

trying to cross our lines. He didn't have any identification on him so we figured he was probably a soldier trying to get back into Germany. When I called Col. Brown up to tell him about the incident his only question was, "At what range was it done?". I told him and his reply was, "That is very good shooting at six o'clock in the morning."

We always called this place Agneses. The reason was that the girl who lived in the house we stayed in was named Agnes. Everyone insisted that it was important to learn how to speak German so they got Agnes to help them. We had heard some rules about fraternizing, but I guess we hadn't been impressed enough. Anyhow, we learned the German words for fork and spoon.

The company went back in small groups and took showers in Kolsheid while we were holding the line here. Clean clothes and a hot shower! That was really a good feeling. It was the first opportunity anyone had had to take a shower or wash up since the day when part of the company went swimming in the Seine River. A few of us had managed a bath at Waubach, but not the complete company by any means.

We would gather together the CP group at night here and sing songs. Sgt. Herche had a good voice and started us off on them. Stan had trouble with me talking in my sleep. He thought something was wrong with me when I would sit up in the middle of the night and ask a question. He knows better now. I'm likely to do that most any time.

It was here also that Langlois washed a bunch of clothes. I pitched in and helped him by washing my pants. Nice clean pants and field jacket. I hung them on the line. The next morning I planned to get the German lady to iron them. However, the next morning my pants and jackets had two big holes in them. An artillery round had landed too close. After all the work I had done and now my jacket was "kaput". That was better than being in them anyhow.

Finally on the 2nd of November we were taken off the line. The 102nd Division relieved us. It had been a month since we had started to break the

Siegfried Line. The relief was made just at dusk. The 102nd being a new outfit in combat did everything by the book. Lt. Snow was really unhappy about how long it took them to get him relieved. I think they had one man killed and two wounded because they froze in place when the artillery started coming in instead of getting under cover. They traveled with plenty of equipment, gas lanterns, plenty of telephones and all the items that we wished we had but didn't.

That was a great feeling to get behind the lines that night. We went back to Kolsheid and set up in houses - not in cellars either. What a relief! I don't think I have ever appreciated the chance to get away from everything like I did that time. We found out that the lady of the house where we were staying spoke French so Langlois was again in his prime. He had been out of communications with civilian personnel since we had left Belgium. He had even cut off his beard at Agneses, and only had a moustache now.

The next morning, the 3rd of November, we went to the rest camp near Kerkrade, Holland. We were met by a band and a staff that promised us a good time and a chance to relax. That's what everyone wanted. We were billeted in a Catholic school. We went to shows, wrote letters and ate our meals sitting at a table. The silverware was furnished by A. Hitler. We were scheduled to stay for two days, but the stay was prolonged. We left on the fourth morning. Of course, we had to have a training schedule the last two mornings. I gave a lecture on censorship. Stan and I each sent a shiny bayonet home from here, the best in captured equipment at that time. We also sent a Thanksgiving Day telegram.

We finally left the rest area, very pleased with our stay. The third battalion had at last received a little break. We went back to the same place at Kolsheid. With the help of Langlois we were gradually getting acquainted with the people there. This was the 7th of November. We were alerted that evening and moved out at 0400 the next morning to relieve the first battalion at Wurselen.

Our CP was on the front lines here. We could see the stadium directly in

front of it. The Germans would shoot rifle grenades over it at night. Artillery was still rough and so was the mortar fire. Again, we retired to the cellars except when we had something that had to be done. I got dirty in that cellar. We were there better than a week with practically no chance to wash up.

Langlois and McWilliams occupied CP number 2 in this set-up. They came up to visit us every day. Cracker Jack Red, was the code name of the outfit that was backing us up here, the 84th Division. They tried to move Langlois out of his CP, but he told them he wasn't accustomed to moving without the approval or order of his company commander. He proceeded to tell the Major in charge that his company could not operate satisfactorily if he didn't maintain the "line of supplies". I guess this line was too much for the Major because he left and didn't bother Frenchy anymore.

Lt. Snow's third platoon was in support here. They were settled back where the civilians of the place resided. He insisted that we come down and visit him to meet his girl who the third platoon crew nicknamed "Baby". The third platoon bunch was a happy outfit. Lt. Snow, Norlie, and Woodie were always up to something. They would call up on the telephone and tell me to listen. Shortly they would sound off with some musical instrument. They would play drums, trumpets, or most anything.

Lt. Conway, the mortar observer from "M" Company was with us here. After we had occupied this line a day or so we were given the plan for the next attack. This was going to be IT. Everything was going to move. What do you know, we were going to be pinched out very shortly! All we had to do was to take this town in front of us. All reports indicated that the cellars all had slits cut in them for firing. We heard how the cellars were all connected with underground tunnels. It wasn't going to be easy. After all, this was Wurselen. We had first moved into the outskirts of this town on the 9th of October. The Germans had had plenty of time to fix up a nice reception for us.

The old "rest easy" signal that had been used since the days of Mortain was thrown out here. A system of calls using the names of various sports was published. The attack might come anytime, but if it were to be postponed the battalion would call up and say "baseball", "hockey", "tennis" or some such word. It was here that we nicknamed Lt. Conway "Baseball". He would run out about four o'clock in the morning and then come running back in saying "Baseball". We all hoped that it would be a cloudy day. That would mean no planes and one more day before the push. This was another one to sweat out. So it went for about four days.

Then came the morning of the 16th of November. That was the day. We displayed signal panels and saw barrage balloons raised over Aachen. Plenty of signals so the planes would not get us. I guess the big boys figured we were playing too small a part to give us any planes. All we saw was the usual number of planes flying around. The time came to jump off. We were stopped cold by three machine guns.

I relayed messages to Col. Brown that day for practically everyone in the battalion. The radios all quit working because a knocked out tank had a radio in it with the butterfly down. Capt. Hopcraft was wounded that day.

Stan came back to the CP about 1830 that night. He was tired and really disgusted. He said he hadn't seen the "Jerries" so stubborn for a long time. He had tried to maneuver the company but what can you do when you run into three machine guns that can't even be knocked out by direct mortar fire hits? They were dug-in in a bunch of rubble. Sgt. Herche fired within ten feet of our men trying to knock them out.

That night the medics worked all night packing the wounded out. We caught a few minutes sleep, but not much. Everyone dreaded the next day.

The next morning came. We jumped off at 0745. What do you know, there was no opposition! The company reached its objective about noon. It sounds good, but it

wasn't too good. The town was "booby trapped" and mined the worst that I have ever seen. Sgt. Markley lost his leg when one blew up as he went down a stairway. "Doc" McKitrick was killed by one of the damn things. That place had wires and gadgets all over it. One of the mine sweepers lost a leg while sweeping for mines. The sweeper hadn't picked it up.

That evening when we took rations up I didn't know whether it was safe to take them over a side road or not. One of the engineers said "Certainly" and another said "No". Capt. Mann and I talked it over trying to decide. I remember McWilliams that evening. He said, "I don't know if we should or not, but you just say to, Lt. Knox, and I'll go". We took them and saved the third platoon walking about half a mile for rations. McWilliams was probably the most willing and cooperative boy in the company. He was always pleasant and happy.

At our CP that night we found a young man that looked like he should be of military age. Further investigation revealed that both of his feet were frozen off. He had lost them fighting on the Russian front. Lt. Snow had trouble with the civilians that night also. They all had some place that they wanted to go.

The next day, the 18th, we followed Company "I" as they advanced to a position near the town of Weiden. The only casualties that morning were from a few mines that Company "I" ran into. Tanks were with us. I remember them gassing up just at dawn that morning.

In the afternoon Sgt. Herche and Sgt. Jones had a good time shooting up all of our mortar rounds at the Germans out in a near 'by field. Troops were beginning to pass thru us and on the right and left. The 104th Division passed not very far from us. We were getting pinched out.

The third platoon crew invited Sgt. Kirby and me over for rabbit dinner that night. (Which reminds me of the enormous quantity of excellent french fries I fixed the next day and then didn't have time to eat them!) The morning of the 19th we became "rear troops". The push was going well. I remember Stan

and me taking a walk together the next morning. We could walk without fear of mortar or artillery which was about the first time since the middle of September, except for our brief stay at the rest area. We found some propaganda leaflets that the Germans had dropped by planes. They played up the menace of the Jewish population and the danger of our being wounded. The appeal was very poor and made a man want to fight them rather than to quit.

That afternoon we went back to Kolsheid. This was becoming quite a home for us. We soon started to call the place Camp Kolsheid. The people were getting used to us now. We always were assigned the same area, so we stayed in the same houses.

The night of the 21st a new officer arrived, Lt. Parramore, from Florida. We visited with him for awhile and told him he had arrived at a good time. We were scheduled to go to the rest camp at Kerkrade the following day. He would have time to get acquainted before anything exciting happened. For certain we should be at the rest area for two days because the schedule there was drawn up accordingly. Stan figured Parramore would be a good officer.

Back to the rest area. The next day would be the 23rd of November or more aptly called Thanksgiving Day. We heard that there was plenty of turkey and arrangements had been made for having ice cream. That was fine with us. That evening I heard that we were alerted. The rumor was correct. We were to move out the next morning to take a small town called Pattern. Now isn't that fine ---- Thanksgiving Day and we were to take a town.

We had our turkey for breakfast and left. It was a wet cold day. We jumped off at 1245. There was nothing but open flat ground between us and the town -- better than a thousand yards. Ours was a perfect attack that day. I have never seen a company better deployed and working as a team better than we were. We took a good bunch of prisoners and soon had the town by surprise and did a superior job. It was good, but war can't be good when men get killed

and wounded. Hugh Wilson, the fourth platoon runner, was killed by a tank and two other men were wounded.

We stayed in Pattern until the morning of the 27th. It was another town where the artillery fire and mortar rounds were rough. Communication lines were always out. One evening while I was checking them I had to duck under a tank to keep safe. I was on a cross roads. Shells really poured in. A couple of rounds even hit Frenchy's charge, the jeep. The kitchens moved up from Kolsheid to a town in the rear of us. We figured we had said good-bye to the place we had begun to call our second home.

Stan came home one evening and told me about the next plan. We were to be attached to the 120th. We would probably go half way to the next town and dig in. That would mean that we would spend a night in the open, which didn't suit us at all. We were happy when the plan was changed and we were told that we would go into the next town of Altdorf when we jumped off. At 1245 on the 27th of November we jumped off. We all hoped it would be as simple as taking Pattern, but I don't think anybody really expected that. The 29th Division was attacking to take the town of Julich on our left and the First Army was jumping for the town of Inden on the right.

We started off. As usual Company "L" was one of the assault companies. It was about 5,000 yards over open ground to the next town. Most of the ground was flat, but a little of it had folds of earth here and there. All went well until we began to receive direct tank fire. When this began we tried to keep moving as we had planned. Sure it was bad, but it wouldn't be good to get stopped in this open field. We wanted to get in that town badly. We tried, but soon we found that we were confronted with machine gun fire only about 200 yards to the front, plus the tanks. It wasn't good. Everyone hit the ground. Not only our company, but "K" also was in the same fix.

We called for tanks, then we called for tanks, then we called for tanks and

then Lunt, our radio operator, called "For God's sake, send us some armor". Then we told them we really had to have some tanks, told them again and again, but it wasn't doing any good. Company "I", the reserve Company had kept too close to the assault companies and was pretty well pinned down also. The battalion commander tried to maneuver this unit. It suffered very heavy casualties pulling back. The Company Commander was badly wounded and later died. Lt. Kane took over the company but couldn't do much to help the situation.

We were stopped ----- stopped cold and pinned down. Sgt. Herche stuck his head up above some beet plants that we were in and got his neck nicked by the machine gun fire. Stan tried to fire artillery on the tank position, but he couldn't observe to do any good. So we stayed pinned down in the beet patch. I don't know why we didn't start to dig in, but I guess it was because we expected to get the tanks we had asked for and start moving. We still didn't like the idea of spending a night in a beet patch. Finally it looked like we wouldn't be moving very soon so we did start to dig in.

Just at dusk, Col. Brown arrived at our CP, otherwise known as the beet patch. He wanted to be sure he knew of our exact position. He intimated that another battalion would pass through us about four o'clock in the morning. That was good news. I sort of doubted if they would have any better luck than we had, but I was glad that it wasn't going to be us that tried to shove on again in the morning. After all it wasn't very often that any outfit passed through or came to the aid of the dependable third battalion.

I spent the early part of the evening running around. It was dark now or I surely wouldn't have! I helped put Lt. Kelly's platoon in position. It had been pinned down and now came up to the rest of the company. I made contact with the third platoon and tried to figure out for about an hour how "K" Company was deployed. Capt. Reckof didn't know. All units were badly mixed and it was hard to figure out who to put where to build up a line. I remember finding Reckof



trying to cut the radio off his radio operator's back. The operator had been killed by the machine gun fire. It wasn't a pleasant job. The man had been shot in the head. He was still grasping the hand set.

I was glad that I had spent the early part of the night running around because when I returned I saw the saddest sight. Stanford was shivering as though he were at the north pole without a stitch of clothing on. He really looked pitiful. I had a scarf that I gave him to put around his neck. I still had to finish my fox hole. That kept me warm for another hour. I dug in with Lt. Clifford, the field artillery observer with us. We put a blanket he had over us and the sleeping bag I had underneath. I shivered some, but I never will be able to compare with cold-blooded Stanford. He really suffered. (I don't mean cold-blooded in actions, but just plain cold-blooded when the weather was chilly.)

This story of the "pinned-down" afternoon in the beet patch wouldn't be complete without mention of the artillery firing that Clifford did that afternoon. He was an FO that could really be trusted; he understood his work and did a very good job. He fired that afternoon by using the coordinates in his head. Although he had no map in his hand and not much chance to stick his head up in the air, he fired within 150 yards of our position. That's plenty good.

Lunt, the radio operator, was a frightened boy that night. He kept telling Stan, "I'm scared Stan, I'm scared". Well, I suppose everyone was. I don't know how they could have been otherwise. Here we were in an open field and we could hear tanks moving around in front of us. We were a plenty good target for artillery and mortar fire and we were plenty vulnerable if the Germans had wanted to hit us.

Lt. Kelly went back about 2200 to act as a guide to bring the 120th up. They arrived and passed through us about 0400. I don't think any of us who had been pinned down expected them to be able to do any good. I heard the

"Jerries" open up with a machine gun about the time they got to us and I thought to myself, "Another regimental commander has messed up and there will probably be two battalions pinned down here in a few minutes".

Things went better than we had hoped for however. The 120th did a very good job of knocking the machine guns out with rifle grenades and getting on into town. They cleared the town out in quick style and had about four German tanks running up and down the main street of town. Men from the 120th told us how they had fired bazooka rounds at them and the rounds had bounced off.

While they were doing all this, we remained in our fox holes and stayed down. About 1000 we got the order to go on into town. Artillery - heavy stuff - was coming in hard and fast. Stan moved the company on in by platoons. It was night before they were set on the left edge of town.

We found a cellar and got in it. What a happy feeling! After spending the last 16 hours in a fox hole which we expected any moment to be the container for an 88 round, we were glad to have a roof and floor above us. It is hard to express how good a cellar looked no matter how wet, cold or small and inconvenient it might be.

Stan was definately "kaput". Of course, we had not received our rations the night before, but everyone had a little something left. We divided up. As soon as Stan had finished his coffee he went to sleep - right on the floor. That was at about 1600. We strung wire and put in communications and tended to the many little things that came up. Stan slept on. Capt. Mann brought the rations up that night. We were, of course, glad to get them and the water. Stan didn't wake up until after mid-night. He was completely fagged out which was easy to explain. The mental strain of being company commander thru what we had just experienced, along with the physical and mental strain we had all suffered, was about all any man could possibly take.

The next afternoon, the 29th of November, we were relieved by the 17th

Cavalry. The company broke down by platoons and went back to Pattern. We were amazed as we went back to realize how far it was from Pattern to the town of Altdorf. It had been about as rough as anything we had seen. Our company's casualties had been small thank goodness, but most of the companies had suffered plenty. However, we had lost some men and if one man is killed, it isn't good. Sgt. Stone of the first platoon was killed by a direct artillery hit.

We spent that night in Pattern and went back, yes, we went back to Camp Kolsheid the next morning. Certainly one place that we had never expected to see again. The people received us very cordially. We were really glad to get back off the line this time. Our nerves had been pretty well tensed by the night in the beet patch. Maybe a better word would be shattered.

We settled down to almost a garrison life. First Col. Brown left us and went to regiment as regimental executive officer. Lt. Col. Fitzgerald took over command of the battalion and a training program was started. That was always the way if we were off the line more than three or four days. The big topic of instruction this time was woods fighting. A little glance at the map would explain why. Just across the Roer River from Altdorf was the Hambach Forest. Nothing was said about the next operation but it was easy to figure out. Considering the rough fighting the First Division had been having in the Hurtgen Forest, the thought of a big forest wasn't good. The First was saying that the Hurtgen was the roughest thing they had been in and certainly they had been thru plenty, ever since their initial landing in North Africa.

It was definately winter now and there was frequent snow flurries. We had a big regimental inspection. Packs were issued and we were required to have all equipment, including a bayonet, which I never saw used. The first time Col. Sutherland came to make the inspection he was unhappy and left the battalion after he inspected headquarters company. We were all set for a tough one. Finally when he did inspect us he was in such a hurry that he didn't find too many things wrong.