

# **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 Company 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 foot bridge over which the infantry crossed. The stream was shallow enough to be forded by vehicles. The remainder of Company C marched in column to the Kyll.

Company A, moving behind the Task Force, and supporting the 347th Infantry, established its CP at Lissendorf. By March 7th the Battalion CP and Reconnaissance 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. Company A advanced across the river and continued as far as Ripsdorf and Hungersdorf, while Company B continued toward Stadtkyll, 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 Reconnaissance Company minus three platoons, moved to the Bassenheim railroad station, five miles west of Koblenz, a distance of 80 miles.

Koblenz, a city with a pre-war 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, Company A with the 2nd Reconnaissance Platoon attached, stopped in the vicinity of Ochtendung, Company B, with the 3rd Reconnaissance Platoon attached, assembled at Rubenach, and Company C, with the 1st Reconnaissance Platoon attached, went into position near Mulheim-Karlich.

On March 16th Company A moved south to the Moselle River to Koburn and Winningen and supported the infantry's crossing that night. The next two days the 347th Infantry advanced southeast towards the Rhine, with Company A knocking out several roadblocks and killing enemy personnel defending them. On March 17th the 2nd Platoon Reconnaissance Company with a task force of two TD's from Company A, two tanks and an infantry platoon, was halted by a roadblock. 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 a prisoner to secure prompt interrogation. [Figure 6-1, Figure 6-2] 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.

Company B fired at German positions across the Rhine and Company 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 Company C moved across the Moselle to Lay and sent their platoons into Koblenz with the 354th Infantry. By evening they had fired at Fort Constantine.

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

Within the next two days Koblenz was completely taken, Fort Constantine being one of the last points to surrender. [Figure 6-3] The third Platoon of Company C fired 29 rounds of APC and HE and the second Platoon 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, Company 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. Company B was relieved from attachment to the 28th Division.

## **THE CROSSING**

The following day the entire Battalion assembled in the vicinity of Northerhausen, ten 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 20mm fire, being supported by Company A firing at targets in the vicinity of Ober-Lahnstein.

Company C supported the 345th Infantry crossing at below Boppard. Later in the day Company C and one platoon of Company A were ferried across at Boppard and moved to support the expansion of the bridgehead. [Figure 6-4] Captain Long, commanding officer of Company C, was given the job of getting all the armor supporting the 345th across the Rhine. Two tanks of Company B, 735th Tank Battalion and two TD's of the 2nd Platoon of Company C were the first armor working with the 87th Division to cross the Rhine. Company B later moved across the bridge and assembled, awaiting the 346th Infantry's crossing.



Figure 6-1  
Crossing the Mozelle – On to the Rhine



Figure 6-2  
Ruins of Koblenz from Fort Constantin



Figure 6-3  
Fort Constantin

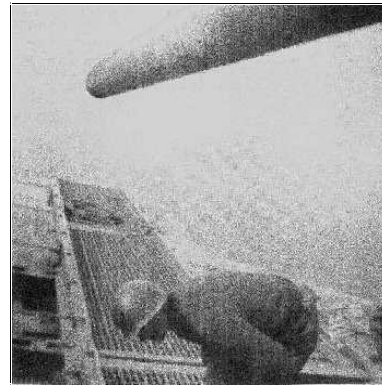


Figure 6-4  
A T.D. Protects the Preparation  
for the Rhine Crossing

## 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 Lt. Colonel Harold S. Sundt and was to be known as Task Force Sundt. [Figure 7-1, Figure 7-2, Figure 7-3] Units comprising the Task Force were the 607th TD Battalion, less A and C Companies, plus Company A of the 735th Tank Battalion, the 87th Reconnaissance Troupe, K Company of the 346th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Platoon Company C of the 312th Engineer Battalion and supported by fires from the 155 mm howitzers of the 335th FA Battalion. The Task Force was divided into three hard hitting companies plus a CP group. Each company consisted of a platoon of tanks, platoon of TD's, platoon of infantry, riding on the armored vehicles, and

a platoon of the 87th Reconnaissance Troupe. The CP group contained the remaining forces. It crossed the Rhine at Boppard on a pontoon bridge and assembled six miles to the northeast at Dachsenhausen which was the limit of the Division advance.

The Task Force's first objective was Nastatten, 12 miles southeast of Boppard. At 0545 March 27th the Task Force took off for Nastatten, the plan of attack being to advance along the high ground to Ruppertshaffen, and thence to Nastatten. By 0830 the Task Force had reached Ruppertshaffen, three miles west of Nastatten, where it assembled and regrouped.

The third Task Force Company, under the command of 1st Lt. Glen J. Doman, 346th Infantry Regiment, made the attack on the town at 0915. The first Company, commanded by 1st Lt. Frank W. Jones, Jr., 735th Tank Battalion, and the second Company, commanded by Captain J. Laverne Nicklas, 607th TD Battalion, supported the attack by fires from the hills west of the town. The third Company's armor was stopped at the Muhl River when the bridge was blown in the face of the advancing reconnaissance elements. The infantry under 2nd Lt. Robert L. Picher, 346th Infantry Regiment, swept through the town and cleared all enemy resistance. [Figure 7-4, Figure 7-5] The Pioneer Platoon commanded by 2nd Lt. Caesar Merlo prepared a ford across the Muhl River. By 1300 the armor of the Task Force crossed with the mission of continuing to the east.

The 2nd Company heading northeast for Holzhausen received heavy 20mm fire, small arms fire, and AT fire coming from the vicinity of the Holzhausen. The third Company attempting to bypass to the north was slowed by darkness and enemy fire. The Task Force assembled for the night one and a half miles northeast of the Nastatten at Buch. During the day they had captured 47 prisoners and advanced eleven miles.

Behind and to the flanks of the Task Force, combat teams of the infantry regiments advanced, the TD platoons being in small task forces. Company A advanced to Bad Ems, passing through Ober-Lahnstein and meeting some resistance and roadblocks. To the south of Company A, Company C advanced with the 345th Infantry to the vicinity of Miehlen, two and one-half miles north of Nastatten, meeting light resistance and some AT and 20mm fire. [Figure 7-6]

The next morning, 28th of March, the Task Force took off again with a new objective, Hahnstatten, 15 miles away. The 2nd Platoon of Company C, 312th Engineer Battalion was attached and the 335th FA Battalion was relieved from direct support. At 0830 the attack on Holzhausen was renewed by approaching it from two directions. No resistance was met and the Task Force headed northeast toward Katzeneinbogen meeting small arms and artillery fire 1500 yards west of the town. The town was enveloped from three sides in conjunction with the 6th Cavalry Group, which was advancing from the northwest. It was entered at 1540 after destroying two 88mm AA-AT guns. With the new objective, Kirberg, the Task Force pushed on reaching Hahnstatten at 1810 and Kirberg at 1900, the only delay being a few abatis roadblocks. The 1st Company pushed east three miles to Daudon-Eufinger and cut the north-south autobahn. During the day two 88mm AA-AT guns were destroyed, 1 prime mover destroyed, 99 prisoners captured and an advance of 18 miles was made. [Figure 7-7]

Company A had advanced with the infantry along the Lahn. River to Limburg, six miles northwest of Kirberg, and Company C had pushed to Hahnstatten meeting no resistance.

At 0930 March 29th the Task Force began their advance to the new objective of Grossen-Linden, 40 miles distant. They reached Niederselters, where a column of the 345th Combat Team, with Company C attached was met. The Task Force bypassed them and pushed through Ober-Brucken,

Munster, Wolfenhausen, Weilmunster, and Kraftsolms where elements of the 9th Armored Division going to Giesson via Grossen-Linden were met. Changing objectives, the Task Force moved south at Oberwetz, to Oberkleen, then to Niederkleen, Lang Gons and Holzheim, arriving at the latter place at 1500. Instructions were received to defend a line – Grosson-Linden, Lang Gons and Pohl Gons. Patrols sent into the woods in that vicinity met little opposition and took numerous prisoners. During the day 210 prisoners had been taken and an advance of 40 miles had been made. [Figure 7-8]

Company A advanced along the Lahn River to Giessen where they met the 9th Armored. Company C in a Task Force with a company of tanks and a battalion of the infantry headed for Butzbach but at Niederseltzer, three miles northeast of Kirberg, they ran into heavy resistance and were held up all day. At 1900 they launched an attack in which Sgt. Sue of Company C destroyed one 75mm AA gun. By 2100 all resistance had ceased.

Captured enemy documents and statements of prisoners indicated that the area in the vicinity of Butzbach was an assembly area for stragglers of the Rhine defenses. Accordingly, on March 30 the Task Force received a mission of securing Hoch-Weisel, three miles southwest of Butzbach, and sweeping the woods to the north and west. At 0800 the 3rd Company moved there and the 3rd Reconnaissance Platoon and the Pioneer Platoon occupied positions between Butzbach and the woods to the west. The day was spent sending patrols through these woods. During the day the Task Force destroyed nine 20mm AA guns, eight 37mm AA guns on 2½ ton trucks, one 40mm AA gun, three 105mm guns, seventeen 75mm AA-AT guns, four 88 AA-AT guns, and twenty-three vehicles. 519 prisoners were taken.

Company C advanced on Brandoberndorf, ten miles west of Butzbach.

On March 31st the Task Force continued to clear the large woods to the west of the Butzbach by first showing their armor and then by the use of combat patrols picked up the disheartened stragglers. 418 prisoners were taken.

April 1st found all missions assigned accomplished, the Task Force dissolved and the Battalion assembled near Kleeberg. During the Task Force's operation, it had taken 1485 prisoners and had advanced 76 miles.

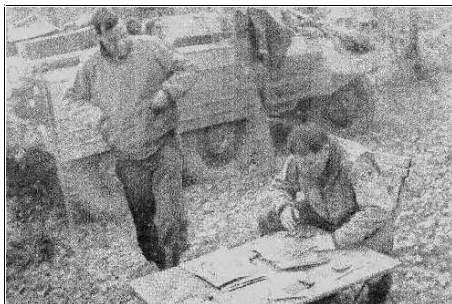


Figure 7-1  
Planning the Task Force

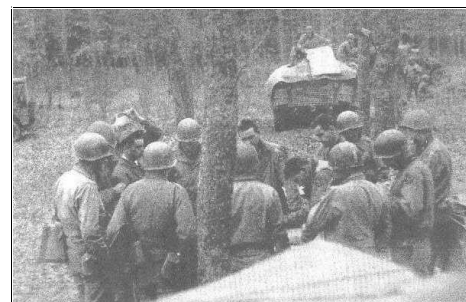


Figure 7-2  
Task Force Commanders are Briefed  
For Take Off Across the Rhine



Figure 7-3  
Typical 607<sup>th</sup> Field C.P.

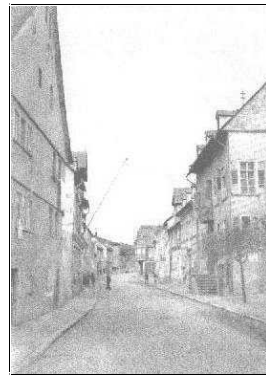


Figure 7-4  
Our First Objective  
Nastattin

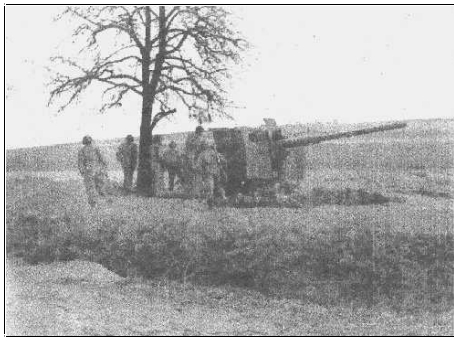


Figure 7-5  
We Knock Out Another AA-AT Gun

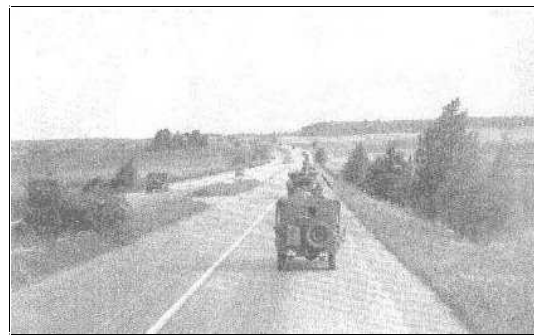


Figure 7-6  
One of TFS's Objectives – An Autobahn



Figure 7-7  
Knocked out Jerry Armored Car



Figure 7-8  
A Lone Woman Watches the Capture  
Of a Frightened Village

## SECOND TASK FORCE

Armored thrusts had raced miles east of the limit of the Division's advance leaving it in the rear areas.

On April 3rd Company A, with the 2nd Reconnaissance Platoon attached, was attached to the 6th Cavalry Group and joined them at Huhlbach 55 miles to the northeast, ten miles northwest of Hersfeld.

Company C, with the 1st Reconnaissance Platoon attached, was attached to the 345th Infantry Regiment and Company B, with a 3rd Reconnaissance Platoon attached, was attached to the 346th Infantry Regiment.

On April 4th the Battalion CP, plus Reconnaissance Company minus three platoons, moved to Ronshausen, 70 miles to the northeast with Companies B and C moving into assembly areas in that vicinity with the infantry regiments.

On April 6th Company A was relieved of attachment to the 6th Cavalry Group and joined the Battalion, assembling at Bebra, three miles northwest of Ronshausen.

On the following day the 87th Division went into action. Company A supporting the 347th Infantry Regiment moved southeast 40 miles to Ober-Schonau, ten miles southwest of Ohrdruf, and placed guns in position near there. Company B moved to the vicinity of Bairoda, fifteen miles northwest of Ober-Schonau. Company C advanced to the vicinity of Tambach, five miles north of Ober-Schonau, where they fired on enemy troops and destroyed one MK IV tank. The Battalion CP moved to Floh, six miles northwest of Ober-Schonau. During the next two days the regiments slowly advanced eastward fighting through heavy forests and hills, meeting some small arms, mortar, and direct fire. By April 9th Companies B and C had moved their CP's to Tambach in the heart of the Thuringen Wald. [Figure 8-1]

On April 10th Task Force Sundt was reconstituted at Tambach. Obtaining clearance from the 89th Infantry Division on the north, it marched through their area which was further advanced than the 87th, passed northeast through Ohrdruf, and Arnstadt. Then the Task Force turned south back into the 87th sector cutting behind the enemy lines. The first opposition was met at Trassdorf, six miles southeast of Arnstadt. Here heavy direct and artillery fire was encountered. The Second Company moved through Ober-Willingen, one mile northeast of Trassdorf, to the high ground 1000 yards southeast where it was stopped. All efforts to advance were met by heavy fire. The First Company was ordered to bypass Trassdorf and drive southwest towards Ilmenau, pushing into the enemies rear. Then the mission was changed, orders being received to head east through Stadtilm to Rudolstadt. The First Company was ordered to the high ground to the northwest of Stadtilm and the Second Company was ordered to move into Stadtilm from Nieder-Willingen. The First moved to attack, but was stopped when heavy artillery and direct fire hit both companies. As darkness fell, the Task Force bivouaced in place for the night.

Company A, in the southern part of the Division's zone, advanced with the 347th Infantry about ten miles, passing through the towns of Oberhof, Elgersburg, Ober-Portitz, Grafinau and to Cottendorf where they met determined resistance. One Hundred SS men armed with small arms and panzerfausts and supported by assault guns and tanks were encountered. When a TD was hit by a bazooka and set afire Sgt. Dominic Karr distinguished himself when he evacuated a wounded man while under small

arms and artillery fire. Disregarding his own safety, 2nd Lt. Grant W. Claymore dashed through the mortar, artillery and machine gun fire to the burning destroyer, climbed inside and rescued his gunner. Returning again to the destroyer which was now aflame with burning ammunition he rescued another man. For his courageous action and extraordinary heroism Lt. Claymore was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. The support lent by the TD's enabled the infantry to take the town with very few casualties.

Company C, with the 345th Infantry, moved through Crawinkel, Plaue, Reinsfeld and Neiderwilligen. The 346th Infantry relieved the 345th, Company C passing to the 346th. By evening the Task Force and the Regiments held a line generally from just outside Stadtilm southwest to Angstadt, a distance of seven miles.

On April 12 the 1st Company attacked Stadtilm from the north and the 2nd Company attacked from the west. The 346th Infantry with the 1st and 2nd Battalions abreast (not part of the Task Force) attacked south of Stadtilm to seize and hold the high ground southeast thereof. All bridges across the Ilm River were known to have been blown with the exception of the main highway bridge, which was not to be blown until the Americans approached. The attack developed with such speed that the bridge was captured intact together with the entire company left behind to defend it. The 3rd Battalion of the 346th Infantry followed the 2nd Company into the town and occupied it.

The 1st and 2nd Companies moved across the bridge and proceeded to the high ground to the east and beyond, passing through Großliebringen and Kleinliebringen. Advancing through Solsdorf, Thalendorf, Kerlau. and Eichfeld toward Rudolstadt, the Task Force met some resistance. Dive bombing by P-47's was used on enemy in Ehrenstein with good results. The 2nd Company encountered abatis on the southwest approaches to Rudolstadt, but reduced these with the help of the Engineer bulldozers. There they encountered heavy small arms and bazooka fire, which destroyed one M-8 but by nightfall had taken the southwest part of the town. The 1st Company moved to Schaala and attacked Rudolstadt from the west in conjunction with the 2nd Company's move to attack, but encountered a defended roadblock and lost a tank to bazooka fire. The 3rd Company moved up to the left of the 2nd Company in Rudolstadt. During the afternoon the air support strafed the high ground to the east and the enemy in the town.

Company A, supporting the 347th Infantry, advanced south of the route taken by the Task Force to Bad Blankenburg meeting little opposition.

Company C, with the 346th Infantry, aided in the capture of Stadtilm and then advanced on the left and echeloned to the rear of the Task Force. They stormed Remda, overcoming small arms and artillery fire, and entered Eichfeld, three miles west of Rudolstadt. The 2nd Platoon, supporting the 2nd Battalion 346th Infantry, closed on the Task Force's CP.

The following day the Task Force continued their attacks on Rudolstadt in conjunction with the 2nd Battalion 346th Infantry, trying in vain to capture an intact bridge across the Saale River. Reaching the river after overcoming small arms, bazooka and sniper fire, they found the bridges had all been blown, as had all the other bridges in the division sector. The Task Force assembled 3000 yards northwest of Saalfeld prepared for immediate movement to take the high ground in the vicinity of Possneck, twelve miles to the east.

Company A, with the 2nd Reconnaissance Platoon attached, forded the stream at Bad Blankenburg with the 347th Infantry and advanced to take Saalfeld finding all of the bridges across the Saale River had been blown. A bridgehead was established.

Two platoons of Company C with two battalions of the 346th Infantry raced ten miles eastward to the Saale and found that all the bridges had been blown north from Rudolstadt to Uhlstadt.

At 1345 April 14th the Task Force crossed the treadway bridge erected at Saalfeld and drove 15 miles eastward to Peuschen, three miles southeast of Possneck, before meeting any resistance. [Figure 8-2] The 1st Company pushed from Schmorda, two miles west of Peuschen, was stopped by bazooka fire at the edge of the woods, losing one M-8 and crew. The 2nd and 3rd Companies, advancing from Wernberg (one and one-half miles south of Possneck), were stopped by intense direct fire 800 yards west of Peuschen. The 3rd Company moved to the high ground north of Peuschen to cover the 2nd Company's movement into the town. The 2nd Company entered followed by the 3rd. When darkness fell, the Task Force CP and the 1st Company bivouacked in Wernburg.

Company A crossed the Saale River behind the Task Force with the 347th Infantry and advanced through Schmorda to Moxa, one and one-half miles south of Peuschen, meeting only slight resistance, but knocking out one 75mm SP gun when Sgt. Esposito's crew turned in a stellar performance.

Company C crossed the bridge at Weissen, north of Rudolstadt, at 1930 and only advanced three miles before darkness overtook them.

The following morning the Task Force dashed eastward meeting little resistance through Taskau, Knau, Plothlen, Dittersdorf, Dragensdorf and Tegau, a distance of about fifteen miles. At Tegau it turned southeast to Lawitz where heavy artillery fire and small arms fire was encountered coming from the east and northeast. The 3rd Company passed the 2nd moving south on the parallel road, one mile to the west, and advanced to Kerschkau where it eliminated scattered resistance. The 2nd Company took the lead again pushing to Lossau and southeast to Lengenbuch, five miles east of Schleiz, where it intercepted a sizable force of enemy moving from the town on foot and in wagons. Joined by the 1st Company all of the enemy were killed, captured or dispersed by this force. Following this shelling the two companies moved east two miles to Thierbach, where heavy resistance was encountered and where they held up for the night.

Company A with the 2nd Reconnaissance Platoon attached, advanced with a 347th Infantry to the vicinity of Schleiz, passing generally through the Ziegenruck, Chrispendorf and Monchgrun.

Company C with the 1st Reconnaissance Platoon attached, moved with the 346th Infantry Regiment to the vicinity of Possneck where they were held up at a roadblock. Clearing it they advanced toward Zeulenroda, not meeting any resistance until they reached Pahren, four miles west of Zeulenroda, where they encountered direct fire. They fought their way east two miles to Klein-Wolschendorf where they spent the night.

The following morning the resistance continued in Thierbach with small arms fire. The 1st and 2nd Companies contacted the Burgermeister and requested the surrender of the town and Garrison on threat of destruction. The request was refused. In the center of the town was a strongly defended enemy roadblock. Disregarding his own safety Captain J. Laverne Nicklaus reconnoitered it and then led the tanks and the infantry into the town and directing the lead tanks fire on the obstacle and the house filled with German troops. While directing these operations Captain Nicklaus was killed by a sniper's bullet.

For his courageous action and devotion to duty he was awarded the Silver Star. The 1st Company pulled back and took positions overlooking the town. When the 2nd Company had cleared, the 1st Company destroyed the town with direct fire, taking 75 prisoners, including a colonel. [Figure 8-3]

The 3rd Company bypassed the town and proceeded across country, bypassing the city of Pauss, going to Unterpirk, Bernsgrun, Frabersgrun, to Steindorf and then racing to the Weisse-Elster River hoping to capture a bridge at Barth Mahlen. [Figure 8-4, Figure 8-5] The 3rd Company closed on the tail of a German artillery battery in the process of crossing the bridge. In the fight that ensued the road was blocked with knocked out artillery, horses and Germans. The delay was sufficient to permit the Germans to blow the bridge. Reconnaissance to the north located the railroad bridge at Cossengrun still intact. Seizing the bridge 1st Lt. Morrow moved his company across and on to Jocketta, Helmsgrun and Gansgrun, where they met intense tank fire. One Sherman tank was destroyed. The Company later moved to Altensalz.. The 2nd Company proceeded to Neuensalz., three miles east of Plauen, fording the river at Barthmahlen The 1st Company moved through the 2nd Company and on to Mechelsgrun. The Task Force CP moved across the railroad bridge, then south to Neuensalz, taken shortly before by the 2nd Company after a sharp fight.

The 1st Platoon of Company A, with the 3rd Battalion 347th Infantry, advanced from Schleiz through Langenbuch, Muhlstroff, Mehltheurer, Syrau to Plauen where they seized and secured a bridge. S/Sgt. John T. Johnson, Company A was given the mission of seizing this bridge across the Weisse-Elster River. He mounted a squad of infantry on two destroyers and led his small task force from the edge of the city through two miles of devastated blocks and almost impassable streets. The smoking tracks of a German tank were a risky but welcome aid in finding the way. Moving rapidly toward his objective he surprised the enemy, seized the bridge and engaged in a firefight with the Jerry's who were firmly established in three buildings over watching the bridge. Covered by the fire of his comrades, S/Sgt. Johnson fearlessly entered the buildings alone and captured one SS officer and ten enlisted men. His award was a Silver Star for gallantry. Also in this vicinity Lt. Daniel M. Auvil of Company A was making a motorized reconnaissance in advance of a task force when he encountered an enemy patrol consisting of a reconnaissance car and two motorcycles. Lt. Auvil opened fire with his machine gun mounted on the jeep eliminating the reconnaissance car and one motorcycle. When his ammunition became exhausted, Lt. Auvil returned to the Task Force, led a light tank forward and directed it in destroying the remaining motorcycle, preventing the enemy from obtaining knowledge of the Task Force. For his heroic action and initiative Lt. Auvil was awarded the Silver Star. The 3rd Platoon of Company A with the 1st Battalion 347th Infantry drove from Langenbuch south through Plauen to Oelsnitz, meeting no resistance, but firing upon fleeing Germans.

Company C with the 346th Infantry headed east with the mission of seizing a bridge over the Weisse-Elster River at Elsterberg. On entering the town they met small arms, machine gun and one round of 88mm fire. Sgt. Benner caught the 88mm flash; Cpl. Green destroyed the gun with his first round. [Figure 8-6] The bridge was seized and the high ground east of town secured.

On April 17th the 3rd Company of the Task Force pushed east and seized Bergen. The 1st and 2nd Companies move to Unter-Lauterbach and Trieb, both northeast of Bergen.

The 1st Platoon of Company A advanced with the 3rd Battalion of the 347th Infantry to Theuma, four miles southeast of Plauen.

The 1st Platoon of Company C with the 1st Battalion 346th Infantry advanced six miles southeast to Treuen, taking it without opposition. The 2nd Platoon with the 2nd Battalion 346th Infantry

pushed on to Leugenfeld, four miles northeast of Treuen, where four light tanks were destroyed by a 75mm Jerry tank destroyer. The panzerjaeger was destroyed by Sgt. Chriske's gun, Cpl. J. T. Wilson gunner, and the Battalion took up a defensive position around the town.

On April 18th and 19th Task Force Sundt remained in place patrolling to the east. Enemy patrols entered each of the company's areas, destroying one M-20 but sharpshooting by Sgt. Stella accounted for the German leader. On April 20th the Task Force, less the Infantry Company, assembled in the vicinity of Neuensalz. [Figure 8-7]

The dash made by this 2nd Task Force Sundt netted 109 miles and 1344 prisoners in nine days. Once the break was made through the Jerry's lines, the scene became a mad rush, fighting through or bypassing defenses – speed was the watchword. To stop was to be pinned down; to continue was to crush Jerry's frugal attempts to delay and leave a string of dead Jerries and burning German vehicles behind. The Germans had pitted the 11th Panzer Division, the so called "Ghost Division" in the 87th Division zone to "stem the tide", but to no avail. [Figure 8-8] The speed with which the Task Force operated was too great to permit a defensive position to be properly set up. 2 tanks, 11 trucks, 4 half-tracks, 3 armored cars, 6 wagons, 3 tractors, 3 motorcycles, 3-75mm guns, and 1-105mm gun were destroyed in comparison with our losses of 1 tank, 2-M8's, 1-M20, and 1 half-track.

During the two week period April 23-May 6, elements of the Battalion remained in defensive positions, conducting maintenance of equipment. Very few changes of locations were made. On May 6th Task Force Sundt was dissolved; its mission completed. The battalion elements remained in assembly positions near Neuensalz.

The most terrible war of all time was drawing to a close. Junctions between the Americans and Russians were imminent all along the front. To prevent unnecessary casualties limiting lines were established beyond which no one could advance. For the 87th Division it was the Mulde River. On May 6th the 347th and the 346th Infantry Regiments, with Companies A and C in support, advanced about twelve miles east against slight resistance. On this drive Sgt. Charles P. Patnude, Company C, encountered a very effective roadblock at the railway underpass in the vicinity of Falkenstein. Two box cars had been removed from the railroad, placed across the road and covered by artillery, mortar and machine gun cross-fire. Sgt. Patnude, taking his destroyer into the underpass, pushed the boxcars apart so he could fire at the hostile machine guns. After knocking out the machine guns Sgt. Patnude and two crew members, while still under heavy mortar and artillery fire, dismounted and hooked a cable from the destroyer to the railroad cars and pulled them to the side of the road, enabling friendly troops to advance. For his courage and leadership he was awarded the Silver Star. After reaching their objectives, patrols were sent to the Mulde River taking hundreds of prisoners. On May 7th the Battalion CP, Reconnaissance Company and Company B moved to Fredrucksgrun, four miles southeast of Falkenstein. On the 8th and 9th Companies A and C assembled with the Battalion at Fredrucksgrun. Peace had been signed. [Figure 8-9] A brilliant record was closed. The greatest of all wars was finished and the lights went on again all over Europe.

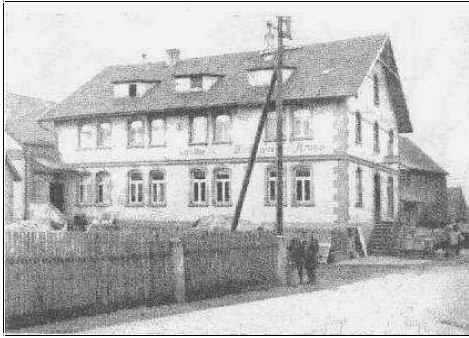


Figure 8-1  
Typical C.P. in Germany 607<sup>th</sup>

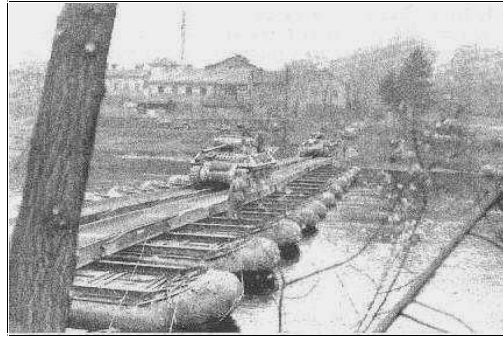


Figure 8-2  
Crossing the Saale at Saalfeld

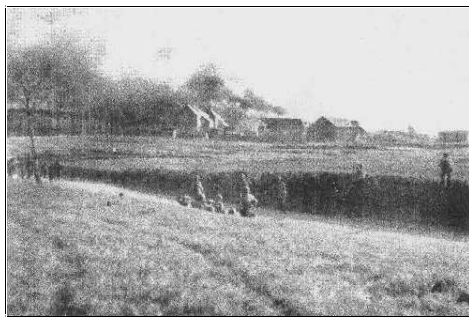


Figure 8-3  
Thierbach Burns-  
A Monument to Captain Nicklas



Figure 8-4  
Liberated D.P.'s near Barth



Figure 8-5  
Passing through the Streets of  
Rodewisch on the Way to  
German Held Auerbach



Figure 8-6  
Last Armored Vehicle Destroyed by 607.  
Company C Destroys a German T.D.



Figure 8-7  
Radio Contact with the Russians  
from Neuensalz



Figure 8-8  
The War's End.  
A German Division Surrenders

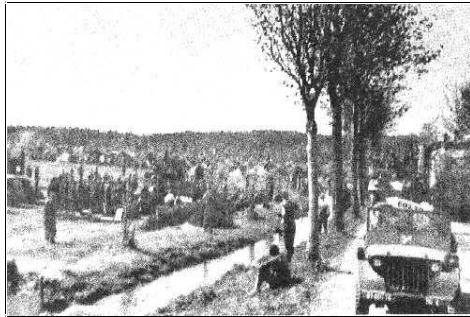


Figure 8-9  
Mass Surrender after Peace Was Signed