

*George Hackney  
Adams*

**100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association  
(World War II)**

**Roland Giduz, Secretary, Box 44, Chapel Hill NC 27514  
(Tel.: 919/942-2194; rgiduz@nc.rr.com)**

**John N. Hackney Jr.  
1120 Watson Dr. NW  
Wilson NC 27893**

**Hello John Hackney,**

**..and bless you for remembering our time at Carolina – and also my dear friend Betty Ray (and also John) McCain. I was interested to read the information about George Hackney Adams of 398<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Co. F, truly a valiant comrade, though not a personal acquaintance.**

**I see in my 100<sup>th</sup> Division roster that his son is addressed in California. You and he may be interested in further detailed information on the 100<sup>th</sup> on an excellent internet site that we maintain. Simply search Google “100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division WWII.” There are many detailed categories of information. You will see references to many other books about the 100<sup>th</sup>. We publish a semi-annual printed newsletter which is mailed to Association members, and many progeny, such as George Jr. receive it as members.**

**While not informative on George Adams, you may also be interested in the current (November) issue of Our State magazine. It has a five-page article on the 100<sup>th</sup>, an excellent write-up by contributor Janet Pittard of Raleigh. Photos included are of our participation in the annual North Carolina Veterans Day parade in Raleigh, which we also led this past weekend.**

**I appreciate your recollection and friendship. All of us in classes 1940-50 at UNC were basically in the same class.**

*Roland Giduz*

## George Adams

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**From:** George Adams [dadams1@san.rr.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 11, 2006 4:25 PM  
**To:** dadams1@san.rr.com  
**Subject:** FW: Memo to John Hackney, Jr

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**From:** George Adams [mailto:dadams1@san.rr.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 11, 2006 11:36 AM  
**To:** 'Debbie Adams'  
**Subject:** Memo to John Hackney, Jr

John:

I apologize for the delay in forwarding the WW II information on Daddy. Luckily my procrastination has allowed me to include a copy of REMEMBER WHEN (history of Fox Company, 398<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 100<sup>th</sup> Division, 7<sup>th</sup> Army, Europe; 1944-1945). This remembrance memorializes the trying times of Daddy's war buddies in a most appropriate way. They were all true heroes and lifetime friends. The following pages actually mention Lt. Adams: 35) Soucht (little French town) visited 12/6/44 plus "Good die young"; 55) Foxhole life plus "The Interrogation" dated 12/28/44; 56) "Maybe Down but Never Out"; 59) "Church Services" dated 1/5/45; 64) "Quick on the Trigger"; 103) Zollingen dated 3/13/45 which began the "big push that later ended the war with Germany"; 104) Bitche dated 3/13-17/45 which battle included Fort Schiesseck----this is where Daddy was awarded the Silver Star for courage in facing enemy fire while exposing himself to allow his company to outflank the German troops; his Bronze Star was awarded for bravery/tactics on 1/10/45 in the vicinity of Reyersviller, France; 141) "Occupation"; 171-173) "I Remember, I Remember"---an excellent summary of the prior months wartime action; 183) Lower L photo (center rear); 188) Upper L photo; 192) Lower Center photo; 193) Lower photo (2<sup>nd</sup> left); 199) Center L photo (jeep); 203) Upper Left plus Lower Right (In Lt. Longsberg's arms); 209) Front Row (3<sup>rd</sup> from right); 213) Lt. Adams platoon.

I will also include copies of articles, day reports and memories that I have. As we discussed, Debbie and I along with Jim Parrott visited this area in '99; we actually walked two of the battle grounds. My research has also identified several excellent books which address the action of the 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry during this difficult period of WW II: 1. When the Odds Were Even by Keith Bonn (Presidio Press); 2. V-Mail by Pfc. Keith Winston (Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill); 3. Citizens Soldiers by Stephen Ambrose (Simon & Schuster); 4. History of the 398<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in WW II by Bernard Boston (The Battery Press, Nashville).

Obviously I could continue to praise the courage your generation exhibited during these trying times but I will stop now. Once you receive this information please give me a call to discuss any questions or to request additional data. I have Daddy's Silver and Bronze Star medals proudly displayed in our home along with his American Campaign Medal. The display also includes the narrative of his Silver Star accommodation.

When I am next in Wilson I look forward to a personal tour of the Wilson County Historical Society project. Please give my love to Anne.

My best to the entire Hackney family, George Hackney Adams, Jr  
 858-454-7555; 619-218-0920

## FACTS ON BIG GEORGE

Enlisted from UNC in

Proposed to Hennie over radio and was married two weeks later

They went to Ft. Benning where George was born

Was pregnant with Hennie when he left for Europe

Hennie born prematurely-word was written to George but letters took a long time

Assigned to 7<sup>th</sup> Armt, 100<sup>th</sup> Division, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Fox Company

Entered as private but went to Officer Candidate School and became a 1<sup>st</sup> Lt.

Private

4<sup>th</sup> Platoon Leader as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt.

Company Executive

Company Commander from January 10<sup>th</sup> to April

Promoted to capt. In April or May (need to check date)

Transferred from F Company in May to prepare for going stateside

Shipped out of New Jersey to Marseilles, France

Encountered hurricane on the way over.

Platoon Leader of Weapons Platoon

Weapons Platoon's main job was to take positions in front of the riflemen. Always close to the front.

Officers usually accompanied their men which was why so many were wounded or killed

Weapons Platoon often suffered heavy casualties because they were so close to the front line

Became Fox Company Commander after Captain Smith was wounded (lost an arm) at Suicide Hill

Was promoted to Capt. On June 16<sup>th</sup> and then assigned to Detached Duty on June 25<sup>th</sup> pending assignment to 63<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, departed June 30<sup>th</sup>

174 combat days

Occupation was probably in Kirchberg (check this)

## COMMENTS FROM MEN IN FOX COMPANY

### Charles Johnson:

Charles was a great deal of help to me in putting me in touch with the right people who would have known Big George the best. He provided me with the current mailing roster of Fox Company. He sent me copies of the morning reports of Fox Company—details of the day to day movements of the men as they were reported during the war. He communicated often with me. He wrote: "I left in early April of '45 to attend Officer Training School. Your Dad gave me the opportunity. He called me to the C.P. (Command Post) outside a basement bunker in a bombed building; I had been instructing the new guys how to handle and detonate the C 2 charges. His first words were, "How do you feel?". Then he asked is I would consider becoming a commissioned officer, a field appointment – added that it was a consensus that I was qualified. Then he sent me to Division. There again I was super lucky. A Division officer gave me the choice—appointment and back to company or go to OCS in Fontainebleu, France. To me, it was deliverance.. I was at the point that I felt I would no longer be able to dodge harm. Of course I went to Fontainebleu(That's where Josephine, Bonaparte's bed partner, said of starving populace, "Let them eat cake.

Charles Johnson was in the original group that landed at Marseilles. He was 18 or 19 at the time. He was a rifleman in the 1<sup>st</sup> platoon, became a sergeant and later a Lt. He was considered an extremely competent and brave soldier. He was wounded in Jan. of 1945. He also served in Korea. He resides in Fort Worth, Texas.He put me in contact with John Lonsberg who was Big George's best buddy during the war.

### KEITH BONN

The author of When The Odds Were Even – a military history of the 100<sup>th</sup> Division . I skimmed it but it was pretty technical. Keith has set up a great web site on the internet and has been very instrumental of putting families in touch with one another. He has also linked his website to actual towns in France and Germany. His father was with the 100<sup>th</sup> but in a different regiment (the 397<sup>th</sup>)

### JOHN LONSBURG

George's best friend and fellow officer in the war., John loaned me his copy of "Remember When" and was happy to be back in touch with the Adams family. During my search for info I ran across a man named Dave White who was trying to get more info on his father, Max White, a forward observer, was with the 398<sup>th</sup> but in another company, Cannon Company. His father lost a leg in the war in November of '44 near the town of Raon-L'Etape(early in the war)but never would discuss the circumstances. He had received a photocopy of the account of his father's injury from Al Sass, a Fox Company soldier and this eventually led him to John Lonsberg. It turns out that John had walked into a mine field to give aid to Max White, a man he really didn't know because Max was in another company. John had seen Dave lying there with a leg missing and had touched his wounds in surveying the damage. John had never known what became of Max White after he was medivaced but told Dave he had always felt a part of him. Dave is indebted to John for his courage that saved his father who would have died within the hour had he not been rescued. In that rescue Irving Hugar ( a medic ) lost his life after he accidentally stepped on a mine as they were carrying White out. John told me the extra weight of carrying White probably detonated the mine. John, himself, was wounded in along with so many other men. I sent copies of war photos that I found in the memorabilia sent to me to Charles Johnson and he in turn sent them to John to I.D.them. John wrote several letters to me which are saved. In answering questions I had about a letter that was written to Hennie during the war from a soldier only identified as Joe, John wrote:

"George was held in high esteem by his men as he was by me. Because the safety of each of us is dependent quite often on the actions of others in combat, this situation tends to breed a closeness that is like no other, anywhere, and we got to feel very emotional about each other. Each man's actions in a unit combat unit such as a rifle company) quite often is decided by the action of their officer leader and it is very important that this officer be efficient, brave, and well-qualified to lead – and always be out if front—you can't lead from the rear. When the men in a unit recognize that they are blessed with such a leader,

they appreciate it and an extreme closeness results. This closeness lasts a life long and is very valued. No one else can, or is expected to understand this-not necessary. As you can see, George earned this thru his actions."

John received a Silver Star and the French Croix de Guerre.

#### WILLIAM KANTER

I received a nice note from Mr. Kanter in response to my Christmas letter. He knew Big George as fellow officer and had an amusing anecdote to report that occurred during the occupation after the war had officially ended.

#### ALDO RUBANO

Aldo was a good friend of George's despite the fact that he was an enlisted man and George was an officer. He wrote a very touching letter to Big George which is attached. After the war and near George's death he visited in Wilson. He was loved by the men in the company for his sensitivity, bravery and loyalty. He struggled to make a living as an artist, never married and died some years ago. There was no family that I could send a copy of his letter to. A lot of his artwork, poems and comments are in "Remember When" which is now in our possession thanks to Albert Schmidt. He was actually assigned the job of pulling "Remember When" together after the war along with 12 other men including Oscar Braman. John Lonsberg who was company commander at the time assigned these 12 men the duty of compiling this book of memoirs. John actually sent two men in a job backwards across Germany and France to retrace the Fox Company route and take snapshots, etc.. When most of the men left for the states it was arranged for Aldo and Braman to be put on orders in Fellbach, Germany to complete the publishing of "Remember When". After the war Aldo continued to work as an artist and did some illustrating for Classics Illustrated in NY (a company owned by Lt. Kanter's family). He actually illustrated some books like Robin Hood. John wrote of Aldo: "Aldo has left us and his last days in NY were not bright and gay but the thoughts that Aldo left with his soldier friends in F Company will last as long as we do, then after that the words he wrote and printed will last much longer somewhere with someone. Aldo was special to us and we will always remember him favorably. Maybe he and George have met again. That would be very nice! To the men in Fox Company Aldo made an everlasting indelible mark as few men do-with things that went out from his mind, and his spirit and his kind and gentle heart and soul."

#### ALBERT SCHMIDT

Albert received my Christmas greeting as his name appeared on a roster and I had realized he was a surviving member of George's platoon. I received a phone call from <sup>him</sup> shortly after he received my letter from the family. He asked me if I knew who he was and of course I recognized him right away. After a few pointed questions (he wanted to make sure I was for real), he told me he was going to give our family two extra copies of "Remember When"! He was having a hard time remembering Big George but he had a few anecdotes to relay to me. He was a machine gunner and loved to question authority and get into a little mischief with his buddies Nichols and Freid. They were pretty good at sneaking rations now and then. (Nobody ever had a full stomach). I mailed him a check to Minnesota to cover the cost of mailing the copies, and put a note in it to the effect that if the check was more than the postage to please have a beer on the Adams family. We talked again on the phone and he was really bothered by the fact that he couldn't remember a company commander by the name of George Adams. I had learned that George became commander after a really bad attack at Suicide Hill and I explained this to Albert and told him where he could find pictures and accounts written by George in the "Remember When". He told me he was wounded at Suicide Hill, in a foxhole, and unable to move from his foxhole partially from fear, partially from wounds. (A lot of men were killed or seriously wounded that day, Jan. 10). Several days later, we received a card from Albert. Inside he wrote "Send no more money-your check is enough for both shipments (2

copies of "Remember When" and old maps) and a beer. I have Lt. Adams in the right frame now-he is the one who helped me off-wounded-Suicide Hill." I was amazed by the coincidence.

#### MARVIN ALPERT

A member of Co. C of the 399<sup>th</sup>, Marv was in the machine gun squad which on Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> 1944 accompanied a Rifle Co. on a pre dawn dash into Bitche and climbed through the College of Bitche window. "I was next to the last person thru the window. One step behind me was Garland Turner, who was shot thru the head and killed-an episode which caused me nightmares for years." Marv's group was the first to enter and occupy territory in Bitche, long before the March Liberation of the city. Marv has been steadfast in his efforts to connect families of war vets and unravel facts about WWII. He is an active officer of the 100<sup>th</sup> Division Assoc. He also gave me some very informative World War II history lessons via the internet!

#### MEL FAW

#### GLENN VLADIMIR

A combat medic with Company E of the 399<sup>th</sup>, Glenn was most helpful in getting me going on the research. He is very active with the 100<sup>th</sup> Division Assoc. His job in the war was to administer to the wounded and arrange for their evacuation. He wrote to tell me that there was nothing more difficult as being an Infantryman (as George was). He wrote: "Eventhough I lived with them I did nothave the same problems as they did. Some of them didn't have anight's sleep for weeks. I will always have the utmost respect for them." I'm sure the infantrymen felt the same way about the medics.

Subject: Pic 01

Date: Fri, 17 Dec 1999 09:47:45 +0000

From: Charles R Johnson <crjohnsn@swbell.net>

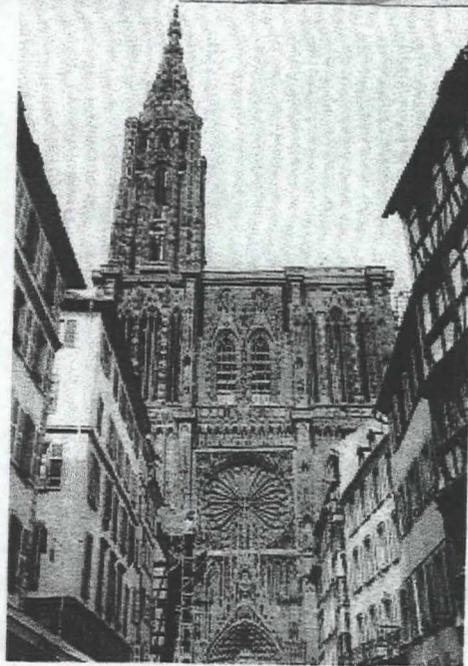
To: "Adams, George & Debbie" <dadams1@san.rr.com>

Following Provided By  
F Co Members For  
Our Visit In 1999

Pic 01



#01  
Hotel GUTENBERG  
STRASBOURG



Cathedral in Strasbourg = must see

Pics 01, 02

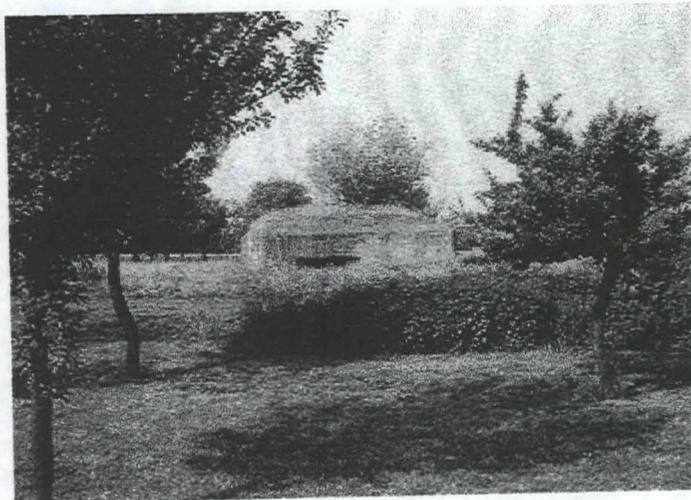
Joyce and I flew into Frankfurt, Germany, being the nearest to Strasbourg, took the shuttle train to Strasbourg (must ask how to find the shuttle terminal). The Airbase and RR station are together. We met the others in Strasbourg and stayed at the Hotel Gutenberg (See Pic 01). Very nice, modest cost, breakfast there. It's very close to the Cathedral. This Cathedral (Pic 02) is one of the most representative of all the churches of that era in all of Germany and France. (Spoken as a Art Major and visitor of 24 like buildings, including Notre Dame in Paris, in both countries in 1946. I was with a trucking company during the occupation and had free travel) It is a must see. Allow, at least, one hour to see inside and walk around to view the exterior. Take a lot of pics. It is memorable. Also walk along the river canal, very interesting.

**Subject: Pic 10**

**Date:** Thu, 16 Dec 1999 11:17:43 +0000

**From:** Charles R Johnson <crjohnsn@swbell.net>

**To:** "Adams, George & Debbie" <dadams1@san.rr.com>



one of the few  
remaining pill boxes  
Weapons Platoon breached  
this under Lt. Adams  
Charles Johnson got a  
Bronze Star here

Photo #10

Pic: Adams 10

One of the remaining concrete pill boxes, near Fort Simserhof, near Bitche, the likes of which we encountered. Walk over and around it. It was said they could never be breached, but we did it. The Weapons Platoon was resting in front of one, larger than this and thought to be abandoned, when the enemy fired on the men. Powers and I, were just ahead with the 1st Platoon. We dropped down in front of it and put heavy fire on the apertures until the 4th Platoon guys could get out of the way. Lt. Adams, later, said, " Good job, Johnson !" and I got a Bronze Star.



Sarregeumenu

Hotel Relais in Bitche - excellent  
good food - can visit old fort plus  
Magenot line

Pic 10a Hotel in Bitche

Hotel Relais des Chateaux Forts. We spent several nights here, excellent food and service. The front door view is the original Fort Bitche, ancient and very interesting. It is huge. Takes about 3 hours to visit and tour through there.

This Hotel is just east of the old fort, across the RR tracks east of downtown Bitche. Be sure to visit the Maginot Line - Fort Simserhof. It will give you an idea of the defensive positions our army had to face.

**Subject: Pic 7**

**Date: Thu, 16 Dec 1999 11:12:01 +0000**

**From: Charles R Johnson <crjohnsn@swbell.net>**

**To: "Adams, George & Debbie" <dadams1@san.rr.com>**



Photo # 7

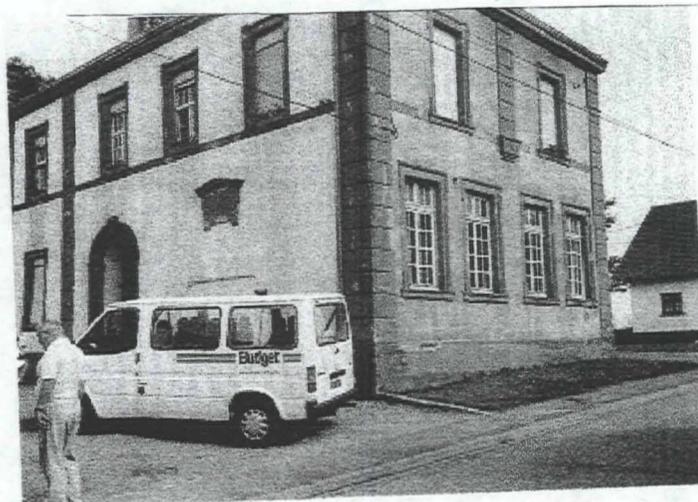


Photo # 8

Pics: Adams 7 & 8:

As for the schoolhouse in Petit-Rederching, coming from Bitche, you turn right into Petit-Rederching, go down into the town, and the schoolhouse is on a side road off to the left. Take along the picture of the schoolhouse

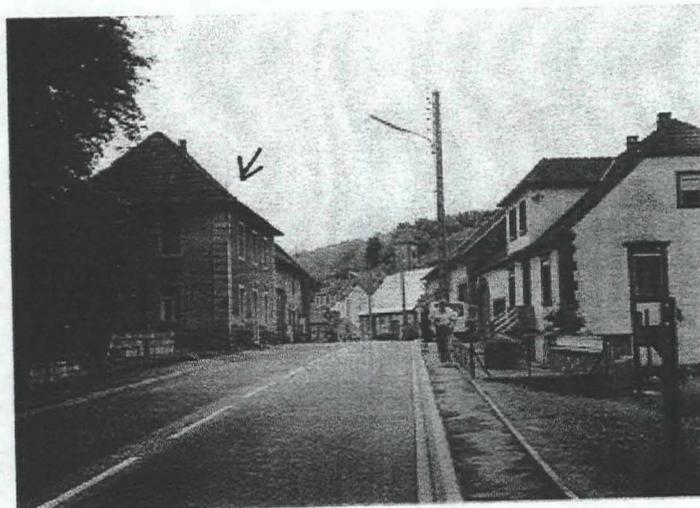
( See pics #Adam 7 the approach & #8 the school house, in its entirety), and wander around until you find it. None of these places are big towns. Ask around. Everyone was very nice to us and are very cooperative. Many speak English. We were all there after 'Suicide Hill' and later. An emotional location for all of us where we accounted for the MIA's, KIA's and WIA's.

**Subject: Pic 4**

**Date:** Thu, 16 Dec 1999 11:06:18 +0000

**From:** Charles R Johnson <crjohnsn@swbell.net>

**To:** "Adams, George & Debbie" <dadams1@san.rr.com>



House = billet Jan. 7  
 Adams 4th platoon were in  
 grey 2 story  
 elevated walkway - use  
 for relief + sleep

Photo #4

Pics: Adams 4, 5 & 6:

Glassenberg, or Glasenberg, was our jumping off place Jan 8, '45, for the event we call Suicide Hill. It will surprise you to find every location to be very near the next place all over the country. Our battle was just out of Glassenberg to the East.

Pic 4 shows the street above Steiner's street. The house on the left was our billet the nite of 7 Jan. The 1st and Adams' 4th Platoons and our officers were in the grey 2 story on the left. Pull up in front on this side and see the elevated walkway. Many of us used that site for relief. We got a good sleep, one of few.

Our host when we visited there in '92 was Arthur Steiner and his wife Anny and his brother Gustave. There is a small religious shrine at the corner where Rue de la Fontaine joins the main road through Glasenberg. The Steiners address in Glasenberg is Arthur Steiner & Anny, 5, Rue de la Fontaine, Glasenberg, 57.410 Poste, Rohrbach-Les-Bitche, FRANCE. When you find the street ( See approach pic # Adam 5), go to the end of the pavement of Rue de la Fontaine, get out and walk East into the woods. Have a hanky ready - many of our men died or were wounded there, just inside the dense woods about 50 to 150 yards, on either side of the path for a width of about 150 yards. Walk around in this patch of woods - you can feel a strong emotion. It is a definite path that becomes a slight upgrade (See pic # Adam 6). Do not attempt to drive into the woods, for the ground is usually muddy and soft. The Steiner's place is at the end of the pavement. Tell them Oscar Braman gave these directions. No one in the immediate family speaks English, but they speak both French and German.

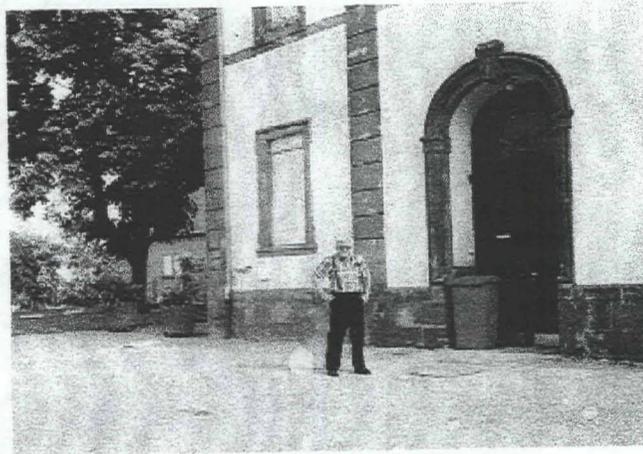
Steiner, Arthur  
 5, Rue de la fontaine  
 57410  
 Rohrbach-les-Bitche

**Subject: Pic 8a**

**Date:** Fri, 17 Dec 1999 10:00:10 +0000

**From:** Charles R Johnson <crjohnsn@swbell.net>

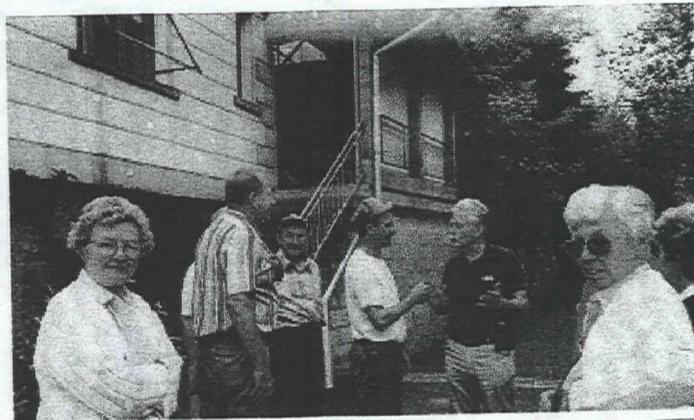
**To:** "Adams, George & Debbie" <dadams1@san.rr.com>



*Photo # 8a shows Schoolhouse  
where men were housed  
(Petit Rederching) - must see*

Pic 8a School House

This shows the size of the small building in Petit Rederching that housed most of 80 some men a couple of times (some stayed across the alley in the rear. It is different back there now.) and me for a target. Hope you find it. Lt Adams would have taken you there.



Pic 5a on the way to 'Suicide Hill' location.

The Dining - Beer hall in Glassenburg. The Steiners live near the end of this street that leads into the path to our 'Suicide Hill' arena. L to R are Joyce Johnson, Mel Faw, Gustave, Arthur Steiner, Oscar Braman and Dot Johnson, and part of Betsy Hudson. High ground behind the building, drop off behind the houses on the right. You can park here and walk a short way into the woods to the East.

**Subject: Pic 1**

**Date:** Thu, 16 Dec 1999 11:00:00 +0000

**From:** Charles R Johnson <crjohnsn@swbell.net>

**To:** "Adams, George & Debbie" <dadams1@san.rr.com>

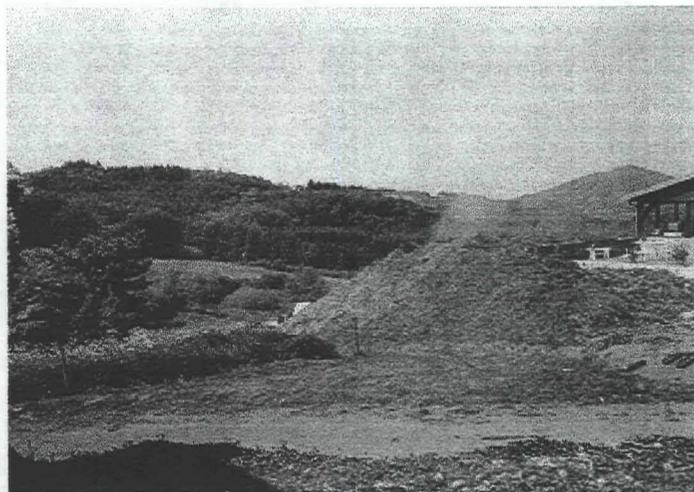


Photo # 1

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Pic: Adams 1

Valley just south of Le Vermont. After a long march thru the woods up and down the mountains after a steep climb on the street we spent the nite in houses for the first time . Next morning had hot chow - in the rain.

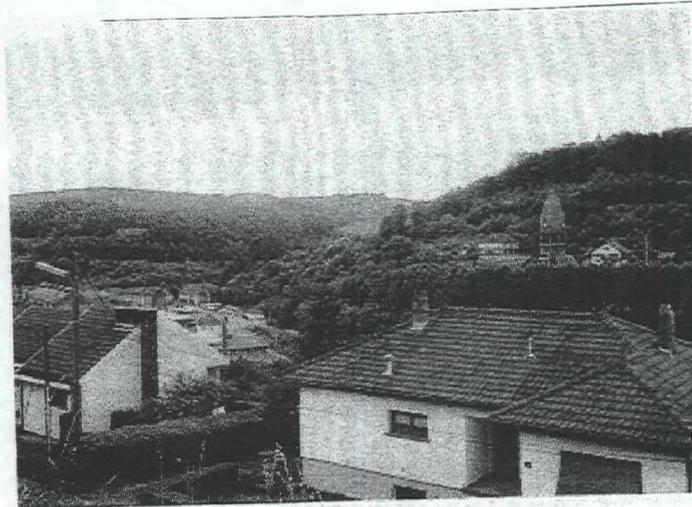


Photo # 3

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Pic: Adams 3

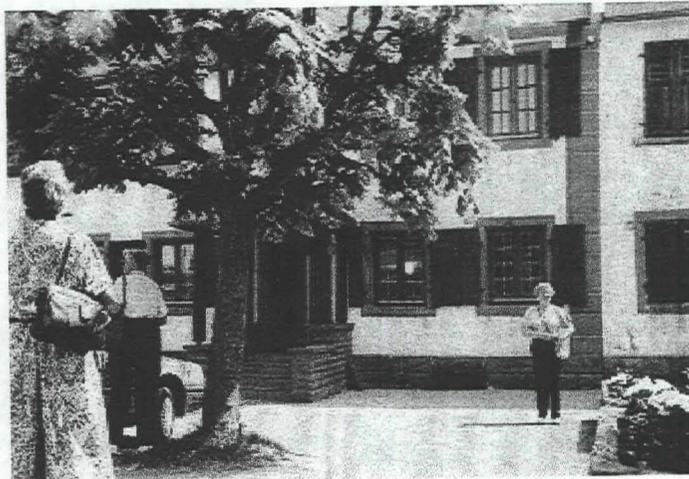
Driving from Lambach to Glassenburg, a major fire fight for Fox Co. on the hill to the right. We could see the Church steeple from our positions just after the gun fire.

**Subject:** Pic 9

**Date:** Thu, 16 Dec 1999 11:15:33 +0000

**From:** Charles R Johnson <crjohnsn@swbell.net>

**To:** "Adams, George & Debbie" <dadams1@san.rr.com>



guesthouse - only one  
in town - meals, drinks

Big Geo got mad @ Charles  
Johnson for socking @ germ. cap  
here (in vestibule inside porch  
to Joyce's right)  
The Nazi captain had  
threatened Charles's 2  
Captives so they wouldn't  
cooperate.

Photo # 9

Pic: Adams 9

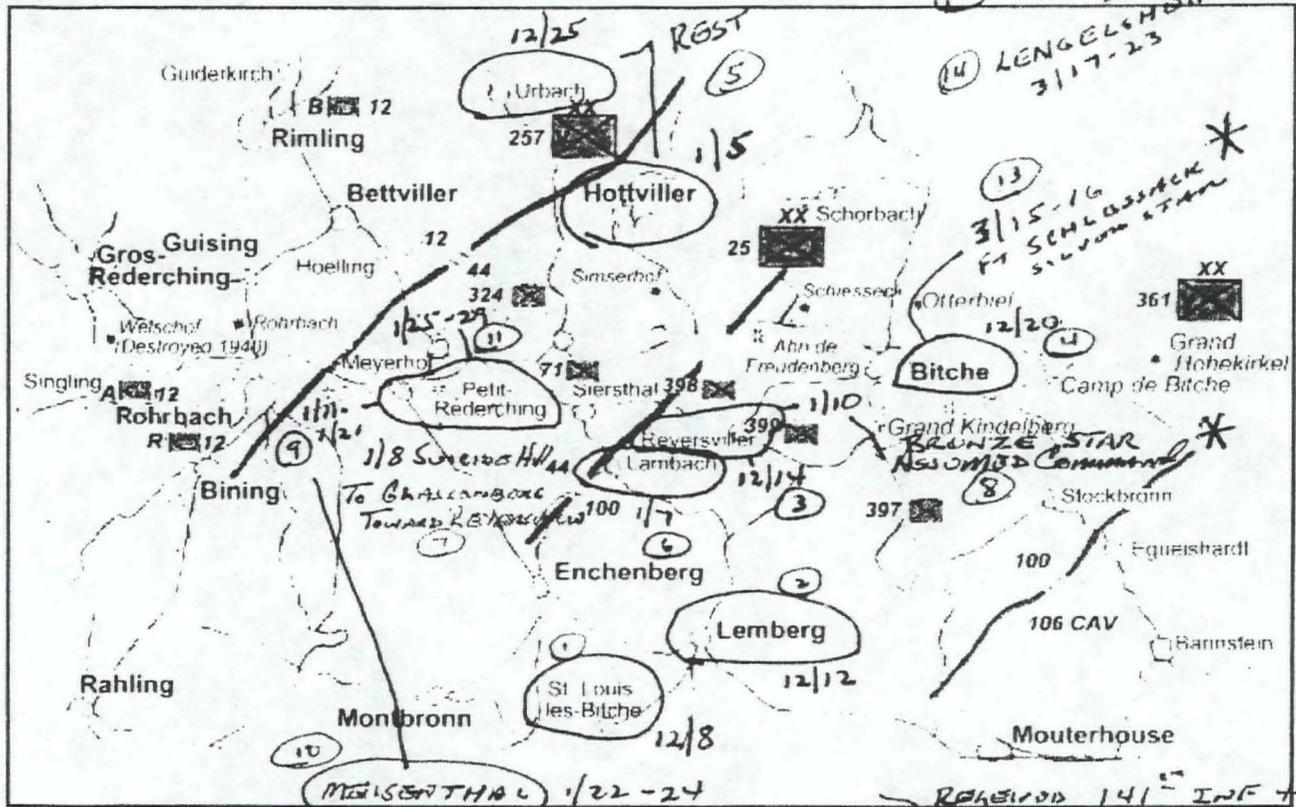
As for the 1945 CP in Sarreinsberg - Goetzenbruck, it is the only "guesthouse" in town. When you see a sign to Goetzenbruck, and wander around, up the hill behind the church, until you find the guesthouse - it's the only place that serves meals and beer. Or ask around.

Lt. Adams chastised me firmly for socking a POW German Captain in the vestibule just inside that short porch to Joyce's right in the picture. The Nazi threatened my two just captured German soldiers, scaring them badly, so they wouldn't cooperate. So, I gave him a hay-maker. Later, just before Adams left for a short leave he admitted it was a 'good punch'. He was known for his leadership and thoughtful tact.

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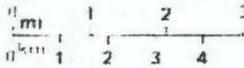
# The 100th Infantry Division in Combat

Just point and CLICK on the German units, Rimling, Bitche, and Fort Schiesseck to learn about them, and the battles fought by the 100th from 1 November 1944 to 8 May 1945, <sup>GR</sup>



## ATTACK ON BITCHE DEFENSES

13 - 21 December, 1945



- \* Major Maginot fortifications (petit or gros ouvrages)
- ' Minor Maginot fortifications (casemates or blockhouses; direction of point indicates orientation of major weapon system)
- \* Abris d' intervalle

**LEGEND**

**Husband of Local Woman Is Given Bronze Star Medal**

U S U  
 U S A  
 GERMAN

Word has been received here that Lt. George H. Adams, husband of the former Miss Hennie Green Wallace of Kinston, has been awarded the Bronze Star Medal "for heroic achievement in action on January 10, 1945, in the vicinity of Reyersviller, France. When the leading platoon of his company was halted by enemy machine-gun fire, Lt. Adams, executive officer, made his way to the top of a nearby hill and called for artillery fire which he accurately adjusted to destroy three hostile emplacements. Then sighting a large German force attempting to outflank his company, he accurately shifted the fire to this new target with such devastating effect that the entire force was routed". Lt. Adams is serving with the Seventh Army on the Western Front. His wife and two children reside in Kinston.

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**MORNING REPORTS SUMMARY**

BY: GHA, SA

\*

# INFANTRY DIV

F Co, 398<sup>th</sup> REGT, 100<sup>th</sup>

NOVEMBER, 1944

• Rail + Motor Convoy

• Nov 1-14 RAOUL ETAPES & VICINITY

11/9 1<sup>st</sup> Wounded in Action - VICINITY ROAD + BRU

Overlooking MUDERTHE RIVER

Light artillery encountered

• Nov 16-17 BACEMAT

• Nov 18-20 CLAIRPUE

Hit artillery fire + little small arms fire

11/20 Night of burning house LT SILE'S MEDAL OF HONOR

ST GRAYZEL / ST BAISE

Hooked-up with 2<sup>nd</sup> bat on tanks

• Nov 23-24 LE VERMONT

Billed in homes. Moral High

SALON

Torkey for B-Fast; Moved 8 1/2 miles E of Salon to

LESTONOTER (Discovered persons upon concentration Camp

Marched 11 miles back to fox-holes. DINNER

ST GRAYZEL

Moved by motor column

27-30 BILLETED IN HOMES. (AKA TRIFONTAINES)

Billed in homes. Weather clear + cold

DECEMBER, 1944

• Dec 1 DRIBRUNNEN

Attended church. 3 Hot Meals

• Dec 2 MODERFIELD

Motor Convoy to SENGENBURG - walked 8 miles to  
reach Forward Assembly Area @ 1800

• Dec 3 PUBERG (2 miles E of PUBORG)

Artillery fire encountered all day. Cold/Rainy

• Dec 4 SOUCHT (FRONT LINE)

1<sup>st</sup> MASON Fire Fight - strong resistance

• Dec 5-7 SOUCH

Attack + Counter Attack. HVY MORTAR FIRE

Anti-Tank gun positioned N of town - 2 squads  
protecting A.T.

• Dec 8 ST LOUIS

Troops billeted in private homes

• Dec 9-11 ALT SCHMEL

Forward Assembly Area; supporting 2<sup>nd</sup> BN

HVY Artillery + mortar fire Cold + Rainy

• Dec 12 LEMBORG

Adv to 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase Line near REYERSVILLER

• Dec 13-18 REYERSVILLER

Near MAGINOT LINE - Patrol entered BITCHE reported  
no enemy activity. 1<sup>st</sup> MAGINOT LINE entry

Weather cold + clear. MORAL High 18<sup>th</sup> RAIN +  
Adv 1000 yds

- Dec 19-21 BITCHE
  - 1<sup>st</sup> ASSAULT Pill boxes, tank traps, barbed wire
  - 1000 yds from FREUDENBERG FARMS 20<sup>th</sup> Counton
  - Attack broken by our tanks - heavy enemy shelling
  - All day "Cabbage Patch", the 'ditch', completed mission
  - to breach MAGINOT LINE. 21<sup>st</sup> 71<sup>st</sup> INFANTRY IN AREA.
- Dec 22-23 HOLBACH (Reinforced by units of 397<sup>th</sup>).
  - DEFENSIVE POSITION; Heavy AIR ACTION & ARTILLERY FIRE.
  - 4 GERMANS surrounded
- Dec 24-27 URBACH
  - Rest Camp; Re-Supply; New Combat CLOTHING (PARKAS)
  - 12<sup>th</sup> ARMORED IN AREA.
- Dec 28 - JANS HOTTSVILLER
  - REST CENTER behind lines; defensive position; occasional
  - ENEMY mortar FIRE & ARTILLERY Moral High
  - Occasional SNOW

JANUARY, 1945

JAN 6-8

LAMBACH

Marched 6 miles to relieve elements of 63<sup>rd</sup> Div; Support of attacking 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn 399<sup>th</sup> INF, 1<sup>st</sup> day of "Suicide Hill" was 1/8 Lambach to GLASSONBERG & into woods toward REYERSVILLOR).

JAN 9-10

REYERSVILLOR

Fire-fight + heavy artillery + mortar fire - support of 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn 399<sup>th</sup> INF Company "I". 10<sup>th</sup> 0800 Company Commander hit by artillery. LT ADAMS assumed command - pinned down by fire withdrew to old position opposite "I" Company. Withdrew at 1000.

JAN 11

PETIT REDERCHING

Moved to P.R. after darkness; moral low over the great losses in the company

JAN 12-18

BETTIVILLER

holding position. Resupply. COLD + SNOW

JAN 19-21

PETIT REDERCHING

Village; billeted in private homes SNOW  
Red Cross present

JAN 22

MEISENTHAL

Moved by motor vehicle - relief of 141<sup>st</sup> INF

JAN 23-24

SARREINSBERG (GOETZENBRUCK)

Relieved elements of 36<sup>th</sup> Div Moral High  
Intermittent artillery & mortar fire

JAN 25-29

PETIT REDERCHING

Motored back to "schoolhouse" position. Near MACINOTA <sup>LIND</sup>

FEBRUARY 1945

JAN 30 MAR 12 SARRLEINSBOURG (GOETZENBRUCK)

MOTOR to MEISSENHAE - RELIEVED 35<sup>th</sup> DIV Co B 137<sup>th</sup> INF  
RAINY MORAL HIGH TYPICALLY ART & MORTAR FIRE; NIGHT PATROLS  
MORAL GOOD AIR ACTIVITIES IN FRONT OF POSITION

MAR 13 - 14 ZOLLINGEN

Billeted in houses.

MAR 15 16 BITCHE

Silver Star  
DM

W of Bitche - organized for an attack + moved out @ 0445.  
1130 attacked Fort Schlessack (Schlössack) Moved  
NW of BITCHE - secured an AT gun position. Light  
ARTILLERY falling. Moved out AM to relieve 397<sup>th</sup> INF -  
2<sup>nd</sup> BN N of Bitche. CLOUDY + COLD

MAR 17 - 23 LENGELSHEIM

Moved by foot to reserve position N of BITCHE

MAR 24 OGGERSHEIM, GERMANY

MOTOR CONVOY - MOVE ON RHINE - Billeted in houses  
Traveled 55 miles

MAR 25 - 31 DANNSTADT, GERMANY

Raided homes. 10 PRISONERS - STRONG SECURITY  
WEATHER FAIR

APRIL 1945

• APRIL 1-3 OFTENSHEIM, GERMANY  
ENEMY AIRCRAFT OVER TOWN @ 1145 - DRIVEN OFF BY  
AA FIRE. MOTOR TRAVEL TO CITIES MORAL HIGH

• APRIL 4-6 HÜHNENSTADT, GERMANY  
CROSSED NECKAR RIVER

\* APRIL 7-10 JAGSTEDT, GERMANY  
MAJOR BATTLE - SMALL ARMS FIRE ENCOUNTERED. HUY  
MORTAR & ARTILLERY FIRE FELL ON COMPANY. SEIZED  
JAGSTEDT - SNIPERS DAILY - GOAL SECURE CITY.

• APRIL 11-13 WALDORFF, GERMANY  
SECURE KOCHER RIVER - SMALL ARMS FIRE  
WEATHER WARM

\* APRIL 14 ADOLZFUHT, GERMANY  
TIRED. LONG RANGE MG FIRE & ROCKET FIRE. RECEIVED  
NEWS OF PRES ROOSEVELT'S DEATH. FOUGHT THROUGH  
ESCHENAU, SIEBENACH

• APRIL 15 VERRENBORG, GERMANY  
RESISTANCE; SMALL ARMS FIRE

• APRIL 16-17 PFEDELBACH, GERMANY  
RESERVE HOLDING. MOVED TO HEUBERG BY MOTOR COMPANY

• APRIL 18-19 MONCHABERG, GERMANY  
BILLETED IN HOUSE WITH LOCAL SECURITY

• APRIL 20-22 SELONAU, GERMANY  
GUARDING VI CORPS HDQS

• APRIL 23-25 SCHWABISEHEIMMUND, GERMANY  
COLD & RAINY

• APRIL 26-30 BAD CANNSTATT, GERMANY  
HOLDING AREA; WEATHER COLD

MAY 1945

MAY 1 - 9 SEHERNDORF, GERMANY  
Moved by motor convoy. Billeted in private homes.  
Weather cool MORAL GOOD

\* MAY 5 OCCASIONAL SNIPER FIRE  
MAY 7 CEASE FIRE ORDER - NO FIRE UNLESS FIRED ON  
UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER BY GERMANY  
MESSAGE FROM PRISONERS

MAY 10 - 16 SCHWABISCH HALL, GERMANY  
MORAL EXCELLENT

MAY 17 - JUNE 7 KIRCHBERG, GERMANY  
Moved by motor convoy. Troops billeted

JUNE 1945

JUNE 8 - 9 WELZHOIM (WALDHEIM), GR  
JUNE 10 - JULY 7 WINNENDON, GR  
Moved by motor convoy.

\* 6/19 GMA promoted to CAPT AS OF 16<sup>th</sup>  
TRAINING + USUAL DUTIES

JULY 1945

JULY 9 - 31 FELLBACH, GR  
Moved by motor convoy



# The 100th Infantry Division in World War II

## *What makes them so special?*

Activated 15 November 1942 at Fort Jackson, SC, under the command of Major General Withers A. Burress (VMI, Class of 1914), who commanded the division throughout its training in the States and all of its combat in the European Theater.

*One of only 11 divisions (out of the 90 US Army divisions in WWII) to be commanded by the same officer from activation to the end of the War.*

Comprised of men from all 48 states.

*Truly an All-American outfit.*

Using a 1,500-man mostly Regular Army cadre, trained 15,000 recruits from basic training, through Tennessee Maneuvers (Second Army No. 4 Tennessee Maneuvers, 17 Nov 43 - 18 Jan 44) to full combat readiness; lost about 3,000 men as replacements for units already in combat.

*Not only a combat division, but a valuable adjunct to the Army training base.*

During a Supplementary Training Period from January 1944 to September, 1944, incorporated over 3,000 replacements, mainly from the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP), and again reached full combat readiness by the late summer, 1944.

*The ASTP "Scholars in Uniform" proved a valuable addition to the highly-trained, physically-hardened division.*

During 1944, the 100th also performed duties as the Army's "Show Division," putting on assault and firepower demonstrations for VIPs from the US and abroad; training exhibitions for selected businessmen; honor guard activities at Radio City in Manhattan; and providing a provisional battalion of 1,200 hand-picked men as the featured unit in the Fifth War Loan Drive in NYC.

*Not only a combat division, but an indispensable part of the effort to maintain morale at home and confidence of allies overseas.*

Entered combat in mid-November 1944 in the Vosges Mountains of northeast France, as part of VI Corps of the United States Seventh Army under Lieutenant General Alexander Patch.

*The Division survived the "Hurricane of 1944" in the North Atlantic en route from the NY Port of Embarkation to the Marseilles.*

Tore through deeply-entrenched German resistance in the craggy High Vosges Mountains in two weeks of savage fighting.

*Practically destroyed the brand-new, full-strength German 708th Volks-Grenadier Division in the process of penetrating the Vosges Mountains by assault for the first time in history. Since the 1st century BC, Romans, Huns, Burgundians, Swedes, Austrians, Bavarians, Germans and even French forces had tried and failed, but in the late autumn of 1944, in the face of nearly constant rain, snow, ice and mud, the US Seventh Army did what no other army had ever done before. For its success in ripping the Germans out of their trenches on the formidable heights overlooking Raon L'Etape, the 1st Battalion, 399th Infantry Regiment was awarded the Division's first Presidential Unit Citation, the collective equivalent of the Distinguished Service Cross for individual valor. Lieutenant Edward Silk, of the 2d Battalion, 398th, won the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions during the rout of the German forces.*

Pursued elements of the German 1st Army through the Low Vosges to the Maginot Line.

*Overcame stiff resistance by the 361st Volks-Grenadier Division at Mouterhouse and Lemberg and advanced on the Maginot Line. (3/399th Infantry won a Presidential Unit Citation for its assault of Lemberg.) Attacking into the Maginot, elements of the Division seized Fort Schiesseck, one of the Maginot forts attacked by the Germans in 1940, from the same direction, i.e. the south. In 1940, the German 257th Infantry Division failed to take Schiesseck, whose French garrison only surrendered a week after the rest of the French Army. In December of 1944, the 100th Infantry Division took the 14-story deep fortress, replete with disappearing gun turrets and 12-foot thick steel-reinforced concrete walls, in a four-day assault, 17 - 20 December 1944.*

Defeated the combined attacks of two German divisions, which were strongly supported by tanks, super-heavy tank destroyers, artillery and rockets, in early January 1945, during the last German offensive in the West, Operation **NORDWIND**.

*After giving some ground initially, the 399th Infantry Regiment tenaciously defended Lemberg in the face of a determined assault by the entire 559th Volks-Grenadier Division and parts of the 257th; on the left, the 397th Infantry refused to be pushed out of the village of Rimling, where it blunted the attack of the vaunted 17th SS Panzer-Grenadiers, the "Götz von Berlichingen" Division. Although the Germans had expected to surround and annihilate the 100th in two days, the Division's stubborn defense completely disrupted the Germans' efforts to regain the strategically-critical Saverne Pass. While the German offensive raged on throughout January on the Alsatian Plain, the 100th's defense in the snows of the worst winter of the 20th century was the single most significant factor in blunting the last German thrust of the war in the West. In recognition of their extraordinary accomplishment, the 3d Battalion, 397th Infantry Regiment (plus H/397th) was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for their defense of Rimling. For his key role in that action, Technical Sergeant Charles F. Carey of the 397th received the Congressional Medal of Honor -- posthumously.*

Highlighted the Seventh Army's drive into Germany in March, 1945 with the seizure of the Bitche, a heavily-fortified town in the Low Vosges Mountains.

*Since the erection of the enormous sandstone citadel there in the early 1700s, the town had been*

*continuously fortified with concentric rings of outworks, including several major Maginot forts, dozens of concrete pillboxes, and thickets of barbed wire and minefields. Although it had been invested several times, most notably in the Franco-Prussian War and in the 1940 campaign, Bitche had never fallen. From this point on, after the 3d Battalion, 398th Infantry won a Presidential Unit Citation there, the entire Division became known as "The Sons of Bitche."*

Fought one of the last major battles of World War II in Europe with the assault river crossing of the Neckar River at Heilbronn, 3 - 12 April 1945.

*In the teeth of fanatical resistance, fueled by an errant RAF bombing raid which had mistakenly hit the city center and turned the enraged populace into enthusiastic helpers of the city's defenders, the 100th launched an amphibious assault across the narrow but swiftly-flowing Neckar. While under constant observation and direct fire of dozens of guns emplaced on the hills surrounding Heilbronn to the east, the men of the 100th clawed their way into the city center and destroyed the German garrison by 12 April. Three battalions, 1/397th, 2/397th and (for the second time) the 3/398th earned Presidential Unit Citations in the process of eradicating this, one of the last major centers of German resistance. PFC Mike Colalillo won the third -- and last -- Congressional Medal of Honor to be awarded to a soldier of the 100th Division during this battle as well.*

In all, in 185 days of uninterrupted ground combat, out of an authorized strength of 13,688 officers and enlisted men, the 100th Infantry Division sustained 916 killed in action, 3,656 wounded in action, and lost 180 men missing in action. The overwhelming majority of these were sustained by the three infantry regiments, which together were authorized 9,771 men; in other words, considering that the infantry units were rarely maintained above 80% strength, about 50% of all the infantrymen in the Division became casualties in the course of achieving the Division's magnificent record. In liberating or capturing over 400 cities, towns and villages, they defeated major elements of eight German divisions. In this process, the men of the 100th inflicted untold casualties on the enemy, the only calculable number of which is the 13,351 enemy prisoners taken.

In return, in addition to the Presidential Unit Citations and Medals of Honor listed above, the soldiers of the 100th Infantry Division earned 36 Distinguished Service Crosses and over 500 Silver Stars for valor in combat. To preserve the *esprit de corps* and fellowship forged in their grueling training and six months of bitter combat, the men of the Division formed the Association of 100th Infantry Division in 1946, and have held annual reunions ever since.

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John  
Finished Book I - fascinating!

Highlights for me:

Capt George Hackney Adams section -  
100<sup>th</sup> Division Commanded by  
Major General Withers A. Barnes  
(VMI '44) - Commanded Division  
from inception through the  
entire European Theater. I  
particularly enjoyed the detailed  
description of house to house -  
village to village combat...  
and the simple pleasures soldiers  
enjoyed in that harsh environment.

I was captivated by the quest to  
confirm the circumstances surrounding  
LT Walter Brown.

I would have like to have heard  
Orville Cockrell (history teacher before the  
war) speak. Legendary history classes  
upon his return... so says Gorgein Hunt.

Charles S. Cooke stories of dinner w/ the wealthy old ladies of Newport, RI would be entertaining for me.

LT (JG) Morgan P. Richman II - USS Coupons relocates to Wilson from Conn after the war ...

H. B. Culbreth - NC NG (INF). WWI; WW II dies of a heart attack 1943 Ft Benning --

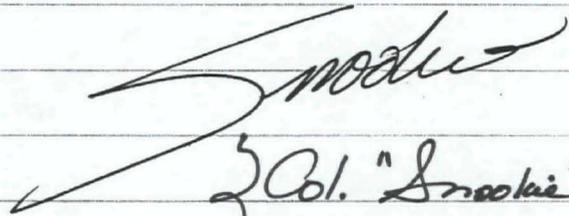
John Doughtridge ('Citadel '30') never went in service - Dupont = ammonia production (gun powder and explosives) and polyethylene (plastic coating/insulation of cable/wire for radar - strategically some of the most important work of the war ...

Wm Herbert Ellis dies Ardennes, Battle of the Bulge.

Reviewed Young American Patriots - The Youth of NC in WW II - Wilson County. Noted Bass, Boykin, Lamm and Williams families with G. Did not see the Hackneys ... You should be listed as well as your brother.

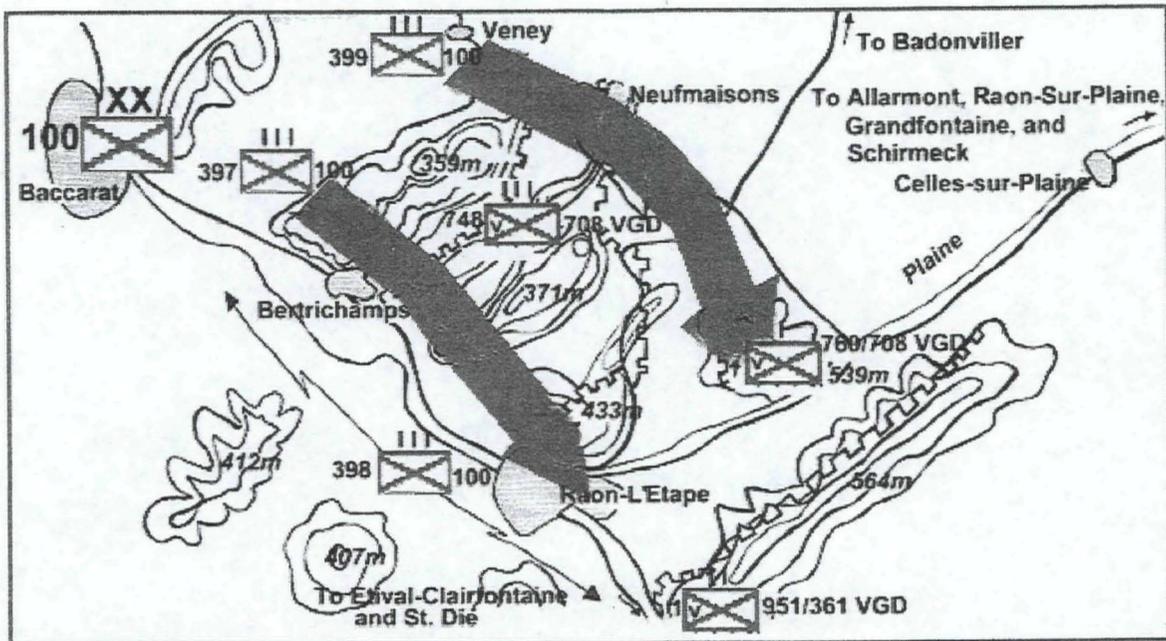
Fascinating reading. Tremendous  
insights can be gleaned from  
reading these letters and personal  
accounts!

You have obviously put a lot  
of work into gathering this  
information . . . so many have  
responded to your letter calling  
for lack to share their  
experience.

  
Col. "Snookie" Parker  
of Wilson, N.C.

# The 100th Infantry Division in Combat

Just point and CLICK on the German units or Raon-L'Etape, to learn about them, and the battles fought by the 100th from 1 November 1944 to 8 May 1945.



## Attack on the German Winter Line

12 - 20 November, 1945

### LEGEND

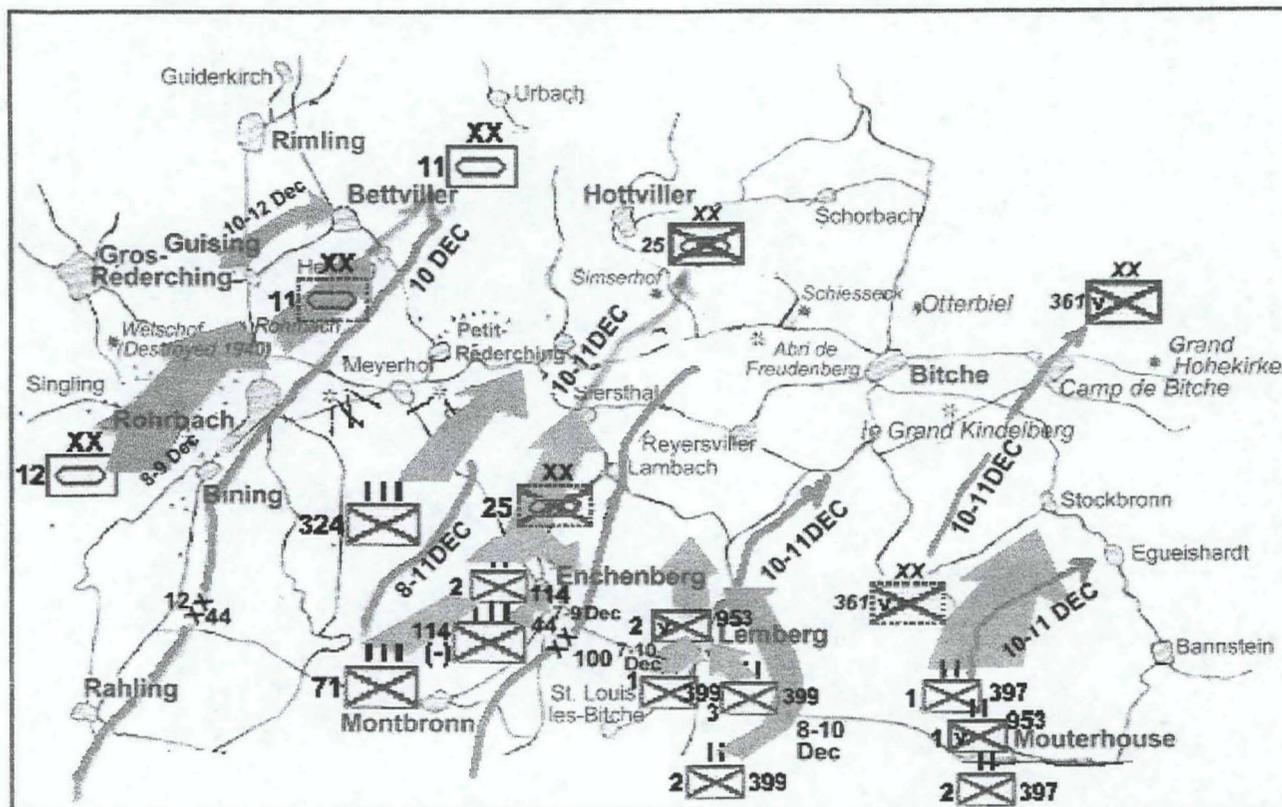
- U.S. UNITS
- U.S. ATTACKS
- GERMAN UNITS

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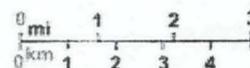
# The 100th Infantry Division in Combat

Just point and **CLICK** on the German units, Rimling, Bitche, and Fort Schiesseck, to learn about them, and the battles fought by the 100th from 1 November 1944 to 8 May 1945.



## Pursuit through the Low Vosges

8 - 11 December, 1945



\* Major Maginot fortifications (petit or gros ouvrages)

' Minor Maginot fortifications (casemates or blockhouses;  
direction of point indicates orientation of major weapon system)

\* Abris d' intervalle

### LEGEND

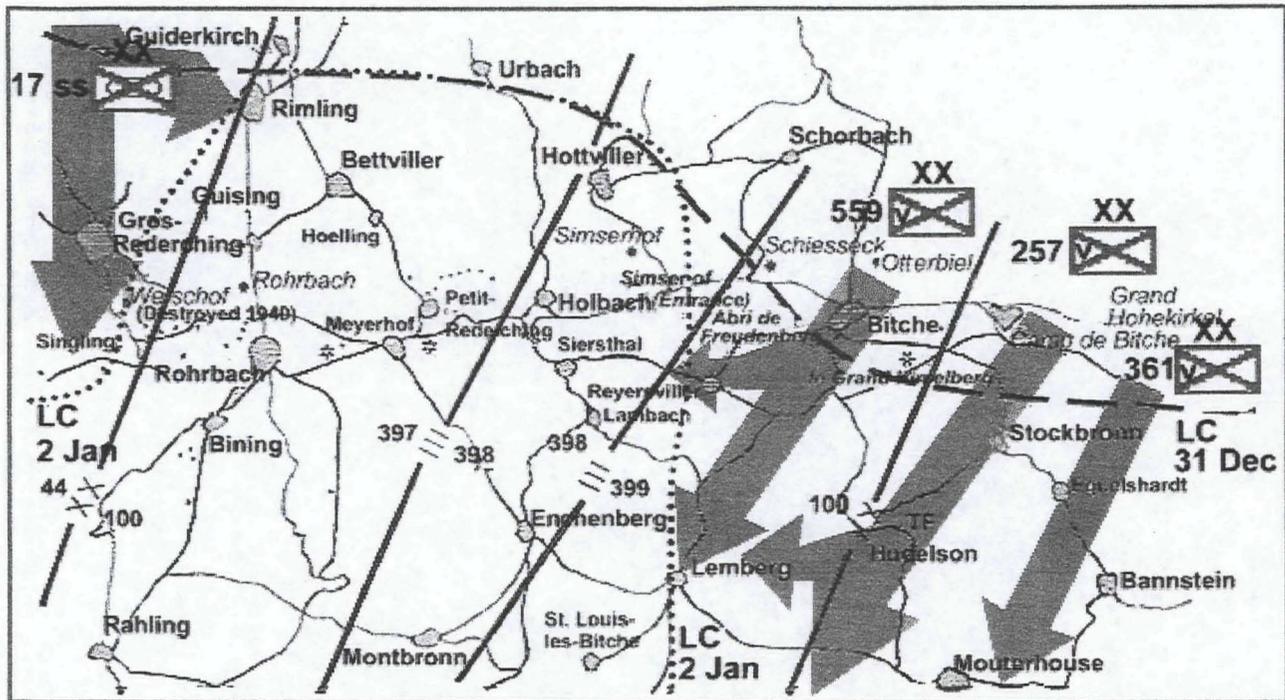
-  U.S. UNITS
-  U.S. ATTACKS
-  GERMAN UNITS

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# The 100th Infantry Division in Combat

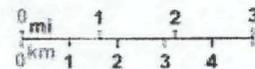
Just point and CLICK on the German units, Rimling, Bitche, and Fort Schiesseck, to learn about them, and the battles fought by the 100th from 1 November 1944 to 8 May 1945.



## Holding the line against

### Nordwind

1 - 7 January 1945



#### LEGEND

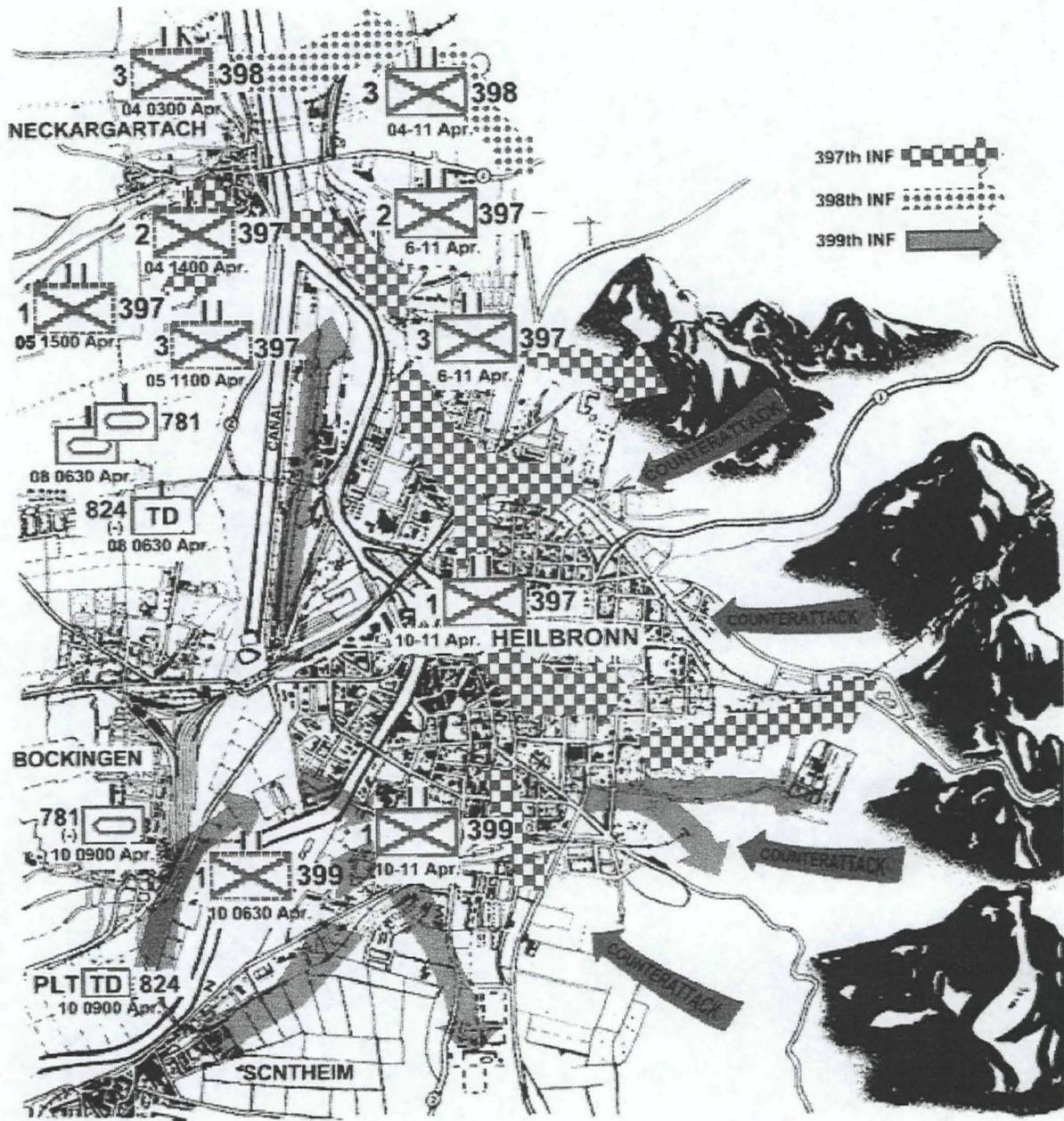
-  U.S. UNITS
-  U.S. ATTACKS
-  GERMAN UNITS

- \* Major Maginot fortifications (petit or gros ouvrages)
- ' Minor Maginot fortifications (casemates or blockhouses; direction of point indicates orientation of major weapon system)
- \* Abris d' intervalle

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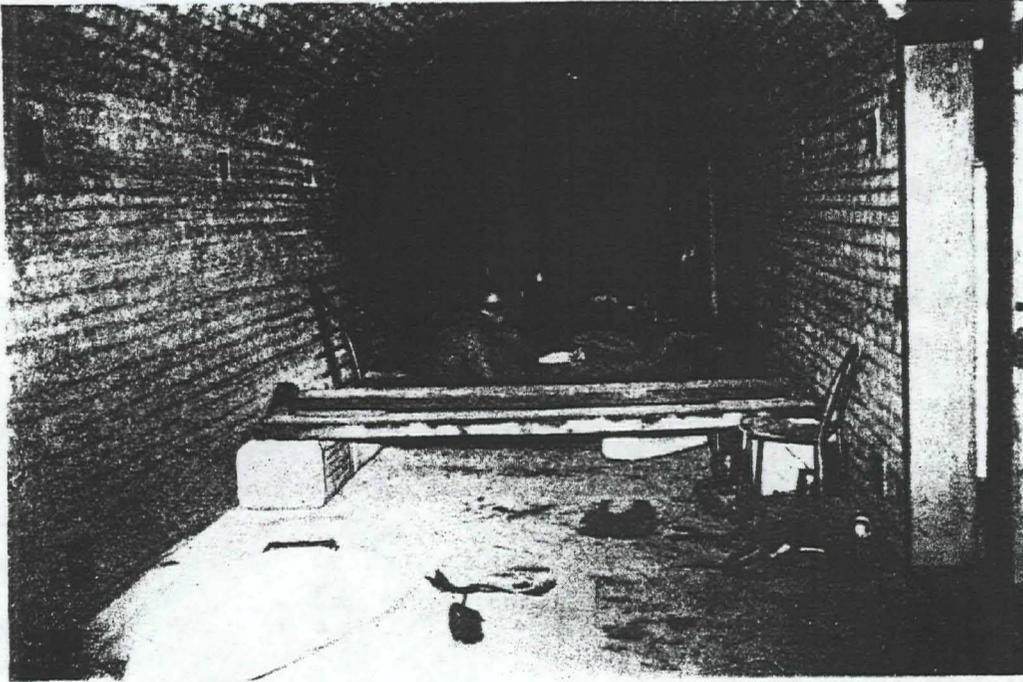
# The 100th Infantry Division in Combat





box which was two meters thick. The mortar effect was devastating. When the lighting and ventilating systems broke down, as much the result of the assault on the personnel entrance as the effect of the shelling, suffocating and blinding gases from the heavy guns in the fort made further resistance impossible.

The 2nd Battalion of the 71st Infantry and Company C of the 63rd Engineer Battalion had from 14 to 18 December worked on the personnel and ammunition entrances on the southern hill. The am-



AMERICAN SOLDIER EXAMINES INTERIOR OF GERMAN FORT  
IN THE MAGINOT LINE

*... By evening of 17 December they had entered the fort and explored its recesses down 23 flights of stairways ..."*

munition entrance was smoked and sealed off. On 14 and 15 December, while riflemen, tank destroyers, and tanks covered them from the fire of both blocks, the engineers cut a path through the two barbed wire

entanglements which ringed the personnel entrance, blew holes in the turrets with satchel charges, and dropped a bangalore torpedo down one of the holes to destroy the diesel power plant. On the next two days tank destroyers opened larger holes, through which riflemen dropped phosphorous grenades and the engineers dropped charges of TNT. By evening of 17 December they had entered the fort and explored its recesses down 23 flights of stairways, going down to the small-gauge railway at the bottom. On the following day, when the Germans resisted their push through the railway tunnel, they decided to blow the staircase and the ventilation system. This they did by exploding 600 pounds of TNT on the stairway and by covering the block with dirt pushed up by a tank-dozer.

On the morning of 19 December the division jumped off for its general assault on the northern pillboxes of Fort Simserhof. The 114th Infantry, which had relieved the 324th in the northwest, attacked Hottviller, while the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 71st regiment attacked the eight pillboxes on the northern hill. Neither force met any opposition. At 0400 hours that morning the enemy had withdrawn from the fort and had retreated north of Hottviller. Having seized its objective, the 44th Division held its positions and prepared for an attack north to the Siegfried Line. The 100th Division was still fighting at Fort Schiesseck.

Supported by the fire of Forts Simserhof, Otterbiel, and Grand Hohekirkel, Fort Schiesseck stands astride the large barren hill which commands Bitche from the northwest. Nine of its 11 blocks are on top of the hill; the others surround its base with fields of fire in all directions. One of these to the southwest is called Freudenberg. The pillboxes of Schiesseck were made of stout steel-reinforced concrete, extended three or four stories underground, and were interconnected; each was surrounded by a moat; each was equipped with tubes down which grenades could be rolled against attacking troops. Three of the blocks had disappearing turrets, and all were heavily armed. Artillery from Otterbiel and Grand Hohekirkel could be expected to cover any attack on Schiesseck. The town of Bitche and Camp de Bitche, to the east, could be taken only after Schiesseck had fallen.

When the 1st Battalion of the 398th Infantry had been pinned down in its experimental attack on 14 December the 100th Division completed plans for a major assault. The plan called for the 398th Regiment on the left to make the main effort, while the 397th on the right was to hold its ground and later to capture Otterbiel and Grand Hohekirkel. The 3rd Battalion was to spearhead the attack of the 398th Infantry against Fort Schiesseck. L Company on the left was to take Freudenberg and blocks 9, 1, 7, 2, and 3; I Company on the right was to take blocks 10, 11, 8, 5, 6, and 4. One platoon was to assault each pillbox. While two squads covered with fire, the third was to advance to button up the apertures. Attached engineers were then to use demolitions, after which tank-dozers were to cover openings and seal off the pillbox. Chemical mortars, 81mm mortars, and tanks were to give maximum support to the attack.

For two days, 15 and 16 December, supporting artillery and the XII Tactical Air Force softened the target. Twenty-seven tons of bombs were dropped on the forts with 32 direct hits. The artillery fired 481 rounds and reported 117 direct hits. All this power, however, had little effect. Although one turret was destroyed, forward observers saw 240mm shells ricochet off the four foot-thick wall of the casements. Even on the second day, when some of the guns moved up to the crest of the protecting hill and fired point blank, the effect was not decisive. The Germans withdrew underground, but they were prepared to come up again when the artillery fire lifted.

The attack began on 17 December. The 397th Infantry had already reached the high ground east of Hottviller to guard the division left flank, alongside the 44th Division forces already there. On the morning of 17 December it launched a diversionary attack on Camp de Bitche. Protected to this extent on their left and right, the two assaulting companies watched an hour-and-a-half air and artillery bombardment, then moved out under a light rolling barrage which lifted as they came up to their targets.

The L Company assault platoon, on the left, found Fort Freudenberg deserted. It was left for a support platoon to secure; and

the troops moved on to assault block 9, which was taken as planned. The I Company assault platoon took blocks 10 and 11. Number 11 was the personnel entrance, large and strongly defended. Three riflemen rushed the block and dropped grenades into its turret to silence a machine gun. The first squad attempted to rush to the moat, but mortar fire from higher on the hill killed three of them and drove the others back. An engineer crawled across, set a satchel charge against the door, released the detonator, and withdrew with the riflemen who had supported him. When the charge failed to explode, a bazooka team attempted to move up to fire on it; but both its members were killed as they advanced. Another bazooka team came up from one of the squads in the rear, fired in the charge, and exploded it. When the smoke cleared, the point squad again rushed the fort. When engineers came up to blow a fixed inner door and the staircase and when the tank-dozer had covered the fort with dirt, the job was done. Throughout the battle for Fort Schiesseck mortar and artillery fire from the blocks on top of the hill, from the neighboring forts, and from the town of Bitche, did more than frontal fire from the assaulted blocks to harass the attackers.

After taking the first four blocks Companies I and L dug in. During the afternoon the XII Tactical Air Force bombed Fort Otterbiel, which had caused heavy casualties with its artillery; and during the night 100th Division artillery fired on the remaining blocks to clear paths through dense barbed wire. On 18 December the attack was renewed, until only block 2 remained to be taken. The assault troops withdrew from block 3 so that artillery might fire on block 2. The bitter fight for this last position took two days. It fell on the morning of 20 December.

The 100th Division had now reduced Fort Schiesseck, and it planned to clear the town of Bitche and advance to the north to come up to the 44th Division line. Both forces were then to move toward the Siegfried Line. Only after a week of heavy fighting and with a full concentration of power had XV Corps been able to knock out the strongest of the Maginot fortifications, when the Germans chose to defend at the Ensemble de Bitche.



routed every enemy formation opposing the 3rd Division. All men will be brought to the highest possible offensive spirit prior to the jump-off. Bayonets will be sharpened." Without artillery preparation the 3rd Division launched its attack at 0100 hours on 15 March just south of the German border in the vicinity of Rimling. Within 30 minutes the border had been crossed, and the enemy's forward positions overrun.

Mines disabled several armored vehicles the first day of the assault, but though the mine-fields were dense they did not extend much beyond one mile. Only at Utweiler was there any serious attempt at resistance. Here the 2nd Battalion of the 7th Infantry received a counter-attack by a battalion of infantry supported by armor. It was completely surrounded until the 3rd Battalion attacked and relieved it from encirclement. Four enemy flakwagons and seven tank destroyers were destroyed by this effort. After two and a half days of fighting the 3rd Division succeeded in driving to the Siegfried Line at a point just south of Zweibruecken.

On the right flank of XV Corps the assault of 15 March was launched by the 100th Infantry Division which had held the corps line southwest of Bitche during the period of aggressive defense. The first mission assigned to the 100th Division in the Seventh Army offensive was the capture of the fortress town of Bitche. This division had fought over the same terrain and had besieged the same citadel in December. In the December fighting for Bitche the 3rd Battalion of the 398th Infantry had received recognition for its work in reducing Fort Schiesseck, overlooking Bitche from the north. \*

At 0500 hours on 15 March the three-regiment offensive of the 100th Division began. The 397th Infantry on the left flank poured out to capture the high ground north of the fortress and by noon had taken Schorbach. The 399th Infantry on the right flank attacked Reyersviller Ridge southeast of Bitche. The 398th Infantry in the center made a frontal assault and seized Fort Freudenberg and Fort Schiesseck. ✓

Division engineers had done their demolition work well in December, and only small resistance was encountered near the blasted pillboxes. Mines were present in great numbers, however. A captured engineer map later revealed that there were 3,839 Schuh mines, S mines,

and antitank mines guarding the southwest approaches . Bitche. Tanks were used to help clear a narrow path through minefields.

On 16 March the 1st Battalion of the 398th Infantry captured Fort Otterbiel north of Bitche against heavy mortar, artillery, and small arms fire. The 2nd Battalion captured the town of Bitche, encountering little resistance, and occupied the northern half. The 3rd Battalion passed through the town to Camp de Bitche to the east and secured the area. Meanwhile, the 399th Infantry was cooperating in this "nutcracker squeeze" by clearing the southern half of Bitche and the College de Bitche. Company B captured 75 prisoners including the commander and staff of the battalion which was charged with defending the town.

The fortress town of Bitche capitulated as a result of the flanking movement executed by the 398th Infantry on the north and the 399th Infantry on the south. General Burress, commanding the division, was made the first citizen of honor in the town's history. The 100th Division now pushed to the north in an advance to the Siegfried Line, leaving the 71st Division to take over control of the Bitche area.

### The Clearing of Northern Alsace

On the Seventh Army right flank between XV Corps and the Rhine VI Corps had made preparations for its mission to clear northern Alsace and to drive through the Wissembourg-Bergzabern-Landau-Neustadt Gap along the Rhine Valley. With four infantry divisions abreast, the 42nd, the 103rd, the 36th, and the 3rd Algerian from west to east, the VI Corps attacked early on 15 March across the Rothbach and Moder Rivers. The 14th Armored Division gave the corps its armored support. Prisoner of war statements showed that tactical surprise had been achieved and that enemy communications had been disrupted early. Progress was hampered somewhat by extensive minefields. Corps artillery fired almost at will on enemy vehicles, guns, tanks, and personnel with excellent results.

On the left flank of the VI Corps the 42nd Division had been holding a sector of the line in the Low Vosges. At 0645 hours on 15 March the division attacked from the general line Althorn-Reipertswiller

## FRANCE INTO GERMANY

schiesseck. In the clear dawn, through woods covered with frost, the battalion moved to positions held by the 1st Battalion at the edge of the forest south of the Freudenberg plateau. Just before noon, the 3rd Battalion started across the open ground toward the orbiting fortifications.

The plan was elaborate. While a diversionary air attack and artillery shelling began to the east against Camp de Bitche in the 397th sector, the 3rd Battalion 398th was to capture all the forts on Schiesseck Hill in a daring maneuver which meant exposing themselves to attack from three directions. The 2nd Battalion, moving as rapidly as possible to minimize this danger, was then to attack northward and reduce all forts in their line of advance until they had captured high ground south of Schorbach to the north and west. This action would protect the left flank of the 3rd Battalion.

If successful, the 3rd Battalion, by taking Schiesseck Hill would have flanked Bitche. The 399th was then to seize that town at once to protect the right flank of the 3rd Battalion 398th, while the 1st Battalion 398th moved in between the 2nd and 3rd. The success of this entire strategy depended upon timing. If any portion of our strategy went wrong, the 3rd Battalion 398th could be cut off by the enemy.

Actually, the 2nd Battalion didn't move up on the left flank until 19 December, two days later. The 399th Infantry did not advance on Bitche, and there was a constant gap closed only by occasional patrols to the west of the 398th where the 44th Division was trying to take Fort Simserhoff. The reason for this delay was that the whole Seventh Army was about to be engaged in a different kind of war, and the Division was to have a new mission.

Cos. L and I, the attacking companies of the 3rd Battalion 398th Infantry, had special equipment for their job. Each squad carried a bazooka and a satchel charge of TNT. The pole charges which each squad had been issued were left behind in casements which the battalion had taken a couple of days before. Each man was also carrying two thermite grenades and two hand grenades, about a quarter of them white phosphorous. Each company had two nine-man squads of engineers from Co. B of the 325th Engineer Battalion attached. The engineers all carried demolitions as well as two 25-pound satchel charges or "beehive" demolitions, which are shaped charges with the quality of clinging to vertical surfaces. The companies were to attack in waves of platoons: the assault platoon, covered by fire from the other two, would knock out the initial resistance; the support platoon with the engineers would destroy the fortification and seal up the openings; and the reserve platoon would move up to keep the enemy from reentering the fort while the other platoons went forward.

In the assault, Co. L, led by 1st Lt. Samuel Teitelbaum, was the first platoon which started down the trail toward Fort Freudenberg, then swung left to approach as closely as possible up a wooded ravine. At last the men had to make a dash for it across the open ground under artillery fire from the Schiesseck units and Bitche. They found the barbed wire cut by the artillery and reached the unoccupied structure with its unexploded 240 still inside.

Coming up behind were Capt. Robert E. Brinkerhoff, the CO of Co. L, with his command group, and the support platoon under 2nd Lt. Elmer L. Givens. The assault platoon, by-passing Unit 9 to the north, struck northeast toward Unit 11. Leaving a six-man guard at Freudenberg, the support platoon followed. Capt. Brinkerhoff got permission by radio not to destroy the fort but to use it as a CP and

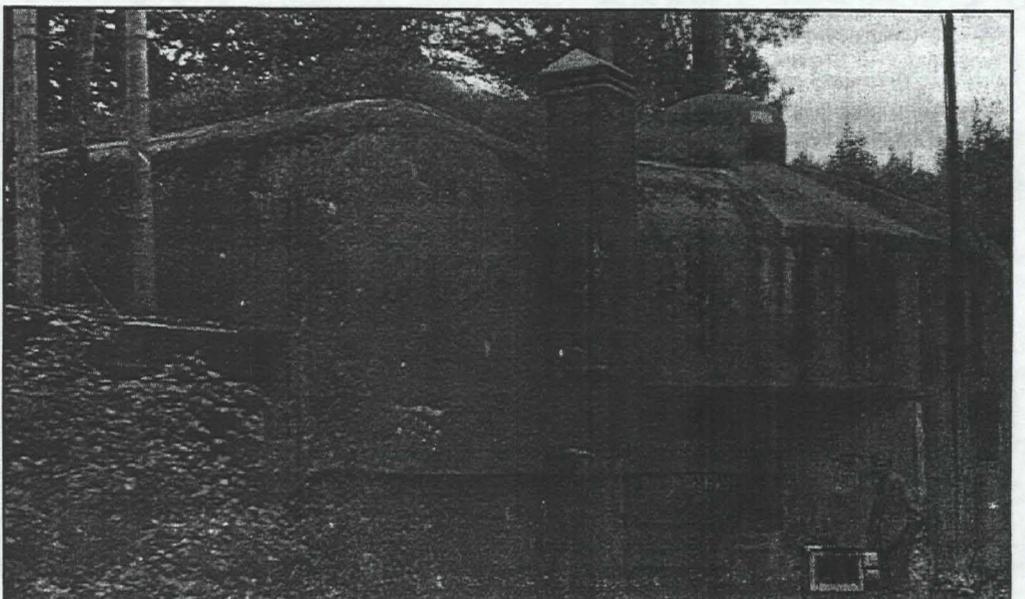
Co. M had set up, the limitation of their fields of fire being compensated for by the protection the positions gave them from artillery.

Enemy artillery made Lt. Teitelbaum's platoon cross to the north of the Bitche road and approach Unit 11 by crawling along a trail and ditch. Below them to the south they could see 2nd Lt. Vincent G. Williams and the assault (third) platoon of Co. I approaching Unit 10. This platoon had attacked the fort directly from the south, passing through the 1st Battalion and over the ground where the dead of the previous attack still lay. They had inched up the incline under very heavy artillery fire, but found that no resistance was coming from the fort itself.

Above and to the north, the 1st squad of Lt. Teitelbaum's platoon had sprinted from the ditch across the road to the protection of a pile of logs. From here, covered by fire from the rest of the squad, Sgt. Paul E. Brannon, Pfc. Theodore O. Bayard, and Pfc. Floyd E. Baker rushed onto the roof of the fort. Baker dropped two grenades into the turret and silenced a machine gun which had been firing from

there. The rest of the squad rushed the entrance of Unit 11, the personnel entrance of the system. In front of the grilled door was a moat five feet wide and about ten feet deep. After S. Sgt. William Hust and three men had placed a log across the moat, Pfc. Richard D. Ahlers crept along the log to the grill and found it locked. He worked back across the log and returned with a satchel charge. Then he dashed for a shell crater where the rest of the men were taking shelter from the explosion.

The hurriedly-placed demolition didn't go off, and the squad decided to try to explode it with a bazooka round. But the three men with the bazooka had been killed by a mortar shell when the squad began to rush the fort. Despite the shell fire, Pfc. George Burzynski ran back to the second and third squads, still in the ditch by the road, and came back with a bazooka. Pfc. Robert McKnight then crawled to within 25 yards of the door and fired the bazooka to set off the charge and blow in the door. The men surrounded the fort and entered it to find the lights still on and in one room a fire raging. To blow open



risen from the enemy's positions on high ground to the southeast. Despite this fierce resistance, however, by 1500 hours the last row of buildings had been cleared and Co. A had moved to positions about one kilometer east of the barracks. Thirteen prisoners were captured during this operation.

To the north on 10 April, Co. C 397th, pushed at 0830 in its attack to further widen the bridgehead to the east. Against much stiffer resistance, the company managed to wrest three more blocks from the Jerries and establish themselves on the nest highway parallel to the Flein road. Co. B found no stance in its zone, however, and pushed four blocks on to the highway where it joined Co. C. All along Co. B's route, the civilians came out of their houses to display large, white pieces of cloth in a sign of complete surrender.

On the night of 10 April, the bridgehead line ran north of Kilianskirche, where Co. A 397th was still fighting, east to the highway beyond the Flein road, thence to the railroad tracks which Co. F 399th had cleared, and south around the railroad works in the area held by Co. A 399th, to the river.

While the battle for Heilbronn proper was in progress, an extremely important maneuver was being carried out by the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 398th Infantry in the vicinity of Offenau, some ten kilometers to the north. On the morning of 4 April, while the 3rd Battalion 398th and elements of the 2nd Battalion 397th were fighting off savage enemy counterattacks in the northern part of the bridgehead, the 3rd Battalion 398th moved via motor into Heilbronn, relieving elements of the 253rd Infantry 3rd Division. The battalion was to establish a bridgehead across the Neckar as soon as practicable to effect a flanking drive to the high ground east of Heilbronn.

Originally, it had been planned for the 2nd Battalion 398th to cross the river over a bridge which was to be constructed by the 3rd Battalion 398th and attached engineers of the 325 Engineer Battalion. When enemy artillery fire prevented the crossing of the span, Capt. Elba W. Bowen, 2nd Battalion S-3, made a reconnaissance of the river to the north and found another crossing site opposite Offenau. That night, a patrol from the 2nd Platoon of the 325 Engineer Battalion, commanded by S. Sgt. Lawrence W. Curbo, crossed the Neckar into Offenau to determine if the town was occupied by the enemy.

Luckily, the patrol found a small boat along the southern bank, and with make shift paddles struggled across the opposite shore, laying wire as they went. Upon reaching the muddy right bank, Sgt. Curbo directed the movement of the boat in the brush, and led his party into the dark streets of Offenau.

The town was deserted of enemy troops, and the civilians, awakened and questioned by the patrol, could give no information of the enemy. An exhaustive search of the town, Sgt. Curbo's patrol returned to their hidden boat and crossed the river to their platoon CP.

Informed of Sgt. Curbo's findings, Lt. Col. Weisel, 2nd Battalion CO, ordered one platoon from Co. F to cross the river the following morning and secure the far bank so that the engineers could construct a footbridge. Lt. Nick Stalikas, command of Co. F's 2nd Platoon, was assigned the mission. The crossing was made in three assaults while in midstream, the platoon was harassed by MG fire. But the range was long, and no one was hit.

Having gained the east bank, one squad remained near the edge of the town to protect the other's flanks while the other two squads moved west to house up the main streets on the east side of Offenau. Finding no trace of the enemy, Lt.

and the night before, called Lt. Adams, Co. F commander, and informed him that all seemed clear. Lt. Adams immediately sent another F Co. platoon across. The two platoons searched the remainder of Offenau but found only two German soldiers who had been left behind by their unit.

A defense of the battalion's crossing was established, and the 2nd Platoon of Co. B 325th Engineers, under Lt. Samuel Pinnel, began construction of a footbridge. By 1500 of 5 April, the bridge was completed and the remainder of Co. F, followed by Co. E, and a platoon of heavy machine guns from Co. H, crossed the river. Co. F outposted Offenau, and Co. E sent one platoon northeast to Obergriesheim to contact the 63rd Division, while the remainder of the company moved to Duttenberg, about three kilometers northeast of Offenau. There they met Co. G, under Capt. Matthew B. Einsmann, and several attached tanks which had crossed the Neckar at Neckarelz, farther north, where the 63rd Division had a bridge. After crossing the river, Co. G and the tanks had turned south and passed through a woods northeast of Offenau, where several hastily abandoned enemy pillboxes and quantity of empty American Red Cross boxes were found. The company arrived in Offenau about 2300 of 5 April, and prepared to spend the night. So far, no enemy opposition had been encountered by any of the 2nd Battalion elements.

The Easy Co. platoon in Obergriesheim set up a defense of the town and awaited further orders, while the rest of the company outposted the town of Duttenberg. Duttenberg is situated on a plain high above the swift-flowing Jagst river, a tributary of the Neckar, and second of three water barriers in the path of the battalion. From their positions, Co. E was able to overlook the proposed crossing site of the battalion, and protect it from possible enemy assault.

The Neckar had been crossed with little difficulty by the 2nd Battalion, but the Jagst and Kocher rivers, tributaries of the Neckar, presented the main problem. Both these rivers flowed into the Neckar at a point just south of where the battalion crossing had been made, and separated our troops from Heilbronn which they were trying to encircle and attack from the rear. Moreover, the two rivers, at this point roughly parallel and only about three kilometers apart, formed a peninsula which could be easily defended by the fanatical SS troops who had been assigned this sector.

By 0500 of 6 April, following a careful reconnaissance of the Jagst, the companies carried their assault boats, unloaded at Duttenberg, to the river bank. The first wave rolled across the Jagst abreast at 0530. Quickly clambering from the boats, the men ran 200 yards across flat, open ground toward a railroad track at the foot of a steep, heavily entrenched, wooded hill. While most of the men were still in the open, enemy machine guns and small arms began blasting them from high ground to their front and from behind the railroad bed to their right. The 2nd Battalionites continued forward in the face of this heavy fire to the protection of the railroad embankment. This advance was made possible by the quick work of Capt. Einsmann, on the north side of the river, who built a continuous firing line composed of elements of E and G Cos. and the heavy machine guns of Co. H, which had not yet been sent across. Although one heavy MG was knocked out by enemy automatic fire, wounding two gunners, the forward elements of the 2nd Battalion, immobilized in the dangerous, open ground, were able to reach the embankment under the excellent covering fire of the units on the north bank of the Jagst.

Farther down the river, Co. F was also receiving heavy fire from high ground to their front and right flank. Some excellent artillery shrapnel

bullet firing by mortarmen of Co. H, aided by unusually good observation from positions on high ground north of the river, did much to lessen this enemy resistance.

In the meanwhile, Capt. Einsmann, searching for a safer crossing site for the remaining battalion elements, discovered a dam a short distance upstream. Raising the head-gates of the dam, he lowered the water level sufficiently in a few minutes for the troops to infiltrate across to the southern bank. The heavy machine guns of Co. H were left in position until the last moment to give covering fire to the troops negotiating the open field in front of the embankment. When the machine guns were taken across, the mortars of Co. H kept the enemy down with intense, accurate fire. In this way, the 2nd Battalion crossed the Jagst with a minimum of casualties and made their way to the comparative safety of the railroad embankment, although snipers were still active.

By 1030 hours of 6 April, all elements of the battalion were in position to resume the attack. Co. F, however, found it impossible to advance because of intense enemy fire on the open field which lead to Jagstfeld. The Jerries covered the field with machine gun fire from positions in a group of railroad cars on a siding, a house in Jagstfeld, only a few hundred yards away, and a hill to the right behind the town.

Co. E reorganized along the railroad track, and moved out in a northeasterly direction along the railroad. Co. G, supported by a section of machine guns from Co. H, jumped off at 1100 and moved across the tracks to the high ground. The enemy withdrew slowly, firing as they retreated to apparently better positions. About 1,000 yards past the tracks, the George Co. men hit the main enemy line, estimated at approximately 150 Krauts supported by at least eight machine guns. A bloody fight, lasting several hours, ensued. The G Co. men, trying to batter their way forward with small arms against an entrenched enemy, lost four killed, three captured, and 27 wounded. Co. H suffered three casualties. The valiant Centurymen took a severe toll of the enemy also, killing 40 Krauts and capturing ten. But the Jerries held, and continued firing with such intensity that we were forced to take cover in the shallow furrows scratched by a clumsy handplow in the thin topsoil of Germany.

Meanwhile, the tanks that had been sent across the Jagst farther east, at Wiessbach, arrived and were thrown into the fight, and after some reorganization the attack was continued. But the enemy was too firmly fixed. One tank was knocked out by a Jerry SP gun, and the remaining tanks were forced to withdraw because of the intense enemy artillery and mortar fire.

Capt. Einsmann, realizing the futility of further offense, ordered his company to withdraw to more tenable positions. Enemy fire on the 3rd Platoon of Co. G, on the right flank, was so severe, however, that despite repeated orders to fall back, they seemed glued to the ground. Seeing the platoons plight, Capt. Einsmann and Sgt. Charley Compton stripped off their field equipment and dashed out to the immobilized platoon to give them courage and inspire them to make a run for their lives. Compton, who became almost a legend in the Division for his exploits, made three trips over the open, ploughed ground, each time carrying wounded back.

At 1900 hours, battalion headquarters radioed to Co. G to proceed to Heuchlingen, some two kilometers to the northeast. An hour later, hungry and almost thoroughly exhausted, what was left of the gallant company marched into the town. Their reward was K-rations for supper.

Co. E already was in Heuchlingen when Co. G arrived. After leaving the crossing site earlier in the afternoon, Co. E had

under cover of the railroad embankment. At this point, the 1st Platoon, led by Lt. Sam Passero, was fired on by automatic weapons. A patrol, sent forward to reconnoiter, reported a number of the weapons dug in on a hill to the right. Observed mortar fire by Co. H scored several direct hits. The mortar men then laid down a smoke screen to protect the Co. E men from enemy observation while moving into Heuchlingen.

Before advancing into the town, Capt. Garahan, the Co. E commander, sent Lt. Pittman and his platoon into the woods on the company's right to clear out any enemy troops threatening their flank. The remainder of Co. E then entered their Heuchlingen where they found a group of American tanks and eight men from the 2nd Battalion Anti-Tank Platoon. The Shermans, together with the Anti-Tankers had crossed the Jagst at Wiessbach and had cleared the town. Co. E remained in Heuchlingen for the night.

Lt. Pittman's platoon, meanwhile, after clearing the woods, was cut off by the enemy who had set up a strong defense line on high ground between the platoon and the Co. E men in Heuchlingen. With the help of a smoke screen laid by the mortars of Co. H, however, he was able to fight his way across the river through intense enemy fire, and arrive in Duttenberg safely. The platoon joined the rest of the company in Heuchlingen the next morning.

Co. F, after having failed to advance across the open ground before Jagstfeld, made a second attempt to reach their objectives later in the afternoon. This time the company was more successful, and after knocking out an enemy machine gun which had been threatening the entire field, took three houses on the outskirts of Jagstfeld, where they paused for the night.

About 0300 the following morning, an 18-man Jerry patrol raided the company's positions. One heavy machine gun of Co. H was knocked out by a direct shot down the muzzle, but after a lively firefight, the enemy was forced to withdraw. The Germans could be seen in the dark carrying their dead and wounded with them as they withdrew through the rubble. At daybreak one dead Kraut was found lying in the street.

At 0600 of 7 April, Battalion radioed Co. F to proceed into Jagstfeld and clean out the town. The company was then to move to the blown bridge site between Jagstfeld and Bad Wimpfen on the Neckar, and secure this point so that the engineers could throw a Bailey bridge across the river. Lt. Adams sent his 3rd Platoon, under command of Lt. William Kantor, into the town.

Kantor made good progress and Lt. Adams ordered Lt. Joseph Ward, leader of the 1st Platoon, to proceed into Jagstfeld by a different street and meet Lt. Kantor and his men. Lt. Ward's platoon had not gone far before they met strong opposition from enemy located in houses and a small, concrete pillbox which barred the platoon's path across an open field. Three rounds from a bazooka, however, drove 12 SS troopers from the pillbox into the open with their hands above their heads. The two platoons then made contact and continued toward the blown bridge site. Just as they started forward they received fire from houses to their left, but with the aid of the section of Co. H machine guns which accompanied them, soon silenced the enemy fire.

The platoons moved forward once more. They were having considerable difficulty with a house in which some Jerries were holed up, when they were joined by several tanks which had crossed the Jagst at Wiessbach. One of the Shermans blasted the house with one well-aimed shot, and the advance continued.

On this same morning, Co. E had been sent

to assist Co. F in the capture of Jagstfeld. Easy Co. encountered only sniper resistance, a commo. to the excellent work done by G Co. the day before.

Co. G entered Jagstfeld at 1100 hours. Its mission was to clear the houses on the left of the railroad yard, drive hard toward Waldau, and secure the bridge there across the Kocher River, which air reconnaissance had reported intact. Enemy artillery and intense small arms and automatic fire from houses to their front and woods to the left of town, gave the George Co. men considerable trouble. The Krauts defended the Jagstfeld railroad station fiercely, but after a bitter fight in which more than 20 Germans, including the officer in command of the Jagstfeld garrison, were killed, the enemy was forced to flee.

To the south, Co. F continued moving slowly through the factory district at the east end of Jagstfeld. The company sustained heavy casualties in the grim battle from building to building. When the F Co. men finally reached a large pickle factory which afforded perfect field of fire and excellent observation of the large railroad yards from which the main organized resistance was coming, a halt was called for the night.

Encroaching darkness also forced Co. G to consolidate. That evening, many enemy were killed as they attempted to run from the heavy George Co. fire on the buildings on the left of Jagstfeld. In Lt. Lustica's words, "the boys had a field-day picking off those Germans as they ran across that open field." Our artillery afforded valuable support, helping to drive the enemy off the open ground and back into the town of Hagenbach, to the northeast.

At 1800, Co. E, which had been routing out snipers in isolated pockets between Heuchlingen and Jagstfeld, was ordered into Jagstfeld to protect the left flank of the battalion, engaged in fighting through the city. Less the 3rd Platoon, which was left to hold Heuchlingen, Easy Co. moved into Jagstfeld at 2000 hours, relieving one platoon of Co. G of left flank duties.

On the morning of 8 April, the 2nd Platoon of Co. F, with two tanks in support, led the company's push deeper into the factory district of Jagstfeld. Upon reaching the railroad yards after clearing snipers from two large factories, the F Co. men were fired upon by mortars, machine guns and small arms. After a lively fire-fight in which we used thousands of rounds of machine gun, 60mm mortar, and .30 cal. ammunition, the enemy was forced to fall back. Co. H machine guns, set up to fire down the railroad tracks and cut off the Krauts' retreat, mowed the enemy down like wheat. The F Co. men lined up at the windows of the buildings they were in and fired in rotation at the Jerries retreating across the open ground, one man firing until he ran out of ammunition and then stepping aside to let another add to the heap of Krauts lying across the tracks.

S. Sgt. Ray Hatley, mortar observer for Co. H, caused such havoc with mortar fire among the Germans caught in this stretch of open ground that the incident was known to the 2nd Battalion men as "Hatley's Slaughter." The mortars also fired extensively on buildings in the yards which the enemy was using as strongpoints.

One building, infested with snipers, was set on fire with a few Co. F bazooka rounds. The sparks ignited the house next to it and chased the Jerries into the open. For days afterward, the buildings in the railroad yard continued blazing. Despite severe losses, however, the enemy clung tenaciously to his battered positions, and little ground was gained during the day. There is no question but that here was one of the main defense lines of the Third Reich.

That night, a large Co. F outpost had a harrowing experience. The outpost, set up in a building in

to drive the Centurymen from their positions. Co. men lost several killed and many wounded. Kraut fire pierced the walls of their houses and ricocheted around the room. A number of men were hit while asleep in their bedrolls. An attempt to knock out the outpost failed as the men drove off the Jerries with heavy counterfire.

Meanwhile, Co. E, less the platoon which had been left in Heuchlingen, had been attempting to clear out a large patch of woods on the left of Co. G, which had been holding up their advance. Although the area had been raked by an artillery TD preparation, the Easy Co. men had no more than 300 yards into the woods before they were stopped by a flak wagon, rockets, mortars and machine arms. Realizing the futility of attempting to clear the woods with only two platoons in the face of a terrific German defense, Capt. Garahan withdrew his platoons to the north side of Jagstfeld area for artillery fire. Shortly after withdrawing, Capt. Garahan slipped on a stairway, injuring himself and Lt. Keddie took command of the company.

At 1500 of 8 April, a second attempt was made to clear the woods. When the platoons had advanced some 600 yards, a patrol was sent to the contact Co. G, and another patrol was sent to reconnoiter the woods on the Easy Co. flank. A patrol dispatched to the right, met the left platoon of Co. G which had been held up in an effort to clear the woods in their sector. The patrol which had been sent to the right, however, was fired upon by machine guns and some small arms, and was forced back to the company. Mortar fire now began on the Easy Co. men again, and Lt. Keddie withdrew his platoons once more to the houses on the north side of Jagstfeld where he set up a defense line for the night.

The dogged resistance that had been encountered by Cos. F and E, also faced G Co., and the fighting in Jagstfeld became, like Heilbronn to the south, a house-to-house battle. While the 2nd Battalion troops were not gaining much ground, the Jerries were taking a heavy toll of the enemy. On the night of 8 and 9 April, the battalion, supported by machine guns and mortars of Co. H, tried to break through the white as he counterattacked and withdrew, or was forced to fight it out. In effect, Jagstfeld was a war of attrition with no quarter asked and none given.

Then, on the night of 9 April, a terrific explosion in the vicinity of Waldau told the Centurymen that the enemy had destroyed the remaining bridge over the Kocher River. Obviously, a crossing would have to be made in the face of the entrenched enemy. Dreams of walking across the Kocher were disintegrated with the blast. But it was almost too much to hope that they would repeat the error he made at Remagen on the Rhine. There is no concrete highway to vi-

The next day, 10 April, enemy mortar fire continued to fall in the railroad yard, but it seemed to come from the north side of the town. Air reconnaissance confirmed the fact that the bridge at Waldau had been destroyed and that the enemy had withdrawn to the town of Kochendorf on the south side of the river. The Jerries seemed to have abandoned Jagstfeld.

Since the bridge was now destroyed and there was a strong possibility that Co. F could not be able to establish a crossing site there, especially if the enemy held Kochendorf in strength, a crossing was sent to Hagenbach, 1,000 yards north of Waldau. Easy Co. was to take the town, and reconnoiter for a possible crossing site at that point. A patrol reaching the outskirts of Hagenbach, a platoon was sent into the town. They had just reached the town when a machine gun opened fire on them from a knoll on their left near the river. After an en-

noiter for a possible crossing site. None id, however, and the patrols returned to where the company spent the night.

quiet night, F Co. pushed out of Jagstfeld ng of 11 April and moved toward their ctive, the town of Waldau. Supported and two TDs, the company advanced to edge of the Kocher River town. An ppoint was smashed by the TDs and a d roadblock was cleared by the Battal- toon, after which F Co. entered Waldau ed a defense.

rols were dispatched to reconnoiter the r possible crossing sites. Both patrols ire. One group, however, found a foot- s the canal just before the river, and a o cross the Kocher if the enemy could om the area.

he 2nd Battalion 398th was occupied at e 1st Battalion of that regiment was northeast, on the 2nd Battalion's right. ternoon of 3 April, the 1st Battalion had 3rd Battalion 255th Infantry, 63rd Divi- Neckar River town of Bad Wimpfen.

ained in Bad Wimpfen while the 2nd ssed the Neckar and Jagst. During the g patrols, reinforced by TDs and tanks, r Eisesheim and Ober Eisesheim, south . Platoons from Co. C 398th were placed hese towns, as well as in Hohenstadt, . Wimpfen, and armor was brought into he west bank of the Neckar to pour fire n of Neckarsulm.

lose to midnight on 6 April, Tec. 5 Mallam and Pfc. Merrill C. Newren, ry Message Center drivers, were called ver Operations Instruction No. 33 to the 1. Forced to abandon their vehicle and ir mission on foot, the two men arrived ttalion CP at 0045, 7 April.

33 ordered the battalion to proceed on t delay to an assembly area across the bergriesheim and attack at 0800 across 0500, the 1st Battalion moved north out pfen on the curving narrow road past the swimming pool that had given Bad s name and pre-war reputation as a e flat strip of bottom land along the utiful Neckar. In the dim light of dawn, t with Cos. B, C, A, D, and Hq. in order, river in single file over the same foot- by the 2nd Battalion several days ear- ttalion's vehicles crossed the Neckar 1, at Neckarelz.

urs later, the battalion was closing into eim, only 200 yards northwest of n, where Cos. E and G were spending the rattling across the Jagst the day before. e 1st Battalion had forded the Jagst and t attack southeast from Untergriesheim eim on the Kocher River.

o. B on the left, Cos. B and C advanced 63rd Division sector to the northern open, gently rising hill. Upon attempting er the crest of this obstacle, Co. C was y artillery, mortar, MG, and small arms hind the hill and a lesser one to the right. ng along a draw to the left of the open hill tense fire from its direct front and a to its left.

ry, TD and tank fire was placed on the ons, and at 1500 of 7 April, the two resumed their drive. Once again, how- vere stopped cold by heavy mortar and

assault companies by the planes due to closeness of our troops to the enemy.

At 1900, Co. C sent the 1st and 2nd Platoons into a draw around the hill to their right while the remainder of the company covered their advance. The platoons had advanced only a few hundred yards, when they were stopped by intense small arms fire. After an artillery preparation on these enemy positions, five light tanks of Co. D 781st Tank Battalion formed to support the assault.

The tanks passed through the line of infantrymen, and drove on ahead, around the right side of the hill. The riflemen, reluctant to follow, due to the heavy machine gun and small arms fire coming from the top of the hill and from other enemy positions in the rolling open ground to the front, stayed in their positions of comparative safety until Pfc. Mike Colalillo, a rifleman in the 2nd Platoon of Co. C, jumped to his feet, and with a shout for his buddies to follow, charged out in the open behind one of the tanks. Inspired by his example, two or three of the men followed him, then a few more, then the whole company.

Using one of the tanks as protection, Colalillo ran toward the enemy positions, firing his grease gun until a shell fragment hit the gun in his hands and rendered it useless. Spotting the light .30 cal. machine gun mounted on the tank he was following, Colalillo clambered to the turret and, carefully asking the permission of the tank commander first, began returning the whizzing enemy fire from his exposed position. As the tank passed around the hill, the target of every Kraut in the vicinity, Colalillo turned his fire on the machine gun nest at the crest, knocking it out and wounding at least ten men.

Still astride the tank, despite the artillery which was coming closer and closer to hitting it, Colalillo peppered a haystack in the draw behind the hill, silencing the enemy fire from that spot and killing an SS lieutenant. Not pausing in his fire, Colalillo concentrated on a machine gun dug in a few yards behind the haystack, definitely spiking it, killing three of the Germans in the dugout, and wounding several who jumped up and began to run in the face of his fire.

Then the machine gun jammed. Trying desperately to repair it without success, Colalillo borrowed a submachine gun from one of the tankers, and jumping down from the turret advanced on foot. Less than five minutes later, the tanks, having run out of ammunition, were forced to withdraw. The company drew back, and Colalillo halted his one-man assault. Drawing back with the company, Colalillo noticed Sgt. John McEvoy, a squad leader in his platoon, trying to crawl to the rear with severe leg wounds. Staying out in the open a few minutes longer, despite the intense artillery and mortar fire, Colalillo dashed to the side of the wounded man and helped him back to the safety of the company's holes.

For this stirring action, Pfc. Mike Colalillo was awarded the third medal of Honor won by a soldier of the Century.

While Colalillo was waging his one-man attack, S. Sgt. Loma M. Hash, a squad leader, lost his life in a similar action. Also one of the first to leave his hole and charge after the tanks, Sgt. Hash, firing as he ran, became separated from the rest of the company. Alternately running and crawling up the western slope of the hill where the enemy was dug in, Sgt. Hash attacked a machine gun nest, throwing a grenade into enemy position, and dashing in to finish the job with his rifle. Three enemy were killed and the gun neutralized before Hash turned his attention elsewhere.

suddenly picked up two discarded weapons and began to fire on the C Co. men. Hash promptly killed the two Krauts, turning, advanced single-handedly, firing into every hole he could find and killing an uncounted number of Jerries.

By this time, he had become the target of intense small arms fire. Refusing to take cover, Hash was finally hit in the leg. As he stumbled forward on the side of the bare hill, he was hit several more times. He died within a few seconds.

The two C Co. platoons had advanced to within 75 yards of Willenbach Farms, where German mortar positions were located, when the tanks ran out of ammunition. Left in an exposed position without tank support, the C Co. men might well have been annihilated were it not for the gallant self-sacrifice of Century men such as Lt. Frank Reinhart, Lt. Noel Felix, S. Sgt. Herman Block, and S. Sgt. Charles Earle. Lt. Reinhart deliberately exposed himself to enemy fire, in order to direct covering fire of his mortar and machine gun sections, until he was killed. Lt. Felix, Sgt. Block, and Sgt. Earle heroically stood their ground while the enemy counter-attacked the withdrawing C Co. Platoons, pumping lead into the advancing Krauts until they were overrun by the Jerries.

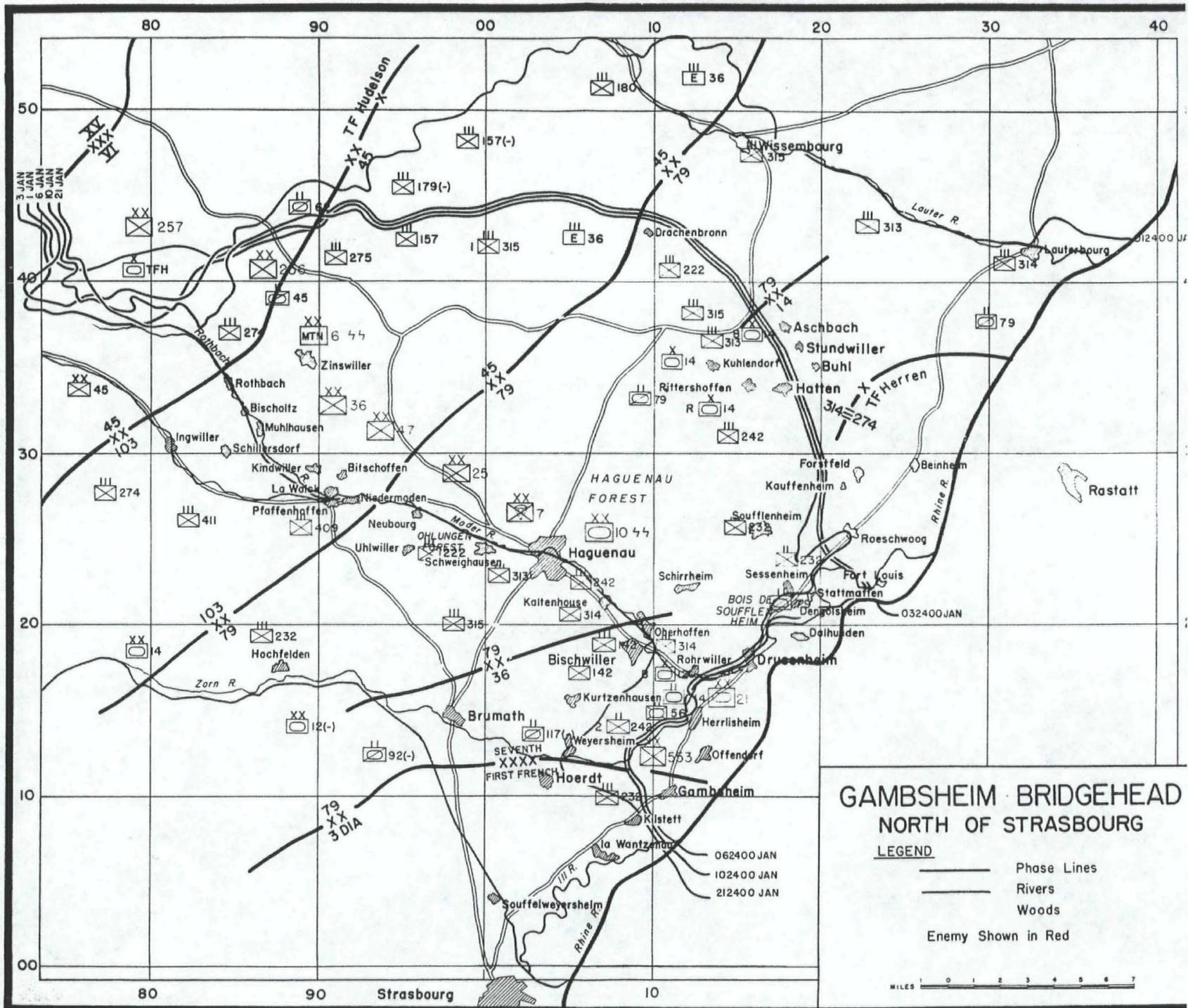
Co. C finally succeeded informing a defense line behind the hill, where they spent the night. Co. A, in reserve up to this time, now moved up on the right of Co. C, where it was feared the Germans might attempt to counterattack.

Cos. A and B jumped off the next morning, 8 April, at 0545, while Co. C remained in reserve. They were met with heavy mortar, artillery and small arms fire. The light tanks and the TDs moved out to join the fight, but after a fierce battle, characterized by small arms duels at distances of 50 to 100 yards, the assault companies were forced to return to their original positions. During this bitter action, feats of heroism by the A and B Co. doughfeet came thick and fast. Tec. 5 Johnson, a rifleman of Co. A, single-handedly charged a machine gun nest which had been putting heavy pressure on our troops, wiping out all four members of the enemy crew. Pfc. Francis Crowley, a B Co. machine gunner, voluntarily lead a group of litter bearers 500 yards in front of our lines to evacuate some casualties. He made two such trips under heavy fire.

For the rest of the day, and all of 9 and 10 April, there was little activity. Having forced the enemy to reveal his positions in meeting the hard-driving attacks of our infantry, we were now in a position to lay back while pounding him with artillery—and pound him we did, blasting his forward and rear elements with devastating artillery, mortar and cannon fire. Heavy MGs from Co. D performed indirect fire missions, spraying the Kraut forward lines and forcing the German infantry to remain in their positions while our artillery smashed them to pieces.

At 0530, 11 April, a patrol from Co. B picked up a PW who claimed that his battalion had withdrawn across the Kocher River. Acting immediately, patrols were dispatched to contact the enemy. Three hours later, orders were received from Lt. Col. Robert M. Williams, regimental commander, instructing all 1st Battalion elements to move forward and seize positions on the Kocher River, securing all crossings sites which could be found.

Before the enemy knew what was happening, Co. C, advancing with other units under cover of our artillery, was digging in along the river bank. Once the Germans spotted our troops, they opened up with small arms, MGs, 20mm, artillery and SP guns. But



**George Adams**

---

**From:** George Adams [dadams1@san.rr.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 28, 2005 4:58 PM  
**To:** 'Logan Jenkins (logan.jenkins@uniontrib.com)'  
**Subject:** Hello  
**Contacts:** Logan Jenkins

Logan:

Thanks for sharing the beautiful story of Renee's parents and their trials during the Third Reich's 1940 invasion of the Netherlands. We all need reminders of our past and the history of the Engel's journeys should never be forgotten.

Ironically, my 85 year old uncle called this week requesting a summary of my deceased father's WW 11 service history. In a one hour conversation we retraced his tour of duty during the Western Front campaign in Europe. He entered combat as 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant with the 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry (7<sup>th</sup> Army) in the Alsace area of France in October, 1944. The 398<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment was transported into the Vosges Mountains in NE France with the task of regaining control of the Maginot Line fortifications which were under German occupation. The resulting 185 days of continuous fighting by the Century Division in severe winter weather resulted in the loss of 916 KIA, 180 MIA and 3656 wounded out of a total of 13,688 soldiers. Many of the Regiment's Companies, including my father's, often experienced losses approaching 100%. Dad was field appointed to the rank of Captain in April, 1945 while in Germany.

The result of these valiant efforts includes retaking the Maginot Line and a march into Germany toward Berlin as the war ended. On 1/10/45 my father was awarded the Bronze Star for tactical leadership and battleship strategy while under hostile fire in the vicinity of Reysersviller, France. On 3/15/45 he was awarded the Silver Star for bravery under hostile fire while taking a strategic position known as Fort Schiesseck along the Maginot Line. Both battles and the campaign were near the town of Bitche, France. As a result, the valiant men of the 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry were often referred to as the "Sons of Bitche".

In an effort to honor these brave men Debbie and I, along with my cousin Jim Parrott, visited this area (including actual battlefields) in 1999. We'll share these memories over a beer some day. During this trip we spent several hours in the Nazi concentration camp known as Natzwiller Struthof located about 30 miles SW of Strasburg. Here we realized the horror of genocide and the massive crimes committed against mankind. The world must never forget this oppression and never allow it to happen again.

Thanks again for sharing the Engle story and give Renee a hug, George

George Adams  
**ADAMS DEVCO**  
(858) 454-7555

*George Adams*  
Part B

HEADQUARTERS SEVENTH ARMY  
WESTERN MILITARY DISTRICT  
APO 758 US Army

GENERAL ORDERS  
No. 585

October 6, 1945

EXTRACT

III—AWARD OF THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS. By direction of the President, under the provisions of Army Regulations 600-45 September 22, 1943 as amended the Distinguished Service Cross is awarded by the Army Commander to the following named individual:

*Second Lt. Herbert S. Verrill*, 0552113, Infantry, Company E, 398th Infantry Regiment, for extraordinary heroism in action on March 15, 1945 in the vicinity of Reyersville, France. During an attack upon strong enemy fortifications, Lieutenant Verrill was leading his platoon under intense automatic weapon fire through hostile mines and barbed wire when he detonated a mine which blew off his foot. He retained his senses and issued clear and concise orders to his men to extricate themselves from the minefield. Then by arm and hand signals he directed the continuation of the attack. The indomitable courage and resolution which he displayed prevented confusion and consequent casualties among the men, and made possible the capture of the objective. Entered military service from Westbrook, Maine.

BY COMMAND OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL KEYES:

JOHN M. WILLEMS,  
*Brigadier General, GSC,*  
*Chief of Staff*

3. POSTHUMOUS AWARD OF SILVER STAR MEDAL

Adams, Earl L., Pfc Co B	Meaney, John C., Jr., 1st Lt Co C
Albright, John M., 1st Lt Co I	Medaglia, Peter A., Pvt Co H
Arheit, Frederick J., Jr., Pfc Co K	Medvin, Ellis, T/5 M.D.
Austin, Sherburne C., Pfc Co A	Miller, Robert E., Pfc Co C
Baeschlin, Sidney J., Pfc Co L	Mole, Samuel A., T/5 M.D.
Bruno, Anthony C., S/Sgt Co I	Montie, Jay V., Pvt Co C
Cohen, Hyman, Sgt Co I	Moon, Allen L., Sgt Co H
Clyburn, Clifford J., Pfc Co G	Napier, Robert L., Pfc Co M
Cook, Robert C., 1st Lt Co B	Ngor, Lew N., Pfc Co L
Curtis, Paige K., Pfc Co M	Plagge, Leland H., Pfc Co A
Dolphin, Howard F., Pfc Co G	Reinhard, Clarence C., Pvt Co C
Doran, Harold H., S/Sgt Co L	Reinhart, Frank M., 2nd Lt Co C
Fletcher, Arthur L., Pfc Co I	Ribinsky, Michael M., Pfc Co I
Folds, William M., Jr., Pfc Co A	Rosenberg, Samuel L., 2nd Lt Co I
Funari, Robert, Jr., Pfc Co L	Rosenberg, Sidney G., Pfc Co K
Glass, Richard, Pfc Co G	Schaeffer, Matthew W., S/Sgt Co H
Goodrich, Charles S., Pvt Co A	Seijo, Victor M., Pfc Co L
Grakus, Frank J., T/Sgt Co B	Spinelli, Dominic V., Pfc M.D.
Hochevar, Henry F., Pfc Co G	Taber, Alvadis, Jr., Sgt Co A
Hosse, Robert, T/Sgt Co H	Tyree, Samuel J., T/5 M.D.
Hunger, Irving, T/4 M.D.	Vranisky, Joseph P., Pfc Co H
Kearfott, John L., Pfc Co L	Wharton, James A., Pfc Co F
Lynch, John J., 2nd Lt Co B	Whitten, Clettus V., Pfc Co A
McInerney, Martin T., Pfc Co A	Wilkins, George, 2nd Lt Hq 3d Bn
Williams, Walter S., Jr., 2nd Lt Co L	

4. SILVER STAR MEDAL, MIA

Cook, Raymond W., Pvt Co C	McLean, Russell T., Pfc Co G
DePiazza, Frank V., Pfc Co G	Milano, Felix J., Pfc Co D
Dutko, Stephen J., T/Sgt Co K	Smith, Griffin D., S/Sgt Co C
Glass, Richard, Pfc Co G	Smith, John P., Pfc Co B
Holmes, John R., Capt Co C	Smith, Robert R., Pfc Co B
Ihrig, Theodore M., S/Sgt Co C	Streiff, Jr., Thomas R., Pfc Co C
Trutter, Edward H., Sgt Co K	

5. SILVER STAR MEDAL

Adams, George H., 1st Lt Co F	Campbell, Albert, 1st Lt Co K
Ahlers, Richard D., Sgt Co L	Carlucci, Victor A., Pfc M.D.
Allen, Arthur P., 1st Lt Co F	Cavanaugh, Edward J., S/Sgt Co E
Annicchiarico, Michael J., Pvt M.D.	Chaty, Raymond P., Sgt Co G
Bailey, Francis J., Jr., Pfc Co B	Chekittis, Bruno, S/Sgt Co E
Baker, Floyd W., Sgt Co L	Clark, Joseph, S/Sgt Co L
Barley, Lewis M., Pfc M.D.	Colalillo, Mike, Pfc Co C
Barry, John J., III, Pfc M.D.	Crow, James E., Sgt Co C
Bietz, Charles W., 2nd Lt Co F	Crowley, John A., S/Sgt Co G
Birchall, William R., S/Sgt Co F	Daigle, Allen J., S/Sgt AT Co
Bissell, William C. M., Sgt Co E	Daly, Paul G., Lt Col 398th Inf Hq
Boling, Archie E., T/Sgt Co I	Deck, Alfred E., Pfc Co H
Bowen, Austin C., Pfc Co E	DeForge, Henry F., Pfc M.D.
Bowen, Elba W., Capt Hq 2nd Bn	Dixon, David W., 2nd Lt Co I
Bradley, Zorro A., Pfc Co K	Drumm, James M., T/Sgt Co E
Brinkerhoff, Robert E., Capt Co L	Duncan, Robert M., Pfc Co E
Brown, James J., Pfc Co L	Eckles, Ralph B., Pfc Cn Co
Browning, Lyda, S/Sgt Co B	Edwards, John T., Sgt Co A
Byrd, James E., 2nd Lt Co E	Einsmann, Matthew B., Capt Co G
Cain, Lloyd R., Sgt Co E	Elledge, Kirg D., Pfc Co I

## 9. BRONZE STAR MEDAL, MIA

Accomando, James J., Pfc Hq 2nd Bn  
 Amtmann, Richard J., Pfc Co K  
 Breish, John W., T/Sgt Co K  
 Danieluk, John J., Sgt Co D  
 Deem, James E., Pfc Co K  
 Girard, Aldor J., Pfc Co K  
 Hastings, Jimmie, Pfc Co K  
 Holmes, John R., Capt Co C  
 Kittelson, Orris E., Pfc Co L

Loehding, Ben F., Sgt Co C  
 Minnon, Mike J., S/Sgt Co G  
 Montgomery, Edward, Pfc Co G  
 Peterson, William G., Pfc Co G  
 Ring, Wallace W., S/Sgt Co K  
 Sevigny, Gerard A., Pfc Co B  
 Telbert, Garnet D., S/Sgt Co L  
 Wagner, Edward J., Pfc Co K  
 Willis, Robert W., Pfc Co L

## 10. POSTHUMOUS AWARD OF BRONZE STAR MEDAL

Adams, Earl L., Pfc Co B  
 Anderson, Leorne W., Pfc Co G  
 Ashton, Roger S., Pfc Co F  
 Atkinson, Lonzo, Sgt Co C  
 Borjon, Charles, Pvt Co L  
 Buck, Jr., Jacob L., Pfc Co C  
 Burrola, Frank M., Pfc Co M  
 Chesney, Robert E., Pfc Co K  
 Coffey, James C., Pfc Co G  
 Danner, Edward G., 2nd Lt Co G  
 Devereaux, John J., Pfc Co I  
 Dillon, John J., Pfc Co G  
 Dougherty, James E., Pfc Co M  
 Downey, John H., Pfc Co K  
 Ethridge, Jack A., Pfc Co C  
 Ferguson, John D., Pfc Co D  
 Friebel, Leo R., Pfc Co A  
 Gallup, Francis M., T/4 M.D.  
 Gifford, Robert E., Pfc Co K  
 Gilmour, William R., Sgt Co L  
 Gray, Chester B., 1st Lt Co M  
 Hatfield, Ellis H., Pfc Co L  
 Hoffman, Edward M., Sgt Co B  
 Igo, Vernon L., Pfc Co L  
 Zahner, Raymond F., S/Sgt Co C

Jempelis, John, Pfc Co G  
 Johnson, Edwin E., Sgt Co A  
 King, Frederick C., Pfc Co C  
 Koelenbeek, Daniel R., Pfc Co C  
 Lloyd, Richard J., Pfc Co I  
 Lutz, George E., Cpl Co L  
 Manis, Miller K., Pfc Co L  
 Manosh, Robert F., Pfc Co B  
 McFadden, Charles, 2nd Lt Hq Co  
 Merrick, Paul H., 2nd Lt Co C  
 Moody II, Edward R., 1st Lt Co K  
 Morgan, Albert R., Pfc Co C  
 Poor, Clarence R., Pfc Co G  
 Riddle, John C., Pvt Co H  
 Roberts, Ralph L., Pfc Co B  
 Smith, David H., Sgt Co I  
 Stephens, Marvin L., Pvt Co L  
 Thompson, Oscar, S/Sgt Co C  
 Treiman, Carl, Pfc AT Co  
 Turnage, W. H., Pfc Co I  
 Wachter, Henry N., S/Sgt Co C  
 Waggoner, Joe A., Pfc Co E  
 Wharton, James A., Pfc Co F  
 Wortman, Lloyd T., Pfc Co C

## 11. BRONZE STAR MEDAL

Abert, Edward R., T/4 Co D  
 Adams, George H., 1st Lt Co F  
 Adams, Henry C., Jr., S/Sgt Co G  
 Alfonso, John G., Pfc Co C  
 Alberty, William C., Pfc Co L  
 Alfonsi, Joseph P., Pfc Co B  
 Aliberti, Umberto J., Pfc Co H  
 Allburn, Jr., James N., Pfc Co A  
 Allen, Guy P., CWO Sv Co  
 Allen, Hubert A., Pfc Co G  
 Allen, Leo G., T/4 Hq 1st Bn  
 Alleva, Nicholas A., Pfc Co D  
 Allred, Calvin H., Pfc Co I  
 Altland, Joseph C., Pfc Hq Co  
 Ammirato, Ernest F., Pfc Co I  
 Amos, Robert T., Jr., 1st Lt Hq 2nd Bn  
 Amszynski, George A., S/Sgt Co B  
 Amtower, Leslie C., Sgt Co K

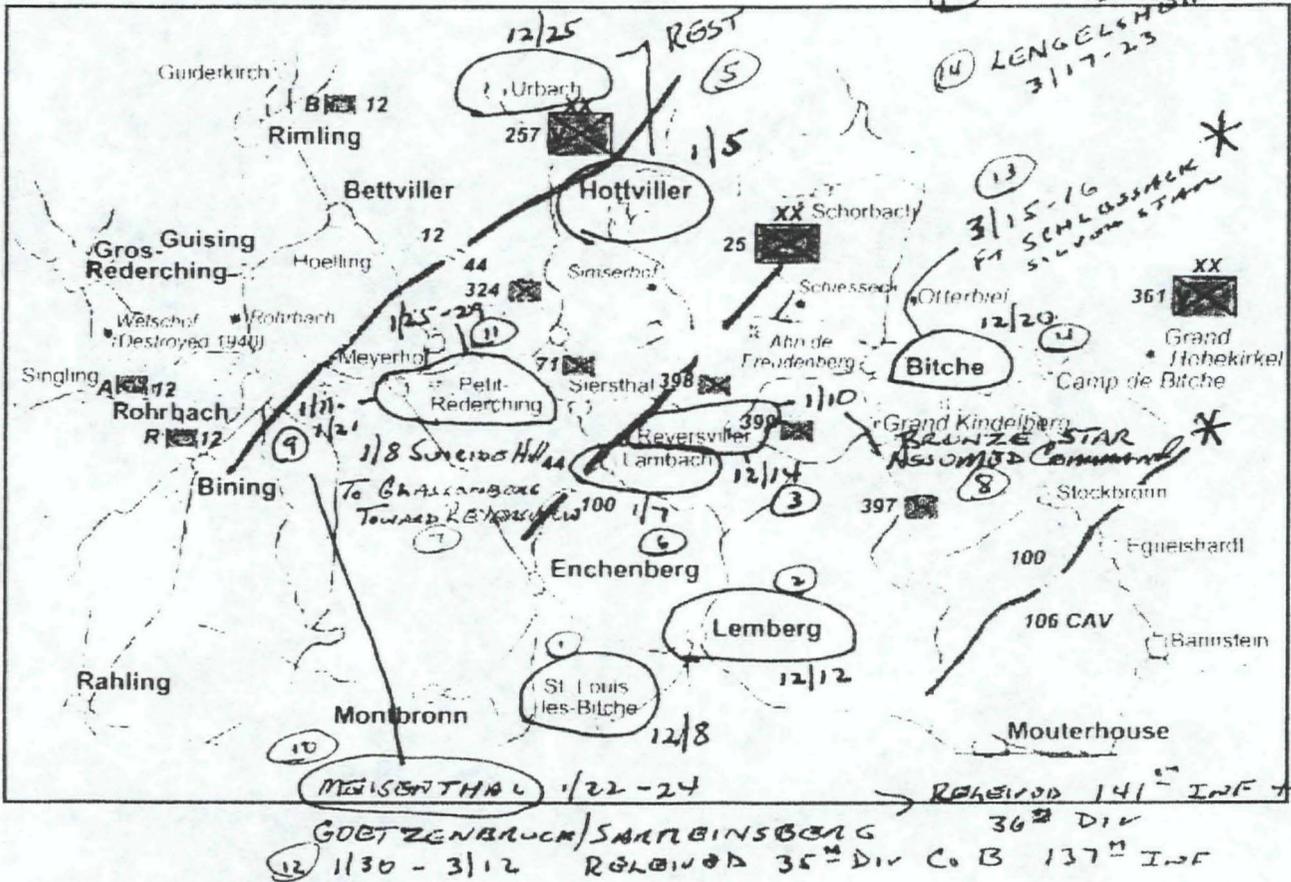
Anderson, DeWayne M., S/Sgt Co I  
 Anderson, Earl J., T/Sgt Co E  
 Anderson, Edward K., Pfc Hq Co 1st Bn  
 Anderson, Joseph H., 1st Lt Co M  
 Andress, Lawrence E., Sgt Cn Co  
 Andrzejak, Raymond L., T/4 Hq Co  
 Angelone, Angelo J., S/Sgt Co L  
 Annicchiarico, Michael J., Pfc M.D.  
 Annunziato, Frank M., S/Sgt Co F  
 Anselmo, Albert P., Pfc Co E  
 Ansley, Samuel H., Pfc Hq 2nd Bn  
 Apple, Jr., Orange F., T/3 M.D.  
 Applemann, John D., Pfc Co D  
 Arakelian, Garabed, Pfc M.D.  
 Arbegast, Harry W., 2nd Lt Co M  
 Arendt, Theodore E., T/Sgt Hq Co 2nd Bn  
 Armstrong, James D., Pfc Co F  
 Armstrong, Jr., Lewis C., Pfc M.D.

Armstrong, Oran R., Cpl Cn Co  
 Armstrong, Robert L., T/Sgt Co I  
 Arnett, Ralph F., Pfc Cn Co  
 Aschoff, Carl R., 1st Lt M.D.  
 Ashford, Leonard, S/Sgt Co M  
 Ashworth, Willie, Pfc Co K  
 Augello, Joseph A., S/Sgt Co D  
 Austin, Norwood K., Pfc Co M  
 Babbitt, Richard, Pfc M.D.  
 Bailey, Charles H., Pfc Co B  
 Bailey, Crawford M., Pfc Co A  
 Bailey, Francis J., Jr., Pfc Co B  
 Bailey, George V., S/Sgt Co F  
 Baird, John A., M/Sgt Sv Co  
 Baker, Jr., Charles M., S/Sgt Co B  
 Baker, Floyd W., S/Sgt Co L  
 Baker, George F., T/Sgt Co L  
 Baker, Walter L., 1st Lt Hq 3rd Bn  
 Ball, Marvin L., Sgt Co C  
 Bamesberger, Fred F., T/4 Co B  
 Barasch, Norman, 1st Lt Sv Co  
 Barb, Ralph J., Pfc M.D.  
 Barber, Orville, Pfc Co A  
 Barg, Francis E., Pfc Co C  
 Barlow, Luther B., Pfc Co A  
 Barner, Maxwell R., Sgt Co K  
 Barnes, James A., Pfc Hq 3rd Bn  
 Barnes, Warren A., Pvt Co D  
 Barnett, Sheldon M., Pfc Hq 1st Bn  
 Barnhart, William R., S/Sgt Co K  
 Baron Jr., Joseph R., Pfc Hq 3rd Bn  
 Baron, Nick M., Pvt Co K  
 Barrows, Francis W., Sgt Hq 3rd Bn  
 Barys, Frank J., S/Sgt Co E  
 Basanda, Raymond G., Pfc Co E  
 Batchelor, Stephen D., Tec 4 Hq 3rd Bn  
 Bates, Theodore H., Pfc Co I  
 Baxter, George I., Pfc Co B  
 Bayard, Theodore D., Pfc Co L  
 Beadling Wesley H., Pfc Co M  
 Beale, Barkley D., Sgt Co G  
 Beard, Lawson R., 1st Lt Hq 1st Bn  
 Beaudoin, Euclid P., 2nd Lt  
 Beaven, Robert P., 1st Lt AT Co  
 Beekman, John J., S/Sgt Co F  
 Beemer, Roy D., Sgt Co E  
 Belden, Jean P., Pfc Co G  
 Bell, Philip F., Pfc Co G  
 Belland, Francis H., Pfc Co G  
 Bellows, Clarence H., Pfc Hq 1st Bn  
 Bender, John R., Pfc Co A  
 Benjamin, Theodore S., S/Sgt Co K  
 Benke, Robert F., T/Sgt Co G  
 Bennett, Edward M., T/5 Co L  
 Bennis, Christopher J., Pfc Co H  
 Benton, James G., Pfc Co H  
 Berry, James F., S/Sgt  
 Berry, Paul E., S/Sgt Hq Co 2nd Bn  
 Berry, Uland, S/Sgt Co D  
 Bibb, Robert B., 2nd Lt At Co  
 Bielaczy, Theodore C., T/Sgt Co M

Bietz, Charles W., 2nd Lt Co F  
 Billings, Ernest E., Pfc Co D  
 Bills, Danny H., Pfc Co D  
 Binkley, John W., Pfc Co B  
 Bindel, Jerome E., Pfc Co M  
 Bisaantz, Harold B., Pfc Co H  
 Bisson, Leopold, Pfc Hq Co 2nd Bn  
 Bjornholt, Rueben E., Cpl Serv Co  
 Black, Herman E., S/Sgt Co C  
 Blaha, Robert J., 1st Lt Co A  
 Blair, Rufus E., Pfc Co F  
 Bland, Jack L., Sgt Co D  
 Blaney, Henry J., S/Sgt Co A  
 Bledsoe, Joel G., Sgt Co H  
 Bless, Berthram O., Pfc Co F  
 Bloom, Irving, T/Sgt Sv Co  
 Bloom, Theodore, Sgt Co C  
 Blumenfeld, Jacob P., Pfc Co C  
 Blumer, William H., S/Sgt Co B  
 Bogert, Jr., Edmund A., T/Sgt Co L  
 Boling, Archie E., S/Sgt Co I  
 Bolton, Gordon E., Sgt Co C  
 Bolton, Samuel C., Pfc Co G  
 Bomar, Jr., Harry F., Pfc Co I  
 Bonanni, Anthony A., Pfc Co A  
 Bonham, Perry E., Jr., Pfc Co B  
 Book, Herbert W., Pfc Co C  
 Boortz, James W., Pfc Co E  
 Boothey, Lloyd F., Pfc  
 Borgstrom, Kurt V., Pfc Co B  
 Boston, Bernard, Capt Co L  
 Bowen, Elba W., Capt Co H  
 Bowen, John F., S/Sgt Co B  
 Bowers, Eric B., Pfc Co G  
 Bowlds, Louis E., 1st Lt Co D  
 Boyer, Robert E., Co C Co C  
 Brackett, Samuel W., Sgt Co C  
 Bradbury, Francis W., Capt M.D.  
 Bradford, Harold, Jr., Pfc Co A  
 Brainard, Raymond F., Jr., 1st Lt At Co  
 Braman, Oscar R., Pfc Co F  
 Bramley, Robert, Capt Hq  
 Brandon, Richard G., Pfc Co C  
 Brannon, Paul E., 2nd Lt Co L  
 Bratton, Hilton R., Pfc Co L  
 Breeden, Jr., Ernest G., Pfc Co E  
 Brennan, John J., T/5 Hq 2nd Bn  
 Brevard, Jonathan C., Pfc Co D  
 Brocato, John A., Cpl Co D  
 Brock, Doyle L., Pfc Sv Co  
 Brodsky, Stanley, Sgt Co A  
 Brody, John J., T/3 M.D.  
 Brough, Herbert J., Pfc Co L  
 Brown, Jr., Arles O., Sgt Co B  
 Brown, Harold G., AT Co  
 Brown, Walton E., Sgt Co I  
 Brown, William A., Cpl Hq 3d Bn  
 Brown, William J., S/Sgt Co B  
 Brown, William P., Pfc Co B  
 Browning, Lyda, S/Sgt Co B  
 Brucker, Peter, T/4 Co C

# The 100th Infantry Division in Combat

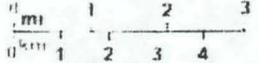
Just point and CLICK on the German units, Rimling, Bitche, and Fort Schiesseck to learn about them, and the battles fought by the 100th from 1 November 1944 to 8 May 1945. <sup>GR</sup>



## ATTACK ON BITCHE DEFENSES

13 - 21 December, 1945

- \* Major Maginot fortifications (petit or gros ouvrages)
- ' Minor Maginot fortifications (casemates or blockhouses;
- direction of point indicates orientation of major weapon system)
- \* Abris d' intervalle



**LEGEND**

- U S U
- U S A
- GERM

### Husband of Local Woman Is Given Bronze Star Medal

Word has been received here that Lt. George H. Adams, husband of the former Miss Hennie Green Wallace of Kinston, has been awarded the Bronze Star Medal "for heroic achievement in action on January 10, 1945, in the vicinity of Reyersviller, France. When the leading platoon of his company was halted by enemy machine-gun fire, Lt. Adams, executive officer, made his way to the top of a nearby hill and called for artillery fire which he accurately adjusted to destroy three hostile emplacements. Then sighting a large German force attempting to outflank his company, he accurately shifted the fire to this new target with such devastating effect that the entire force was routed". Lt. Adams is serving with the Seventh Army on the Western Front. His wife and two children reside in Kinston.

[Back](#)  
[Home](#)

Lionel Humbert  
B.P.44  
F - 54540 BADONVILLER  
**Tel.-Fax** : 03.83.42.10.36

Badonviller, le 21 décembre 1999

**Debbie and George ADAMS**  
**6045 Beaumont Avenue**  
**USA - LA JOLLA CA 92037**

Dear Sir and Madam,

Thank you very much for your letter dated Dec.1st 1999. Of course, I will be honoured to meet you in Raon l'Etape and to show you where the fights happened, in which you father was involved. Vous m'avez écrit que votre père appartenait à la Fox company, sans me préciser dans quel regiment (397, 398, 399). It would be useful for me to know it, in order to look for documents which could help me to personnaliser notre excursion.

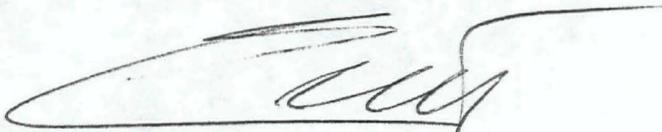
Your father fought around Raon in November, both the other areas where he saw combat (Saverne gap, Wingen, Rimling, Germany) are located approx. 100-110 km north of Raon. Ces areas n'étant pas du tout situées dans ma région, je ne pourrai pas vous aider ou vous accompagner, également for professional reasons...

Par contre, à Raon, j'aurai plaisir à vous aider. Of course, I can reserve you a good hotel which is celui que vous voyez sur la carte postale, on the opposite roed side of the town hall. I can reserve you a comfortable room as far as I know the expected dates from your stay. My father, which is mayor of the town, is always very honoured to welcome vets of the century, presque chaque année.

Bien-sûr, il serait passionnant pour moi de pouvoir "jeter un oeil" (translation is "to have a look" and not "to throw his eye".... french is a strange language anyway !) sur les documents et photos du capitaine Adams, ainsi que sur le livre "Remember when", que je ne connais pas.

En ce qui concerne la famille de "Jules Vache" (are you sure, because you wrote one time "Vache" and one time "Vachy"), je vais tenter de retrouver anybody, but please let me un petit peu de temps pour m'en occuper. I will inform you a.s.a.p.

Best regards, merry christmas and bonne et heureuse année 2000.



Lionel HUMBERT



Typical Vosges forest made cross-country tactical movement difficult; the snow and sub-freezing temperatures of one of the most vicious winters of the 20th-century to that point made it miserable...and a firmly-entrenched enemy made it deadly.



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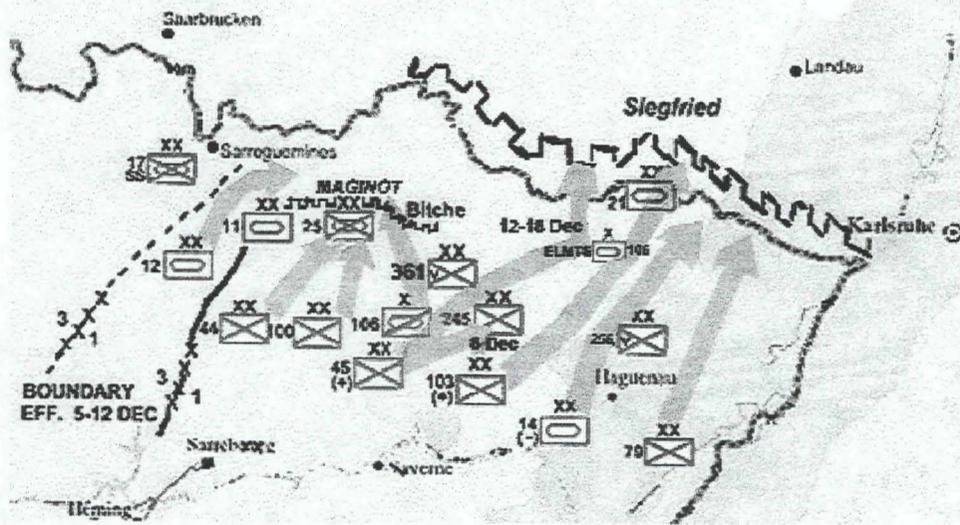


Downtown Raon L'Etape on the day of liberation; the Cross of Lorraine - symbol of Free France - and the "*V pour la Victoire*" garland on the monument to the town's World War I dead say it all.

After practically destroying the freshly-committed *708th Volks-Grenadier Division*, as part of the XV Corps, the Division wheeled north and pursued elements of the German *1st Army* through the Low Vosges, halting only when the initial success of the Germans' Ardennes offensive further north necessitated a strategic halt. Before digging in to consolidate their gains, however, the men of the Division had seized Fort Schiesseck, one of the strongest fortresses of the Maginot Line. Ironically, the fortifications in the area had been attacked unsuccessfully by the German *257th Infantry Division* in June of 1940 - **from the same direction** (south) after their breakthrough in the Saar a few days earlier.

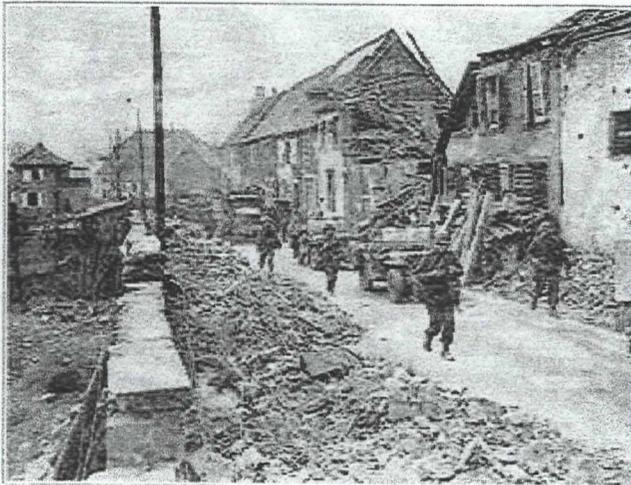
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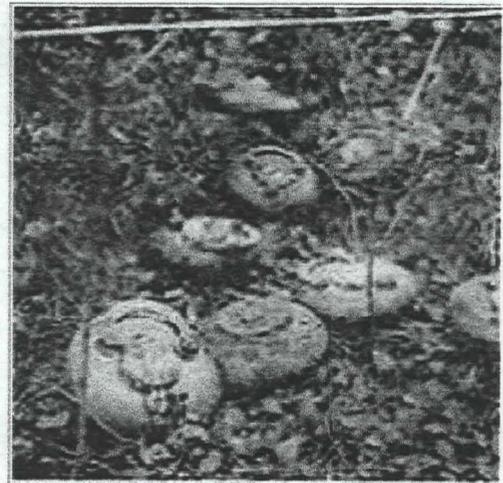


## Pursuit Through the Low Vosges

1 - 20 December 1944



During the pursuit of German *1st Army* units to the Maginot Line, the tenaciously delaying *361st Volks-Grenadier Division* traded terrain for time to prepare stronger defenses to the north. Some towns were strongly defended while others...



....were simply mined or otherwise barred to slow down the *Century Division's* pursuit. It was impossible to tell which was which, so reconnaissance had to be conducted on every piece of defensible terrain, and this in turn slowed the *Division's* pursuit.

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# Battle of Bitche

## Page One



Tired dogfaces at Division rest center.



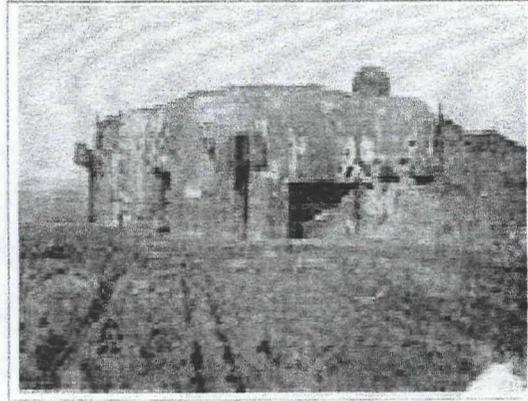
100th on the march.



Tanks and TD's line up along the main street of Lemberg preparatory to moving forward in the drive against Bitche.



In the late autumn of 1944, the German *1st Army* was still far from beaten. This knocked-out, well-camouflaged *Hetzer* tank destroyer and the bodies of its crew bear mute testimony to the tenacity of the German resistance at this stage of the war.

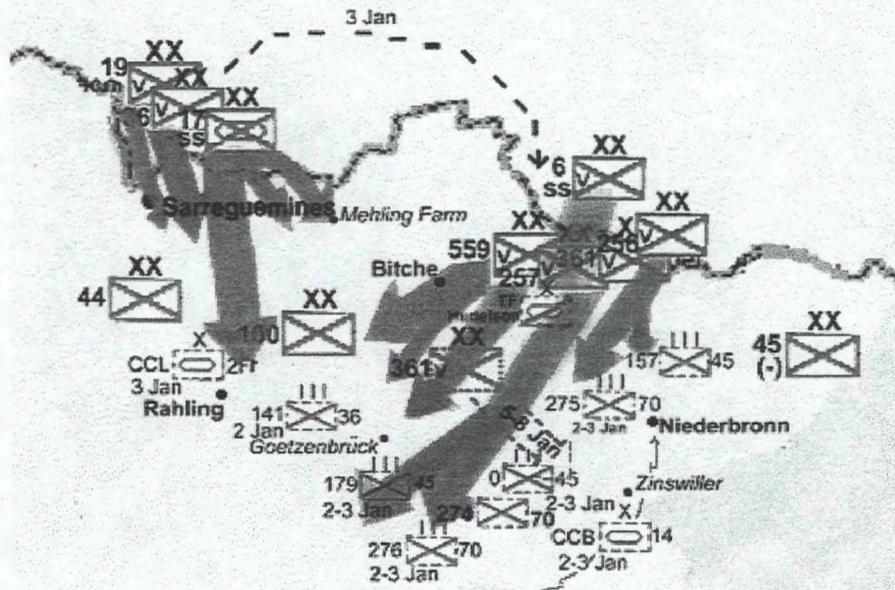


The Germans' skilled delay allowed them to prepare positions in and around the Maginot Line for defense against the 100th Infantry Division's advance. Unlike parts of the line further to the east, the *casemates* (pillboxes) and *ouvrages* (fortresses) of the Ensemble de Bitche were especially suited for all-around defense; these very pillboxes had withstood the German assault - from the same direction (south) during the 1940 campaign, after the German breakthrough in the Saar.

Just before midnight of New Year's Eve, the 100th was attacked by the elements of three German divisions, as *Army Group G* unleashed the last German offensive in the West, Operation NORDWIND. Although the units on both flanks gave way, the 100th held its sector, and fought in three directions simultaneously for almost two weeks. By blunting the repeated attacks of the *17th SS-Panzer Grenadier Division "Götz von Berlichingen"* and the *559th and 257th Volks-Grenadier Divisions*, the 100th was instrumental in foiling the Germans' attempt to break through to the Alsatian Plain, cut off the Seventh Army from the 1st French, and relieve the *19th Army* in the Colmar Pocket.

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## Operation NORDWIND in the Low Vosges

1 - 7 January 1945



During Operation NORDWIND, the last German offensive on the Western Front, three German divisions attempted to encircle and annihilate the 100th Infantry Division. Near Lemberg, on the Division's right, the XC Corps attackers were stopped by the 399th and elements of the 398th Infantry Regiment after three days of ferocious fighting.

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After a brutal four months spent fighting in the depths of a mountain winter, the rolling hills of springtime Germany seemed warm and peaceful...



...but looks could be deceiving. At Heilbronn and, to a lesser extent, other places along the way from Ludwigshafen to Stuttgart, remnants of the German Army stood and fought... until they were destroyed.

(above) Here the remains of a completely destroyed *Jagdpanther* ("Hunting Panther") tank destroyer bears mute testimony to the disintegration of the German Army.



A scratch force of Volkssturm militia, veteran mountain infantry from the *2nd Mountain Division* infantry from the *553d*, and *the 559th Volks-Grenadier Divisions*, and the remnants of other units - backed by considerable quantities of rocket launchers, artillery, and anti-aircraft guns in the direct-fire mode - banded together to defend the city of Heilbronn. Aided by a citizenry animated to great zeal by the mistaken RAF bombing of the city center not long before, the defenders fortified the already highly defensible city on the right bank of the Neckar using hundreds of tons of rubble from the shattered buildings. During a brutal eight-day battle, the 100th wrested this, one of the last remaining German strongholds, from its tenacious defenders, in a house-by-house fight that tested every bit of the experience gained by the Division in its five months of combat to that point.



The rubble-strewn streets of Heilbronn results of an errant RAF night raid aimed at the nearby German rocket-launcher school - provided hundreds of tons of ready building material with which the animated populace constructed bulletproof defensive positions.



A squad gets ready to cross the Neckar into the hell that was Heilbronn, April 1945.

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## 100th Infantry Division for the fortress of Bitche and Heilbronn

By John M. Ross

# “Two Trips to Hell . . .”

For the Centurymen, nothing compared with the battles.

The young lieutenant weighed the situation as his patrol lay flat on the cold wet earth. German machine gun fire fell like hail on the open field ahead. Behind him, the main elements of his battalion were pushing up through the Black Forest, building an all-out attack on the German line.

He pulled his men back to the cover of the woods and ordered them to sight their machine guns on the farmhouse the Germans had turned into a strong point. Belt after belt of ammunition was poured into the building, without results. A bolder plan was needed if the attack was to succeed. The moment of decision had arrived for First Lieutenant Ed Silk of Johnstown, Pennsylvania. He had been in the line barely a week, but now the whole progress of the war pivoted directly on him. A battalion, a division, indeed the entire U.S. Seventh Army, awaited his next move.

“Cover me as best you can,” Lieutenant Silk told his men. “I’m going forward.”

The patrol - a volunteer group from Company E, 398th Infantry Regiment - fired at the farmhouse windows while Silk darted out of the woods and zig-zagged across the open field. He missed death again and again as German fire followed him. About 100 yards from the farmhouse, the lieutenant reached the cover of a low stone wall that bordered the farm. Crawling to a good position, Silk steadied his carbine on the wall and fired at the farmhouse windows until his ammunition was exhausted.

Then Silk vaulted the wall and dodged 50 yards to the side of the building. The Germans, momentarily stunned by Silk’s daring, took him



under fire again, but miraculously the lieutenant escaped. He flattened himself against the side of the house and began to inch along toward the window from which the German machine gun was being fired. Then he lobbed a grenade over his head and into the window and raced for a woodpile on the opposite side of the yard. As he made this second dash, another ma-

chine gun opened fire on him from a woodshed to the rear of the house. The gun chewed again at the woodpile, but missed Silk.

There was an explosion inside the farmhouse, followed by silence. Silk knew his grenade had done its job. One machine gun was knocked out. Now he turned to the gun in the woodshed. He circled and rushed the shed from the

opposite side, hurling a grenade through the doorway as he ran past. The grenade exploded, but the gun continued firing. Silk had missed his target.

Covered by the corner of the house, the lieutenant quickly assessed his situation. He had only one grenade left and no other ammunition. Within minutes - if not seconds - the Germans would be on him. He didn't wait for them to move, but began another desperate run at the woodshed. This time his exploding grenade brought screams from the mortally wounded German gun crew.

Two machine guns had been destroyed, but other German riflemen remained in the farmhouse, and although Silk was now totally without weapons he wasn't ready to quit. He picked up some rocks and, running along the side of the building, began tossing them through the window, calling for the Germans to surrender. The ruse worked. Twelve confused Germans came out of the farmhouse with their hands held high. Later ten German bodies were found in the house and woodshed.

The signal was flashed back to the woods. The path for the attack was open again. And in Ed Silk the 100th Infantry Division had its first Medal of Honor winner.

Mid-November of 1944 was a comparatively late date for a unit to start fighting in World War II. But for the men of the Century Division, the attack through the Vosges Mountains was the beginning. For a time there had been a strong feeling that the 100th Division would never reach combat at all. Stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, it had become a "showcase" outfit for Washington officials. Its realistic demonstration, called the "Infantry in Action" brought uniform makers and equipment manufacturers, newsmen and magazine editors, the Secretary of War and other assorted VIPs to see the big show. And as the Century's reputation grew, spit-and-polish assignments increased. The Division marched up New York City's Fifth Avenue to help sell War Bonds and when the Army introduced the new Infantryman's Badge, the 100th was selected to conduct the first tests for

it. When things became dull, Lieutenant Al Blozis, former world's shot-put champ, would toss a grenade half the length of the drill field and stamp the 100th Division emblem on this record.

The Centurymen were all civilian-soldiers, from the 48 states (although there were larger groups from the Eastern states, New York and New England) when the Division was activated. The bulk of its original cadre had been members of the famous Army War Show, which toured the country through most of 1942 to stimulate bond sales, so the Division put a premium on drill precision. During the long months of garrison life in the States the draftees managed to keep their sense of humor by poking fun at their strange mission. On D-Day, for instance, when their comrades in arms were invading Normandy, the Centurymen coined a new slogan for the occasion: "We parade while they invade."

When the Division's hour finally came, the men were ready and even anxious to go. As combat time is measured, its hour was brief - six months - but during that period it shouldered some of the heaviest burdens of the Allied drive through Germany.

It battled through the snow-laden, forest-covered Vosges Mountains, a feat unparalleled in military history. it overran the Maginot Line and liberated Bitche, a fortress which had not bowed to an invading army in over 200 years. And when the Germans launched their Ardennes offensive in late December of 1944, the Centurymen stood firm although they were outnumbered four to one. They crossed the Rhine and the Neckar, where the enemy had a tremendous terrain advantage. And when the Germans made a last-ditch stand at Heilbronn, the 100th smashed them.

The 100th Infantry Division was born at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, on November 15, 1942. Only the cadre, brought in from the 76th Division, was on hand when the Division received its colors, but by mid-December the new recruits were arriving by the trainload and the griping began immediately, usually a healthy sign.

Command of the 100th had been awarded to Major General Withers A.

Burress, a handsome career soldier from Richmond, Virginia. It was one of the notable instances where the Army placed the right man in the right job. From Fort Jackson, South Carolina, all the way to Stuttgart and the completion of the Division's combat mission, it was a good partnership.

Burress was a quiet, mild-mannered man. Close friends and old classmates at Virginia Military Institute called him "Pinky," and almost from the beginning the men of the 100th called themselves "Pinky's boys" or "Pinky's mob." But for all his gentleness, "Pinky" Burress never left any doubt as to who was running his outfit. He was a strong leader and an exacting taskmaster. But he also watched over his men like a shepherd, listened to their gripes, protected their rights and tried to get them home alive.

The Division started out with 16,000 officers and men on its roster - about 1800 over normal strength. But before the second phase of training was completed, transfers and discharges had reduced its strength to 12,300. The distribution of division manpower was along standard lines - three infantry regiments, the 397th, 398th and 399th; four field artillery battalions, the 373rd, 374th, 375th and 925th; the 325th Engineer Battalion, the 325th Medical Battalion; signal, ordnance and quartermaster companies; a reconnaissance troop and a military police platoon.

The 100th completed its 13-week basic training program on March 27, 1943. Over 87 percent of the infantry had qualified with the M-1 on the nearby Leesburg range. Then, for intermediate training, the 100th moved into the chigger-infested Carolina pine woods where its members became acquainted with the infiltration course and the simulated "Nazi Village," and discovered they had hardened up enough to march 25 miles with full field pack in less than eight hours. They also learned that they had been named the "Singing Division" by the nation's newspapers. One favorite, sung to the tune of "Let's Remember Pearl Harbor," went like this:

*Let's remember Fort Jackson  
As a concentration camp.*

*Continued on the next page.*



drove on until they encountered enemy wire and minefields. On the following day, Colonel William A. Ellis, commander of the 397th Regiment, was killed by machine-gun fire.

The 1st Battalion of the 399th carried most of the burden in the drive toward the vital town of Raon L'Etape, the Division's initial objective. As it struggled for the high ground around the town, it had to attack up a steep, almost impassable slope, covered with trees and heavy undergrowth. The enemy had well-fortified positions - logged-over foxholes with good fields of fire. He had to be rooted out of these miniature forts one by one. It was a hard, slow job.

When some riflemen of the 399th's Company B were ambushed by a German machine gun, Technical Sergeant Rudolph Steinman of Chicago, Illinois, set out with his weapons platoon to rescue his comrades. But Steinman and his men were also caught in a crossfire of German automatic weapons. All of Baker Company was now in an impossible situation. Steinman moved a squad into a position where it could fire on the enemy gunners. Then, ordering the squad to cover him, he crawled toward the German position. The enemy started firing at him immediately, but Steinman didn't stop. He jumped to his feet and, firing his carbine as rapidly as the trigger would move, he charged the position. The enemy gunner fell dead. Another tried to take his place, reconsidered and fell back. Within seconds, Steinman had 16 prisoners, and Company B had been rescued from the ambush.

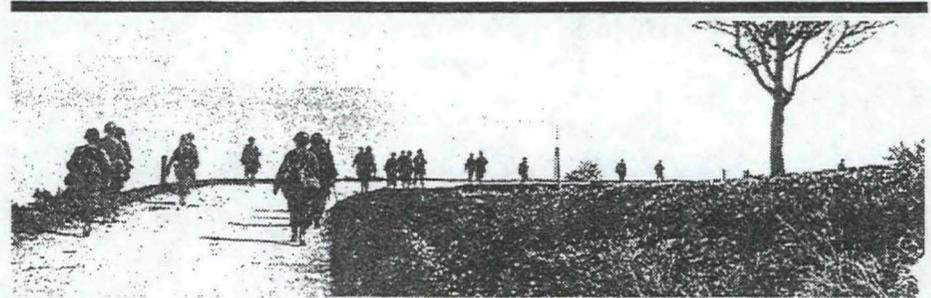
After a long day of fighting, the 1st Battalion took the high ground, but an hour later the Germans counterattacked. A daring charge by Sergeant Lucian Zarlenga and his riflemen of Company A and Sergeant Richard Anderson of Dog Company, firing a machine gun from the hip, forced them back, and at nightfall the hill remained in American hands.

For its tenacity, 1st Battalion, 399th Infantry, received a Presidential Unit Citation. It had enabled the Division to push on to Raon L'Etape and drove the wedge that cracked the German winter line.

The Centurymen crossed the Plaine

and Meurthe Rivers while the Germans tried to reorganize in an area southeast of Raon L'Etape. However, on the night of November 19, when the veteran 3rd Infantry Division, on the right of the 100th, managed to cross the Meurthe, the bewildered Germans, threatened by two flanking movements, made a hasty withdrawal. Within seven days the Seventh Army attack drove all the way to the Rhine.

By November 25, the Division had successfully trapped the enemy in the



White phosphorus shells land on Fischback, Germany, as men of Company C, 397th Infantry, move up to take the town in April, 1945.

mountains between the Plaine and Bruche Rivers and its Vosges campaign, except for mopping up, was completed. It was an important moment for the Division. Starting as green troops, they had attacked strong enemy forces and captured fortified areas that had never been successfully invaded.

Ordered to a new area 40 kilometers to the north, the men of the 100th welcomed a chance to take showers, eat some hot meals, get mail from home and sleep, little knowing that their toughest days lay ahead.

In late November and early December, the Division moved into its new positions to the north and began attacking the small towns on the road to the Maginot Line. German resistance was strong. The 100th's plan for breaching the Maginot in the Bitche area called for the 398th Infantry Regiment to attack along the ridge north of Reyersville and break through by first taking Freudenberg Fort and the Freudenberg Outpost. Divisions in other sectors had found the Maginot forts lightly defended: the 398th hoped for the same situation. However, when the 398th launched its attack on the afternoon of December 14, it found it-

self facing a fortification of almost unbelievable strength. The "Folly of France" might have been weak in other sectors, but at Bitche the pillboxes were formidable.

Two of the main forts, Freudenberg and Schiesseck, lay directly in the 398th's path. Freudenberg was a huge single unit. Schiesseck was divided into 11 interconnected units of varying size and firepower - some going down five levels and all joined by tunnels and a narrow gauge supply rail-

road. Most of the units had moats and emergency exits. These two forts were the only part of the Maginot which did not surrender in 1940.

After a 30-minute air bombardment and a heavy concentration of artillery shelling, the 398th launched a four-day assault that captured the two forts. The Division's 325th Engineers used tons of explosives to destroy captured pillboxes, but sometimes even a 600-pound charge of dynamite would only chip the massive concrete walls. In the meantime, the Germans, who knew the fortifications intimately, were able to shift positions throughout Schiesseck and inflict heavy casualties on the Centurymen.

On December 20, with the assault on Bitche proceeding on schedule, XV Corps headquarters ordered the 100th to consolidate its defensive positions and prepare for a strong enemy counterattack. To the north, Von Runstedt had launched his Ardennes offensive, forcing all divisions to the south of the Bulge to displace northward. Although this thinned out the U.S. lines along the entire front, it was necessary to release units to deflate the Bulge.

The fighting around Bitche had been

*Continued on the next page.*

5

marked by close hand-to-hand encounters. PFC Ted Bates, of the 398th, for instance, had been digging his foxhole when two Germans slipped up on him along a draw with a machine gun. When Bates saw them he jumped on one and started fighting. Although he was outnumbered, Bates fought so furiously - even using his teeth - that both Germans surrendered.

By December 22, the Century Division had completed the adjustment of its new lines and the entire sector became quiet. The men's third Christmas dinner together - still partly hot when it reached them in the lines - was interrupted by a few combat patrols and occasional artillery fire. Packages from home were delivered and fleece-lined white coats were distributed for camouflage in the snow, which had begun to fall Christmas Eve.

Between Christmas and New Year's Day the Division improved its positions, mined the enemy's approaches and beat back several German combat patrols. Intelligence reports from higher echelons indicated the counter-offensive was imminent. It began in the late afternoon of New Year's Eve. The attack, initially, was aimed at the 44th Infantry Division, on the 100th's left flank, and against the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron on the right. The direction of the assault placed the 100th in immediate danger of being surrounded by two prongs of a double envelopment.

The German infantry attacked the Centurymen screaming, cursing and shouting "Yankee bastards," or American gangsters." The ran in upright position, disregarding cover with a bravado that made the GIs think that they were either drunk or doped. The 100th's well emplaced automatic weapons cut down dozens of them. Technical Sergeant Rudy Steinman's machine-gun crew, covering the flank of Dog Company, 399th Infantry, mowed down wave after wave of the onrushing Germans and was credited with killing at least 100. Private Leon Outlaw of Company M, 397th Regiment, machine-gunned a similar number.

But the German attack gained momentum and the danger to the Century Division's flanks grew alarmingly.

Under heavy pressure, the 44th Division, on the left, was forced to pull back to stronger positions, and the men of the 397th Infantry, thus exposed, were forced to stretch their lines. On the right, the situation was summed up by a telephone call received from the 117th Reconnaissance Troop at the 399th Infantry's CP by Major Lawrence Conrey, the regimental S-3.

"We're falling back a little," the 117th officer reported.

"How far is a little?" Conrey asked.

"About two thousand yards," was the answer.

"Do you have to fall back so far all at once?" the major fumed.

There was no reply.

By late afternoon of the first day, the 117th Recon Troop had pulled back eight or nine miles to the south and the 399th Infantry had to bring up units to fill the gap. The regiment's front, which faced northeast toward Bitche, was altered immediately as the brunt of the attack came from the flank. Baker Company, in a pivotal position, took a battering in the early hours of the thrust. At one point an outpost manned by six Baker-men carried on an unequal fight against 300 Germans. Finally forced to withdraw, the six men eluded the Germans by slipping through the halls and rooms of the College de Bitche, ambushing their pursuers several times before finally making a dash to the Century's main line.

Failure of communications on the left flank placed King Company, 397th Infantry, in another treacherous predicament. Directly in the path of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division which was just north of Rimling, Company K's situation became desperate when it could not be warned that the 44th Division was withdrawing. The third German wave found a 1000-yard gap to the left of Company K, enabling the Germans to bypass the company's forward positions and slip into Rimling where an enemy platoon assembled near a church at the south end of the town.

In the church tower above them sat Lieutenant James S. Howard, a forward observer for the 374th Field Artillery Battalion. He had a grenade, a carbine and a .45 automatic, so he de-

cidied to attack. He dropped the grenade squarely in the midst of the Germans, then emptied his carbine into the group and went for the pistol. More than half of the Germans fell dead or wounded, the others running for a nearby building. Moments later, a squad from Item Company, 397th Infantry, came up and took 20 German prisoners.

Apparently hoping to achieve surprise, the German assault began without an artillery preparation. However, the succeeding attacks were preceded by heavy barrages and occasional strafing by enemy-flown American P-47s. While the 397th struggled to close the ever-widening gap on their left, the 374th Field Artillery Battalion interdicted the opening with a curtain of fire. That afternoon, the 374th, with its effective firing, broke up an assault by an onrushing infantry battalion and then a concentration of 50 tanks and other armored vehicles.

At the right end of the Century Division line, the 399th Infantry's exposed rear areas received some help when a battalion of the 255th Infantry Regiment and another of the 141st Infantry Regiment, 36th Division, were rushed up from reserve positions. In the first 24 hours of the attack, the Germans made five desperate assaults in this area - aimed mostly at the sector of Company B, 399th Infantry.

The German attack in the Bitche area was strategically linked to the Ardennes offensive. Believing the divisions of the Seventh Army to be inferior to those of Patton and Hodges to the north, the Germans thought they could break through Patch's men, wheel northward and roll up the rear of Patton's army. In ten days of fierce fighting, using nearly four divisions, and hitting hardest against the partly seasoned troops of the 100th Division, they gained nothing. The 100th gave no ground worth mentioning.

There were heroes everywhere. The gallant men of the 3rd Battalion, 397th Infantry, who held the exposed left flank against steadily mounting odds, were awarded a Presidential Unit Citation. So was Company H, 397th Infantry, for its spectacular defense of Rimling. But perhaps the outstanding incident was the two-day rampage of

SILVER STAR DAY: FT SCHLESSECK  
COMPANY F HOSTILE MACHINES GUN FIRE FROM CONCRETE  
PILL BOX CRAWLED 7 YDS - FIRED +  
100th INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION DIRECTED PLATOON (6)

Technical Sergeant Charles F. Carey, Jr., anti-tank sergeant and acting platoon leader of Headquarters Company, 397th Infantry.

During the period January 8-9, Sergeant Carey rallied the outnumbered forces of his platoon for the spirited defense of Rimling with a display of gallantry that virtually broke the back of the enemy attack. He led three successive patrols to locate key enemy gun emplacements. Under heavy fire, he rescued two wounded comrades; he knocked out an enemy tank and killed its crew as they attempted to escape; he killed two snipers and captured 16 prisoners; and then led a patrol to other buildings where an additional 41 Germans surrendered. Between patrols and escapades, Sergeant Carey skillfully maneuvered his platoon and other 397th units to meet the fluid situation. When the brunt of the German attack finally struck, various sections of Carey's platoon were trapped and captured, but the sergeant, realizing that four of his men were caught in an attic under withering enemy fire, went to the rear of the building with a ladder and helped the men escape. Next, he set out to rescue a bazooka team which the Germans had surrounded in a barn, exposing himself to heavy sniper fire to reach them. Caught in the open, he was killed by a German sniper.

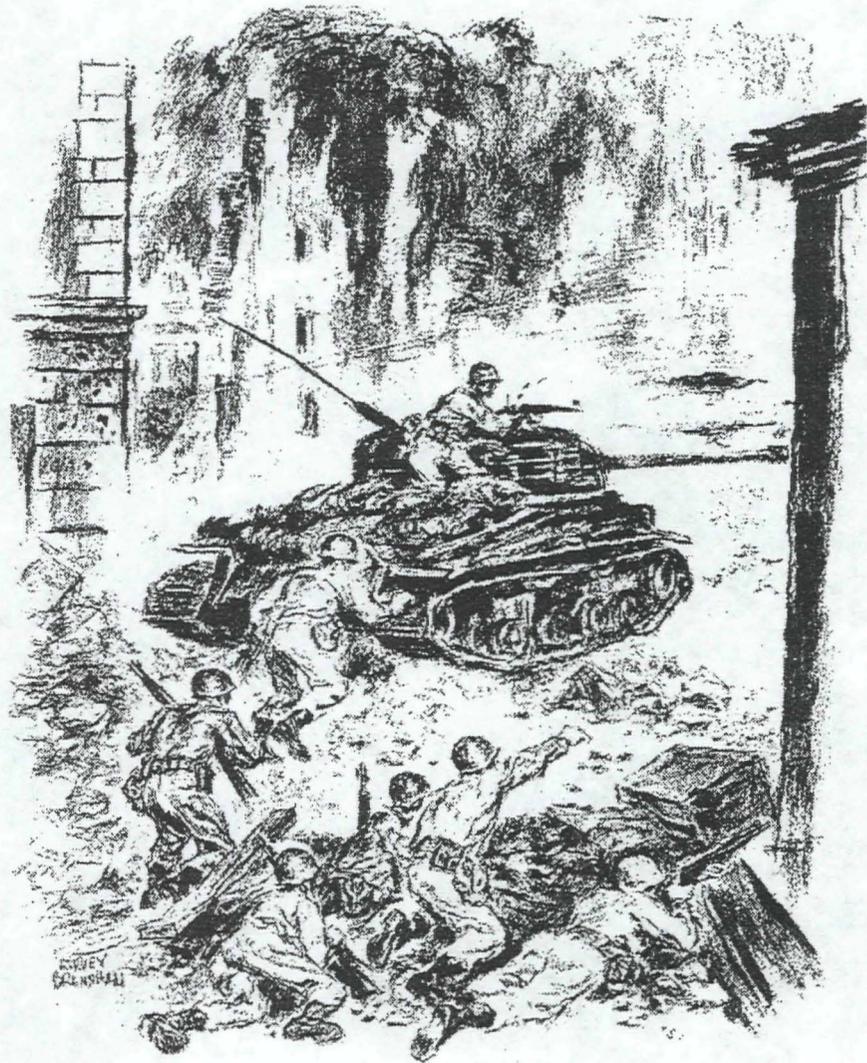
Sergeant Carey was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously.

For its effort in repelling the Germans' savage ten-day assault, Lieutenant General Jacob L. Devers, commanding the Sixth Army Group, sent a warm letter of commendation to the Centurymen. Then, from January 10 until March 15, 1944, the Division remained in the foxholes of their defensive lines, fighting the bitter cold, trench foot and boredom. There was time to log over the holes and put in floors until they became semi-permanent installations. There was also time now for an occasional night's sleep in a crowded but warm farm house and a few hot meals; or a trip to the Division rest center at Sarrebouurg, set up by T/4 Arthur Philips of Richmond, Virginia. Later in the winter the Division received a quota for passes to Paris and Brussels.

On March 15 as the spring thaw began, the Seventh Army attacked along its entire front with four divisions in line: the 3rd, 45th, 100th and 71st Infantry Divisions, from left to right in the army sector. Initially, the 100th received little small-arms fire in its zone, but devastating artillery, mortar and rocket fire, which the Germans

smaller towns against light resistance, on the start of a 92-mile motor dash to the Rhine. Upon arriving at Ludwigshaven, it found that Patton's 94th Infantry Division was already attacking the city and received orders to hold in position and rest.

On March 31 Division infantry units crossed the Rhine by pontoon bridge



had spent all winter zeroing in on predetermined targets along the attack route.

Despite this, on the second day the city of Bitche and its Maginot forts fell, with Company E of the 398th Infantry entering Bitche - the first attacking force to achieve entrance in the history of the fortress city.

Crossing the German border, the Division slammed through a series of

and moved into Ludwigshaven's battered twin city of Mannheim. Since the crossing was easier than anticipated, the 100th was able to push on quickly through Mannheim and turn southward along the Rhine, where it made contact with the First French Army ten miles downriver. At this point the Division turned to the southeast and was given the mission to attack Heilbronn,

Continued on the next page.

an important railroad and communications center.

Again the attack pace accelerated as the Division began the 40-mile race to Heilbronn, spearheaded by the 10th Armored Division. Aerial reconnaissance of the city prior to the attack reported little enemy activity. However, the physical features of the city were ideal for defense. The deep, swift-flowing Neckar River was a formidable barrier to the west of the city and behind the city was a group of hills that offered unbroken observation of the river, plus thick wooded cover for artillery emplacements. And, unknown to the Americans, the Germans had constructed tunnels connecting Heilbronn's numerous, stone-walled factory buildings and had devised an intricate plan for a block-by-block defense of the city. To further complicate the Division's difficult mission, the 10th Armored was suddenly diverted to the north just as the attack was to get underway.

During the early hours of April 4, the Century's 3rd Battalion, 398th Infantry, began crossing the Neckar in assault boats, since the four bridges into Heilbronn had already been destroyed by the enemy. Within an hour the entire battalion was across with hardly a shot having been fired. The Centurymen had started to probe Heilbronn's factory district when the Germans - two battalions strong - counterattacked. By using their underground tunnels in the factory area, they got between the 3rd Battalion and the river.

In a situation not of his choosing or to his liking to begin with, General Burress could not withdraw the trapped battalion on the east bank. He had only one choice - pour reinforcements across as rapidly as possible. However, as soon as the men started across, the German artillery, zeroed in perfectly on almost every inch of the river, began its devastating fire.

The engineers attempted to put a bridge across the river, but every attempt - even those made in darkness - met with heavy casualties.

It became evident almost immediately that the enemy strength in Heilbronn had been badly underestimated. Perhaps the German high com-

mand had not originally intended to make such a strong defense at Heilbronn, but as more and more German troops retreated from the Rhine this city at the head of the Neckar valley became a natural regrouping area. The battle became, almost by chance, one of the most desperate stands of the European war.

The Century's field artillery, joined by Corps and Army artillery battalions and chemical mortars (for smoke screening), fired round-the-clock while the 12th Tactical Air Corps bombed and strafed German positions. With the enemy kept busy, assault boats were able to ferry more and more Centurymen to the east bank, although it still was impossible to put up a bridge to get tanks and other armored equipment across. The German artillery would wait all day while the engineers assembled a pontoon bridge. Then, as soon as it was ready for use, they would unleash a barrage that would destroy it in a few minutes.

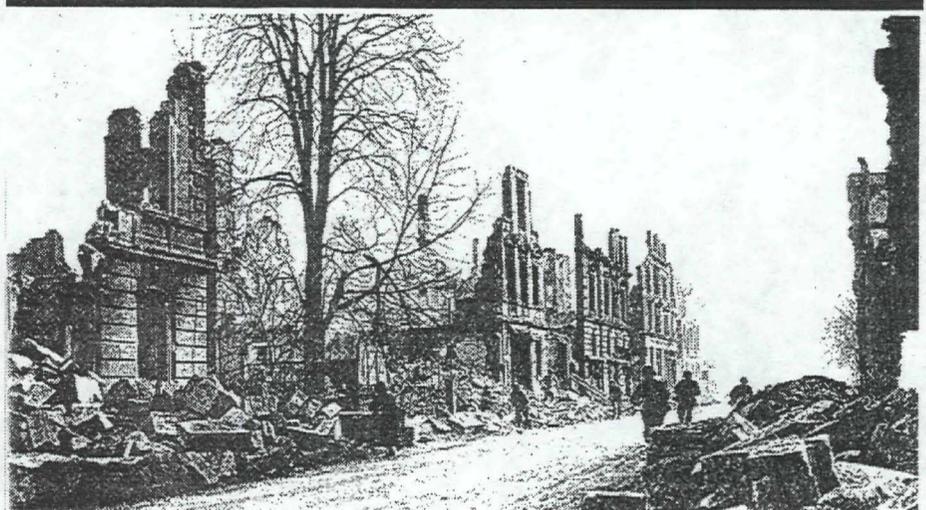
It was not until April 10 - the seventh day of battle - when the engineers had built a power-driven raft capable of ferrying armor to the other side, that the infantrymen got the help of tanks and tank destroyers.

The battle for Heilbronn raged for nine days before the pincers being thrown around the city was snapped shut. While the battle was bloody, the 100th's losses were comparatively light - 60 killed; 250 wounded, and 112 missing. On the other hand, the Century-

men took 1769 prisoners and probably killed or wounded twice that number. It was during this same period that the Division acclaimed its third Medal of Honor winner - PFC Mike Colalillo, of Duluth, Minnesota, a rifleman with Company C, 398th Infantry.

Colalillo and his comrades of Baker and Charlie Companies were stopped cold by heavy mortar and artillery fire north of Heilbronn, in an attack that was intended to drive through the city. The companies waited for five tanks of the 781st Tank Battalion to move ahead of them, but were pinned down anyway by automatic weapons fire. At this point, Colalillo jumped to his feet, ran up behind one of the tanks and called for his buddies to follow. As they did, Colalillo ran toward the enemy positions, firing his grease-gun as he went. When a shell fragment knocked the gun from his hands, he grabbed a .30-caliber machine gun from the tank he was following and continued the attack, jumping aboard the tank. As artillery shells and machine-gun fire exploded around him, Colalillo turned his gun on a German position and wounded at least ten men. Next, he peppered a haystack, silenced the gun hidden in it and killed an SS lieutenant. Then, spotting another German gun position to the rear of the haystack he knocked this one out by killing three Germans.

When his own gun finally jammed, Colalillo borrowed a sub-machine gun from one of the tanks and went after



Men of the 399th Infantry run through the street of battered Heilbronn as German rocket fire and artillery rake the city.

by David Colley

# Operation Northwind: 'Greatest Defensive Battle'

*Hitler's final offensive on the Western Front in January 1945, devastated the French province of Alsace. Yet, the U.S. Seventh Army's desperate battle there is among the least known of the European War.*



All along the frozen, snowbound front in northeastern France in the last days of December 1944, troops of Lt. Gen. Alexander Patch's U.S. Seventh Army braced for an attack. Air reconnaissance, patrols and intelligence reports indicated the Seventh would be hit. The Germans needed a diversion to relieve pressure on their divisions

in the Ardennes where the U.S. First Army had regained its balance in the Battle of the Bulge. Patton's Third Army had relinquished ground to the adjacent Seventh as the Third dispatched divisions to the Bulge, leaving Patch's units stretched perilously thin. One veteran recalled manning 1,000 yards of front with only a squad.

The geography of the front also rendered the Seventh vulnerable. The line formed a V-shaped salient, dubbed the *Lauterbourg Bulge*. The salient's northern edge stretched more than 84 miles, west to east, from a point near Saarbrücken to Lauterbourg. The front then ran south, hugging the west bank of the Rhine River for another 42 miles to a point below Strasbourg, France.

Eventually fighting along that front were 15 U.S. divisions — 3rd, 28th, 36th, 42nd, 44th, 45th, 63rd, 70th, 75th, 79th, 100th and 103rd Infantry, 101st Airborne and 12th and 14th Armored. All told, some 250,000 GIs participated. Bitter battles would be waged at Wingen, Philippsbourg, Herrlisheim and Rittershoffen.

To Hitler, the Lauterbourg Bulge appeared like a ripe fruit waiting to be plucked and he directed his generals to take it out.

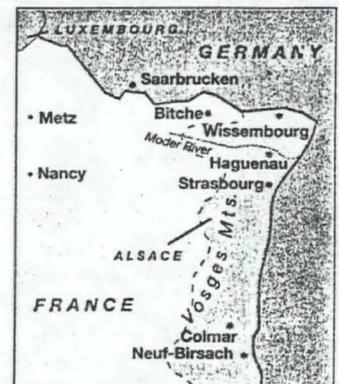
**Easy Targets in the Snow.** *Operation Northwind* began in the northwest sector of the salient just after midnight, New Year's Day, 1945, when elements of the Ger-

man XIII SS and LXXXIX Corps attacked southward.

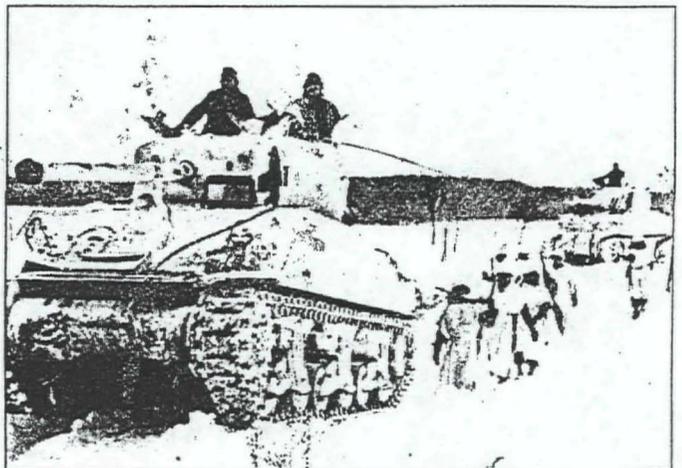
"They were drunk and marched toward us in columns of two with their rifles slung over their shoulders," recalls Dick Atkinson, a 100th Division veteran. Silhouetted against the deep snow, the enemy troops were easy targets. Atkinson opened up with his machine gun as the enemy formed skirmish lines and attacked over open fields. "I probably killed 150 to 200," he claims.

The two corps of the German First Army attacked south from Sarreguemines and Bitche over the Sarre River valley, at the base of the Lauterbourg salient. Their objective was to reach the Saverne Gap, split the U.S. XV and VI Corps and bottle up the VI, commanded by Maj. Gen. Albert Brooks, on the Alsatian plain with its back to the Rhine.

But the Germans hadn't counted on the determination of the infantrymen from the 100th and 44th divisions and two regiments of the 63rd Division organized into *Task Force Harris*, one of several hastily assembled commands shifted back and forth to meet new onslaughts. The German XIII Corps attack faltered.



Camouflaged U.S. tanks and infantrymen on the Alsatian front in January 1945.  
U.S. Army photo



The LXXXIX Corps assault from the Bitche area, employing the German 559th, 257th, 361st and 256th *Volks grenadier* divisions, and later the 6th SS Mountain Division, was more successful. They surprised the Americans by attacking through the rough, frozen landscape of the Low Vosges and swept aside an ad hoc command of the 94th and 117th Cavalry squadrons dubbed *Task Force Hudelson*, and the 62d Armored Infantry Bn. The fight would continue intermittently for three weeks.

The 100th Division hastily blocked the western flank of the LXXXIX Corps attack. To contain the eastern flank of the attack the Americans threw in *TF Harris*, *Task Force Herren* (regiments from 70th Division), elements from the 79th, 45th and 36th divisions and the 36th C Combat Engineer Regiment, to prevent the enemy from controlling vital mountain exits that would have put the Germans behind VI Corps. Patch also deployed the entire 103rd Division eastward.

The snow was knee-deep and the conditions were bitterly cold, so cold that Howard P. Schreiver, a sergeant with the 45th Division, never dug a foxhole — the ground was frozen solid — and his canteen popped. Pat Reilly, a sergeant with the 313th Bn., 79th Division, recalls infantrymen urinating into their M-1s to unfreeze the firing mechanisms.

By Jan. 5, the initial attacks of *Operation Northwind* began to wane. But these assaults were only the first of a series of concentric attacks launched in Alsace — most against the Seventh Army. Troops of the French First Army, under Gen. Jean de Latre de Tassigney, also participated farther south, but to a limited degree. Lt. Gen. Jacob Devers commanded both armies as head of Sixth Army Group.

**Operation Winter Solstice.** Hitler had more up his sleeve — *Operation Sonnenwende* (Winter Solstice). On Jan. 5, Heinrich Himmler, head of the *Waffen SS* and commanding Army Group *Oberrhein*, launched an attack across the Rhine at Gamsheim, 10 miles north of Strasbourg, into VI Corps' right flank. Two days later, the German 19th Army crossed the Rhine south of Strasbourg at Rhinau.

*Task Force Linden*, another ad hoc unit comprising green troops from the 42nd "Rainbow" Division, tried but failed to contain the two bridgeheads. Elements of 14th Armored Division, a few battalions from the 79th Division, and the green 12th Armored Division began deploying against the bridgeheads.

South of Strasbourg, Gen. de Latre threw in elements of his French 5th Armored and 1st Infantry divisions against the German bridgehead at Rhinau. *Operation Sonnenwende* made few gains, but highlighted the impor-

tance of Strasbourg to the Allied and French cause.

Even before the New Year's attacks, Eisenhower ordered Devers to straighten the Seventh's front line and withdraw to more defensible positions in the foothills of the Low Vosges Mountains. The entire Western Front, from the North Sea to Switzerland, was adopting a defensive posture as the lines were stripped of troops to help defend the Ardennes.

Devers was reluctant to give up ground won with his troops' blood. He also knew withdrawal meant giving up Strasbourg. Gen. Charles de Gaulle, leader of the Free

French, also attacked Eisenhower's plan to abandon the city and threatened to remove French forces from the Allied command and use them to defend the city. Strasbourg is the symbol of French rule in an area often claimed or annexed by Germany. De Gaulle also feared horrible retribution by the *Gestapo* against the citizens of Strasbourg.

Eisenhower relented and agreed to protect Strasbourg and Devers agreed to prepare for a series of staged withdrawals, if necessary.

A fifth attack against the Americans was launched on Jan. 5 by the German XXXIX Panzer Corps made up of the 21st Panzer and 25th Panzer Grenadier divisions striking south toward the towns of Hatten and Rittershoffen. Pat Reilly recalls the 313th Infantry Regt. falling back through the Haguenau Forest to the town of Haguenau.

Fighting raged in small pockets and villages as the Americans withdrew. "It was a weird battle," Reilly recalls. "One time you were surrounded, the next you weren't. Often we took refuge in villages where the Germans were upstairs in the same house. We heard them and could see them and vice versa. If they didn't make a move we left and if we didn't make a move they left."

The melee reached westward as fighting between the 45th Division and 6th SS Mountain Division picked up around Baerenthal and Mouterhouse and continued until Jan. 21.

On Jan. 16, the German army in Alsace struck. The 10th SS and 7th Parachute divisions, the core of XXXIX Corps' reserve, spearheaded a drive south from Lauterbourg, down the west bank of the Rhine, to link with German forces in the Gamsheim bridgehead.

To counter the pressing Germans, Brooks pulled his lines back southwest to the Moder River. The move greatly reduced the frontage of VI Corps' units and left the Germans confused and swinging at air.

Reilly recalls a tremendous, nighttime artillery barrage when the enemy pulled abreast of U.S. lines and seemed ready to attack. The next morning, however, there was only an eerie silence.

A final lunge was made over the Moder River line the



A GI mortar crew prepares a barrage of white phosphorous shells during *Operation Northwind*. U.S. Army photo



night of Jan. 24-25. Six German divisions struck in three prongs. "The Germans had shot their last bolt in France," as Charles Whiting put in *Operation Northwind*. The Seventh Army, no matter how tired and extended, was still intact and operational. In early February, 125,000 GIs — at the cost of 6,400 casualties — played a part in reducing the Colmar Pocket. The last German fortress on the western bank of the Rhine to fall was at Neuf-Brisach ("Waffle City").

**Meeting the Test of Battle.** *Northwind* was costly for both sides, although the figures vary. Seventh Army after action reports listed 11,609 battle casualties for the period of the offensive plus 2,836 cases of trench foot and 380 cases of frostbite. But VI Corps' losses for the same period are listed as 14,716 with 773 killed, 4,838 wounded, 3,657 missing and 5,448 non-battle casualties.

German forces sustained 23,000 men killed, wounded or missing. The U.S. processed some 5,985 German POWs.

*Northwind* engagements speak well for American arms and the GI. Reilly, today an insurance executive in Pittsburgh and student of *Northwind* history, attributes much of the victory to overwhelming U.S. artillery. But GIs, many fresh off troopships as was Howard Schreiber, met the test of battle. Often outnumbered, they fought the venerable German army to a standstill.

The *Wehrmacht*, four months before its total collapse in May 1945, was not what it once was. Nor was its lead-

ership what it had been. Attacks to split VI Corps from the Seventh Army were uncoordinated. The Americans were often surprised by the enemy's inability to control the battlefield.

U.S. leadership, on the other hand, often was excellent. Devers gave much of the credit for victory — or survival — to Brooks, whom he said, "fought one of the greatest defensive battles of all times with very little."

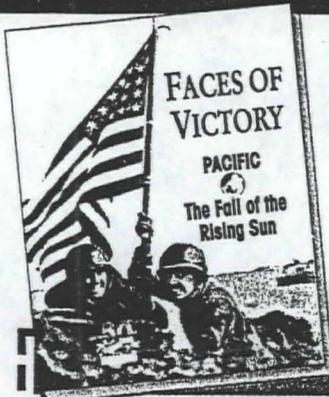
Devers, too, must be credited. As overall commander, he held off full-scale German attacks with little or no reinforcement. Today, he is all but forgotten, cast in the shadow of the more popular Patton and Bradley and the controversial Montgomery.

Yet it was Sixth Army Group, the orphan of the Allied armies, that first reached the Rhine in November 1944. It was prepared to immediately cross the river, against virtually no opposition, and strike into the industrial heart of Germany. But Eisenhower overruled Devers. He ordered him instead to wheel northward in support of the Third Army, bogged down in an abortive offensive.

Historians can only speculate about the outcome of the war in Europe had Devers been allowed to attack across the Rhine in early December 1944. The possibilities are endless. For one, *Operation Northwind* might have remained on Hitler's drawing board. ☆

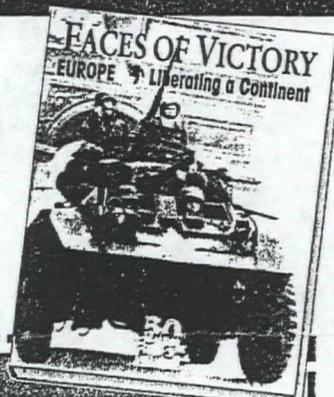
David Colley, a freelance writer/author based in Pennsylvania, is working on a book about the Red Ball Express in World War II.

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