

when the door was kicked loose and the 10 Germans came piling out into the street. Private First Class Hunnewell fired into the group, killing three outright and wounding two others. The rest fled and were taken care of later in the mop-up.

On the 10th the enemy launched five powerful attacks against the Third Battalion, sending in first a small wave of approximately 30 men and then a second wave of a battalion, which covered the advance of the first with its fire. In general, the Third Battalion stopped the first wave with machine guns and small arms, and the mortars broke up the second wave before it could develop.

Artillery was not available, but our mortars were extremely effective. Lt. Donald J. Conway had pushed an observation post forward to one of the high towers of a coal mine 450 yards from the enemy. From this position he could usually see the enemy attacks as they formed. The OP was maintained through four direct hits by enemy artillery, but the fifth made it untenable. Prisoners taken during the action admitted that casualties from our mortar fire were very high. Air support came to the rescue and worked over the enemy troop concentrations to the south.

Meanwhile, the Second Battalion, with tanks attached, made another attempt to break through Bardenberg, entering this time from the direction of Pley. Fighting bitterly, they reached the center of Bardenburg. The lead tank, commanded by Lt. Lambert V. Wieser, tried to cross an intersection and was fired on by an assault gun set up in the street to its left. Lieutenant Wieser turned his tank into the face of the fire and traded shot for shot with the assault gun as he bore down upon it. Although his fire had no effect on the assault gun, he continued firing until he was 50 yards away, even though his tank was burning. He evacuated his crew, took command of another tank and went after the gun again. The second tank was destroyed by a German bazooka, and Lieutenant Wieser sustained burns which caused his death.

This attempt to break through Bardenberg finally failed, and the situation in North Wurselen was becoming more and more critical. No supplies could get through except for a small quantity brought in jeeps that had the audacity to run the seriously wounded back from Wurselen through the fire at the intersection at Bardenberg.

Lt Milton J. Parks established an aid station in the mine



with the help of two medics and their aid kits. On the morning of the 10th he already had a large number of serious cases who had to be evacuated, among them Lt. David S. Drake. Lt. Drake was placed on an improvised litter in a trailer with three men holding him in place. The vehicle, driven by T/5 Sidney Bosofsky, left the mine area at 0800 in a convoy with three other jeeps carrying wounded. The three other jeeps took cover from the fire on the intersection, but T/5 Bosofsky dashed through the 20MM, machine gun, and sniper fire to bring his vehicle to cover 400 yards beyond the intersection. Lieutenant Drake told him, "I owe you my life."

At 1900 the Second Battalion was withdrawn to the northern edge of Bardenberg while our medium and heavy artillery shelled the town throughout the night. That night we intercepted a German radio message sent to their force in Bardenberg exhorting them to hold their ground as help was on the way. On the morning of the 11th, the comparatively fresh Third Battalion of the 120th was attached to us. Maj. Howard W. Greer, with Companies I and L of that Battalion, plus a company of tanks, was given the mission of breaking through Bardenberg and relieving the First and Third Battalions. After a 15-minute artillery preparation, this task force passed through our Second Battalion and began a methodical cleaning up of the town, house by house.

By the middle of the afternoon they had cleared the intersection and were held up by the fire from the enemy tanks and half-tracks. Major Greer borrowed a bazooka and made his way forward to a position from which he could fire at the foremost enemy tank. Just as he fired the first rocket, the



*Friendly and enemy artillery destroyed this landmark of Bradenburg, Germany.*

tank spotted him and fired. His rocket destroyed the tank, and the shell from the tank struck the corner of the building he was using for concealment. Fragments of the building cut his face and hands, knocked him down, and knocked his helmet off. He got up and started after the second tank, which he also put out of action.

This turned the tide, for after that the Task Force destroyed six tanks, 16 half-tracks, and took 96 prisoners in short order. At the same time, Company I made contact with the other companies of the Third Battalion in Wurselen after a strong drive south down the right flank. They had destroyed 10 half-tracks and captured 40 German soldiers and three officers. Soon afterward the Task Force made contact with the companies of our First Battalion in Wurselen, and then withdrew to a defensive position north of Bardenberg.

Our Second Battalion occupied the town and the Regiment was regrouped. Although the enemy had been seriously weakened in that sector, the battle was by no means over.

On the 12th, the 116th Infantry passed through our lines to contact the left flank of the First Division and thus com-

plete the encirclement of Aachen. Unfortunately they were held up by the enemy's strong defense of Wurselen and made little progress. Meanwhile, the 119th Infantry was holding the west flank of the 30th Division from Herzogenrath to North Wurselen against an enemy counterattack through Kohlscheid. Since the 10th, this flank, as far as Bardenberg, had been held by the 30th Division Reconnaissance Troop and the Regimental I & R Platoon, which had met a number of enemy patrols in the wooded valley before Kohlscheid.

On the 12th, a group of 100 enemy infantry was spotted grouping for an attack across the bridge near Kohlscheid. Our artillery broke it up. From Bardenberg south toward North Wurselen the flank was held for a period by elements of Company D and by the kitchen train of the First Battalion. The German counterattacks did not strike this lightly-held flank of the Division, but hit Wurselen in defense of the highway running through it out of Aachen. Between the 12th and the 15th there were five serious counterattacks. On the 12th a counterattack by tanks and infantry had been repulsed in the First Battalion sector (on the Regimental left), and on the 13th there were still tanks wandering around.

Company B was prevented from clearing the area ahead by some five tanks to their left and three to their right front. Capt. Edward E. McBride, Jr., went forward to a building 75 yards from the first enemy tank and directed artillery on it. When it was knocked out, he directed two additional hits on a second tank. Despite our attempts, we were not making satisfactory progress in Wurselen. We threw in heavy concentrations of artillery, but the enemy was stubborn. At dusk on the 14th, a company of enemy infantry hit Company K, on the left of the First Battalion. The enemy approached along a hedgerow beside the railroad tracks, opposite the positions of the Second Platoon of Company K. The machine gun fire supporting their attack was heavy enough to temporarily neutralize our fire. When the enemy company closed in, they began throwing a large number of hard grenades into our positions. To stop their advance Lt. Donald A. Ward filled his pockets and hands with fragmentation grenades and began crawling toward the hedgerow. The enemy attempted unsuccessfully to stop him with grenades. When it became dark he crawled up close to the hedge and let loose. After the rapid explosions, the enemy filled the air with screams of pain. At daylight five enemy

dead were found behind the hedgerow. They had carried their wounded with them. Our platoon had suffered no casualties.

Late on the 15th, the Second Battalion relieved the First Battalion in North Wurselen in preparation for the series of attacks which was to take Kohlscheid. The First Battalion was to reduce northern Kohlscheid while the Third Battalion was to take the southern part and continue south about 1,000 yards to an objective near Sors. The Second Battalion was to make a hard push head into Wurselen. Shortly after midnight the Third Battalion sent a squad into the southern outskirts of Kohlscheid to feel out the enemy before the attack. The patrol had just entered the defense perimeter when it received a mortar barrage, which wounded three men. Pfc. Paul L. Howard, a medic with the patrol, helped the three men to the shelter of a house 30 yards away, while the barrage was still falling.

After reconnoitering the enemy territory, the patrol started back, but was intercepted by a strong enemy patrol and took up defense in a house. A fierce close encounter with rifles and grenades followed and the patrol was captured. On their way to the enemy rear under guard, our artillery barrage preparation for the attack of the Third Battalion fell on the group and two Americans were wounded. Private First Class Howard refused to take cover, gave the wounded first aid in the open, and then helped carry them to an enemy bunker nearby. He remained with the wounded until the Third Battalion came through.

When Company I came down the road into the outskirts of Kohlscheid, they received machine gun fire from a dug-in position about 100 yards ahead. There were several casualties, and the column scattered to the sides of the road for cover.

Lt. Vincent S. Scurria was ordered to swing his platoon 500 yards left, thus bringing it into enemy territory to cover the route of the tanks which were coming up. After the platoon had advanced 300 yards it was pinned down by crossfire from two dug-in machine guns 500 yards away. Mortar fire was called for but had no effect.

Lieutenant Scurria stood up in the machine gun fire and maneuvered his platoon into positions from which they were at last able to knock out the machine gun nests. The tanks then coordinated their attack with that of the infantry, and rapidly cleaned out the southern end of Kohlscheid. The

Third Battalion reached its objective near Sors early in the afternoon.

The First Battalion had, long before dawn, bridged the Wurm River in front of Kohlscheid and proceeded to the north edge of the town, meeting scattered but stubborn opposition. The Wurm River ran generally south to north. It was small and could be termed a good-sized creek. However, in the "Line" battle, the Regiment had to bridge it three times—once moving east at Rimburg, once moving west at Kohlscheid, and once moving east, south of Kohlscheid.

The leading platoon of Company A was pinned down by machine gun fire until T/Sgt. John Overman, a mortar observer, charged the machine gun position with his sub-machine gun and killed three of the enemy crew. After that, progress was fairly rapid. First Battalion had the downtown area cleared before noon and was on its way southwest in the direction of Ursfeld and Richterich. Second Battalion jumped off at daylight, and though it soon ran into resistance from tank, machine gun, and artillery fire, it was able to knock out one tank and two pillboxes. Secure footholds were established finally on the northern and western edges of Wurselen.

Our plan was not to push directly through Wurselen to cut the highway, but to come down the western side of the city and cut the highway at a point southwest of it, making contact with the First Division at the same time. In the afternoon the Second Battalion held positions reaching down the slope to within 500 yards of the highway, and a company of the 99th Infantry Battalion, an American Norwegian Battalion attached to us, had men dug in just short of the highway. The enemy held a considerable force of tanks and infantry on the high hill directly south of Wurselen overlooking the highway. This force brought such heavy fire to bear on the men of the 99th that they were unable to leave their foxholes by daylight.

The enemy also had pushed tanks along the road and sent six of them, accompanied by 40 infantrymen, against Company E holding the extreme right of the Second Battalion west of the highway. One of the tanks, a Mark VI, was able to advance to within 175 yards of our lines. A bazooka team was sent out, but, finding that the bazooka had no effect on the heavy armor of the monster tank, the team came back. In a second attempt Pvt. Blair L. Mutimer took



"Sweatin' it out"

the bazooka and went forward 50 yards and fired. One rocket hit the tank, glanced off without doing any damage, and two others, though they missed, accounted for 15 of the accompanying infantry. The attack was finally driven off by artillery and small arms fire.

At nightfall, a patrol was sent from Company F to contact the 18th Infantry of the First Division. The patrol slipped forward in the darkness and rain, coming within 200 yards of the First Division front lines before they were fired on by an enemy outpost. S/Sgt. Frank A. Karwel, who was in charge of the patrol, vanished. Fortunately he had given orders to avoid a fire fight and get on to the First Division. Two lead scouts, Pvt. Edward Krauss and Pvt. Evan F. Whitis, succeeded in crawling out from under the concentrated small arms and mortar fire, and in reaching the First Division lines. The seven other men of the patrol managed to work back to our lines in the dark. Private Krauss and Private First Class Whitis guided a patrol from the First Division back to our lines later that night, but found no trace of Sergeant Karwel. It was not known whether he was killed or captured.

Another patrol was sent from the Third Battalion sector near Sors to contact the First Division. It was led by Lt. Robert L. Kelly of L Company. The enemy discovered them when the lead scouts were within 20 yards, and in order to avoid capture or sudden death, all the members of the patrol trusted to the darkness, turned, and slipped back along the route they had come. Although Lieutenant Kelly stum-

bled, fell, and lost his weapon, the others continued on to a covered position 150 yards away. Lieutenant Kelly, alone and unarmed, crawled more than 100 yards to a small clump of woods to await developments.

The enemy came out from their positions to investigate and at times passed within a few yards of Lieutenant Kelly. The balance of the patrol, with the exception of S/Sgt. Simone, believed he was captured. S/Sgt. Simone was not satisfied and decided to look for his lieutenant. He walked and crawled forward calling in a very low voice. He found the Lieutenant and led him back to join his patrol.

Thus on the night of the 16th, the circle around Aachen was complete, though not yet strong. We were to spend the next weeks consolidating the encirclement and cleaning out pockets, fighting off counterattacks and keeping the Germans from breaking out or in. On the morning of the 17th the First Battalion held its positions southwest of Kohlscheid and pushed forward reconnaissance in force. Company A with a platoon of tanks reached Richterich and took 24 prisoners. Company B and a platoon of tanks cleaned out the pillboxes around Forsterheide and then moved south to join Company A north of Richterich. The Second Battalion defended its sector in the western part of Wurselen, and with the help of TDs, covered the highway at a point due east of Wolfsfurth. An enemy tank was destroyed there in the afternoon. The Battalion also cleaned out pillboxes in its sector and took 25 prisoners.

In the evening, the Third Battalion sent two patrols to secure the bridge east of Eulersweg, where the highway crosses the Wurm River. Both patrols received fire, but succeeded in by-passing it and reaching the bridge, where they made contact with the First Division. During the night the road-block in the Second Battalion sector was reinforced. Two mine fields were placed on the road by members of the AT Mine Platoon led by Lt. Warren Behrens. They laid one of the mine fields within 10 yards of an enemy tank, trusting to the darkness and the sound of the motors of other enemy tanks to conceal their activity. Earlier in the day Lt. John Boots, then in command of the platoon, had been killed by tank fire while reconnoitering the terrain for these mine fields.

The enemy had excellent observation on the area from their pillboxes and other defenses on the hill to the east, known as "Crucifix Hill." At night they shot frequent flares illuminating the opposite slope occupied by our troops.

Because of the flares and the muddiness of the ground, Sgt. William H. Crabtree was unable to take an AT gun directly down the slope against the column of enemy tanks in the valley. After a difficult reconnaissance, during which he moved in and out of enemy territory, he found a less exposed route. Even so, the gun was spotted as it was dragged by hand down the slope. Enemy artillery and small arms were augmented by tank fire from the hill and valley. The crew fired the gun from the slope on the enemy tanks and, alternately dragging and firing, fought their way into a position at the base of the slope covering a stretch of the highway.

At 0900 of the 18th, the Third Panzer Division launched an attack against the roadblocks held by Company A of the 99th Battalion, inflicting heavy casualties. The attack was thrown back within 30 minutes with a loss of three Mark VI tanks. Two of them were knocked out by our TDs and the third by a bazooka from Company F. Company A of the 99th had been driven 100 yards back from the roadblocks.

Later that afternoon the enemy launched another attack through the left flank of G Company. This attack, preceded by artillery and mortar barrages, was made by 10 tanks and 100 infantry. The onslaught quickly overran a light machine gun platoon supporting Company G on that flank and bore down on an intersection near the G Company CP. Twenty men of the Company were lost and the majority withdrew 100 yards. Lt. Winslow H. MacDonald grabbed a bazooka and a bag of rockets and took up a position at the intersection. As the first tank came rumbling down the street he fired two rockets at less than 100 yards. Although both rockets glanced, the tank was somewhat intimidated and withdrew a short distance to cover. Lieutenant MacDonald then ran across the open street to move in on the tanks. Almost immediately they started forward again, protecting each other with fire. Lieutenant MacDonald stood fast, fired four more rockets, and brought the attack to a standstill in that sector.

Hitler had publicly announced that Aachen would not fall, and it was obvious that he had committed his full strength to its aid. Elements of four Nazi divisions were identified in our sector, and they were on the offensive.

A prong of the enemy attack again threatened the positions of Company E. Mark VIs chewed up our outposts only to be

finally stopped by our tanks at ranges of 100 yards. Other prongs continued to hit up and down the line.

Sergeant Crabtree was observing his sector from the second story of a house near his 57MM AT gun when he saw three Mark IVs moving directly toward his position. Tank fire had already driven all but one of his crew into the cellar of the house. Sergeant Crabtree, aided by Robert J. Kochanowicz, manned the gun and brought fire on the enemy tanks 700 yards away. The enemy spotted them and returned their fire, blowing off a wheel of the gun and wounding Sergeant Crabtree. Even with the wheel gone, he fired three more rounds, disabling the lead tank and forcing the two others to halt 300 yards short of his position.

In breaking through the flank of Company G, the enemy isolated Lt. Louis A. Daugherty, Jr., mortar observer in support of the Company, and eleven men of various units. They took cover with Lieutenant Daugherty in the cellar of the house from which he was observing. Active enemy infantry broke into the ground floor of their building and tried to dislodge them with grenades. The group answered with grenades and even made a number of forays from the cellar. Lieutenant Daugherty killed two and wounded three others, while Pfc. Edmondo D. Richeidie took two prisoners. Four of the men in the cellar were seriously wounded and not evacuated until shortly after nightfall, when the enemy force at last reluctantly gave up the attack and withdrew.

In the early morning the First Battalion and two platoons of tanks jumped off with the mission of taking the high ground 1,000 yards south of Richterich and establishing road-blocks on the complex highways running northwest out of Aachen near Laurensberg. The Battalion accomplished its mission in half an hour, taking 115 prisoners. It was quickly relieved by the 1104th Engineer Group and drove southeast to an objective west of Sors. Sors had been taken earlier in the day by the Third Battalion, who had established road-blocks at Scheuer, below Heumesser, and across the main highway near Grosstuck. This last road-block, established by Company I, finally made a solid junction with the First Division, and the ring around Aachen was physically complete.

The breaching of the Siegfried Line and the encirclement of Aachen had taken us 16 days of continuous fighting, during which the Regiment suffered 661 casualties. Of these, 85 were killed, 482 were wounded, and 134 were missing in ac-