

## STOUMONT ACTION

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"A" Co, less the 2nd Platoon and Maintenance section, attached to the 3rd Battalion, 119th Infantry, entered STOUMONT, BELGIUM, about 181800 Dec 44. At that time through the evening darkness the cat-eye lights of an unknown quantity of enemy armor was observed and their motor purred about 1200 yards South East of the town. Immediate reconnaissance for gun positions was made and the 2 platoons, the first under Lt THOMAS SPRINGFIELD and the 3rd under Lt NARD JACOBSON, went into positions East, South and West of town as shown by attached overlay. Two belts of mines were laid in a hasty field by the Infantry on the road leading to LA GLEIZE as indicated on the overlay.

At approximately 2300 the Germans sent a small vehicle West toward our lines along the main road leading into STOUMONT. It advanced almost as far as the first mine field, halted and then withdrew without suffering any damages. At about 0230 the morning of 19 Dec 44 the same maneuver was attempted but this time the vehicle, a jeep, hit a mine and was destroyed.

About 0500 German armor, led by a Mk V tank and infantry launched a determined attack on STOUMONT. The early morning darkness was intensified by a heavy fog which made it impossible to see through the telescopic sights in the towed 3" guns. Although a request was made of the infantry for mortar flares to assist observation at sighting targets, this request was denied. With foot troops the lead tank moved along the main highway leading to STOUMONT until it reached the first mine barrier at which time the tank personnel with the aid of flashlights removed first mines. Private Sanchez threw a hand grenade at these Germans and their return fire from automatic weapons drove Pvt Brinkoetter from the 30 Cal MG with which he was about to open fire, wounding him slightly. The tank then moved through the mines flanking No. 1 gun on its right and as the gun could not fire on the tank or move to positions from which it could fire, the crew was forced to withdraw. The tank continued its advance, turning off the road to the North, then driving West parallel to the main highway until No. 2 gun was flanked and its crew forced to retire. At this time No. 3 gun adjusted its position so that it could cover the main road junction and No. 5 moved to the alternate position shown on the overlay marked "A" where it covered the North branch of the highway and road junction. The Mk V returned to the highway and moved slowly West until it reached the road junction, where it was fired upon by No. 3 gun. No damage to the tank was done as all shots ricocheted off the front of the glacier plate. The tank then opened up with MG and 75mm HE knocking out the 3" gun. At about 0730 with light conditions improving the tank edged forward and came within range of No. 5 gun and a 90mm AAA gun on the right flank. Both opened fire at the same time and the tank burned.

By this time enemy armor had left the main highway and was attempting to flank the town from the South and North. Enemy

infantry small arms fire upon No. 4 gun and crew forced the crew to withdraw. No. 6 gun became engaged in a fire fight and after holding infantry off for some time with small arms fire the German tank suddenly appeared around the South West corner of the cemetery and knocked out the 3" gun with HE. This tank then continued West between guns No. 6 & 7 automatically flanking and coming into the rear of 7 & 8 guns which were unable to swing around for their protection.

During the action fire from tanks and large calibre assault guns had been moderate. After all guns had been neutralized and friendly infantry was withdrawing from the town at about 0930, instructions were given to withdraw in all vehicles that could be removed.