttridge's invention. He still has a copy.

It was at the sheep farm also that a bagful of Good Conduct medals arrived to be distributed to those who had managed to spend a year in the service without being convicted of any major crimes. The distribution was cheered and jeered. Infantrymen quickly become suspicious of all decorations except the Combat Infantry Badge.

On one night there was a fearful barrage from American M-1 rifles when activity was heard just ahead of I Company's foxholes. The invader turned out to be a huge wild boar. Several men claimed credit for killing the beast. However, bragging rights were given to Francisco Lopez (now a permanent Stuttgart resident) since the animal expired nearest to his foxhole. Tough but edible ham steaks were added to the Company I menu starting early the next morning.

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Back to the rear, the Army was massing a vast supply of guns, tanks, food, fuel, ammunition and men for the final assault on Germany, but for many of the men in I Company it was the first chance they had for four-day rest leaves, most of them to Paris or Brussels. Three or four men were allowed to go at one time, and these were not the wild adventures often depicted in Hollywood war films. Infantry combat reduces all of life to the basic simplicities of a hot bath, clean clothes, a warm meal and a soft bed. That is about as near to heaven as an infantryman can get.

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ATTACK ON GERMANY

On March 13, the army was ready for the final push.

A new and nervous unit took over I Company's foxholes at the sheep farm, and the company walked back to Holbach where it boarded trucks for the shuttle to Hottviller and a tense night of preparation for the final assault. It came before dawn on March 15, 1945. The morning report for that day:

Company attacked enemy positions west of Hottviller France at 0400 and captured town of Schorbach France enemy artillery heavy 2 EM KIA. Company placed in battalion reserve and occupying town for night. Weather fair morale good.

That attack netted 28 prisoners, and on the 17th I Company captured the villages of Breidenbach and Dorst against only light resistance and without any casualties. Some thought the war was over. They invented a sort of football cheer that went "Rohrbach, Schorbach, Breidenbach, Dorst! Rohrbach, Schorbach, Breidenbach, Dorst!" The cheering was premature.

It is not even mentioned in the morning reports, but when the company hit the vaunted Siegfried Line near the twin villages of Kleinsteinhausen and Grossteinhausen it seemed to have come up against an impassable barrier. Not even at Rimling had the men of Company I undergone an artillery barrage like that one. The German 88s, firing on a flat trajectory from concrete fortresses, stopped the advance in its tracks.

Paul Mosher describes it:

"We reached Grossteinhausen first and set off for the other village which was about a mile away. It was quite dark by now, and the paved road was narrow with deep ditches on either side. Artillery fire from German 88s started coming in, and as we reached Kleinsteinhausen the artillery fire became intense. Our column started breaking up as soldiers dived into various homes or the preferred lower level cellar entrances.

"After about 30 minutes orders came down to get back on the street and continue through town to where we were going to dig in for the night. The problem was that

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Company K also was attempting to pass through town, and they had no orders to leave their places of safety. So sorting out the Company I troops was difficult. Not many of us wanted to go outside."

One squad sought shelter in what once had been a small store filled with glass display cases. As German artillery began taking it apart, slivers of glass flew in all directions, and Joe Sullivan shouted "Get the hell out of here." Earl McKisson went through a window and hit the ground just as a shell took the roof off.

"I'm hit," he gasped.

A large piece of roofing tile had landed on the small of his back.

Fifteen years later McKisson died of cancer of the spine. Shortly before he died, he wrote a former I Company friend: "You know, the Irish are fey. I have known since that day at Kleinsteinhausen that I was living on borrowed time."

Never before had I Company experienced such an intense bombardment from so close a range.

"The German guns that were shelling us were less than a mile away. You could see the muzzle flash, hear the shell as it came in and exploded, and then hear the sound of the muzzle blast from the gun. We had never experienced this before," Mosher said.

(The German 88, often called the best gun of the war, had the flat trajectory of a big-game rifle. The American 105-mm howitzer, the workhorse of Allied artillery, lobbed its shells at the enemy much like a mortar).

One of the reports on combat activities stated that the 3rd battalion of the 397th received more enemy shells on that day than any other unit of the division on any day of the war. The shelling never stopped. The noise was deafening. But there were surprisingly few casualties. There was, however, a welcome rumor -- a rumor that one of Gen. Patton's armored units had found a weak spot in the Siegfried Line farther north. The rumor turned out to be true. Patton's forces were now behind the German defenses, and the Germans would have no choice but to get out of those fortresses as fast as they could.

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Another welcomed rumor was that the 100th Division was to be relieved by the 71st Division, and that also turned out to be true.

Mosher was among those chosen to guide units of the fresh and untried division into the I company foxholes. For the occasion he donned a "liberated" opera hat.

"The leaders of the soldiers I was to guide to the line stared in disbelief," he wrote later. "There was one officer and three or four non-coms. In a very soldierly manner I outlined where we were going, the conditions we could expect during our approach, and the situation at the line. I was particularly careful to mention that they should expect to be under heavy artillery fire while en route. They seemed to be listening carefully, but their eyes kept glancing at the tophat. I'm sure they felt I had been in combat too long."

With the replacements in place, Company I withdrew for a night's sleep. Mosher's tophat performance was hailed by everyone but the captain who told him to put on his steel helmet. The next day, March 22, I Company boarded trucks and rode through the Siegfried line. The German defenders had fled.

The company rode 15 miles into Germany with no resistance at all. The men were amazed by the cleanliness and modernity of the towns, particularly Pirmasens. Two days later, on March 24, Company I reached the Rhine River at Ludwigshafen. But between Pirmasens and Neustadt they were shaken by a sight they still remember vividly.

The German Wehrmacht used thousands of horses for transport duty to conserve its scarce supplies of fuel. In the book *Frontsoldaten*, the author cites letters from several soldiers on the Russian front lamenting the fate of those horses. An officer named Friedrich Reinhold Haag wrote home that he was horrified by the sight of a beautiful white horse grazing by a ditch. An artillery shell had torn away the horse's right foreleg. Haag ordered one of his men to kill the horse. "Then the soldier, who just ten minutes before had been in a hard fight, replied: 'I haven't got the heart for it, Herr Leutnant'."

Company I didn't have the heart for it, either. Slogging down a narrow country road in a deep valley, the company came on what was left of a long horse-drawn German

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column. American planes had caught it a day or two before, and the remains were sickening. There was nothing to do but walk on through the bloody mess.

The airman, the tanker, the submariner, the artilleryman, the bombardier, the sailor all fire at *targets* in wartime. Rarely do they have to look at those targets from close range. The infantryman fires at human beings, and by the very nature of his job must walk through the bloody result. He becomes hardened to the death of other human beings, but somehow the death of horses hurts him.

The walk through that valley was made in utter silence.

The company moved into Ludwigshafen with the aim of capturing something that might help get it across the Rhine but ran immediately into elements of the 94th Division of Patton's Third Army which had come down from the north. A day or so later the 100th pulled back six miles to the village of Eppstein to avoid any confusion but not before taking enemy mortar fire that killed one soldier and wounded two others, including Tiges J. (Frenchy) Martin of Cut Off, La., and Lt. Israel Sacks of Brooklyn.

That first night in Ludwigshafen was spent in what was left of the huge I.G. Farben chemical plant looking across the Rhine into the ruins of Mannheim. T/4 David Berezin, of Hollywood, Fla., who handled communications, recalls that night in particular.

"We still could communicate with the German phone operators across the river in Mannheim. They didn't know we were in the building," Berezin said.

That night, Berezin and Roy Moore, a wireman from Atlanta, strung an entire reel of soundpower telephone wire connecting the company headquarters with the various platoons and those on outpost. When the order came to pull back, Berezin had no more wire and went back to battalion headquarters for a fresh supply.

"Off I went and saw the lieutenant in charge," Berezin said. "When I asked him for a reel of wire, he said 'go and pick up the wire you laid.' I said I can't use that wire because it was damaged by artillery fire and mortar fire. I told him that furthermore I had laid the

wire at night, and it was too dangerous to pick it up in daylight. He answered that he would not give me a reel of wire, that I should pick up the wire I had already laid."

Berezin reported this state of affairs to the company commander who told him to pick up his carbine and head back to battalion.

"When we got there," Berezin said, "Capt. Grant said to the lieutenant 'I understand you told Berezin to pick up that wire he laid the night before. If I were Berezin I'd tell you to kiss my ass.'"

Berezin got his reel of wire.

That was another thing shared by the American infantryman and the German Landser -- a general distrust of everyone in the rear. Germans called them "Etappenschweine," a sort of untranslatable bit of argot meaning a "step by step pig" or maybe "a pig who goes by the book."

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HEILBRONN

After a quiet week in Eppstein waiting for engineers to get a pontoon bridge across the Rhine, I Company boarded trucks and crossed the fabled river on the last day of March without a shot. The convoy was slowed only by the rubble that had been Mannheim, but once into open country it headed south toward what long had been rumored would be Hitler's "National Redoubt" where the last of his forces would make a suicide stand. That suicide stand was made instead in the city of Heilbronn on the Neckar River.

The world's attention was focused on the coming battle for Berlin toward which Russian troops were racing, but the battle for Heilbronn was among the worst experienced by Company I and the rest of the 100th Division. It was a battle that logic says never should have been fought -- for all practical purposes the war was over -- but logic never was a strong point in the thinking of Hitler's more fanatical SS officers.

The author of *Frontsoldaten* concluded that basic infantry training in the Wehrmacht often (but not always) was designed to make the soldier fear his officers far more than he feared the enemy. This trait certainly had been evident at Rimling and was evident again at Heilbronn where many of the defenders were boys and old men led (or rather, commanded) by SS officers who rewarded cowardice with a bullet in the back. Lt. John H. Slade of Hawkinsville, Ga., commanding G Company of the 397th, reported that SS officers shot and killed at least six young German soldiers who were trying to surrender to his company.

"They wasn't nuthin' but kids... 14 to 17-year-olds," Slade said.

Fighting children was hard enough in itself. Many members of Company I were only a couple of years older than the Heilbronn defenders, but they had been through almost six months of unrelieved warfare and had aged beyond their years. Perhaps a more difficult enemy was the realization that the war really *was* over, or should have been, and the major concern of every soldier was to stay alive to see the end of it.

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At the Division's 1992 reunion in Pennsylvania, Col. Paul Hartig of Carlisle Barracks labeled this concern the "old sergeants' syndrome." Each day of combat lessens the chance that a particular soldier will survive, and he becomes quite cautious.

(Col. Hartig had made a special study of the evolution of World War I "shellshock" to World War II "battle fatigue" to the "post trauma stress disorder" of Vietnam which allows for delayed symptoms. He concluded that 200 consecutive days of infantry combat is the outside limit for the sanity of an infantryman).

This "old sergeants' syndrome" would seem to have ruled out any heroics at Heilbronn, but six of the company's 20 Silver Star medals as well as 35 Bronze Stars were won in the eight-day battle for that city.

How the 100th became involved in the battle for Heilbronn is typical of warfare where nothing is certain but uncertainty. Intelligence reports and air reconnaissance gave no sign that Heilbronn would be strongly defended, and Gen. Burress planned to have the 397th and 398th regiments cross the Neckar River well north of the city and attack it from the rear while the 399th made a frontal assault. Before he could begin this plan, however, strategists in VI Corps ordered him to rush one battalion immediately to join the 10th Armored Division in trying to establish a beachhead across the river.

The 3rd Battalion of the 398th got this assignment and crossed the river easily in small boats in the early morning darkness of April 4. After some initial success, this battalion soon found itself almost surrounded by counter-attacking German troops. Worse yet, the 10th Armored was abruptly relieved of its assignment to support the capture of Heilbronn and was shifted to another sector. Gen. Burress' original plan was in the ashcan, and he risked the loss of an entire battalion if it was not immediately reinforced.

Faced with what the division history called "a staggering tactical problem," the general did not hesitate. He ordered the 397th regiment to get across the river immediately. It was beginning to be obvious that the city was going to be defended by everything the Germans had left, which was plenty. The division history describes it:

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"Heilbronn was an ideal spot for a last-ditch stand. The deep, swift-flowing Neckar made a formidable defense barrier...(and) forming a semi-circle behind the city were a group of easily-defended hills, bare almost to their summits with thick woods at the crests which afforded excellent concealment for German artillery and gave the enemy unbroken observation of every inch of the river from Neckarsulm, on the north, to Sontheim on the south."

The city also was a natural re-grouping area for disorganized German troops who had been running ahead of the American advance, and the history estimates there were "several thousand" such regulars in Heilbronn as well as many local Volksturm units.

Company I (and the rest of the 3rd battalion) had been on the road for more than 20 miles on April 3 to reach the village of Kirchardt but still was far from the target of Neckargartach where it was supposed to cross the river on the night of April 4. The company boarded trucks on the morning of April 4 but soon had to pile off and make it on foot because of German artillery -- in the so-called "route march formation" with at least five paces between each man to minimize casualties.

The wisdom of abandoning the trucks became obvious. At the top of the last ridge before heading down a long slope to the river was the remains of a Jeep which had either run over a land mine or taken a direct artillery hit. It appeared that there had been three soldiers in the Jeep, but only parts of them remained.

The 2nd battalion crossed the Neckar that afternoon under a smoke screen laid down by black troops of the 163rd Chemical Smoke Generator Company, but the original plan for a night crossing by the 3rd battalion into unfamiliar terrain was abandoned, and Company I bedded down for the night in the unscarred town of Neckargartach. The sight of the flimsy little assault boats along the river bank, many of them shattered by German artillery, was not reassuring. They were paddle boats that held only 12 men, and each man would get an oar -- a far cry from the big assault craft pictured in the newsreels of the day.

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The morning report for April 5, 1945:

Company crossed Neckar River under smoke screen at 1000 and advanced 400 yards. Company pinned down by enemy artillery fire. Weather rainy morale good.

"Early that morning," Mosher recalls, "we assembled into groups that would be in the same small boat. We established within the group who would carry what and where in the boat each of us was to be seated. The necessity for an orderly and speedy execution of this maneuver did not have to be emphasized. It was simply pointed out that we could expect moderate to heavy shelling on the river bank and in the water. So the sooner your group got in the boat and started rowing, the less likely you would be to become a casualty."

While the 4th platoon was waiting to clamber into the boats, a reporter from the division newspaper showed up and began interviewing some of the men. It was the only time during the war that anyone in Company I had seen a reporter. He apparently wanted to know about rumors that the Navy or Coast Guard would be involved in the river crossing. After this interview was published in the division news a month later, some speculated that it also may have been the first assignment for the reporter who wrote about the "doughs" and "doughboys" of the company -- a term that was never used by any GI.

The interview as published appears in the Appendix.

Mosher's recollection of the crossing:

"Each of us was given an oar as we headed toward the river's edge. We passed one of the machines which manufactured the greasy, grey smoke. The faces and clothes of the black soldiers who generated the smoke had picked up the grey color. They seemed to blend into the smoke and were nearly invisible.

"The actual river crossing was uneventful. We placed our gear in the bottom of the boat and carried our assigned boat to the river's edge -- four or five guys on a side. We pushed the front of the boat out into the river, and the first two guys jumped in. A little

An illustration of soldiers in a small boat on a river, with a banner at the top that reads "Heilbronn Germany". The scene is set in a hazy, overcast environment with bare trees in the background. The soldiers are wearing helmets and carrying equipment, including a machine gun mounted on the boat. The water is dark and choppy, suggesting a difficult crossing. The banner is yellow with black text and is positioned in the upper left corner of the illustration.

Heilbronn

Germany

Without doubt our entry into Heilbronn was one of our most spectacular events. River crossings were not part of our training program in the States and we never practiced what we needed to do if we had to make one. So, our first, and only attempt which we made had to be done exactly right. No time for practice as we faced enemy shelling and the rapidly flowing Neckar River.

We got into the loaded boats and paddled as if our lives depended on it. They did!

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farther and the next two were in the boat. We repeated this procedure until the last two were in, and with a final shove we were in the river without even getting our feet wet. The water was often within about two inches of coming over the sides of the boat which was seriously overloaded, but with shells falling nearby there was no time to readjust or rearrange, so we paddled like hell for the opposite bank.

"The Neckar River at the point of our crossing was nearly 100 yards wide. Mortar shells and artillery rounds continued to come in during the crossing, but nothing really close. There were no casualties.

"We immediately set up a defense perimeter. I found a vantage point which looked out to the east toward the hills which partially surrounded the city. An impressive tower was atop one of the higher hills nearly a mile away. There were mostly fields in front of me in the direction of the tower. To my immediate front, starting about 100 yards out, were the bodies of the soldiers of the 3rd battalion of the 398th which had originally assaulted this area. Perhaps a hundred bodies were visible. I had never seen so many dead comrades. I learned later that one of those bodies was likely Fred Areheit who had been a very good friend when we were at The Citadel in the ASTP just a few short months before."

The infantry had made it across, but the tanks, artillery and heavy mortars had no way to join them. Every effort by the engineers to lay a pontoon bridge across the Neckar was destroyed by German artillery firing from the safety of those wooded hilltops. American P-51s were called in for strafing runs, and American artillery and mortars pounded the city into rubble and set many buildings afire, but rubble becomes its own fortress. Heilbronn was going to be a house-to-house and room-to-room battle.

Company I's first target was the Fiat automobile factory which was cleared despite intense machinegun and Panzerfaust fire from the defenders.

"In 1945 I did not know a Fiat from a Siat," John Sheets wrote later, "but a grease pit is a grease pit anywhere -- the kind used to lubricate automobiles. It was a bit large for a foxhole, but it would have to suffice for the first of many anxious nights in Heilbronn."

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The morning report for April 6:

Company in attack on the city of Heilbronn Germany advance one mile inside of city. Enemy artillery was heavy as company advanced. Encountered small arms fire. Weather cloudy with rain, morale good."

The division history gives a better picture of the action that day. From its position in the Fiat factory, Company I was picked to lead the assault on a large, grey stone house which seemed to be German defensive headquarters in that area. There was cover of a sort from two rows of warehouses between the Fiat factory and the stone house.

"How do you get from one burning factory building to another?" Sheets wrote. "One way was to use an enclosed, glassed-in catwalk high above the flames. When troops are afraid of height and fire, combined with enemy artillery, it was hairy, but our 2nd platoon hung in there and dashed across."

Here is the account from the division history:

"S/Sgt. Harold Kovarsky (of Passaic, N.J.) led the attack with his squad from the 2nd platoon of Company I. They made it to the first row of warehouses without drawing fire, but when they started to move out into the open again, the Jerries fired on them from the cellar of the westernmost warehouse in the first row and from the foxholes in front of the grey house. When the lead scout in the squad was wounded, Kovarsky withdrew his men and called for artillery. The forward observer directed fire for 30 minutes on the Jerries in the warehouse and in front of the grey house, killing some 15 of them as they tried to escape from the artillery into the grey house.

"Kovarsky then set up two light machineguns on the second floor of his warehouse and sprayed the windows of the warehouses in the second row and the enemy foxholes. These machineguns covered Kovarsky and his men as they ran 50 yards in the open under intense enemy fire to the middle building of the second row of warehouses. They reached the ramp which led up into the first floor of the warehouse, fired a machinegun burst into

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the windows of the building, and advanced into the structure where they paused amid burning piles of grain for the rear element of the squad to come up.

"As they waited, a round of our own artillery came in and struck Sgt. Kovarsky in the leg. When Kovarsky's squad was joined by the squad of S/Sgt. Robert Tessmer in the warehouse, four men led by Sgt. John Keelan went down into the cellar and captured five enemy prisoners, the only Jerries left in the building.

"In the cellar, the men found a tunnel leading from their warehouse to the westernmost warehouse in the row, the one nearest the grey house. Waiting for the 3rd platoon of Company I to join them, the group proceeded through the tunnel to the next warehouse and found it deserted. From the upstairs window they could see the cement bunker between them and the grey house, and they fired four bazooka rounds into the bunker, killing two Jerries. The Krauts in the foxholes retired into the grey house."

A squad from Company F, following in support of Company I, finished the job of taking the house by firing rifle grenades through the windows. They took 20 prisoners from inside the house and 53 from the factory across the street.

Rifle grenades and bazookas generally had not been carried by anyone in Company I until the battle for Heilbronn. They would have been of little or no use in the forests of the Vosges, but with no tanks able to cross the river they became weapons of choice in the fighting for Heilbronn's factory district. Mortarman Earl McKisson found himself carrying a bazooka without any clear idea of how the thing worked, and he almost did himself in.

The bazooka (named after a dubious musical instrument made famous by Arkansas comedian Bob Burns) was a five-foot-long, smooth-bore steel tube, open at both ends, which fired a 19-inch long rocket weighing about 3-1/2 pounds. Its back-blast did almost as much damage to the rear as its rocket did to its target in front. McKisson either forgot this fact or didn't know it. He had his back to a crumbling brick wall the first and only time

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he fired the weapon, and the entire wall came down on top of him. He crawled out unharmed but spitting brick dust.

Rifle grenades were more complicated, took more effort to fire, and often were wildly inaccurate even though they packed a big punch. One was used with deadly effect by Paul Mosher.

On April 7, Mosher saw a Company I rifleman shot down by a sniper.

"From my vantage point near the top of a burned-out church steeple," he wrote in his *Sketches of WW II*, "it seemed obvious that the shot had come from a half destroyed house which was across the street and about 30 to 40 yards to my immediate front. However, rather than fire my machine gun, I chose to launch a rifle grenade.

"One of the reasons for their unpopularity was the matter of carrying the damn grenades. By the time a front line soldier got loaded with his ammo, regular grenades (the throwing kind) and rations he was not too interested in any additional weight regardless of its effectiveness. As machine gun sergeant and carrying the lighter weight carbine (and no throwing grenades) my load was somewhat less than that of a rifleman. As to how to carry them (there was a directional and stabilizing fin behind the explosive charge which made them an awkward 10 inches long) I solved this problem by suspending the grenades from a cord and letting them hang in my chest area. But, despite carrying them for several days, I had not as yet had an opportunity to fire one.

"I inserted the propulsion cartridge, put the grenade on the launcher and pulled the pin. Ready to fire. The trick now was to select the correct trajectory so that the grenade would travel in an appropriate arc and land on target. Pure guess ruled since I had never had the opportunity back in the States to fire the grenade on the practice range. But, I was lucky -- or instantly skilled -- because I made a direct hit on an overhang just out the front door of the building I had targeted.

"What an explosion! I had no idea these grenades packed such a devastating punch."

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A white flag waved from the door of the building, and 8 or 10 Germans came slowly out with their hands in the air.

"As our guys started to head the Jerries back toward the rear, I wanted to yell out that they were my prisoners! After all, it was my lucky hit that likely convinced these Germans that artillery was about to come down like rain. But I didn't yell, and we packed up the gun. We prepared to move past this captured strong point to our next objective." Mosher said.

But bazookas and rifle grenades could not take the place of the badly needed tanks which the Germans had and the Americans did not. Food and ammunition still were being ferried across in the flimsy paddle boats, and the wounded were taken out by the boats as well. Every time the 325th Engineers got something resembling a bridge across the fast-flowing river, German artillery blew it out of the water.

In desperation, battalion headquarters tried to float three so-called "amphibious" tanks across the Neckar. Capt. Grant sent Bruce Larson back across the river to guide one of these experimental vehicles to the Company I area. The amphibs glided easily down the sloping bank on the west side of the river and even made it across but couldn't climb the steep east bank. They slid back into the river and sank, and Larson was almost drowned.

"I was the last man to crawl out of the hatch before the vehicle sank to the bottom," Larson said.

The industrial area of Heilbronn was a vast network of railroad tracks, canals, warehouses and underground tunnels. The tunnels were used by both Germans and Americans to move from one burning building to another, and that was an experience many brave men dreaded. There were, of course, no lights in those tunnels, and one company poet described them as "blacker than a sack of assholes."

T/Sgt. Ed Heuermann of Peoria, Ill., led his squad across one canal by swinging below the crossties of a railroad bridge that was covered by a German machinegun.

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But it wasn't all street fighting. On the morning of April 8, Companies G, F, and L had to hold up their advance while Company I cleared a powerful force of Germans from an orchard. There was a long factory building along the east side of the orchard, and a well-fortified machinegun nest was the orchard's centerpiece.

After an artillery barrage of the area, Sgt. Richard C. Olsen of Wayzata, Minn., led his 2nd platoon squad into the factory with the idea of working along its walls to a point near a brick house in the corner of the orchard. German fire seemed to be directed from there.

The first scout, Pfc. James E. Van Damme of Phelps, N.Y., led the way and made it over a sheltering wall into the first room of the factory. Pfc. Henry Perkins of Glasgow, Ky., was right behind him. Perkins didn't make it. He was killed by a shot from the brick house.

Shortly before this attack Perkins, an amiable farmer, had been proudly showing a snapshot of his young son to everyone in his squad. Perkins' death so angered his squad members that Van Damme won a Silver Star for the assault that followed. Bazooka rounds, anti-tank grenades and machinegun fire silenced the German defenders in the house, and another bazooka round forced the machinegunner in the center of the orchard to run for cover. S/Sgt. Thomas E. Cooper of Lovettsville, Va., led four men across the orchard and up to the front door of the house. Pvt. Arthur Hare of Tishomingo, Okla, knocked the door down with his rifle butt, and seven Germans immediately surrendered. Two more were captured in the cellar.

There were many heroes in Heilbronn. One of them was Lt. John Mullins who served as both platoon leader and executive officer after joining the company shortly before the December battle for Ingwiller. Two of Mullins' decorations were received on April 9. He won the Silver Star that day and the Purple Heart the same day when he was wounded and fell into the river. Pvt. Clarence Bray, a lanky rifleman from Gate City, Va., pulled Mullins from the swift Neckar waters.

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By the morning of April 10, Company I had reached the center of the factory district and was in a chemical processing plant with open interior metal stairs that had survived the fire resulting from air raids. Sgt. Joe Lize of Detroit was at the trigger of his machinegun giving covering fire for riflemen out front. Bill Wladecki was feeding the ammo belt.

Lize was firing tracer bullets, and their erratic pattern indicated the machinegun barrel was worn out and should be replaced. Lize grunted and dropped dead with a bullet in his heart. A German sniper apparently had aimed at the source of those tracer bullets with deadly accuracy. Lize had been an amateur boxer, and Wladecki recalls that when he was hit he put up both fists as if in defense and fell backwards.

Later that day, the long-awaited tanks arrived. Sgt. Heuermann was the first man in Company I to contact them. The pincer movement on Heilbronn was being closed. But not before Pfc Clyde Harkleroad won a measure of fame for denouncing Col. Felix Tharpe of Macon, Ga., for his failure to get tanks across the river much earlier. Tharpe, wearing no insignia, had crossed the river to see how the troops were doing, and he hit the ground beside Harkleroad and another trooper when German artillery came in.

Harkleroad proceeded to excoriate the high brass for the absence of tanks until his buddy nudged him and said "you're talking to the colonel."

Tharpe took no offense, and Harkleroad was known ever after as "Colonel" Harkleroad.

The morning report for April 11:

Company made slight gains in Heilbronn Germany. Street fighting continues.

Weather fair morale good.

Food was getting scarce. Fortunately those warehouses held a good supply. One platoon of the company found a trove of canned cherries, and another found a vast supply of tinned sardines. Not exactly a balanced diet but better than K rations.

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Company I now was nearing the outskirts of the city. The Germans were beaten but not yet disorganized. Not yet ready to run.

On the night of the 11th, Wladecki's squad set up its machinegun on a table in a shattered church yard. Shortly after dark they heard the distinct sound of hobnail boots hitting the pavement in perfect rhythm. It sounded as though 20 or 30 well-disciplined soldiers were headed directly toward them.

The 30-caliber light machinegun was an effective weapon, but firing it required two steps. It first extracted a bullet from the belt and then the cycle was repeated and the extracted shell would be placed in the firing chamber. After that when the trigger was pulled the cycle would be automatic. The first step was called "half-load" and the second "full-load."

The sound of the boots was getting very close when Wladecki told his squad to begin firing. The Germans apparently heard that command as well, and there was a rapid scuffling of boots as they scattered. Then there was the sound of the machinegun. It was a dull thud. The gun had only been on half-load.

There were shouts of "load the gun! Load the damn gun!" But by this time the boots were long gone.

By April 13 the battle for Heilbronn was over, and Company I moved on about four miles south of the city until it was stopped again by German artillery. Pockets of soldiers, apparently unattached to any central command, continued to construct road blocks and set up anti-tank guns at strategic points. It was on April 13 that most members of Company I heard that President Franklin D. Roosevelt had died the previous day. Some heard it first from a German housewife who apparently had a shortwave radio.

"Now you will surrender, ja?" she asked.

The war went on. On April 14 the company crawled down an orchard lane toward the village of Obergruppenbach. Lt. Gerald S. Godwin of Astoria, N.Y., who had been with the company earlier but had been sent back for special training, had just rejoined I

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Company. Somehow he got out ahead of his platoon and was seriously wounded. Those behind could hear him calling faintly for help. Capt. Grant listened to his cries and told BAR-man Richard Tobias: "Come on, Tobias, let's go."

They dashed out, found the lieutenant, and Grant threw him over his shoulder and carried him to safety.

"I can still see that bloody arm of his dangling off Grant's back," Tobias said later.

Company I Combat History

THE WAR ENDS

By now the Wehrmacht had unraveled, and it became a chase to find Germans either ready to fight or ready to surrender. The last serious encounter of the war for Company I came on April 20 in the village of Backnang, Germany.

White bedsheets fluttered from every window in the town, and Sgt. Loren D. Lukeheart of Boise, Idaho, figured the war was finally over. Lukeheart was walking down the middle of the town's one main street when a bullet caught him in the chest. Those who heard the shot said it was not from a military weapon but probably from a small-caliber sporting rifle fired from one of those white-flagged houses.

It was standard practice during those last weeks of the war and well into the summer of 1945 to have the mayor of each town order the citizens to bring their weapons to the town square. They were surprisingly well armed, although most of the weapons were shotguns or hunting rifles, some of great financial value. There also were a lot of sidearms.

After Lukeheart was wounded the company climbed aboard Sherman tanks and tank destroyers to continue the chase. Just outside the town the convoy stopped when a group of German soldiers came out of the woods with hands in the air. Henry Vogel, riding on the lead tank, slid off to take the Germans to the rear. A German anti-tank gun up ahead fired a shell that exploded off the tank and seriously wounded Vogel. The tank's gunner put a round down the barrel of the German gun.

Most thought Vogel was dead, but he survived to win the distinction of being the last major casualty of Company I in World War II. Lukeheart also survived. There was something grimly appropriate in the fact that April 20, 1945, also was Adolf Hitler's 56th birthday and, for all practical purposes, was the end of the war for Company I, 397th Infantry. Ten days later Hitler was dead, and Company I was moving temporarily out of Stuttgart toward its final wartime stop.



This photo was taken as we paused briefly on April 20, 1945. We were in the vicinity of the city of Backnang. Although not known when the photo was taken, we had fired our last shots in anger. The war was over for Company I.

Because of strict prohibitions against photos (and, of course, diaries) pictures taken by front line troops during combat are rare. (The camera used to take these photos had been "liberated" only an hour or so before from one of the houses seen dimly in the background.)

On the left in the picture is machine gun sergeant Paul Mosher with his squad leader and very best Ohio friend, Bill Wladecki. (Far right)

In the center is the fearless leader of the fourth Platoon and everyone's friend, Joseph "Moon" Schonarth.

If these soldiers appear a little plump or bulgy, remember that somewhere in their jackets and pockets they are carrying every thing they own--including food, drink, shelter and spare ammo!

Company I Combat History

Many years later Vogel wrote for his children an account of that warm April afternoon. As usual, his version differs widely from both the morning report and the official history which says Backnang was taken "without incident." Combat memories are intense enough to be trusted.

"I was on the lead tank as we left town," Vogel wrote. "We heard small arms fire ahead. The tank stopped, and we piled off of it. We saw three German soldiers ahead waving a white flag. Lt. Edinson told me to escort them back out of the way and turn them over to someone in the rear. Up close they turned out to be men in their 50s who were delighted to see us.

"All of a sudden I found myself on my hands and knees wondering what I had tripped over. Then I noticed that the end of the middle finger on my left hand was missing. This was my first clue that I had been wounded. At this point I realized that I could not feel anything below my right hip. My first thought was that the leg had been blown off. Summoning all the nerve I could muster, I looked around and was relieved to see that the leg was still there although I had no feeling in it and no control of it."

He had not heard the shell or the explosion, lending credence to the old infantry maxim that "you never hear the one that gets you."

Although Vogel felt no pain either then or later in the hospital, he had been hit by six pieces of shrapnel, and at least four of them did major damage. His parents were not notified until May 5 that he had been "seriously wounded" on April 20. After three months in various hospitals he went home aboard the USS George Washington which docked in New York on July 6, exactly nine months to the day since it had sailed for Marseilles with the 100th Division aboard.

Since he had been wearing hospital garb after being wounded, Vogel brought home no souvenirs except his scars and a piece of shrapnel still in his back.

"It's probably not important," he wrote, "but it would have been nice to have some kind of belongings that had been mine during the war."

Company I Combat History

The morning report for April 30:

Company moved to Salach Germany travel 32 miles roads good weather cold & morale excellent.

The company was still in Salach when the war in Europe officially ended on May 8, 1945, and occupation duty began. Some newer members fired their guns into the air to celebrate the occasion, but most of the old hands simply went to sleep.

That summer of occupation duty is a story in itself, but on Aug. 10 the 100th Division was alerted for immediate shipment to the Pacific and the war with Japan. That was four days after the U.S. dropped the first atomic bomb on Japan, and that war ended before the 100th could move. Those with the least number of points toward discharge were transferred out for occupation duty with other units, and the Army's point system became a sore point in itself. Even Gen. Burrell left for a new assignment. The division finally went home from Marseilles in bits and pieces in January and February, 1946, but most of its original personnel were left behind because of the point system which seemed to favor everybody but the infantrymen who had fought the war.

Official figures are lacking, but the rosters published in the division history in 1946 (Page 269) indicate that at least 50 members of Company I were killed in combat and (pages 269-271) at least 111 wounded. Three members of the company, Cook, McLean and Thorvald Thompson of Menlo Park, California, still were listed as missing in action at that time. Cooke and McLean were later accounted for. It is possible that some died of their wounds after the history was published, and at least one died in a Jeep wreck (Charles A. Forezzi of Albany, N.Y.) after the firing was over.

Because all medical personnel were carried on the roster of the Regimental Medical Detachment, the two medics killed while serving with us are not included in the listing of Company I dead. The two medics were: Henry Lipshitz, who was killed on November 14th, and Max Shafron, killed at Ingwiller in December. Although not on our roster, the men the medics cared for counted them among their own.

Company I Combat History

Also, Roger H. Fiebelkorn, who, as part of the battalion communications staff, was with our company on almost a full time basis, was not on our roster. Fiebelkorn was killed on November 14, 1944.

The known combat dead of Company I, in addition to Lipshitz, Shafron and Fiebelkorn are:

S/Sgt. George W. Acreman of Georgianna, Ala.; Pfc. Paul W. Arthur, Hamilton, Ohio; Pfc. Roy L. Baker, Turlock, Cal.; Pvt. Alfred Banks, Crystal Lake, Ill.; Pfc. Joseph W. Britian, Albuquerque, N.M.; Pfc. Arnold P. Brock, Sioux Rapids, Ia.; Pfc. Lloyd B. Cagle, Denison, Tex.; Pvt. Samuel Cohen (address not known); Pfc. Troy R. Carroll, Gordo, Ala.; T/Sgt. Santiago Cintron, New York, N.Y.; 1st Sgt. Thomas E. DeVane, Bovill, Idaho; T/5 Windle A. Eddy, Wortham, Tex.; Pvt. David C. Everett, Wallingford, Conn.; Pfc. Irving A. Feigenbaum, Newark, N.J.; Pvt. Francis A. Goeckel, Wilkes-Barre, Pa.; Pvt. Cruz Gonzales, Mercedes, Tex.; Pvt. John M. Hunter, Marceline, Mo.; Pfc. Lindsey E. Howell, Leoma, Tenn.; Pvt. Lloyd A. Ikenberry, Chicago, Ill.; Pfc. Walter J. Kane, Elizabeth, N.J.; Pvt. Frank Kresa, Utica, N.Y.; Pvt. Carl J. Kucan, Milwaukee, Wis.; Pfc. Aloysius L. Kujawski, Shenandoah, Pa.; Pfc. Clifford E. Lane, Milwaukee, Wis.; Pvt. Isadore Lewitter, Newark, N.J.; Sgt. Joe M. Lize, Detroit, Mich.; Pfc. Charles S. Margossian, Somerville, Mass.; Pvt. Lawrence W. Marsh, Goshen, N.Y.; Pvt. Douglas O. May, Paducah, Ky.; Pfc. James I. McGovern, Chicago, Ill.; S/Sgt. Allen I. McLean, Okanogan, Wash.; Pvt. Odell S. Myers, Fort Mill, S. C.; Pvt. Thomas P. Noone, Cochituate, Mass.; Pfc. Jack M. Paterson, Detroit, Mich.; Pfc. Henry P. Perkins, Glasgow, Ky.; Sgt. John J. Riley, Seattle, Wash.; Pvt. Ishmael Roybal, Sacramento, Cal.; Pfc. LeRoy Scarborough, Lake Charles, La.; Pvt. Edmond M. Shaffron, Chicago, Ill.; Pvt. Bryce E. Speck, Barberton, Ohio; Pvt. George J. Stout, Trenton, N.J.; Pvt. Stanley Swedo, Johnstown, Pa.; Pfc. Max E. Toole, Yale, Mich.; Pfc. James W. Tucker, Hamilton, Miss.; Pvt. Karl L. Volle, Sandborn, Ind.; Pfc. George O. Womble, Gastonia, N.C.

Company I Combat History

And those known to have died later of wounds:

Pvt. John L. Beebe, Chincoteague, Va.; Pvt. Ramon D. Gernhart, Pierson, Iowa;
Pvt. James E. Malone, Gary, Ind.; Pvt. Harvey E. Trammell, Cazenovia, N.Y.

These men were as brothers to us and we shall never forget them.

THE END

BENEDICTION

FROM REVEREND BRUCE LARSON

(Minister and former Mortar Squad Leader)

“We salute the memory of our many fallen Comrades and of those who have died in the many decades since that far off time. We continue to remember with appreciation and affection those still living, many of whom are engaged in a quieter battle-- the difficulties and problems of old age.

May we all be joined once again at that great reveille in the heavens.”

AMEN.

COMPANY I COMBAT HISTORY



THE VICTOR

UNITED STATES ARMY INFANTRYMAN
IN FULL BATTLE GEAR
WW II

APPENDIX

MAPS AND ITINERARY NOVEMBER

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-------|---------------|
| 1944-APRIL 1945 | | Page 91-105 |
| ACTION AT RIMLING AND VICINITY | | Page 106 |
| MAP--RIMLING AREA | | Page 107 |
| MAP--NORTHWIND ATTACK | | Page 108 |
| PRESIDENTIAL CITATION | | Page 109 |
| CAPTAIN ULYSSES J. GRANT | | Page 110, 111 |
| NECKAR RIVER CROSSING | | Page 112 |
| PHOTOS | | Page 113-118 |
| COMPLETE ROSTER | | Page 119-135 |

COMPANY I COMBAT HISTORY

CAMPAIGN MAPS AND COMMENTARY

Two questions frequently asked by each of us at the conclusion of combat and remain even today are:

1. Where were we?
2. What did we do there?

Question No 2 is somewhat more easily answered, either from our own memories or by means of reference material such as our Division or Regimental history publications. Thus, most of us are able to recall many events which happened during combat-- some terribly significant, some exceedingly trivial-- but where these things happened is often very elusive.

Fortunately, to help us with Question No 1, Kenneth E Brown has researched our movements during the period October 1944 through April 1945 and the material on the following pages will certainly be very helpful in refreshing our memories as to the events of that long ago period.

Ken Brown joined Company I at Fort Bragg and during combat served as the liaison between battalion headquarters and our company.

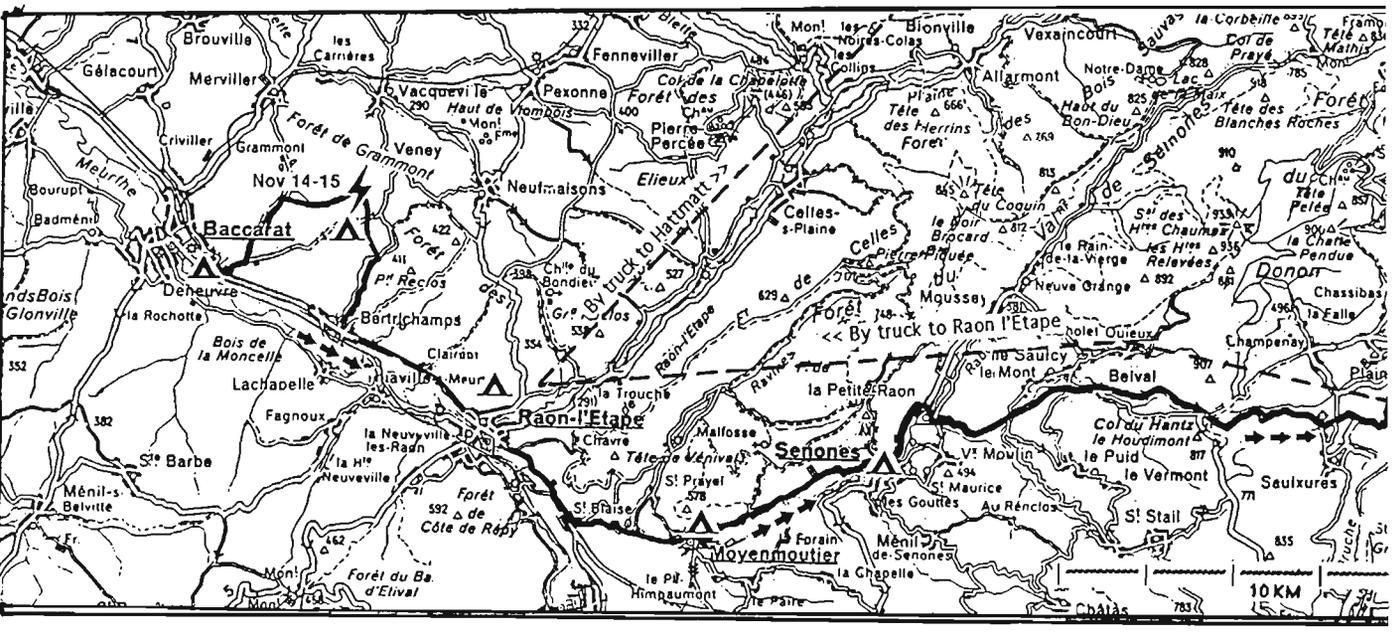
The material prepared by Ken Brown which begins on the next page is presented in seven stages or segments. For each segment the map appears on the left page and the commentary on the right.

Ken Brown's comments also follow a general format. Usually, the first paragraph gives an appraisal of the accuracy of the data on the map opposite as well as the date Company I visited a particular village or area.

As indicated in the comments of Brown, determining our position from day to day has been materially assisted by the acquisition of Morning Reports (MRs) for the combat period.

Also note that the material which Mr Brown has prepared mixes a blend of combat chit chat, a peek at a soldier's life during combat as well as a bit of travelog.

(1) BACCARAT to ST. BLAISE



⚡ Principal Engagements
 ▲ Overnight, one or more

FROM SHIP TO COMBAT

| CONVOY ROUTE: PLACES | DATE(S) | COMBAT ROUTE: PLACES | DATE |
|---------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|-------|
| MARSEILLE | | | |
| Delta Base Staging Area 1 | Oct 20 - 29 | | |
| Avignon | Oct 30 | | |
| Montelimar | Oct 30 | | |
| VALENCE | Oct 30 | BACCARAT/BERTRICHAMPS AREA | Nov 5 |
| Lyon | Oct 31 | RAON L'ETAPE | Nov 1 |
| DIJON | Oct 31 | la Petite St. Blaise | Nov 2 |
| Combeauxfontaine | Nov 1 | MOYENMOUTIER | Nov 2 |
| Vesoul | Nov 1 | SENONES | Nov 2 |
| Epinal | Nov 1 | la Petite-Raon | Nov 2 |
| ST. HELENE | Nov 1 - 4 | Belval | Nov 2 |
| Rambervillers | Nov 5 | ST. BLAISE | Nov 2 |

* Names in CAPs indicate an ▲

BACCARAT TO ST. BLAISE

Ken Brown's comments:

(Because of the frequent use the reader is reminded that "MR" refers to the Morning Reports which were compiled daily giving troop strength, weather, geographic location, etc.)

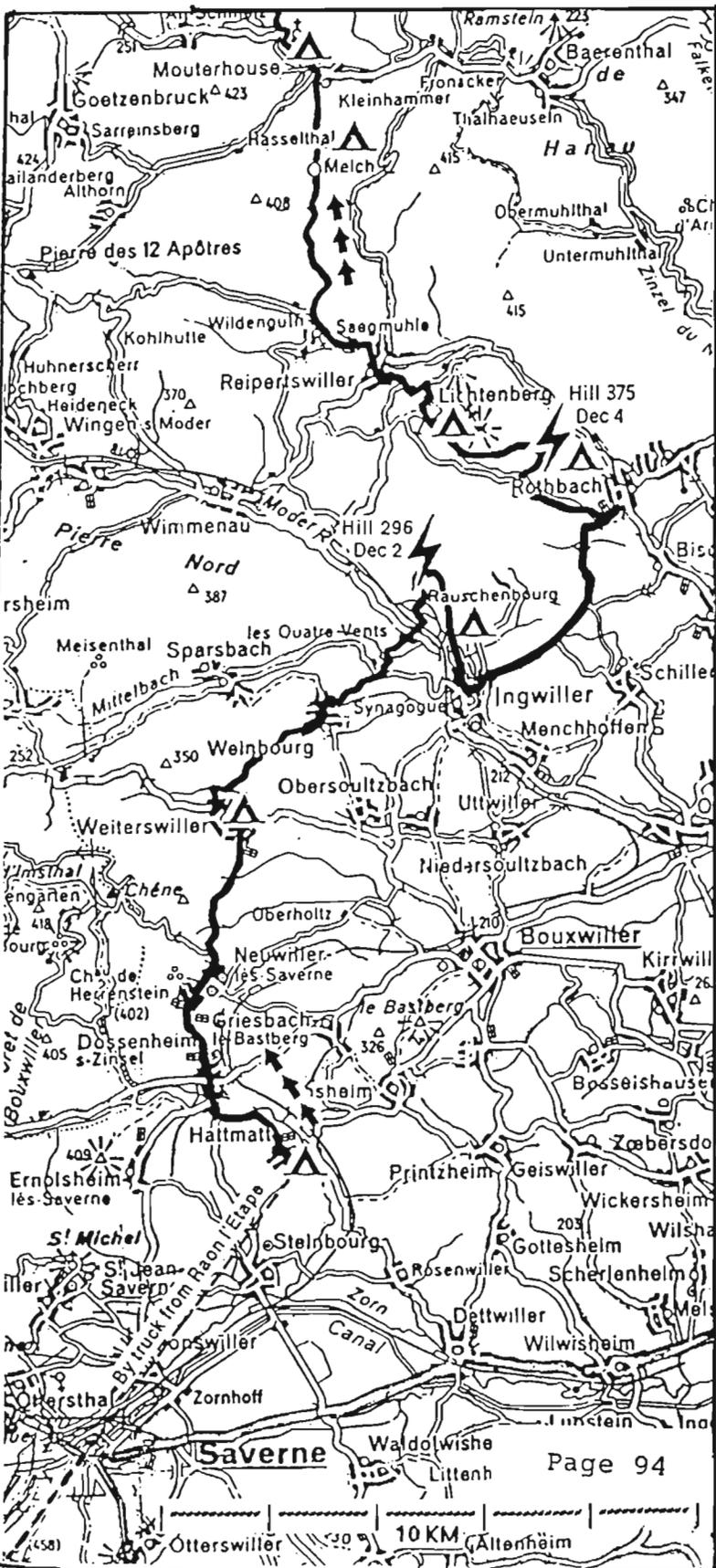
FROM SHIP TO COMBAT. I include this because I now have copies via Paul Mosher of the IRs for this period. The route list of places is with the Baccarat - St. Blaise map. No memory logging seems necessary. It was a quiet trip, reflective, little conversation, some tense humor. From conversations at Bragg and along the way, I had the feeling that most of us were thinking less of death itself than of whether we could face it courageously. The Rhone Valley castles, if anything, probably reminded us of the durability of architecture and the brevity of life. The trip totaled approximately 430 miles and deposited us for a few days in a patch of woods near St. Helene. Don't try to find it on an ordinary map; it's an exquisite name but a tiny village. Here we got intensive instruction in land mine defense from engineers with tactical experience. We slept in the old shelter-half pup tents, the last ones I ever saw, in combat or since.

ACCARAT - ST. BLAISE. Route/places information is accurate, except possibly for this copy error listing: MR says we dug in at Moyenmoutier. My memory is of trudging right on by. MR says we started for Raon l'Etape at 0630 and arrived Moyenmoutier at 1750, meaning that we would have spent 11 and 1/2 hours covering 4 and 1/4 miles over a paved road against no opposition. The MRs have the day-to-day sequences for this march out of order, giving extra justification for other doubts. I have accepted the MR version, anyway.

Anyone who has an adequate quadrangle for the Baccarat/Bertrichamps area and can track our route and November 14 point of engagement in greater detail than possible here, it would be appreciated. It is a place of great emotional significance for many of us. Along the first section of road out of Raon l'Etape, we were taking a break in front of a farm house, when Frank Hurtle, who was sitting next to me, jumped as though someone had poked him. Someone had. Behind him stood a German in surrender mode, who then led us into the house, where several more soldiers were waiting, with a mounted machine gun trained on the open road we had just moved along and a couple of Panzerfausts leaning against the wall, along with all the rifles. MR for that day says "Company captured 15 EM and 1 OFF." Beyond Moyenmoutier we encountered a few good old boys from the 3rd Division who were coexisting peacefully with the Germans occupying a house on the neighboring knoll-- explanation: "they haven't bothered us so we figured we wouldn't bother them." After a small firefight, we occupied Senones for a pleasant overnight, left the next morning with an early pass for us by the villagers and wine and apples from others along our exit route. Came on a laborate, abandoned entrenchments near Belval, described by Paul Mosher in his memoir. Traveled most of the day and into the night through a steady rain. Caught a prisoner on the hill before St. Blaise, who got roughed up a little when he seemed unwilling to answer questions. St. Blaise a highly visible landmark with a couple of houses on fire. Had a peaceful interlude there. A few left for the first R&R, and one of our lesser beings looted and desecrated the Catholic church and was duly punished.

The southeast route out of Raon l'Etape followed an open valley and was relatively level and straight. Turning eastward it generally rose and fell over gentle hills, which became higher and more rugged before Senones and before St. Blaise. The landscape seemed more agricultural along the route to Senones and more forested from there to St. Blaise.

(2) SAVERNE to MOUTERHOUSE



| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| HATTMATT | Nov 27 - 28 |
| Dossenheim | Nov 29 |
| Neuwiller | Nov 29 |
| WEITERSWILLER | Nov 29 |
| Weinsbourg | Nov 30 |
| INGWILLER AREA | Nov 30 - Dec 2 |
| ROTHBACH AREA | Dec 3 - Dec 5 |
| LICHTENBERG | Dec 6 |
| Reipertswiller | Dec 7 |
| Wildenguth | Dec 7 |
| MELCH | Dec 7 |
| MOUTERHOUSE | Dec 8 |

HATTMATT TO MOUTERHOUSE

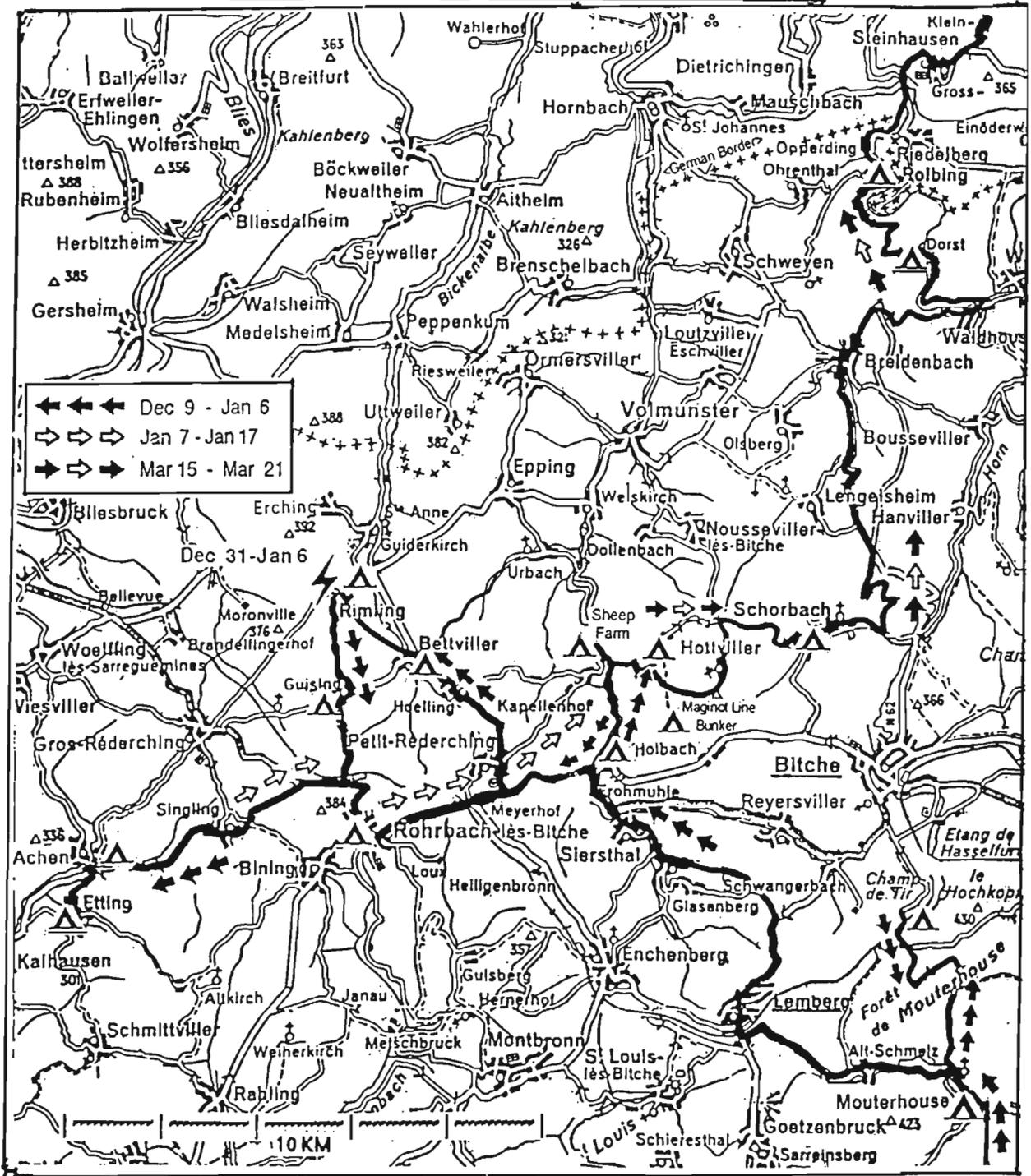
Ken Brown's comments:

HATTMATT - MOUTERHOUSE. Route/places information is accurate; MRs were a big help here. However, MRs say we spent two overnights at Melch. Can't remember any. So I compromised on one and assigned the second to Mouterhouse, where I am sure the Company spent at least one night before moving beyond the town.

From Hattmatt, we moved uneventfully enough to the Ingwiller/Rothbach area, where no one who was there needs any reminders. We lost some of the best ones there, among them "old" tough guys DeVane and Cintron, and my close friend Cliff Lane, class valedictorian and university student, killed by snagging the trip wire of a mine. Afterwards, we spent one night in Lichtenberg, which had a modest castle on the hill, then made our way to Melch where we took off through the woods to Mouterhouse. The unit histories refer to a good bit of action toward Mouterhouse, but I remember our trip as mainly tedious but uneventful.

From Saverne Gap to Ingwiller, we moved through fairly open terrain, amid low hills. From Ingwiller/Rothbach on, much of the terrain was more forested with steeper slopes and fewer people along the way.

(3) MOUTERHOUSE to GERMAN BORDER



| | | | |
|---|----------------|--|----------------|
| HILL ABOVE BITCHE (6 KM NW of Mouterhouse) | Dec 9 - 19 | ETTING/AACHEN AREA | Jan 10 - 17 |
| Lemberg | Dec 20 | HOLBACH | Jan 18 |
| HOTTVILLER | Dec 20 - 23 | HOTTVILLER AREA (Maginot Line Bunker, Sheep Farm, Hottviller) | Jan 18 - Mar 1 |
| Petit-Rederching | Dec 24 | SCHORBACH | Mar 15 - 16 |
| BETTVILLER | Dec 24 - 27 | Breidenbach | Mar 17 |
| RIMLING | Dec 28 - Jan 5 | Waldhouse | Mar 17 |
| ROHRBACH | Jan 6 | DORST | Mar 17 - 20 |
| GUISING | Jan 7 - 9 | ROLBING | Mar 21 |
| Singling | Jan 10 | German border | Mar 22 |

MOUTERHOUSE TO GERMAN BORDER

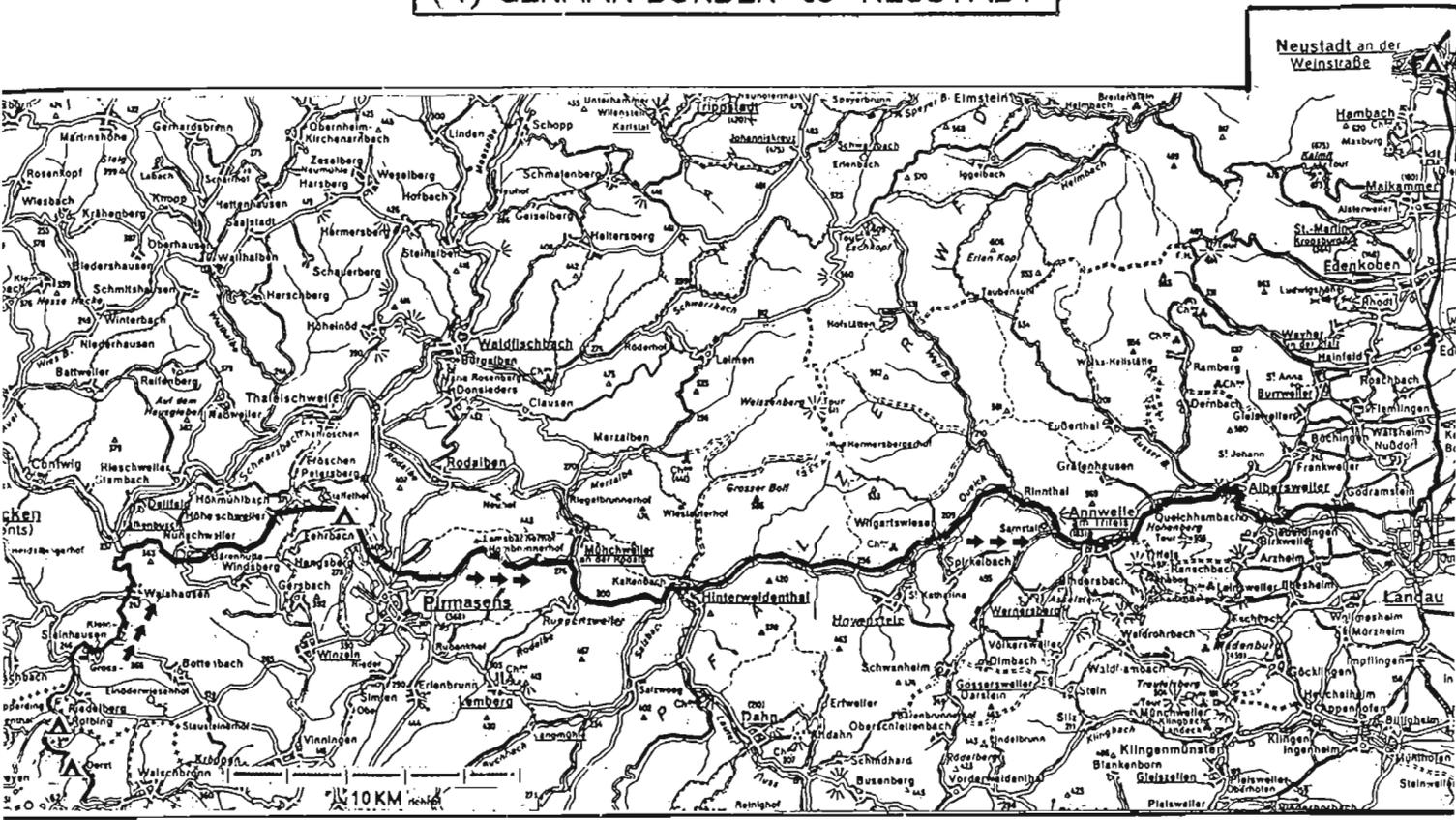
Ken Brown's comments:

MOUTERHOUSE - GERMAN BORDER. Route/places reliability is slightly less reliable than previous sections. MRs helped enormously in fixing dates.

This section involved more maneuvering and countermarching than all others combined. After pausing in Mouterhouse, the Company moved about six kilometers north, where it dug in on a hill above Bitche. Principal feature here was repeated mortar fire from Bitche direction. Here Acrement (Sgt. from Alabama) received a lethal head wound; his blood filled a space six feet across in the worn-down floor of the old Mouterhouse post office as he eased from unconsciousness into death. Went from here to the curious, abandoned village of Hottviller, and then, to Bettviller, where on Christmas Day we received that great winter clothing, just as the temperature was preparing to plunge into extreme cold. No need to remind anyone of Rimling, which was next. After turning away our visitors from the 17th SS, the Battalion disengaged with a nighttime trek to Rohrbach, and Company I went shortly to the area of Etting/Aachen, where it moved into a sizeable farm compound. Weather here was about as cold as at Rimling. I made many trips across a wide, snow-covered, deeply furrowed field between Etting and the farm stead, including one night under artificial moonlight with an SCR-600 radio on my back. (I depart here from the MRs, which place us at Singling, a village we passed by going and coming but didn't occupy.) Next we returned eastward--I think by a combination of marching and trucks--where the Company was spread around an area primarily from Hottviller to the "Sheep Farm," with some at first in one of the big Maginot Line bunkers on the hill between Hottviller and Holbach, where the concrete left it feeling colder than outside. Remaining in this area, we occupied ourselves with patrolling and civic improvements until the kickoff in March. Among my memory gaps: According to the MRs, (1) relieving Company F on Jan 7 for a three-day defense in the Guising vicinity and (2) shuttling back to Rohrbach for one day just before the March offensive. Does anyone recall these moves? Although I was tagging along behind during much of the movement from Hottviller to the German border, the histories, Mosher and Tessmer memoirs, and the MRs leave me reasonably confident about places and dates.

Too much geography here to attempt any close description, except to note the common pattern of alternating woods and fields and the magnificent uselessness of the Maginot installations ranging through the region. I have been almost startled by the pastoral beauty since revealed in pictures of the area. But I was nineteen years old at the time, and at that age any place unequipped with bright lights, warmth, and some girls was dull gray.

(4) GERMAN BORDER to NEUSTADT



| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| German border | Mar 22 |
| Gross Steinhausen | Mar 22 |
| Klein Steinhausen | Mar 22 |
| Walshausen | Mar 22 |
| Höheschweiller | Mar 22 |
| FEHRBACH | Mar 22 |
| Pirmasens | Mar 23 |
| Hinterweidenthal | Mar 23 |
| Wilgartswiesen | Mar 23 |
| Annweiler | Mar 23 |
| Albersweiler | Mar 23 |
| Landau (bypassed) | Mar 23 |
| Edesheim | Mar 23 |
| Edenkoben | Mar 23 |
| Maikammer | Mar 23 |
| NEUSTADT | Mar 23 |

COMPANY I COMBAT HISTORY

GERMAN BORDER TO NEUSTADT

Although not mentioned by Mr Brown, during this phase of our attack we traveled by truck through the vaunted Siegfried Line or Westwall. Company I had arrived at the Siegfried Line just a couple of days prior and many of us thought we would assault this imposing structure. Fortunately, the forces of Patton had already breached the Line on our left flank and the Germans abandoned the fortifications in our sector without a fight.

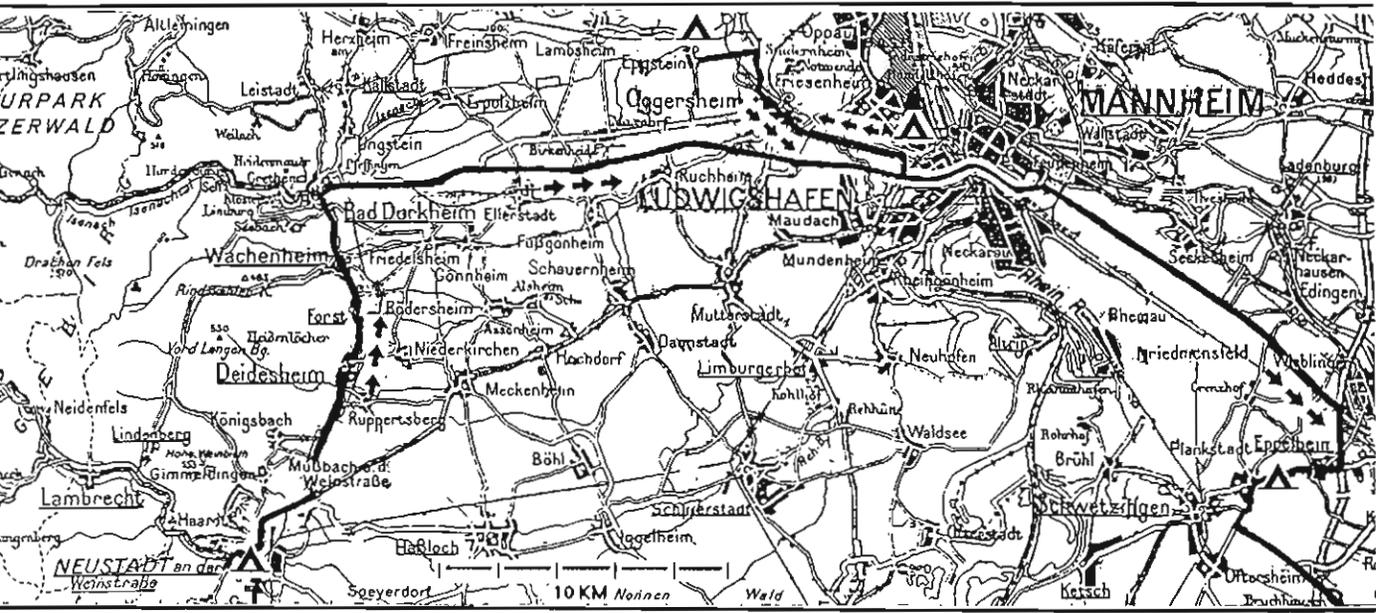
Ken Brown's comments:

GERMAN BORDER - NEUSTADT. This section involves by far the biggest question about accuracy. I have no concern about the route from the German border to Pirmasens; my memory accords with all other information. But my memory of the route from Pirmasens to Neustadt conflicts with every other report I have. I say we went due east and then due north to Neustadt. The unit histories show us reaching Neustadt over a more direct, northeastward course over back-roads through the villages of Petersberg, Rodalben, Merzalben, Leiman, Elmstein, and Lambrecht. It is possible of course that part of the Battalion went that way and I Company the way I indicate, which could have made sense in accomplishing more of a sweep through an area already largely cleared. If anyone remembers with certainty any of the villages just named, I am dead wrong. Meanwhile, here is my version.

Over the unquestioned route from the German border to Pirmasens, we rode most of the way on artillery trucks, passing through little mountain villages, where at one point the trucks paused while the Hausfrauen continued their street scrubbing with no apparent interest in us conquerors. From Pirmasens, we moved eastward on foot, with the great forests of the Palatinate to our north and a smallish, muddy stream paralleling our route on the right for several miles along this narrow, hill-fringed valley. It was along here that we came on the strafed German convoy described by Paul Mosher and marched through the long continuum of burned-out vehicles, dismembered bodies, and pitiful remains of the great sorrel horses blown into the ooze of the muddy stream. A little farther on we met a contingent of DPs heading westward (I relieved one of his bicycle, a bullying stunt for which I have ever since been ashamed), and not long afterward picked up by trucks, conveyed to the north-south road out of Landau and from there on to Neustadt. Neustadt was a pleasant overnight in the excellent quarters of an absent wine merchant--with all that implies.

Have already noted the principal characteristic of this area, which apparently still constitutes one of the major forests of Europe. Our decimation of the forces that attacked us during Nordwind probably saved us from having to battle our way through that expanse.

(5) NEUSTADT to PLANKSTADT



| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| NEUSTADT | Mar 23 |
| Deidesheim | Mar 24 |
| Wachenheim | Mar 24 |
| Bad Dürkheim | Mar 24 |
| LUDWIGSHAVEN (I.G. Farben plant) | Mar 24 - 25 |
| Öggersheim | Mar 26 |
| EPPSTEIN | Mar 26 - 30 |
| Ludwigshaven | Mar 31 |
| <i>Rhine River</i> | Mar 31 |
| Mannheim | Mar 31 |
| Heidelberg (bypassed) | Mar 31 |
| Eppelheim | Mar 31 |
| PLANKSTADT | Mar 31 |

COMPANY I COMBAT HISTORY

NEUSTADT TO PLANKSTADT

Ken Brown's comments:

NEUSTADT - PLANKSTADT. Route/places information is reliable, but the MR shows no stopover at Bad Dürkheim and has an error in the Ludwigshaven dates. I have made an adjustment that covers both problems, but if anyone has better information about this I would like to know.

We stopped overnight at Bad Dürkheim, not far my stepfather's hometown of Hertlingshausen. Then on to Ludwigshaven and the I.G-Farben Werke, which for some reason had not suffered the damage of the city itself. Discovered a room full of photo supplies and accepted surrender of dozens of rolls of film, which I passed out to friends. Could talk to the operator across the Rhine in still enemy-held Mannheim and hear the air raid sirens going off as the B-24's went overhead. Following this, a rearward movement to Eppstein and our first experience in controlling a conquered town and where most of the Company got to go still farther back to see Marlene Dietrich. (In noting my various certainties along the way, I have kept in mind that for nearly fifty years I was equally certain that our rearward movement was to Bad Dürkheim, until finally Bob Tessmer discovered my error and corrected it.) Then again on the road to Ludwigshaven, marching at first with one of our mountain boys lashed to the Company's Jeep trailer while he sobered up after a playful effort to shoot one of our Lieutenants--and after the Lt. declined to bring charges, never permitting one unfriendly word about that officer.

After resuming our eastward trek, we picked up trucks, rode them across the Rhine on a pontoon bridge, through the devastated city of Mannheim, down the Autobahn past Heidelberg, and from there the short distance to Eppenheim/Plankstadt. We spent most of Easter Sunday relaxing. I enjoyed a glass of pink champagne proffered by Lt. Mullins, and several of us spent a few amusing minutes observing a Battalion staff officer waving his 45 in the air as he tried to get a few frightened civilians to do what he wanted, a scene that reminded me of our old WW I history book at home with its picture of the Belgian civilians cowering before the Germans.

Not much about the Rhine plain to jog a memory. The Rhine itself, the small villages, the shattered remains of the two cities, the distant glimpse of Heidelberg castle were the memorable features.

Note: It is doubtful that Lt John T Mullins who was the target of Clarence Bray (the "mountain boy" referred to above) would have considered this action as "a playful gesture" since the rifle was loaded and ready to fire. But, as noted by Ken no charges were filed against Bray.

Later, in Heilbronn, Clarence rescued Mullins from the Neckar River after the officer was wounded. John Mullins states that Clarence Bray saved his life.

(6) PLANKSTADT to HEILBRONN



| | | | |
|--------------|-------|---------------|------------|
| PLANKSTADT | Mar 1 | KIRCHARDT | Apr 3 |
| SANDHAUSEN | Apr 1 | Fürfeld | Apr 4 |
| Wiesloch | Apr 2 | Kirchhausen | Apr 4 |
| Dielheim | Apr 2 | Frankenbach | Apr 4 |
| MÜHLHAUSEN | Apr 2 | NECKARGARTACH | Apr 4 |
| Eichtersheim | Apr 2 | Neckar River | Apr 5 |
| Sinsheim | Apr 3 | HEILBRONN | Apr 5 - 13 |

COMPANY I COMBAT HISTORY

PLANKSTADT TO HEILBRONN

Ken Brown's comments:

PLANKSTADT - HEILBRONN. The route/places information after Mühlhausen is reliable and a little less so before. The stop-over places are all confirmed by the MRs, and most of the connecting route and places passed through then follow automatically. From Plankstadt to Mühlhausen, however, minor variations on the route shown could easily have occurred.

Must have become bored by the war at this point, for my memory in any substantive sense went AWOL. I remember only snatches--the Company CP along the hillside street of some little town, where I was pulled away to testify at a court martial...our walk, almost a stroll, through a lovely little place with good stonework and a canal and trees...and a few other dreamlike impressions. Any one of these could have been Waldorf, just to the right of the route I show--and the birthplace of the unmourned John Jacob Astor--or Wiesloch, or Sandhausen, or Dielheim, or one or two other places on the way to Mühlhausen, where the route again becomes certain. My memory snaps back at Heilbronn, where no one needs it. Still, a few fragments: Lt. Mullins, blown off a scow into the Neckar River and wounded for the third or fourth time, rescued by Clarence Bray, who appears anonymously in another episode noted here; Harold "Korky" Kovarsky hopping toward me on his way to Battalion with the smiling news that he had just gotten his "million-dollar wound" and, I learned later, just after leading an assault to reduce a machine gun nest; running through ankle-deep apple sauce that had filled a street beside a warehouse now stocked with empty, shrapnel punctured barrels; on the last, rainy morning, getting the news of President Roosevelt's death from someone passing my sheltering overhang, while troops to my rear passed the time by looting an entire residential block.

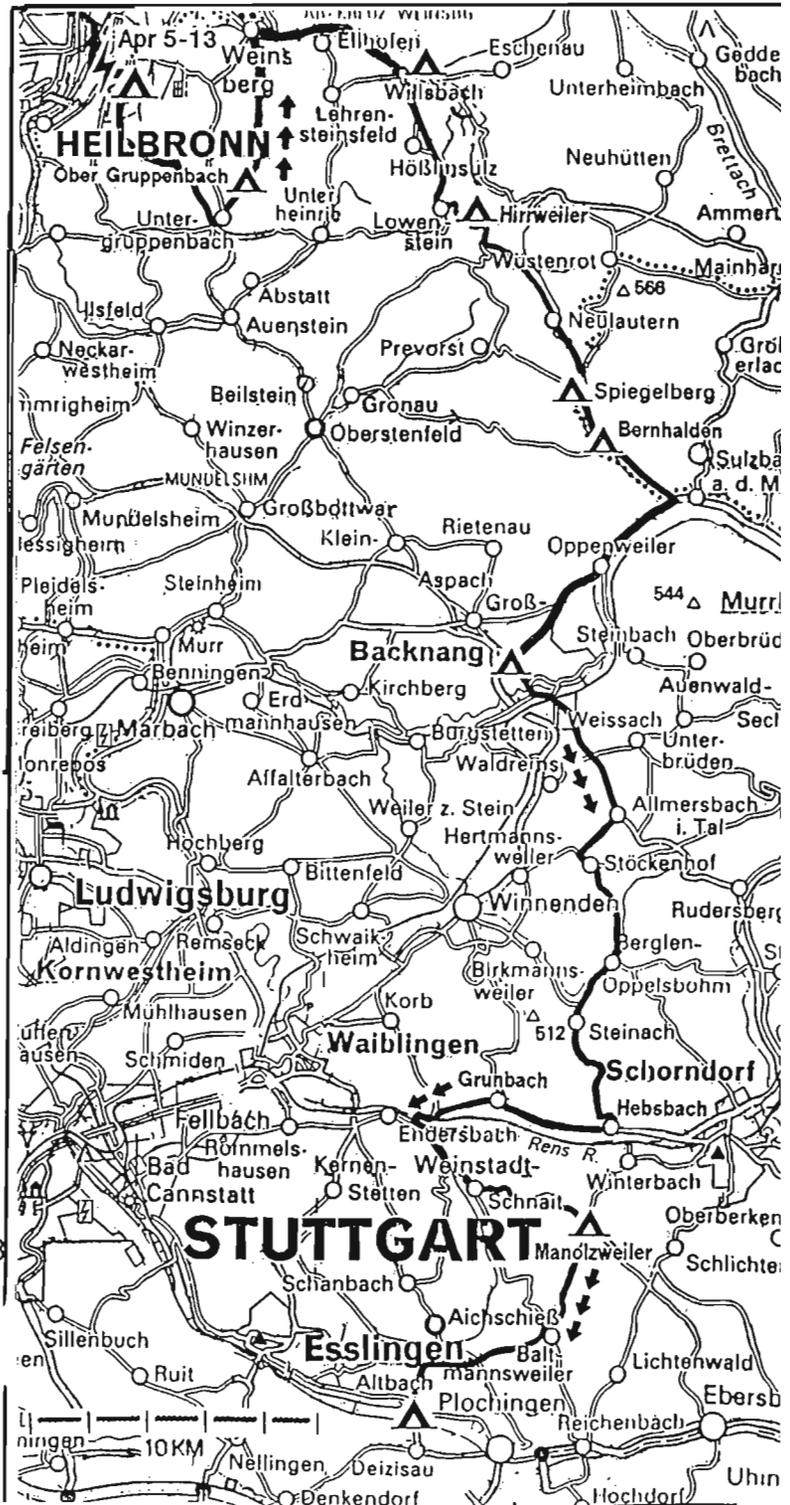
Low hills and a good deal of pleasant, open country is about all I remember of this route's physical character.

Note: Mr Brown's comments above relating to troops looting refers, of course, to soldiers from other organizations. The soldiers of Company I had taken a pledge forsaking looting and defending chastity.

(7) HEILBRONN to ALTBACH

| | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| HEILBRONN | Apr 5 - 13 |
| Unter Gruppenbach | Apr 14 |
| OBER GRUPPENBACH | Apr 14 |
| Weinsberg | Apr 15 |
| Ellhofen | Apr 15 |
| WILLSBACH | Apr 15 - 16 |
| HIRRWEILER | Apr 17 |
| Neulautern | Apr 18 |
| SPIEGELBERG | Apr 18 |
| BERNHALDEN | Apr 19 |
| Oppenweiler | Apr 20 |
| BACKNANG | Apr 20 |
| Allmersbach | Apr 21 |
| Stöckenhof | Apr 21 |
| Steinach | Apr 21 |
| Hebsbach | Apr 21 |
| Grunbach | Apr 21 |
| Rens River | Apr 21 |
| Weinstadt-Schnait | Apr 21 |
| MANOLZWEILER | APR 21 |
| Baltmannsweiler | Apr 22 |
| ALTBACH | Apr 22 - 25 |
| STUTTGART | Apr 26 - 29 |
| SALACH | Apr 30 - May 8 |

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 OCCUPATIO



COMPANY I COMBAT HISTORY

HEILBRONN TO ALTBACH

Ken Brown's comments:

HEILBRONN - ALTBACH. I brought back from the Louisville reunion and read soon after a report distributed there of Major William Preston's return to Weissach, but missed until recently a small map he had prepared of the route covered in this section. He was Battalion Executive Officer for, I believe, our entire combat period. His map confirmed my doubtful memory of our movement out of Heilbronn to Backnang and had an even greater value in correcting my erroneous version of the movement from Backnang on to Altbach and also in clarifying statements about our movements in the Regimental history. Thanks to him, what was recently the least reliable map in the set is now one of the best.

Most of us rode out of Heilbronn on tanks, and I shared the front of a Sherman with Lt. Hovolosky. On the heights southeast of the city a sudden artillery barrage wounded Shev and missed me. There was still enough resistance and enough area to clear to prevent any headlong rush southward. After Backnang, the advance speeded up considerably, and my memory receded proportionately. Just south of Backnang, we passed the turnoff to Weissach, the town mentioned that in 1995 would invite Major Preston back to accept recognition and honor on behalf of Col. Tarpe and the 3rd Battalion for the decision to spare the valley from artillery fire during our passage through it. In one day we reached the Rens river, detoured a good distance because of a blown bridge and by evening were within a close reach of Altbach where the combat phase of our journey effectively ended. There were of course great clumps of surrendering Germans. I remember trying out a moped on a street that ran by a makeshift compound consisting of a rope encircling a few hundred lounging men and several unhappy looking officers. I have pondered this memory occasionally. Participant in one of history's great collapses, and one of the few things I remember distinctly on a moped.

The route from Heilbronn to Backnang moved over relatively hilly terrain, which began to level out beyond Backnang and leveled out considerably at the Rens River and beyond. It included typically German village/agricultural country.

COMPANY I COMBAT HISTORY

The material appearing on the following pages is as follows:

1. A map of the Rimling area.
2. A map which shows the impact of the enemy offensive which began on January 1, 1945-- Operation Northwind.
3. A copy of the Distinguished Unit Citation, commonly called the Presidential Citation, which was awarded to our 3rd Battalion for action at Rimling for the period January 1 thru January 5, 1945.

Additional details follow:

Rimling

Company I and the rest of the 3rd Battalion moved into the Rimling area on December 28, 1944. The weather was very cold--usually below freezing-- with snow a foot or so deep.

Looking at the map, it should be noted that the Germans generally held the area to the north of Rimling with the German border only a few miles further north.

The villages of Guilderkirch and Erching mentioned in the text on pages 48-50 are just a couple of miles north of our Company I headquarters in Rimling.

Northwind Operation Map

This map is shown on Page 108. As noted in the text, pages 46 & 47, this was the period of the last great German offensive-- The Battle of the Bulge-- and significant Seventh Army manpower had been diverted to Patton's Third Army. Note that the front assigned to the 100th Division ran from Rimling to just south of Bitche or about 10 miles.

When the Germans launched their attack on January 1, 1945 the 397th Regiment was on the left flank of the Division and Company I was on the extreme left flank of the 3rd Battalion. And, although the men of the 3rd Battalion held their ground, the soldiers of the 44th Division withdrew several miles back to Gros Rederching area.

On January 1, Company I and most of the 3rd Battalion were facing an enemy to the north. Soon thereafter the enemy was both to the north and to the west.

Presidential Citation

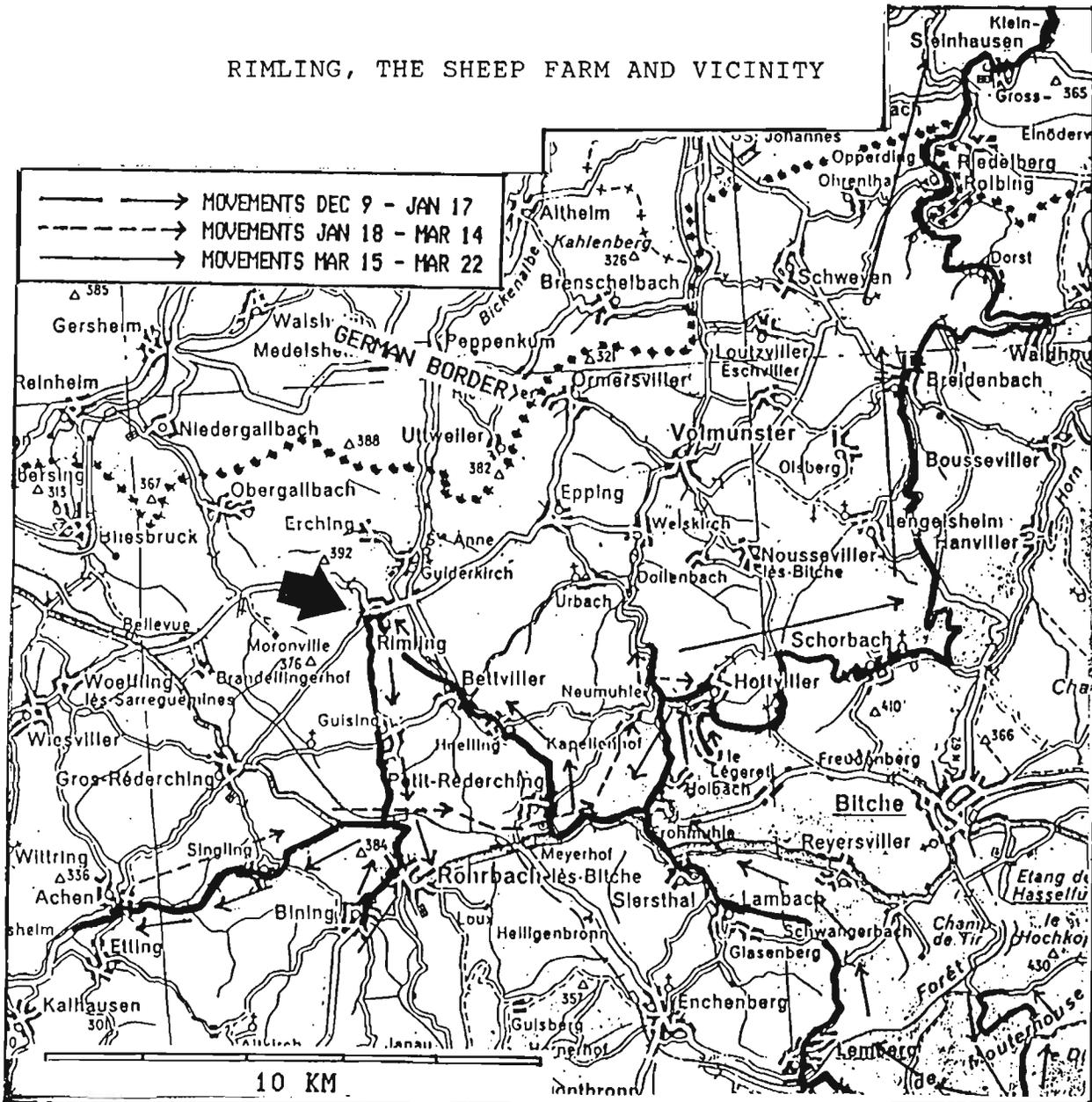
By "...direction of the President.." our 3rd Battalion was awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation for "...outstanding and exceptional accomplishments in combat.." in the Rimling area for the period January 1-5, 1945.

This is a unique award in that it honors both the unit so decorated as well as the individual soldiers who were part of the organization when the award was earned. Thus, any soldier serving in the 3rd Battalion would wear over his right hand dress jacket pocket the solid blue ribbon outlined with gold. And, each soldier in the organization at the time the award was won could wear this decoration regardless of subsequent transfer to another army unit.

Thus, this award honored both the unit as well as the individual and was a significant achievement for Company I.

COMPANY I COMBAT HISTORY

RIMLING, THE SHEEP FARM AND VICINITY



The above map shows in detail that part of France where Company I spent nearly half of the time we were in combat. From mid-December 1944 until mid-March 1945.

(For an overview and to locate where this map segment is situated look in your Atlas to the extreme upper right hand part of France. Company I was in this "corner" --north and to the west of Strasbourg, very near the German border.)

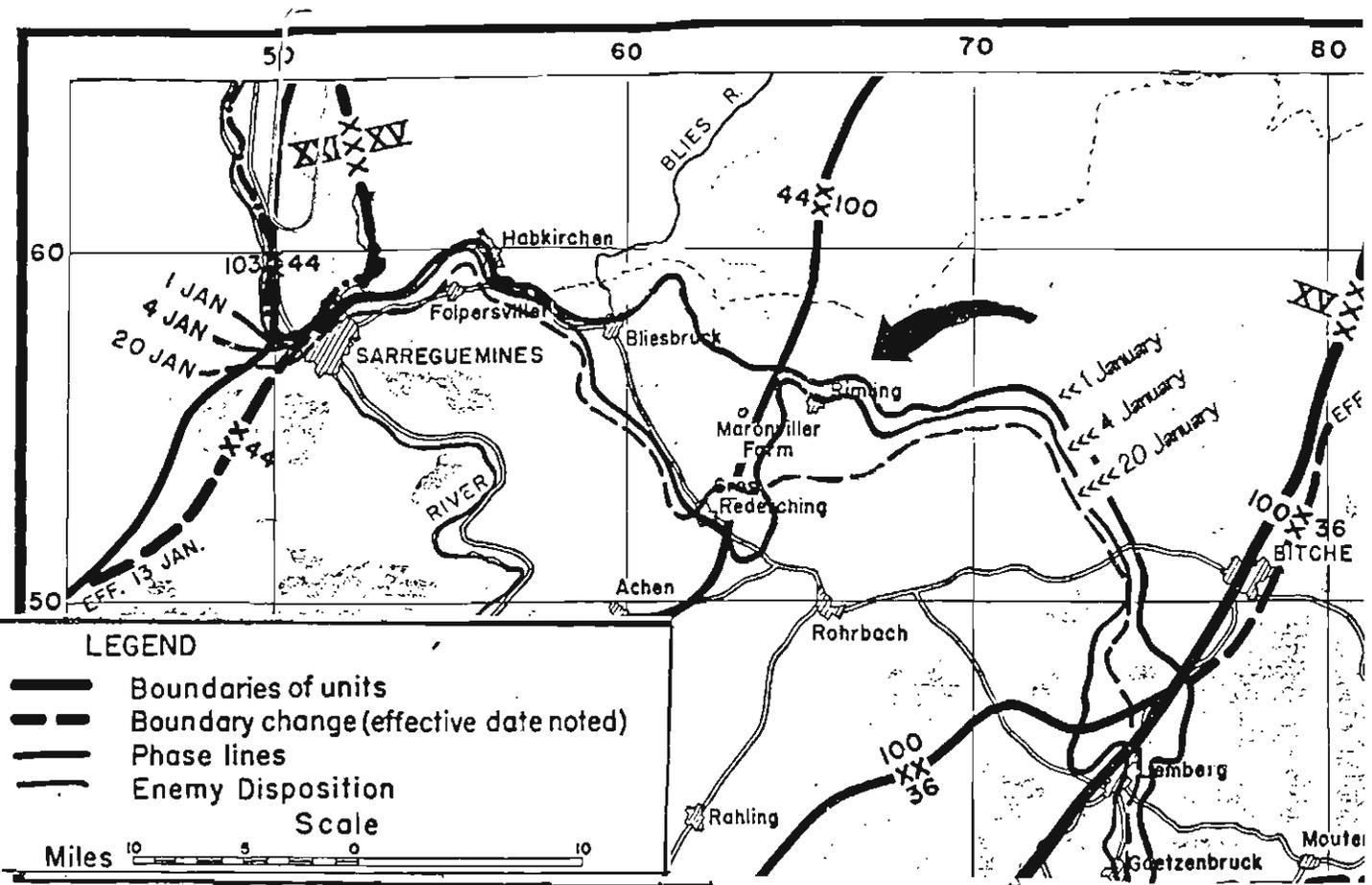
Rimling is in the center left above with Gulderkirch and Erching just to the north.

The Sheep Farm where we spent nearly two months is just south of Urbach. Both Urbach and the nearby village of Dollenbach were occupied by the Germans during this period and, mostly to remind each other we were enemies, we usually fired at one another on a daily basis.

The village of Hottviller was the jumping off place in our final assault on Germany.

COMPANY I COMBAT HISTORY

OPERATION NORTHWIND



The above map portrays the situation of a portion of the Seventh Army before and after the Northwind Offensive. The 100th Division is shown in the center with the 44th Division on the left flank and the 36th on the right. As can be determined by reference to the scale, the 100th Division was holding a front of nearly 20 miles, from Rimling to just south of Bitche.

The 397th Regiment was on the Division's left flank and Company I was on the left flank of the 3rd Battalion. At January 1, 1945 the front line ran west from Rimling in the direction of Sarreguemines. After the German attack the 44th retreated south toward Gros Rederching and by January 4 its 71st Regiment was several miles to the rear of Company I and the other soldiers of the 100th Division.

We were then facing the enemy on the west as well as the north. But we did not retreat and our 3rd Battalion was awarded the Presidential Citation for our courageous stand. (See next page.)

COMPANY I COMBAT HISTORY

HEADQUARTERS 100TH INFANTRY DIVISION
Office of the Commanding General
APO 447, U.S. Army

27 June 1945

GENERAL ORDERS)

NUMBER 183)

BATTLE HONORS - CITATION OF UNIT

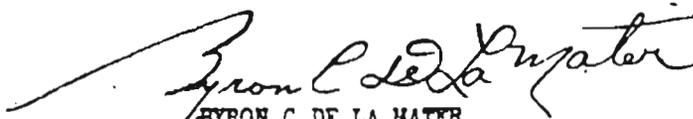
By direction of the President, under the provisions of Section IV, Circular Number 833, War Department, 1943, and with the approval of the Army Commander, the following named organization is cited for outstanding performance of duty in action:

The 3D BATTALION, 397TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, is cited for outstanding and exceptional accomplishment in combat during the period 1 January 1945 to 5 January 1945 in the Bitch sector, near Rimling, France. The 100th Division was assigned the mission of defending against an expected enemy attack in force, which had as its objective the capture of Saverne Pass, a vital terrain feature in the Seventh Army front. The 3d Battalion, 397th Infantry Regiment, occupied a defensive position on the left flank of the Division. Suddenly, at midnight on New Year's Eve, the enemy (17th SS Pz Gren Div) launched a heavy and fanatical attack, the main effort of which encompassed the 3d Battalion and units on its left. The unit on the left of the 3d Battalion was driven back during the course of the day some five thousand (5,000) yards. Because of the width of the front, reserves were not available to fill the gap. A platoon of the left company was overrun by the enemy Tank-Infantry assault, and the enemy infiltrated in force into Rimling, behind the lines of the battalion. Notwithstanding the exposed and tactically disadvantageous position in which the battalion found itself, it succeeded in restoring its lines, capturing or killing all of the infiltrating enemy. For five (5) days the battalion, in this exposed position, was subjected to repeated attacks from the front, flank and rear, by enemy tanks and infantry, accompanied by mortar and artillery fire. Repeated attacks by troops of this Division and the Division on the left to reestablish the line and make contact with the left flank of the 3d Battalion failed. The 3d Battalion, nearly surrounded, still held on, despite heavy losses and a disadvantageous tactical situation, which warranted withdrawal. However, in doing so, it inflicted such heavy losses upon the enemy and impressed upon him so successfully the will of our troops to hold on, that further offensive action on this part of the front by the enemy was discontinued. The action of this battalion, therefore, played a decisive role in thwarting the enemy from attaining his vital objective of Saverne Pass and enabled the Division to hold its position without a serious change in dispositions. The extraordinary heroism and determination, esprit-de-corps and effective fighting displayed by this unit in successfully accomplishing this unusual and rugged task was an inspiration to other troops in the sector, and reflected the greatest credit upon the armed forces of the United States.

BY COMMAND OF BRIGADIER GENERAL MURPHY:

J. O. KILGORE
Colonel GSC
Chief of Staff

OFFICIAL:


HYRON C DE LA MATER
Lt Col AGD
Adjutant General

CAPTAIN ULYSSES J GRANT

Captain Grant was a brave and dedicated soldier. He was the commanding officer of Co. I from Nov 14, 1944 until the end of hostilities.

The following article summarizes Capt. Grant's background, his aggressive military style and his likely plans for the future.

(Photo by Dave Berezin)



Capt. Grant Was Daring Head Of Item Co. During Combat

Probably the roughest, toughest, hell-for-leather officer in the entire regiment is Capt. Ulysses Grant, currently S-3 and formerly company commander of Item Co.

During the battalion's tour of combat Capt. Grant was one of the most aggressive company commanders in the entire division. He didn't send his company into hot spots; he led them, and his fiery vigorous charges probably did as much to disrupt the enemy plan of attack as anything.

He started off as a platoon leader in combat but assumed command of Item Co. when Lt. McDermid was hit on the first push. He has had amazing luck, having been caught in every conceivable type of ambush and barrage and coming through unscathed.

Capt. Grant comes from Oklahoma and looks like a cowboy, tall, rangy and high cheek boned. He calls horseback riding his favorite hobby, and is perfectly at home in Stuttgart with the Special Service horses.

He is a graduate of Oklahoma A. and M. and was commissioned in Sept. of 1943 at Benning. After a short stopover at Camp Croft, he went to the 100th at Jackson and became platoon leader in Item Co.

An umpire during maneuvers, he returned to Item in Jan. of 1944. He holds both the Silver and the Bronze Stars, and received the saber as being the best all round senior at ROTC where he was battalion commander.

He is married, 25 years old, and plans to be a gentleman farmer with a little political dabbling on the side. He intends to further his education after the war with refreshers in English, Public Speaking, etc.

COMPANY I COMBAT HISTORY

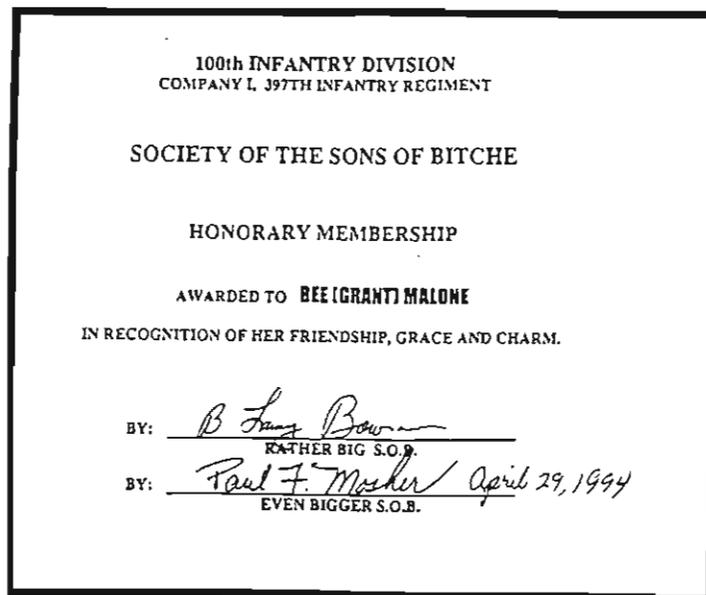
After the war, Jerry (as he was known to family and friends) Grant received his doctorate degree from Cornell and immediately joined the Rockefeller Foundation.

The following is an excerpt from an Oklahoma State University publication at the time of his death:

When Ulysses Jerry Grant died on Nov. 1, 1987, he left the figurative footprints of his pioneering efforts in foreign technical assistance in agriculture around the world.

Dr. Grant had a life-long career with the Rockefeller Foundation in various capacities in developing countries, where he assisted in research, extension, education, and training programs designed to increase food production. After more than 28 years of foreign service, Dr. Grant returned to Oklahoma State University to serve with its International Agriculture Program.

At a reunion in May 1994 Company I members honored the memory of Captain Grant. It was our privilege to have his widow Bee (Grant) Malone as our guest and she was presented a certificate of membership in The Society of The Sons of Bitche. A reduced size copy of the certificate is below:



Attending the 1994 Reunion in DeLand, FL in addition to Bee and Lee Malone were: Betty & Jim Blackwell, Lowry Bowman, Mary & Dan Martin, Lois & Tiges Martin, Betty & Bill McKeown, Lou & Paul Mosher, John T Mullins, Mim and CJ Naquin, Beulla & Dale Noble, John Sheets, Joe Sullivan, Barbara & Henry Vogel and Dorothy & Bill Wladecki.

NECKAR RIVER CROSSING--HEILBRONN

The article below resulted from an interview held near the Neckar River on April 5, 1945. At the time, Company I was unaware that the upcoming battle for Heilbronn would be our last major engagement of WW II.

We knew the crossing would be dangerous and we knew the enemy waited on the other bank. But we concealed our concerns from the rear echelon reporter.

The article appeared in the May 1945 issue of THE 100th DIVISION NEWS.

Doughs of 397th's Co. I Take 1st River Crossing in Stride

They stood around in doorways or sat resting on steps. They were men of the 3rd Bn., 397th Inf., waiting to go across the Neckar river. Elements of the 398th Inf. went across the day before, but the operation was still dangerous and for most of the doughs it was the first time they were going to cross a river in assault boats.

Co. I, commanded by Capt. Ulysses S. Grant, of Rosedale, Okla., was the lead company. T/Sgt. Joseph Schonarth, of Boston, whose weapons platoon would go over in the first wave, said, "I hope we make it." Others were less serious. Sgt. Paul Mosher, of Delaware, Ohio, said "if I see a Navy man down there I'll go over the hill."

Grayish white smoke began to settle in the town of Neckargartach as a chemical outfit started to lay a smoke screen. It seemed like a heavy fog. Visibility at some places was five yards, at others anywhere from five to 25. Looking at the sun through the man-made fog was like looking at it through smoked glass. Doughs just began to move through town in single files along both sides of the street when the roar of American planes was heard overhead.

Some doughboys seemed unconcerned with it all. Pfc. Joseph Sullivan, of Philadelphia, was eating K-ration caramels as he walked along. S/Sgt. Omar Lester, last Co. I man in the march, kicked about the vehicles in the streets. "They're nothing but 88-bait," he said.

Near the river's edge they crowded, single file, between two buildings and waited for their turn to board the boats. At the river were Engineers of Co. A, 325th Engr. Com. Bn., ready with the small assault boats. Capt. R. J. Baxter, of Cleveland, Ohio, was in charge of the crossing.

Giant, rubber pontons with which Engineers attempted to lay a bridge the night before, lay knocked-out along the bank. Some were partially deflated. One had a shrapnel hole right where it said, "Goodyear—Akron, Ohio."

The Neckar looked to be about 80 or 90 yards wide at this point. The Air Corps could be heard strafing on the other side.

Doughboys loaded down like walking arsenals took to the boats on the double. There were nine doughs and three Engineers to a boat. Doughs took the stroke from the lead Engineers and dipped their oars as evenly as possible. The engineer at the rear of the boat would direct the course. "Easy on the left, dig deep on the right," he would bark.

One of the engineers in our boat said, "I hope they build these damn things with motors for the next war."

On the other side doughs disembarked and ran up the inclined bank to a rallying point. Engineers turned their boats around and went back for another load.

Ten minutes after the company landed on the other side, Cpl. Joseph Tarantino, of Brooklyn, 3rd Bn. wireman with Co. I, went back across the river unrolling wire to repair a break that had developed since he took the wire over in the first wave.

Then the rest of the 3rd Bn. companies came over, and the battle of the Century for Heilbronn began on the east banks of the Neckar.

COMPANY I COMBAT HISTORY

COMPANY I PHOTOS

With few exceptions, the photos which follow were taken in 1945 in the immediate post-war period. Due to the practice of exchanging photos among Company I members it is impossible to know the photographer nor in many cases where the picture was taken and, now, the identity of all the individuals in a snapshot may prove elusive.



L to R (rear) Larson, Lester, Nisick, Mosher, Cohen & Williams.
(front) Polansky, Wladecki, Pelligrino & Lynch at the Marseille staging area.



Lowry Bowman, Larson & McKisson in Heidelberg



(L to R) Standing: Scolini, Capt Grant, Smolens, Laughing person (who refused to give his ID). Front: Jagars, Krevor and Ken Brown. Owner of forehead and hair (bottom of photo) not known.



Pete Korson and Frank Hurrle

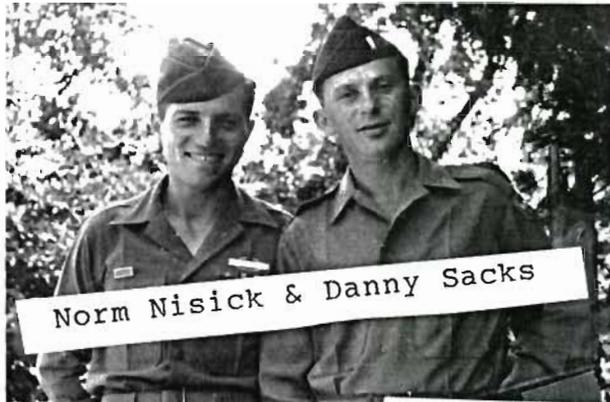


(L to R) LTs Eylander, Scheiman? Edinson and Shovlowski.

COMPANY I COMBAT HISTORY



Tom Carpino



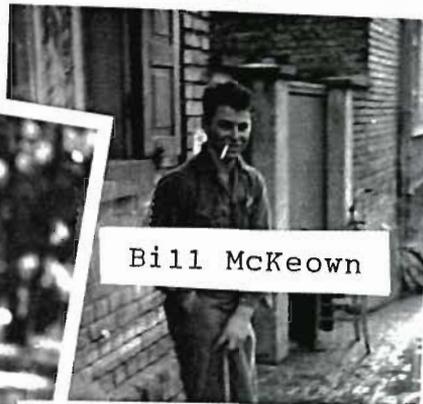
Norm Nisick & Danny Sacks



Oreste Fata & Harold McAfee



Dale Noble



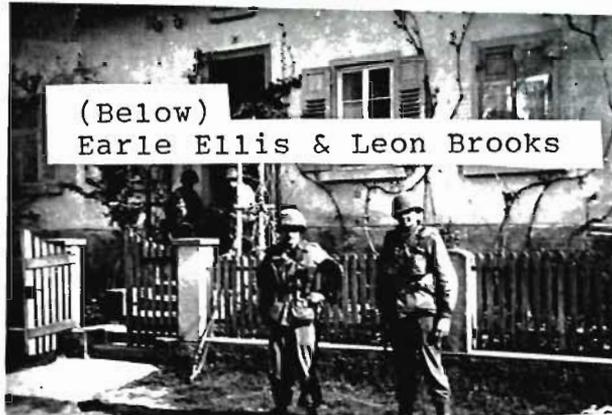
Bill McKeown



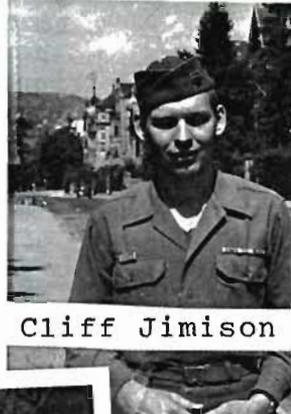
Harold Kovarsky & Jake Resnic



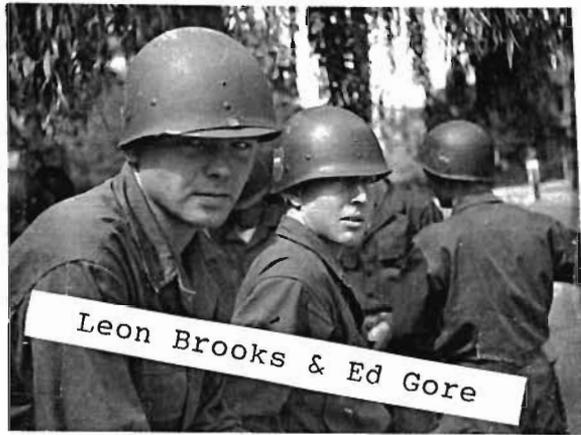
(Below) Howard Gorham & Perry Womack



(Below) Earle Ellis & Leon Brooks



Cliff Jimison



Leon Brooks & Ed Gore



Joseph P "Moon" Schonarth



Stan Williams.

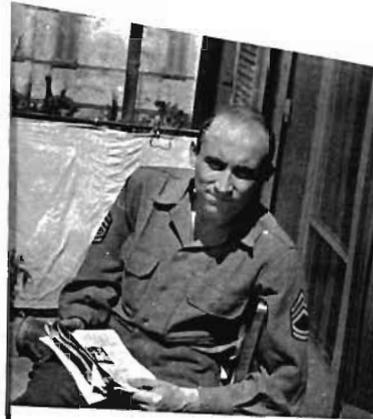
COMPANY I COMBAT HISTORY



Harkleroad, Collins,
Cooper & Schirr.



Harry "Dick" Guttridge



Joe Schonarth



Lt John Mullins
Most likely in Eppstein, Ger.

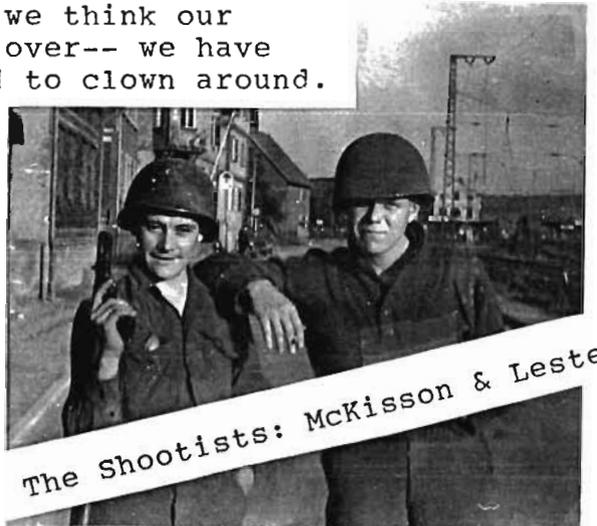


Lt Franklin McVeigh
At Osterburg Castle.



John Sheets and Albert T Klett.

ALTBACH, GERMANY
You can tell we think our
combat days are over-- we have
shaved and started to clown around.



The Shootists: McKisson & Lester.

COMPANY I COMBAT HISTORY



Rear: Baker, Sachs, Eylander & Martin. Front: Schirr & Kovarsky.



Lt Sam Stephens



(L to R) Ellis, Lopez, Mendoza?, Gore & Burns (103rd Division)



Main Gate at Bad Canstadt Barracks. (L to R) Unknown, Larson, Unknown, Caroselli now Carell, Malie & Wladecki.



In Paris--Tobias and Williams.



Also in Paris: Paul Mosher.

COMPANY I PHOTOS (CONT.)

Fast forward some fifty years and the results are shown below. Yes, the gentlemen pictured below are the same "boys of summer" shown on the previous pages.

Our first major reunion was at Lancaster, PA in 1992 when 15 Company I members were present. Unfortunately, we could not schedule a time for an inclusive group picture. So, it takes three photos to include all those present.



Basic Group: (L to R) Mosher, Apetz, Keelan, Berezin, Sheets, Klett, Martin, Sullivan and Bowman.



Add: Tessmer (far left) Brown (third from left and Vogel (second from right).



Bruce Larson

Still missing: Korson and Tobias.

COMPANY I COMBAT HISTORY

COMPANY I REUNION--APRIL 30, 1994
DeLAND, FL.

At this reunion we honored the memory of Captain Ulysses J Grant. Joining us was his widow, Bee Malone.



(All L to R) Seated: Tiges Martin, Danny Martin, Dale Noble, Henry Vogel. Standing: Lowry Bowman, CJ Naquin, Bill McKeown, John Sheets, Jim Blackwell, Bill Wladecki, Paul Mosher and Joe Sullivan.



Including wives, some 22 of us were together for dinner.

Shown at the left is Bee (Grant) Malone and John T Mullins. John served as Captain Grant's executive officer prior to being wounded at Heilbronn.

COMPANY I COMBAT HISTORY

COMPANY I ROSTERS

The roster information shown on the following pages covers the 339 enlisted men, 21 officers and 7 medical personnel who served in or with Company I from November 1944 to May 1945. Information available through September 1996 has been included. In view of the large volume of data involved, the long elapsed time period and certain other factors, some errors may exist. However, the errors were certainly not intentional and, hopefully, rare.

The name, rank and original address shown in the left column was taken from The Story of the Century (referred to as the "Division History") which was published in Germany in 1946. Due to the very high turnover experienced during combat and in the immediate post-war period while we were still in Europe, these Division History listings do contain some known errors and omissions. In preparing these rosters no deletions were made from the Division History data, but in a few instances individuals were added to the roster based on information available from the 100th Infantry Division Association (the "Association") as well as personal knowledge on the part of those preparing this material.

The information shown in the right column reflects:

(a) Current addresses as available from the Association and confirmed by mailings to Company I members.

(b) The date of death for Company I members who have died since WW II is shown when known. Sources include information from our Association and personal contacts.

(c) Killed in Action--place and date. Fifty of our comrades were killed during the period of combat starting November 14, 1944 and ending May 8, 1945. Basic data on these deaths were obtained from the Morning Reports. Verification of date and place of death was made through research by Ken Brown as well as reviews by Lowry Bowman, Albert T Klett, Paul Mosher and John Sheets.

COMPLETE ROSTER: COMPANY I ENLISTED MEN

| <u>As listed-- 100th Division History</u> | <u>Comment/Current Address</u> |
|--|--|
| Acreman, George W S/Sgt Rte # 3 Box 20, Geogiana, AL | Killed In Action France. Dec. 9, 1944 |
| Ackerman, Wayne A Pfc Rte #1 Box 258 Merced, CA | |
| Acunzo, John A Pfc 4 3rd St, Brooklyn, NY | |
| Adkins, Lawrence A Pfc North St, Plymouth, CN | |
| Aguilar, Joe L Pvt Box 178, Baytown, TX | |
| Albrecht, John A Pfc 107 Eutaw Ave, Camden, NJ | |
| Alviti, Lawrence G Jr Sgt Rte #1, Willow Creek, PA | |
| Annis, Truman J Sgt 6832 Glidden St, San Diego, CA | |
| Antczak, Charles J T/4 812 N Canal St, Pittsburgh, PA | Deceased. September 12, 1986 |
| Apetz, Milford P Pfc 178 Bernard St, Rochester, NY | 295 Landing Road N. Rochester, NY 14625 |
| Arnold, Benjamin H 449 N Garlamd Rd, Memphis, TN | Deceased. April 1, 1993 |
| Arrington, Wilbur C Pfc 123 Midland Ave, Findlay, OH | 255 E Perrin Ave McComb, OH 45858 |
| Arthur, Paul W Pfc 341 Vine St, Hamilton, OH | Killed In Action Heilbronn. April, 1945 |
| Asman, Bernard Pfc 153 Lewis St, Perth Amboy, NJ | |
| Atkelson, William L Sgt Hickory Valley, TN | |
| Babcock, Edward R Pfc 39 Broadway, New York, NY | |
| Baker, Charles R Pfc 400 W 3rd St, Norfolk, VA | |
| Baker, Frederick O S/Sgt 146 Elliott Ave, Yonkers, NY | 96 Franklin Ave Harrison, NY 10528 |
| Baker, Roy L Pfc 324 S 1st St, Turlock, CA | Killed In Action Heilbronn. April, 1945 |
| Banks, Alfred Pvt 130 Grant St, Crystal Lake, IL | Killed In Action Ingwiller. Dec., 1944 |
| Beale, Andrew J Pfc 5 Oak St, Ft Edward, NY | Deceased. Date not known |
| Beebe, John L Pvt 32 Mumford St, Chineoteague, VA | Died Of Wounds incurred March 12, 1945 |
| Beerens Harvey J Pvt Rte #1, Lake City, MI | |
| Beggs, James C Pvt Rte #1, Carlisle, AR | Rte #1 Box 854 Lakeview, AR 72642 |
| Beinens, Marvin L Pfc 474 Church St, Whitinsville, MA | |

COMPLETE ROSTER: COMPANY I ENLISTED MEN

| <u>As listed--100th Division History</u> | <u>Comment/Current Address</u> |
|--|--|
| Bell, William L Pfc 2446 Bellview Ave, Atlanta, GA | |
| Bender, Thomas B S/Sgt General Delivery, Springhill, AL | |
| Berezin, David Pfc 836 E 53rd St, Chicago, IL | 4350 Hillcrest Dr #500 Hollywood, FL 33021 |
| Bergeran, Ferdinand Jr Pfc Oscar, LA | |
| Berthiaume, Francis J Pfc 75 Louisiana St, Buffalo, NY | 1796 Kenmore Ave, Buffalo, NY 14216 |
| Billheim, John E Pfc 804 N 6th St, Sunbury, PA | Deceased. Date not known |
| Blackwell, James D Pfc 7430 Holmes Rd, Kansas City, KS | 4200 Homestead Dr Prairie Village, KS 66208 |
| Blanchard, Warren G Cpl 3 Prospect St, Utica, NY | |
| Blais, Leonard F Pfc 85 Worchster St, Southbridge, MA | |
| Bonner, Boyd L S/Sgt Rte #1 Yorktown, IN | 26663 W Carnegie Pk Southfield, MI 48034 |
| Botley, Darwin L Pfc 626 Monmouth St, Newport, KY | |
| Bouchard, Arthur H Pfc 163 E Water St, Tauton, MA | |
| Bouchard, Charles T/4 51 County St, New Bedford, MA | |
| Bower, Guy A Pvt Rte #5, Floyd, VA | |
| Bowman, B. Lowry Pfc 1045 Lucille Ave, Atlanta, GA | 21247 Rich Valley Rd Abingdon, VA 24210 |
| Boyd, Dennis C Jr Pfc 613 Payne St, Norfolk, VA | 3117 Choctaw Dr Virginia Beach, VA 23462 |
| Bradbury, James R Cpl Box 514, San Augustine, TX | |
| Bramante, Rene J Pfc 3105 Marina Dr, Alameda, CA | |
| Bray, Clarence P Pvt Rte #1, Gate City, VA | |
| Breiterman, Paul Pfc 46 E 22nd St, Brooklyn, NY | |
| Brendel, William J Jr Pvt 117 W Rosemar St, Phila, PA | |
| Bridges, Green R Pfc Rte #1, Parrott, GA | |
| Britain, Joseph W Jr Pfc 305 S Mesa, Albuquerque, NM | Killed In Action November 14, 1944 |
| Brock, Arnold P Pfc Sioux Rapids, IA | Killed in Action Heilbronn. April, 1945 |
| Brooks, Leon Jr Pfc 721 Second St, Lancaster, PA | Deceased. April, 1989 |
| Brown, Kenneth E Pfc New Northern Hotel, Richwood, WV | 16 Mt Vernon Circle Asheville, NC 28804 |

COMPLETE ROSTER: COMPANY I ENLISTED MEN

| <u>As Listed--100th Division History</u> | <u>Comment/Current Address</u> |
|--|--|
| Budz, Henry R Sgt Front St, Housatonic, MA | |
| Cagle, Lloyd B Pvt 216 E Hull St, Denison, TX | Killed In Action Rimling. Jan. 1945 |
| Carmiagnani, Angelo Pvt 3831 Addison Ave, Chicago, IL | |
| Caroselli, Edwin A (Name change to) | |
| Carell, Edwin A Pfc 243 Fulton Ave, Jersey City, NJ | 9 Broadview St Acton, MA 01720 |
| Carpino, Thomas S/Sgt 24 Lindsey St, Kingston, NY | 120 Lawrenceville #1 Kingston, NY 12401 |
| Carroll, Troy R Pfc Rte #1, Gorda, AL | Killed in Action Rimling. Dec. 1944 |
| Case, Earl M S/Sgt 6944 Fairfax Dr, Arlington, VA | |
| Casey, William E Sgt Robert Lee, TX | |
| Catapaso, Frank, Jr Pvt 213 Shepard Ave, Brooklyn, NY | |
| Carter, Howard N S/Sgt 524 S Penn St, Mangum, OK | |
| Cerveney, Robert Sgt 13618 Southview Ave, Cleveland, OH | |
| Chancey, Melvin Pfc 235 Bronson St, Jacksonville, FL | |
| Chang, Seung W Pvt 57 E Broadway, New York, NY | |
| Christy, Paul Pfc 77 View Court, Cincinnati, OH | |
| Cintron, Santiago T/Sgt 54 E 116th St, New York, NY | Killed In Action Ingwiller. Dec, 1944 |
| Cochrane, James C Pfc Rte #8, Charlotte, NC | 7721 Orrview Dr Charlotte, NC 28212 |
| Cohen, Robert L Sgt 1312 West St, Annapolis, MD | |
| Cohen, Sam (Address not known) | Killed In Action Ingwiller. Dec. 1944 |
| Collidewei, Charles H Pfc Box 161, Livermore, CA | |
| Collins, Asa L Pfc Saxis, VA | |
| Cook, Kenneth B S/Sgt 919 Forest Ave, Bellevue, PA | Captured Jan. 1945 Died. March 13, 1985. |
| Cooke, Edward A Pfc 5232 First St NW, Washington DC | 9 Russell Ave #210 Gaithersburg, MD 20877 |
| Cooper, Thomas E S/Sgt Rte #3, Lovettsville, VA | |
| Cornier, Dumas J Pfc Rayne, LA | |
| Cowher, Eugene S Pfc 110 E Dakota St, Detroit, MI | 19905 Imperial Hwy Detroit, MI 48240 |
| Crewell, Galen N Cpl Rte #1, Bridgeport, IL | |

COMPLETE ROSTER: COMPANY I ENLISTED MEN

| <u>As Listed--100th Division History</u> | <u>Comment/Current Address</u> |
|--|--|
| Crews, Lorenzo D T/Sgt 2281 Union Ave, Memphis, TN | 7436 Kingsland Dr Memphis, TN 38125 |
| Dakoulia, Tony G Pfc Box 458, Trinidad, CO | |
| Dean, Nickolas P Pvt Gen Del, Dawson, GA | |
| Decembrele, Augustine S Cpl 99 Leonard St, Canton, MA | 9 Maplecroft Rd Canton, MA 02021 |
| Dell, John E T/5 135 Barnes Ave, Lansing MI | |
| DeVane, Thomas E 1st Sgt Box 655, Bovill, ID | Killed In Action Ingwiller. Dec. 1944 |
| DeVito, Joseph Pfc Kinney St, Piermont, NY | 250 Gorge Rd Clifford, NJ 07010 |
| DeWeese, Joseph C 1st Sgt 236 S Plymouth, Rochester, NY | |
| DiBella, Michaelangelo Pfc 1784 Horton St, Rochester, NY | |
| Dickerson, Rodney O Pfc Willsboro, NY | RFD 4 Box 540 Scotia, NY 12302 |
| DiLorenza, James Pfc 129 Salisbury St, Rochester, NY | 235 Colonial Dr Webster, NY 14520 |
| DiPaolantonio, Dominic Pfc 25 W Willow Grove, Philadelphia PA | |
| Donnally, Stanley M Pvt 62 Chittenden, Columbus, OH | |
| Dubie, Robert J Pvt 235 State St, Portland, ME | 356 Bridge St Westbrook, ME 04092 |
| Dunno, Charles E Pvt 609 Crawford St, Van Wert, OH | |
| Eddy, Windle E T/5 Gen Del, Wortham, TX | Killed In Action Ingwiller. Dec. 1944 |
| Ellis, Earle L Pfc Rte #1, Windsor, PA | Deceased. September 16, 1976 |
| Elliehausen, Ernest H Pvt 562 Lancaster Ave, York, PA | |
| Estes, Gerald A Pfc Ausable Forks, NY | |
| Everett, David C Pvt Choate School, Wallingford, CN | Killed In Action Ingwiller. Dec. 1944 |
| Fagerness, George W T/5 Rte #1 Box 52, Centralia, WA | |
| Feidei, John Pfc 3025 Hampton Rd, Erie, PA | |
| Feigenbaum, Irving A Pfc 25 Van Velsor Pl, Newark, NJ | Killed In Action Heilbronn. April, 1945 |
| Fisher, John R Pfc 145 Franklin Ave, Ridgewood, NJ | 15 Hawes Run Rd W Yarmouth, MA 02673 |
| Fedor, Charles L Pvt Box 92, Aquilar, CO | |

COMPLETE ROSTER: COMPANY I ENLISTED MEN

| <u>As Listed--100th Division History</u> | <u>Comment/Current Address</u> |
|--|--|
| Forehand, Frank L S/Sgt Hiltonia, GA | |
| Forezzi, Charles A Pvt 69 S Ferry St, Albany, NY | Killed--auto accident Germany. Fall--1945 |
| Fowler, Edwin M Pfc Rte #1, Flintville, TN | |
| Frank, Edward A Jr Pvt 7 Oak Crescent, Poughkeepsie, NY | |
| Funaro, Joseph S/Sgt 14 West St, Mechanicville, NY | 10 Talmadge Pl Mechanicville, NY 121 |
| Gaouette, Louis T/Sgt (Not listed in Division History) | |
| Gens, Robert W T/4 1646 Zinc St, LaSalle, IL | |
| Gernhart, Raymond D Pvt Pierson, IA | Died Of Wounds incurred March 15 19 |
| Gershman, Herbert S Pfc 504 Sheppard Ave, Brooklyn, NY | Deceased. Date of death not known. |
| Goeckel, Francis A Pvt 8 Lehigh St, Wilkes-Barre, PA | Killed In Action November 14, 1944 |
| Gonzales, Cruz Pvt 150 N Michigan Ave, Mercedes, TX | Killed In Action France. Dec. 20, 194 |
| Gore, Edward M Pfc Rte #3, Albertville, AL | 1456 Main St Albertville, AL 3595 |
| Gorham, Howard B T/5 546 Colorado St, Bridgeport, CN | 174 Plymouth St Stratford, CT 06497 |
| Graef, Roy H Pfc P O Laurys Station, PA | |
| Graham, Francis H Pfc Rte #2, Camden, NY | |
| Grasso, Henry E Pfc 13 Gould St, Wakefield, RI | |
| Green, Ray T Pvt 107½ W 3rd St, Pittsburgh, KA | |
| Grimes, Pearl Pfc Symbol, KY | |
| Groff, Malcolm A Pfc 351 N Scales St, Reidsville, NC | |
| Gross, Robert W Pfc 66 Fretcher, Valley Stream, NY | |
| Guttridge, Harry (Dick) R Sgt 350 W Judson St, Youngstown, OH | 7450 Westview Dr Youngstown, OH 4451 |
| Hadley, Keith J (Not listed in 100th Div History) | 131 Francis Dr Walla Walla, WA 993 |
| Hall, Jordan C Pfc Rte #2, Pulaski, VA | |
| Ham, Thomas O Pfc Red Bay, AL | |
| Hamm, Richard F Pfc 101 E Williston Ave, E Williston, NY | |

COMPLETE ROSTER: COMPANY I ENLISTED MEN

| <u>As Listed--100th Division History</u> | <u>Comment/Current Address</u> |
|---|--|
| Hansen, Carroll M Pfc Box 184, Shafter, CA | |
| Hanway, Paul S Jr Pfc 93 Poplar St, Richfield Park, NJ | |
| Hare, Arthur D Pfc Rte #1, Tishomingo, OK | |
| Harkleroad, Clyde T Pfc 9 Coffey St, Bristol, TN | 244 Luke McKamey Rd Piney Flats, TN 37686 |
| Hartley, Carroll S Pfc Greenview, IL | |
| Haser, Paul G Sgt 6744 Bell St, New Kensington, PA | 420 Wedgewood Dr Lower Burrell, PA15068 |
| Hayhurst, John F Pfc 1207 Roger Ave, Brooklyn, NY | |
| Haynes, Thornton K Pfc 402 N Shore Rd, Norfolk, VA | |
| Healey, James Sgt 57 Parrish St, Dallas, PA | |
| Hellman, Gilbert E Pfc 1213 Glyndon Ave, Baltimore, MD | |
| Hendrix, William A Pfc Bridgeman, MI | 1342 Brentwood Dr Saint Joseph, MI 49085 |
| Henschel, William A Pfc Bathgate, ND | |
| Heuermann, Edwin J T/Sgt Rte #1, Peoria, IL | Deceased. November 9, 1977 |
| Higgins, Oswald K Pvt Stocksville, NC | |
| Hinkle, Marvin F Pfc 141 E 10th St, Erie, PA | Deceased. 1986 |
| Heald, Walter C Pfc 12731 E Warren Ave, Detroit, MI | |
| Hodel, Franklin Cpl Box 127, Crawford, TX | |
| Hoiiby, Eugene S S/Sgt 13136 Sorrento Ave, Detroit, MI | 29444 W Six Mile Rd Livonia, MI 48152 |
| Holston, Thomas P Pfc Pasadena, MD | |
| Horner, Victor A S/Sgt 1505 White Ave, Fresno, CA | |
| Howard, Samuel K Pfc 1315 N Bois D'Arc St, Tyler, TX | |
| Howell, Lindsay E Pfc Rte #2, Leoma, TN | Killed In Action November 14, 1944 |
| Hunter, John M Cpl 304 W Curtos St, Marceline, MO | Killed In Action Date/Place not known. |
| Hurrle, Frank B Jr Pfc 1400 State St, New Albany, IN | 108 W Rosewood Dr Clarksville, IN 47129 |
| Hurt, David G Sgt Rte #1, Webster, KY | Deceased. Date not known |
| Ikenberry, Lloyd A Pvt 3832 Fulton St, Chicago, IL | Killed in Action Ingwiller. Dec. 1944 |

COMPLETE ROSTER: COMPANY I ENLISTED MEN

| <u>As Listed--100th Division History</u> | <u>Comment/Current Address</u> |
|---|---|
| Jackson, James C Pfc 1234 10th Ave, Phenix City, AL | 2503 1st Ave Phenix City, AL 36867 |
| Jacobs, Robert D, Pfc 38 Tower St, Jamaica Plains, MA | 20 Ballou St Quincy, MA 02169 |
| Jagars, Walter D Pfc 127 Lawndale Ave, Kansas City, MO | |
| Jamele, Edwin L Pfc 1406 N Main St, Waterbury, CT | 136 Dan Parker Dr Waterbury, CT 06704 |
| Jankovich, Michael C Pfc 2573 St Olga St, Cleveland, OH | |
| Jennette, John O Pvt 842 Central Ave, Detroit, MI | |
| Jester, Robert L Pfc Box 691, Spring Hill, LA | |
| Jimison, Clifford H Sgt Box 42, McConnell, WV | 20800 Erben Ave Saint Clare Shores, MI 48081 |
| Johnson, Robert C Pfc 20 Seagate, Montrose Angus, Scotland | |
| Jonas, Francis J Pfc 175 Amber St, Buffalo, NY | |
| Jonietz, Ralph J Pvt Rte #2, Independence, WI | 221 S 7400 Valley View Mushego, WI 53150 |
| Jordan, Fred D Pfc Rte #4, Martinsburg, WV | Rte #1, Box 230 Inwood, WV 25428 |
| Jordan, Joseph A T/5 138 Elm St, Saratoga Springs, NY | Deceased. January 16, 1985 |
| Kane, Walter J Pfc Lynn, MA | Killed In Action November 14, 1944 |
| Keelan, John P S/Sgt 73 Parker Rd Elizabeth, NJ | 28 Spier Dr Livingston NJ 07039 |
| Kelso, Wilbur T Sgt RD No 3 Shippensburg, PA | |
| Killman, Russell J Pfc Bloxom, VA | Deceased. May 5, 1995 |
| King, Fred L Pvt Route No 2, Nashville, TN | Deceased. 1994 |
| King, Roger P Pfc Gen'l Delivery, Pritchard, AL | |
| Kitchen, Richard J Jr Pvt Ivor, VA | |
| Klein, Julius Pfc 113 Grham Ave, Brooklyn, NY | |
| Klett, Albert T Pfc 803 3rd Ave, Jamestown, ND | 701 NE 5th St Jamestown, ND 58401 |
| Knox, Lewis J Tec 4 Box 166 Pendleton, SC | |
| Korson, Peter J Pfc Route No 1 Suttons Bay, MI | 8566 E Alpers Rd Suttons Bay, MI 49682 |
| Kovarsky, Harold I S/Sgt 90 Hamiton Ave, Passic, NJ | 1138-B Thornbury Ln Lakehurst, NJ 08733 |
| Kozlowski, Stanley C Pfc Route No 3 Pulaski WI | |

COMPLETE ROSTER: COMPANY I ENLISTED MEN

| <u>As listed 100th Division History</u> | <u>Comment/Current Address</u> |
|---|---|
| Kresa, Frank Pvt 513 Whitesboro St, Utica, NY | Killed In Action November 14, 1944 |
| Krevor, Henry H Pfc 81 Chambers St, Boston MA | |
| Kucan, Carl J Pvt 1732 S 10th, Milwaukee, WI | Killed In Action Ingwiller. Dec. 1944 |
| Kujawski, Aloysius L Pfc 110 N Market St Shenandoah, PA | Killed In Action November 14, 1944 |
| Lane, Clifford E Pfc 729 N 31st St, Milwaukee, WI | Killed In Action Ingwiller. Dec. 1944 |
| Larson, Bruce L Sgt 4642 N Claredon Ave, Chicago, IL | 4100 Palomino Dr NE Bainbridge Is, WA 98110 |
| Lee, Sammie A Pfc Rte #1 Box 38, Scranton, SC | |
| Lena, Frank Pfc 109 E Main St, Bunkie, LA | 1043 Pear Valley Collierville, TN 38017 |
| Lester, Homer M F S/Sgt 157 Canisteo Ave, Hornell, NY | Deceased. December 5, 1983 |
| Lettrich, Michael Jr Pfc 243 W 9th St, Tarntum, PA | |
| Lewitter, Isadore Pvt 319 Peshine Ave, Newark, NJ | Killed In Action France. Dec. 18, 1944 |
| Lincoln Robert H Pfc Rte #1 Fairport Rd, Rochester, NY | Deceased. February, 1992 |
| Lize, Joe M Sgt 9626 Traverse St, Detroit, MI | Killed in Action Heilbronn. April, 1945 |
| Lopez, Francisco S Pfc General Delivery, Victorville, CA | Barbarossa Weg. 16. 70736 Fellbach Schmidn Stuttgart, Germany |
| Lucke, Walter S Pvt 116 E Agarith St, San Antonio, TX | |
| Lukehart, Loren D Sgt 701 S 16th St, Boise, ID | |
| Lynch, Francis J S/Sgt 875 N Bucknell St, Philadelphia, PA | Deceased. June 3, 1993 |
| Lynn, Edmond B Pfc 3327 Gravier St, New Orleans, LA | |
| Lyons, Thomas B Pfc Rte #2, Butler, PA | |
| Maddox, John A Pvt LaPlata, MD | Rt 2 Box 2042 LaPlata, MD 20646 |
| Malie, Paul J Pfc (Not listed in 100th Div History) | 493 Castle Shannon Bvd Pittsburgh, PA 15234 |
| Malloy, Richard J Pvt 39A Edgewater Park, Bronx, NY | |
| Malone, Charles J Pfc 1301 Montgomery St, Shamokin, PA | Died of Wounds incurred Mar. 15, 1945 |
| Malone, James E Jr Pvt 1708 Harrison St, Gary, IN | |
| Malton, Chester A Pvt 831 Pheneas St, Pittsburgh, PA | |

COMPLETE ROSTER: COMPANY I ENLISTED MEN

| <u>As Listed--100th Division History</u> | <u>Comment/Current Address</u> |
|--|--|
| Mammarella, Dante F Pvt 23-72 Cresent St, Astoria, NY | |
| Manske, Henry A Pfc Big Fork, MN | |
| Marchese, Anthony Pfc 235 E 106th St, New York, NY | |
| Margosian, Charles S Pfc 258 Beacon St, Somerville, MA | Killed In Action France. Dec. 9, 1944 |
| Marsh, Lawrence W Pvt 53 N Church St, Goshen, NY | Killed In Action France. Dec. 9, 1944 |
| Martin, Daniel R S/Sgt 631 W 207th St, New York, NY | 11932 NW 11th St Pembroke Pines, FL 33026 |
| Martin, Tiges J Pfc Rte Box 258, Cut Off, LA | Box 128 LaRose, LA 70373 |
| Matte, Eddison Jr Pvt Church Point, LA | |
| May, Douglas O Pvt 1208 S 6th St, Paducah, KY | Killed In Action Ingwiller. Dec. 1944 |
| McAfee, Harold M Sgt Rte #3, Morrison, TN | Deceased. 1975 (Est) |
| McCloskey, Charles A 1st Sgt 512 Western Ave, Covington, KY | |
| McDonald, Theron H Sgt 621 N Ashley St, Valdosta, GA | |
| McConigle, Lawrence P Pfc 104 Knox Ave, Pittsburgh, PA | |
| McGovern, James I Pfc 2927 N Fairfield Ave, Chicago, IL | Killed in Action France. Jan. 20, 1944 |
| McKeown, William E Pfc Rte #2, Grand Junction, MI | 3162 Lakeveiw Dr Allegan, MI 49010 |
| McKisson, Earl W Pfc 1609 N Osceola, Clearwater, FL | Deceased. 1960 or 1961. |
| McLean, Allen I Sgt Okanogan, WA | Killed in Action November 14, 1944 |
| McLean, Jack N Sgt Okanogan, WA | Captured November 14, 1944 |
| Medlin, Junior C Pfc Rte #1, Springhope, NC | |
| Melancon, Kerney Pvt Box 366, Welch, LA | |
| Mendoza, Mike Pfc 904½ W 2nd Ave, Davenport, IA | |
| Mendoza, Arthur Pvt 711 Don Cubero St, Santa Fe, NM | 106 W Pennsylvania Ave Redlands, CA 92374 |
| Middleton, Jean E Pfc Rte #1, Oxford, KS | Deceased. 1991 |
| Miller, Isadore J Pfc 76 Naden Ave, Newark, NJ | |
| Moore, Aubrey W Pvt 716 N Person St, Raleigh, NC | |
| Moore, James R Pfc 916 Myrtle Ave NW, Atlanta, GA | |

COMPLETE ROSTER: COMPANY I ENLISTED MEN

| <u>As Listed--100th Division History</u> | <u>Comment/Current Address</u> |
|---|--|
| Moore, Roy W Pfc 916 Myrtle Ave NW, Atlanta, GA | |
| Mosher, Paul F Sgt 169 E Central Ave, Delaware, OH | 3408 Winged Foot Crt Dallas, TX 75229 |
| Mull, William R S/Sgt 2502 Edwards Ave, Granite City, IL | |
| Myers, Odell S Pvt 64 Oak Ave, Fort Mill, SC | Killed In Action Rimling. January, 1945 |
| Naquin, Clifford J Jr Sgt Gray, LA | 621 Phillip St Thibodeux, LA 70301 |
| Newmeyer, Jack L Pfc Box 161, Large, PA | |
| Nichols, James E Pfc 1 Williams St, Rome, GA | |
| Nisick, Norman P Pfc Box 3, Lead, SD | 16607 W Yakitat Pl Benton City, WA 99320 |
| Noble, Dale C Pfc 414 S Anderson St, Elwood, IN | 316 E Howard St Greentown, IN 46036 |
| Noone, Thomas P Pvt 11 Lake Rd, Cochituate, MA | Killed in Action Ingwiller. Dec. 1944 |
| O'Brien, Robert E Pfc 2713 Erickson Ave, E Elmhurst, NY | |
| Odorizzi, Albert P Pfc Palmermo Ave, Vineland, NJ | |
| Olivera, George Cpl 50 Main St, Warren, RI | |
| Olsen, Richard C Sgt Rte #2, Wayzata, MN | |
| Oren, Raymond A Jr 7101 Woodland Ave, Philadelphia, PA | |
| Partain, Glen A Pfc 2008 Ruhland Ave, Redondo Beach, CA | |
| Paterson, Jack M Pfc 9789 American Ave, Detroit, MI | Killed in Action Ingwiller. Dec. 1944 |
| Pelligrino, John J T/Sgt 639 Palisade Ave, Clifford Park, NJ | 1118-A Thornbury Lane Lakehurst, NJ 08733 |
| Pendleton, Willis E Sgt E South St, McComb, OH | 263 E South St McComb, OH 45858 |
| Peoples, Darl J Pfc Rte #4, Clearfield, PA | |
| Perkins, Henry P Pfc Rte #4, Glogosow, KY | Killed In Action Heilbronn. April, 1945 |
| Phillips, Dale E Pfc Rte #1, Tekoa, WA | Deceased. 1994. |
| Phillips, Stanley W Pvt Grafton, NH | |
| Pierce, John J Pfc 314 52nd St, New York, NY | |
| Pitts, Eldon D Pfc Rte #3, Hazelhurst, MA | |

COMPLETE ROSTER: COMPANY I ENLISTED MEN

| <u>As Listed--100th Division History</u> | <u>Comment/Current Address</u> |
|--|---|
| Polansky, Seymour H Pfc 65 Mt Hope Pl, Bronx, NY | |
| Pollack, John P S/Sgt 116 3rd St, Battle Creek, MI | |
| Polochak, Paul Pfc Rte #4, McDonald, PA | |
| Postlewait, William N 342½ Main St, Bolivar, NY | RD #1 Port Allegany, PA 16752 |
| Preston, Charles J Pfc 303 Webster St, St Paul, MN | |
| Radliff, William M Pfc 508 First Ave, Troy, NY | |
| Rastatter, Lee H Pfc 839 E 26th St, Erie, PA | |
| Redlich, Norman Pfc 21 Sycamore Ave, Mt Vernon, NY | 480 Park Ave #50 New York, NY 10009 |
| Reed, Phillip E Pvt 5910 Wickham Ave, Newport News, VA | |
| Reeves, Charles L Pvt 101 Pearl St, Mt Vernon, IN | 1108 E Second St Mount Vernon, IN 47620 |
| Reina, Balemar Pvt Box 5009, Sonora, TX | |
| Reines, Philip Pfc 1155 Gerard Ave, Bronx, NY | 19 MacArthur Ave Yonkers, NY 10707 |
| Resnick, Jacob S/Sgt Rte #1, Catskill, NY | |
| Robinson, Oscar L Pvt Rte #5, Bowie, TX | |
| Robrigues, Nicholas Pfc 100 Anthony St, Fall River, MA | |
| Rohrs, Robert C Pvt 180 Mamaroneck, White Plains, NY | 2155 Pine Dr Fawleys Island, SC 29585 |
| Ronkainen, Raymond (Not listed in 100th History) | 345 Franklin St Laurium, MI 49913 |
| Rose, Joseph Pvt 497 E 4th St, Brooklyn, NY | |
| Riley, John J Sgt 1921 Cresent Dr, Seattle, WA | Killed In Action Ingwiller. Dec. 1944 |
| Roybal, Ishmael Pvt Gen Del, Sacramento, CA | Killed In Action France. March 9, 1945 |
| Russo, Matthew D Pvt 109-49 114th St, Ozone Park, NY | |
| Scarborough, LeRoy Pfc 1528 Gieffers St, Lake Charles, LA | Killed In Action November 14, 1944 |
| Schirr, Richard W Pfc 628½ Curtis St, Toledo, OH | 34 John Amne Circle Canal Winchester, OH 43110 |
| Schlipf, Harvey T Pvt Box 24, Rocky Ridge, OH | |
| Schonarth, Joseph P Jr T/Sgt 20 Wilder St, Dorchester, MA | Deceased. January 15, 1970 |

COMPLETE ROSTER: COMPANY I ENLISTED MEN

| <u>As Listed--100th Division History</u> | <u>Comment/Current Address</u> |
|--|---|
| Schultz, John Cpl Rte #1, Birmingham, MI | |
| Scolini, Gilbert F T/4 542 Athens St, San Francisco, CA | |
| Sellers, Thomas L Pfc 2725 Avenue G, Fort Worth, TX | |
| Shaffron, Edmund M Pvt 1459 W Fargo St, Chicago, IL | Killed In Action November 14, 1944 |
| Shankle, James F Cpl 202 Lydia St, Paris, TN | 1425 India St Paris, TN 38242 |
| Sheets, John L Pfc Polkadotte, OH | 108 Lower Garfield Gallipolis, OH 45631 |
| Shirley, William W S/Sgt 1327 Bank St, Lake Charles, LA | |
| Sherry, Fred A Pfc 2028 W 12th St, Brooklyn, | |
| Shores, Willard (Not listed in 100 Div History) | Rte #4 Box 130 Wytheville, VA 24382 |
| Showalter, Percy N Jr Pfc Roseland, VA | |
| Silverman, Albert Sgt 306 E Bancroft St, Toledo, OH | |
| Silverman, Louis Sgt 215 Mt Hope Pl, Bronx, NY | |
| Simon, Meyer Sgt 1433 Charlotte St, Bronx, NY | |
| Smith, Thomas J Pfc 246 S 4th St, Brooklyn, NY | |
| Smith, Vernis T S/Sgt 715 S 12th St, Frederick, OK | |
| Smolens, Daniel C T/5 24 Normandy St, Roxbury, MA | 828 Roxbury Pkwy Chestnut Hill, MA 02167 |
| Speck, Bryce E Pvt 379 Hazelwood Ext, Barberton, OH | Killed In Action November 14, 1944 |
| Spurgeon, Lloyd P Pvt 53 Lester St, Lemon Grove, CA | |
| Stout, George J Jr Pvt 264 Walnut Ave, Trenton, NJ | Killed in Action November 14, 1944 |
| Sullivan, Joseph J Pfc 1600 Delmont, Beechwood, PA | 949 Wooten Rd Bryn Mawr, PA 19010 |
| Swedo, Stanley Pvt Rte #1 Box 448, Johnstown, PA | Killed In Action November 14, 1944 |
| Tambasco, Anthony Pfc 290 Avenue P, Brooklyn, NY | |
| Taylor, Charles G S/Sgt 404 E Avenue B, Sweetwater, TX | |
| Tessmer, Robert G S/Sgt 5104 Steadman, Dearborn, MI | 32 Shady Hollow Dr Dearborn, MI 48124 |
| Thompson, Thorvald J Sgt Box 431, Menlo Park, CA | Captured. December, 1944 |

COMPLETE ROSTER: COMPANY I ENLISTED MEN

| <u>As Listed--100th Division History</u> | <u>Comment/Current Address</u> |
|---|--|
| Timlison, John A Pvt 214 N High St, Paris, IL | |
| Timoney, Edward D S/Sgt 2830 34th St, Long Island City, NY | |
| Tobias, Richard C Pfc Rte #3, Xenia, OH | 5846 Darlington F Pittsburgh, PA 1 |
| Toole, Max E Pfc Rte #1, Yale, MI | Killed In Action Rimling. January, Died of Wounds incurred Dec. 9, 1428 Alexander Av Chambersburg, PA |
| Trammell, Harvey E Pvt Cazenovia, NY | |
| Trittle, Seth E S/Sgt 319 Phila Ave, Chambersburg, PA | |
| Tuck, Eugene A Pfc 1610 44th St, Newport News, VA | Rte #4 Box 350 Nathalie, VA 245 |
| Tucker, James W Pfc Hamilton, MS | Killed in Action Ingwiller. Dec. 1 29 Highwood Dr Northport, NY 11 |
| Turner, Eugene T Pvt 538 Empire Bldg, Brooklyn, NY | |
| Ura, Edward T Pfc 2008 Pringle Ave, Jackson, MI | Deceased. Date not known |
| Van Damme, James E Pfc 54 Clifton St, Phelps, NY | Deceased. Date not known |
| Vogel, Henry E Pfc 2 Arcadia Dr, Greenville, SC | 222 Wyatt Ave Clemson, SC 2963 |
| Volle, Karl L Pvt Rte #2, Sandborn, IN | Killed In Action November 14, 1944 |
| Wallace, Claude C Pvt Rte #1, Carthage, NC | |
| Waller, Julius W Pfc Fairborn, GA | |
| Ward, Philip H Pvt 113 Altamont, Scarsdale, NY | 459 Stormville Mt Stormville, NY 1 |
| Weeks, Edwin J Pfc Rte #3, Vienna, VA | |
| Weimerskirch, John T Pvt 7 Carlisle PL, Pittsburgh, PA | 5455 Ashlan Ave Fresno, CA 93727 |
| Welch, Robert E Cpl 1043 Summit St, Warren, OH | |
| West, John W Pvt Floyd, VA | 4153 Woodridge Dr Roanoke, VA 2401 |
| White, Everett G Pfc Rte #1, Moira, NY | |
| White, Thurman W Pfc Rte #1, Sunflower, MS | |
| Wilbur, Doran G Pfc Box 941m Castle Rock, WA | |
| Wilcos, Wayne K T/5 PO Box 162, Barnesville, OH | |

CO I ROSTER--EM's, OFFICERS & MEDICS

| <u>As Listed--100th Division History</u> | <u>Comment/Current Address</u> |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Widner, John D Pfc Rte #4, Marysville, TN | |
| Williams, Stanley D Pfc 1 Bassett Pl, Red Bank, NJ | 12 Red Gate Rd Jaffrey, NH 03452 |
| Willingham, Troy F Pvt 307 W 30th St, Bryan, TX | |
| Womble, George O Pfc Ranlo Station, Gastonia, NC | Killed In Action November 14, 1944 |
| Wladecki, William B S/Sgt 911 W 17h St, Lorain, OH | 234 Vestavia Dr Venice, FL 34292 |
| Worley, Herbert L T/5 347 E Trigg Ave, Memphis, TN | |
| Wright, Julian Pfc 972 Leggett Ave, New York, NY | |
| Ziegler, Milton R Sgt 42 Beacon St, Jersey City, NJ | |
| Zuehlsdorff, Maurice L Pfc Rte #1, Elbow Lake, MN | |
| Zuhars, Charles W T/5 Box 244, Wheelersbourg, OH | |

ROSTER OF OFFICERS--COMPANY I, 397th REGIMENT

| <u>As listed--100th Division History</u> | <u>Comment/Current Address</u> |
|--|---|
| Anderson, Robert E 2nd Lt 6403 Lakeshore Dr, Dallas, TX | Direct Appointment from S/Sgt. Transferred to 36th (Texas) Div. |
| Ashe, Charles E 2nd Lt 254 New St, Macon, GA | Direct Appointment from T/Sgt. |
| Cansler, Edwin T III 2nd Lt 112 Hermitage Rd, Charlotte, NC (Deceased. May 3, 1996.) | Direct Appointment from S/Sgt. Wounded at Grossteinhausen. Did not return. |
| Edinson, William 2nd Lt 9413 Avenue A, Brooklyn, NY | Direct Appointment from T/Sgt. |
| Eylander, Edward S 2nd Lt PO Box 514, Marysville, WA | Direct Appointment from T/Sgt. 2701 S 360th St Federal Way, WA 98003 |
| Forshaw, Walter H 2nd Lt (Address not shown in Div History) | Listed on Morning Report (MR) of 12/4/44 as joining Co I. No additional information. |

CO I ROSTER--EM's, OFFICERS & MEDICS

| <u>As listed--100th Division History</u> | <u>Comment/Current Add</u> |
|--|--|
| Godwin, Gerald S 2nd Lt 26-80 30th St, Astoria, NY | Wounded near Heilbr. Did not return. 4045 Azalea St Riverside, CA 925 |
| Grant, Ulysses J Capt 309 Mississippi St, Atoka, OK | Commanded CO I from Nov.14, 1944 until end of hostilities Deceased. Nov. 1, |
| Hartline, Kenneth W 2nd Lt 762 Bellevue Ave, Akron, OH | Departed at Ingwil Did not return. |
| McDermid, Charles G 1st Lt 1808 Silverado Trail, Napa, CA | Wounded Nov. 14, 1 Did not return. |
| McVeigh, Franklin J 1st Lt 1710 Highland Ave, Knoxville, TN | Drawer 1007 Gatlinburg, TN 37 |
| Mullins, John T 1st Lt 486 E 141st St, New York, NY | Wounded at Heilbro Did not return. 455 E 14th St New York, NY 1000 |
| Sacks, Israel 2nd Lt 444 Vermont St, Brooklyn, NY | Direct Appointment from T/Sgt. |
| Sanderson, Carl W 2nd Lt (Address not shown in Div History) | Direct Appointment from 1st Sgt befor joining Co I. |
| Scheiman, Saul 2nd Lt 7235 Phillips Ave, Chicago, IL | Direct Appointment from S/Sgt. |
| Scott, Ralph W Capt 608 Belmont Ave, Portsmouth, VA | Appendicitis attac Marseilles. Did no return. |
| Shapley, James R 2nd Lt 4182 Adams St, Gary, IN | Direct Appointment from 1st Sgt. |
| Shovlowski, Joseph 2nd Lt Box 942, Holdeh, MA | Direct Appointment from 1st Sgt. |
| Stephens, Sam 1st Lt Cornerville, AR | Deceased. April 30 1983 |
| Strough, David A 1st Lt 717 Vine St, Erie, PA | Wounded at Ingwill Did not return. |
| Thatcher, Walter 2nd Lt (Address not shown in Div History) | Listed on MR of 12 as wounded near Mouterhouse, Franc |

CO I ROSTER--EM's, OFFICERS & MEDICS

ROSTER OF MEDICAL PERSONNEL ASSIGNED
TO COMPANY I, 397th INFANTRY

| <u>As listed--100th Division History</u> | <u>Comment/Current Address</u> |
|---|--|
| Fata, Oreste Tec/4 119 Early Rd, Youngstown, OH | Deceased. (Date not known) |
| Lipschitz, Henry Tec/5 1106 Morris Ave, New York, NY | Killed in Action November 14, 1944 |
| Shafron, Max Pfc 359 Midwood St, Brooklyn, NY | Killed in Action Ingwiller. Dec. 1944 |
| Shocko, Julius Pfc Gen'l Delivery, Charlevoix, MI | |
| Wires, John S Tec/5 45 Windsor Rd, Wellesley Hills, MA | Rte #1 Plainfield, VT 05667 |
| Nomack, Melville P Tec/5 404 W Burleson, Marshall, TX | |
| Yowell, Robert Tec/3 509 Monroe Ave, Moberly, MO | Deceased. Oct 17, 1992 |

NOTE 1.

The Medical Corpsmen were an integral part of Company I. They ate with us. We shared foxholes. We were shelled together. However, technically, they were not members of our company.

These brave and often life-savers were part of the Medical Detachment which reported at the Regimental level.

It is with pride we list these men along with the members of Company I.

NOTE 2.

All roster information based on data available through September 1996.

for an explanation as to how the above was compiled and other information see the cover sheet.

