

Generally speaking, [on] September 14th the Battalion took a rest from the call of duty in the war. Already, thought was being given to the job that lay ahead -- the cracking of the famous Siegfried Line, which was to be encountered 25 miles to the east. In order to be ready for this task, all the companies spent this day checking over all their equipment, weapons and vehicles. Supplies of lumber, demolitions, ammunition tools and other equipment were replenished. Radios, mine detectors, [and] flame throwers were examined for proper operation. It was house cleaning and inventory day at the 105th.

The next day it was back to the War again. Showers during the past two days had caused some of the roads to become quite muddy and nearly impassable. To Company C fell the job of repairing the roads, shov^{ing} up banks and filling bad spots with gravel. Company A had an interesting day in the newly "liberated" city of Maastricht. Reports had been received that some buildings in the city had been boobytrapped. In all, over 25 buildings of different kinds were investigated by Company A with only two boobytraps being found. Included in the buildings were former enemy barracks, hospitals, generals' quarters, headquarters of the Wehrmacht, police station, a prison and homes. Also this day, the 119th Infantry, with Company B in support, was meeting some very heavy and determined resistance at Valkenburg, a very strategic strong point of the enemy. All three bridges in the town across the Geul River had been destroyed. Several times during the day, Company B attempted to go into the town to build a ford around one of the bridges, but each attempt was met with artillery, mortar and direct weapon fire by the enemy. At other

points along the river, the company was more fortunate, being able to construct a bridge at one place and a ford at another.

Morning came and the infantry and Company B were still have their troubles at Valkenburg. But with the aid of some heavy artillery and a little out-flanking by the infantry, the town was cleared sufficiently to allow Company B to go to their work. Further south on the stream, Company B constructed an improvised bridge. With combat engineer ingenuity, a bridge was hastily constructed from handy large concrete culvert pipes which were placed in the stream and stringers and ~~checking~~ placed across the top.

Meanwhile in the 120th Infantry sector to the south, Company C was busy with making crossing of the Geul River. Enemy resistance here was not heavy, but many obstacles in the form of roadblocks and abatis were to be found. These were promptly cleared by Company C.

Sept 17th -- Companies B and C followed up the advance of the infantry, sweeping, clearing and maintaining roads in the Division sector. Company A, in Division reserve, spent the day making prepared pole type demolition charges for use in the now imminent assault of the Siegfried Line. Also along this line in the evening all companies had review classes in the use of the flame thrower, the preparation and placing of demolition charges and the breaching of obstacles.

Of interest this day was the removal by Company A of four enemy box mines, the first this Battalion has encountered.

Preparations for the assault^a of the Siegfried Line continued [on] September 18th. During the day more pole and satchel charges were prepared by Company B and in the evening, again, review classes in assault techniques were conducted. A Battalion Headquarters, after numerous preliminary plans had been submitted, the final Engineer Plan for the assault^a of the Siegfried Line rolled off the press.

Today, September 19th, all companies of the Battalion moved forward to their respective assembly areas, just east of Heerlen, Holland. Since we have been moving closer and closer to the German border, all troops have noticed how much cooler our reception has been from the civilians in the towns and villages. Gone is most of the flag-waving, cheering and enthusiastic crowd which used to welcome our arrival. Tomorrow, the assault of the Siegfried Line begins, and by tomorrow night it is hoped our troops will be well-established across the German frontier.

Elaborate plans have been made for this attack, with full use being made of all sources of information. Practically every arm of the service will play a part in the attack. Tonight everyone is tense with expectancy for the morning's job and with wonderment of what the morrow will bring.

Sept 20th -- It seemed as though the weather was to stall the big

attack, for this morning dawned with heavy fog blanketing the ground. But with hopes of the fog lifting by noon, the Division went ahead with the plan. The engineers moved ahead to their positions with their especially prepared pole and satchel charges, their flame throwers and their mine detectors. Early in the morning under cover of the fog, a reconnaissance patrol from Company B led by Lt Burton was able to make the first actual reconnaissance of the Wurm River, which flows directly in front of the guns of the Siegfried Line. Several times during the morning, the sun tried to break through the fog. But when H-Hour (1210) came, the fog was still too thick for effective bombing and the attack was postponed until the next day. Late in the afternoon a reconnaissance party from Company C made an investigation of a Wurm River crossing site but ran into trouble from an enemy pillbox overlooking the site. One casualty resulted -- Lt Groe. He was wounded in the foot by a machine gun.

Sept 21st -- This morning we learned that the big attack, which is in everyone's mind these days, has been postponed indefinitely. Everything and everybody was in readiness for this operation and there seemed little to be done but wait. However, the infantry was sending out many patrols, and with the patrols went engineers from Companies A and B. Their purpose was to obtain all possible information of crossings and crossing sites of the Wurm River and of the antitank and antipersonnel obstacles in the path of advance. Much valuable information was gathered. So much that it was possible for the Engineer Plan of the operation to be altered to insure greater success. The patrols ran into some small arms fire but no casualties were reported. Although practically every unit in the

Division has at one time or another reported the capture of a prisoner, today was the first time that one of H&S Company's isolated water points reported a capture of four prisoners of war.

Sept 22d -- The word came in early in the morning [that] the attack was on for this day. By mid-morning all the final preparations within the engineer Battalion had been made. Everything was ready and even the early morning haze had lifted and the sky was practically cloudless. But again the old story came down -- "attack postponed indefinitely." In the afternoon, a group of P-38s attacked the Siegfried Line in our sector. Having been previously informed of the attack, everyone was anxious to watch the planes drop their oil bombs. Great clouds of dense black smoke rose from the direction of the Siegfried Line. Everyone's spirits were high, as they thought of the havoc the oil bombs must be raising in the enemy's lines. The true extent of the bomb's fury was brought home when three of the planes disastrously dropped their bombs short of their mark. The bombs plummeted into a patch of woods in full view of most of the spectators. It is known that there were some of our own troops in the woods and undoubtedly some men were killed. This very unfortunate accident put a bad taste in everyone's mouth and a damper in the whole afternoon's proceedings.

Sept 23d -- The morning was wet, dismal and dreary. The temperature was dropping, winds increasing and there were definitely signs of winter coming. The war in this sector had settled down to artillery duels, with the Yanks throwing about ten pounds of lead for Jerries' one. ---

Occasionally a stray member of the Luftwaffe wandered over the area, but he was promptly greeted with AA fire.

With a little time on their hands, the men's thoughts turned to the now serious problem of getting a bath. Besides the hardships of cold weather and cold water to be endured, there was the ticklish situation of how to take a bath in a bivouac area, located in the middle of a town, and still preserve one's modesty. The problem was solved when exploring Yanks found modern hot shower and locker room accommodations for over 300 men in a nearby coalmine plant.

In the afternoon, members of this Battalion enjoyed a XIX Corps USO car show, the show played in the auditorium of St. Francis School in Heerlen. The high spot of the entertainment was reached when four GIs were invited onto the stage by four very pretty young ladies. Amid cheers, whistles and hearty laughter, the GIs and girls danced the "Boompsey daisy?". Comical to behold was six-foot-eight inch Pvt. Cruvey of Company C and his five-foot-two partner. Enjoying himself immensely was T5 Odis "Tex" Longbotham of H&S Company with his partner, a shaply young blonde from Texas.

Sept 24th -- Today the weather continued to remind us that winter was coming. Sullen dark clouds scooted across the sky with occasional showers driven by a cold, piercing, north wind. The men made improvements to their foxholes, straw from ~~from~~ a nearby barn being used

liberally as protection from the cold and dampness. Small campfires sprung up, as men heated up in-between-meal cups of coffee.

All the companies continued to smooth out the rough spots in their plans for the assault of the Siegfried Line. Company A made further reconnaissance of all available crossing sites of the Wurm River in the regimental sector. It was decided to use improvised footbridges to cross the infantry over the river and construction of the bridges was started. Company C, which is in Battalion reserve, spent the day making up prepared demolition charges for use in reducing enemy obstacles.

Sept 25th -- More entertainment was in store for the Battalion today. The 66th Army Group Forces band arrived at Battalion Headquarters in the morning and much to the enjoyment of the GIs congregated [there] gave out with some good popular and jazz music. In the afternoon, by courtesy of the Special Service Department, a movie was shown for the Battalion. What's more, the movie was shown in a real theater, the Ast theater in Schaesburg, Holland.

During the day, Company B constructed an improvised fortified line to be used as a training site. Pillboxes were simulated by pushing up mounds of earth with the bulldozers and placing concrete slabs in front of the mound. An antitank ditch 300 yards long was scooped out by the bulldozer, and a minefield 100 yards long of mines without fuzes was laid and small one-pound TNT pole charges were prepared. This, then, was the

miniature Siegfried Line, the assault of which the infantry and engineers practiced for the next few days.

Sept 26th -- Today made a week that the Division has been in this same position. The war in this sector is confined to artillery, air and patrol action. Continually, day and night our big guns keep pounding away at the Siegfried Line. Occasionally a German observation plane puts in an appearance but almost all of the planes seen these days are Yanks making their all but unceasing attacks on enemy targets.

To further perfect the timing of the plans and the speed [of] construction during the actual operation, Companies B and C accompanied reconnaissance patrols of the 119th Infantry. The patrols were able to cross the Wurm River, something that hadn't been done before. Much valuable information was gathered by the engineers on the proposed crossing sites -- the width and depth of stream, the condition of the banks and the layout of the surrounding terrain.

The Special Service outfits were working overtime these days putting on as many shows and movies for as many troops as possible. Today, in the morning the Battalion attended another USO camp show at a very large and modern theater in Heerlen. A variety revue of clever acts, the show was a big success with the Yanks. Sitting comfortably in the theater, it was hard to realize that there is a war going on.

Sept 28th -- Today, Companies A and B continued with training with infantry on the assault of fortified positions. All the component parts of an assault group practiced their respective tasks to gain coordination. Today, Company B began construction of assault duckwalk bridges to be used for crossing the infantry over the Wurm River. These bridges, two feet wide and 26 feet long, were constructed of wood and were to be carried from the line of departure by the infantry [pioneer] platoons.

Company C started construction of some large culverts that were to be used as an improvised bridge. Starting with a three-foot diameter by 12-foot long 1/3-inch thick steel culvert pipe, six-inch diameter logs were bound [lengthwise] to the outside of the culvert with steel cable to reinforce the strength of the culvert. To the inside of the culvert running lengthwise were welded one-inch pipe for further reinforcement. Three of these culverts were constructed today.

Sept 29th -- Again today, Companies A and B carried on training with infantry on practice assaults on fortified positions.

One platoon of Company B finished construction of the assault duckwalk bridges and spray-painted the bridges for camouflage purposes. Another check was made to see that all assault equipment was ready for operations. Assault demolition charges were painted to camouflage the

charges from enemy observation.

Company C made a practice crossing of the Geul River in the vicinity of Gulpen. The crossing involved the use of the culverts which had been constructed the previous day. The crossing was more or less a trial to see if the idea would work. The results were good and it was planned to go ahead and use the improvised bridge in actual operations.

At the movie theaters in Heerlen and Schaesburg, the Special Service teams were running continuous movies. Depending upon their work and the time available, the engineers attended the movies.

Sept 30th -- Continued training with the infantry on assault of fortified positions was on the program for Companies A and B today.

The 1st and 2d Platoons of Company C, in preparation for their part in the coming operations, made practice constructions of Treadway bridges. The purpose of the practice was for speeding time of construction.

The rest of the company worked hard fabricating more culverts which were to be used as an improvised bridge. Also, the sleds on which the bridge was to be towed by tanks were constructed.

Oct 1st -- Last night, Cpl John Maher, Pfc Joseph Macera, and Pvt Robert Pierce of Company B accompanied an infantry patrol into the Siegfried Line. Each of the engineers carried with him two 25-pound satchel charges. In the area the patrol was to operate in were known to be two pillboxes and possibly a third one. The mission of the engineers was to destroy the embrasures of the pillboxes. Fifteen minutes was allotted to the engineers for their work and during that time the charges were placed in the two known boxes. The third box was not located. Results of the satchel charges were reported as excellent.

Today, Company C conducted a demonstration of their proposed river crossing using the improvised bridge equipment they had constructed. The demonstration was made as realistic as possible and conducted on a spot of the Geul River near Gulpen, which closely resemble the proposed location of the Wurm River.

Oct 2d -- This morning dawned bright and clear. The sky was a beautiful blue without a cloud to mar its surface. This was clearly the day for which we had been long preparing for -- the day for the assault of the Siegfried Line. In order to better control operations, the Battalion established a forward CP in a house with the 117th Infantry's Regimental CP. The house was located in the town of Gracht, perhaps a mile across the German border. To better describe this operation, it would be best at this time to give a few pertinent details of the Division and Battalion plans that were to be followed.

The Division planned to attack with the 117th and 119th Infantry Regiments abreast, to attack on a narrow front with the infantry regiments in a column of battalions and to attack in the vicinity of Marienburg and Rimburg. Companies A and B of the engineers were placed in support of the 117th and 119th Infantries, respectively. The engineers' mission in such an attack was to assist the advance of the forward elements by breaching tactical wire, removing or destroying other obstacles, removing antitank and antipersonnel mines and clearing main supply routes.

The 1st and 2d Platoons of Company C were placed in support of Company B and Company A, respectively, their mission being to construct a crossing on the Wurm River for regimental main supply routes. The 3d Platoon of Company C remained in Battalion reserve.

In support and to precede the Division attack there was to be an hour and 45 minutes aerial bombardment.

At 0915 this morning, the aerial attack began with groups of medium bombers droning over the target area. As a result of bitter experience learned during the large bombing west of St. Lo, definite precautions were taken to see that none of our ~~our~~ troops were hit by our own bombs. Perhaps because of this, the bombing today was not too effective as most of the bombs fell to the rear of the immediate front objectives. The dive bombers with their oilflame ~~(napalm)~~ bombs were more effective, but it was found later that a large number of the pillboxes were untouched.

At H-Hour, [1100], the ground attack began. In both sectors, the assault battalions of infantry moved forward from the line of departure covered by a terrific artillery barrage from over eleven battalions of artillery. With each assault battalion were engineer demolition men armed with bangalore torpedoes, pole and satchel charges.

The first obstacle encountered was the Wurm River, which was crossed by the infantry on assault duckwalk bridges. These bridges had been previously built by the engineers and concealed on the line of departure under cover of darkness^S. Since the duckwalk bridges had worked so well in the Vire River crossing in Normandy, it had been decided to use them here

also. Once again, they proved a success and a rapid and sure means of crossing.

The attack moved forward from the river with some tactical wire encountered. Gaps in this were quickly made by the engineers of Companies A and B using the bangalore torpedoes.

Here the attack progressed into the fortified area. Some pillboxes were very apparent and easily discernable. These had either been destroyed by air or artillery or were quickly eliminated by the ground forces. But some pillboxes were camouflaged to look like ordinary homes. At a casual glance, these would be overlooked, but to the alert Yanks the small gun embrasures low in the walls gave the position away.

Meanwhile, back on the Wurm River the 1st and 2d Platoons of Company C were beginning construction of improvised bridges. This improvised bridge consisted of three four-foot diameter by 12-foot long steel culvert reinforced by logs and smaller pipes. This bridge and the method of constructing it were planned so that the bridge could be erected under fire. The plan of construction was as follows: A medium tank was to tow the bridge on a rough lumber sled down to the river and then turn parallel to the river. Then a tank dozer was to push the culverts ~~with its blade~~ off the sled into the stream. Finally, the dozer was to push earth on top of the culverts, form a roadway and cross the bridge and on the far bank for an approach.

Several practice constructions of this bridge were made on the Geul River near Gulpen the week before and were successful. However, today fate was against the operation. Heavy rains during the past few days had greatly softened the banks of the river, and the banks were turned into a quagmire by the tanks. The tank bulldozers bogged down and it was necessary to call for the Treadway bridge units which were in reserve.

After a lot of hard work, overcoming the muddy terrain conditions, and dodging heavy enemy artiller fire, the 1st Platoon completed their bridge at 1630 in the 119th Infantry sector. Not long after that, the 2d Platoon completed their bridge in the 117th Infantry sector.

Further ahead, our troops were running into very stout resistance.

It wa apparent that the areial bombardment had not "softened" the opposition to any great extent. Also, the enemy seemed very determined to hold at all costs. The attack developed into a furious fight with both sides slugging it out. As the battle raged, our troops surged forward. By nightfall, which is early these days, a bridgehead about a mile and a half deep and two miles wide had been established.

Enemy artiller fire had been very heavy all day, especially among the

assault troops. Company A engineers with the infantry assault teams were particularly hard hit. In one shell barrage very soon after H-Hour, Pvt Roger C. Thames..., T5 Olen C. Gilbert..., Pvt Lloyd E. Renier..., and Pfc Edward B. Peek..., all from Company A, were killed. [Seven men were wounded] in Company A this day.

Company B's casualties were Pfc Joseph J. Macera killed by shell fire while advancing with infantry assault detachments and [two men] wounded. In H&S Company, [a sergeant] was wounded by shell fire at [the] bridge site in [the] 119th Infantry sector.

There wasn't much sleep for anybody on the east side of the river this night. Besides almost continual enemy shell fire, there was a lot of work to be done. The approaches and abutments of both bridges across the Wurm River demanded continual maintenance work.

Early in the morning, the enemy counterattacked, and after some very stiff fighting the attacks were repulsed. In the 117th Infantry, our troops were able to advance slowly. Company A in close support and under incessant artillery fire began their work of clearing and sweeping the regimental MSR. Several minefields were uncovered and promptly removed. To the south in the 119th sector, the infantry was meeting almost fanatical resistance and very little progress was made. All the platoons of Company B were in support of their respective battalions and were "sweating" it out.

Although it probably was never planned for such use, an ancient castle, complete with moat, seemed to be playing an integral part in the Siegfried Line at Rimburg. Intense small arms fire issuing from the maze of rooms protected by thick solid stone walls proved to be a major obstacle to the advance. After a while, the Rimburg castle was taken after heavy artillery fire, but still each room had to be checked for any remaining enemy.

Prisoners of war taken today spoke of the effectiveness of our tactics against pillboxes. They were particularly impressed by the attacks from the rear of the boxes. They were also impressed with the accuracy of the small arms fire which is reported to have killed a number of men manning the weapons in the embrasures by striking them right between the eyes. A number of machine guns were jammed also by this fire.

In the morning, Company C had been placed in support of the 120th Infantry for close engineer support.

Again today, enemy shell fire claimed casualties in the Battalion. From Company B, Pvt Ralph B. Richey..., was killed and [two men] were wounded while advancing with their infantry assault team.

One squad truck of Company C was knocked out today when it ran over a box mine east of Marienburg. Of the men in the truck, [three] were wounded. [Another soldier in Company C] was accidentally wounded today when unloading a .50 caliber machine gun.

Oct 4th -- The battle in the Siegfried Line continued at a high pitch. Our troops were encountering the heaviest enemy artillery fire so far seen by the Division. The enemy continued to make good use of their dug-in and fortified positions. A number of counterattacks were launched by the enemy in an effort to regain positions and knock out our bridges across the Wurm River. All the counterattacks were repulsed, but because of these and the stiff defense of the enemy little progress was being made by the Yanks. A patch of woods on the east bank of the river in the 119th sector proved to be a particularly troublesome spot as much small arms fire was noted to come from it.

Because of the heavy fighting, the engineers of Companies A and B were unable to do too much work. All the platoons were in close support of their battalions and cleared minefields as quick as they could get to them.

To prevent the enemy from slipping in at night and reoccupying captured pillboxes, the engineers were given the mission of ~~seal~~ the pillboxes against further use. This afternoon men from H&S Company started working in the 117th sector sealing boxes by welding the doors shut and covering

[them] with earth [using] the D-7 bulldozer. Occasional enemy artillery fire was still landing in the area, and it was one of these that made a near hit on a jeep and killed T5 Louis Kee..., and Pfc Robert L. Liel..., both of H&S Company.

In an effort to stop artillery fire on the bridge at Marienburg, one platoon of Company C made a search of several pillboxes for possible enemy artillery observers. Five men wounded when a man set off a boobytrap in one box.

Oct 5th -- The battle still raged. More and more tanks and [other] armor were now passing through the gaps made by the Division and were fanning out to the north while the 30th Division was swinging around and attacking to the south. Today the infantry advance in the 117th sector and 119th sector was slow as the enemy resisted strongly from field fortifications and pillboxes. Consequently, Companies A and B were limited in their operations. The 1st Platoon of Company B completed a hazardous as well as a difficult construction job today. The highway overpass of the railroad south of Rimburg had been destroyed by the enemy. The platoon went to work under light enemy artillery fire and made a bypass to the north of the overpass. It was necessary to make a sizeable cut through the embankment down to the railroad tracks and a like cut out the far side. Several times during the construction the platoon had to seek shelter from shell fire. Even so, [two men] were wounded in one barrage.

To the south, in the 120th Infantry sector, the enemy had withdrawn from the town of Kerkrade during the past night under an artillery cover. The advance of the infantry in this area was against light opposition, the major obstacle being numerous and extensive mine-fields. The engineers of Company C covered a wide area today, sweeping the roads with mine detectors. Many of the minefields lifted contained Reigelmines, the first that the Battalion had encountered in some time. Also, some fields had Tellermines in combination with Reigelmines.

Oct 6th - The heavy enemy shelling slackened off a bit except near Herbach. In this sector, after a heavy artillery barrage, the enemy made another counterattack. Our troops were driven back, but after some help by aircraft and artillery and some heavy fighting our troops were able to regain their former positions.

In the northern sector, the town of Ubach was beginning to resemble Mortain as a result of terrific pounding by air and artillery. To enable supply trains to roll through the town, Company A started to work clearing the rubble and debris from the streets of the town.

In the central sector, due to the heavy fighting that [ensued], Company B was again restricted in their operations. Yet, in the southern sector, Company C had their hands full of work. The town of Kerkrade had been heavily mined and the engineers of the mine detector teams were kept busy

sweeping the many streets of the town.

Tonight the Luftwaffe put in an appearance and made it an extended visit. Four enemy planes flew over the bridge sites at Marienburg and Rimbürg and dropped flares and some large bombs, but the bridges, if these were the targets, escaped any harm. During the rest of the night one or two enemy planes occasionally appeared over the Division area dropping a couple of large [bombs] and numerous antipersonnel bombs.

Oct 7th -- The Division continued its attack to the south against only scattered resistance. Enemy artillery was extremely light which led to the belief that the enemy had moved his artillery to the rear to cover his next defensive positions. On the left flank, the infantry, by nightfall, had seized the town of Alsdorf, while on the right flank the 119th Infantry seized Merkstein.

The engineers, following closely in the advance of the leading element, cleared and swept roads for mines. As enemy pillboxes were captured, the engineers set to work methodically to seal the boxes against further use. Generally, the quickest and easiest way of sealing boxes was by covering [them] with dirt by use of a bulldozer or by welding the steel doors shut. But today Company B encountered some pillboxes in their area that were inaccessible [and impervious to destruction] by bulldozer.... So it was decided to destroy the boxes with demolition. The charges were prepared and placed, a total of 500 pounds of TNT being used altogether.

With a tremendous explosion, the pillbox literally flew into a thousand pieces. Three-to four-foot thick sections of reinforced concrete walls and ceilings were torn to shreds. With a dull thud, the shattered remnants of Hitler's impregnable Siegfried Line crashed to earth.

Oct 8th -- Continuing their attack to the south this morning, our troops met stubborn resistance from enemy small arms fire, [but] pillbox by pillbox the Yanks went forward. The town of Herzogenrath was cleared of enemy after quite a ferocious house-to-house fight. Soon after the capture of the town, the engineers of Company B began their routine work of sweeping the streets for mines. As the work progressed, more and more mines were encountered. Not only the streets but [the] sidewalks, also, were saturated with mines. Schu, Reigel, S-, and Teller mines were uncovered by the dozens. Most of the mines had been laid in a haphazard manner under the cobblestones of the streets, and a good percentage of them were boobytrapped. Several instances occurred where mine detectors buzzed indicating the presence of metal below the surface, but when investigated only a piece of scrap metal was found. The "delay-minded" enemy had even sought to delay the engineer mine detector crew.

By nightfall, several hundreds of mines had been removed from the streets of Herzogenrath, and there were more streets to be swept yet. The large number of mines found in this town seems to indicate that this is where the enemy must have expected the Yank assault on the Siegfried Line.

[One man] was wounded today while removing mines in the town of Herzogenrath. The [soldier], with a mine detector crew, attempted to seek shelter in a ditch from an enemy barrage [and] hit an S-mine in the bottom of the ravine.

This morning in the 117th sector the regiment was getting ready to attack from ~~this~~ positions just south of Alsdorf. From Company A's CP, which was located on the northern edge of the town, Lt Twohig, Sgt. Bueno, and T4 Milliron rode in their jeep to one of the infantry battalion's CP to confer on some engineer work. The advance CP was located south of a large school building. The enemy decided to counterattack this morning. His attack came from the east and southeast [and was] directed at taking the town of Alsdorf and keeping the enemy escape route from Aachen open. Starting back to their CP, the men from Company A were caught in the counterattack. They immediately took shelter, along with other Yanks, in the school building. From a vantage point on the second floor, the Yanks watched five enemy tanks approach their building. And as they watched they saw a U.S. tank destroyer make successive direct hits on four of the tanks. The fifth tank retreated, and, Lt Twohig said, "I was glad to see that TD. That fifth tank was just raising its gun, getting ready to put a shot through our building." Now enemy infantry was approaching the building. About 200 yards from the school, the enemy had to cross between tow hedges about 20 yards apart. The men too aim and fired. T4 Milliron accounted for the first Jerry. From then on the battle was on. Several more enemy were killed by the engineers as they attempted to cross the open space. As the fight progressed, the Yanks found a better vantage point on the fourth floor of the building overlooking a series of

foxholes the enemy had jumped into. As the enemy cautiously raised themselves from thier holes, Lt Twohig and Milliron counted one, two, three, and fired simultaneously. Several more of the enemy were accounted for in this manner.

The estimated two platoons which had attacked our friends had decided that this was too much and quickly withdrew. The totals for the fight showed five Germans killed by Milliron, four by Lt Twohig, and three captured by Sgt Bueno.

The main weight of the counterattack had cut off the infantry battalion from Alsdorf, and it was late in the afternoon before the counterattack was beaten off and communications restored.

When it was all over, said Lt Twohig, "It was fun while it lasted, but I'd sure like to have all my equipment back." The Lieutenant's jeep had been knocked out and burned when a shall from the Nazi tank missed an antitank gun and hit the jeep.

Oct 9th -- Company A continued with their road clearance and mine sweeping in the vicinity of Alsdort. This night, the company laid hasty minefields to the east and southeast of Alsdort for the antitank security of the 1st and 2d Battalions.

To the west in the town of Herzogenrath, Company B still worked removing mines from the streets. Most of the mines removed were Riegel and Teller mines. To the north of the town, the enemy had destroyed a railroad and overpass over the road which was to be used as an MSR. The overpass was a heavy steel bridge which completely obstructed the road. To clear this, Company B used the electric welder to cut the girders and rails and then winched the sections out of the way. Then the bulldozer came in and cleared the rubble away. This was one of the heaviest jobs the Battalion has completed.

To the south of the town, a platoon of Company B destroyed two more pillboxes with demolitions. The charge used now, as a result of experience, has been cut from 500 to 400 pounds of TNT.

Company C operated today in the Noppenburg area. The company worked clearing roads and sweeping them for mines. A number of bomb craters in the roads had to be filled. However, few mines were encountered in this sector. Company C also sealed some captured pillboxes, covering them over with earth with their bulldozer.

Oct 10th -- In the 117th Infantry sector today, the infantry dug in for active defense. Company A completed clearing and sweeping a network of roads in the vicinity of Alsdorf. The hasty minefields laid by the company the night before were still left in place for antitank security.

To the southeast of Herzogenrath, Company B continued clearing and sweeping roads to the town of Bardenburg. This work was done by Lt Burton's platoon and was done under enemy artillery fire which supported a counterattack in that sector. In the vicinity of Maubach, another platoon destroyed seven more enemy pillboxes with demolitions.

Company C continued with work of the same sort in the vicinity of Noppenburg and Ottenfeld.

Oct 11th -- The Division had reached its objective and completed its northern part of the encirclement of Aachen. Only a short distance separated the 30th on the north and the 1st [Division, commanded by Maj Gen Clarence R. Huebner] on the south.

As the 117th Infantry had dug in, Company A did not have any operations today.

But over in the 119th sector, Company B was busy. The company continued with the work of clearing and maintaining roads south of Herzogenrath to Bardenburg. In one spot, a pillbox that had been blown was blocking the road [and] was cleared by the company. A little further on the road, a 100-yard stretch of fallen trees across the road had to be cleared. With

their power saws and winches on their trucks, the engineers soon removed the trees. Seven more capture pillboxes in the area went the way of others, blown to pieces by demolitions. In another area, the company located four Tellermines which were taped off with tracing tape. In the town of Herzogenrath, one squad repaired and maintained a culvert bypass of a destroyed bridge over the Wurm River.

Company C today continued cleaning and sweeping roads for mines in their sector south of Noppenburg. The night before, the company had laid four hasty minefields for antitank security in the regimental area.

Oct 12th -- Today the general situation remained the same. The Division was now on active defense. Several counterattacks were made by the enemy during the last twenty-four period, but all the attacks were repulsed.

Tonight Company A has one platoon [assigned] for security for the regimental CP. Since it has been reported that a number of the coal mines in this sector are interconnected by underground shaft and there is a possibility the enemy might use these for infiltration, two squads of Company A are guarding the entrance to mines in Alsdorf tonight. Also tonight, another platoon is out laying more hasty minefields for local antitank security.

In Bardenburg today, Company B demolished 18 enemy halftrack vehicles and

four self-propelled guns which had been captured intact. The vehicles were put out of commission with incendiary grenades placed in the breach of the guns and on top of the motor blocks. Company B also continued clearing and sweeping roads for mines in the regimental area. The policy of destroying captured pillboxes continued when the company demolished six more boxes with demolitions. So far, Company B has used tons of demolitions for destroying pillboxes.

Oct 13th -- Again, today the situation generally remained unchanged. The encirclement of Aachen was complete. The destruction of the city by aerial and artillery bombardment, as promised by the ultimatum issued to the city, was proceeding daily. Still the enemy made numerous attempts by counterattacks during the day, and by aircraft at night, to relieve the garrison of Aachen. So far, though, the enemy has [had] no success.

Meanwhile, the engineers of Company A continued on guard at the entrances to mine shafts in Alsdorf and at the regimental command post.

In the Company B sector, the company was still pretty much occupied with destroying the numerous pillboxes to be found there. Nine more of the pillboxes were destroyed by demolitions. The charges were placed in the inside corners of the pillboxes and were well-tamped. All doors and embrasures were then closed and the charges detonated. To date, Company B along has used over 20 tons of explosives for this work. The entrance to two coal mine shafts near Bardenburg were sealed by demolitions. This

was to prevent the infiltration of the enemy through our lines by coming through interconnecting mine shafts.

Three small minefields were removed by Company B today. The fields contained Schu mines which cannot be detected by the mine detectors so that it was necessary to probe the fields.

The regimental MSR in the 120th Infantry sector was the scene of most of Company C activity today. Numerous holes and shell craters in the road were filled with gravel. At one spot under a railroad overpass, ten inches of water was drained off the road and the mud was scooped off the road by the bulldozer. At the other muddy spots on the MSR, the mud was scooped out and refilled with gravel.

The minefields road blocks put in by Company C a few days ago were today extended into standard hasty minefields 150-yards long. Also, a small antipersonnel minefield, consisting of trip wires and hand grenades, was placed in the vicinity of the antitank minefields.

Oct 14th -- In addition to their duties of guarding the regimental CP and the entrances to the coal mines in Alsdorf, Company A assumed a new job today. It is believed that natural gas obtained from the coal fields in this vicinity was piped east to Cologne and other cities. So, to deny German industry the use of this gas, all the valves in the gas mains in

Alsdorf have been closed and are being guarded by Company A.

Company B, operating in the middle of the heavily-fortified section of the Siegfried Line, still continued methodically to reduce captured pillboxes to rubble. Eight more boxes were destroyed with demolitions by the company today.

In addition, Company A removed an extensive enemy minefields containing 50 Schu mines southeast of Herzogenrath. The whole field had to be hand-probed as the mine detector does not detect Schu mines. Four other reported enemy minefields in the regimental area were investigated by Company B, but [not] one mine was detected or located.

Some idea of how heavily mined the streets of Herzogenrath were may be obtained by the report turned in by Company B today. On October 8th, [from] one stretch of street about a half-mile long the 3d Platoon removed 80 Tellermines, 16 Riegelmines and one A/P mine.

Oct 15th -- Today, while two platoons of Company A remained in Alsdorf for the security of the regimental command post and to guard the coal mine entrances and the gas main valves, the 3d Platoon returned to Battalion Headquarters. There the platoon worked long into the night preparing 150 pole-type demolition charges to be used in the next day's operations.

Company B, in support of the 119th Infantry, began today to make preparations for the next day's attack. The Division was determined for the next day's attack. ~~The Division was determined~~ to close the gap around Aachen. The plan was to drive west across the Wurm River near Bardenburg and then attack south.

Company B sent out reconnaissance teams to look over the site where ~~were~~ they intended to build two bridges and to find bridge assembly sites. Elsewhere in the sector, Company B destroyed seven more pillboxes by demolition. In the 120th Infantry sector, Company C put two other pillboxes out of commission with large charges of TNT. Heavy rains during the past two days had turned the regimental MSR into a sea of mud in spots. At one place the company had to drain off ten inches of water from the road and then scrape the thick mud off the road with the bulldozer. At other places, many loads of gravel were hauled in to replace the mud which was scooped out.

At 2330, Lt Burton's 1st Platoon and Lt Kent's 3d Platoon of Company B, each with two Brockway trucks, went forward to the bridge assembly sites. At the southern bridge site, work was stopped by the failure of the hydraulic lift on one of the trucks. Soon, another truck was available and at 0530, Oct 16th, the 45-foot Treadway bridge was completed. At the northern site, heavy artillery and mortar fire held up construction for a long while. Between barrages, the bridge was finally assembled and

pushed across the river at 1015....

Mine detector crossed the river and began to sweep the road for mines, and the reconnaissance teams started reconnoitering the roads to the west ~~of the roads to the west~~ of the river.

Elsewhere in the Division sector, the situation remained unchanged. Company A continued on guard at the coal mine entrances and the gas main valves. Continuous rains kept Company C busy at work maintaining the regimental MSR. Late in the afternoon today, contact was made by the 119th Infantry with the 1st Infantry Division, thus completely encircling the city of Aachen.

Oct 17th -- As the Division consolidated its new gains, Company B continued to clear the recently gained ground. The roads in the sector were cleared and swept for mines with no mines being found. A reconnaissance was made of the captured pillboxes, but due to heavy artillery and mortar fire in the area it was impossible to destroy the boxes. Meanwhile, Company B kept continuous maintenance crews on the bridges they had constructed the previous day.

Oct 18th -- In the eastern sector of the Division today the situation remained static and activity was confined to patrolling and artillery exchanges. Company A, in support of the 117th Infantry, was very

inactive except for furnishing a platoon every night for regimental CP security.

In the 120th Infantry sector, with the infantry holding its position, Company C turned their efforts toward the maintenance of roads in their area. The never-ending rains required constant attention on the second-class roads. In addition, the road leading to and from the Division water point was maintained by the company.

While the 119th Infantry in its sector was regrouping and firmly establishing itself, Company B continued with road clearance and the sweeping of roads for mines. Shell holes in the roads, which had been hard-hit, were filled and the roads maintained. A bridge on a main route south of Bardenburg leading into Aachen, when captured, was found intact. When engineers from Company B examined the bridge they found the bridge was prepared for demolition by the enemy and that no charges were boobytrapped. Accordingly, the engineers cut the enemy detonating wires, placed a small charge of TNT among the enemy charges, and ran their own detonating wires back to a foxhole. The bridge was now ready for our use to blow, if necessary, in the case of a heavy enemy counterattack.

Oct 19th -- While Company A remained idle, Company B, in their area, began destruction of captured pillboxes. Four pillboxes were destroyed by demolitions and three more boxes were prepared for demolitions and will be blown as soon as the infantry CPs vacate them. Two engineer^s

remained on guard at the bridge which the enemy had so obligingly prepared for demolition.

Tonight enemy aircraft were over the Division area. But instead of the usual bombs and sticks of antipersonnel bombs, the aircraft dropped leaflets. The propaganda of the leaflets was a little late. The enemy's warning of dire consequences befalling us in our attempts to take Aachen seemed immaterial in that reports have already shown the 90% of the city has been taken.

Oct 20th -- Today there was little activity by the engineers. Company B continued maintaining their two Treadway bridges and keeping two men on guard at the bridge which was prepared for demolition. The maintenance of the regimental MSR and the road to the Division water point were the objects of Company C's efforts today.

In the 117th regimental sector tonight, under occasional mortar and artillery fire, Company A laid five minefields of M3 A/P mines. Two of the fields were laid in conjunction with a previously laid hasty antitank roadblock. All of the A/P mines were installed with trip wires. It was necessary to lay the fields at night when the enemy could not observe the work.

Oct 21st -- With the news that the garrison in Aachen had capitulated

except for a few small pockets of resistance, the 119th Infantry today began to swing its front to the east of Wurselen. Company B in support destroyed five more of the captured pillboxes with demolitions and also destroyed a large enemy ammunition dump. Maintenance crews of Company B still remained at the two Treadway bridges and the demolition crew remained on duty at the bridge prepared for demolition.

Again today, Company C worked maintaining the roads in their sector. The 1st Platoon hauled in 19 truckloads of gravel in order to keep the heavily traveled road to the water point in good condition. Two captured pillboxes in the area were destroyed with demolitions by the 3d Platoon. The 2d Platoon took a day off to go back to the coal mine...for a hot shower.