

really went to the bottom when Stan came in one evening and told us that we were going to remain attached to the First Army and break the Seigfried Line for them. That didn't sound good. So, it was mighty fine to hear that there was a change to that plan and we were going back to the Ninth Army. About this time, the snow began to melt. How good it seemed to see the ground instead of that white, cold snow.

At Rencheux we stayed with an elderly man and his wife. They took a great interest in us, especially the Captain. I was always getting in trouble with the lady because I would put the coal in the fire the wrong way.

At 0100 the morning of Feb. 3rd our battalion and regiment started north. Our route took us through Aachen and then through Wurselen. From there, yes, our destination was CAMP KOLSHEID. At 0600 that morning we were back in the same house we had left on December the 17th. The people acted very happy to see us once more and inquired about those who were not with us.

It was good to be back to our second home again. We relaxed and hoped we would be around at least a day or so. The program was light--a little training, but not bad. On the morning of February 6th, I left for Paris. I spent 72 hours enjoying the wonders of gay Paree. Of greatest interest to me was the subway system. Of course I saw all the sights and enjoyed a chance to relax. I saw an opera, the follies and a very good Special Service stage show.

When I returned to Camp Kolsheid I found that the company had left. All indications were that they had left to cross the Roer River. I found the kitchen in the same place. They told me the story. The jump had been planned for February 11, but the Jerries opened up the dams and caused the river to rise.

The next day I rejoined the company at Kirchberg. What a place they were in. The roads were knee deep in mud. The only way to get supplies to the

company was by use of a half track. It was rainy and very discouraging weather. Artillery and mortar rounds were once more a common occurrence. What a change from the town of Paris which didn't even have black-out regulations!

Stan was again in bad shape because of sinuses. I figured when I first saw him that he would be leaving us. It just wasn't good. He would have spells a couple hours each day when he would be in agony. I had guessed correctly--- he told me that he was going back to the hospital. It didn't make him happy. He had become attached to the company and he hated to leave.

I must not forget to mention that Lt. Tullbane had returned while I was in Paris. He was the same old Johnny. The next day, the 13th, the battalion was pulled back to the rest area at Kerkrade. This was another spot that we had not expected to see again. We enjoyed the shows here until the evening of the 15th of February when we departed for a new assembly area. This time we landed in Kinzweiler. Stan had left us at the rest area, so Knox was again company commander.

The stay at Kinzweiler was not bad. It was very near the town of Eschweiler. Our stay was made a pleasant one by the friendliness of the officers and especially the Chaplain of an Ack Ack outfit stationed in the same town. Of course, training was carried on. We practiced attacking towns and river crossings. The reasons, of course, were obvious. The Roer River was gradually going down. On the other side of the river was the town of Hambach which was to be the objective of the third battalion. The sound of a river crossing was not good and the added fact that the Jerries had been sitting on the other side of the river getting ready for us for three months made a fellow sweat. Just the thought of running into booby traps was enough to make a man do a lot of thinking.

Stan came back to us one of those evenings. As usual, the doctors and hospitals had done him no good. He had some good stories to tell about how

sorry the doctors were feeling for themselves. One of them had complained to Stan because he had been inspecting latrines for seven months. "Me a doctor, inspecting latrines", he had complained to Stan. That poor sap. I feel sorry for him working in the rear area inspecting latrines. Doc Schlegel hit the ceiling when he found out that the rear had sent Stan back without fixing him up. The next morning Doc took Stan to the Division Surgeon and sent him back once more.

The day arrived. Still everything was top secret. Major Stewart couldn't even tell us when we would cross or when D Day was to be, but he did say we would leave that night. The evening of the 22nd we left for Lamersdorf. It wasn't hard to guess when the day would be now--it would be in the morning. We arrived in Lammersdorf and settled down to get a few minutes of rest. All sleep or rest stopped at 0230 that morning. Monty had started the most tremendous racket that I ever hope to hear. Artillery opened up in mass. Stan, who was in the hospital about 12 miles to the rear, heard it start. How anything could live or even keep from cracking under that stuff amazes me. It is hard to express the tremendous racket those barrages made.

For one solid hour, twenty-three artillery battalions fired nothing but counter-battery fire. More artillery was expended in a twenty-four hour period than had been used in the drive from Wurselen to the River. We were under Marshall Montgomery. Someone had said he was great for using artillery. If there was any question about it, there could be no question now.

At 0330 the first battalion started across that river. They made it fine. That was mighty good news to hear. The artillery was still pounding away. We left Lammersdorf and headed for Schaphoven as soon as it was definite that the second battalion had cleared that town. Just about daylight we arrived in Schaphover and got under cover in a hurry. The returned fire was not bad. Monty's artillery was doing a great job.

We remained in Schaphoven while the second battalion enlarged the bridgehead. It looked like we would get the night operation in passing through the second battalion and taking our town of Hambach. Lt. Parramore went down to the river bank and watched the engineers putting up the bridge. He didn't stay long, but he came back with the information needed, namely, how to get down to the crossing spot.

We received the final order at 1800. Our jump off time would be 2245. Our battalion would cross on the foot bridge at 0930. We crossed the river and got prepared for the jump off. I remember talking to Capt. Parker of "E" Company as I was coordinating our passage through their lines. He shook his head when I said we were on our way to Hambach. We knew there were two ditches around the town so one squad in each platoon was assigned the job of carrying duck boards. What a time they had with those boards, and then we didn't use them!

The time came and we started off across that open field. How we hoped we wouldn't receive artillery fire, run into machine guns, stumble over mines and a hundred other things. We were starting out on the operation that had been in the back of our heads for a long time. We were across the Roer and the Hambach Forest was straight ahead.

The artillery was really doing a job. Everything was landing in the town of Hambach as we approached it. The phosphorous rounds were making a beautiful picture. Still everyone feared above all the danger of running into mines.

The battalion was well deployed. Company "I" was on the left. They were receiving some artillery fire now, and we were also getting some, but not as much as "I" Company.

Everything kept moving. One of our men was hurt, someone was taking care of him. The hope of every man about this time was to get into those first buildings and we did. But it didn't stop then either. Everyone knew exactly

where he was going, and in an hour the town was pretty well cleared out except for a small pocket between our company and "I" Company. We had about 30 prisoners which we sent on the way.

Lt. Parramore found himself cut off from the rest of his platoon for a short length of time when a Jerry detail came into town with some chow for the Germans. The healthy reception that the detail received made them leave.

About 0400 the report was received that the Germans were approaching with tanks. That wasn't good, and I was very happy when I found out that it was not true. About a half hour later the tank destroyers arrived. It was plenty good to see them. That meant that the bridge was across and more armor would be over shortly. Now we had something with which to hold the town. They were used!

Just as daylight arrived, the two companies finally cleared out the few remaining buildings. Major Stewart arrived in town about that time and told me the story. We would have to push out at least 300 yards into the edge of the woods before our job would be completed. That wasn't a good job because there might still be plenty in the woods. This was the Hambach forest that had been on our minds since December.

Lt. Parramore and Lt. Tullbane led the combat team that cleared out the edge of that woods. They lost communications and had plenty of trouble, but cleared it out regardless.

We had been told that it was absolutely necessary that Hambach be taken. I was beginning to realize why. Tanks began to roll into that town about 1000. I got the story. The 117th was passing through us along one main route thru the forest, the 1st battalion was passing thru another, and Companies "I" and "K" were to take a third route. Company "L" was to revert to regimental reserve while this action was taking place. How we all hoped again that everything would go OK so we wouldn't have to do anything except defend the

town.

All went pretty well. Both of the battalions in our regiment reached their objectives. The 117th was held up by anti-tank fire but hoped to be able to move in the morning. Company "L" shifted positions and set up to defend the key to the operation, Hambach.

The morning of the 25th of February we heard the plan for the next operation. The objective would be Rodigen. We would jump off from the edge of the woods just east of Julich and attack northeast on the right of the 29th Division. Julich had been taken and so had Duren. The 104th had worked Duren over.

This next operation involved traveling over 5,000 yards of open country. Our company was to be in battalion reserve on this deal. All was going well at first. The lead companies over ran some ack-ack positions and took a number of prisoners. The Germans were messed up on the situation and we were moving too fast for them to get straightened out. That was fine.

Then "K" Company was pinned down just outside of the objective. Artillery was beginning to come in on us. One man was killed. This was no place to stay so we headed for the town by pulling to the right of the planned route. I heard over the radio at this time that "I" Company was in town. We skirted the edge of the first town and headed for Rodigen. Sure enough, Lt. Scurrier was in town with his platoon. We coordinated with him and started to clear that place out.

One lone tank had managed to get into town. A large number had been knocked out. The situation wasn't good. We needed more tanks to help us clear out the town and hold it. None could get up because of tank fire that the Germans had. One tank was in the edge of town that was sure. This didn't make a good objective for a rifle platoon or even a company without some tank support.

At first, Major Stewart couldn't believe that we were in town but he was finally convinced. The problem was to hold what we had until we could get some aid. Then came the incident that just about caused a couple cases of heart failure and plenty of sweating. Two German tanks rolled right down the street. I ran to the corner of the house we were in and watched the big baby rolling by. What a feeling. A BAR man opened up killing the man in the turret but the tank lumbered on. It was going on out, which was the good thing.

There was still a tank on the west edge of town so we held what we had. Darkness arrived and Company "K" worked on into town. Tanks arrived and so did tank destroyers. That made the situation much better. Early the following morning Company "K" finally finished clearing the town. Major Stewart visited our CP and told me that I had done a good job and complimented the men of the company. He was greatly concerned about a possible counter-attack by the Germans about daylight. He mentioned that there was no place to go to so we would have to hold our ground. No one wanted to fight again for that place like we had to at Stoumount.

All that night, the second platoon had to send out patrols to try to contact the 29th Division. We never made the contact but sent the patrols every two hours.

Stan came back again on the 26th of February. He had crossed the Roer River by himself and was back with the company to stay.

The big picture was moving fast. Other elements of the division passed through us that night heading for objectives 5,000 to 8,000 yards ahead. It looked like about time for the armored divisions to start rolling. It was now quite evident that our objective was Munchen Gladbach and the land surrounding that area, including the part of Dusseldorf on the west bank.

Our battalion was to move out the next morning. The battalion would be in reserve on the next move. All except Company "L" who were to hold a castle