

COMPANY C

The mission of C Company was to cross the Wurm River as one of the assault companies to the right (south) and abreast of B Company, breach the Siegfried Line by taking pillboxes Number Five and Number Six, and seize an area in and east of Palenberg.

The company was at full strength at the jump-off. They moved off with the First Platoon on the left and the Third on the right, abreast. The mortar section of the Weapons Platoon was hit at the line of departure after the assault platoons had moved out. Enemy artillery wounded the Weapons Platoon leader at this point.

According to the platoon leaders of the assault platoons, support of all types was not very strong that day. Fire bombs were seen dropping from three or four planes, but no appreciable damage resulted. The rolling barrage of the 4.2 mortars was regarded as ineffective because there were no enemy troops west of the railroad track. Furthermore, both platoon leaders state that they have information that some of the 4.2 mortars slipped in the mud, and the base plates kicked backward in such a way to cause some shorts which fell among our own troops. They state that they feel they could have done better if allowed to run forward without the mortar barrage.

Both platoon leaders feel that the progress of C Company was slowed considerably by the catwalks which the

troops carried to cross the Wurm River. There was considerable sweating, straining and puffing and everybody was tired by the time they had crossed the open field as far as the ridge overlooking the river.

The most severe casualties in C Company were suffered when they reached a draw just over the brink of the hill. The draw channelized the company advance, and the enemy was laying in artillery and mortars in heavy concentrations. Both of the assault squads of the First and Third Platoons were almost wiped out in this draw. The Second Platoon, in support, was also hard hit.

"It was pinned down so hard it couldn't wiggle," explained Lieutenant Stanley.

When Lieutenant Stanley reached the river, there were five men from his platoon at that point attempting to get the bridges in. The crossing was slowed when two catwalks were hit by enemy shells. No fire came from the pillboxes on either platoon, because it was stated that B Company was already up on the pillboxes and had them covered. Some small-arms fire came from the Rimburg castle and the wooded area across the railroad track to the right in the 119th sector, but it did not bother the men or cause nearly as many casualties as the shelling.

Lieutenant Stanley did not know until after he had reached the river that the assault squad of his platoon had been wiped out back in the draw. Contact was not good, and he waited at the river for the assault squad to come up and join him. Finally, he worked the balance of his platoon up to a sheltered position on the west side of the railroad track embankment, and Lieutenant Johnson did likewise. At the railroad track, the First Platoon had 12 men left; the Third Platoon had 15. They stayed at the railroad track bank for about 45 minutes. One or two men crossed over into defiladed positions across the track, but most of the company stayed on the west side.

After 45 minutes at this point, Lieutenant Stanley radioed Captain Morris Stoeffer, Company Commander of C Company, saying "I have no assault squad, and I can't assault the pillboxes without an assault squad."

Captain Stoeffer radioed back: "Just hold it on the railroad track and Company A will be up to relieve you."

Shortly after 1300, Company A passed through C and reduced pillbox Number Five. Company C then crossed the railroad track and joined Company A, tying in with them for the defense on the night of October 2-3.

There were many evidences that the Germans in the