

COMBAT HISTORY

OF THE

344th FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

FOREWORD BY EDITORS

The historian, amateur or expert, must write from fact; when, where, how and who. From these must be sifted the necessary ingredients to make our history accurate. To make history readable there is a need for imagination and a sense of time. In fixing a particular scene or event on paper we need facts and figures. In order to make the event one with many we need continuity. To one man the landing on the Normandy beach may be the most memorable event of the first month in France. To another some happening in July may be the high point; but there is a lapse of thirty days between the two dates – days equally important to a great number of men. That is our job; to fill the gap not only between dates but also to recall and record days and dates vital to this history. If there are omissions, remember that there were no recording machines carried in combat. Our memories are not infallible. Keep in step with us and you may recall things that you have forgotten. We realize that all have their own stories, own experiences to relate. To make this writing a personal record we would need a book encyclopedic in scope. If we can keep this work somewhere between the objective and the personal we shall accomplish our aim.

The Editors

Chapter I

The 344th Field Artillery Battalion, an organic unit of the 90th Division, having been demobilized after World War I, was reactivated on March 25, 1942, at Camp Barkeley, Texas, by a cadre of already trained men from the Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

From this point on an intensive training schedule was carried out through the summer and fall with numerous recruits and also some depletions. By Christmas the Battalion was up to fighting strength.

After the Christmas celebration was over there followed a month of field problems out on the range around Barkeley, and then we shoved off for Louisiana maneuvers, which were against the 77th Division. These maneuvers lasted all of February and March, and gave us a taste of what we were supposed to do in the real thing. We returned to Barkeley on April 4th and started polishing up the rough spots uncovered by those "games".

During the training period, when furloughs were also given, we went out on several service practices and also more field. In May we went to Brownwood, Texas, for our artillery GHQ test. This outfit did a grand job, and along with the other units of the 90th Division Artillery, we put a record down, that as yet, has been second to none.

Returning again to Barkeley we sweated through-out the summer months and then headed for Indio, California, where we spent four months of hard training in the desert. The desert taught us to respect the supply problem and also gave us our first acquaintance with Army field rations. During the time spent out there we maneuvered against the 93rd Division, a colored outfit.

Word came down to us in late December that we would shortly head east, where we would all get furloughs right away. The place that we were to go to was Fort Dix, N. J. then the rumors started, "Boys this is it! We are heading out!" And many other such remarks. We left for Dix on the 2nd of January, arriving there on the 7th. Furloughs started at once and were completed by the end of February.

Now that furloughs were over with we were well on the way to being prepared for a POE. Many inspections and the big job of having everything in tip top shape was at hand, plus special classes in applying the finishing touches to our two years of training. We set out for camp Kilmer, N.J., on the 17th of March. Spent five days there and then boarded the S. S. John Erickson, formally known as the Swedish American liner Kungsholm, sister ship of the Gripsholm on the evening of March 22.

After much delay and confusion we finally set sail for the European Theater of Operations, landing in Liverpool, England, on the 9th of April, Easter Sunday, after an extremely quiet crossing.

At the docks we got our first taste of English friendliness, what with their band playing their welcoming themes and all the shouting back and forth. While embarking on the train for our new camp the Red Cross handed out coffee and doughnuts and gum to all the boys. When they were through the train gave a mighty shrill blast and off we lurched for our new camp, Davenport, near Wolverhampton.

While we were at Davenport we received all of our sectional equipment and everything that was not given to us at our POE. We went through a good physical conditioning. And after a month of this sort of training we headed for Sennybridge, South Wales, where we did some firing on the artillery range. During our stay we were in contact with many "Tommys" and learned a little more about them. At the end of the week of firing, out in that typical wet, raw weather that the United Kingdom is so well-known for, we headed back to Davenport supposedly to resume our previous training. When we got back we were told to take only that equipment we would need right away for we would be moving out in a few days. 10 days later we moved through several towns on a long motor march down to what is known as a marshaling area, Cheptsow, a town close to Newport, on the Bristol Channel.

At once activity was stepped up to a lively pace. Our wanderings were limited and much paperwork had to be done. Amazingly enough our "Chow" improved greatly, accompanied by such cracks as "fattening for the kill" and many others. Extra classes on first aid, gas, and our own particular jobs were being held, and a few speeches from visiting firemen telling us that the "chips were down".

In the last few days of our stay at this place no one was allowed in or out of the camp. On the 28th of May the truck drivers took all the heavy equipment down to the docks and loaded them on the liberty ships that were to take us to our objective, and the battalion followed on the train, June 1st.

We stood off Newport for at least 48 hours while waiting for our convoy to be made up and then sailed down the channel and around Land's End into the English Channel.

On June 4th, a day of much excitement for all of us we were briefed by our officers. That caused plenty of talk among the boys for we knew that at last we were to get a crack at the much-hated enemy. We were to land in France behind the assault division. Two years of patient waiting and now the time had arrived for everyone to prove his mettle.

June 6th was a big day for everyone. At home the folks were all in church, while everybody was tense, expecting most anything to happen. Early in the evening the skipper of the boat called all hands aft to tell us that the beachhead landings and the airborne had all been initially successful, but also that the American Fifth Army had taken Rome. The big thing in everyone's mind now was, when were we going to land, for the land was not yet in sight and our planes were shuttling back and forth all day long across the channel, and our destroyers were doubly alert as they cut the water around us.

The morning of the seventh at approximately 0200 we were all alerted for submarine attack. One had been located in our vicinity and our "Greyhounds" were out after it. After a few moments, needless to say anxious ones, we were told to go back to bed. Later that night some planes flew over but no calling cards were dropped and so no alert was sounded. That morning, just as it was getting daylight some of us went up on deck to watch for the sight of land. Soon a faint dark line could be seen in the distance. We were approaching the shore of France. It was not very long after that when we began to hear the heavy guns shooting toward shore. When the ship hove in closer we saw that it was a big "Battlewagon" and later found it to be the USS Texas one of the ships so badly damaged at Pearl Harbor, showing the axis just what it was made of, and typifying the "Yankee spirit". This was D plus 2 and we were swinging anchor off of Utah Beach. Looking around gave us the biggest thrill and impression yet felt as to our future combat power. Boats of all descriptions as far as the eye could reach, accompanied by an umbrella of Air Corps, all before this tiny strip of land. As the sun came up the haze cleared up more and more.

The huge barrage balloons, like great sausages, swung from their cables, an ever present reminder that the forces of Hermann Goering may come at any time. Slowly our ship moved through channels, cleared of mines, to reach our anchorage in closer to the shore. Many were anchored permanently: here a destroyer down by the stern, there a landing craft's bow sticking out of the water like a shark's fin. From the flying bridge of the ship an airplane spotter, with powerful glasses, swept the skies continually. Naval guns fired tremendous salvos shoreward. The beach was littered with landing craft and knocked out vehicles. An occasional German shell burst on the beach. Yet there was more than the strangeness. There was a lack of war. The sky was filled with aircraft – allied aircraft. The water was filled with fighting craft – Allied naval craft. We knew what it cost to take the beach, but we had not seen it taken. We knew that inshore a few yards, or perhaps a mile, thousands of men were fighting for a few feet, a yard of breathing space. The sun swung from east to west. A few planes slipped out of formation and crashed into the sea. A minesweeper, hunting for its deadly loot, blew up and sank within a minute. Suddenly a landing craft came alongside, vehicles and men were loaded – you move toward shore, this was it.

Those that went ashore the first night included most of the radio, wire and detail men from the various batteries. We learned that first night that the Luftwaffe did most of their work after dark. Those who witnessed the display of ack-ack fire over the beaches of Normandy shall not soon forget the drama and sudden shock of massed fire; nor shall they forget the slow drive along strange woods through a strange country, towards a strange and hazy destination.

The ninth of June the firing batteries came in, and Lt. Andrews, A battery, and Lt. Lasher, B Battery, forward observers, went up with the infantry. At 1045 we fired a 15 minute preparation on a

road junction near Chef De Pont for the 82nd Airborne Division. Along with the support of the 345th Field Artillery Battalion this was the first firing done by the 90th Division Artillery. Fox hole digging was one of the important duties; no prodding was necessary.

June 10 and 11th was spent in position near St. Mere Eglise. The Luftwaffe made a call on the night of the 10th and the morning of the eleventh – a call of death. Four dead and 16 wounded. A false gas alarm was given during this attack. Numerous incidents relating to this alarm can be recalled by many, the 20 casualties had a sobering effect on all. From this position the battalion fired on the areas held by the enemy near the Merderet River. Strong enemy artillery fire was reported falling in this sector. Our mission was to neutralize that particular area. Made a lateral movement to Chef du Pont on the evening of the eleventh, where we continued to fire heavy concentrations in support of the infantry. There were paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne in our battalion area. These men were the remnants of the thousands dropped on D-Day. They had fought continually since landing, the casualties heavy. Their parachutes and wrecked gliders dotted the small fields of Normandy. The hedgerows were the traps from which they had fought and died. Heavily armed, and battlewise, they continued to fight along with the infantry of the various divisions whenever contact was made. Many the night their voices growled out of the darkness: "keep that damn noise down. Where the hell you think you are? Damn artillerymen."

June thirteenth – the battle for Etienville and Picauville was well underway. Here the Allies hit them with everything in the book. It was here that Lt. Andrews won his recommendation for the Silver Star. Lt. Andrews, an artilleryman, led a platoon of doughboys to the attack, after their officers had become casualties. Lt. Lasher was killed this day while driving through Picauville by one of our own bombs. That night we fired a big concentration for a river crossing by the 82nd Airborne. It was a successful mission.

On the fifteenth of June we moved to Amfreville to support the 357th Infantry, which was between the 4th and 9th divisions, who later pinched us out. We remained there until the night of the eighteenth when we made a night move to the vicinity of Gourbesville. This was a night of slow movement and great suspense, as roving German planes flared the roads. The days in Normandy were long, the nights short; the men were tired and rest came in short doses; a night march increased attention and put the men on edge. As the flares turned our cloak of darkness into well lighted highways, the men huddled lower in the trucks. The ghostly light emphasized the fatigue lines around their mouths and gave their features a harsh and distorted appearance. By dawn the batteries were all in position, camouflage nets in place, ready to fire.

It was here at Gourbesville that the 79th Infantry Division came up through us and continued the attack.

On the night of June 21 we moved to the south and joined up with 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions to take up an active defense of the lower part of the peninsula. In going to this area we had to pass through several small towns, one being Etienville.

Up to this time we had been under VII Corps control but now we went into the VIII Corps. This area was to be occupied until the plans for large-scale attacks towards Periers had been completed. But Hill 122 and the Foret de Mont Castre were ahead. This was to be the most important battle in the Normandy Campaign.

When we were first in a new position very little firing was done, for we had been instructed to keep the amount of artillery as much a secret as possible. So for that reason the entire sector was very quiet until the end of June.

July first was a day very similar to the last few days, rain and sun, rain and sun. That day we fired better than 900 rounds, more than we had shot for several days. The Service Battery ammo train has had a rather ticklish job crossing the bridge at Cretteville. Apparently the "Hun" had it well bracketed at all times, much to the consternation of all travelers. The air activity, ours thank God, has been rather good, considering the weather. One can well imagine the thoughts that go through Jerry's mind when "Jabo"

starts one of his screaming downward journeys. All the prisoners taken claim him as the most feared along with artillery, whose massing they couldn't fathom.

Though July 2nd was much the same as July 1st, there was much more activity around the battalion area, indicating the preparation of a big drive; heralding the ultimate doom of Germany. Liaison officers from various outfits that were to support us in the coming action arrived during the day to talk over plans. Our mission was to support the 358th Infantry in taking the high ground through the Foret de Mont Castre and then drive toward Periers. This drive included the 82nd, 79th and 90th Divisions. Attached to our combat team was part of the 712th Tank Battalion and one platoon of the 86th Chemical Mortar Battalion.

July 3rd broke as a dark dreary day, with a very low ceiling, but the attack still went off on the designated time, 0515, with a terrific corps artillery "serenade", opening a pathway, or should we say a swath for those unbeatable "footsloggers". The final objective, Coutances and east looked a long way off, and a very costly one too. Immediately to our front was the highest point in the peninsula, Hill 122, whose approaches were covered by dense forest, and heavily guarded by the enemy.

On the first day of the attack our battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Merton E. Munson was wounded by mortar fire and had to be evacuated, leaving Major Charles Conn in command. Lt. Bovard and Andrews were also made casualties during the days hard fighting. Besides the tenacious quality of fighting by the enemy, rumored through P.W. channels to be paratroopers used as infantry. The doughboys had no air support because of the poor weather and their progress was slowed down by much swamp and marsh. After firing a great many rounds throughout the day we heavily interdicted the roads leading into the hill and behind it.

After snatching a few winks here and there the attack was resumed along with promise of good weather for at dawn it was clear, which meant that our planes would be out to pound away at the enemy too. The town of Leseey, right under the hill where every move could be seen by the ever watchful enemy, was our objective for the day. The objective was taken shortly after noon after we had poured out a big concentration around it.

One rather amusing incident at noon on the fourth. We were preparing a fire mission that was to include all the different colored smokes in our possession for a little surprise celebration of the fourth when all hell broke loose around us. Machine guns, rifles, pistols and all the sidearms known in our army opened up. We all ducked into our foxholes, grabbing our weapons as we did for we did not know what to expect. One minute the field was alive with men, the next minute there wasn't a soul in sight. Pretty soon the phone rang and someone could be seen cautiously making his way to it, making sure that he did not expose himself anymore than necessary. The call was to inform us that everyone could fire his side arm at noon to celebrate the fourth, by order of the Commanding General. We all guessed that everyone had been notified except us. What a relief to us, and amusing too, everybody had a different story to tell in connection with the outbreak. One person swore it was a plane, another thought a combat patrol had come upon us, and many other stories. That evening we fired smoke missions for the P-47s as they were out on the prowl. Though they did some good bombing they still did not silence the 88s that were coming this way. That job of silencing the 88s was a specialty of Lt. William Matthews and his observer. He would go up in his liaison plane and the shooting would cease at once. Also managed to knock out several guns in this manner. Our battalion executive Captain A. J. Danovsky liked to go up just before dusk with Lt. Matthews and look for guns and enemy fire. Thus giving the FDC plenty of targets to fire on. That day we fired well over 1900 rounds. Late that night we received word that Lt. Cantini and two members of the crew had been made casualties while up forward. Normandy seemed to be exacting a rather heavy toll of artillery forward parties.

July 5th was a clear day with an occasional thunderhead appearing. On this day we went over to support the 357th Infantry, our own infantry had been pulled back into reserve, after making their initial objectives, with heavy losses. In order to give good support we had to move in behind the main effort. Lt. Cross, C battery forward observer and his crew hit a mine while going up to relieve Captain Lippard,

C Battery commander, and had to be evacuated. While all this was going on we were very active in firing until we moved. Our battalion fired around 1900 rounds that day. More and more as the days went by, we began to realize just what war was, and we can all say that we're glad to be in the artillery, instead of the infantry.

July 6th brought around several new experiences for this battalion. The first pertained to the worn out tube B battery had on one of the guns. They were immediately given a new tube. Another new experience was the white bread received at supper, the first since the United Kingdom. The third, and the most serious was that of firing not only interdiction during the dark hours, but also firing many rounds to prevent loss of already highly paid for gains. We had been rather quiet all day having been given a few interdiction targets, until shortly after dark. Around 2330 a liaison officer called up screaming for artillery along one side of Hill 122. Type of target: enemy movement and counterattack. We immediately alerted the batteries and a few moments steel was flying all over the desired area and we forced Heinie back into his hole. That kept up until somewhere close to 0300. Later in discussing what happened during the morning we came to the conclusion that this particular fight was about the bloodiest we had ever been a part of in all of Normandy.

July 7th the Heinies not only tried a few attacks during the day, but also brought some of their tanks into play; but they also dispersed. The colonel came back to the outfit today to resume his duties and also a new outfit lent support to us, the 28th Field Artillery Battalion, medium outfit from the 8th Division. Between 1200 and 1500 we pushed back some more Heinie attacks.

The seventh saw our combat team come back into the fight, and so our mission was to go in direct support of them. 100 prisoners were brought in today and all seemed to say the same thing that the American artillery was too much for them. They also said that it had had terrible effect on their buddies. It was here that we discovered what we could really do with a fuse delay and a high charge, for they did not like our "time fire". The total ammo spent this day was 2700 rounds.

The eighth was moving day for the 344th, and though it was only a short distance, it was still to the front, and any move that way is always encouraging. Our move took us through Leseey and St. Georges, both very badly smashed, to a small group of farm buildings between Hill 122 and St. Georges. No sooner had the battalion set up for future missions when Heinie artillery started whizzing all around. To date 1448 prisoners had been taken.

On the ninth a remarkable trick was pulled with our artillery, through the quick thinking of Captain F. R. Jones, our Assistant S-3. The 3rd Battalion, 358th Infantry was lost in the Foret de Mont Castre, surrounded by enemy and wished to get away from there but did not know what direction to take. Colonel Bealke, the battalion commander of the 3rd, radioed into us to fire some kind of an orientation round so that he could find his location. Captain Jones told them we were going to register with green smoke so as not to endanger anyone. So with the colonel doing the adjusting we fired a regular registration overhead and when the rounds were bursting right over the 3rd Battalion's head we ceased firing and Captain Jones took the adjusted data from the computer and plotted it on the fire chart. Then he sent the adjusted coordinates to the colonel thus enabling him to lead his battalion out of trouble. To our knowledge this was the first time smoke was used in just such a manner.

For the last few days the weather had been most miserable and wet, causing our guns to slide around a great deal, and making it difficult for the cannoneers when big shifts were necessary. July tenth was no exception to the weather and little activity was reported, except for both our artillery and that of the enemy. Every once in a while a round would whine over us and head for the rear and we would sigh with relief. Unfortunately Captain Cruise and his men in Service Battery would have to sweat out those "overs".

On July twelfth we were informed that our combat team had made more progress than any other outfit, especially the 3rd Battalion, who had reached their objective on the other side of Hill 122 and were on the banks of the Seves. The cost had been heavy and to those boys who got through that engagement it will always stick in their minds as a living hell. In order to lend the best support to our

now advancing infantry we had to move approximately 3 miles, one of our better moves in the Normandy campaign. In reaching our new position we had to pass through bitterly fought over territory. The forest was almost completely stripped of limbs and foliage, the grim testimony to the savage fight that took place there. Bodies, both Yankee and German were stacked like cordwood, a heavy pungent odor of death clinging to the area. Many bodies were still in foxholes, caught by time fire and tree burst. Many were killed by concussion.

While we was setting up in the new position Cpls. Mutaschink and Maines came across a wounded Heinie paratrooper, abandoned better than sixty hours before. He told his captors that his entire regiment, because of some difficulty with the high command had been thrown into the fight as regular ground troops and had only been in combat for a week. They had been ordered to withdraw to the east bank of the Seves and take up a defensive position. We were now just 1500 yards from the front, within their mortar range, though none were used against us, for they had withdrawn their heavy equipment and were using their 88s.

And so ends another battle, bloody and costly to both sides, later to be known as the battle for Hill 122 and the Foret de Mont Castre. In winning this ground we gained one of the highest points in the Cherbourg Peninsula from which an observer could see the ocean on two sides when the atmosphere was clear.

Even though the battle for the most important piece of ground had been finished the Heinies were still throwing a few rounds our way. On the fourteenth artillery not only beautifully bracketed our CP but also managed to knock over one of A Battery's machine guns, fortunately the gunner heard the round coming and was in his hole when the shell landed. On this day our firing slowed down considerably, 1000 rounds in all. That afternoon we moved to Gorges, still hot from the short struggle that went on in the town. We were to take up an active defense in this area until the flanking outfits came abreast of us.

Apparently the Germans had a little artillery close by for on that night we received a good portion of their day's quota of ammo in and around the town. B Battery had one close call when after dark the left front wheel of their detail truck was knocked off by an 88. The battalion survey section upon waking in the morning found a number of perforations in the Hedgerow next to where their foxholes were located, ones that had not been there the night before. It is truly amazing what confidence one has in a foxhole.

The 358th Infantry was now pulled out of line for a rest, clean clothes and some good hot chow, so our mission though still a defensive one was in general support of other outfits on line. In this position we all had a big treat, through two of our boys, Sgt. J. A. Hathcoat and Corporal Arnold Standaford, who in their wanderings around the area came across a small flour mill. In looking further they found plenty of buckwheat and after tinkering around a bit they got the mill running. The result was that the next morning we had buckwheats for breakfast, our first hotcakes since the United Kingdom, and though they were a little gritty everyone enjoyed them.

Saturday nights always seem to be our "hottest". All had been quiet throughout the day, but shortly after dark a Jerry plane buzzed our area and dropped a bomb to close for comfort. Never knew that there were so many people in one building, especially the message center. They came pouring out of there like rats leaving a sinking ship, hysterics and all. Many were reluctant in going back for quite a while for fear the Jerry would return. But the rest of the night was quiet.

Sunday was, according to the word of our Lord, a day of rest and was very inactive and the boys took advantage of it by doing much washing of clothes and also themselves. In the afternoon, for those who wished both mass and Protestant services were held. That night it was a different story. Just before dark the air became filled with a high-pitched scream of "incoming mail" with Heinie artillery playing the part of the mailman. Rounds began to land all over town and pretty soon our position was well bracketed. The headquarters kitchen truck was hit in several places by shrapnel of close landing shells and over in another spot in the same area a boy was killed by a single stray piece of flying steel.

On the following morning headquarters moved to the outside of town and none too quickly, for no sooner had they moved when rounds came in covering the whole of the area just vacated. All the firing batteries also looked for alternate positions, but did not move.

Between the eighteenth and twenty-first nothing particular happened, though preparations were being made for another attack. This time it was a strip of ground referred to as the "Island", for it is bounded by several small streams, and located between the towns of Seves and St. Germain Sur Seves. H-hour was to be on the 22nd.

The afternoon of the twenty-first there was quite a bit of excitement through the battalion area. C Battery received a large amount of artillery fire, 108 rounds in all. The peculiar thing was that 70 rounds were duds. Immediately we thought of the forced labor the Germans had, and came to the conclusion that some clever sabotage had not only been done, but also had taken good effect. Another part of the excitement was the story of the bomb attempt on Hitler's life, and the mass purge of all high-ranking German army officers. Also heard that there had been quite a shakeup in the Japanese home government, caused by repeated losses. Soon everyone was wondering who would throw in the towel first.

At 0600 the next morning the attack started with our combat team making the main effort. Lt. Saul Bauer and his crew from A Battery were with the 1st Battalion, Lt's. Fishbein and Lisecki, were with the 2nd, and Lt. Coleman was with the 3rd. The day was one of pouring rain, and therefore observation was poor. The action started off in good fashion with the better part of two battalions getting onto the island after a long preparation delivered by all our artillery, but soon the Germans, who were well dug in opened up with everything they had, wheeling their tanks and SP's up to the front and inflicted heavy casualties. After 2200 we lost all contact with the 2nd Battalion. That evening after it cleared up a bit Captain Danovsky and Lt. Matthews, our impromptu "Artillery knockout team", went up in the plane and were soon playing hob with the enemy mortars and artillery. That night we set many fires burning in their gun positions, and things quieted down a little. Still no word from the 2nd Battalion, but we still had hopes of hearing from them before the night was up. Then we realized that not all was well up there. The 2nd Battalion was in real trouble and we could do nothing about it. Finally the next morning we heard what had happened. The 2nd upon reaching the island were immediately set upon by everything the Heinies could throw at them, cutting them off from all avenues of escape except one, back over the stream that had just crossed. The casualties had been heavy, but a few did manage to get back, long after dark. Even our liaison officer had been unable to get up to the 2nd because of the terrific enemy curtain of fire that have been laid down between the back areas and the island.

After this type of attack had failed the troops were pulled back and new plans were in the making; big ones for an all-out attack all the way to Periers, 10,000 yards away.

In preparation for this big attack the infantry were going to use a loudspeaker to see if the Heinies would surrender, thus stopping much loss of blood and life. The role we had in this little affair was to provide a smokescreen for those that wished to surrender. This was to prevent their own troops from "harassing" them. After much trouble with knocked out wires etc., the infantry delivered their message and we laid the smoke down. Immediately the German 120 mm mortars and artillery started dropping in on the screen that we had set up. Though the place was hot there were a few that managed to get through. The P. W.'s claimed that artillery had really raised hell with they're eating, for we had destroyed their field kitchens, denying them hot meals for several days.

On the twenty-fifth we witnessed the greatest all-out bombing that ever took place in our sector. There were over 3000 planes in the raid, and as we all stood around watching the attack, the ground shook as if a real earthquake was taking place. The target was the St. Lo-Periers highway, and territory on either side of the road. At the beginning of the raid there was much flak that went up to meet the planes, but towards the end of it, when the Thunderbolts and Mustangs started strafing, flak ceased filling the air with its deadly blossoms. Later we learned that due to a few short bombs General McNair had been killed, a loss that all regretted.

The VIII Corps was to jump off with the 79th, 8th, 90th and 83rd Divisions abreast, and were to move south of the V Corps, thus encircling and heading to the east.

A big fight was expected the following morning, but the enemy withdrew from the island on the night of the twenty-seventh and so when we fired a large concentration for the jump off, we fired at a bunch of empty foxholes. The afternoon of that day, the twenty-eighth, we moved to La Buisson, a small town to one side of the island. On our road march to this new position one could readily see why the artillery had little effect on the enemy. They dug their holes on the side opposite from where the shells were coming. Their system included what looked like a bunch of rabbit tunnels so that they could go from one place to another without exposing themselves. Shells would come in and just bounce off, exploding in the air, harmlessly. White phosphorus was the one shell that had effect for it would set things ablaze.

After setting up in this new place a few rounds came in, but other than making a few people jittery, there were no bad effects. The only casualty in this position was a boy from C Battery who managed to walk into a booby-trap. He was pretty well cut up, but not serious enough to be evacuated.

The twenty-eighth was rather an inactive day, except for a few fire missions, but a rather amusing incident occurred. Upon entering the courtyard of the Headquarters one was greeted with a terrific stench. A cow had been hit by a white phosphorus shell and the process of decay had already set in. Not knowing how long they were to be there, Sgt. Sutherland was detailed to remove the carcass. Cpl's Kirby, Brown and Repetto were tagged for the detail. They dragged it away with a Jeep and in the process of the digging a hole Brown and Kirby had to leave because of the odor, much to the amusement of Repetto, who not long after was seen frantically searching for a gas mask to finish the job.

That afternoon we march-ordered, passing through part of Periers, a very much smashed up town, where the Germans upon leaving had severely booby-trapped everything, thus denying any use of the town; and passed on to a small group of farm buildings to the east of the town. We noticed that the people seemed to be getting more and more friendly as we moved further inland. They were losing that bewildered and skeptical look that we have been running into formerly.

During the evening we learned that big things were happening out there in front of us, also that we were now part of the Third Army, having been attached to the First Army for the initial landings. Everyone started thinking that now things would be stepped up with Patton behind us. It was rumored that General Patton, after having sat back in the rear with all his armor idle for as long as he could stand it, bellowed at General Bradley to get his men aside and let some fighters through. A good thing that he was kidding for there would be a lot of mad men that he would have to account for.

From July twenty-ninth up to and including August first we had a training schedule, movies, and a few brisk hikes. The most important thing was the news that we were receiving the activities of the armor, General Patton's armor, that swift, hard punching super-blitz men, who had exploited a breakthrough and were swiftly streaking for Brittany, and also heart of France.

During the training we were visited by Captain William E. Hokle, our former S-3, who was later transferred to the Army Civil Affairs Corps.

So the 90th come to a halt, the first in two months, Patton's armor was moving to and through Coutances, Avranches, and beyond to cut off the Brittany Peninsula. The unbelievable had happened, we were moving out of the boxlike hedgerow country. Larger fields, better roads lie ahead. We could stop and think a little. Behind us was a bloody hell called Normandy, with its dust choked roads, its gigantic cob-webbing of telephone lines, and that gray dust that covered the trees, grass, and fields with his dirty film. Before us was the promise of movement – there was no need to prove our ability to fight the Germans at close quarters, we had done that. Now the enemy had to prove how good he was out in the open. Patton's name was synonymous with power and drive. Here was the "blitz" come back to roost.



Chapter II

And so it goes. At 0130 on August second we started on the move that later developed into the eradication of the German 7th Army in the Falaise pocket.

The Battalion moved out with the 537th AAA, B Battery interspersed throughout the column for air raid security. The column moved along at a very slow pace during those dark hours of the early-morning, enabling us to see the damage done to the towns of Coutances and Avranches. Both towns not only had been visited by our bombers, but also the armor had done a good bit of smashing to pieces the buildings they fought their way through. We can distinctly remember the appearance of Coutances. At the crossroads of the town MP's were standing, guiding traffic through the rubble with their red lens flashlights, rubble that stood around like grim specters, telling what had happened when the "Yank" came through. In all, this scene was very eerie. After daylight we began to notice German armor absolutely crushed, strewn all along our route. People who were wide awake, began lining the streets waving flags of all descriptions and shouting, "Viva Les Americaine!" When the column would stop we would give out cigarettes and candy, in return for the cider and cognac that they continually pressed on us. Around 0802 two M.E. 109's flew over the column, apparently as surprised in seeing us as we were them, for they scooted away with a few fifty slugs in their tail feathers, never to return. The towns and villages that we started passing through at this point seemed to have missed most of the violence of war, testimony to the speed that Jerry was being driven back. Later that morning we drew off into a field and orchard where we set up, ready to fire on anything that showed any signs of resistance. Planes, Jerry at that, flew over all day, and the only firing done all day was at them, no artillery was asked for. That afternoon the 358th Infantry took St. Hilaire du Harcouet and Louvigne de Desert with no artillery fire.

The next two days were nothing but more moving, with no resistance met that the infantry could not handle. When we moved into La Touche we were greeted by a group of FW 190's but our ack-ack and a 90 mm outfit chased them away in good fashion.

During the dark hours of the night, before the last move, Captain Smith, a liaison officer, was around the infantry CP when a strange truck drew up to where he was standing. He and his radio operator went over to see what the trouble was and discovered a load of Heinies, all kinds of weapons, and ammunition aboard. The captain immediately forced them out of the truck, relieved them of all weapons, and turned him over to the MP's. This group of Germans, not realizing that the Americans were up this far had come through looking for their own outfit, illustrating how badly disorganized their outfit was becoming in this fast-moving fight.

The next night everyone was either sleeping or guarding those who slept, when Sgt. Berry, of headquarters maintenance crew, telephoned in from an outpost warning us that there were an untold number of Heinies in the area. Immediately everyone was alerted and squads were formed to cover the specified areas. Pretty soon some infantry, who were in the adjoining field, near an old rail line, opened up with rifle fire and grenades. Everything then quieted down, while we waited for daylight before investigating the area. The result of the shooting was the killing of one Jerry, and the capture of one officer. Later on in the day the total reached 34 captured. Larger numbers were captured by the "Doughs" who sent out a few men to flush out the countryside.

August fifth saw us move from the La Touche to St. Denis de Gastines, a long move during which time no rounds were fired. Before moving two Polish boys came into the area and Cpl. Leo Widzinski, Headquarters Battery machine gunner, took them in tow. Upon questioning the two we learned that they had been in a German forced labor battalion around Cherbourg, and had made their escape when the German defenses had begun to crumble there. Now they were trying to locate someone who would send them home. These boys had been in the type of labor outfit that kept making defenses for their "masters" as the Germans had been driven back. After the questioning was over the Poles were loaded on the kitchen truck, to be carried as "Men of all work".

On the sixth of August we moved through the Foret de Mayenne finally arriving at Chalons du Maine, after dark. The night was very quiet, with the exception of "Bed Check Charlie" who still managed to pussyfoot over us in his washing machine powered plane, endeavoring to locate the "DAMN YANKEE" but to no avail. That night he stayed around too long, for as he was circling overhead a new sound, a savage snarling roar was heard coming from our rear. Next it was the stuttering of a group of machine guns, and several rounds of tracer snaking out of the dark, directly over Charlie's head and down he came, a flaming pyre, vivid proof of the deadliness of the stinging "Black Widow" our new night fighter.

That same night the boys in the rear echelon were caught by some enemy planes, who first flared the entire area, and then laid their eggs as the boys were just moving into position. Sgt. Pinky Pendegraft, Headquarter Battery clerk said that as the flares dropped the boys all got out of the truck and jumped for the hedgerows. The casualties were heavy, many wounded and killed.

At noon on the seventh we went into a rendezvous area close to Montsurs, and while waiting for the reconnaissance to be completed we were "buzzed" by about a dozen ME109's who had a few more holes in their wings when they left us. When we moved we went about 12 miles down the road to the vicinity of St. Suzanne, where there had been quite a scrap between the task force out in front of us and the enemy. We went into position just off a large fork in the road, massed, and alerted for a tank attack that was expected in our area.

The next morning we learned that the attack that was supposed to come off, and never did, had been intercepted by an infantry roadblock. With one bazooka round fired the enemy motor column surrendered, 70 prisoners were taken on that deal. Further to the west, the main part of the enemy column had been cut off and wiped out by Task Force Weaver, one of our pincer-like feelers that was out in front of us.

That day, in order to speed things up a bit we operated on a new system. We were to follow the infantry and only move into position when resistance that could not be handled by the infantry was met. Our recon would be at the head of our part of the column. Our route took us through Viviers, Bernay, and Suvre. The French people were really becoming more and more demonstrative as we moved through the various towns. Throwing apples and more flowers in our way, and whenever we stopped they would give Cognac and cider.

Around 0400 the next morning we dropped trails in the neighborhood of Les Chapelles well within range of Le Mans, one of our main goals. After daylight Charlie Battery had a little excitement. Captain Lippard found a La Salle in good condition, and so he added it to his column vehicles. Also there were a few prisoners taken in his battery area. When the recon party went out that morning Cpls. Snider, the colonel's driver and Jack Greene, radio operator, flushed and captured 5 krauts and turned them over to the infantry for processing. Back at the batteries we were doing very little, but we did manage to listen to the news broadcasts telling us of the drive that Von Kluge's 7th Army armor was making around Mortain desperately trying to cut us off from our sources of supply, but troops were rushed in and those German vehicles that managed to escape the deadly firing of our rocket firing planes were cleaned up or driven off by the ground forces, and the threat was then eliminated, leaving a good chance for the allies to trap the whole 7th Army.

In the afternoon we went through Le Mans, our first large city. There were thousands of people lining the streets, apparently going mad with joy, almost hysterical, upon being liberated. They kept screaming "Les Americains, Viva Les Americains". About the time we were passing through the main part of town where the people were the thickest, several truckloads of Heinies were brought in, going back to the PW cages. The howls of rage, the jeers and hooting was almost frightening, something none of us had ever heard before. Some of the people we noticed had objects in their hands, threatening to throw them at the prisoners, but some members of the crowd managed to prevent such happenings. A maddened crowd is a terrifying sight.

After winding their way through that happy reception we went into position on the high ground to the east of town. Everyone thought that we were on the way to Paris, for we were across the main road leading to it, but events happened in the past few days that changed our plans. The 90th was given the job to close as fast as possible the newly formed trap that was at that time, encircling the German 7th. Many were the groans of disappointment when the fellows found they were not ready for Paris, as yet.

While waiting for final orders on just what was going to happen, the boys took advantage of the streams around there to clean up and go swimming. A mental bracing for all after so many days of "eating dust" and always on the move.

The day before we were to take off, two liaison officers arrived from the outfit we were to follow: the French 2nd Armored Division. All that day the roads were choked with their tanks and other vehicles moving up for the jump off.

On the morning of the 11th we "jumped off" and headed for the territory where the Heinies were gradually being encircled. The French outfit was a hard-driving bunch, and a group that had no more regard for their own safety than anything else. They would run onto traps, but instead of backing off and handling them from a distance they just poured gas to their tank and crushed everything that stood in their way. They were "Hell on Wheels" and twice as hard on their own equipment. We passed through Doucelles, where on the twelfth Sgt. Lebak, Cpl. Whitlock and Pvt. Ray Clark came back to the outfit, after convalescing in England. The thirteenth saw us in Conde-Sur-Sarthe and again some more came back to the battalion; namely Lt. Raley, Cpl. Harkick and Pvt. Semone.

On the fifteenth we went through Alencon, a place well bombed, Forges, Sees, Marmouille, and came to rest at Nonant-le-Pin, where the battalion did its first firing in several days. We had our first accident in firing on the sixteenth, Charlie Battery had a muzzle burst and some of the boys were hurt, though none were evacuated.

Today we learned a little more about this trap that we were closing. Told that the next few days would be the most critical period in the Battle of France. That the enemy had been driven into a pocket, whose opening we were close, near Falaise (including Chambois, Le Bourg-St. Leonard, and Ste. Eugenie). We were on the southeast side of the trap while the British, Canadians and Polish were coming down from the northwest driving this large group of enemy troops in front of them.

On August 17th we moved into a dense forest in the vicinity of Le Pin-au-Haras, where we were greeted by a few mortar rounds, which had no effect. We fired well over 900 rounds that day, all directed at the enemy now falling into our trap.

On August 18 while the Colonel was up forward with the Regimental Commander, the enemy lobbed a few mortar rounds too close, and resulted in wounding his driver, Ed Snider. When they got him back to our aid station Captain Culp and Sgt. "Pappy Mills" did such a good job of patching him up that he did not need to be evacuated. Lt. Paul Raley and Pfc. Bill Thornley, Able Battery forward observers were also wounded. Thornley had to be taken to the rear, but Lt. Raley was not.

Late that afternoon we moved into position on the outer edge of the trap, from which we were to cause so much damage to the "Hun". The move was more to the side than it was forward, enabling us to fully block the last opening with our fire. That particular day we fired 1100 rounds. Targets were getting more numerous and observation was better. Though we fired a great deal that day we still had no idea that the "gap" was going to mean so much.

The Falaise Gap

The Falaise Pocket, or Gap, as the papers always managed to title it, was a valley bounded by high hills and dense forests, with the towns of Chambois and Le Bourg-St. Leonard on one side of it, and the other small settlements of Ste. Eugénie and Tournai-sur-Dives located on the small dry river that was really the only available outlet left. From our present position we covered that one outlet with a

murderous fire. It was here that the 90th finally eradicated the German 7th from the High Command's list. It was here that the remnants of 20 German divisions were annihilated.

The picture of the final positions were as follows: the 358th Infantry was situated on the high ground facing north into the pocket, while the 359th Infantry was in and around the town of Chambois, facing northwest, thus forming a large "L", with the long axis running East-West. The center of the "L" was a valley bounded by high hills, behind which the artillery was in position, and in the valley were our victims. The hills around the valley afforded good OP's for the observers, and our communications were complete. Fort Sill set up only there was nothing "canned" about this particular problem. During the action, any targets missed by ground observers were picked up by the liaison pilots, our only air support during the whole engagement.

Besides our own division artillery which was at the disposal of this battalion, we had the 186th F.A., a 155 howitzer outfit, and a 240th F.A. a 155 gun outfit, and their respective groups. Also there were tanks, tank destroyers and infantry cannon companies, these three last groups were up in there firing direct.

The heavy part of the firing was between the 18th and the 20th of August, in which time there were an estimated 3000 German guns, staff cars, tanks, self-propelled guns, and horse-drawn vehicles destroyed, and every conceivable type of vehicle used to haul troops and their supplies.

During the entire time we were firing our radio net sounded like a big broadcast of a football game. Everyone who was not doing something was hanging around one of many 610 radios, including the doughboys, listening to the blow-by-blow accounts given by the liaison pilots who were continually flying over the valley where the enemy was.

The trap was now well set, the action that followed can be described in many ways, but a fair description, in our mind, is to take the report of all who participated, and combine it into one or two items.

The Germans, in complete disorder, were trying to escape through the gap, that little river at the eastern end of the valley, and as they came pouring into the trap from the West, heading east, they passed in front of our guns, which were silent at the time. As they got opposite us, all the artillery started pouring in broadside after broadside. This battalion remained in fire for effect for as long as three and four hours at a time, never letting the howitzers cool off. No one-gun adjustments, everything went at one time, for the targets were too many and too big to miss. Rounds would land in the middle of the column, and it would head for the woods. The woods were then shelled and the enemy would have to come back out into the open, and so it went for three days; back and forth, back and forth, until the valley floor looked like a tremendous junkyard. Because of the great chaos in the trap the enemy did not fight back too much, and soon all the hills were lined with spectators and extra observers. In one day this single battalion got credit for knocking out 34 tanks. The infantry situated as they were, had real occasion to rejoice, for instead of them doing the dirty jobs, this time the artillery and other heavy weapons were doing at all.

One United Press correspondent who was on hand for the whole thing described the following scene:

"I made my way through the dense forests to the heights beyond Ste. Eugénie, overlooking the German trap. The OP was situated on the sloping green that might well have been a picnic ground rather than a balcony of death.

"Through high-powered field glasses loaned to me by a 90th Division officer (Lt. Russell Johnson, Battery Commander of B Battery, 344th F.A.), I saw long columns of smoke ascending from multitudes of knocked out tanks, trucks and those long buses the Germans use for personnel carriers.

"Overhead whining shells, of pinpoint accurate artillery maintained a constant symphony of death for the trapped German 7th Army."

In the pocket there were great many foot troops, but all were so confused that they put up no fight whatsoever. It wasn't until late in the second day that they showed any signs of wanting to surrender en masse. After that idea once entered their heads it was not an uncommon sight to see one doughboy ushering, or herding in as many as a hundred krauts alone. The PW upon being questioned all said the same thing. The artillery was driving them crazy, from both fear and noise. The 7th was through fighting. Artillery was too much for them. They could no longer take the terrific pounding.

The most able person to describe the happenings in the valley was Lt. William Matthews, liaison pilot for our battalion. For those three days he flew continually, coming down just long enough to refuel and grab something to eat, and then up in the air he would go. In one day he flew for 11 hours. To describe in full what he did would be a book in itself, so the extracts below are taken from his written account of what happened on the 19th of August.

"On the morning of the 19th I took off to register a battalion, just as I cleared the hills looking into the valley, I saw the roads alive with vehicles of every description. Immediately fire was brought down on the road crossing just to the north of Ste. Eugénie and the progress of the vehicles was stopped in that vicinity. Fire was falling in several places in the valley, however, several trucks pulled to the sides of the road and moved around the stalled vehicles, then headed north towards Chambois and St. Lambert-Sur-Dives, which were under fire at the time. Every place where there were more than four vehicles grouped, artillery fire would drop. Those trucks that were still trying to escape through Chambois were piling up, caught our fire."

"- The road east of Bailleul was blocked and the trapped vehicles began to move into the fields, the roads through Tournai-Sur-Dives were blocked also, and then the roads were forgotten. Vehicles flooded out into the fields and it looked like a stampede of cattle."

"- A large body of vehicles, trucks, tanks, SP guns, grouped south of Tournai, numbering around 200 or more. It looked as if they wanted to give up, but then they started firing, and I called for artillery. After what seemed like hours, it was actually minutes, the group of vehicles turned into Tournai. The roads were blocked and they assembled in the woods just south of town. Artillery hammered the woods until the assembly area was a mass of burning vehicles. Black smoke obscured our vision and prevented further fire at this point. The enemy gathered his vehicles along hedgerows, under trees, or out in the open. No cover was too small, but it still was not enough. Continued pressure from the rear forced them to try and move."

"- Moving out into the open, and in regular lines, were several regiments of horse drawn artillery, carts and wagons. They came forward as our first rounds landed right on them. The line wavered north of the fire and continued on. Several volleys landed right in the column and the line turned at right angles and headed north. It was a slaughter. Horses would fall and stop a wagon. Many were running away, some would turn right into the fire, others gathered in the shelter of an old rock quarry to escape but immediately artillery fire drove them out. They turned south into a crossroad just southeast of Tournai-Sur-Dives and the road was soon blocked by fire. More units piled up on top of them and soon it was impossible to turn the horses. Then it became a shambles. Horses loose and running everywhere. Some teams still hitched to caissons and wagons and one or more killed in the traces. All semblance of organization had ceased at this point."

"- Vehicles were still headed northeast towards the once formed outlet, the creek, but none could be seen making their way past it. Very late in the day, another column of

trucks and vehicles tried to make Tournai-Sur-Dives. They were already blocked and turned south into other stopped vehicles. Breaks were in the column as they tried to dodge the fire, but soon they came to a halt, and as it grew dark only occasional movement could be seen. Grouped vehicles in Villedieu Les Balleul were given as interdiction for the night."

The above extracts were just a few brief samples of what our air liaison did during the whole engagement. Those targets that could not be adjusted from the ground were referred to him, and he took them over with devastating results.

Aside from the terrific firing that was continued over the period of three days, we had a little excitement on the morning of August 21. That morning as we were all going to breakfast we heard that familiar washing machine engine flying overhead. The ceiling was extremely low, therefore the plane was down to about 300 feet, apparently looking for German troops, though at the time we thought that perhaps he was looking for us. We all had the same question on our lips, "why in hell doesn't the ack-ack open up on him?" On his third circle every known gun, that is 40 mm and 50 calibers opened up as he made a sharp bank right over the batteries, and he immediately burst into flames crashing about two hedgerows away from us. Everyone broke into a dead run for the plane, more for souvenirs and to see the plane than to help anyone who could've possibly escaped that blazing pyre. Of the five crew members we were able to "salvage" two. The other three were completely crushed, with their physical parts strewn all over the field. In crashing the Heinkel 111, for that was what the plane turned out to be, neatly cut through two hedgerows, several trees and knocked down a farmer's apple crop. Much to our surprise the plane was loaded with ammunition and other supplies and thus we deduced that he was looking for some of his trapped buddies. Once more Goering could chalk up another plane in the "Lost in Action" column.

On August 22 at noon we pulled away from the Gap and went into Corps reserve near a town called Mormouille. There we cleaned things up a bit, getting ready for our rush across the rest of France behind General Patton's powerful armor. After reaching our new positions some of the boys were sent back into the Gap to see what we had really done.

The destruction started as we neared Le Bourg-St. Leonard, where there were all sorts of knocked out vehicles, and wrecked houses. At a large intersection we were lumbering down the road with all their heavy equipment, headed back for their designated bivouacs.

After passing through quite a stretch of woods, we arrived at a Ste. Eugénie, a town that was badly shelled. There were all sorts of German wreckage around here, spreading all the way through "Death Valley". The wreckage was so great that the only way we could get around was on foot. One very good way of describing the scene that lay before us was that all we saw in front and around us was a gigantic junkyard, one that would put any junk collector to great shame. The utter destruction of an army was comparable to nothing before seen by any of us.

The next day or two brought in the official tabulation from G2. The following was chalked up by this battalion alone: 34 tanks, 10 self-propelled guns, 43 horse drawn artillery pieces, 612 motor vehicles, 321 horse-drawn vehicles, and all kinds of other equipment. This tabulation brought the 344th out in front of all the outfits participating in the Gap.



Chapter III

On August 26th we were again on our way, this time towards Fountainbleau 170 miles away. Our route took us through many places, the largest being Château Dun, Pithiviers and into the outskirts of Fountainbleau, itself.

The trip to this historical town, home of the famous Summer Palace and gardens of the Kings of France, was the longest single road march that we had yet made since we set foot on French soil, and proved to be of great interest to all. After leaving our bivouac at Marmouille, the first great difference was a sudden disappearance of hedgerows. The plain fields of France were just like the typical midwestern area of America. The most amazing thing was a complete lack of enemy planes, we did not see a single plane the whole trip. Another thing was the lack of signs of war. Here and there we saw an abandoned German vehicle, but saw very little damage done, other than a few places that have been bombed.

Fountainbleau, the summer place for moneyed Parisians, an old city, yet modern. The streets lined with those ever famous sidewalk cafes, and restaurants. The towns gave us Americans a very warm reception. We passed through the center of the city in the evening when everyone was out sitting around doing some social "elbow bending".

The afternoon of the twenty-seventh saw us preparing to cross the Seine River, where the engineers had done their usual excellent job of putting in a pontoon bridge. Antiaircraft guns defended both sides of the river against possible air attacks. Approaches to the bridge were jammed with heavy traffic, double columns of armor, artillery, ack-ack batteries, and other units. Slowly, surely, we crossed the bridge and climbed up the sharp, winding road that led to the ground east of Fountainbleau. Thirty-five miles rolled behind us that day as we went into bivouac near the town of Chenthee. The next morning started another typical day of moving in leaps and bounds. As dusk came upon us, burning haystacks could be seen in the distance. TDs were moving out ahead of us firing into the stacks as they afforded excellent concealment for enemy self-propelled guns and tanks. The fire from these long burning piles illuminated the immediate areas too well, our vehicles were silhouetted against the skyline – well set up targets for any Jerry who might be waiting for us. But our luck held good until we hit Jonchey-Sur-Vesle, where an ack-ack gun truck hit a mine while pulling to the side of the road, and blew up. For over an hour 40 mm, 50 caliber machine gun, and bazooka ammo, filled the rain soaked night with battle sounds. Captain Danovsky, Headquarters Battery, was killed near the same spot, earlier in the day by a mine. His driver, Cpl. Jim Shaw of B Battery, died from wounds caused by the same explosion.

August 30th we moved towards Rheims, famous city of Cathedral and Champagne. Unfortunately the powers that be decided against our entry into this beautiful city that beckons so invitingly from the distance of six kilometers. From high ground we can see the twin towers of the celebrated cathedral reaching for the sky. Just as successfully as stretching out our hands for a glass of "Dry Monopolie", six kilometers from heaven. We went into position near St. Masmès.

The "bitches" of yesterday turned into the pleased grins of today, September 1st. Men from the Battalion could go to Rheims for a few hours. The fortunate few had a splendid day for sightseeing and tasting. Here was the French spirit at its best, both the human and bottle varieties. Expensive? Well, what was it worth to those who had been "a little too busy" to visit a city in three months? To those the price was secondary – to walk a street, to admire a statue, to look in a store window, to flirt with the girl, to drink in a city sparkled in the bright sun. Below there also was an abundance of effervescent wine, champagnes known the world over, and many interesting things to be done, if only for a few hours, the drought would be over.

We stayed in the vicinity of St. Masmès until September 6th. This was a good opportunity for the men to clean themselves as well as their equipment. A small, fast flowing stream, the Vesle flowed through the battery positions. Several movies were shown at the theater in the town of Bazancourt. The

movies were all lousy, as usual, but helped to relieve the monotony of waiting. During this stay here there were a few changes in the officer personnel; Captain Lippard, Charlie Battery Commander, became Battalion Executive, Captain Thornton went to Charlie Battery as Commander, and Lt. Mann to Captain Thornton's place as liaison officer.

On the sixth we moved from St. Masmès on a long trip towards, and beyond Verdun. Our route took us through Pont Farverger, Betheniville, St. Hilaire Le Grande, Suippes, Somme Suippes, St. Menchold, Clermont, Blercourt, and Verdun itself. Verdun, the famous besieged city of World War I, with its cold grim fortresses had seen too much of soldiering to be much interested in our long convoy. The old fortresses of this town were not defended by the Germans in this present conflict, a few battle scars were to be seen but not many.

After going through Verdun, where the people had a sort of beaten, downtrodden look, a look as if they had been worked by a tyrant all their days, we headed out east and went through Etain and finally arrived at Barancourt ninety-four miles from where we started in the morning.

From Barancourt we went to Landres, and ended up in a small town called Lugquengnieux, after passing through a small place, just a wide spot in the road called Mairy. The towns in this zone are all mining towns dull, dreary and uninteresting, almost dead. A few children and girls wave and smile, but men are sober faced and tired looking, trudging along, minding their own business, looking straight ahead. Lt. Cantini returned to the battalion in this position.

About 0200 on the morning of September eighth, small arms fire could be heard to the rear. Towards dawn the Battalion heard that a panzer brigade searching for our recon outfit, not realizing that they were up against an entire division, attacked Division Artillery Headquarters, killing several and wounding many more. Finally some aid was brought to the men and the Panzer outfit made its way to Mairy, where our Service Battery was located; also in the town was the 1st Battalion 358th and their Canon Company. The Germans entered the town shortly after daybreak, only to run into a tremendous barrage of all types of fire, including artillery which had swung its guns 180 degrees in order to fire on the enemy. Grenades were tossed from windows into open halftracks, riflemen were sniping from all vantage points; bazookas smashed and wrecked tracked vehicles as fast as they came into range. The artillery was firing heavy a barrage on all roads coming into town, thus blocking any escape. A and B companies, 358th Infantry, plus Service Battery plus our artillery accounted for 48 halftracks, 27 assault guns, 7 tiger tanks, 2 motorcycles and 1 truck, and 100 prisoners, and 47 wounded, the 1st Battalion suffered 22 casualties. Sgt. Tammany, and Pfc. Schneiderman knocked out a tank, S/Sgt. Tucker and Cpl. Harnagel a halftrack, Sgt. Gemar and Cpl. Rathage stopped a Mark V tank. All these men, from Service Battery, did their splendid work with bazookas, and no casualties. The Panzer outfit learned too late that it was pulling the tale of a tiger, and was almost completely annihilated. A heartening sight during the fight was to see the Frenchmen come out of the town and woods with weapons of all types and heading for the scene of the fight. That day was the first active firing we had done since the Falaise Pocket. Nine hundred twenty-four rounds fired. That night a normal barrage was laid down right in front of the CP. During the day the ack-ack had quite a novel experience. One of their gun sections had spotted some Germans running into the woods right in front of the gun, so Captain Aurbach, B.C. had them level the Bouffers and fire horizontally into the woods with Lt. Bauer doing the adjusting. Though the results were never known, at least it stopped Heinie from running around out in the open and attacking Headquarters Battery position.

After everything had quieted down around Lucquengnieux we moved two and one half miles to Trieu. A large settlement of Polish miners were working here, and a few of the men in the Battalion who could speak the language had a little celebration to break the monotony of speaking English. The country was becoming more hilly, with occasional pillboxes cropping up, apparently we were getting into the old Maginot line wherein France had placed her hopes, only to be overrun in 39 days

On the thirteenth we moved to the vicinity of Veremerange, close to the Moselle River and the German border. Our mission was to clear the town of Thionville, or Diedenhoffen, as the Germans were

prone to call it. It was while in this position that heavy and continuous rains turned our battery positions into quagmires. One battery pitched their tents, pup tents, inadequate at best in a dry creek bed until the rains brought a small flood.

On the sixteenth a German, believed to be an artillery spotter, was discovered in an upstairs apartment. Above the room where the battalion CP was located. He was immediately taken to the rear P. W. Cage. A fine thing.

In cleaning up Thionville much loot in the form of Nazi flags and German equipment was found by our forward party boys, who had well "established" themselves in the Hotel Metropole, using the upper floors as an OP.

Patton's armor had struck towards Metz, elements of which had entered this well fortified city, and though no heavy resistance had been met, had to withdraw because supplies could not be brought up to them. All along the front the 3rd Army went into more or less static positions. Our Division was no exception. We remained in Veremerange until the twenty-seventh.

On the afternoon of the twenty-seventh we moved through Briey, Jarny and Mars Le Tours coming to a halt outside of Vionville, within 16,000 yards of Metz, but only a short distance from its too big forts, Jeanne D'Arc and Driant. After a few days of moving around the Battalion finally became settled in positions that afforded good firing positions and yet gave fair protection against the guns from the German manned forts that "barked" almost every night. Rainy weather had followed us to this position, making pools out of foxholes and lakes out of dugouts. On the twenty-ninth a new battery was added to the battalion, "Dog" Battery, with Lt. Green as Commander. It consisted of three 10.5 cm German guns. September 30th relieved some of the monotony for the fellows. Twenty-five percent from each of the batteries were allowed into Giraumont for 24 hours of rest and relaxation, to shower, sleep indoors, see a movie, or do what you please. "K" rations for the bill of fare. The showers were located at the mines in the town. Individual tile stalls! As long as we were in Vionville we were permitted this change from the sameness of battery duty.

Between October 2nd and November 1st, though there was no real fighting going on, the artillery fired any missions that came in, for our FO teams were out and so were the Liaison Crews. Captain Culp, Battalion Surgeon, was evacuated to England, and Captain William McConahey was transferred to us from the 2nd Battalion, 357th Infantry. Sgt. D'Angelo was made a 2nd Lt. and went to Baker Battery. Major Salisbury became our new S3, replacing Major Conn, who took over the Battalion Executive's job. Captain Andrews returned to us from England where he was convalescing after being wounded in the battle of Foret de Mont Castre. For the past month and a half we had our true share of rain. Our Fire Direction was enlarged by attached units, namely; two platoons from the 712 tanks, two platoons from the 74th tank destroyers, and one platoon from A Company, 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion, plus Liaison Officer from the 5th Div-Arty, and an officer from B Battery, 943rd F.A. The Battalion switchboard looked like a civilian board for there were so many lines coming into it, thirty in all. We finally established a separate FDC for the attached units, with a few from the battalion running it under the able guidance of Lt. Green as S3 and S/Sgt. Roy Compton as his assistant. Sgt. Compton was from A Battery. The Red Cross clubmobile visited us twice during our stay here. One Sunday afternoon we were visited by either our first buzz bomb, or perhaps one of those jet propelled jobs. No one was sure, for the clouds were low hanging, and the plane, or object was not easily identified. Here we received our first cigarette rations in a long while. Rumors were circulating around that soon there would be three day passes to Paris! No one really believed it, but it was something to mull over in one's mind. A few days later six men went to Paris from this Battalion. So, it was not just a rumor! One night while Fort Driant was serenading us with 15 cm guns a shell went right through the wall of the room immediately next to where Colonel Munson was sleeping, bursting there, and he didn't even wake up! Must be wonderful to be a heavy sleeper! More rumors. We were to be relieved by a brand-new outfit, the 10th Armored, and go back for a rest. We left for Arcourt on November 2nd, twenty-six miles to the

rear. The 10th took over lock, stock and barrel. Even moved their self-propelled guns into our gun positions.

November 3rd we had reveille, calisthenics, and all the trimmings at a training program provides. A rest? Everyone realized that there is something big being cooked up, for we were told that the position that we moved into there would be no moving around, and all insignias would be covered up.

On the 5th, Sunday, there was no training schedule, but everybody was alerted for a night move. We took off at dusk and drove blackout for thirty-five miles right into the heart of the Maginot Line. Just west of the Moselle River. The batteries were all told to lie low during the day, and to eliminate all unnecessary movement. The CP was set up in a large two-story fort with electric lights and ventilation system. The next few days nothing was done except to sit around and wait for H-Hour to arrive. Attached to us was a 241st Group Artillery, and again we formed another F.D.C. using tanks in battery formation, using them as guns for interdiction only. We know now that the Moselle is to be our task, and the Fort Koenigsmacher is one of the main obstacles, after once across.

H-Hour finally arrived on the morning of the 9th, 0300. This time we played a trick on Heinie and never fired a round across in the sector that the infantry was to take, they went over, on boats and after awhile a footbridge. At least two battalions across before the Germans knew what was afoot. That was when we started firing on selected targets. The infantry was to take the high ground around Koenigsmacher also the fort itself. Liaison one and three went over with the first wave to get communications in back to our F.D.C. The forward observers with first wave were; Lts. D'Angelo, Coleman, Buchanan and Murray. The heavy rains had made the river three times its normal width, and it was now a fast-moving torrent. Good progress was made after reaching the other side, but the need for dry clothing and supplies was most urgent. On the 10th, Lt. Lloyd Watland, one of our Liaison pilots dropped food, clothing and explosives to the infantry, who were fighting near the fort. Composition C was dropped to the 1st Battalion so that they could blow the strong Fort Koenigsmacher, an obstacle for any further progress. The engineers were desperately trying to bridge the swollen torrent, and for their protection we kept constant cloud of smoke between them and the high ground further ahead from which the enemy could observe all activity. Several times they had the bridge completed only to have the river wash it away. Finally a bridge was in and we were told to get ready to cross. Also word was gotten to us that the Fort had fallen, with a total of 240 prisoners, including the Commandant. The capture of this fort now made it easier for all to move, and made for more flexible maneuvering. We moved down to the bridge at 0300 on the morning of the 14th, the bridge that the hard fighting 315th engineers had put in. The night was one of pitch darkness, with slow drizzling rain making it just that much more unpleasant, and causing us to creep along yard by yard, as a blind man picks his way across rough ground. The first vehicle across was a gun truck from C Battery, and the battalion came immediately behind it, dodging the German shells that were coming in to the bridgehead area. Other than a few extra heartbeats, there was no mishap on that river crossing.

On the 15th and 16th we were in position near Niederrhein, firing heavy concentrations at the withdrawing Germans. Running through the battalion area was a huge tank trap, unfinished in parts, with tools still in it, showing how recently work had been done on it, by slave labor. In the soft, muddy earth could be seen the footprints of those who had worked on the trap.

We marched ordered at 1000 on the 17th. The fighting was almost as bitter as Normandy. The most extensive mine fields we have yet run into. Large stacks of anti-personnel mines and teller mines were piled along the roads – the engineers doing their usual good job of the deactivating and pulling them. Brave man! The odor of death hung in the air, like a curtain, as our vehicles carefully threaded their way along roads marked by signs reading: "DANGER! MINES!" We went into position in Distroff, the town where G Company was nearly, or treacherously, trapped for a while; the familiar scenes of shattered houses, burned out and blackened vehicles, dead men and horses, all here in great numbers.

Alerted to reinforce the 915th Field Artillery on the eighteenth. The Jerries were retreating fast and we had to move fast to keep within range and deliver effective fire. This running fight kept up for three days, and as we moved from town to town we passed all the gruesome sights of a hard-hitting type of fighting, roads marked by smashed vehicles, horse-drawn vehicles with their animals sprawled in a bloody smear, and corpses all over the roadsides. Then we returned to Distroff to prepare a movement into another sector, where we were to follow the 10th Armored into Germany.

On the twenty-second this battalion pulled into Perl Germany, the first complete outfit of the 90th Div-Arty to be in pre-1940 Germany. Up to now we had been fighting in the Alsace-Lorraine country, the chess board that both Germany and France had taken turns in controlling. Our F.D.C. was located at 34 Adolf Hitler Strasse. The Battalion fired a volley at 1300, on a target that was our first blasting on the Sacred Soil of the Superman. Those that pulled the lanyards for the ceremonial rounds were: Pvts. Deramus and Murphy, and Pfc. Thompson and Clark of A Battery; Captain Johnson, Lt. Webster, Cpl. De Lara, and Pfc. O'Daniel of B Battery, 1st Sgt. Lawton, Pfc. Joe Hansen, Pfc. Moret, and Pfc. Jechna of C battery. Our plans soon changed and we went back to regimental combat team control, instead of supporting the 10th Armored.

November 23, Thanksgiving day. Rain and Turkey, with all the trimmings. There was little activity that day, though many were able to take shower baths, located in the modern school house. We noticed a big difference in the towns and farms here in Germany, over those in France. One of the big changes was the absence of the wealth usually found out in front of the French houses. The German houses all had new furniture, modern plumbing and electricity, though the latter was out, because of the fighting that went on in and around the towns.

Captain Smith took over as A Battery C.O. while Captain Andrews became Liaison 1. From a position between Perl and Borg we went back under Division control in German controlled France, a move of about 17 miles to Zewrange, passing through Apach, Sierck, Kirchnaumam, Halstroff, Flashstroff. Our mission was to go into support of the 915th F.A. Pretty soon after moving into our position some fairly heavy German artillery came in and tore up a couple of tents and trucks, other than that all was well.

December 1st, moved to Fresdorferhof, we are back in Germany once more. A large force of American medium bombers over us this day around noon, and an A20 crashed about a mile from the battalion position, luckily the crew bailed out safely and the pilot came down in B Battery location. Unfortunately the plane crashed into an ack-ack gun position, killing one and burning two others. Side glance; Battalion received its first lot of combat shoes.

The Battalion moved to Gissengen on the night of December 4th, because Jerry had observation on a crossroad in the center of the road. Whether he had observation or not makes no difference for soon rounds started coming in on the road, much to the consternation of the message center which was located about 300 feet from the bursts. The next morning no sooner had A Battery finished registering when twelve rounds came into the position. Again Lady Luck was with us and no one was injured it was decided to move A Battery as one never knew whether the Heinie would bring in more effective fire than that which they had. The gun battery moved about 1000 yards closer to the river. Our mission was to take the town on the other side of the Saar River, Dillingen. The Saar, another river that had to be overcome, another river that had to be bridged, so that we could get to the enemy on the other side.

Lt. Colonel Munson was decorated with the Croix de Guerre, thus adding another decoration to his already impressive display.

On the morning of the 6th at 0415 the 358th Infantry initiated H-Hour by crossing the Saar in assault boats to take Dillingen. But it was not as easy as that. Dillingen was a well camouflaged fortress town. Pillboxes were disguised in various ways; garages, stores and buildings turned into traps to catch the unwary. The street fighting was of a particularly vicious type and gains were measured in yards, hundreds not thousands. The enemy were using their crossfire pill boxes to good advantage.

While placing a self-propelled 155 mm Long Tom, in a position where it could be used for direct fire on the pill boxes, Colonel Munson was hit by shell fragments and had to be evacuated. This was his third wound since landing in France. That day the self-propelled knocked out two pillboxes.

Enemy artillery fire continued to come into the battalion area throughout the night of the eighth. Two rounds dropped in next to one of the guns in Baker Battery, killing Pvt. Packard and wounding Cpl. Henry. The weather was still miserable, the slush turning the fields into mires and the pits in which the guns were implaced were no longer capable of holding the guns. Firing platforms had to be made, and heavy logs had to be placed under the guns to keep them from sinking. The cannoneers were improvising shelters of various designs to keep dry. That night several hundred rounds were fired in a spot already registered on, where counterattacks were reported taking place. For several weeks rumors had been circulating around that a few men would be able to go home on the 30 day leave, plus travel time. Cpl. Rumick and Cpl. Wallace were the lucky ones to go home. On the 10th, a German was found hiding in a haystack near the S.P. position. He claimed to be a corporal but was wearing a lieutenant's dress, and had a pair of field glasses on his person, apparently planted for observation purposes. Major Salisbury left this battalion on the 13th for Div-Arty, to take up the job of S3. Captain Reddington came to us as the new S3. He was formerly with 20th Corps Artillery. While attempting to put a cable across the Saar, Cpl. McGee and Pvt. Green, both of Headquarters Battery were thrown from the boat, and as the river was so completely covered by a cloud of smoke visibility was very limited, and they were last seen going downstream, being dragged by the swift current. Two others who were in the boat at the time managed to get to shore.

Up to date, December 19 the S.P. gun had knocked out 10 pillboxes and damaged four others. On the 19th, twenty-three men were transferred to the infantry. We were informed also that on the night of the 21st and 22nd that the infantry would be withdrawn. It looked as if we were needed elsewhere, especially the "Bulge". During the next evening and morning the infantry was brought back in boats, for no bridge had ever been put in, everything had been ferried back and forth. Behind them the "Doughboys" had left the town that had been completely devastated. A town that was never again to be retaken by the Germans. It was a big dent in the highly vaunted Siegfried line, regardless of the cost to our men.

At 0600 on the morning of the 23rd we moved out of Gissingen and after passing through several small rather beaten up towns we went in to position around Gongalfangen. The reason for this move instead of the "Bulge" was to take up a defensive position, with a series of positions that we could fall back to in case Von Runstedt tried to break through in our sector. Bridge approaches were mined and trees were prepared for hasty roadblocks. During this time Fire Direction was preparing all kinds of defensive fires, with the usual, "on the ball" work of the survey section. While this work was going on we were intently awaiting news of the happenings up in the Ardennes but as yet nothing could be determined, other than a bunch of personal opinions. That night Cpl. Bruss, computer from B Battery, played midwife to a cow, she was having trouble dropping her calf. As Christmas approached our thoughts, taking up a lot of our thoughts of home, were still on the outcome in the Ardennes, wondering if any good news would come out, so as to make everyone a little more at ease. Christmas Eve came and went, turkeys and champagne having been distributed to all the batteries. Sent 524 rounds over towards Jerry just to let them know that there was a lot of Hell in store for him if he dared to venture our way, and to remind him that "Peace on Earth, Goodwill Towards Men" was a good thing to strive for. Christmas day came upon us with all its meaning shrouded by the dark cloak of Mars, but the Lord knew that we wished to celebrate his nativity in a bright and cheerful manner, and we found that he heard General Patton's prayer, for the sun came out in all its splendor and at least made the day as cheerful as possible. Later that morning the Red Cross doughnut wagon pulled in and made the day more pleasant. The chaplains also did right by us all, for their services were inspiring to the most downhearted. As far as action was concerned the day remained quiet, but that night we sent a very new and deadly shell screaming into the enemy lines. The German offensive and magnificent defense of Bastogne were the

main topics of discussion. Though the weather had cleared, it had turned extremely cold. The firing batteries were in pyramidal tents and hot stoves, headquarters was in houses, so everyone was not suffering too much from cold weather. December 31st, the year came to an end, 205 rounds were fired otherwise it was very quiet. New Year's Day found us still at Gongalfangen and outlying districts, and direct support of the 358th Infantry, with the 343rd F.A. still lending their support to us. Enemy aircraft had become more frequent of late, one was shot down near Waldweisse. Our planes patrolled the skies from dawn to dusk. We had several snowstorms and the roads were bad. Everyone was on edge, for tales had been spread about the enemy as more ruthless than ever, and would hesitate at nothing to get what and go where they wanted. They had been apprehended behind our lines, dressed in our uniform, thus throwing all travelers, under suspicion, and causing us to stop all cars on the roads.

Chapter IV

January 7 we left this last defensive position and headed in deep secrecy for Luxembourg. The 94th Division took over our positions. In making this move we had been transferred to the 3rd Corps, headed for the Ardennes Salient, in the vicinity of Lufange, Luxembourg, southeast of Bastogne. Our long trip carried us through Koenigsmacher, across the Moselle, Luxembourg City, Longwy, Grosbous and Eschdorf. The cold, bone chilling ride that covered part of the country we had previously fought through. We passed positions where our guns had been and the ammo boxes and piles of dirt just as we had left it. We crossed over the Moselle from Koenigsmacher to Cattenom, the bridge that had taken so much backbreaking, heartbreaking effort. One man expressed the feeling of many when he observed: "Hell this is a damned retreat." But we knew that up toward Bastogne there was this scrap and we were to be a part of it. So we moved through fine rain, snow and sleet, into the valleys and hills and the great Forests of Luxembourg.

Luxembourg City was a site for our country sated eyes. Homes, stores, autos, movie houses public conveyances, all added up to a welcome – if only momentary – change. The city had a Christmas Garden appearance with its oddly shaped houses, sharply angled roofs, chimney pots and fenced lawns and yards, now blanketed by snow.

Snow and high winds combined to make our days more uncomfortable than usual. A tremendous amount of artillery was in this area and we were told our Corps mission was to eliminate the German Salient southeast of Bastogne with the 26th Infantry smashing forward under terrible conditions; wind, snow, steep hills, slippery ice coated roads, which all gave mute testimony to the tenacity and fighting ability of the infantryman of our division. The 90th and the 35th were rapidly forming a pocket, and the Germans were frantically trying to escape.

From Bavigne we moved to Tarchamps, one of the towns. We had been pounding for several days we remained here four days firing, heavily, on a variety of targets, one a tremendous concentration on the village of Niederwampach. Our fire direction massed fourteen battalions on this target and after this bombing from the ground, the infantry moved in and took the town and the Jerries prisoner without loss to themselves. The Germans, stunned and bewildered, never had a chance to defend, much less to attack, our onrushing doughboys.

The 17th we march ordered to Bras, Belgium – this had been a town, but the Air Corps and artillery had reduced it to a pile of rubble, and the few houses that did remain were mere skeletons that mocked the efforts of those who tried to use them as shelters. Dead Germans, sprawled in twisted and grotesque heaps, were well refrigerated by the intense cold and snow – "when the thaws and warmer weather comes the stench will demoralize even the strongest stomach". While here the Germans through counterattack after counterattack at our infantry who were in the town of Oberwampach. During this period we fired a total of 7738 rounds at the tanks and infantry that tried to drive us from this hard-won sector. This was the largest expenditure of ammo since Normandy. Our 100,000th round was fired here.

After the bitter fighting of the past few days we advanced into battered towns which it cost much to take and hold. At Chimpach we found 12 German 75's in position with their sights still mounted, aiming stakes out, ammo laid neatly in rows ready to fire. Several of the guns had thermite grenades in their breaches, but the others had been abandoned before they could be destroyed.

Oberwampach, Stockem, Boxhorn, Binsfeld, Bieler, were all typical of the towns we had been fighting in since our arrival here. Smashed Jerry equipment littered the roads and fields which, was a pleasant sight to our eyes. The days were getting warmer and rain had taken the place of the snow which had been with us – it seems – for so long.

The end of the month, January 31, we went into position along the Our River, near the town of Wemeler in Belgium. This was in the general vicinity through which Von Rundstedt had made his initial breakthrough. Vehicles of the 106th and the 28th Infantry Divisions, the outfits which had taken

the first blows of Rundstedt's power drives, were still lying where they had been knocked out. Then the rains washed most of the snow away and the river rose, of course, in flood stage; this revealed much small arms equipment scattered about and some of the men found pistols and small arms of all types. Wemeler and our position turned into mud and slop, the continual rains turned this hilly country into a series of racing mountain streams. The Valley roads were underwater and the engineers were rebuilding bridges and repairing roads and doing all they could do to slug up and over these sliding, crumbling, roads.

4th February, we slogged into Bliealf where the Germans had converted a railroad tunnel into an underground factory. Excellent machine tools were in place and only needed the necessary power to make them operable. Living quarters were adjoining this factory – in fact part of the tunnel was used for sleeping. We remained at Bliealf until the ninth, then moved into the environs of Branscheid.

When we entered Branscheid we were really in the Siegfried Line. Large pillbox forts dotted the hills, and the long rows of Dragon's teeth wound down through the valleys and up over the hills. The Battalion passed through the teeth and on the ninth an F.D.C. was set up in a two-room pillbox, on the outskirts of the badly mauled town of Branscheid, a town which Von Rundstedt's armor came plunging through. Mute testimony was a large amount of US equipment, lying around in a completely wrecked manner.

Again the question of supplies was becoming rather acute, for on the 13th of February a large flight of C-47's came over and dropped a great many supplies to us. It was not so much a question of out distancing the supply lines, but more the condition of the roads, which had been torn up not only by "Mother Nature" but also warfare and its heavy traffic. The supplies thus dropped helped the quartermaster to establish a forward dump in the fastest manner known to get large amounts of supplies to a place in a hurry, by air transport. It was a rare sight not to see pillboxes on the prominent hilltops, cleverly camouflaged and strongly constructed. As we saw them at the time they were of little use to anyone, for the infantry and engineers had used a little composition "C" on them, cracking each one wide open.

The 17th found us still in the same position, firing at a few targets. The early spring weather with its bud stimulating sunshine was magnificent. The sun appearing with its new warmth seemed to us a portent of ending this dreary fight. Only a few patches of snow remained, and that deep in the woods and permanently shaded spots. Our old friend mud was still making it miserable working outside but the newly found warmth of the sun compensated for a great deal.

Habshied, another very much blown apart town, typical of all Siegfried line towns, was our stopping place until the 20th, when we took off down through a winding road and stopped at Oberuttfeld, where Jerry laid down direct fire on our ack-ack guns. Two of the batteries were so situated that it was necessary to keep them silent, for Jerry had observation on these particular positions. Several casualties were sustained by the 537th ack-ack, our attached unit, though our own boys escaped all. The towns of Binshied and Arzfeld passed under our wheels between the 23rd and the 24th, and nothing much happened. On the way into the town of Binscheid we passed over a road curve that was being swept for mines at the time we passed. Very shortly after we got by, a newspaper correspondent happened to spin his wheels just at the wrong time on the curve, and "Blam". A newspaper man was immediately sent for.

No sooner had we reached Arzfeld than we were notified that we were to go into a rest period back in the rear. The 6th Armored was to take over our area. On the present drive, Task Force Scott and the 358th Infantry had taken 607 prisoners and were in the process of cleaning up the woods to the Prum River.

On February 25th we moved back to Winterspelt, for our rest, acting as the Corps reserve. Out in front of us sat a battalion of Long Toms, firing over the Prum River every so often. Our promise of a rest was an actuality; showers, clean clothes, loafed around, and took things easy. There were movies for those that wished to go, and church was also held. It was rumored that we were in SHAEF reserve.

Everyone asked: "What gives?" A new month found us still in reserve and a lot of men were thinking perhaps the war was over, but the more sober ones believed it to be a period of reorganization and much needed rest.

At noon of March 3rd we march ordered and went to fighting again. We crossed the Prum River and went through the town of Prunfeld, a town so full of holes, shell and bomb, that it was hard to find more than two walls of the same building still standing, and finally ended in Dachschied. We had gotten a good six day rest and the spirit was again high, thus causing the men to make such remarks as: "A couple more weeks of regular moving and we should be crossing the Rhine". At that time we were supporting the fires of 915th F.A. Battalion.

Near the town of Serwerath, two Germans walked out of the nearby woods and gave themselves up to Cpl. Leo Widzinsky, Headquarters Battery. The story is that when Leo discovered they had no lugars, he told him to go surrender to someone else. Our destruction of these German towns was methodical and thorough. The civilians looked on with blank expressions as we passed through, it did not take much imagination to guess what their thoughts were. We wondered if they remembered the pictures that the Nazis released after their bombings of Coventry, London, Rotterdam, and Warsaw, and other points east, west, north and south? Probably not.

Our infantry team, 358th, went like the proverbial house afire after the rest period, and we kept up to them in good style. We made a late move toward the town of Pelm, but B Battery and part of Headquarters were the only elements to make it on the night of March 7th, the rest pulled off the road and closed in the next morning after daylight. All were ready for another march, only to be told that the 11th Armored had road priority, for they were striking for the Rhine, and we were to follow them. On the morning of the 9th on the way to Burch – many French P.W.'s shouted and waved in their splendaneous manner.

The Battalion convoy roared down one of Hitler's Autobahns on March 10th. The Autobahns were beautifully graded and equal to the best US highways. The particular highway that we went sailing down had a large racetrack and grandstand, perhaps 150 yards long, on the side of the road. Columns of prisoners marching to the rear areas were an excellent indication of the speed and power of the drive that was moving along out in front of us. The 4th Armored was smashing along at a terrific pace, hundreds of German horses were still in their traces, smashing pieces of animal matter, indicating to us the disorderly retreat of the once great German army.

Mayen was a town. It was practically wiped off the map by allied bombers who gave the Heinies a modern version of old St. Nick's Christmas journey. Great craters covered one complete end of the town, and large buildings in the center of town had wide cracks, radiating from stone lentels and sills like spider webs. We went into position around Saffig, or the Battalion registered on targets across the Rhine. The 4th armored was to support our fires, but early the next morning our mission changed. We were to cross the Moselle again. After once having fought so hard and at such a price, it seemed that we had to take the "Damned" river again.

The picturesque town of Munstermaifeld was in good shape, and spring was definitely in the air, as the batteries went into position near the town, on March 12th. In the afternoon of the next day, an unwary enemy plane, coming over our area, was jumped by one of our planes a Lightning, and shot it down. We remained here until the Doughs crossed the Moselle again.

At 0200 on the morning of the 14th infantry crossed the Moselle and made good progress. The only opposition reported was that of heavy weapons shelling the bridgehead. Our Battalion march ordered to Betxemerhof, and waited for the dark so we could cross under the cover of night. For quite a while the army had been using artificial moonlight. Huge searchlights were set up some place in the rear, with their powerful beams reflected off the clouds thus giving enough light to ensure safe travel by trucks over narrow and treacherous roads. Just at dusk we pulled out of our position and formed for the usual slow ant like pace of the approach and crossing the bridge. As the column formed, and S.P. gun from across the river opened up on the bridgehead. On the far side, high on the hills that swept up from

the River, could be seen the muzzle flash of this gun. The flash, then a shell screening through the air, and a loud crack, accompanied by a lurid flash, as a projectile landed. If he had swung over to his right a little more we would all been at his mercy but fortunately he was more interested in something else, for his shells kept landing about 600 yards away from us. It was a night filled with tension and immediate danger did not slacken until we went into position to Brondenbach, a town spread out along the Moselle. Because of the terrain we had to fire high angle, using a low charge.

The next morning bright and warm saw us waiting for the armor to get clear of the road so that we could take off again. The Germans were fleeing rapidly, and our moves though short, were many. We took off for Saabenhof. A long winding hill leading up from Brodenbach, gave us an opportunity to see the magnificently scenic country that we were moving through. To imagine a more beautiful variety of scenes was difficult, the rolling country with the Moselle curving in and around the sharp, vine covered hills the towns were clean and well situated, and only slight evidence of any fighting. The 4th armored was still rolling out ahead of us.

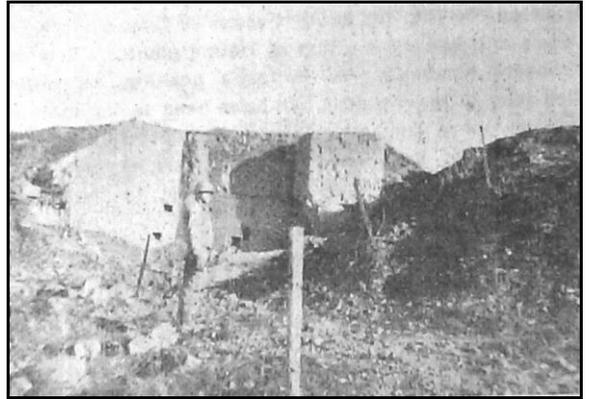
Afternoon of the 16th, after a long ride through rough territory we hit the town of Hassenbach. This town and areas around it had been hit. We fired into a wooded area beyond town, for the infantry had run into a group of SS men, numbering about 70. A hard fight took place but the result was several prisoners, and a few knocked out 20 mm ack-ack Guns and about 35 SS killed. Late that afternoon we received a report that Lt. Hester had crashed in enemy held territory. Progress in reaching this spot was slow. Both men it was discovered had died in the crash. Well liked by all, they were to be missed very much.

For the past few days many French and Polish laborers had been seen along the roads. As the 17th was St. Patrick's Day, Sgt. McEachern of Headquarters Battery saw fit to celebrate. In commemoration of his patron Saint he proved that motorcycle riding was a snap: results, one sprained ankle.

Lt. Col. Munson returned to the Battalion on the 18th of March. We were in position at Gensingen where General Bixby, Division Artillery Commanding Officer, had dinner with the officers, celebrating the return of Colonel Munson. In this position we had our first chance to see the Heinie jet propelled plane in action. He was apparently interested in the bridgework in rear of us, for he kept flying around. Scorning all the flak that was thrown at him. Liberated eggs were becoming a very frequent item on our diet, and each position that we went into, eggs were on everyone's mind.

Off again on the 20th for another series of leapfrog moves. Close to noon we were attacked by a group of Heinie planes. They dropped sticks of antipersonnel bombs in A Battery's position, wounding five. Cpl. Stryker died later of his wounds. We have been seeing more German planes of all types, more than ever before. The situation was at this point getting very tight for the Germans. They were throwing everything at us, trying to stop the drive. The closer we got to the Rhine the more planes we saw.

We march ordered to the fairly modern town of Finthen, where we stayed for four days, while our combat team attacked and cleaned out Mainz. We were there from the 21st through the 24th. Germans had observation on the town from their positions on the east side of the Rhine, and an occasional round would whip into town. Several targets in Mainz felt our power, as the Doughs mopped up completely to the river's edge. Big plans were under way, for it was obvious that the Rhine was to be bridged pretty soon. On the 23rd the 26th division took over our positions, and we were to follow the 5th across, farther upriver. On the morning of the 24th we went down to the vicinity Neirstein and waited while the 5th crossed, followed by the 4th armored and then us. The big news during the day was that the 5th Division had reached the other bank without opposition.



Chapter V

At 0800 we moved into an assembly area at Selzen. At 1530 we started moving towards the Rhine. Our long convoy dragged along to Nierstein where the 5th had crossed, patiently waiting our turn to go over. With a great roar, heralded by fanfares from the large amount of ack-ack guns, the enemy planes came in strafing and bombing, desperately trying to knock out the bridge, but the result was one knocked down plane. We all climbed back into trucks, left so hurriedly and inched our way ever so slowly towards the bridge expecting at any moment that Jerry would come plunging out of the clouds, guns blazing. The flak guns, in their sandbagged emplacements, lined the shore, alert and expectant. About 1900 hours the head of the convoy swung onto the bridge, slowly the river rolled under our wheels. How calm and placid it was. Engineers were nonchalantly tightening bolts on the pontoon structure, inspecting joints and checking their work. On the river could be seen boats, boats patrolling the waters looking for floating obstacles that might damage the bridge, for rumors had it that the Heinie was desperate enough to send human torpedoes against the work. On reaching the east bank, tension was relieved as everyone heaved sighs of relief. When darkness closed in on us the rate of march was stepped up a little, but not quite fast enough, for a few of the vehicles were still on a bridge when Jerry came back. Though he managed to scare those, he did not do any other damage. Flat low country stretched before us, not a hill in sight. Suddenly the sky over the bridgehead was filled with tracer fire. Those who could remember it was the Normandy beachhead all over again. On a smaller scale, but just as vicious. One plane was shot down and burst with a tremendous flash. So the night found us moving slowly, jerkily, into a position near Donheim. A night long to remember, a night of roaring airplane engines, unseen sounds, tenseness and trigger quick tempers, burning towns, barns and vehicles could be seen for miles in the flat country, and Patton's armor roared eastward through the night exploiting with rapidity the easily won bridgehead.

The bright morning of March 25th helped to relieve the tension of the night before and again we were on the move. As we moved along the road many ack-ack guns were seen in place, apparently used as indirect fire against our onrushing tanks, as they all had the depressed tubes.

For the next two days steady progress was made towards the Main River, and Frankfurt, where the largest German airdrome was located. In half a dozen positions, constantly, hammering away at the enemy, the question whirling in everyone's mind was, "where is the Nazi going to make his last stand?" There were reports about some stronghold in the Bavarian Alps, but then that was just a rumor. Finally drew up into position where a good field of fire was available for the crossing of the Main. It was where an old searchlight outfit had been, now nothing more than a shack remaining intact. Stayed there overnight and until early the next morning when we moved down across the Main, luckily with little difficulty, for we breezed across the river as if it were nothing more than a creek and went into the town of Wittelbuchen, a town close to Frankfurt.

The next several days were strictly moving days with little or no firing done. It seemed as if there just was no fight left in the Heinie for he was now surrendering by the scores. Polish and Russians were beginning to crowd the roads continually, their broad peasant faces were wreathed in grins as we rolled by. Lt. Keen took over the job as Battalion Communications Officer, as well as Headquarters Battery Commander, on March 30.

March 31st we were in position at Sandhof. This month was a very active one for the 344th. After leaving the rest area, way back by Winterspelt, the outfit traveled roughly 175 miles, crossed three rivers and the 31st found us very deep in Germany, gnawing away at its innards. Up to this day the 90th had taken a total of 41,000 prisoners since D-Day, June 6, 1944.

The A Battery ammo truck caught fire and the surrounding area sounded like a good battle, with all sorts of shell bursts and small ammo going off. It was later believed that the truck had been hit by a panzerfoust.

The new month started the same as when we left March, with three and four moves a day always in pursuit of the fast retreating Wehrmacht. On the evening of April 2nd a German plane was shot down in the adjusting town, but before it crashed it released its load in the rail yards hitting a carload of high explosive and setting off all of it at once. The explosion was so bad, injuring many civilians and GIs in the town that our own medics under the direction of Captain McConahey were asked for help in taking care of the casualties.

The next day we received some friendly artillery fire in the town of Kaiseroda, but no one was injured. We heard from some Italian P. W.'s that there were large stores of German bullion and art treasures located in a salt mine in that town. Later we learned that the infantry had located the loot, and also some high bank officials. The treasure had been put in the mines to escape the heavy air raids that had been frequent of late.

Major Conn traded his gold leafs in for a set of silver leaves on April 5th. Moved to Bad Liebenstein, where we ran across several German Military Hospitals crowded to capacity. The next day we moved into an assembly area, letting the 87th Division takeover where we left off, at Liebrode, where we did not even lay the guns. On the 7th we took off for Heiderbach. The trip was a smooth one until we drew near Zella Mehlis, where the roads were thoroughly jammed with GI vehicles of every description. Finally reached our destination. A pistol factory was located in Zella Mehlis, where the officers went down and picked up several cases of guns that were distributed to the batteries for souvenirs. We had to supply 25 trucks for the infantry, in order to bring them up to the line. The next day we left Heiderbach for Schmiedefeld, passing through Suhl. Colonel Munson and his driver Cpl. Van Riper and radio operator Cpl. Sheldon, returning from the 1st Battalion CP saw a German soldier run across the road in front of them and head for the woods. Van fired on him and caused his surrender, bringing back his "Burp" gun as proof.

The town of Neustadt was still burning, in spots, as we went into position near there. The infantry had only just cleared out showing how close behind them we were.

The 11th of April Colonel Munson left us for XII Corps and Colonel Conn is our new Battalion Commander.

On April 12th we displaced four times and finally ended up in Plessant. The area around Plessant had not been cleared, for no sooner had we gone through one of the worst downpours we had experienced, a firefight broke the silence. A tank was seen going up into the vicinity from which the small arms fire was coming, firing as it moved. The battalion was not there except for A Battery and the CP truck. The firing battery was wheeled around for direct fire, and a temporary F.D.C. was set up, but no firing was necessary. Heavy showers made the position a true mire out of it. Many of the trucks in trying to get out of this position became bogged down and had to be pulled out. All credit goes to the maintenance section of B Battery, 537th AAA for snaking out the mired vehicles. After going through one of the worst downpours we had experienced, the remainder of the Battalion caught up with those who had gone ahead, and ended up in Gebensdorf after dark.

The report of the death of President Roosevelt was confirmed on the 13th, much to everyone's sorrow. Just one more reason for knocking Germany to pieces, both Republicans and Democrats agreed to that. We were still in general support of the 358th Infantry and reinforced by the 179th F.A. Battalion. For several days we have been going through heavily wooded country. Many sawmills and logging sections were seen tied into the fast running mountain streams, which were dammed to control their flow for power and floating of cut timber to the mills.

April 16th the Battalion moved to Unter Ketzau, going around the town of Hof, already taken by the 358th. Stayed here for two days, thus enabling the outfits following us to catch up. Lt. Mann and Cpl. Mathis were decorated with the DSC while we were in his position. The 3rd Battalion, 358th sent a task force into Czechoslovakia and erected to sign reading "You are now entering Czechoslovakia through the courtesy of 3rd Battalion 358th Infantry Regiment" on the other side of this sign was written the same thing in Russian one of our liaison planes accompanying the task force was lost on the trip.

When the plane was low on fuel Lt. Rizzo came down to gas up and in starting the plane again, it got away from him, took off by itself and crashed. Not having time to salvage it or repair on the spot, the men burned it and took off midst a hail of lead from a party of Germans that they had run into. The task force was made up of I Company, 2 tanks, 2 tank destroyers and the I and R Platoon. Captain Foster our S2 represented the 344th F.A. The T.F. reached the Czech border at 1000 and left to return at 1100. On the trip 36 prisoners were taken. Moved to Kautendorf that night, supposedly back in the fight again, but there was very little fighting going on. On the 20th we were joined by the 738th F.A. Battalion an 8 inch outfit. A Battery brought in 8 prisoners, taken near their position. C Battery received two boys from two of the divisions overrun in the initial phase of the "Bulge". They had been on the long "March of Death" and had finally escaped while being transferred from one camp to another. Their tales were typical of all others. On April 22nd we moved to Schonfight, and still very little firing. There were rumors that the war would soon be over, and naturally everyone hoped that that was the case. Mr. Kadlecek, Personnel Officer had been up with us for a few days and finally left for his own department, with beaucoup souvenirs. Captain Reddington went to 20th Corps Artillery and was replaced by Captain Jones, acting S3, and Lt. Green as Assistant S3. On the 22nd two more moves, ending up in Spielling for the night. The positions were near the concentration camp and crematory of Flossenberg. Some of the officers and men went over to have a look at the place and brought back reports similar to other stories; on horror and degradation that returned this "civilized" place to the dark ages.

The next-day saw us moving to Pleystein and after dark to Burkhartreuth, through several towns that were still burning. One of which we had dumped a lot of the W.P. into, razing it completely. The civilians stood around their burning houses with expressionless faces. War had come to them with a sudden and devastating force. Those Germans would not forget us; the dead German soldiers that lay along the roads were ignored as the flames crept closer to the huddled, twisted bodies. Interdictory fire kept the Battalion base busy that night, more than 600 rounds were fired. On the 25th several flights of bombers were heading back from raids over Czechoslovakia, when one fell out of formation and suddenly blew up. Apparently the crew had bailed out for we picked up several and the 358th picked up the remaining members, one being rescued from civilians who were about to molest him. Moved to Schensee that afternoon. Day after day the prisoners were pouring in, having had enough.

On the 26th we moved to Tiefenbach and then to Trefelstein. Expected to be in this position awhile, supporting the 358th in a defensive position. Were joined here by the 244th F.A. for additional support. A Battery captured a 35 piece German band intact. Stayed here the 27th 28th and 29th, on the 29th B Battery and one gun from the ack-ack fired on a house directly in front of them, where a bunch of SS had been reported in hiding. On the 30th we moved to a new position just outside Waldmunchen.

On May first we moved to Haselbach, Czechoslovakia, our fifth country since landing in Normandy. Fired 739 rounds, including our 150,000 one. There was snow wet and heavy, on the second of May. The 358th was relieved by the 2nd Infantry Division, and we went back into Germany, town of Lam, and later that day moved to Lohberg, Germany. Here was a real sight. Snow-capped hills, and heavily wooded. The town was a summer resort. On the third and fourth were entirely relieved by the 2nd Infantry Division but before leaving the flak boys brought in a German lieutenant and two men. They had a note to the American Commandant from their commander, asking to be allowed to surrender to us. The outfit was part of the 11th Panzer, and finally the 359th received the surrender. Moved to Tresdorf, Germany now in Corps reserve, but not for long. After a long move the next day we moved to Paseka, Czechoslovakia, back in direct support off the 358th, with the 345th F.A. in support of us. The 90th was to make a bridgehead for the 4th Armored through a bad mountain pass. That was on the 5th of May. On the sixth the armor had road priorities, and so by a process of infiltration we managed to keep up with the infantry. The town of Untereichenstein was the stopover for the night. Shortly after getting into position a large convoy of German vehicles came in town, driven by the surrendering 11th Panzer. The last round fired by the 344th was at 1435 on German infantry, raising the total to 150,671. On the morning of the 7th we got an order to cease all fire except when attacked. This order came from

both Regiment and Div-Arty. Around 1400 we moved to Schihebetz, Czechoslovakia. The war is over they claim, but the Battalion was alert and ready to fire in any case. As we passed from Sudentenland into Czechoslovakia proper the towns were bedecked in flower garlands, and the people all gave a grand welcome as the "Yanks" came through. Almost like going through France again.

May 8th beautiful weather and holiday for all. There was happiness in the air in this small town. People did all to make us comfortable. We were entertained royally. Band concerts, dances and drinks. General Ernest talked to the officers. This day of May 8 was declared as V-E Day. Rumor had it that we were to be occupational troops.

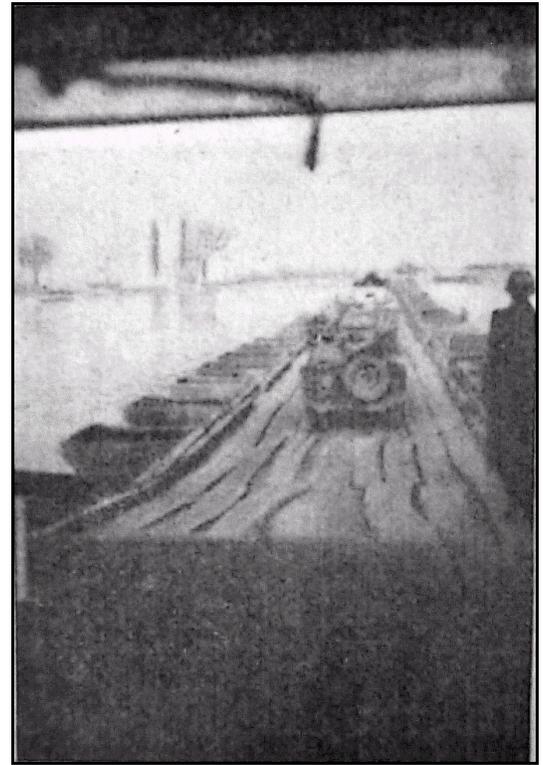
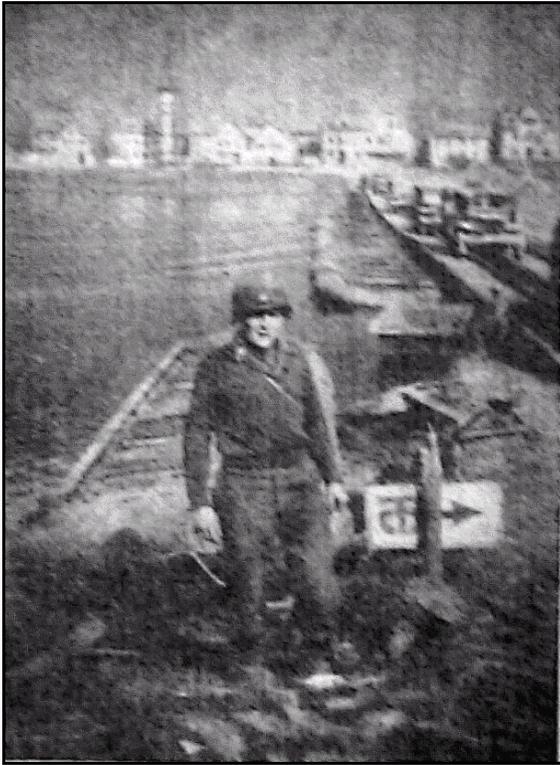
May 9th a recon party was sent out to inspect a new area, which was near the Danube and Regensburg. In the afternoon townsfolk wished to express their gratitude of being liberated through the means of a ceremony, at which time they presented a Czechoslovakian flag and medal to a Major Lippard, acting on behalf of Colonel Conn, who was absent at the time.

May 10th we were alerted to move to the Northeast, for the 4th Armored was having trouble with troops still out in front of them. Bivouacked in Kateun, where again we had a wonderful reception. On the way to our new position we passed some Russian troops on the road, and also a large concentration of P.W.'s with their equipment and vehicles strewn all over the few fields. Shortly after we hit the new position several men were off to the Riviera, and a few days of true relaxation.

May 11th, 12th and 13th we started cleaning equipment and getting things organized. Swimming and fishing were the main recreations, but there were dances in the various towns around every night so the boys were having a pretty good time of it. On the 14th we lost several boys through the newly announced point system, the lucky fellows: from Headquarters Battery 1st Sgt. Castello, and Cpl. Standeford, A Battery, 1st Sgt. Gilbert and T/5 Gilbert Miller, from B Battery, Pfc. McLean: T/5 Salo from C Battery and M/Sgt. Wyley from Service, were the first group to leave. That afternoon we left for our occupational area, a trip of 16 miles, ending up in a small steel town of Maxhutte, Germany, just outside Burglengenfeld.

Thus ends the combat history of the 344th Field Artillery Battalion eleven months and for two odd days since we landed in Normandy. France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany and Czechoslovakia had felt our power and strength. From the hedgerows of Normandy, across the plains of France, through the Siegfried Line, over the rolling hills of Germany and Czechoslovakia this Battalion did its full share toward hastening the end of the most destructive war in the History of Man.





APPENDIX

INCLUDED

- I Original "Beachhead" Roster 6 June 1944
- II Battalion Roster as of 1st August 1945
- III Honor Roll
- IV Purple Heart Awards
- V Heroic and Meritorious Awards
- VI Itinerary

BATTALION ROSTER
At the Time It Hit the Beach

HEADQUARTERS AND HEADQUARTERS BATTERY

Lt. Colonel Merten F. Munson
Major Robert V. Lippard
Captain Glenn R. Davis
Captain Robert V. Bovard
Captain Forrest R. Jones
1st Lt. Joseph P. Godfrey
1st Lt. Trammell C. Keen
2nd Lt. Lloyd A. Watland
T/Sgt. Raymond J. Harbitz
T/Sgt. Cleo L. Harris
S/Sgt. Roy L. Serratte
S/Sgt. Jack B. Davis
S/Sgt. Walter J. Hynes
T/3 James Azat
Sgt. James A. Hathcoat
Sgt. Kenneth L. Aune
Sgt. Elvin L. Morse
T/4 Clemmie C. McGregor
T/4 Louis C. Armstrong
T/4 Stanley J. Budzyn
T/4 Louis J. Weber
T/4 Merle B. Johnson
T/4 Ambrose F. Mohan
Cpl. Elton E. Blake
Cpl. Jack A. Fitzwater
Cpl. Jose E. Medina
Cpl. Edward J. Kowal
Cpl. Erwin W. Mutschink
Cpl. Leo A. Widzinski
T/5 Willard J. Edwards
T/5 Alexander Laird
T/5 Joseph F. Kendra
T/5 Ernest F. Repetto
T/5 Maurise H. Simile
T/5 S Frank J. Coppola
T/5 John W. Harcarik
T/5 Richard A. Price
T/5 Edward A. Snider
T/5 Joseph L. Harmon
T/5 Arthur N. Fleming
T/5 Warren P. Fowler
Pfc. Carl E. Auten
Pfc. Clark B. Brown

Major Charles Conn
Captain Arlo H. Knowles
Captain Louis R. Ross
Captain Earl B. Taylor
Captain G. A. Foster
1st Lt. Leonard E. Green
1st Lt. Wm. B. Mathiews
M/Sgt. Joseph J. Leshnock
T/Sgt. Joe Musgrave
T/Sgt. Meridith C. Gran
S/Sgt. Wm. James W. Sutherland
S/Sgt. Arthur L. Johnson
S/Sgt. Burdette L. Engman
T/3 Wm. C. Walcott
Sgt. Alfred J. Boschler
Sgt. Clarence L. Shaw
Sgt. Ben M. Flud
T/4 Carl L. Austen
T/4 Edward F. Bartosh
T/4 Charles R. Berry
T/4 James A. Johnson
T/4 Felix Lipinski
Cpl. Cosmo Rivera
Cpl. Everett F. Paxton
Cpl. Arnold H. Standeford
Cpl. Jimmie L. Roberts
Cpl. Charles T. Lucas
Cpl. Almo Kirby
T/5 George N. Ruetteggers
T/5 Benjamin F. Martin
T/5 Wm. B. Foust
T/5 Jack C. Perrine
T/5 Raymond G. Robertson
T/5 Walter E. Staruk
T/5 Arthur H. Eitzmann
T/5 John J. O'Brien
T/5 John W. Roberts
T/5 John T. Woodruff
T/5 Thomas F. Maines
T/5 Wilbur D. Van Riper
Pfc. Gustav L. Bender
Pfc. Wm. Young
Pfc. James R. Delaney

Pfc. Roman A. Verhoff
Pfc. William E. King
Pfc. James T. Montgomery
Pfc. Clyde P. Belford
Pfc. Clarence W. Desper
Pfc. George L. Lesnau
Pfc. Peter J. Rukavina
Pfc. Roy E. DeCoto
Pfc. Norman Hansen
Pfc. James R. Reid
Pvt. Stanley D. Esselstrom
Pvt. James W. Hermsen
Pvt. Gilber H. Hoffman
Pvt. Frank H. Lopez
Pvt. Karl J. Viola Jr.
Pvt. Charles C. Sebo
Pvt. Werner J. Straus
Pvt. Frederick F. Wilcox
Pvt. George Saltis
Pvt. Herbert A. Richardson
Pvt. Manuel Callahan
Pvt. George E. Klein
Pvt. Thomas H. Taylor
Pvt. Herbert A. Richardson
Pvt. Allen S. Trucker Jr.
Pvt. Kenneth B. Vangness

MEDICS

T/3 Elvin E. Betts
T/3 Carl A. Mills
T/4 Phillip E. Troxel
Cpl. John S. Murph
T/5 Thomas A. Ryan
Pfc. Gerald R. Hadcok
Pfc. Edward J. Wyciskalla
Pvt. James M. Adkins
Pvt. Walter Jowers

Pvt. Milton E. Lind
Pfc. Paul H. Paulson
Pfc. Frank H. Lopez
Pfc. Leonard J. Cotugno
Pfc. Edward M. Knierim
Pfc. James N. Nebel
Pfc. Jack W. Tackett
Pfc. Albert G. Cade
Pfc. Arthur L. Steinfurth
Pvt. Harry Bremm
Pvt. Pedro L. Martinez
Pvt. Harold E. Hicks
Pvt. George E. Klein
Pvt. Ricardo F. Munoz
Pvt. Melwin W. Schmidt
Pvt. Salvators Villalobos
Pvt. Jack W. Tackett
Pvt. James E. Wilson
Pvt. Egon J. Berillon
Pvt. Richard W. Barr
Pvt. Paul A. Goldsmith
Pvt. George E. Scully
Pvt. Anthony B. Oreka
Pvt. Charles F. Teel
Pvt. George H. Van Driel
Pvt. George S. Van Sandt

T/3 Duane L. Lyane
T/4 Richard E. Jarisch
T/4 Howard J. Kersey
Cpl. Aaron Varnar
T/5 Peter P. Wedl
Pfc. Raymond Paracoiny
Pvt. Paul Aleva
Pvt. Quinton E. Haley

ABLE BATTERY

Captain David B. Andrews
Captain Roy E. Smith
1st Sgt. Leslie A. Gilbert
S/Sgt. Roy T. Compton
S/Sgt. Harlan H. Hopkins
S/Sgt. Paul F. Rafferty
Sgt. Theodore K. Oman
Sgt. Glenn A. Beck
Sgt. James A. Tuch

Captain Thomas J. Mann
1st Lt. Paul H. Raley
S/Sgt. Hassell C. Whitefield
S/Sgt. John E. Cavender
S/Sgt. Jack T. Devlin
Sgt. Robert J. Stefanini
Sgt. James J. Fowler
Sgt. Dillard W. Boyd
T/4 Raymond E. Holt

T/4 Werth L. Adair
Cpl. Adelbert G. Adkins
Cpl. Mose R. Burns
Cpl. Howard S. Nelson
Cpl. George R. Wagonseller
Cpl. Elza E. Miller
Cpl. George E. Hanson
T/5 Virgil T. Maag
T/5 Wm. J. Baker
T/5 Sigmund R. Norwicke
T/5 Ray W. Sanders
Pfc. Friel A. Armbrister
Pfc.. Loland J. Broussard
Pfc. Benjamin Cohen
Pfc. James V. Cummings
Pfc. Ralph C. Hughes
Pfc. Isham Moses
Pfc. Arthur C. Thompson
Pfc. Walter W. Mathis
Pfc. Robert Ballew
Pfc. Ray Clark
Pfc. Jose G. Cuellar
Pfc. Frank D. Griffiths
Pfc. Jesse A. Lehtcoe
Pfc. Archie O. Murphy
Pfc. Frederick E. Wilcox
Pfc. Evert O. Hillbloom
Pfc. Eulojio Reveles Jr.
Pfc. Joe C. Hood
Pvt. John J. Jameson
Pfc. Leonard Gr. Deramus
Pvt. Gilbert W. Miller

T/4 Raymond Shellabarger
Cpl. Oliver K. Castner
Cpl. Herman Maurer
Cpl. John F. Walsh
Cpl. John K. Wall
Cpl. Herbert C. Hutchins
Cpl. John J. McGloughan
T/5 Wm. Rumik
T/5 Earl P. Beeman
T/5 Frank M. Stephens
T/5 August E. Bollinger
Pfc. Bill F. Buckner
Pfc. Clifford V. Clark
Pfc. Joseph Cretella
Pfc. Granville S. Dunaway
Pfc. Thomas L. Hassett
Pfc. John F. Passa
Pfc. Dennis P. Wininger
Pfc. Joseph Abreu
Pfc. Stanley P. Bobola
Pfc. Joseph B. Colwell
Pfc. Peter Dancesia
Pfc. Clayton J. Jacobson
Pfc. Jack J. Leon
Pfc. John E. Teel
Pfc. Aime J. Gagnon
Pfc. Wm. G. Cannon
Pfc. Malcolm C. Carrmichael
Pfc. Raymond R. Patterson
Pvt. Ernest C. Spivey
Pfc. Elmer C. Greenlee
Pvt. Wm. L. Muccina

BAKER BATTERY

Captain Steven E. Morelli
2nd Lt. Leo F. Butler
1st Sgt. Colie H. Cochran
S/Sgt. Louis W. Budmayr
Sgt. Herbert A. Mumford
Sgt. John F. Otruba
T/4 Earl L. Racette
T/4 Deward E. Efurd
Cpl. Oren J. Bruss
Cpl. Lester C. Burkett
Cpl. Thomas E. Andrews
Cpl. Jess C. Crabtree
Cpl. Girvis P. McCann
Cpl. Jesse O. Reed

Captain Russell C. Johnson
2nd Lt. Thomas W. Lashar
S/Sgt. Logan L. Stoeber
S/Sgt. Beltran B. Sedillo
Sgt. James C. Turnbull
Sgt. Henry C. Myers
T/4 Ray A. Benson
T/4 Louis E. Willis
Cpl. Archie D. Mayberry
Cpl. Tom J. McCandless
Cpl. James C. Henry
Cpl. Ray A. Cooper
Cpl. Max De Lara
Cpl. Edward B. Cowen

Cpl. Pete J. Wiechkoske
T/5 Rolfe A. Gray
T/5 Samuel W. Murphy
T/5 John L. Warner
T/5 Wm. J. Daly
T/5 Herman P. Jones
T/5 Carroll Payne
T/5 Clifford R. May
Pfc. Arnold W. Larson
Pfc. Paul R. Rosensteel
Pfc. Robert H. Currey
Pfc. Pat Marasco
Pfc. Lonzo C. White
Pfc. Jesse I. Goodman
Pfc. Clifford E. Schofield
Pfc. Lawerenee A. Beer
Pfc. Frederick L. Harvey
Pfc. Lloyd G. Tilton
Pfc. Earnest H. Harris
Pfc. Burna Roach
Pfc. Stanley B. Bergeland
Pfc. Arthur Martz
Pfc. Walter M. Schiewe
Pfc. Robert L. Curtis
Pfc. Felix Persico
Pfc. Jerry White
Pfc. James E. Hale
Pfc. Clyde Southers

Cpl. Joseph J. Simnone
T/5 Charles F. Elliott
T/5 George L. Lawless
T/5 Thomas H. Knieven
T/5 Jenner E. Langhan
T/5 Carroll R. Boardman
T/5 Wm. H. Hills
Pfc. Elijah C. Clevenger
Pfc. Domingo D. Morales
Pfc. Melvin C. Wasley
Pfc. Harold V. Julian
Pfc. Newman J. Robinson
Pfc. Raymond E. Begitschke
Pfc. Jake B. Keller
Pfc. Peter R. Vesco
Pfc. Jose Cramer
Pfc. Chester I. Pokusa
Pfc. Frank Chung
Pfc. Robert L. Mann
Pfc. Jessie Ukastine
Pfc. Rufus D. Everitt
Pfc. Fredrick Nicolini
Pfc. Laverne W. Winfrey
Pfc. David L. Hamilton
Pfc. Percy D. Thompson
Pfc. Eugene W. Chancler
Pfc. Newell V. O'Daniel
Pfc. James R. Walker

CHARLIE BATTERY

Captain Walter B. Thornton
1st Lt. Kenneth W. Licht
S/Sgt. Robert H. Tiefenbrum
S/Sgt. Donald C. Corbert
Sgt. Ben S. Bingham
Sgt. Frank Amaral
Sgt. John J. Abeyta
T/4 Roger S. Nylund
T/4 Ralph E. MacEachen
T/4 Ira D. Mullin
Cpl. Arbie P. CoIwell
Cpl. Edward P. Jechna
Cpl. Clifton M. Schrum
Cpl. Joe M. Gray
Cpl. Louis Schwartz
T/5 Domenick Mastromonaco
T/5 August Wiest
T/5 Jessie T. Whitlock

1st Lt. Francis O. Cantini
1st Sgt. George J. Lawton
S/Sgt. Paul J. Vogel
Sgt. Frederick M. Fox
Sgt. Teodoro Salas
Sgt. Theodore G. MacFarling
Sgt. Wm. E. Wurtz
T/4 Harold A. Robenbeck
T/4 Edmond L. Hill
T/4 Hollis E Peek
Cpl. Joseph R. Himmler
Cpl. Sevastian Sandoval
Cpl. George H. Allacher
Cpl. Burton J. Peterson
Cpl. John R. Wallace
T/5 Elwyn B. Tidwell
T/5 William W. Salo
T/5 Alvin Evrage

T/5 Ernest V. Schmidt
T/5 Glenn M. Hickey
T/5 George W. Anderson
Pfc. Cecil R. Calley
Pfc. John A. Falsetto
Pfc. Thurman H. Buck
Pfc. Delwin D. Merrill
Pfc. Henry J. Kemper
Pfc. Henry Szykowski
Pfc. Maynard W. Rensvold
Pfc. Albert L. Trexler
Pfc. Edgar A. Raymond
Pfc. Oliver D. McLaughlin
Pfc. Marvin A. Bryant
Pfc. Willie C. Spears
Pfc. Everett L. Lahey
Pfc. Charles W. Johannsen
Pfc. Louis J. Marek
Pfc. Wadey L. Potts
Pfc. James R. Taylor
Pfc. Andres V. Urbano
Pfc. Ramon S. Lara
Pfc. Fern L. Asbell
Pfc. Wm. C. Redding
Pfc. Bruce O. Dimsdle
Pfc. Pete Terraichia
Pvt. Eugene J. Wankowski

T/5 Edgar C. Young
T/5 Charles I. Shaunfield
Pfc. James H. Brewer
Pfc. Mario J. DeCristofaro
Pfc. Pedro C. Ansualdua
Pfc. Thomas W. Hughes
Pfc. Daniel A. Gieptner
Pfc. Emil J. Marek
Pfc. Jose E. Pino
Pfc. Isa M. Sullivan
Pfc. Thomas R. Tuckey
Pfc. Dale L. Graham
Pfc. Joe M. Tamayo
Pfc. Mike Montecalvo
Pfc. Robert L. White
Pfc. Elmer F. Moffitt
Pfc. August H. Kiedaisch
Pfc. Robert E. Merritt
Pfc. Neil C. Spencer
Pfc. John M. Trisciuzzi
Pfc. Earl W. Colson
Pfc. Wm. S. Rupick
Pfc. Edward W. Fleming
Pfc. Glenn H. Cleaves
Pfc. Metz T. Hamblin
Pfc. Albert J. Zimmerman

SERVICE BATTERY

Captain Robert A. Kruse
M/Sgt. Harold F. Gemar
1st Sgt. Samuel W. Frey
T/Sgt. Floyd F. Hobson
T/Sgt. J. B. Evans
S/Sgt. Harold R. Goodwin
Sgt. John S. Tamagni
T/4 Henry Boelens
T/4 Thomas J. Bramley
T/4 Chester J. Banducci
T/4 Merritt C. Townley
Cpl. Howard H. Samples
Cpl. Albert W. Mieir
T/5 Byrom F. Harnagel
T/5 Melvin C. Hurst
T/5 Alfred C. Orio
T/5 Raymond D. Brown
T/5 Raymond L. Byrom
T/5 Harold L. Smith
Pfc. Garard J. Allard

CWO Johnnie S. Yarbrough
M/Sgt. Byron S. Wylie
1st Sgt. Nicholas J. Heller
T/Sgt. Norbert C. Labley
S/Sgt. Andrew B. Wilcoxon
Sgt. Frank E. Heide
Sgt. Byron L. Holley
T/4 Lawrence B. Klutts
T/4 Sam. L. Harkins
T/4 Sam Morris
Cpl. Henry J. Meyer
Cpl. William L. Coleman
T/5 Lester C. Mulliniks
T/5 Wylie C. Burleson
T/5 Fred W. Knettle
T/5 Johnnie W. Swink
T/5 Orie Ried
T/5 Barry E. Hawkinson
T/5 Elmer P. Peterson
Pfc. Guy T. Hinsley

Pfc. Leon Schneiderrman
Pfc. Tony S. Martinez
Pfc. Charles J. Fitzimons
Pfc. Lyman L. Richardson
Pfc. Edward H. Lindenbaum
Pfc. James A. Jolly
Pfc. Carl H. Reed
Pfc. Uruslo V. Ortiz
Pvt. Jimmie A. Capers
Pvt. Otillo Apodaca
Pvt. Coleman C. Jones

Pfc. Caterino Z. Gazcia
Pfc. Wm. R. Rathage
Pfc. John R. White
Pfc. Delma E. Edwards
Pfc. Harvey C. Buck
Pfc. James H. Wilson
Pfc. Carl H. Peters
Pfc. Jack Riggs
Pvt. Joseph M. Mason
Pvt. Wilmer F. Fetty

MEDICAL DETACHMENT

Captain John H. Culp
T/4 Raymond H. Tresner
T/3 Carl H. Mills
Cpl. Melvin J. Diemer
T/5 Peter P. Wedl
Pfc. Gerald R. Hadcock

S/Sgt. Francis B. Frazier
T/4 Richard E. Jarisch
Cpl. Aaron Varner
T/5 Alfred J. Fortune
Pfc. Paul J. Banks
Pfc. Tennie B. Clarin

344th Field Artillery Battalion
August 1, 1945
HEADQUARTERS BATTERY
Enlisted Men

MASTER SERGEANTS

Charles B. Queenan

1ST SERGEANTS

Charles A. Heilman

TECHNICAL SERGEANTS

Albert J. Croft

Raymond J. Harbitz

STAFF SERGEANTS

Robert H. Carver

Burdotte L. Engman

Walter M. Hynes

Pusquale A. Trocchia

William Urban

SERGEANTS

Kenneth L. Aune

James A. Hathcoat

Vernon H. Keirstead

Elvin L. Morse

Clarence L. Shaw

TECHNICIANS FOURTH GRADE

Merle B. Johnson

John Kremasky

Felix Lipinski

Paul J. Lowicki

Ralph E. MacEachen

Ambrose F. Mohan

John T. Monahan

Otto Muller

Fred S. Severs

Sylvester T. Snaza

Joseph L. Theriot

CORPORALS

Edward A. Baumgartner

Elmo W. Kirby

Edward J. Kowal

Charles T. Lucas Jr.

Jose P. Medina

Erwin W. Mutschink

David Pluss

Jimmie L. Roberts

Leo A. Widzinski

Stanley L. Williams

TECHNICIANS FIFTH GRADE

Henry L. Bartlette

Robert I. Bolton

Frank J. Coppola

Willard H. Edwards

Arthur H. Eitzmann

Edward S. Evans

William B. Foust

John W. Harcarik

Nickolas V. Kokoron

Alexander Laird

Robert M. Malloy

Benjiman F. Martin

John J. O'Brien, Jr.

Jack C. Perrine

Richard A. Price

Ernest C. Repetto

John W. Roberts
George N. Ruettgers
William M. Sheldon
Edward A. Snider
Wilbur D. Van Riper
Joseph E. Kendra

Raymond G. Robertson
Guido F. Schroader
Maurise H. Simle
Walter P. Staruk
John T. Woodruff

PRIVATES FIRST CLASS

R. L. Anderson Jr.
Jerald R. Aulich
Kenneth F. Behler
Elliot S. Cohen
Roy E. De Coto
Clarence W. Desper
Santo P. Fanizzi
John Fields
Norman Hansen

Adial O. Armour
Vincent Basileo
Clyde F. Belfod
Leonard J. Cotugno
Lawrence L. Defoor
Charles E. Eure Jr.
James F. Farley
George Greene

BATTERY A

STAFF SERGEANTS

Cavander, John E.
Hopkins, Harlon H.
Rafferty, Paul F.
Carter, Elmer P.
Clark., Clifford V.
Cohen, Benjamin

Devlin, Jack T.
Pantaleo, Anthony J.
Camel, Joseph
Chew, John C.
Clark, Ray
Colwell, Joseph B.

SERGEANTS

Fowler, James J.
Stefanini, Robert J.

Oman, Theodore K.
Tuch, James A.

TECHNICIANS FOURTH GRADE

Adair, Warth L.
Shellabarger, Raymond. H.

Holt, Raymond E.

CORPORALS

Adkins, Adelbert G.
Costner, Oliver K.
Nelson, Howard S.
Rourk, Raymond D.
Walsh, John F.

Burns, Mose R.
Maurer, Herman
Pee, George R.
Wagonseller, George R.
Wiggins, Leonard B.

TECHNICIANS FIFTH GRADE

Baker, William J.
Belorit, Jr. John
Falke, Charles J.
Norwicke, Siemund R.

Beeman, Earl P.
Bollinger, August E.
Mazzo, Vito
Peterson, Samuel O.

Sanders, Ray W.
Stephens, Frank M.

Smith, William T.
Williams, Harvey

PRIVATES FIRST CLASS

Aure, Joseph
Alagna, John J.
Armbrister, Friel A.
Ballew, Robert E.
Berman, David
Bobola, Stanley F.
Broussard, Loland J.
Buckner, Bill F.
Camel, Joseph
Carter, Elmer R.
Chew, John C.
Clark, Clifford V.
Clark, Ray
Cohen, Benjamin
Colwell, Joseph B.
Cretella, Joseph
Cuellar, Jose G.
Cummins, James V.
Dancesia, Peter
Davis, Willis A.
Di Giovanni, Salvatore
Dodge, Shirl L.
Dunaway, Granville S.
Evans, Robert C.
Ferrone, Thomas A.
Fouch, Frank
Griffitts, Frank D.
Hassett, Thomas L.

Holmes, Charles L.
Huff, Wallace H.
Hughes, Ralph C.
Jacobson, Clayton J.
Jandro, Robert J.
Leon, Jack J.
Lethco, Jesse A.
Marcrom, Luke L.
Moses, Isham
Murphy, Archie O.
Passa, John F.
Petralia, Anthony J.
Platano, Eugene
Poole, William R.
Ratchford, Gerard T.
Rhodes, Cecil C.
Smith, Garner F.
Teel, John E.
Thompson, Arthur C.
Tiernan, James B.
Wagner, Marvin C.
Walsh, Jr. William D.
Ward, Jr. Calvin D.
Wingard, Martin
Winger, Dennis F.
Goins, Lawrence W.
Hall, Howard F.
Hirsch, Lester M.

PRIVATES

Balliet, Theodore W.
Jameson, John H.

Bennage, James E.
Kmitch, Thomas

BATTERY B

FIRST SERGEANT

Budmayr, Louis W.

STAFF SERGEANTS

Delmonte, Fiume
Sedillo, Beltran B

Otruba, John F.
Stoeber, Logan L.

SERGEANTS

Holt, Bruce C.
Myers, Henry C.

Kendrick, Leroy A.
Seek, Robert J.

TECHNICIANS FOURTH GRADE

Benson, Roy A.
Pugh, Thomas J.
Ynfante, Rozell L.

Pantozzi, Stephen V.
Schall, Norman H.

CORPORALS

Bingley, Edward H.
Burket, Lester C.
Daly, William J.
Ditmore, Hubert. C.
McCandless, Tom J.
Nieznay, Frank

Bruss, Oren J.
Cooper, Ray A.
De Lara, Max
Mayberry, Archie D.
McCann, Girvis P.
Reed, Jesse O.

TECHNICIANS FIFTH GRADE

Booth, Edwin H.
Clark, Paul V.
Gray, Rolfe A.
Jones, Louis V.
Langham, Jenner E.
Pintak, John, Jr.

Charles, Alfred
Elliott, Charles F.
Harmer, John E.
Jones, Herman P.
Murphy, Samuel W.
Sheerin, Vincent J.

PRIVATES FIRST CLASS

Corcoran, Stephen
Curtis, Robert L.
Cassell, Dalph W.
Donnelly, James P.
Eller, Arvel J.
Fairfield, David D.
Goodell, Robert L.
Hale, James E.
Hamilton, David L.
Holder, Verl C.
Jarabek, Edward J.
Keller, Jake B.
Matteo, Joseph, Jr.
O'Daniel, Nowell V.
Persico, Felix
Pokusa, Chester L.
Schofield, Clifford E.
Southers, Clyde
Tilton, Lloyd G.
Vesco, Peter R.
White, Jerry
Begitschke, Raymond E.
Cagnina, Salvatore A.

Cramer, Jose
De Ramus, James C. Jr.
Chancler, Eugene W.
Dump, Ivan L.
Elliott, Sidney M.
Ferrell, John P.
Goodman, Jesse I.
Hamblin, Kenneth H. Jr.
Harvey, Frederick L.
Houts, Harold L.
Jensen, Alton K.
Lovett, Edward C.
Marcason, Joseph W.
Pendley, Roy E.
Pierce, Theron A.
Reisdorf, George F.
Snellen, John W.
Thompson, Percy D.
Vecchione, Mario
Walker, James R.
Beer, Lawrence A. Jr.
Brownstein, Allen
Carlton, Raymond E.

PRIVATES

Downing, Henry E.

Downs, Dewey D.

Henson, Johnny
Powers, Paul W.

Pack, Guilford D.
Runyan, Donald W.

BATTERY C

STAFF SERGEANTS

Colbert, Donald C.
Vogel, Paul J.

Tiefenbrun, Robert H.

SERGEANTS

Beard, Paul R.
Fox, Frederick M.
Hester, Reaves F.
Sopata, Stanley J.

Benson, Raymond V.
Garrett, Wilber D.
Salas, Teodoro R.

TECHNICIANS FOURTH GRADE

Hill, Edmond L.
Techet, Joseph M.

Olson, Daniel W.
Wortley, Robert C.

CORPORALS

Allacher, George H.
Himler, Joseph R.
Petersen, Burton J.
Sandoval, Sevastian
Shrum, Clifton M.
Wallace, John R.

Colwell, Arbie P.
Jechna, Edward P.
Sappenfield, Roy B.
Schwartz, Louis
Tale, Wayne W.

TECHNICIANS FIFTH GRADE

Crutchfield, Clyde Y.
Huebner, Lyle W.
Powell, Dorris A.
Secrets, Nelson B.
Tidwell, Elwyn B.
Young, Edgar C.

Evrage, Alvin
Mastromonoco, Dom.
Schmidt, Ernest V.
Serven, Michael
Wiest, August

PRIVATES FIRST CLASS

Coronado, Ernesto C.
Dimadle, Bruce O.
Falsetto, John A.
Gieptner, Daniel A.
Hughes, Thomas W.
James, Venice N.
Johnson, Vincent A.
Key, Albert C.
Lahey, Everett J.
Legg, Walter R.
Marek, Emil J.
Martin, Thomas L.
Merritt, Robert E.

DeCristofaro, Mario J.
Dyer, Johnny J.
Fetekake, Charles
Hamblin, Metz T.
Jackovac, Mike
Johannsen, Charles W.
Kemper, Henry J.
Kiedaisch, August H.
Lane, Virgil D.
Lewis, Donald L.
Marek, Louis J.
Merrill, Delwin D.
Miller, Fred E.

Moffitt, Elmer F.
Oseroff, Sidney
Polverelli, James J.
Raymond, Edgar A.
Rensvold, Maynard W.
Ansualdua, Pedro C.
Arruda, Armand R.
Boevers, Richard F.
Brewer, James H.
Brown, James C
Buck, Thurman H.
Canton, Angelo
Cleave, Slenn H.
Coates, Carroll F.
Coulter, Franklin M.

Nemecek, Joseph J.
Pino, Jose E.
Potts, Wadey L.
Reik, John H.
Sanders, Furman A.
Sedlack, William E,
Sneed, Arthur S.
Spencer, Neil C.
Sullivan, Isa M.
Szykowski, Henry
Trexler, Albert L.
Trisciuzzi, John M.
Tuckey, Thomas R.
Urbano, Andres V.

HONOR ROLL OF THE 344th F.A. BATTALION

The following list compiles the names of the men who generously gave
up their all in doing their assigned tasks:

RANK	NAME	HOW KILLED	BATTERY	DATE OF DEATH
Pfc.	Allen, Haskel, C.	KIA	B	11 June 1944
Cpl.	Andrews, Thomas B.	DOW	B	7 Dec. 1944
1st Lt.	Bauer, Sol	KIA	A	16 March 1945
Cpl.	Clayton, Sherman E.	KIA	B	6 August 1944
Pfc.	Clemons, Robert O.	KIA	Sv.	11 June 1944
Capt.	Danovsky, Andrew J.	DOW	Hq.	30 August 1944
Pvt.	Grenn, Carter R.	KIA	Hq.	16 Dec. 1944
1st Lt.	Hester, Jack	KIA	Hq.	16 March 1945
2nd Lt.	Lasher, Thomas W.	KIA	B	12 June 1944
Cpl.	Mach, Raymond R.	KIA	A	7 July 1944
Cpl.	McGee, Thorn O.	KIA	Hq.	16 Dec. 1944
Pvt.	Nolan, Gerald. D.	KIA	C	5 July 1944
Pvt.	Packard, Clayton D.	DOW	B	9 Dec. 1944
Pfc.	Phillips, Thomas W. Jr.	KIA	A	3 July 1944
Pfc.	Pivnick, Jerome	KIA	B	6 May 1944
Cpl.	Rufe, Libere V.	KIA	Hq.	17 July I~t4
Cpl.	Sham, Jim S.	DOW	B	7 Sept. 1944
Pvt.	Shields, Harvey M.	KIA	A	11 June 1944
T/5	Spraker, Eli I.	DOW	A	21 March 1944
S/Sgt.	Whitefield, Hassel C.	DOW	A	17 Jan. 1945
Pfc.	Wood, Alvie M.	KIA	A	11 June 1944

Legend:

KIA Killed In Action.
MIA Missing In Action.
DOW Died of Wounds.

PURPLE HEARTS AWARDED TO 344th F.A. BATTALION

*=With cluster

‡=Posthumously

HEADQUARTERS BATTERY

Cpl. Diemer, M. J. *
Pfc. Knierim, E.
T/5 Lawless, G. *
Pfc. Paulsen, P.
Pfc. Rukavina, P.
T/5 Woodruff, J. T.

Pfc. Hughes, G. Jr.
Cpl. Lucas, C. T.
T/5 O'Brien, J. J.
Pfc. Reid, J. R.
S/Sgt. Sutherland, J. W.
T/5 Weber, L. J.

A BATTERY

Cpl. Bruss, O. J.
Sgt. Efurud, D. E.
Pfc. Martz, A.
Cpl. McCandless, T. Jr.
Sgt. Mumford, H. A. Jr.
Sgt. Otruba, J. F.
Pfc. Persice, F.
Pfc. Southers, C.
Pfc. Wassley, P. R.

T/5 Boardman, C. R.
Pfc. Hall, J. E. *
Pfc. Mattee, J. Jr.
Pfc. Morales, D. D.
Pfc.. O'Daniel, N. V.
T/5 Payne, C. H.
Cpl. Simone, J. J.
Pfc. Tiltan, L. G.

B BATTERY

Sgt. Boyd, D. W. *
T/5 Farrell, J. E.
Cpl. Hanson, G. E.
Cpl. Mach, R. R. ‡
Pfc. Patterson, R. R.
Pvt. Shields, H, M. ‡
Pfc. Taylor, T. H.
S/Sgt. Whitefield, H. C. ‡
Pfc. Phillips, T. W. Jr. ‡
Pfc. Wasley, M. C.

1st Sgt. Compton, R. T.
Pfc. Geins, L. W.
Cpl. Hutchins, H. C.
Sgt. Oman, T. K.
T/5 Rumik, Wm. *
T/5 Spraker, E. I. ‡
Pfc. Thornley, W. H. Jr.
Pfc. Wood, A. M. ‡
Pfc. Vesco, P. R.

C BATTERY

Sgt. Amaral, F. A.
Pfc. Calley, C. R.
Pfc. Dyer, J. J.
Pfc. Hamblin, M. T.
T/5 Mastromonaco, D.
Pvt. Redding, W. J.
Pfc. Trisciuzzi, J. M.
T/5 Whitlock, J. T.
T/5 Young, E. C.

T/5 Anderson, G. W.
Pfc. De Cristefare, M. J.
Pfc. Gray, J. R.
Pfc. Heming, E. W.
T/4 Nylund, R. S.
Pfc. Sawyer, G. N.
Pfc. Wallace, J. R.
Sgt. Wurtz, W. E.

SERVICE BATTERY

Pfc. Bellus, S. W.
T/5 Brown, R. D.
T/4 Harkens, S. L.

T/4 Beelens, H.
1st Sgt. Fry, S. W.
Pfc. Peters, C. H.

AWARDS FOR HEROISM AND MERIT

BRONZE STAR AWARD

*=With cluster
‡=Posthumously

	BATTERY		BATTERY
Sgt. Flud, B. M.	Hq.	T/5 Woodruff, J. F.	Hq.
Cpl. Kowal, E. J.	Hq. *	1st Lt. Godfrey	
Sgt. Aune, K. L.	Hq.	1st Lt. Mathews, Wm. R.	Hq.
Capt. Smith R. E.	A	Capt. Thornton, W. B. Jr.	C *
Cpl. Standeford, A. H.	Hq. *	Sgt. Otruba, J. F.	B *
Capt. Tayler, E. B.	Hq.	S/Sgt. Davis, J. B.	Hq.
Pvt. Paxton, E. F.	Sv.	Capt. Danovsky, A. J.	Hq. ‡
Lt. Col. Conn, C.	Hq. *	Capt. Jones, F. R.	Hq.
2nd Lt. Fishbein, C.	B.	Capt. Bovard, R. P.	Hq.
T/5 Ruebner, L. W.	C. *	Pvt. Sawyer, G. N.	C. *
T/Sgt. Harbitz, R. J.	Hq.	T/5 Wedl, P. P.	Med.
Pvt. Thornley. W. H.	A. *	S/Sgt. Gran, M. C.	Hq. *
T/5 McGee, T. O.	Hq. *	Capt. Knowles, A.	Hq.
1st Lt. Cantini, F. O.	C.	Sgt. Boschler, A. J.	Hq.
1st Lt. Licht, K. W.	C.	Cpl. Wallace, J. R..	C.
Sgt. Turnbull, J. C.	B. *	1st Lt. Green, L. E.	Hq.
T/4 Racette, E. L.	B.	S/Sgt. Goodwin, H. R.	Sv.
S/Sgt. Evans, J. B.	Sv.	Sgt. Wurtz, W. E.	C.
Capt. Foster, G. A.	Hq.	S/Sgt. Colbert, D. C.	C.
1st Sgt. Compton, R. E.	A.	S/Sgt. Sutherland, J. W.	Hq.
S/Sgt. Musgraves J. E.	Hq.	T/5 Fowler, W. P.	Hq.
Sgt. Morse, E. L.	Hq.	T/5 Baker, Wm. J.	A.
Pfc. Wininger, D. F.	A.	Pfc. Mathis, W. W.	A.
2nd Lt. Buller, L. F.	C.	T/5 Warner, J. L.	B.
T/5 Anderson, G. W.	C.	T/5 Nylund, R. S.	C.
Cpl. Hutchins, H. C.	A.	Pfc. Greene, G.	Hq.
S/Sgt. Seratte, R. L.	Hq.	Pvt. Schiewe, W. M.	B.
T/5 May, C. R.	B.	T/5 Farrell, J. E.	A.
Capt. Mathiews, M. O.	Hq.	Pfc. King, Wm. E.	Hq.
Cpl. Blake, E. E.	Hq.	Sgt. Abeyta, J. J.	C.
1st Lt. Keen, T. C.	Hq. *	Cpl. Andrews, T. E.	B. ‡
1st Lt. Pater, R. C.	C.	1st Lt. Rebidue, R. E.	B.
1st Lt. Lisechi, L. J.	B.	1st Lt. Cross, L. J.	C.
Sgt. Johnson, A. L.	Hq.	Pfc. Verhoff, R. A.	Hq.
Pfc. Montgomery, J. T.	Hq.	Pvt. Green, C. R.	Hq.
T/4 Adair, W. L.	A.	T/5 Miller, E. E.	A. *
Pfc. Begitschky, R. F.	B.	Pvt. Capello, R. A.	Hq.

Sgt. Gemar, H. F.	Sv.	S/Sgt. Tucker, J. G.	Sv.
Capt. Johnson, R. C.	B.	Capt. Kruse, R. A.	Sv.
M/Sgt. Leshnock, J. J.	Hq.	1st Lt. Bauer, Sol.	Hq.
1st Lt. Coleman, J. M.	A. *	2nd Lt. Austen, C. L.	A.
2nd Lt. DeAnqelo, D. E.	B.	1st Sgt. Cochran, C. H.	B.
S/Sgt. Budmayer, L. W.	B.	S/Sgt. Steeber, L. L.	B.
T/4 Benson, R. A.	B	T/4 Willis, L. E. Jr.	B. *
Cpl. Burket, Lester C.	B.	Sgt. Efurd, D. E.	B.
T/5 Mullins, W. W.	Med.	Pfc. Hamilton, D. L.	B.
T/5 Payne, C. H.	B.	Pfc. Hughes, G, Jr.	Hq.
T/5 O'Brien, J. J.	Hq.	CWO Kadlecek, F. A.	Hq.
1st Sgt. Costello, J. W.	Hq.	1st Sgt. Gilbert, L. A.	A.
1st Sgt. Lawton, G. J.	C.	T/Sgt. Koehler, L. W.	Hq.
Pfc. Delaney, J. R.	Hq.	S/Sgt. Engman, B. L,	Hq.
S/Sgt. Kunkel R. G.	C.	S/Sgt. Tiefenbrum, R. H.	C.
S/Sgt. Urban, Wm.	Hq.	Sgt. McFarling, T. G.	C.
T/4 Armstrong, L. G.	Hq.	T/4 Berry, C. R.	Hq.
T/4 Budzyn, S. J.	Hq.	T/4 Hill, G. T.	Hq.
T/4 Lipinski, F.	Hq.	T/4 Pendergraft, I. J.	Hq.
T/4 Sifuentez, E.	Hq.	Pfc. Wiest, A.	C. *
T/4 Johnson, J. A.	Hq.	T/4 Yanke, A. E.	Hq.
T/4 Johnson, M. B.	Hq.	T/4 MacGreger, C. C.	Hq.
1st Lt. Webster, H.	B.	S/Sgt. Sedillo, B. B.	B.
Sgt. Mumford, H. A. Jr.	B.	Pvt. Chung, F.	B.
Sgt. Myers, H. C.	B.	Sgt. Fowler, J. J.	A.
1st Lt. Murray, J. A.	A.	T/5 Norwicke, S. R.	A. *
Cpl. Sullivan, I. M.	C.	Sgt. Bingham, B. S.	C.
Sgt. Salas, T. R.	C.	S/Sgt. Vogel, P. J.	C.
Pfc. Balliet, T. W.	A.	Pfc. McCloughan, J. J.	A.
S/Sgt. Rafferty, P. F.	A.	Sgt. Oram, H. P.	B.
Cpl. Simone, J. J.	B.	T/5 Rumick, Wm.	A.
2nd Lt. Roccia, C. F.	B.	T/5 Anderson, G. W.	C. *
T/4 Mullin, I. D.	C.	Pvt. Miller, F. E.	
Pfc. Banks, P. J.	Med.	T/5 Mastremonaco, D.	C.
Pfc. Dyer, J. J.	C.	T/5 Spraker, E. I.	A. †
T/4 Mohan, A. F.	Hq.	T/5 Price, R. A.	Hq.
Pfc. Bender, G. L.	Hq.	Pfc. Nebel, J. N.	Hq.
CW0 Yarborough, J. S.	Sv.	Pfc. Strauss, W. J.	Hq.
Pfc. Cummings, J. V.	A.	Pfc. Patterson, R. R.	A.
Pfc. Wilcox, F. E.	Hq. *	Pfc. Holmes, C. L.	A.
T/5 Edwards, W.	Hq.	T/5 Harcarik, J. W.	Hq.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS

	BATTERY		BATTERY
1st Lt. Mann, Thomas E.	A.	S/Sgt. Whitefield, Hassell, C. †	A.
Pfc. Mathis, Walter W.	A.		

SILVER STAR AWARD

	BATTERY		BATTERY
Sgt. Otruba, J. F.	B.	Capt. Andrews, D. B.	Hq.
1st Lt. Fields, C. T. Jr.	Sv.	T/5 Brown, R. D.	Sv.
T/4 Snaza, S. T.	Hq.	T/5 Rumick, Wm.	A.
Cpl. Fitzwater, J. A.	Hq.	Lt. Col. Munsen, M. E.	Hq. *
T/5 Salo, W. W.	C.	1st Lt. Buchanan	C.
1st Lt. Bauer, Sol.	A.	1st Lt. Mathiews, Wm. R.	Hq.
1st Lt. Murray, J. A.	A.	2nd Lt. Coleman, J. W.	C.
Sgt. Morse, Elvin L.	Hq.	Pfc. Lara, L. Jr.	Hq.
Sgt. Flud, B. M.	Hq.	Sgt. Tamagani, J. S.	Sv.
T/5 Harnagel, B. F.	Hq.	T/5 Rathage, Wm. R.	Sv.
1st Lt. Raley, P. H.	A.	Pfc. Schneiderman, L.	Sv.
1st Lt. Thorpe, K. F. K.	A.	T/5 Farrell, J. E.	A.
T/5 Lawless, George M.	Hq.	Pfc. Goins, L.	A.

AIR MEDAL

	BATTERY		BATTERY
1st Lt. Watland, L. A.	Hq. 3*	1st Lt. Mathiews, Wm. R.	Hq. 2*
1st Lt. Godfrey, J. T.	Hq. 3*	1st Lt. Hester, J.	Hq. *
1st Lt. Bauer, Sol.	A. *	1st Lt. Olbeter, L. T.	Hq. 3*
1st Lt. Rizzo, V. P.	Hq. 8*	1st Lt. Murray, J. A.	Hq.
T/5 Robertson, R. C.	Hq.		

ITINERARY of the 344th F. A. BATTALION

The following list includes all positions, or general locations of the Battalion from the time we landed on the Beach to May 14th, when we took up our temporary occupational zone, as well as our route, which covered 2400 miles, Fired 150,671 rounds and laid better than 1800 miles of wire throughout the whole campaign.

June	8-9	Landed on Utah Beach
	9	Ste. Mere Eglise
	10	Chef du Pont
	13	Etienville, Piccauville
	15	Amfreville
	19	Gourbesville
	22	Vicinity of Coiqny
July	8	St. Georges
	12	Lastelle
	14	Gorges
	28	Le Buissons (Periers)
Aug.	2	Contances, Averanches, St. Hilaire du Harcouet
	3	Los Loges Marchis
	4	La Touche
	5	Fougerolles du Plaesis, St. Denis de Gastines
	6	La Touterie-Foret du Mayenne-Alexain-Charlons su Maines

- 7 Montsurs-St. Suzanne
- 8 Viviers-Torce en Charmine, Neuvelette, St. Sympheriens, Berney, Sourvre, La Quainte
- 9 La Chappelle, La Mans (Vicinity)
- 11 Soulligne-sous-Ballen, Le Cemey, Doucelle
- 12 Feuilliere, Greigne
- 13 Conde sur Sarthe, Alencon, Val Fram Barth, Forges, Vingt-Hanaps, Sees, Chaillens, Marmouille, Nonant La Pin, Montaique
- 17 Le-Pin-Au Haras
- 18 Mormouille
- 26 Chaillons, Le Mesle, St. Cosmes, La Ferte, Bernards, Courgenard, Royale Court Alain, Chateau D'un, Verize, Carmainville, Orgeres, Allines, Le Pusset, Jonville, Chaussey, Pithiviers, La Chappele, Fontainebleau, Semois
- 27 Machault, Echeubeulains, Nangis, Rampillen, Maison Rouge, Chenoise
- 28 Beton-Bazouches, La Fert Gaucher, Montmirail, Coufremaux
- 29 Coudie Brie, Celles es Conde, St. Agaan, Monthoden, Dermans, Verneville, Passy-Grigny-Villiers-Agnon, Goussancourt, Coulonges en Tardenpis, Dravegny, Fismes, Jonchery sur Vesle
- 30 Cherfy Merfy, St. Thierry, Soucy, Briment, Bourgagne, Poilcourt, St. Etienne sur Suppe
- 31 Foultsur Suippe, Bazancourt, Warmerville, Hertigville, St. Masmes
- Sept. 6 Port Farverner, Bethenieville, St. Hilaire Le Petit, St. Martin, St. Hilaire La Grand, Suippes, Somme Suippe, Valmy, St. Menehould, Clermont, Parois, Blercourt, Verdun, Etain, Barrancourt
- 7 Landres, Boulogny, Piennes, Mairy, Lugquengnieux
- 9 Trieux
- 10 Fontoy
- 12 Angevillers
- 13 Veremeranqe
- 27 Levrangq, Hayanqe, Avril, Briey, Labry, Jarny, Mars La Tour, Vionville
- Nov. 2 Circourt
- 5 Audin La Roman, Bas se Parthe
- 14 Cattenom, Koenigsmacher
- 15 Niederhamm
- 17 Distroff
- 18 Metzereche, Bettleanville, Stoobert
- 19 Charleville (Back to Distroff)
- 21 Montenach
- 22 Perl (Germany)
- 27 Apach, Sierck, Kirchnaumen, Halstroff, Flashstroff, Zeurange
- Dec. 1 Waldweisse, Oberesch, Diesdorferhof
- 4 Elstroff, Gissingen
- 22 Niedeldorf, Gengalfangen
- Jan. 7 Waldweisse, Koenigsmacher, Cattenom, Luxembourg City, Longwy, Gresbus, Eschadorf, Liefange
- 11 Bavigne
- 12 Tarchamps
- 16 Bras (Belgium, Vicinity of Bastogne)
- 21 Chimpach, Niederwampach, Oberwampach
- 22 Stockem
- 24 Boxhorn

	26	Binsfeld
	27	Beiler
	31	Wemeler
Feb.	4	Bleialf
	9	Brandsheid (Through Dragon's Teeth)
	18	Habsheid
	21	Oberuttfeld
	22	Binsheid
	23	Arzfeld
	25	Winterspelt
Mar.	3	Prumsfeld, Dackschied
	4	Dingdorf, Wettleborn, Sewwerath
	5	Kopp
	6	Hinterhausen
	7	Birreborn, Pelm
	9	Bruck
	11	Mayen, Saffig
	12	Munstermaifeld
	14	Betxemerhof, Brodenbach
	15	Stabenhof
	16	Oppenhausen, Halsenbach
	17	Ehrbach
	13	Daxweiler, Stromberg
	19	Rummelsheim, Gensigen
	20	Oherhilbersheim, Schwabenheim, Essenheim
	21	Finthen
	24	Selxen, Nierstein (crossed Rhine), Dornheim
	25	Griesheim, Scheppenhause, Egelsbach
	26	Dreiechenhain, Dietzenbach, Obertshausen
	27	Lammerspiel
	213	Mittelhuchen
Mar.	29	Windecken
	30	Altenstad, Ortenberg, Burkards
	31	Schlitz, Sandolfs
April	2	Hermannspiegel, Wustfeld, Ausbach
	3	Vacha
	4	Dorndorf, Kaiseroda, Bad Salzungen
	5	Bad Liebenstein
	6	Liebelroda
	7	Zella Mehlis, Heiderbach
	9	Suhl, Schmiedefeld
	10	Frauenwald, Neustadt
	11	Cross-Driedenbach
	12	Menselbach, Neuhausa, Plesau, Gebersdorf
	13	Zopen, Stienbach. Lehenstien, Ossa
	14	Neundorf, Lichtenburg, Issigau
	15	Schelgel, Kodditz
	16	Hof, Unter Kitzau
	18	Tauperlitz, Kautendorf

- 19 Rehou, Schonwald
- 20 Selb, Birkenbuhl, Bergnersreuth
- 21 Konnersreuth, Mitterteich, Klein
- 22 Gumpen, Schonfight
- 23 Ellenbach, Spielberg
- 24 Pleystien, Burkhardreith
- 25 Eslarn, Schonsee
- 26 Tiefenbach, Treffelstien
- 30 Waldmuchen
- May 1 Halsbach (Czechoslovakia)
- 3 Lam, Lehberg (Germany)
- 4 Tredorf
- 5 Engelmar, Paseka (Czechoslovakia)
- 6 Unteriechenstein
- 7 Shihobetz (Cease fire order given)
- 10 Katoun
- 14 Maxhutte, German (Occupational area)

The above list and dates are towns and localities that were passed through and fought over, shelled and captured by the 358th Combat Team, of which the 344th Field Artillery Battalion was a part.