

of the river and its CP to the vicinity of Hettange Grande. On September 13th Co. C moved the 1st platoon to Boust, about four miles north of Thionville. The 2nd platoon with Major John Solomon and Capt. Ernest Long observing and Lt. William Pendergast commanding, took one reconnaissance section and the second gun of its platoon forward of the infantry positions to a temporary location two hundred yards west of Basse Parth. From this position the gun, manned by Sgt. Thomas and his gun crew, fired ten rounds into Germany. The target was the church steeple in Perl. These were the first rounds fired by the 90th Division into Germany, first rounds fired by the XX Corps into Germany, and it is believed that this was the first fire to fall into Germany from troops of the Third US. Army.

### Storming Of Metz.

After closing up to the Moselle River, the 90th Infantry Division was given the new mission of holding an area north and west of Metz, including Thionville, instead of crossing the Moselle near Thionville. On September 14th the 358th Regiment with Co. B attached was given the mission of holding the Thionville sector. The Battalion CP moved to the vicinity of Hatrize (5000 yards northeast of Conflans). Co. A assembled near Malancourt and Co. C near the Battalion CP. Two platoons of Co. C were placed in support of Task Force Randolph which had the mission of defending in depth the area of Roncourt-St. Privat-Amanvillers-Habonville, an area taken over from the 7th Armored Division. Co. A, with the 357th Infantry, held from the left flank of Task Force Randolph to the right flank of the 358th Infantry. The 2nd platoon of Co. A moved guns into position on the high ground overlooking Mirange Silvange. On September 15th Co. C moved their CP to Ste. Marie aux Chenes with one platoon in position east of town and the other two with Task Force Randolph in position near Roncourt, St. Privat and Habonville.

On September 16th the Battalion CP moved to a mine two thousand yards southeast of Moinville. From September 16-26th there was very little change in positions. On the 19th Co. A moved one platoon to face east across the Moselle from positions in Talange and Monde-lange. The other two platoons faced south toward Metz from positions

near Pierrevillers and Mirangé Silvange. On September 24th Capt. Bodell moved their CP to Rhombas.

Co. C placed four guns in indirect fire from a positions sixteen hundred yards northeast of Ste. Marie aux Chenes and fired interdictory and harrassing missions. During part of the period only two guns fired indirect while the other two were in direct fire positions at Mal-maison (seven miles west of Metz).

Co. B remained with the 358th Infantry Regiment, firing at pill boxes near Thionville, until September 27th when they were relieved. They moved into an assembly area about two thousand yards north of Mars la Tour and about five miles southeast of Conflans before going into position near Jouaville. The Company was given the mission of covering the area from Verneville south for about six miles in support of the 358th and 359th Infantry Regiments. During the remainder of the month the companies rotated their platoons, giving them a chance to rest and rehabilitate.

From September 1st to 30th six tanks and thirteen half-tracks of the enemy were destroyed. 2825 rounds (indirect fire) were fired and 45 prisoners were taken.

On October 2nd the Battalion CP moved to Ste. Marie aux Chenes and Lt. Colonel Sundt took over Task Force Randolph which was renamed Task Force Sundt. It consisted of the 607th TD Battalion (less Co. A and 1st platoon of Co. B), plus Co. A, 712th Tank Battalion, an assault gun platoon of the 712th Tank Battalion and Co. B of the 179th Engineer Battalion. In the area, supporting but not attached, were Co. D of the 712th Tank Battalion and the mortar platoon of the 712th Tank Battalion. Co. B's CP took over the old Battalion CP's position at the Paradise Mine and placed one platoon in indirect firing position at that point.

Units in Task Force Sundt and also platoons of the three gun companies were rotated each week until the end of the month. Each of the gun companies kept one platoon doing indirect firing. Co. A and Co. C each had one platoon supporting the 357th Infantry's attack on Mézières (five miles north of Metz), and on October 30th Co. A sent one platoon into the town. On October 24th the left boundary of the Task Force was moved a short distance further east and the units displaced to secure the new area.

During October 15,105 rounds were fired indirect and 8 prisoners were taken. Forty nine rounds of counter battery were received. Also during this period, the Divisional defenses were strengthened. Co. C laid 1800 yards of concertina wire, and approximately 1800 anti-personnel mine, trip flares and booby traps. Patrols from the platoons made contact daily with friendly infantry in the woods 1500 yards east. Two Germans, nick-named Hans and Fritz, occupied fox holes on the northwest side of Amanvillers. Whenever they showed themselves, the members of one of Co. C's gun crews adjusted artillery on them, using Co. B's guns.

The 95th Infantry Division began to relieve the 90th Infantry Division on November 1st. The 90th Division elements of Task Force Sundt were relieved by 2400 of that day. Effective November 2nd, the 607th TD Bn was relieved from attachment to the 90th Infantry Division and attached to the 95th Infantry Division. Task Force Sundt was dissolved on November 2nd. In preparation for the attack on Metz, three Regimental Combat Teams took over the 95th Division front.

The 379th regimental area (south flank) was extended to the south to the Moselle River and on November 6th Co. B moved to Gorze with platoons there and at Noveant in support of them. On November 6th the 357th area (north flank) was also extended to the north and Co. A moved two guns to the high ground overlooking the Moselle River one mile southwest of Uckange and two guns to the road one mile west of Uckange. The following day two guns which had been firing indirect were moved to Richmont, two miles south of Uckange.

On November 12th, the 607th TD Bn (towed) began to convert to the 607th TD Bn (self-propelled), being equipped with the M-36 tank destroyer armed with the 90 mm gun. The 2nd platoon of Co. A and of Co. C were the first to be converted.

The first main efforts to take Metz began with the crossing of the swollen Moselle River south of Uckange by the 1st Bn of the 377th Infantry Regiment against stiff resistance, the pushing south from Mézières les Metz by the 2nd Bn of the 377th Infantry and the advance southeast and east by the 378th and 379th Infantry Regiments, respectively.

Supporting the 379th's advance on Metz Co. B moved its CP to Vion-



WE CONVERT TO S.P. FOR THE STORMING OF METZ

ville with a platoon at Gravelotte and one in indirect fire at Vionville.

On the 13th of November S/Sgt. Hempel of the 2nd platoon of Co. C led bazooka teams across the greatly swollen Moselle River in boats to support the 1st Bn of 377th Infantry. In addition they carried supplies over that night and the next night in spite of heavy enemy fire, which sunk several boats, and returned on the 15th.

As the 377th continued their attacks south of Mézières toward Metz, Co. A moved its CP to Mézières on the 16th of November with one platoon firing indirect from a position just to the south. The second platoon remained in a ready position to support the 2nd Bn, 377th Infantry, also near Maizieres. The 2nd platoon Co. C, attached to Co. A, advanced with the 3rd Bn, 377th Infantry to the vicinity of La Maxe and then moved forward two hundred yards and fired at Fort Gambeta, two miles north of Metz, rescuing a company of infantry, which had been pinned down by heavy machine gun fire from the fort, and covered its withdrawal . . .

The 3rd platoon of Co. B made a dramatic run on November 16th from its conversion area to the rescue of a force of infantry who were attempting to relieve a Battalion of the 359th Infantry which for four days had been cut off behind Fort Jeanne d'Arc. The relieving column had encountered heavy cross fire from Fort de Guise and surprise fire from Leipzig Farm. It had been thought that Leipzig Farm was neutralized but reinforcements were brought up by a secret tunnel. Lt. Reynolds ably directed his guns in neutralizing the direct fire and then in spite of very heavy mortar fire, with the aid of Lt. Molnar, reorganized the relief column and successfully completed the relief mission. However, their work had only begun for it then became apparent that a bold thrust toward Metz itself offered great possibilities. With the reconnaissance section leading, the infantry riding the destroyers and the engineer's mine removal team accompanying them, Lt. Reynolds drove his lead-spitting column eastward to Moulin les Metz, pausing as darkness fell just 1000 yards from the Moselle River. The following morning the drive was renewed and contact was made with the 378th Infantry in the center of Metz. About three hundred prisoners were taken by this task force. The might of the 90 mm gun proved a decisive factor in disrupting the enemy and encouraging our forces. For their heroic leadership Lt. Reynolds received the Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star and Lt. Molnar received the Silver Star.

On November 17th Lt. Albert C. Knapp of Co. A, after having lead two M-36 tank destroyers in the opening of a route from Woippy to the Moselle River continued south toward the heavily defended North Metz railroad station. The enemy flanked both sides of Lt. Knapp's approach, waited in emplacements to his front and delivered fire down on him from a railroad trestle crossing the road. Lt. Knapp, disregarding the vulnerability of his vehicles' open turrets, manned the 50 cal. AA guns and smashed into the German positions, ruthlessly routing the occupants. Lt. Knapp's initiative greatly assisted in the reduction of all opposition in the area. For his gallantry he was awarded the Silver Star. Two other men to receive this award in the battle for Metz were Sgt. Milton F. Svoboda and Pvt. Clifford H. Ellis, both of Company A, who acted as 50 cal. machine gunners.

The 2nd platoon of Co. C, relieved from attachment to Co. A, was reinforced by one reconnaissance section and moved to the east side

of the Moselle via the Moselle bridge-head and had advanced south to the vicinity of Malroy (three miles north of Metz). The 19th of November was spent in mopping up in Metz; Task Force Bacon having closed on the city from the northeast, while the rest of the Division had closed from the north and west. The Fifth Infantry Division entered from the south and east.

Lt. Colonel Sundt received the Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star for his success in directing the Battalion in artillery and anti-tank support of the 95th Division from November 8th to the 21st in the attack on Metz.

During the week of November 12th to 19th, all platoons had been converted to self-propelled units.

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## THE SIEGFRIED BATTLES

### Racing For The Saar.

On November 20th the 607th TD Battalion was relieved from attachment to the 95th Infantry Division and attached to the 90th Infantry Division for the second time. Co. A moved their CP to Woippy. A Reconnaissance Company was formed at Ste. Marie aux Chenes.

On the 21st of November the Battalion, minus Rcn. Company, marched across the Moselle River at Uckange and moved east to join the 90th Infantry Division. The Battalion CP moved to Monneri (11 miles east of Thionville) with the gun companies in adjacent towns.

The following day the Battalion was ordered to rejoin the 95th Infantry Division and on the 23rd moved back to the Moselle River, where they were joined by Rcn Company and thence proceeded south along the river to the vicinity of Ars Laquenexy (six miles southeast of Metz). The gun companies assembled in towns in that general area.

As the 95th Infantry Division pushed to the northeast, the enemy fought a delaying action back through the Maginot line toward the Saar River and the Siegfried line which bordered on the east side of the Saar. In support of the 377th Infantry Regiment, Co. A, with the

2nd Rcn. platoon attached, moved to Volmerange with two platoons crossing the Nied River and assembling in Boulay Moselle. Co. C, with the 1st Rcn. platoon attached, advanced with the 378th Infantry to Macker with platoons at Momerstraff and Zondrange. The Battalion CP plus Rcn Company, less two platoons, moved to Coucelles Chaussy and then to Varize. Co. B, in reserve, moved to Helstrof.

Passing through the almost undefended Maginot line, the 1st platoon of Co. C, moving into an assembly position east of Niedervisse, was fired upon by an enemy 75 mm AT gun. The track of the leading destroyer was knocked off, but by quick action the crew destroyed the Jerry gun and took 14 prisoners. Later the 1st platoon knocked out three pillboxes and destroyed three enemy 20 mm flak guns near Momerstraff.

The following day the Battalion CP and Rcn. Co., minus two platoons, moved to a railroad station at Teterchen (five miles northeast of Boulay).

For the remainder of the month, the companies, supporting the Regiments, moved on about a seven mile front up to within three miles of the Saar River near Saarlautern.

At one point in the advance the German artillery laid down a fierce barrage from the high, dominating hills southeast of Falck. 1st Lt. George King of Co. C was charged with defending the town pending the arrival of reinforcing infantry. Numerically superior German infantry moved down the southern ridge onto the town as Lt. King deployed his tank destroyer platoon with the few automatic weapons at his disposal into a defensive position. Under a further barrage of artillery and mortars the Germans struck stealthily, endeavoring to infiltrate the American positions, but Lt. King's platoon fought back fiercely and repulsed them. Again and again the enemy repeated his tactics, only to find the defense impenetrable. Credit for the successful defence of Falck against overwhelming enemy numbers was largely due to Lt. King's initiative and gallantry for which he was awarded the Silver Star. Two other Co. C men awarded this medal in the vicinity of Falck were Pvt. Franklin P. Monroe, for retrieving a half-track loaded with ammunition and gasoline in face of heavy shelling, and Sgt. Oscar Kaiser, for evacuating a wounded comrade 800 yards in front of friendly lines while under furious enemy fire.

Just north of Falck one of the most costly single battles occurred. On November 28th the 3rd platoon of Co. C, commanded by Lt. Leroy C. Baker, moved from a reserve position to relieve the 1st platoon, which was supporting the 1st Battalion of the 378th Infantry in Falck. The platoon leader was given the mission to proceed according to a time schedule up the main road from Falck to Merten and to meet the Infantry on the edge of Merten. It was understood that the Infantry was to storm the town by flanking attacks from the north and the south prior to the platoon's entrance into the town. The platoon proceeded according to the time schedule towards the town through artillery fire which was falling along the road. The leading destroyer reached the west end of Merten where it was stopped by an anti-tank barrier. It fired several rounds into the town which was still occupied by the enemy. In an effort to bypass the barrier, the destroyer became bogged in the mud and was fired upon and destroyed by an enemy anti-tank gun. The second destroyer of the platoon, following the first, turned around and made its way back to Falck after the first was hit. The third destroyer received a hit from an AT gun, and, losing a track, it swerved off the road into a ditch where it was set afire by the enemy AT gun. The fourth destroyer had the mission of covering the advancing three. Observing the flash of the AT gun, it attempted to return the fire but the gun failed to function. Trying to turn the destroyer around ended with it also becoming bogged down in the mud. This destroyer was later recovered. The remnants of the platoon assembled in the vicinity of Falck and later returned to the Company CP. Pfc. Benjamin T. Oakley was awarded the Silver Star for voluntarily going to the vicinity of Merten, under heavy shell fire, and assisting in the evacuation of the wounded.

During November the Battalion fired 5590 rounds indirect fire, took 206 prisoners and destroyed the following listed enemy equipment by direct fire.

- 3 Anti-tank Guns
- 6 Anti-aircraft Guns
- 3 Machine Guns
- 4 Pill boxes
- 3 Ammunition Carts
- 2 Light Vehicles
- Several enemy strong points and OP's.

## The Bridgehead

A tremendous job now lay before the Division. Two barriers were in their path; namely, the Saar River and the Siegfried line. This portion of the West Wall lying in front of the 95th Division was as thick as any point on the Western Front.

The Division continued to close on the Saar, meeting small arms, mortar, artillery, and direct fire. If the roads were not blocked by anti-tank ditches, they were blocked by mines and AT guns.

On December 1st a tank held up the Infantry at Ste. Barbara (three miles northwest of Saarlautern). The tank was situated so that direct fire could not be brought on it without suicidal exposure to its fire. A bazooka team, under Sgt. Roy E. Holcomb, crawled toward the enemy tank. Covered by friendly small arms fire, the team moved to within 75 yards of the tank and opened fire, but without effect. Sgt. Holcomb approached from another direction and when he was 50 yards from the tank he again opened fire, partially disabling it and causing it to retreat. As he made his way back to his platoon, another enemy tank moved into the position previously occupied by the one he had damaged. Thereupon, armed with a bazooka, he again crawled toward the tank and fired four rounds at it and partially disabled it but was killed by return fire. His courageous determination and his heroic devotion to duty were of the highest order. In recognition of his heroism he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. — Further attempts to destroy the tank by bazooka fire failed. Lt. Knapp, the platoon leader, then directed Sgt. Rollins, destroyer commander, to fire several rounds of 90 mm through the buildings in the direction of the tank. S/Sgt. Schoessler (then Cpl.), gunner, dismounted from the destroyer and made a foot reconnaissance to determine the gun-target line through the buildings. He reentered the destroyer and fired several rounds into the buildings adjacent to the tank. Again dismounting and going forward through heavy enemy mortar and small arms fire, Sgt. Schoessler ascertained the effect of his fire, returned and fired four additional rounds in the direction of the tank. This firing created a smoke-dust cloud which enabled the destroyer to be moved to a more advantageous position to bring direct fire to bear on the tank. Four more rounds fired through the smoke-dust cloud at the tank caused it to burst into

flames. For his initiative and outstanding bravery S/Sgt. Schoessler was awarded the Silver Star.

Saarlautern, a city of some thirty thousand people, lies mainly on the west side of the Saar River, with the suburbs of Fraulautern and Saarlautern—Roden just to the east of the river. When the 95th Division reached the outskirts of Saarlautern two of the three bridges crossing the Saar in the city had been blown; the one still intact being in the center of the town.

The plan of attack was to occupy part of Saarlautern and then with a reserve force shoot across the bridge and establish a bridgehead before the enemy could blow it.

Co. A, supporting the 377th Infantry Regiment, was the first to reach the Saar. On December 2nd their 1st and 3rd platoons moved to Beaumaris (just north of Saarlautern) and prepared to support any crossing of the river.

Co. B sent its 3rd platoon with the 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry Regiment in their assault on Saarlautern and the 1st platoon moved to the rear of the assaulting Battalion of the 379th and prepared for an early crossing.

On the night of December 2nd, the 379th sent the 1st Bn. across the river in boats, killed the guard on the northeast end of the bridge and cut the wires to the demolition charge. It consolidated its hold on the east bank while an attack launched by the 1st platoon Co. B closely followed by infantry cleared the west bank down to the bridge. On December 3rd Lt. Calvin R. Stone moved his platoon across the bridge to protect the bridgehead. This early crossing made at great risk before the bridge was completely cleared of demolition, and through a curtain of fire, was to prevent the enemy from counter-attacking in an attempt to regain the bridge. Before daylight on the 4th, Lt. Robert L. Arrison moved his platoon across to support the Infantry moving east. When the Germans attacked from the north, he placed his guns to aid Lt. Stone in the defense of the bridgehead. The enemy attacked with tanks and infantry supported by heavy artillery fire. The skillful employment of the M-36's and the 50 calibers machine guns, coordinated with the infantry, repulsed the attacks time after time. A midnight attack, that had as its mission the destruction of the bridge across the Saar, was also repulsed. Four tanks were destroyed with the loss of one TD. For

their superb leadership and gallantry the two officers were awarded Silver Stars.

In the initial attack five tanks approached the bridge. The leading one was hit and burned up. Cpl. Eugene L. LaFountain, Co. B gunner of another TD blanked out due to smoke, pulled out past the burning tank. His destroyer was hit by an overwatching tank knocking off the track. Undaunted, Cpl. LaFountain destroyed the nearest tank. Another round went through his destroyer cutting off Cpl. LaFountain's leg. In spite of his serious wound, Cpl. LaFountain continued to fire until his ammunition was exhausted. For his supreme devotion to duty Cpl. LaFountain was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

Co. C, supporting the 378th in their attack on the southern part of Saarlautern and Lisdorf, sent the 2nd platoon to reduce a road block in one of the streets. One section proceeded to do the job and as the two destroyers moved down the street a window shutter was opened and a German bazooka crew fired on the lead destroyer, hitting it on the turret. A bed roll and the lifting ring set the bazooka round off, preventing it from damaging the destroyer. The covering destroyer fired on several houses in the vicinity causing 35 Germans to run to the street to surrender. On December 5th Co. C supported the successful crossing of the Saar River at Lisdorf by the 378th Infantry, neutralizing several pill boxes, the 3rd platoon knocking out "Teters Pillbox" (containing a 75 mm AT gun) while under heavy enemy artillery fire. This bridgehead was doomed never to be enlarged very much. On the same day the Battalion CP, plus Rcn Company, minus three platoons, moved to Felsberg from Ittersdorf.

Upon reaching the main belt of the Siegfried line the attacking forces were slowed down. To aid in the expansion of the bridgehead Lt. Richard A. Reynolds, Co. B, moved his platoon across the bridge and supported the Infantry, attacking north. He repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire while directing his platoon. On one occasion, while heavily engaged with stubbornly resisting forces, he halted his destroyer in an exposed position and personally rescued members of another crew who were trapped in a burning tank destroyer. During subsequent action, while directing fire against enemy pill boxes, Lt. Reynolds was killed. For supreme devotion to duty and conspicuous heroism Lt. Reynolds was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

The bridgehead continued to expand and the fighting moved slowly into Saarlautern-Roden and Fraulautern, the attackers conducting a systematic destruction of pill boxes and houses being used for strong points. Sgt. Joseph F. Costa, Co. A, was awarded the Silver Star Medal for moving his destroyer across a causeway in Fraulautern in the face of mortar and direct artillery fire in order to replenish badly needed rations and gasoline. In another action on this same date, Sgt. James Sheeran, Co. A, was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action. Disregarding his own life, he left his place of safety to carry a wounded comrade from a street which was under heavy mortar fire to a building where first aid could be administered. All advances were met with very heavy mortar and artillery fire. In a single day 1800 rounds were received in Fraulautern. Co. A relieved Co. B in the bridgehead area, Co. B going to Ittersdorf for maintenance and reorganization. Sergeant (then private) Eugene Esposito, Co. C, promptly took command of a destroyer when his gun commander was killed by machine gun fire. He opened fire on the machine gun, silencing it and killing its crew. He then moved his destroyer forward and annihilated a bazooka team which was situated behind a stone wall. Spotting a flame thrower creeping beside the wall toward his destroyer, Sgt. Esposito opened fire and knocked down the wall, killing the enemy. He then eliminated another machine gun nest. For his heroic and positive action Sgt. Esposito was awarded the Silver Star. On December 9th an enemy tank destroyed an M-36 of Co. A as it crossed a railroad track in Fraulautern.

Co. C continued to fire on pill boxes, houses and OP's that could be seen across the river from the vicinity of Lisdorf. An artillery shell fragment hit a TD of Co. C on the December 13th, causing it to burn. December 17th found Co. C, which had replaced Co. A in the bridgehead, relieved by the 818th TD Bn. Part of Co. C, with the 1st Rcn platoon attached, continued to support the 378th Infantry, firing at targets of opportunity in Ensdorf. The Battalion CP moved to Merten.

On December 21st Co. A and Co. B relieved the elements of the 818th TD Bn and the Battalion moved back to Felsberg. Co. C assembled at Berweiler going into indirect fire positions. The pioneer platoon working with a reconnaissance platoon conducted 81 mm mortar training, firing into Ensdorf. A group of 15 enemy was seen and fire

was placed on them. One was killed, four were wounded and the remainder dispersed.

### The Defensive.

Because of the enemy's penetration into the Ardennes, it was feared that he might launch an attack into our weakest point, the gap between our right flank and the 103rd Division's left flank, an area being screened by the 106th Cav. Group. A reconnaissance for defensive positions was initiated both by the Division and the 607th. The 3rd Rcn. platoon established OP's and listening posts near Werbeln and maintained contact with the 106th Cav. Squadron on the Division's right flank.

On December 25th Co. B assembled in Merten, being relieved by Co. A, and on December 26th the Battalion CP plus Rcn. Co. minus detached platoons, moved to Berus. The 1st Rcn. platoon moved to the right flank of the Division (south of the 3rd platoon) and established their CP and contact with the 121st Cav. Squadron at Carlsbrun. They reconnoitered routes and terrain in the area and located OP's from where it was possible to observe any enemy attack coming out of Forbach (four miles southwest of Saarbrücken). Companies B and C reconnoitered defensive positions in the vicinity of L'Hopital and St. Avold, respectively, to meet any enemy threat. On December 27th these same companies placed platoons in indirect fire positions in Merten and Berweiler. On December 29th the pioneer platoon, supporting the 206th Engineer Battalion, prepared nine road blocks which would be blown in case of an attack in the vicinity of St. Avold.

During the month of December 1945 the Battalion chalked up the following score:

In direct action fired 3719 rounds of 90 mm HE, 1209 rounds of APC.

In indirect action fired 1590 rounds on 86 missions.

Destroyed - 8 tanks (1 MK III, 6 MK IV, 1 MK V).

10 75mm AT Guns

9 Machine Guns

8 20mm AA Guns

90 Pill boxes

Prisoners taken — 94.

During the week January 1-7 the Battalion continued to improve its defense plans. The companies were rotated and the reconnaissance platoons continued to maintain contact with the units on the right flank of the Division. In Saarlautern the hammering at the Siegfried line continued.

On January 7th, Co. B, with the 3rd Rcn. platoon attached, was attached to the 6th Cav. Group, which, with the 94th Infantry Division, was holding a portion of the southern shoulder of the Ardennes bulge. This area was located just northeast of the boundary between France, Luxemburg and Germany and at the edge of the Siegfried line. Co. B moved into an assembly area near Halstroff. After reconnoitering for gun positions they were reattached to the 94th Division on the 14th when they were committed, one platoon assisting in the capture of and then providing AT defense for Tettingen. The Co. CP and other platoons moved to Sehndorf. On January 18th the enemy attacked with undetermined number of tanks and half-tracks. Co. B,



ANOTHER TANK TO OUR CREDIT—A MARK IV

having guns in Tettingen, Nennig, and Besch, repulsed the attack in the Tettingen area, destroying five tanks.

Back around Saarlautern 3rd platoon of Co. C assisted in repelling a heavy enemy counter-attack, losing a destroyer to bazooka fire. On January 14th Co. A had moved to St. Avold ready to go into firing positions in case of an enemy attack and on the 18th assembled near Merten, having been relieved by the 704th TD Bn.

Co. B continued to support the 94th Division until January 23rd when it was relieved by Co. A. Co. B assembled in Merten. On the following day Co. A destroyed five tanks. They were relieved by the 704th TD Bn and returned to Berus on January 25th.

Co. C continued to support the 95th Infantry Division in their attack in the Saarlautern area and the reconnaissance platoons maintained contact with the units to the south.

#### Against The Siegfried Again.

On January 27th the 95th Division was relieved by the 26th Infantry Division and was ordered to assemble in Belgium north of Bastogne. The Battalion, on the coldest day of the winter, marched 150 miles to the vicinity of Hœuffalize, Belgium via Boulay, Uckange, Longwy, Arlon and Neufchateau, with the Battalion CP and Rcn. Co. going into the town of Taverneux.

During January the Battalion destroyed 7 Mk V tanks, 3 Mk IV tanks and 9 pill boxes; fired 2510 rounds in indirect fire. Two M-36's and one jeep were lost due to enemy action.

On February 2nd, 1945 the Battalion was relieved from attachment to the 95th Infantry Division and attached to the 87th Infantry Division. This Division was closing on the enemy as he withdrew from the Ardennes bulge. Passing through St. Vith, Belgium, Co. A, with the 2nd Rcn. platoon attached, moved northeast 30 miles to join the 347th Infantry Regiment in their area near the Belgium-Germany border. The platoons were employed in Berterath and Losheim with the Co. CP in Manderfeld. On February 4th, Co. C, with the 1st Rcn. platoon attached, joined the 346th Infantry Regiment and supported them in the town of Auw, Roth and Wecherath. On February 5th the Battalion CP moved to Laudesfeld, Germany from Schonberg, Belgium.

For the third time the Battalion was facing the Siegfried line. Complicated by mud which made cross country movement impossible, the attack began. Roads became so bad that stretches had to be corduroied to carry traffic.

Co. B, supporting the 345th Infantry, advanced into the pill box area along the Schnee Eifel ridge and took one pill box with .50 caliber machine gun firing. The 1st platoon advanced until all destroyers were stuck in the mud. Two were pulled out and continued on the attack. On February 7th, near Roth, Lt. Calvin Stone led his platoon on foot through heavily mined areas, keeping abreast of the advancing rifle elements. Encountering a well-fortified enemy position Lt. Stone voluntarily advanced alone and threw a grenade into the structure. Following the explosion he charged inside, firing his carbine, killing two and capturing six of the enemy. During the ensuing action, Lt. Stone continuously exposed himself to enemy fire while directing his tank destroyers in locating other enemy installations. For his devotion to



ONE OF THE MANY SIEGFRIED PILL BOXES OUR T.D.'S NEUTRALIZED

duty and courage he was awarded the Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star. The same day Co. B destroyed four more pill boxes and during the next couple of days whittled their way through pill boxes to take Olzheim and Neuendorf. On February 11th Co. C extended its front and relieved Co. B which moved into Division reserve at Wischeid (one mile west of Auw).

Due to the terrible condition of the roads little advance was made and no relief of the forward elements could be accomplished. Co. A fired indirect, Co. C continued to support the 345th Regiment, and Co. B continued maintenance of equipment and supplied men to help construct and maintain roads. The pioneer platoon worked on roads and prepared alternate positions for destroyers. The attack began again on February 26th, but moved very slowly because of the mud and mines.

During February the Battalion destroyed 1 half-track, 2 horse-drawn artillery pieces, 8 machine guns, 5 pill boxes. Fired 1605 rounds of 90 mm in indirect fire.

On March 1st the 1st platoon Co. A, with one platoon of tanks, formed two armored groups consisting of two medium tanks and two tank destroyers. One group was led by the tank platoon leader and one was led by the tank destroyer platoon leader. These two groups moved in support of the Infantry as it assaulted the town of Ormont. After the TD's had fired 26 rounds of 90 mm and 2000 rounds of .50 caliber, the tanks firing about the same amount, the town was captured by the Infantry.

During the next couple of days, the companies hammered their way through more pill boxes of the strongly fortified line. With the key points of Ormont, Neuendorf, and Olzheim taken, the Siegfried line was breeched and resistance slackened.

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## RHINE BATTLES

### The Approach.

The Division advanced slowly eastward along a six mile front extending from Kronenburgerhutte to Neuendorf being held up frequently by mines, blown bridges and artillery. On March 6th the 3rd platoon Co. C and the pioneer platoon was attached to Task Force Muir, which had the mission of capturing a bridge across the Kyll River near Lissendorf, 10 miles away. They advanced rapidly against some artillery and mortar fire and by noon had reached Lissendorf, only to have the bridge blown up in their faces. The third platoon fired at enemy across the river while the pioneer platoon built a footbridge over which the Infantry crossed. The stream was shallow enough to be forded by vehicles. The remainder of Co. C marched in column to the Kyll.

Co. A, moving behind the Task Force, and supporting the 347th Infantry, established its CP at Lissendorf. By March 7th the Battalion CP and Rcn. CP had advanced through Roth and Shonberg to Lissendorf. Task Force Muir and the remaining elements of the 345th Infantry crossed the Kyll River and continued to advance to the northeast through Wiesbaum, where the pioneers were released, thence towards the Ahr River. Co. A advanced across the river and continued as far as Ripsdorf and Hungersdorf, while Co. B continued toward Stadkyll, crossed the river, and took Esch and Feusdorf. By March 9th the Division had cleared the area to the Ahr River. Beyond this other units had raced almost to the Rhine. During the next five days, the Battalion remained in the same dispositions with all companies conducting maintenance.

On March 14th the Division was ordered to march to a position facing Koblenz. The Battalion CP, plus Rcn. Co. minus three platoons, moved to the Bassenheim railroad station, five miles west of Koblenz, a distance of 80 miles.

Koblenz, a city with a prewar population of 90,000 people, lies in the triangle formed by the Moselle River flowing northeast into the Rhine which flows north. The next mission of the 87th Division was

to take this historic city. All bridges across the Moselle leading to the city had been blown isolating it from the west.

Arriving in this new area, Co. A, with the 2nd Ren. platoon attached, stopped in the vicinity of Ochtendung. Co. B, with the 3rd Ren. platoon attached, assembled at Rubenach, and Co. C, with the 1st Ren. platoon attached, went into position near Mulheim.

On March 16th Co. A moved south to the Moselle River to Kolburn and Winningen and supported the Infantry's crossing that night. The next two days the 347th Infantry advanced southeast toward the Rhine, with Co. A knocking out several road blocks and killing enemy personnel defending them. On March 17th the 2nd platoon Ren. Co. with a task force of two TDs from Co. A, two tanks and an infantry platoon, was halted by a road block. When small arms fire was received from well entrenched dominating positions, Pfc. Novakovich, on his own initiative, moved up the hill in an attempt to outflank the enemy. Capturing one German, he returned with the prisoner to secure prompt



CROSSING THE MOSELLE—ON TO THE RHINE



RUINS OF KOBLENZ FROM FORT KONSTANTIN

interrogation. He then led two comrades in a fierce and successful assault upon the enemy positions, killing several Germans and forcing others to withdraw. For his gallantry and leadership Pfc. Novakovich was awarded the Silver Star.

Co. B fired at German positions across the Rhine and Co. C moved its CP and one platoon to Metternick, just across from Koblenz and fired on the enemy in the southern part of the city.

On March 18th Co. C moved across the Moselle to Lay and sent their platoons into Koblenz with the 345th Infantry. By evening they had fired at Fort Constantine.

As the regiments moved south the Division boundary also moved south. Co. B was attached to the 28th Infantry Division and moved to Pladt in Division reserve.

Within the next two days Koblenz was completely taken, Fort Constantine being one of the last points to surrender. The third platoon of Co. C fired 29 rounds of APC and HE and the second platoon



FORT KONSTANTIN

fired 13 rounds APC and 27 rounds HE into the Fort. Immediately, 14 officers and 85 men surrendered the fort to the 345th Infantry. Then the Infantry moved into the city proper knocking out two enemy machine gun nests. During this action Sgt. Thomas C. Johnson, Co. C, was awarded the Silver Star for repairing his gun from the outside of the turret in face of vicious enemy fire, putting it into action again in a very few minutes.

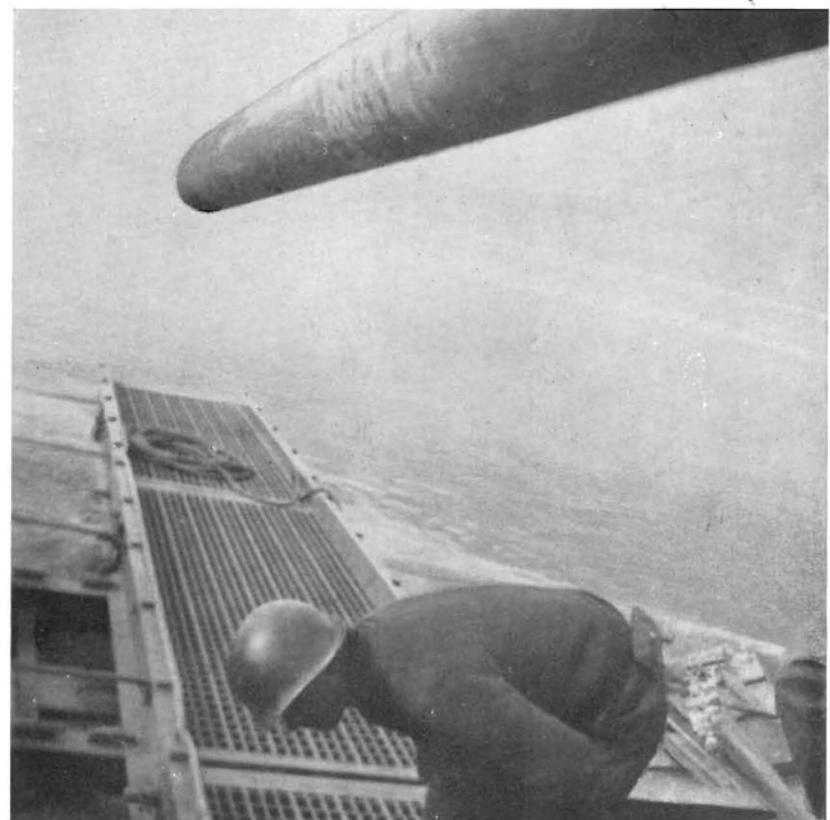
On March 22nd, after Koblenz had fallen, the companies assembled preparatory to moving. Co. B was relieved from attachment to the 28th Division.

#### The Crossing.

The following day the entire Battalion assembled in the vicinity of Norterhausen, 10 miles southwest of Koblenz. The last battles for Germany were about to be fought. Units to the north and south were crossing the Rhine and pushing deep into Germany.

On March 25th the 347th Infantry crossed the Rhine in boats against heavy 20 mm fire, being supported by Co. A firing at targets in the vicinity of Ober-Lahnstein.

Co. C supported the 345th Infantry crossing at Boppard. Later in the day Co. C and one platoon of Co. A were ferried across at Boppard and moved to support the expansion of the bridgehead. Capt. Long, commanding officer of Co. C, was given the job of getting all the



A T.D. PROTECTS THE PREPARATION FOR THE RHINE CROSSING

armor supporting the 345th across the Rhine. Two tanks of Co. B, 735th Tank Battalion and two TDs of the 2nd platoon of Co. C were the first armor working with the 87th Division to cross the Rhine. Co. B later moved across the bridge and assembled, awaiting the 346th Infantry's crossing.

#### First Task Force.

Following the crossing of the Rhine River, German resistance crumbled to such an extent that it was essential to form a hard-hitting, fast moving armored unit to reach into the German rear areas, disrupt communications, cut up German administrative units and installations. Such a force was organized and placed under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Harald S. Sundt and was to be known as Task Force Sundt. Units comprising the Task Force were the 607th TD Bn, less A and C companies, plus Co. A of the 735th Tank Battalion, the 87th



PLANNING THE TASK FORCE



TASK FORCE COMMANDERS ARE BRIEFED FOR TAKE OFF ACROSS THE RHINE